

absolute india

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REDUCE FUEL TAX 'IN SPIRIT OF COOPERATIVE FEDERALISM', PM MODI TO STATES, BUT

FUEL WON'T GET CHEAPER



Team Absolute | New Delhi

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday urged the states to reduce the Value Added Tax (VAT) on fuel "in the spirit of cooperative federalism".

During a virtual meeting with chief ministers, Prime Minister Modi stressed how the country fought a long battle against Covid with the spirit of cooperative federalism.

"The same should be done for economic issues, given the impact of global issues like the ongoing war-like situation in the world," he added.

"Let me give you a small example. The Centre reduced the excise duty on petrol and diesel last November to reduce the burden on the citizens. We also requested the states to reduce their taxes and transfer the benefit to the people. Some reduced taxes but some states did not give any benefit from this to the people", he said.

"Due to this, the prices of petrol and diesel in these states continue to remain high. In a way, this is not only an injustice to the people of these states but it also has an impact on neighbouring

TN GOVT NOT INCLINED TO REDUCE TAXES ON PETROL, DIESEL

Chennai: Even as Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday urