

absolute india

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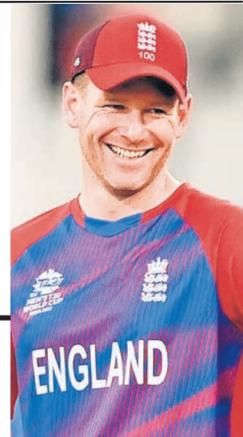
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WE WILL EFFECTIVELY INTRODUCE FTA BETWEEN INDIA & UK: MODI

AN AUSPICIOUS FRIENDSHIP

The UK Prime Minister was given a ceremonial reception and a Guard of Honour at Rashtrapati Bhawan where he was received by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Talking to the media after the ceremonial welcome, Johnson said that relations with India were never so strong.

“We welcome the UK as support in manufacturing, technology, design and development and other sectors for Aatmanirbhar Bharat.”

Narendra Modi, Prime Minister, India

“I have never seen such a joyful reception. I wouldn't get that necessarily anywhere in the world.”

Boris Johnson, Prime Minister, UK



initiated by India in infrastructure modernisation plan and National Infrastructure Pipeline, Modi said that India welcomes the increasing investments here by the UK companies and “we have seen such an example in Halol in Gujarat on Thursday. “Around 1.6 million UK nationals of Indian origin have been making a positive contribution in the Indian economy and society as well. We are proud of those people of Indian origin, we want to further strengthen this bridge and in this direction, Prime Minister Johnson has personally helped a lot, I greet him for this,” the Indian Prime Minister said.

He also said that India has shown its commitment to fulfil the commitments made in COP-26 in Glasgow and decided to further enhance the partnership for climate and energy. “I invite the UK to join India's National Hydrogen Mission and express my gratitude for setting up Strategic Tech Dialogue between the two countries,” Modi said.

“The conclusion of the implementation arrangements of the Global Innovation Partnership will prove to be a very important initiative between us today. This will fur-

ther strengthen our partnership with other countries. Under this, India

and the UK will co-finance up to \$100 million for the transfer and scaling-up of “Made in India” innovations to third countries.

“These will also help in the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, and efforts to tackle climate change. This will prove to be very useful for our start-ups and MSME sector to explore new markets, and to globalise their innovations,” Modi said. Prime Minister Narendra Modi said the situation in Ukraine and Afghanistan were also discussed during the meeting. Earlier, while addressing the media, British Prime Minister Boris Johnson said, “I felt like Sachin Tendulkar upon my arrival and also felt like Amitabh Bachchan when I saw hoardings everywhere.”

JOHNSON OFFERS INDIA HELP TO BUILD ITS OWN FIGHTER JETS

New Delhi: With an eye on Russia, British Prime Minister Boris Johnson on Friday offered help to India giving 'know-how' for making its own fighter jets and a licence for faster deliveries of defence equipment, especially when the West is trying to wean India away from Russia.

During bilateral talks with his Indian counterpart Narendra Modi, Johnson discussed the ways to boost trade and security ties with India, which buys more than half of its military hardware from Russia. Johnson has offered support for new Indian-designed and built fighter jets, offering the best of British know-how on building battle-winning aircraft.

Both leaders agreed to transform defence and security cooperation as a key element of India-UK Comprehensive Strategic

Partnership and discussed opportunities for defence collaboration including co-development and co-production for meeting the needs of armed forces of both the countries. The two leaders had also detailed discussion on co-production and defence technology, particularly in electric propulsion and modern defence aircraft's jet engines and other complex defence equipment, the Ministry of External Affairs said in a statement. Both sides issued a joint statement for further intensifying co-operation on Cyber Security particularly in the areas of cyber governance, cyber deterrence and safeguarding critical national infrastructure.

They also agreed to closely cooperate on countering the persistent threat of terrorism and radical extremism.

Nitish Kumar walks to Rabri Devi's residence for Iftar party



Team Absolute | Patna

The Iftar party, hosted by the RJD at the official residence of former Chief Minister Rabri Devi on Friday, attracted attention of every political party in the state. Chief Minister Nitish Kumar, accepting the invitation sent to him by Rabri Devi, and her sons Tejashwi Yadav and Tej Pratap Yadav, walked from his 7 Circular Road bungalow to her 10 Circular Road residence - a mere bungalow away. He was seen meeting Rabri Devi and Tejashwi Yadav. Nitish

Kumar's meeting with Tejashwi Yadav has a big message for BJP top leadership - coming it is a day before Union Home Minister Amit Shah's visit to the state.

Sources have said that Nitish Kumar is coming closer to the RJD especially at a time when its supremo Lalu Prasad has been granted bail by the Jharkhand High Court in a fodder scam case. It will be interesting to see the next move of Nitish Kumar.

In the recent past, the relation between his Janata Dal-United and the BJP is not so healthy in Bihar.

Nitish Kumar's visit to Rabri Devi's house for an Iftar party will increase his bargaining power with BJP.

There is also a possibility that JD-U may inch closer to the RJD and Nitish Kumar might replicate his 2016 act where he separate the JD-U from the Mahagathbandhan and formed the government with the help of the BJP in Bihar. This time, there is a possibility that Nitish Kumar may leave the NDA and join Mahagathbandhan to form a government in Bihar. Holding mid-term polls would be his second choice.

Meanwhile, apart from a large number of RJD supporters, Congress leaders like state chief Madan Mohan Jha, and Awadhesh Narayan Singh, BJP leader and Industry Minister Shah Nawaz Hussain, Assembly Speaker Vijay Sinha and leaders of other parties were also present. The latter included LJP (Ram Vilas) President Chirag Paswan, VIP President and recently sacked minister Mukesh Sahani.

WHO endorses Paxlovid Covid pill for high risk Covid patients

GENEVA | Agencies

The World Health Organisation (IANS) on Friday made a strong recommendation for Pfizer's antiviral for mild and moderate Covid-19 patients at highest risk of hospital admission. The oral antiviral drug, which is a combination of nirmatrelvir and ritonavir tablets, “is the best therapeutic choice for high-risk patients to date”, according to the global health body. It strongly recommended for patients who are 12 years or older with non-severe Covid-19 who are at highest risk of developing severe disease and hospitalisation, such as unvaccinated, older, or immunosuppressed patients. However, the WHO suggested against its use in patients at lower risk, as the benefits were found to be negligible. The new recommendation by the WHO is based on new data from two randomised controlled tri-



als involving 3,078 patients. The data show that the risk of hospitalisation is reduced by 85 per cent following this treatment. In a high-risk group (over 10 per cent risk of hospitalisation), that means 84 fewer hospitalisations per 1,000 patients. Meanwhile, the WHO also called for wide geographical distribution and transparency from Pfizer.

DELHI AGAIN SEES NEW COVID CASES CROSS 1K MARK

New Delhi: Delhi on Friday reported a rise in new Covid cases in last 24 hours, at 1,042 against 965 on the previous day, while there were two fresh deaths, according to the Health Department bulletin. The number of active cases in the city has also surged to 3,253, while the positivity rate was 4.64 per cent.



The number of Covid containment zones stands at 620. Meanwhile, a total of 22,442 new tests -- 13,169 RT-PCR and 9,273 Rapid Antigen - were conducted in the last 24 hours, taking the total to 3,76,43,156. A total of 47,064 vaccines were administered in the last 24 hours - 6,409 first doses, 26,163 second doses and 14,492 vaccines precaution doses. The total number of cumulative beneficiaries vaccinated so far stands at 3,30,59,731 according to the health bulletin.

Election Commission mulling postal ballots for overseas voters

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Election Commission of India has said that its contemplating postal ballots for overseas voters, an official statement said on Friday.

During his recent visit to South Africa and interaction with the members of the Indian community there, Chief Election Commissioner Sushil Chandra urged the community to register as overseas voters as the present numbers are abysmally low. He also shared with the members that extension of Electronically Transmitted Postal Ballot System (ETPBS) facility to overseas voters is being contemplated.

The Election Commission delegation, led by the CEC, visited South Africa and Mauritius from April 9-19.

During this visit, a series of meetings were held with the Election Commissions of South Africa and Mauritius as well as interactions



with the large NRI community in the two countries. Both Election Management Bodies are also MOU partners with ECI.

The three countries share a relationship which is fundamental, unique and rooted in the collective experiences and cumulative strength of their people, the statement said.

NOW, TN ALSO MAKES MASK MANDATORY, VIOLATORS TO BE FINED RS 500

Chennai: In an order issued on Friday, the Tamil Nadu Health Department has made wearing of masks mandatory in the state and violators will have to pay Rs 500 as fine. The Department said the decision was taken considering the rising cases of Covid-19 in the country, especially in Delhi. Tamil Nadu has also witnessed a slight increase in fresh cases in the past couple of days. The Department had earlier withdrawn the mask mandate following a decline in the number of infections. On Thursday, 39 people tested positive for Covid in Tamil Nadu, with 31 registered the previous day. Twelve students of IIT Madras had also tested positive for the virus and the premium institute was declared a Covid zone on Thursday.

Plea in Supreme Court seeks nationwide ban on Halal products

Team Absolute | New Delhi

A plea has been moved in the Supreme Court seeking a nation-wide ban on Halal certified products and also withdrawal of Halal certification.

The plea, by advocate Vibhor Anand, said: people who may not be comfortable with halal meat, or for people with religions where only jhatka meat is allowed, no longer have any choice in the matter. The plea contended that because the acceptance of Halal certification by private organizations like Jamiat Ulama-e-Hind and few others mean that the existing government certification like ISI and FSSAI on consumer products are not enough. “Because the Halal certification of products is discriminatory towards other communities and imposes



a religious belief on the non-followers too,” it alleged. It said that by allowing the demand of one community of Halal certification by the private organisations gives rise to the apprehension to come up the other communities' demand for similar certification on the basis of their religious belief. The plea contended that the Muslim minority, which is 15 per cent of the population, wants

to consume 'Halal' meat, it is being forced upon the rest 85 per cent of the people. “Now, this 'Halal' certification is not restricted to meat, but it has been extended to even food items, cosmetics, medicines, hospitals, housing societies and malls. It includes snacks, sweets, grains, oils, cosmetics, soaps, shampoos, toothpastes, nail polish, lipsticks, etc,” added the plea.

TOP LET COMMANDER AMONG 4 TERRORISTS KILLED IN ENCOUNTER AT BARAMULLA IN J&K

Srinagar: Four terrorists have been killed in an ongoing encounter that started on Thursday between terrorists and security forces at Malwah area in North Kashmir's Baramulla district.

Among those killed is top LeT commander Yousuf Kantrow who was involved in several acts of terrorism including attacks on police and security forces.

“Another terrorist killed (Total 04). Operation in progress,” police said. Three soldiers and a civilian have also been injured during the encounter which took place after a joint team of the police and the security forces cordoned off the area and launched a search operation on the basis of specific information about presence of terrorists.

As the security forces zeroed in on the spot where terrorists were hiding they came under a heavy volume of fire that triggered the encounter.

Heat wave abates from most of India

Team Absolute | New Delhi

However, heat wave conditions are very likely to prevail in isolated pockets over Gujarat during next five days, over southwest Uttar Pradesh during April 23 to 26, over southeast Uttar Pradesh during 24-26, over Madhya Pradesh on April 25-26 and over Rajasthan & Vidarbha on April 26, the IMD bulletin said.

There will be a rise by 2-3 degrees Celsius in maximum temperatures very likely over interior Maharashtra during next two days and no significant change thereafter even as no significant change in maximum temperatures is very likely over remaining parts of the country.

Heat wave has abated from most of India with only eight stations across India recorded maximum temperatures between 42-43.8 degrees Celsius, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) said on Friday.

It also predicted a gradual rise by 3-5 degrees Celsius in maximum temperatures is very likely over most parts of north-west India during the next five days. After the maximum temperatures fell by about 2-3 degrees Celsius over east India on Friday, they are set to rise by 3-5 degrees Celsius during the next three days. However, no



significant change in maximum temperatures is very likely during the next two days over central India that will witness a gradual rise by 3-5 degrees

Celsius thereafter. Isolated heavy rainfall is likely over Assam and Meghalaya till April 24 and over Arunachal Pradesh on April 23 and 24.



K'TAKA: MLA WARNS OF LEGAL ACTION AGAINST GIRLS INSISTING ON HIJAB

► ALIA ASSADI AND RESHMA, THE STUDENTS WHO CAME TO APPEAR IN THE EXAM, INSISTED THAT THEY SHOULD BE ALLOWED TO WEAR THE HIJAB. THE STUDENTS WERE TURNED OUT AFTER THEY REFUSED TO HEED TO THE AUTHORITIES' REQUEST AT THE VIDYODAYA PU COLLEGE EXAMINATION CENTRE TO TAKE OFF THEIR HIJAB.

BENGALURU | Agencies

A Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) legislator from Karnataka's Udipi on Friday termed the attempt of two girl students to attend the Class 12 exams wearing hijab as a deliberate attempt to seek media attention. "Legal action will be initiated and a criminal case would be filed against these students, if they try to create a scene on Saturday," he said. "It has been proved that it's a conspiracy. We had called them to collect hall tickets by Thursday evening. They came to college at 9.30 a.m. Since the principal had told them that they would get hall tickets only after



removing their hijab, they collected hall tickets without hijab and later, they have created a drama at the examination centre, insisting on hijab," he said.

"I have spoken to the district administration and the police department. I have directed them to lodge a contempt case against them if they indulge in any drama tomorrow to allow them to wear hijab. Are they trying to be playful here? They are not innocent students, they are petitioners of hijab cases," he

added. The legislator further said their intention is to spoil the atmosphere of the college and destroy peace in the society.

"Are these students above the High Court? We will not tolerate if they create drama tomorrow (Saturday). They don't want exams, other students are disturbed by their actions. Parents of other children are worried over the developments and questioning us on controlling them," he said.

There is no sympathy for these girls, they

are doing all this to get media attention. "Till now, I thought they were girl students and innocents. We will initiate legal action," Bhat said.

K'TAKA SET TO IMPLEMENT LAW ON AZAAN

Bengaluru: The Karnataka government is all set to strictly implement the law in connection with Azaan. The move is likely to add to the existing social unrest in the state.

Karnataka Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai and the state DG and IGP Praveen Sood made it clear on Friday that everyone should follow the law in this regard. Meanwhile, Sri Ram Sena founder Pramod Muthalik has stated that he has launched a "Azaan se Azadi" campaign in the state. He had demanded that the government should ensure implementation of the law on violation of rules while performing Azaan in mosques.

Instructions have been issued for resolving the Azaan issue harmoniously through holding peace committee meetings at the police station level. The process is going on. Everyone should follow the law, Bommai said.

DALIT MAN FORCED TO RUB NOSE IN OWN SPIT; NHRC SEEKS REPORT



BHUBANESWAR | Agencies

The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) sought a report from the Odisha government over an incident wherein a Dalit man was allegedly forced to rub his nose in his own spit for refusing to pay donation to the village temple. The Commission has taken a suo-motu cognizance of a media report of the incident and issued notice to the Odisha Chief Secretary, calling for a report within six weeks including status of the investigation of the case, and the status of statutory relief paid to the victims. "Examining the contents of the news report, the Commission has observed that the issues raised are of a very serious nature and right

to dignity of the victims have been grossly violated," the NHRC said in a statement on Friday. The incident took place last Saturday evening when Chameli Ojha, sarpanch of Tikhari village under Marshaghai police station in Kendrapara district, visited the man's house, seeking donation for the temple, sources said.

When the man said that he had already donated for the deity, the sarpanch allegedly abused him and his wife. However, the sarpanch has refuted the allegation made by the Dalit man.

An FIR has been registered at Marshaghai police station under various sections of the IPC and under relevant provisions of the Protection of the Scheduled Castes & the Scheduled Tribes Act, 1989.

12-year-old TN boy arrested on rape charges after 17-yr-old girl gives birth

CHENNAI | Agencies

In a shocking incident, a 12-year-old boy was arrested by the Tanjavur All Women Police after a 17-year-old girl gave birth to a girl after being raped by the boy.

He was held under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (Pocso) Act. However, when contacted, the police at Tanjavur All Women Police station told IANS that even though the girl had named the 12-year-old boy, the police are investigating whether anyone else was involved in it. The police said that the girl was admitted to Raja Mirasudar government hospital on April 16 after she complained of stomach pain. Doctors examining her found that she was nine months pregnant and



she delivered a baby girl the same day. The hospital authorities informed the Tanjavur All Women Police station and questioned the girl. She named a 12-year-old boy who lived in the same neighbourhood.

The Tanjavur All Women Police arrested the boy under

the Pocso Act Section 5(1) and 5 (j)(ii). The boy has been sent to a juvenile home in Tanjavur.

The police said that they are conducting a DNA test on the boy to ascertain his age and to find out whether he is the biological father of the child.

Bulldozer brings down 300-yr-old Shiva Temple in R'sthan, triggers controversy

JAIPUR | Agencies

A 300-year-old Lord Shiva temple in Alwar district's Rajgarh town was demolished on Friday.

The video of the temple demolition is going viral on social media putting the Congress government of Rajasthan in the dock. However, the ruling party has washed its hands off the demolition claiming that the Rajgarh municipality is being ruled by the BJP and the action has been taken by the saffron party workers.

Meanwhile, the local administration said that the action to remove the encroachment was taken as per the master plan. Bharatiya Janata Party state president Satish Poonia however questioned how can a 300-year-old temple be an encroachment? "The BJP is sending its team to the spot, which will give its report in three days," he added. Congress state president Govind Singh Dotasara told a press conference that the BJP is playing politics on the issue. "In 2018, the BJP Mandal President wrote a letter to the district collector recommending the removal of this encroachment. As there is a BJP



board in Rajgarh being headed by Satish Guharia, the resolution to remove this encroachment was passed in their board meeting. Thereafter, encroachment was removed. Temples are not tampered with in the Congress government, this has been the agenda of the BJP," he added.

"Many temples were demolished during the BJP rule in Rajasthan under, during the tenure of former CM Vasundhara Raje. Recently, bulldozers were run in Delhi to erase buildings despite SC objections. Also many temples were brought down in Gujarat. It's the BJP and RSS which is playing politics on these issues," he added. Veteran Congress leader Jitendra Singh said, "It is unfortunate that the encroachment drive was ordered by the BJP Board and Chairman of the Nagar Palika Rajgarh to make the Gaurav Path also sanctioned by the last government without taking the local people into consideration."

BJP IT Cell chief Amit Malviya shared a video of the incident on Twitter and said "Shedding tears on Karauli and Jahangirpuri and hurting Hindus' faith -- this is what the secularism of Congress is all about."

'Will file a better affidavit', Delhi Police to SC on hate speech at Delhi meet

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Delhi Police on Friday conceded before the Supreme Court that it needed to re-examine its affidavit saying that the speakers at a religious meet organised by Hindu Yuva Vahini on December 19, 2021, made no hate speeches against the Muslim community. The Delhi Police said it will file a "better affidavit".

At the outset, senior advocate Kapil Sibal, representing the petitioners, said the Delhi Police said an inquiry was conducted into the matter, and justified that persons had gathered to save 'ethics of their community'.

The Delhi Police, in its affidavit, said "The findings of the inquiry after visual and audio examination of the evidence further disclose that the speech did not contain any hate words against a particular community, and persons who gathered there with a motive to save the ethics of their community".

Sibal said: "Your lordships may have to decide constitutionally, what ethics are?"

A bench headed by Justice A.M. Khanwilkar noted that the affidavit was filed by the Deputy



Commissioner of Police and queried Additional Solicitor General (ASG) K.M. Nataraj, "Do you accept this position...we want to understand...Has any superior officer verified this?" The bench, also comprising Justice Abhay S.Oka, said: "We want to know that the senior officer has understood the nuances of other aspects before filing this affidavit. Has he merely reproduced an inquiry report or applied his mind? Do you want to take a relook?"

Justice Khanwilkar further queried, "Is it your stand as well... the reproduction of the inquiry

report of the sub-inspector level officer?"

Nataraj, representing the Delhi Police, said: "We have to take a relook". Justice Khanwilkar asked Nataraj, "Do you want to have a relook at the whole matter?...Is this the stand of Commissioner of Police, Delhi?" Nataraj submitted that a fresh affidavit will be filed, after taking instructions from the authorities concerned. The top court noted that the ASG sought more time to file a better affidavit in the matter.

The top court gave Delhi Police two weeks to file an affidavit and scheduled the matter for further hearing on May 9. The bench said that the police should file a better affidavit on or before May 4. In the affidavit, the Delhi Police said some complaints were lodged alleging that hate speech was made at the event organised here by the 'Hindu Yuva Vahini' on December 19 last year and all those complaints were consolidated and an inquiry was conducted.

The Delhi Police said the speech made by Sudarshan News TV Editor Suresh Chavhanke at the meet didn't amount to hate speech against any particular community.

Lalu Prasad gets bail in fodder scam; RJD hails

RANCHI/PATNA | Agencies

The Jharkhand High Court on Friday granted bail to Rashtriya Janta Dal (RJD) chief Lalu Prasad in connection with a fodder scam case relating to fraudulent withdrawal of Rs 139.5 crore from the Doranda treasury in undivided Bihar.

Ranchi High Court judge Aresh Kumar Singh granted the bail 42 weeks after Lalu's conviction in the Doranda case. The special CBI court had convicted the RJD chief on February 21 and awarded five years jail term. Since then, four hearings have taken place in the court for his bail.

During the last hearing, the court had asked CBI to clear its objection on why should



Lalu Prasad should not be given a bail. Though the CBI filed its reply in the court, the judge was not satisfied with the arguments.

On the other hand, Justice Aresh Kumar Singh was more satisfied by the argument of Lalu's lawyer Prabhat Kumar.

Rajiv Kumar quits as NITI Aayog Vice Chairperson, Suman Bery to succeed

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Niti Aayog Vice Chairperson Rajeev Kumar has resigned from his post and will be replaced by economist Suman K. Bery from May 1, an official statement said on Friday.

According to a statement issued by the Department of Personnel and Training, the Appointments Committee of the Cabinet has accepted the resignation of Rajiv Kumar and will relieve him from his post on April 30.

It also said that Bery has been appointed, with immediate effect, as a full-time member of NITI Aayog on the same terms and conditions as are applicable to the position, and will take over as Vice Chairperson on May 1. Rajiv Kumar was the gov-



ernment think-tank's Vice Chairperson since September 2017.

Bery has served in the Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister and the National Statistical Commission, as well as being Director General of the National Council of Applied Economic Research (NCAER), New Delhi. He also had a stint in the World Bank.

2-wheeler EV fires shake up nation, govt applies emergency brakes

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The unabated deadly fires in the electric two-wheelers has shaken up the entire EV industry and its stakeholders, forcing the government to now press an emergency button and direct EV makers to immediately recall faulty batches that may trigger more such incidents.

After Union Road Transport and Highways Minister Nitin Gadkari said in a tweet that companies may take advance action to recall all defective batches of vehicles immediately, Hyderabad-based Pure EV said it has initiated the recall of 2,000 e-scooters to check any faults in batteries and chargers. "In view of the recent fire



incidents involving our vehicles in Nizamabad and Chennai, PURE EV has decided to recall 2,000 vehicles from the models ETrance Plus and EPluto7G of the concerned batches," the company said in a statement late on Thursday.

An 80-year-old man was killed and two others injured when the battery of a Pure EV electric two-wheeler exploded in their

house in Telangana's Nizamabad district.

According to police, the incident occurred on the night of April 19 in a house where the battery was being charged. This was the fifth incident of a fire in a PURE EV scooter. Earlier, Gadkari warned EV makers that if any company is found negligent in their processes, "a heavy penalty will be imposed and a recall of all

defective vehicles will also be ordered".

"We have constituted an Expert Committee to enquire into these incidents and make recommendations on remedial steps. Based on the reports, we will issue necessary orders on the defaulting companies," he said. After nearly six such EV fire incidents within a month, the government has asked all EV players to take firm steps to avoid such incidents.

From Ola Electric to Okinawa Autotech, several EV makers are under the scanner for reported fires in their e-scooters.

"We will soon issue quality-centric guidelines for Electric Vehicles," Gadkari said.

Nepal national sent to jail for supplying fake Indian currency

Team Absolute | New Delhi

A Nepal national has been awarded five years' rigorous imprisonment by an NIA court for supplying fake Indian currency. The court also slapped a fine of Rs 2,000 on the guilty.

The court noted that the NIA had successfully proved its case before sending Abi Mohammed Ansari to jail. The case pertains to the seizure of fake Indian currency notes of Rs 1,000 denomination having face value of Rs 49,88,000 by the DRI from the IGI airport in Delhi in 2014. Later, the NIA had taken over the probe.

A chargesheet was filed against two accused persons in 2015, and subsequently a supplementary chargesheet was filed



against three accused persons in 2017. Earlier this year, the NIA special court had convicted one accused in the case.

CHANGE OF NAME

I BRAJESH KUMAR OJHA s/o shri HARE KRISHNA OJHA presently residing at Flat number 12A/304 Dwarkadham new jail road Bhopal pin : 462038 have changed my daughter's name from ADITI to ADITI OJHA vide affidavit number BC268178 dated 19 April 2022.



POWER-STARVED MAHARASHTRA TO IMPORT COAL, ACQUIRE MINE IN CHHATTISGARH

Alarmed by the continuing power crisis and ongoing load-shedding in large parts of the state, the Maharashtra government plans to import coal and acquire a coal-mine from Chhattisgarh for power generation, Deputy Chief

demand-supply currently. "A meeting to discuss the issue of load-shedding was held with Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray. We will take a review of the power department every week on the load-shedding," Pawar said. Last week, the state Cabinet authorised the Maharashtra State Electricity Distribution Co Ltd to purchase power from elsewhere to tide over the current crisis. Pawar reiterated that insufficient coal is being supplied to various states by the Centre, and even Maharashtra is not getting the required quantities, though all efforts are being made to ensure smooth power supply and end the ongoing power-cuts.

"Accordingly, the state has decided to make some imports from outside the country and also get a coal mine allocated to the Maharashtra State Power Generation Company in Chhattisgarh, for which Energy Minister Dr Nitin Raut is working," he said.

Last week, Raut had slammed the Centre for the poor management of coal supplies despite a sharp increase in electricity

demand due to the summer heat and relaxation of Covid-19 curbs all over.

The Maha Vikas Aghadi government has assured that efforts are underway to normalise power supply and ease load-shedding as early as possible in the state.

The MEDCL has been permitted to procure electricity for a short period till June 15 until the power generation and power availability situation in the state can be restored. According to officials, MSEDCL distributes 87 per cent of the total electricity consumption in the state, and the usage of power by the agricultural consumers has also increased since March 2022.

Due to hot summer, the highest demand of the state has reached 28,489 MW. This is an increase of 8.2 per cent over the previous year, but coal shortages have hampered efforts to boost the power generation.

Given this year's shortfall of around 3,500MW-4,000MW, it has resulted in several hours of blackouts both during day and night in large parts of the state, though Mumbai has been spared.

Team Absolute | Pune

Alarmed by the continuing power crisis and ongoing load-shedding in large parts of the state, the Maharashtra government plans to import coal and acquire a coal-mine from Chhattisgarh for power generation, Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar said here on Friday.

Talking to media persons, he said coal is not being supplied in the country as per demand, forcing the state government to consider alternatives to bridge the gap of around 3,500 MW-4,000 MW shortfall between the

BJP keeps off Rana couple's plans to teach 'Hindutva' to Thackeray

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) on Friday distanced itself from the campaign launched by independent MP and ex-filmstar Navneet Rana and her MLA husband Ravi to 'teach' Hindutva lessons to Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray.

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) on Friday distanced itself from the campaign launched by independent MP and ex-filmstar Navneet Rana and her MLA husband Ravi to 'teach' Hindutva lessons to Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray.

Leader of Opposition (Council) Pravin Darekar categorically said it was the Rana couple's initiative and the BJP had "nothing to do with it".

The Ranas reached Mumbai from Amravati ostensibly to recite 'Hanuman Chalisa' outside the private residence of Chief Minister Thackeray, 'Matoshri' in Bandra east and to 'remind' him of the 'Hindutva' he had allegedly abandoned by allying Shiv Sena with Nationalist Congress Party-Congress.

However, a Kherwadi Police Station team rushed to the Ranas home in Khar and slapped prohibitory orders on them under CrPC Sec. 149.

Hundreds of ShivSainiks led by senior leaders like Anil Desai, Vinayak Parab, ex-Mayor KishoriPednekar, YuvaSena and Women's Wing gathered outside 'Matoshri' to counter the Ranas'



plans. "Let them come here and render 'HanumaChalisa', we are ready to serve them 'Maha Prasad' (a beating) in Shiv Sena style," warned Desai.

Parab warned that if the Rana couple tried to target the Thackeray's home, Shiv Sainiks will not keep quiet and "give them a befitting reply."

In Nagpur, Sena MP and Chief Spokesperson Sanjay Raut dismissed the Ranas as 'Bunty and Babli' who have reached Mumbai to perform 'stunts' to please their political bosses.

Pednekar said those who cannot win elections without the support of the BJP are now trying to foment trouble for Maha Vikas Aghadi gov-

ernment with such 'nautanki' (dramatics) to divert attention from the country's major problems like inflation, fuel price hikes and unemployment.

"Their whole game-plan is to create disturbances in Maharashtra and impose President's rule and declare Mumbai as a Union Territory ahead of the upcoming civic elections. They have no courage to do this in BJP-ruled states," Pednekar said.

Taking a cue from the planned 'Hanuman Chalisa' crusade outside mosques of Maharashtra Navnirman Sena (MNS) President Raj Thackeray, the Rana couple jumped into the controversy with their own brand of imparting 'Hindutva' lessons to Thackeray.

Barred by the police notice, the Ranas plan to address their stance through a media conference later this afternoon giving anxious moments to the law-enforcing authorities.

Meanwhile, the Mumbai Police deployed tight security outside Thackeray's private and official residences and also NCP President Sharad Pawar's Silver Oak bungalow which was attacked by agitating state transport employees on April 8.

'Too nascent stage', SC refuses to entertain Nawab Malik's plea against arrest by ED

THE SUPREME COURT ON FRIDAY REFUSED TO ENTERTAIN A PLEA BY MAHARASHTRA MINISTER AND NCP LEADER NAWAB MALIK TO RELEASE HIM IN A CASE OF MONEY LAUNDERING.

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The Supreme Court on Friday refused to entertain a plea by Maharashtra Minister and NCP leader Nawab Malik to release him in a case of money laundering.

A bench comprising Justices D.Y. Chandrachud and Surya Kant said: "We will not interfere. It is too nascent a stage to interfere...We can't interfere with the due process at this stage."

The bench asked senior advocate Kapil Sibal, representing Malik, to move the competent court with the bail application. "The special court can consider the bail application," said the bench.

Sibal vehemently argued that there was no prima facie case and there was no predicate offence, no FIR on forgery, and added, "How does Prevention of Money Laundering Act be applied?"

Sibal said, "How do they arrest me in 2022 for something, which happened in 1993...where I am not in the picture at all?"

Sibal added that the special court is not going to grant his client bail with a 5000-page charge sheet filed in the matter. "The Arnab Goswami judgment is in my favour," Sibal submitted.

Refusing to entertain Malik's plea, the bench said: "We are not inclined to exercise jurisdiction under Article 136 when the investigation is at the nascent stage."

The bench clarified that the observation of the high court on merits should not come in the way of parties taking recourse to the rights available under the law.

Malik moved the top court challenging the Bombay High Court, which declined his interim release in a habeas corpus petition. Malik has claimed that his arrest was completely illegal.

On March 15, the Bombay High Court rejected Malik's interim application seeking immediate release in a case of money laundering registered against him by the Enforcement Directorate (ED). Malik was arrested on February 23 based on an FIR registered against terrorist Dawood Ibrahim and his aides.

The high court held that Malik was arrested by the ED, and subsequently remanded to custody following due process and there was no reason for it to pass any interim order for his release. Denying relief to Malik, the high court had said that just because

the special Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) court's order remanding him in custody is not in his favour, it does not make it illegal or wrong.

Malik's plea contended that his petition was strictly on the law, and the high court could not have given a prima facie finding regarding Section 3 of PMLA, without giving reasons.

The ED has alleged that Munira Plumber's prime property in Kurla, worth Rs 300 crore as per the current market value, was usurped by Malik through Solidus Investments Pvt. Ltd, a company purportedly owned by his family members. The ED has claimed that this was done in connivance with Dawood's sister HaseenaParker, her bodyguard Salim Patel and 1993 bomb blasts convict Sardar Shah Wali Khan. In his plea in the top court, Malik claimed his arrest was illegal and violated his fundamental rights, as well as statutory provisions, and he was entitled to writ of habeas corpus.

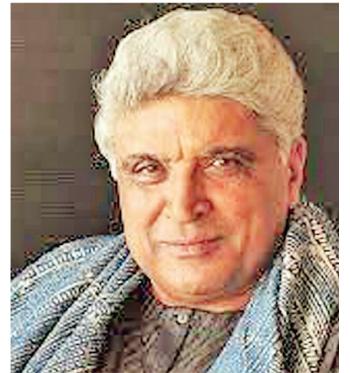
Javed Akhtar lends voice to IP awareness for artistes

Team Absolute | Mumbai

As the Indian Performing Right Society Ltd (IPRS) gears up to launch an awareness campaign on music rights on World Intellectual Property Day, iconic poet and lyricist Javed Akhtar emphasises the importance of protecting IP rights among the youth.

Akhtar said, "The Indian Performing Right Society Ltd (IPRS) is consistently innovating to safeguard its members' works and rights. Continuing with its efforts, IPRS is now all set to expand its horizon, reaching out to the youth and the nation's future creators, helping them to find out how IP rights can support their goals, and help transform their dreams into reality. We aim to bring about the much-needed change towards understanding and acknowledging the rights of a creator. IPRS is a copyright society registered under the Copyright Act, 1957."

Speaking on the initiative, Rakesh Nigam, CEO, of IPRS said, "We are glad to take this effort to the next level by reaching out to not only the creators of today but empowering the songwriters of tomorrow through knowledge and knowhow. This financial year, our focus will be to create a valuable business ecosystem and new revenue opportunities for our mem-



bers. The industry is witnessing major transformation, with digital technology presenting new opportunities and challenges in protecting copyright works, thus catapulting the role of IPRS further," he added. Launching the initiative on April 26, the first session will happen at the Institute of Film, Communication and Creative Arts - Whistling Woods, where IPRS will shed light on why it is vital for creators and those associated with music and media, to understand IP and copyright.

ALL INDIA MARATHI LITERARY CONFERENCE INAUGURATED BY NCP CHIEF SHARAD PAWAR

"Writers, thinkers must be aware of it as such things can be obstacles in national interest. Writings on history should be research-based, or else they can create disputes that can last long in society," said Pawar

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The 95th All India Marathi Literary Conference was inaugurated by NCP chief Sharad Pawar in Udgir in Maharashtra's Latur district. He said literature must be free and not bound by any school of thought and it had the power to bring about revolutions, the French Revolution being an example.

The 'Akhil Bharatiya Marathi Sahitya Sammelan' is being held in Bharat Ratna Lata Mangeshkar Sahitya Nagari in Udgir, some 316 kilometres from Latur. "Many schools of thought have come out of literature. Thinkers can bring about revolutions, like the French Revolution is its example. Literature should be free and not be bound by any school of thought. Today, the focus of making literature nutritive for a specific thought process is underway and it is dangerous for democracy. It can cause anarchy," Pawar said at the event.

"Writers, thinkers must be aware of it as such things can be obstacles in national

interest. Writings on history should be research-based, or else they can create disputes that can last long in society," he added. He also said the process of electing the president of the prestigious literary meet should be changed in such a way that at least once in five years it gets a woman president. Bharat Sasane, president of the literary meet said thinkers and writers were whispering at present that the poor were getting poorer, while the rich were getting richer. "However, people associated with literature must speak fearlessly. The day people start living without fear, we can say achhe din (good days) have arrived," Sasane said. Former Lok Sabha Speaker Shivraj Patil Chakurkar spoke on the need for translating works into Marathi to make the language richer, while Maharashtra minister Ashok Chavan said there was lack of 'political will to give classical language status to Marathi'. "The government has taken the initiative and made Marathi mandatory from Classes I to X," he said.

Police Commissioner Who Said Bhajans Can't Be Played on Loudspeaker at Azaan Times Transferred



Team Absolute | Mumbai

Days after Nashik police commissioner Deepak Pandey issued a directive stating that no one within 100 metres of a mosque will be allowed to play bhajans or songs on loudspeakers 15 minutes before and after the call for azaan, he was transferred out of his post, the Indian Express reported.

Pandey had issued the directive regarding the playing of songs on loudspeakers on Monday, April 18, when he had also written to religious places in the city instructing them to take permission for the use of loudspeakers before May 3. He went on to say that those religious places which fail to do so will face legal action, including possible detention by the police.

The order stated that "every church, temple, gurudwara or mosque" would have to file an application at the Nashik police commissionerate seeking permission to use loudspeakers.

Pandey's order came in response to Maharashtra Navnirman Sena (MNS) chief Raj Thackeray's 'ultimatum' to the Maharashtra government demanding the loudspeakers outside mosques

Nashik police commissioner Deepak Pandey had, on Monday, issued a directive stating that no songs or bhajans will be allowed on loudspeakers near mosques 15 minutes before and after the azaan call.

which play azaan be removed, threatening to play 'Hanuman Chalisa' on loudspeakers if this is not done before May 3.

Pandey has been appointed as the special inspector-general of prevention of atrocities against women (PAW), which is considered a side-posting in response to his directives.

Pandey's transfer is also being linked to a letter he wrote to Maharashtra director-general of police (DGP) earlier this month in which he accused revenue officials of harassing citizens and working in cahoots with the state's land mafia. Seeking that the powers of revenue officials and executive magistrates be transferred to the police, Pandey, in the letter, reportedly referred to revenue officials as 'RDX', an explosive substance, and the executive magistrate as a 'detonator'; terms which the Maharashtra cabinet had taken exception to. Pandey's transfer triggered a major reshuffle in the state's police force, setting off 40 transfers or promotions of senior police personnel.

Jayant Naiknavare, deputy inspector general (DIG) of police (VIP security), will replace Pandey as the Nashik police commissioner. The government has also transferred Pimpri-Chinchwad police commissioner Krishna Prakash, who

will be the new special police inspector general (VIP security), Maharashtra.

Special IG Ankush Shinde will replace Prakash as the Pimpri-Chinchwad police commissioner. In turn, Milind Bharambe, joint commissioner of police (JCP), Mumbai, has been transferred and posted as special inspector general.

Pune JCP Ravindra Shisve has been appointed IG (state human rights commission), while senior officer SureshkumarMekala has been named IG (State CID).

Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB) DIG Lakhmi Gautam has been transferred as IG (establishment) in the Maharashtra police headquarters, while Sandeep Kamik has been promoted and appointed JCP in Pune city. Another senior officer, Satyanarayan, has been appointed IG (coastal security), Praveen Kumar Padwal, joint commissioner of police (EOW), while S. Jaykumar has been promoted as IG (administration) in the state police headquarters. IPS officer Nishith Mishra has been posted as IG (Anti-Terrorism Squad), Sanjay Mohite promoted as IG (Konkan range), Dattatray Karale as JCP Thane, Pravin Pawar as Director, Maharashtra Intelligence Academy, and B. G. Shekhar as IG (Nashik range).

TANISHAA MUKERJI IS SAVING THE PLANET THROUGH HER NGO 'STAMP'

With World Earth Day 2022 just around the corner, Tanishaa Mukerji and her environmentalist NGO 'Stamp' take the pains needed to salvage the only habitable planet. Her work in planting trees, cleaning up beaches and using her influence in encouraging others as well is truly inspirational.

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Tanishaa talks about her journey and responsibility in maintaining our planet. She says "Preserving our planet is like breathing or any other important activity we do. It should be our first priority instead of a decorative social cause. I aim to keep working and motivating others to help save the blue planet through my NGO called 'Stamp'. We organize activities and events surrounding global betterment and work towards making the planet greener by planting trees helping with increasing our green cover and reducing our carbon footprint. I wish that this little effort of ours spreads as much awareness as possible and goes a long way. I feel time is running out for us and If we don't do



something about preserving our soil our water and our plant and animal life it will be sacrificed to the economic gains of a few and at the end of the day these individuals are operating without a conscience or a care about the future!"



EDITOR'S SPECS

SP in distress?

Pragatisheel Samajwadi Party Lohia (PSPL) president Shiupal Singh Yadav, on Friday, met Samajwadi Party (SP) leader Mohd Azam Khan, who is lodged in the Sitapur jail. The meeting assumes significance since both, Azam Khan and Shiupal Yadav, are said to be upset with SP president Akhilesh Yadav. On Thursday, Shiupal had dared Akhilesh to expel him from the party if he felt that he was indulging in anti-party activities. Despite being the president of PSPL, Shiupal had contested the recent Assembly elections on a SP ticket. Azam Khan's supporters, on the other hand, are upset with Akhilesh Yadav maintaining a studied silence on the manner in which the BJP is targeting Azam Khan and other Muslim leaders of the party. After the meeting Shiupal parried all questions about discussions and said that he had come to inquire about the health of Azam Khan. Sources, however, said that the two leaders discussed in detail the prevailing political situation and the same in the Samajwadi Party. Earlier, Rashtriya Lok Dal (RLD) President Jayant Chaudhary, on Wednesday, made a surprise visit to Rampur to meet the family of Samajwadi Party leader Mohd Azam Khan, who is presently lodged in jail. Jayant met Azam Khan's wife and former MLA Tanzeem Fatima and son Abdullah Azam Khan, who is MLA from Suar Assembly seat. Jayant's meeting assumes significance in view of the fact that Akhilesh is facing flak for not supporting Azam Khan, who has been targeted by the Yogi Adityanath government. Jayant held a meeting with Bhim Army chief Chandra Shekhar and the two are said to have discussed an alliance for the next elections. The two also discussed factors that led to their respective parties under performance in the recent Assembly elections. Chandra Shekhar has already ruled out any truck with Akhilesh saying that he wants Dalit votes but does not want to address their issues.

HOW A 'LOCAL-TO-LOCAL' EDUCATION STRATEGY WORKED OUT FOR STUDENTS OF RURAL ODISHA

Naba Kishor Pujari

Ten-year-old Abha* got a break from her routine when the primary school of Katimaha village, under Tikabali block, was ordered shut due to the Covid-19 outbreak. A student of Class 5, Abha was initially "happy about it" because it felt like a vacation. Little did she know that this supposed holiday would be prolonged to limits she had neither expected nor wanted. Katimaha in Odisha's Kandhamal district is 31 km from Phulbani, the district headquarters. Over 90.14 per cent of the district population is recognised as rural, in a region that's still struggling to raise its female literacy rate from 51.94 per cent at present. Abha was unaware of the toll the pandemic would have on her family's financial standing. Her textbooks remained packed in her school bag, and she became her mother's permanent helper with household chores. Such was the state of affairs even after the Odisha government had launched online education initiatives to facilitate learning from home during the lockdown. The Shiksha Sanjog Programme, a WhatsApp-based digital learning platform, as well as radio classes and YouTube live streaming were adopted to keep children connected with their education. However, Abha was a textbook case of the rural-urban digital divide and how students were affected by it. Challenges of poor tele-density, lack of internet infrastructure in forested regions and people's financial distress fell through the cracks when these online modes of education were designed. "I didn't have a smartphone or television in my house to study through the government's digital programmes," said the 10-year-old, whose parents were supportive of her education but lacked the means. "They aren't educated enough to help me cope with my lessons. I was on my own to handle it."



The 'Mo Chatashali' model

Recognising the need of the hour, Delhi-based NGO Atmashakti Trust, along with its allies Odisha Shramajeebee Mancha and Mahila Shramajeebi Mancha, Odisha, developed an alternative, more inclusive model, Mo Chatashali. Named after an Odia phrase that translates to 'my school' in English, Mo Chatashali offered remedial education by conducting face-to-face classes for underprivileged children who didn't have access to online classes. Mid August in 2020, the trust and its allies ran a pilot programme, Mission 3-5-8, a campaign to provide remedial classes for 4,364 students in 17 districts. "The outcome of this campaign was encouraging, as children were found to be doing better academically after taking remedial classes," said Ruchi Kashyap, executive trustee of Atmashakti. "That motivated us to do more, after which we launched the Mo Chatashali initiative to cater to the educational needs of these rural kids." According to Anjan Pradhan, convener of the Odisha Shramajeebee Mancha, the Mo Chatashali programme spanned 84 blocks in 17 districts and included 1 lakh students of rural Odisha under its ambit. "It's a grassroots initiative that emerged as a solution against school closures and made sure that children didn't get too disconnected from their education," he added. These chatashalis are run, supported and managed entirely by the local village communities. In collaboration with the NGO, the administrative bodies of each village would allocate a space to run these centres. The model adopted a local-to-local strategy, through which they appointed a young individual from their community as a teacher, some of these children were familiar with. This strategy also incorporated tribal dialects such as Santali, Ho, Koya, Munda and Bonda as the medium of communication at both the chatashalis and in the textbooks provided. It was no mean feat for these organisations to cover 17 districts in 84 blocks. Initially, parents were reluctant to participate, but Atmashakti Trust, with the help of its village-level committees, reached out to local residents and explained the "correlation between school closures and the detachment their children were experiencing from education." Atmashakti works with 21 regional sangathans, or organisations, at the district level, with a committee presence at the village level, as well. For every two to three gram panchayats, there is a janasathi, a coordinating point, for this initiative. Considering the involvement of village committees and local teachers, Mo Chatashali became a natural choice for parents

over time, in the absence of access to the state's digital education options. In September 2020, School and Mass Education Minister Samir Ranjan Dash was quoted as saying that of the 60 lakh students enrolled in Odisha's government schools, online classes reached just 22 lakh of them. However, a survey titled "The Paused Classrooms" - conducted by Save the Children in collaboration with the Odisha RTE Forum - discovered that only 6 lakh students could access these digital classes. Bhagabati Naik, a resident of Kaliguda village in Koraput district, was the chosen volunteer for the chatashali there. Naik was trained through the remedial teaching modules of Ujjwala, a state government education scheme aimed at improving Odisha's elementary education system. "We were trained on how to run a classroom, maintain an attendance register and teach," Naik said. This basic yet crucial bit of training helped volunteers like Naik run chatashalis efficiently for two hours every day, teaching students Odia, English and mathematics. They tracked students' progress with an assessment every fortnight. The in-house training department of Atmashakti, Birsa Bahini, conducted offline and online training region wise, to improve the skills of volunteers within a stipulated timeline. Mo Chatashali is a classic example of a community-driven success story. It was "the only hope" for parents like Daitari Patel, a resident of Dumberbahal village, to bridge the academic gap the pandemic had created. "Two to three months after schools were shut down, I noticed my child's reading and writing abilities deteriorate," he explained. "After desperately looking for a solution, I contacted Nagarik Vikash Sangathan, the people's collective in Kalahandi district, to help us open a chatashali in our village." It's parents like Patel, who emphasised the need for an alternative education

medium to online classes, that made these centres a successful model statewide. In fact, the Odisha government awarded the Mo Chatashali initiative for bridging this learning gap for over 1 lakh rural students all through the pandemic and the subsequent lockdowns. However, getting students to enrol was just the tip of the iceberg. The harder task was capturing the interest of the children who had been disconnected from their studies for months and grown comfortable with it. It was challenging to draw their attention back to textbooks. This was when the Atmashakti Trust advised volunteers "to use interpersonal methods of teaching, like the use of games, dance routines and poems", to allow the kids to adapt to chatashalis. Moreover, another challenge was keeping volunteers engaged for longer durations as well as financing the chatashalis. They continued to run and emerge fruitful, nevertheless. These chatashalis were a through-and-through boon for the rural children of Odisha, without which they could have been driven to the social perils of child marriages, early pregnancies and child labour after being forced to drop out of schools. Considering the results of remedial schools and the academic deficit induced by the lack of resources among marginalised, underprivileged students, the Mo Chatashali model could be relevant as an after-school education strategy, as well. Anil Pradhan, convener of the Odisha RTE Forum, emphasised that this model must be "replicated by the government" as an additional source of help to the marginalised students, who've remained disconnected from schools through the lockdowns. "The names of all minors quoted have been changed to protect their identity (The author is an Odisha-based freelance journalist and a member of 101Reporters, a pan-India network of grassroots reporters.)"

international

PAKISTAN'S DEADLY AIR STRIKES INCREASE TENSIONS WITH TALIBAN

Border clashes and unprecedented Pakistani air strikes inside Afghanistan have increased already simmering tensions, media reports said. Pakistan launched air raids over eastern Afghanistan on April 16, killing dozens of civilians, according to locals. Islamabad said it was targeting Tehrik-e Taliban Pakistan (TTP) militants. The air strikes provoked unusually harsh exchanges, with the Taliban issuing threats against its longtime ally. Experts said the root of the growing tensions is the Taliban's unwillingness to crack down on the TTP, a close ideological and organisational ally, RFE/RL reported. From its bases inside Afghanistan, the extremist group has intensified its insurgency against Islamabad in recent years. The Afghan Taliban has mediated peace talks between Islamabad and the TTP, also known as the Pakistani Taliban. But since a temporary month-long cease-fire expired and peace talks collapsed in December, the militants have increased their cross-border



attacks against Pakistani security forces. "Pakistan is angry that the Taliban are copying its playbook by hosting a militant group hostile to a neighbouring country," said Sami Yousefzai, a veteran Afghan journalist and commentator who has tracked the Taliban since its emergence in the 1990s. He was referring to Islamabad's support to the Taliban during the 20-year US-led war in Afghanistan, RFE/RL reported. Yousefzai said the Afghan Taliban is unlikely to bow to Islamabad's demand

CLIMATE CHANGE TOP ISSUE FOR AUSTRALIAN VOTERS: POLL

Canberra: Climate change, cost of living and the economy are the most important issues to Australians in the general election to be held on May 21, a new poll revealed on Friday. State broadcaster the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) published data from Vote Compass, which asks voters where they stand on a series of major issues before telling them which party they most closely align with, reports Xinhua news agency. It revealed that 29 per cent of voters identified climate change as their most important issue for how they will vote in the election. However, only 8 per cent of people who said they intend to vote for the governing conservative Coalition identified climate change as an important issue compared to 30 per cent of supporters of the opposition centre-left Labor Party and 50 per cent of people who vote for the left-wing Greens. The Coalition has promised to cut greenhouse gas emissions by 26-28 per cent from 2005 levels by 2030 and has committed to a 2050 net zero target. Under Labor's climate policy, emissions would be cut by 43 per cent by 2030. Cost of living and the economy rated as voters' next biggest concern, with 13 per cent of 97,159 Vote Compass participants choosing each, followed by government accountability, the environment, and healthcare.

'Russia wanted to send Ukrainians to concentration camps in Siberia'

Kiev | Agencies A top official in Kiev has claimed that the Russian top brass had plans to deport a large proportion of Ukrainians to concentration camps in western Siberia to be used as forced labour to build new cities. Oleksiy Danilov, Secretary of the National Security and Defence Council of Ukraine, said that on September 6, 2021, Russian Defence Minister Sergei Shoigu published an article entitled 'New Cities of Siberia', Ukrayinska Pravda reported. "Few people paid any attention to this publication, but we pay attention to such things," he said. "After reading it carefully, we realised that their desire to build up Siberia at the expense of our citizens and our country, as has already happened time and again, will never go away." Danilov said that Shoigu explicitly announced this plan to build three to five large cities with populations between 300,000 and 1 million and, "consequently, this has to be (done by) Ukrainians". "All the reports that our partners' intelligence was giving us were about concentration camps, filtration camps, and physically eliminat-



ing the Ukrainian president and top political leadership as the number one priority." He further said that Shoigu hinted in the article that Ukrainians were to work as forced labour and that citizens from the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) should be brought in to do the work. However, Danilov insisted that other CIS countries did not have a sufficient number of physically able citizens to accomplish such an ambitious city-building scheme. In February this year, some Western publications published intelligence reports from their sources stating that Russia was preparing filtration and labour camps for Ukrainians, to which dissen- ters would be deported following the invasion.

TURKEY SUMMONS IRAQI ENVOY TO DEFEND CROSS-BORDER OFFENSIVE

Ankara | Agencies Turkey's Foreign Ministry has summoned the charge d'affaires of the Iraqi Embassy to defend Ankara's fresh cross-border operation in northern Iraq. The Ministry expressed its "discomfort over the baseless allegations" by the Iraqi authorities against Turkey's military operation, dubbed Claw-Lock, that targeted the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK), Xinhua news agency quoted Ministry spokesperson Tanju Bilgic as saying in a statement. The Turkish move came after Iraqi Foreign Ministry on Tuesday summoned the Turkish ambassador in protest over Turkey's launching a cross-border offensive in



northern Iraq a day earlier. Iraq slammed the Turkish operation as a violation of its sovereignty. Bilgic said Ankara prefers that the Iraqi authorities eliminate the PKK, and is ready for cooperation in this regard. The PKK, which has been rebelling against the Turkish government for more than three decades, is listed as a "terrorist" organisation by Turkey. As long as the Iraqi authorities do not take concrete and effective steps in this direction and the PKK

continues to pose threat to Turkey from Iraqi territories, Turkey will continue to take the necessary measures on the basis of the right of self-defence arising from Article 51 of the UN Charter, Bilgic explained. The Turkish offensive came two days after Masrour Barzani, Prime Minister of Iraq's Kurdistan Regional Government, met President Recep Tayyip Erdogan in Istanbul. Erdogan on Wednesday thanked Iraqi authorities for their support of the military operation, saying that the offensive was solely aimed at maintaining Turkey's border security. Turkey regularly conducts cross-border operations on the PKK bases in northern Iraq, despite Iraq's repeated protests.

Ex-Honduran President extradited to US on drug charges

Tegucigalpa | Agencies Former President of Honduras Juan Orlando Hernandez has been extradited to the US, where he will face charges of drug trafficking. On Thursday, Hernandez, who had been in custody since his arrest on February 15, was transferred by helicopter from the Los Cobras police headquarters on the outskirts of the Honduran capital to the Hernan Acosta Mejia airbase in Tegucigalpa, where agents from the US Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) were waiting for him, reports Xinhua news agency. The 53-year-old's transfer was accompanied by a strong police ground and air operation. Honduran Judge Edwin Francisco

Ortez granted the extradition request on March 16, after evaluating evidence presented by the Court of the Southern District of New York and Hernandez's lawyers. Hernandez faces charges of "conspiracy to import a controlled substance into the US", manufacturing and distributing a controlled substance with the intent and knowledge that substance would be illegally imported into the US; and with the intent to distribute a controlled substance aboard an aircraft registered on American soil. He is also charged with weapons violations. DEA head Anne Milgram called Hernandez "a central figure in one of the largest and most violent cocaine trafficking conspiracies in the world". Hernandez's family said on



Wednesday night a team of lawyers was hired in the US to defend the former President, who was elected in 2014. In a video posted on his wife's Twitter account, the former leader

denied the allegations, saying: "I am innocent. I have been subjected to an unfair trial." Since 2014, Honduras has extradited to the US some 32 people linked to drug trafficking.



BRITISH-ERA POLICING OVER, NOW IT SHOULD BE TECHNOLOGY-DRIVEN : AMIT SHAH

► UNION HOME MINISTER AMIT SHAH ON FRIDAY SAID THAT THE BRITISH-ERA 'DANDA-BASED' POLICING IS OVER AND SHOULD BE REPLACED WITH TECHNOLOGY-DRIVEN POLICING.

► SHAH WAS SPEAKING AT THE INAUGURATION OF THE 48TH ALL INDIA POLICE SCIENCE CONGRESS (AIPSC) ORGANISED BY THE BUREAU OF POLICE RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT



police in Bhopal, Shah stated that there were problems like the Kashmir issue, Left-wing extremism, narcotics, and armed groups in the Northeast. "They were a threat to our internal security. Our government addressed the issue and took measures to improve policing system," he added. Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan also spoke on the occasion.

The main objective of the programme is to provide a common platform to various police forces, units, social scientists, forensic experts and other stakeholders to deliberate on selected themes of topical interests to the Indian police, an official said. For the first time, the AIPSC is being attended by police forces, units, social scientists, forensic experts and stakeholders along with the officers of the department of correctional administration, he said.

During the event, papers will be presented on various themes, including policing during the pandemic, skills of investigators and aid of technology, law and order processes, human resource management and wellness, leadership mentoring and mental health stress management, and prison processes and good practices. About 100 participants, 20 speakers from different states, union territories, Central Armed Police Force (CAPF), Central Police Organisation (CPO), prisons and correctional administration as well as forensic science laboratories and various universities are taking part in the conference, the official said. Madhya Pradesh Governor Mangubhai Patel will chair the valedictory session of the AIPSC on Saturday.

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Friday said that the British-era 'danda-based' policing is over and should be replaced with technology-driven policing.

Addressing the Akhil Bhartiya Police Vigyan Congress in Bhopal, the Home Minister asserted that police need to stay two steps ahead of criminals by becoming tech-savvy. He was speaking at the inauguration of the 48th All India Police Science Congress (AIPSC) organised by the Bureau of Police Research and Development (BPR&D) here. "Time of British era danda-based policing is over. Now, it's imperative that policing is based on knowledge, evidence, and logic. We have to change the science of policing," the Home Minister said. He further added that until knowledge of technology percolates to bottom level of the system, it won't be possible to tackle modern-day criminals. Addressing a gathering of

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan made MP a developing state from a BIMARU state: Shah

■ Dividend Amount Distributed to Tendu Patta Collectors. Road Paved For Development of Seven and a Half Lakh Hectare Forest Area in MP. Inauguration of Converting 827 Forest Villages in 26 Districts into Revenue Villages. Madhya Pradesh has done Era Transformative work. Steps taken in Madhya Pradesh for Tribal Development Are Exemplary in the Country



and exhibition of new equipments was inaugurated on the occasion of All India Police Science Congress in the academy.

Shah said that Madhya Pradesh is the first state in the country to make forest dwellers the owners of forest areas. Madhya Pradesh has done this era transformative work. The Madhya Pradesh government is active in fulfilling the important announcements made for the development of tribal community in Jabalpur in the last September. Fulfilling those announcements, Chief Minister Chouhan has started implementing them. Forests were owned by the government from the time of the British. Now in Madhya Pradesh, along with the precious teak wood, forest dwellers will be the owners of 20% of the amount of other forest wealth. This is a big initiative implemented in favour of the tribal community. Madhya Pradesh has the highest tribal population of 21% in the country. Madhya Pradesh government has done commendable work for their welfare.

Union Minister Shah was addressing the conference of Forest Committees at Jamboree Maidan. Shah said that Madhya Pradesh is now included in the developed states. Here important works like irrigation system, adequate power supply have been done under the leadership of Shivraj Ji. Madhya Pradesh's initiative for tribal welfare is exemplary for the whole country. Shah said that all the people of the forest dwelling areas should live with rights, this is their dream, which is being realised. In Madhya Pradesh, 827 out of 925 forest villages will start getting facilities like revenue villages. Delimitation will be possible here, loan for housing will be available and all the rights of revenue will be provided to the forest dwellers. The representatives of the forest dwellers who came to the conference will go back today with a sense of self-respect. Works can be done on priority through forest committees in more than 15 thousand 600 gram sabhas in the state.

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Union Home and Cooperatives Minister Amit Shah has said that Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has made a special contribution in transforming Madhya Pradesh into a developing state from a BIMARU state. Chief Minister Chouhan and Home Minister Dr. Narottam Mishra were present in the programme. Before the programme, Union Minister Shah and Chief Minister Chouhan paid floral tributes and garlanded martyrs at Shaheed Memorial in the premises of Central Police Training Academy, Bhopal. Plantation was also done at all religious places in the campus,

Forest dwellers' lives will be improved by converting revenue villages into forest villages: Chief Minister Chouhan

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan said that a powerful, glorious and prosperous India is being built under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Union Home Minister Amit Shah has worked for the end of terrorism and Naxalism with the abolition of Article 370 from Kashmir. In Madhya Pradesh, work is being done in all directions under the leadership of Prime Minister Modi. Greenery has been increased in the state with the help of forest dwellers. The work of distribution of free ration has been done under the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Yojana. In tribal-dominated blocks, the work of delivering ration to the homes has been done. The process of implementing the PESA Act was started in the interest of the forest dwellers. The right to community forest management has been given. This will benefit the forest dwellers. Chief Minister Chouhan said that an amount of Rs 125 crore is being provided in the accounts of 22 lakh beneficiaries of the state. This is a campaign to change the lives of Vanvasi brothers and sisters. In Madhya Pradesh, instead of Rs. 250 per hundred bundles, Rs. 300 will be given to the tendu patta collectors.

FIVE ARRESTED FOR MURDER DURING RAM NAVAMI CLASHES

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Five people have been arrested in connection with the murder of a man in the communal clashes in Khargone, Madhya Pradesh, during Ram Navami celebrations. Eyewitnesses confirmed that the men were among those seen attacking Ibrish Khan in Anand Nagar-Kapas Mandi locality on the night of April 10.

The arrested men are from Anand Nagar-Rahimpura area, sources said. Ibrish Khan, a 30-year-old municipal employee, was missing since the April 10 violence. His body was found eight days later at a morgue in Indore, around 120 km from Khargone. According to the local police, Ibrish

Khan was murdered by seven-eight men on the night of the clashes. The body, found the next day, had remained unidentified and sent to the Indore morgue as there were no freezer facilities in Khargone, the police said.

The men who have been arrested are identified as Dilip, Sandeep, Ajay Karma, Ajay Solanki and Dipak Pradhan. Khargone's acting Superintendent of Police Rohit Kashwani said the accused killed Ibrish Khan out of "religious frenzy". He went on to say that the five arrested men have confessed to committing the crime, however, at least 3 more men are on the run. The family had alleged that the police tried to cover up the death. Ibrish Khan's brother Iqhlak Khan accused the police of complicity. His brother, he said,

was last seen in police custody at the Khargone police station on the evening of April 10. "The people in Anand Nagar attacked my brother with weapons and crushed his head with a stone," he alleged while speaking to reporters. The police, he said, informed the family only after he threatened to go to the media. Sources have said that Ibrish was among those who threw petrol bombs on of the accused's house after which he was chased, caught and attacked with sharp-edged weapons. This was followed by clashes between the groups. 24 people, including Superintendent of Police Siddharth Chaudhary who was shot, were injured in Khargone when two groups clashed during a Ram Navami procession on April 10.

ENCROACHMENT MADE BY KHARGONE RIOT-ACCUSED WON'T BE RAZED WITHOUT DUE LEGAL PROCESS: MP GOVT TO HC

The state government made the submission in the high court on Thursday at a time when opposition parties, especially Congress, was raised question marks over the BJP government's anti-encroachment drive in Khargone.



Team Absolute | Bhopal

The Shivraj Singh Chouhan government has told the Indore bench of the Madhya Pradesh High Court that the alleged encroachment made by an accused in the Khargone riots case shall not be removed without the due legal procedure.

The state government made the submission in the high court on Thursday at a time when opposition parties, especially Congress, was raised question marks over the BJP government's anti-encroachment drive in Khargone.

In her plea, Fareeda Bee (45), wife of Firoz Khan, who was arrested in connection with the communal violence in Khargone city, has expressed apprehensions that the government might demolish their house without following the due procedure.

A single bench of the high court comprising Justice Vijay Kumar Shukla had on Thursday disposed of her petition after additional advocate general Pushyamitra Bhargava on behalf of the state government submitted that no action shall be taken against petitioner Fareeda Bee for demolition of the house without following the due process of law.

In view of the aforesaid statement made on behalf of the respondents/state, the present petition is disposed

of, the judge observed. Lawyer Ashhar Warsi told reporters on Friday that his client's husband, Firoz Khan, had been arrested for his alleged involvement in the riot.

He claimed that the Khargone district administration's anti-encroachment squad with bulldozers reached Fareeda Bee's place on Wednesday and talked about removing encroachment. He said that his client has not been served any notice to remove encroachment from her house spread over an area of 1,800 sq feet in Tawadi Mohalla in Khargone.

Khargone Superintendent of Police Rohit Kashwani said that efforts were on to take action against Firoz Khan under the National Security Act (NSA). He has been accused of inciting people to throw stones.

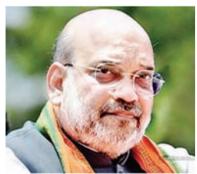
Communal clashes had broken out in Khargone city on April 10 during a Ram Navami procession, leading to arson and stone-pelting, leading to the clamping of curfew. Superintendent of Police Siddharth Choudhary had received a bullet injury during the violence.

Muslim religious leaders in Madhya Pradesh have been alleging that members of the community were unfairly targeted by the authorities following the Ram Navami violence, and houses were demolished in some cases without due process.

Amit Shah accorded warm welcomed by Chouhan and Ministers at State Hangar

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Union Home and Cooperative Minister Shri Amit Shah was welcomed by Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan by presenting a bunch of flowers on his arrival in Bhopal.



Development Minister Mahendra Singh Sisodia, Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises, Science and Technology Minister Omprakash Sakhlecha, Tourism, Culture, Spiritual Minister Usha Thakur, Animal Husbandry, Social Justice and Disabled Welfare Minister Prem Singh Patel, Cooperative and Public Service Management

Minister Arvind Singh Bhadoria, Higher Education Minister Mohan Yadav, Industrial Policy and Investment Promotion Minister Rajvardhan Singh, Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Horticulture and Food Processing, Narmada Valley Development Bharat Singh Kushwaha, Minister of State for Backward Classes and Minorities Welfare (Independent. Charge), Denotified, Nomadic and Semi-Nomadic Tribes Ramkhelawan Patel, MP and BJP State President VD Sharma, MP Bhopal Sadhu Pragma Singh Thakur also welcomed Shah by presenting him with a bunch of flowers. Director General of Police Sudhir Saxena, Divisional Commissioner Gulshan Bamra, Bhopal Police Commissioner Makrand Deuskar, Collector Bhopal Avinash Lavania and other senior officers of Bhopal division were present.

Shah was welcomed at State Hangar by Assembly Speaker Girish Gautam, Minister of Home, Jail, Parliamentary Affairs and Law and Legislative Affairs Narottam Mishra, Minister of Water Resources, Fishermen Welfare and Fisheries Development Tulsi Silawat, Minister of Commercial Taxes, Finance, Planning, Economics and Statistics Jagdish Deora, Food, Civil Supplies and Consumer Protection Minister Bisahul Singh, Urban Development and Housing Minister Bhupendra Singh, Tribal Affairs, Scheduled Caste Welfare Minister Meena Singh, Farmers Welfare and Agriculture Development Minister Kamal Patel, Mineral Resources, Labour Minister Brijendra Pratap Singh, Medical Education, Bhopal Gas Tragedy Relief and Rehabilitation Minister Vishwas Sarang, Public Health and Family Welfare Minister Prabhuram Choudhary, Panchayat and Rural

SHAH WELCOMED AT CM RESIDENCE



Bhopal: Union Home Minister Amit Shah was accorded a warm welcome at the Chief Minister's official residence. Shah was accorded a warm welcome by the Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan along with the members of the Central and State Council of Ministers and public representatives. On this occasion, Union Minister of Civil Aviation Jyotiraditya Scindia, Union Minister of State for Jal Shakti and Food Processing Prahlad Patel, Union Minister of State for Steel and Rural Development Faggan Singh Kulaste, Minister of State for Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying L. Murugan, Minister of State for Home Ajay Mishra, Minister of State for Home and Sports Nishith Pramanik, MP VD Sharma, Rakesh Singh, State Home Minister Narottam Mishra, Hitanand Sharma and other public representatives were present. Shah also had lunch at the Chief Minister's residence.

Farmer hires helicopter to bring daughter-in-law home

■ In an attempt to do something unique for the happiness of his only son and daughter-in-law, a farmer from Mandasaur district of Madhya Pradesh hired a helicopter to bring his daughter-in-law home.



Team Absolute | Bhopal

A farmer, resident of Badwan village in Mandasaur district of Madhya Pradesh hired a helicopter for his son's wedding and spent lakhs to bring his daughter-in-law home in a chopper.

The farmer, Ramesh Dhakad, expressed that he always wanted to do something unique for his only son,

adding that nothing is more important to him than his son's happiness.

Meanwhile, the groom, Yashwant Dhakad, said he wanted to go in a Scorpio to pick up his bride but his father arranged for a helicopter, leaving him stunned.

Ramesh Dhakad is a farmer by profession, who has 25 bighas of land in Badwan village, and runs a grocery shop. Having only one son, Ramesh didn't

wanted to leave any stone unturned for his son's marriage, which is why he decided to take his son's wedding procession in a helicopter. The wedding venue was 45 km away.

"Big officials and ministerial leaders can go in a helicopter, then why can't a farmer's son go in a helicopter?", said Ramesh, adding that what he did was only for the happiness of his son and daughter-in-law.

CHIEF MINISTER PLANTED CASSIA AND KARANJ SAPLINGS

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Bhopal: Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan along with Arun Pandey, Abhishek Namina, Vaibhav Yogi and Piyush Raikwar of Jai Hind Sena organisation planted Cassia and Karanj saplings in Smart City Garden on Friday. The organisation awakens the youths to work in the interest of the nation. For the last 5 years, the sacred work of environmental protection and plantation is also being done continuously. In this sequence, the organisation has planted trees at Awadhपुरi, Tovindpur, Kotra Sultanabad, Nehru Nagar, South TT Nagar, government schools and religious places in Bhopal. The organisation is also active in the works of social service according to the need. The bark and leaves of Cassia planted today are used in making Ayurvedic medicines. Karanj is considered important in Ayurvedic medicine. Karanj is also used in religious works.



AFTER TIGER, FOREST DEPARTMENT NOW DEVELOPING ELEPHANT CORRIDORS

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Forest department has decided to develop elephant corridors in Madhya Pradesh as part of the strategy to deal with frequent influx of tuskers from the neighbouring state, said a forest official. Madhya Pradesh has already created corridors for safe movement of tigers from one reserve to another thereby ensuring their safety.

Elephants had trampled five people to death in Shahdol last month besides causing considerable damage to crops and houses in past six months. As many as 14 people have lost their lives in past three years. Moreover, an ex-gratia of Rs 50 lakh has been distributed as compensation to the aggrieved families in past three years. "State will conserve identified elephant corridors. Forest department needs to

conserve such corridors to facilitate movement of tuskers and avoid conflict," said deputy director of Bandhavgarh Tiger Reserve, Lovit Bharti.

Madhya Pradesh has history of elephants coming from other states and then going back to their place of origin but of late elephants have also started settling here, he added.

Biggest settlement of elephants has been made in Bandhavgarh where more than 45 elephants have made their home. At present, three separate herds of tuskers are moving in the state around Anuppur, Singrauli, Sidhi and Shahdol. Each pack has 9-10 elephants including calves.

Considering increasing movement of elephants and conflicts, forest department had constituted a seven-member committee including elephant expert R Sukumar. The committee submitted its recommen-

dations for mitigation of elephant-human conflict.

Former chief wildlife warden Alok Kumar said that the recommendations include short term plans, mid-term plan and long term plan.

"One of the important recommendations includes conservation of the passage for elephants. In short term plans, awareness programmes have been recommended," said Kumar.

Deputy director of Bandhavgarh Reserve, Bharti said that 'haathi mitra dal' (friends of elephants) have been formed in the villages where elephants are moving or are expected to move.

"The biggest challenge, at present, is that forest dwellers are collecting mahua in the forest. Humans have intruded into territory of elephants. This has led to conflict. We have advised the villagers to exer-

cise precaution," said Bharti.

WhatsApp groups have been made to enable early warning system. Forest staff and animal lovers are creating awareness among the villagers. "They have asked the villagers to give proper respect to pachyderm. Leave their passage and avoid any confrontation," said Pushpendra, animal lover, working with villagers in Shahdol and Umara.

Forest staff has also distributed torch lights, sirens and crackers to villagers as a precautionary measure.

The phenomenon of wild elephants entering MP started in 2007-08. The elephants from Chhattisgarh enter Singrauli, Sidhi, Shahdol, Anuppur and Dindori district. In the initial years, these elephants used to spend few months, at the most 2-3 months during rainy season in MP and would then return to Chhattisgarh.



Aspiring lawyer

Kim Kardashian was said to have been taking 'detailed notes' on a legal pad in court as her family is embroiled in a \$100million lawsuit against Blac Chyna.

Los Angeles | Agencies

The Kardashians star, 41, was said to have been busy making observations and taking notes during the trial at Los Angeles Superior Court on Wednesday, reports dailymail.co.uk. A reporter for The Sun, who was in court at the time, said: 'Kim was taking detailed notes on a large pad throughout the case.'

'The family left the courthouse discreetly through a private exit. They all looked very stoic.' It comes after she passed the 'baby bar' - which is officially known as the First-Year Law Students' Examination - in December and admitted she has 'never worked so hard' on anything.

'The experience taught me so much and I've never worked so hard on something in my life,' Kim told Vogue Hong Kong.

Kim previously admitted that following her legal dreams makes her feel closer to her father, the late Robert Kardashian.

Kim and her family are currently embroiled in Blac Chyna's \$100million lawsuit over claims the Kardashian-Jenner family sought to ruin the model's business career. Chyna brought the lawsuit against Kris Jenner, 66, Kylie Jenner, 24, Kim Kardashian, 41, and Khloé Kardashian, 37. The Kardashians and Jenners have denied the accusations and tried in vain to have the case thrown out of court.



Los Angeles | Agencies

Streaming giant Netflix's 'Bridgerton' was watched for more than 2.5 billion minutes during the week of its Season 2 debut, according to Nielsen's newly released Streaming Top 10 rankings.

The Chris Van Dusen-created period romance was easily the No. 1 program on streaming for the week

of March 21-27 on Nielsen's charts, even though only its first season was available for the majority of that week, as Season 2 premiered on March 25.

Nielsen does not breakdown its streaming data by season, so the 2.5 billion minutes tally counts viewership across all 16 episodes of 'Bridgerton' Season 1 and 2 combined, reports variety.com.

Netflix's 'The Adam Project' came in a distant second with 1.19 billion minutes viewed during that period. In third was new Netflix competition 'Is It Cake?', followed by 'Turning Red' on Disney+ in fourth and Netflix's 'The Last Kingdom' in fifth.

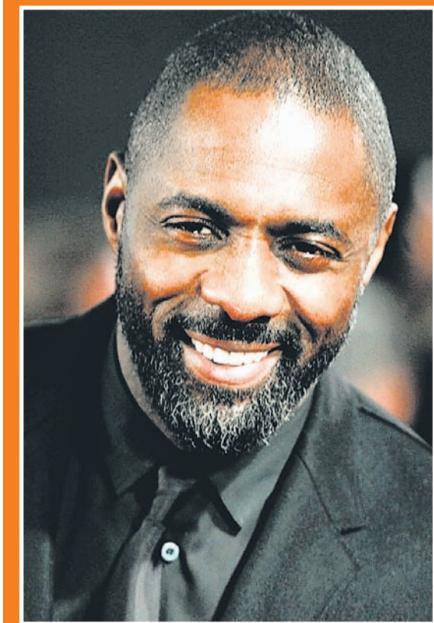
Rounding out the Top 10 streaming programs overall were 'NCIS' on Netflix, 'Encanto' on Disney+, 'Cocomelon' on Netflix, 'Criminal

Minds' on Netflix and 'Inventing Anna' on Netflix.

When looking at the list of just original streaming TV series for that week, 'Bridgerton' was still at the top, followed by 'Is It Cake?', 'The Last Kingdom', 'Inventing Anna', 'Bad Vegan', 'Pieces of Her', 'Ozark', 'The Marvelous Mrs Maisel', 'Human Resources' and 'Love is Blind'.

Season of the Sharmas

'BRIDGERTON' S2 GARNERS 2.5 BILLION VIEWS, SAYS NIELSEN



Idris Elba to star in thriller series 'Hijack'

Los Angeles | Agencies

Hollywood star Idris Elba is set to star in and executive produce thriller series 'Hijack' for Apple TV+.

The seven-part drama will be the debut project to emerge from Elba's first-look deal with Apple. His production company Green Door Pictures signed a deal with the streamer in 2020, reports 'Variety'. In 'Hijack', Elba will play accomplished business negotiator Sam Nelson, whose fast-talking skills are called upon when a plane he is riding is hijacked.

'Sam needs to step up and use all his guile to try and save the lives of the passengers - but, his high-risk strategy could be his undoing,' reads the synopsis.

George Kay has written the series, which will be directed by Jim Field Smith. Kay and Field Smith will serve as executive producers on 'Hijack' alongside Elba, Jamie Laursen and Hakan Kousetta of 60Forty Films and Kris Thykier.

The series will be produced by 60Forty Films and Field Smith and Kay's Idiotlamp Productions in association with Green Door. 'Hijack' will be the latest addition to Apple's UK television offering, which already includes Gary Oldman star 'Slow Horses' and 'The Essex Serpent', starring Tom Hiddleston and Claire Danes, which is set to premiere next month.

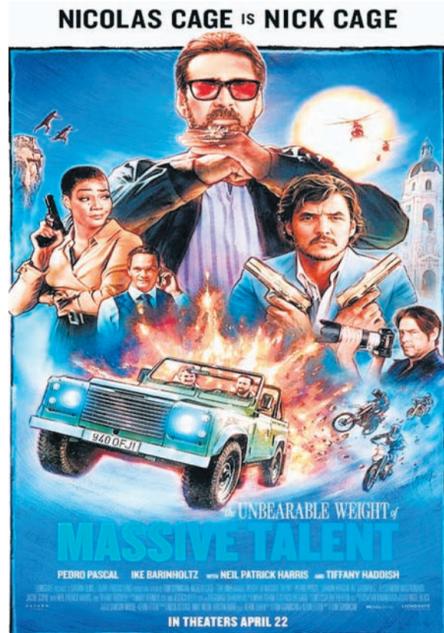
'THE UNBEARABLE WEIGHT OF MASSIVE TALENT': PASCAL-CAGE CHEMISTRY KEEPS FILM AFLOAT

FILM REVIEW
TROY RIBEIRO
(In theatres)
Direction: Tom Gormican
Duration: 146 minutes
Cast: Nicolas Cage, Pedro Pascal, Tiffany Haddish, Sharon Horgan, Paco Leon
Ratings: ***1/2 (three and a half stars)

Don't let this film's unwieldy title repulse you, for at its core, the film is a self-deprecating comedy that will keep you entertained.

Here, Nicolas Cage plays a fictional version of himself as a tense, anxiety-prone fading star who is now in massive debt. With his professional and personal life in the doldrums he is at the end of his teeters when his agent, Richard (Neal Patrick Harris), informs him that Javi Gutierrez (Pedro Pascal), a rich fan of his from Mallorca, Spain is willing to pay him one million dollars if he shows up at his birthday party.

Desperate, Nicolas accepts the offer and lands in Spain with the hope that he would do his bit and be gone in a jiffy. But eventually, he and Javi end up forging a warm bond between them. Their bro-time is foiled by CIA agents Vivan (Tiffany Haddish) and Martin (Ike Barinholtz), who intercepts Nicolas and ropes him in to spy on his benefactor after telling him that Javi is a mobster who has kidnapped a politician's



daughter. Reluctantly Nicolas takes up the CIA assignment, only to soon realise that all is not what it seems on the surface.

The plot is fairly scattered, with a gentle satire of Hollywood and a perfunctory series of scenes where Cage tries his hand at spy-craft. Besides the buddy-action comedy between Nicolas and Javi, there are scenes of a cynical, egotist father trying to reconnect with

his daughter Addy and estranged wife, Olivia. Also, with Nick loaded on LSD, we get to see another version of Nick Cage, a much younger persona with a poorly CGI-degraded skin, who pops up repeatedly to boost the ego of the protagonist Nick. Cage tries hard to be funny, poking fun at himself and revelling in his reputation for living life on excesses.

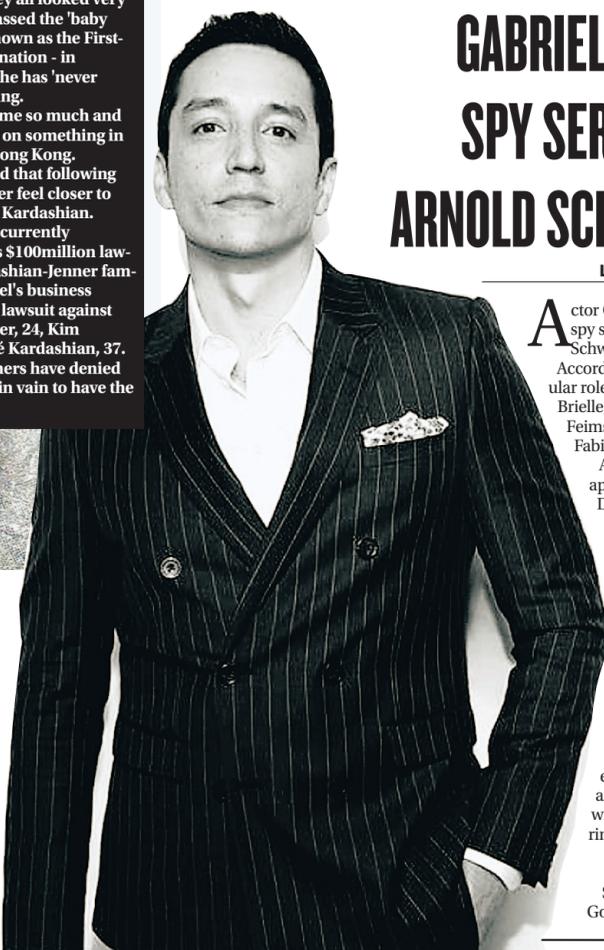
Pedro Pascal is brilliant as well. He brings warm and gleefully appealing energy to his 'mega-fan' role. It is not hard to believe his charming character in this insane plot.

The best scenes in the film are the moments of unapologetic and shared admiration between Pascal and Cage. Other performances that stand out are by Sharon Horgan and Lily Mo Sheen. They both bring grace and heart to their roles with natural ease.

Overall, the film is an action film with a fabulous dose of humanity in it.

GABRIEL LUNA STARS IN SPY SERIES HELMED BY ARNOLD SCHWARZENEGGER

Los Angeles | Agencies



Actor Gabriel Luna is all set to star in a Netflix spy series helmed by Hollywood star Arnold Schwarzenegger and Monica Barbaro. According to 'Variety', appearing in series regular roles in the series are Jay Baruchel, Aparna Brielle, Andy Buckley, Milan Carter, Fortune Feimster, Barbara Eve Harris, Gabriel Luna, Fabiana Udenio, and Travis Van Winkle.

Additionally, the following actors will appear in recurring roles: Devon Bostick, David Chinchilla, Rachel Lynch, Stephanie Sy, and Scott Thompson. The untitled spy drama was ordered at Netflix in May 2021, with the streamer giving the one-hour show an eight episode order. In the show, when a father (Schwarzenegger) and daughter (Barbaro) learn that they've each secretly been working as CIA operatives for years, they realise their entire relationship has been a lie and they truly don't know one another at all.

'Reacher' creator Nick Santora created this series and serves as showrunner and executive producer. Schwarzenegger will executive produce in addition to starring.

Adam Higgs and Scott Sullivan also executive produce along with Skydance's David Ellison, Dana Goldberg and Bill Bost.

NICOLAS CAGE TRIED TO BUILD \$80 MN FILM STUDIO

Los Angeles | Agencies

Hollywood star Nicolas Cage revealed on 'Jimmy Kimmel Live!' that he once tried to get a movie studio built in Las Vegas and had even secured \$80 million to do so.

According to 'Variety', Cage said Tesla CEO Elon Musk came to town and Las Vegas opted to put the money into the Tesla corporation instead of his desired movie studio.

Cage lives in Las Vegas, and the city has been the backdrop for some of his films like 'Leaving Las Vegas' and 'Honeymoon in Vegas'.

Cage won an Oscar for best actor for his performance in 'Leaving Las Vegas'.

"Vegas has been good to me, it really has," Cage said. "It's both a small town and a big city. It's probably one of the most unique addresses. If you want to go to the strip and participate you can. If you want to just go with the locals and go to the cool restaurants then you can."

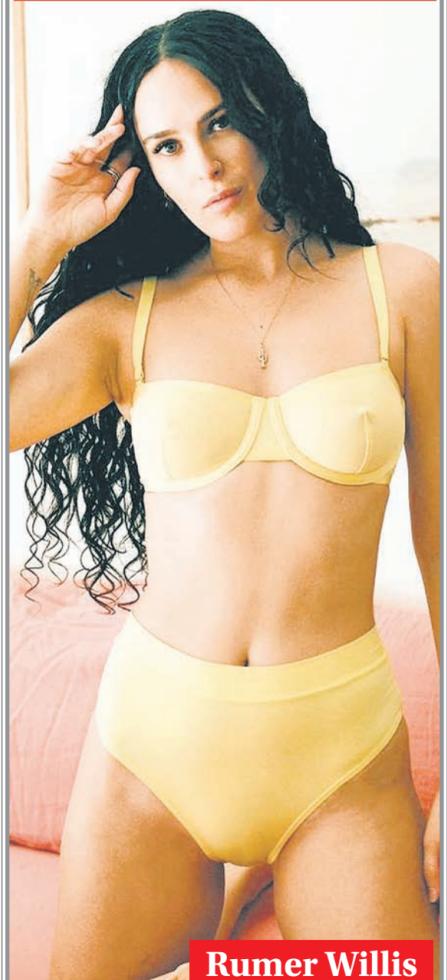
Cage confirmed he originally moved to Las Vegas for tax reasons, but "then I learned to love it".

The actor added, "I've had great experiences making movies there. 'Leaving Las Vegas' was great.

"Honeymoon in Vegas' is great. I've got good mojo there. I tried to get a movie studio built there and then Elon Musk came in, and all the money I got for the movie studio - I got \$80 million - they put into the Tesla corporation, which then ironically drained all of the water out of the city. But I almost got it, I almost got a movie studio."



ABSOLUTE PIC OF THE DAY



Rumer Willis



IPL 2022:

BUTTLER'S TON, CLINICAL BOWLING HELP RAJASTHAN BEAT DELHI CAPITALS BY 15 RUNS

Team Absolute | Mumbai

A clinical bowling performance - after Jos Buttler blasted a 65-ball 116 -- helped Rajasthan Royals defend a score of 222/2 against Delhi capitals to register a 15-run victory in Match 34 of the IPL 2022, at the Wankhede Stadium here on Friday.

Prasidh Krishna finished with 3/22 while R Ashwin ended with 2/32 as Royals weathered some anxious moments as they defended their big total to register their fifth win of the season and move to the top of the points table with 10 points, overtaking Gujarat Titans and Royal Challengers Bangalore on higher net run rate. Buttler had set up the victory by stroking to his third century of IPL 2022 and Devdutt Padikkal contributed a superb 54 as Rajasthan Royals posted a massive 222/2 in 20 overs, the highest score of this season so far. Jos Buttler stitched 155 runs for the opening wicket with Devdutt Padikkal (54) as Rajasthan Royals posted a massive 222/2 in 20 overs. Delhi Capitals, already ravaged by a



Covid-19 outbreak in their squad, reached Wankhede Stadium instead of MCA Stadium in Pune without head coach Ricky Ponting, who went into isolation after a family member tested positive this morning. On the field, they ran into Buttler, who was in imperious form as he built his innings with caution before hitting a plethora of shots in scoring 116 off 65 deliveries. This was his third century of this edition of IPL and fourth overall. Virat Kohli had scored four tons in a single edition of IPL in 2016 and now Buttler needs one more century to equal that record. Buttler struck

his first hundred of IPL 2022 against Mumbai Indians at DY Patil, his second was against Kolkata Knight Riders at Brabourne. Buttler scored his 100 off 57 deliveries, hitting eight fours and eight sixes as he and Padikkal raised 155 runs for the opening wicket -- their highest partnership for any wicket, surpassing the unbeaten 152-run stand for the third wicket between Ben Stokes and Sanju Samson against Mumbai Indians at Abu Dhabi in 2020. This was the first 150-run stand for the opening wicket in IPL 2022. Padikkal played second fiddle but displayed

his range of shots, hitting Mustafizur Rahman for three successive fours early in his innings as Rajasthan Royals made full use of the opportunity to bat first and set up a big target for Delhi Capitals. Skipper Sanju Samson stroked to a brilliant cameo of unbeaten 46 off 19 deliveries, capitalising on a dropped catch when he was on 28.

They then came back to restrict Delhi Capitals to 207-8 in 20 overs to seal a win. Delhi came close in the chase thanks to superb innings by David Warner (28), Prithvi Shaw (37), skipper Rishabh Pant (44) and an unbeaten 15-ball 36 by Rovman Powell to come close to the target but in the end, they fell short narrowly.

Brief scores:

Rajasthan Royals 222/2 in 20 overs (Devidutt Padikkal 54, Jos Buttler 116, Sanju Samson 46 not out; Mustafizur Rahman 1/43) beat Delhi Capitals 207/8 in 20 overs (David Warner 28, Prithvi Shaw 27, Rishabh Pant 44, Rovman Powell 36; Prasidh Krishna 3/22, R Ashwin 2/32) by 15 runs.

Asian Wrestling Championships

India's Anshu Malik settles for silver

Ulaanbaatar (Mongolia) | Agencies

Indian wrestler Anshu Malik failed to defend her women's 57kg title at the 2022 Asian Wrestling Championships 2022 and settled for silver after losing to Japan's Tsugumi Sakurai in the final, here on Friday.

Anshu, who won the gold in the division at last year's Asian Championships in Almaty, began her title defence with purpose with a win by technical superiority over Uzbekistan's Shokhida Akhmedova.

The 20-year-old, who became the first Indian women's wrestler to win a World Championships silver last year, followed her first win of the day with a similarly dominating victory over Singapore's Danielle Sue Ching Lim in the second round before beating Mongolia's Bolortuya Khurelkhuu in the semi-



finals. All three of Anshu's wins en route to the final were via technical superiority. However, her charge fell short in the gold medal match against Sakurai, the reigning 55 kg world champion. The Japanese grappler took a 4-0 lead before pinning her Indian opponent as Anshu had to settle for silver. It was Anshu's third successive medal at the continental showpiece, having won a bronze in 2020 and a gold in 2021.

On the other hand, another Indian wrestler Radhika, competing in the women's

65kg which was played in a Nordic round system (each wrestler facing others in a round robin format) due to the limited number of contestants, also bagged a silver in her event. Radhika lost her first bout against Japan's Miwa Morikawa, a former worlds silver medalist and eventual gold medalist in the event, via technical superiority but she bounced back to beat Uzbekistan's Ariukhan Jumabaeva (4-2), Mongolia's Purevsuren Ulziisaikhan (8-6) and Kazakhstan's Dariga Aben (technical superiority) to finish second.

Eoin Morgan rules himself out from Test captaincy

London | Agencies

England's 2019 World Cup winning captain Eoin Morgan on Friday has ruled himself out from the race of becoming the next men's Test captain and has instead backed all-rounder Ben Stokes to take up the job after Joe Root's resignation earlier in April.

Whoever becomes England's Test captain has got the tough job to get the side on track with collective performances in all departments of the game. In its last 17 Tests, England have emerged victorious just once and lost the Ashes 4-0 in Australia followed by 1-0 defeat in West Indies.

"Absolutely not, no. I'm very happy with the role that I play within the white-ball team and English cricket at the moment. It has been the part of my career that I'm most proud of. My career is firmly focused on World Cups, and hopefully sustaining what we've built over the



last six years is probably going to be the most important part of what I leave behind eventually. I haven't played red-ball cricket for a long time. I wouldn't have any interest in the job. I would be no good at it," Morgan told Sky Sports.

Morgan, who played a Test match in February 2012 against Pakistan at Dubai, has backed Stokes to take the role of captaining England in the longest format of the game.

Barcelona claim narrow win in La Liga

Madrid | Agencies

Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang's ninth goal of the season gave FC Barcelona a 1-0 win against Real Sociedad to keep Barca second in La Liga here on Thursday.

The striker headed Ferran Torres' cross into the back of the Real Sociedad net in the 11th minute of the game in what was Barca's only effort on target during the match.

Barca had the better of the first half, but were on the back foot more in the second half, especially after Ronald Araujo had to be replaced by Eric Garcia after a knock on his knee.

Marc Andre Ter Stegen kept the home side at bay with two excellent saves from Adnan Januzaj as Real Sociedad ended the game with 56 percent of possession.

Sevilla remain third after a 3-2 win away to Levante, whose survival



hopes suffered a big blow after Jesus Corona scored two first-half goals and Jules Kounde added a third in the 81st minute, reports Xinhua. Jose Luis Morales's 22nd minute

momentarily leveled the scores, but he missed another with the score at 2-1 and Roberto Soldado's second for Levante came with just three minutes left to play.

Sergi Guardiola's 42nd-minute goal ended Rayo Vallecano's 13 match run without a win and gave the Madrid based side a completely deserved 1-0 win away to a disappointing Espanyol. Cadiz's second half fight-back fell just short as they lost 3-2 at home to Athletic Club Bilbao.

The visitors raced into a 3-0 first half lead thanks to goals from Raul Garcia, Iker Muniain, who netted after his initial penalty had been blocked, and Mikel Vesga, who fired home from outside of the area.

Cadiz fought back strongly after the break and after Lucas Perez pulled a goal back in the 57th minute, they put Athletic under constant pressure with a string of crosses. Athletic were reduced to 10 when Vesga was sent off for a second yellow card, but although Ruben Soriano netted a second goal in the 86th minute, Athletic held on for three points.

Santosh Trophy

West Bengal return to winning ways, beat Meghalaya in thriller

Malappuram | Agencies

In a thrilling encounter, West Bengal got the better of Meghalaya 4-3 in a Group A match of the Hero 75th National Football Championship for Santosh Trophy at the Kottapadi Stadium, here on Friday.

A brace of goals from Md Fardin Ali Molla and Mahitosh Roy ensured Bengal returned to winning ways.

West Bengal completely dominated the first half. They hogged the majority of the ball possession and used their flanks to great effect. Md Fardin Ali Molla and Dilip Orawn were live-wires throughout the opening period. A fair few long-range attempts were tried by the Bengal players before they went ahead in the 23rd minute.

Meghalaya had no real attempts till the 40th minute and it seemed like Bengal were in cruise control.

But things quickly changed in the 40th minute when Subhankar Adhikari made a hash of an easy clearance from



an innocuous through ball attempt. Sangti Janai Shianglong punished the mistake and Meghalaya restored parity completely against the run of play.

The attacker sent the goalkeeper the wrong way to help his side go 2-1 upright on the stroke of half-time. The second half was even more

entertaining. A long ball found Dilip Orawn in space down the right. His pinpoint cross was met the first time by Mahitosh Roy and he swept the ball home to make it 4-3 for Bengal. Despite Bengal's brilliant attacking display, their defenders time and again looked nervous and a handball from a corner meant Meghalaya once again had the chance to draw level in the 86th minute.

Meghalaya skipper Hardy Cliff Nongbri stepped up but Priyant made an incredible double save, including from the rebound attempt and Bengal somehow clung on to claim all three points from a thoroughly engrossing contest. The win meant Bengal now have six points from three games and remain in the hunt to make the last four. They will next face Rajasthan on Sunday.

For Meghalaya, despite a valiant effort, they find themselves with four points from as many games with Punjab up next.

NEW IF DHONI STAYED TILL LAST BALL, HE WOULD WIN IT FOR CSK: JADEJA

Navi Mumbai:

Thursday's 'El Clasico' of IPL 2022 totally lived up to its billing at DY Patil Stadium with MS Dhoni offering a throwback to his vintage finishing avatar, hitting a six down the ground, pulling through short fine leg for four more, a brace whipped through mid-wicket and a match-winning four pulled through fine leg off Jaydev Unadkat on the final ball to give Chennai a close three-wicket win over Mumbai Indians.

"We were under a lot of pressure and the way the match was going, I felt that there was pressure on both sides of the dugout because the world's best finisher was batting. We knew that somehow if he could stay until the last ball, then definitely he would win it for us because we had the belief that he would not miss those last few balls and luckily it happened like that. We were tense but we had faith because he has won so many matches for India and in the IPL," stated Jadeja.



Sabalenka defeats Andreescu, Badosa outlasts Rybakina in Stuttgart

Stuttgart | Agencies

No.3 seed Aryna Sabalenka defeated Bianca Andreescu in the second round of the Porsche Tennis Grand Prix, triumphing 6-1, 3-6, 6-2 in 1 hour and 52 minutes here on Thursday.

Earlier on Centre Court, No.2 seed Paula Badosa had also survived a three-setter, holding off Elena Rybakina 6-2, 4-6, 7-6(4) in 2 hours and 30 minutes.

Belarusian Sabalenka, runner-up in Stuttgart last year to Ashleigh Barty, booked her place in her second quarterfinal of 2022 following Doha in February. The 23-year-old is continuing to find her groove after a stuttering start to the year, and improved her overall record to 8-8. This week has marked Andreescu's return from a six-month hiatus to address her mental health. The Canadian's tour-level clay experience has been limited

so far. Stuttgart was just her fourth WTA main draw on the surface and she owns only one Top 100 win on clay, Vera Lapko in 2018 Roland Garros qualifying. The only previous time Sabalenka and Andreescu had faced each other was in the very different environment of the Manchester ITF W100 in 2017 on grass, before either player had cracked the Top 100. Sabalenka won that match 2-6, 6-4, 6-3.

In another match, Spaniard Badosa's intensity dipped in the second, while Rybakina improved her first serve percentage from 41 per cent to 72 per cent. Even so, Badosa managed to peg Rybakina's 4-0 lead back to 4-4 before the Kazakh gathered herself to get over the line. The quality and length of the baseline duels rose in the third set, and Badosa gained the upper hand in most of them as she went up 4-1.

IPL 2022

Kolkata face tough Gujarat test in a bid to break three-match losing streak

Navi Mumbai | Agencies

Two-time IPL champions Kolkata Knight Riders will be aiming to break their three-match losing streak and get their 2022 campaign back on track when they face a tough test in table-toppers Gujarat Titans at the DY Patil Stadium on Saturday afternoon.

The Shreyas Iyer-led side needed 40 runs off 24 balls to win against Rajasthan Royals when leg-spinner Yuzvendra Chahal struck with a hat-trick to lose by seven runs. On the other hand, Gujarat didn't have regular captain Hardik Pandya but still won against Chennai Super Kings by three wickets on the back of an unbeaten 94 from David Miller and stand-in skipper Rashid Khan chipping in with a valuable cameo of 40.

For Kolkata, Shreyas has been the top run-scorer for them in IPL 2022, making 236 runs in seven matches at an average of 39.33 and strike-rate of 148.42 with two fifties. But he would hope for his opening combination to deliver. With Ajinkya Rahane out of side after initial five matches, Aaron Finch and Venkatesh Iyer were tried out.

But against Rajasthan, they made a lot of changes to their batting line-up like opening with Sunil Narine alongside



Finch. Andre Russell was slotted at five while Venkatesh was kept at six and Pat Cummins held back for number nine. In

the bowling as well, everyone apart from Sunil Narine took a severe beating.

On the other hand, Gujarat too have their issues with opening combination but Shubman Gill, the ex-Kolkata opener, has notched up impressive half-centuries in 84 and 96 and how he faces up against Narine will be an interesting battle. Replacing an out-of-sorts Matthew Wade with Wriddhiman Saha is yet to yield results while Vijay Shankar has been enduring a bad run at number three. In their batting, Pandya has been in great touch while batting at number four, making 228 runs from five innings at an average of 76.00 and strike-rate of 136.52. With the ball as well, Pandya gives the feeling of being a force to reckon with, picking four wickets in five matches at an economy rate of 7.56. He has also been supported by Abhinav Manohar providing some finishing fireworks.

With Pandya contributing with the ball, Gujarat's bowling attack featuring Mohammed Shami, Lockie Ferguson and uncapped Yash Dayal have been great in the tournament. In power-play, Gujarat have taken most wickets with 14 scalps while Kolkata are three behind with 11 wickets. Khan, the leg-spinner, has been at his economical best with an economy rate of 6.66. Overall, a misfiring Kolkata have a tough task in overcoming a strong Gujarat side if they are to end their three-match losing run in IPL 2022.



RAKUL PREET

on wedding, film choices and more

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Rakul Preet Singh is busy with back-to-back film promotions. After wowing audiences with her brilliant performance in *Attack Part 1*, the actress is gearing up to wow us once more with *Runway 34*. Since it is based on true events, the film has become one of the most talked-about. The actress discussed working with Ajay Devgn and Amitabh Bachchan, her wedding plans, and much more in a recent interview. While speaking with reporters, Rakul Preet stated that it was the film's premise that prompted her to accept the role of Tania. The actress used the opportunity to push herself and progress as it is the first film based on an aviation thriller.

She also claimed that she attended a few workshops to get a better understanding of the character. It was a completely different experience for her than *De de Pyar de* when she was pitted against Ajay Devgn. The actress expressed her delight at the prospect of working with Amitabh Bachchan. The actress further added, "The whole experience of working with Amit Ji is something I will never forget." According to the actress, she wasn't juggling one film a day and another next. It just happens that everything is being released this year. She later said, when she was on set, though, she was completely focused on *Runway 34*.

The reporters couldn't leave Rakul without questioning about her wedding plans with boyfriend Jacky Bhagnani. To which Rakul Preet smartly responded, "It is not the right moment for me to get married".

She never emphasizes the language as an actor, but rather the project she is working on. Since Sridevi and Tabu became the biggest stars many years ago, there has been a cross-culture. People have always been making films from Bollywood to Tollywood, doing remakes.

Because of social media, a conversation about these topics has erupted. Continuing the interview, she stated that bringing about societal change is not on her list of priorities when selecting a film. She chose a film because the storyline caught her interest, and if a change is on the way, that's even better.

I'm very spontaneous actor: Ajay Devgn

Durga Chakravarty | New Delhi



Bollywood star Ajay Devgn in his over a three-decade-long journey in Hindi cinema has given seen the highs of highs with the work he has done. The powerful performer says he does not get affected by portraying intense roles on screen as he is not a method actor but a spontaneous one.

The 53-year-old actor-filmmaker currently awaits the release of his upcoming film 'Runway 34', a film reportedly inspired by the true events of the Jet Airways Doha to Kochi flight that had a narrow escape on August 2015, after facing difficulties to land at Cochin International Airport due to bad weather and unclear visibility.

Talking to correspondent about if an intense role or a film like 'Runway 34' affects him, Ajay in a conversation said: "No, it doesn't because I

am not a method actor. I am a very spontaneous actor." The actor,

who has been feted with two National Film Awards, added: "I start thinking how a character would think in that situation and perform and if I think too much about the character or about how I am going to do it, I will lose the spontaneity and stop feeling. I don't like rehearsing. I just want to think about the character feel it and go out and do it. So as soon as it is over I also switch off."

Ajay, who has been honoured by the Government of India with the Padma Shri in 2016, spoke about the challenges he faced during the shoot of 'Runway 34', which also stars Amitabh Bachchan and Rakul Preet Singh. He shared that they used almost 14 cameras in the cockpit to get the right shots.

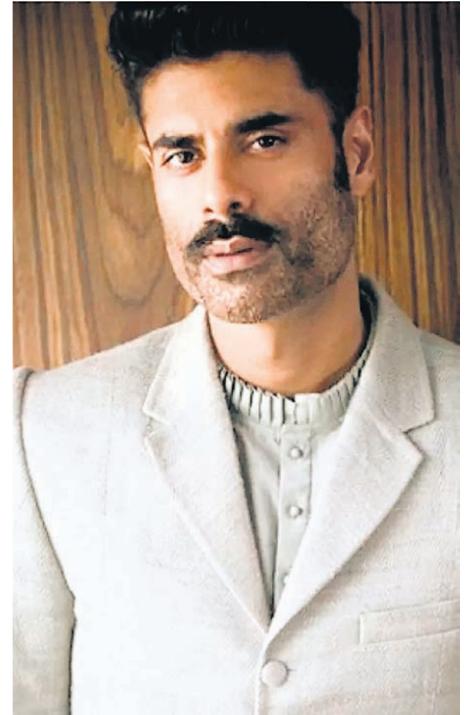
SIKANDAR KHER LAUDS CO-STAR JACKIE SHROFF'S BENEVOLENCE

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Bollywood actor Sikandar Kher, who is working with Jackie Shroff has showered praise on the veteran star, calling him one of most benevolent human beings. Elaborating on the same, Sikandar says, "There are some people who impact one's life very deeply and emotionally and Jaggu Dada is one such person for me. Having known him since my childhood, I have always had a very special bond with him. He is one of the kindest, most honest and benevolent human beings that I have ever met in my life. It's inspiring to see how he is and how he treats everyone around him."

Lauding Jackie's humility, Sikandar said, "He talks with everyone with utmost respect and I think that is the reason why everyone loves working with him. As an actor as well, I have always been a huge fan of his work and for me, even today, sharing screen space with Jaggu Dada and doing a scene with him is a wonderful feeling! Having him around on the sets of 'Chidiya Udd' was a great learning opportunity for me and the entire team."

Sikandar was last seen in the second season of 'Aarya' on Disney+ Hotstar, which starred former Miss Universe and actress Sushmita Sen in the lead role.



ITS ACTION TIME FOR AN ACTION HERO!

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The excitement to see upcoming movie, starring Ayushmann Khurrana and Jaideep Ahlawat, is intense. The film's teaser sparked a lot of excitement among fans, and we have some exciting news for those who can't wait to see it in 70 MM. An Action Hero will be released in December. Talking about the film hitting the theatres this year, producer Aanand L Rai said, "we are always excited to bring newer stories newer world for its audience. Happy to have two of my favorite actors Ayushman and Jaideep in this thrilling journey." Speaking about the film's release date announcement, producer Bhushan Kumar said, "The entire team has put in a lot of hard work into making this happen. We have achieved quite a lot in such a short period and we are waiting to watch the final product on screen just as much as everyone else."

Speaking about the film's release, director Anirudh Iyer said, "Bringing alive our vision for An Action Hero with Ayushmann and Jaideep has been a blast. Both are brilliant performers and our schedules so far have been quite productive. I am happy with the outcome so far and we can't wait to show you what we have in store." The project, with its sleek action and oddball, satirical sense of humor, is set to enter theatres on December 2. The film began shooting in January 2022, with the London schedule generating a lot of buzzes online. The film's director, Jaideep Ahlawat, recently concluded production, and the countdown has already begun. This film is a project directed by Anirudh Iyer, produced by Aanand L Rai, Bhushan Kumar and Krishan Kumar, presented by Gulshan Kumar



How does it feel to play a fun-loving girl? Ask Palak Jain

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actress Palak Jain is essaying the role of fun loving and grounded girl Isha in current show. Palak shares her excitement saying: "I feel I can finally tick that off, as I am stepping into the shoes of Isha! Similarly, Dosti Anokhi has one of the most beautiful and unique storylines and being a part of it is no less than a golden opportunity. My character Isha is a typical modern south Delhi girl but at the

same time she is also deeply rooted in her family values from Banaras which gives a desi touch to her personality."

"Due to her parents' separation at a very young age, she craves for love and warmth. So, whenever she is with her nanu and nani, she feels that love and is very much attached to them. On noticing the attention being diverted to Purvi, Isha gets very insecure and hence starts creating new twists and turns in Purvi's life," she adds.

INSTAGRAM PIC OF THE DAY



Tara Sutaria



and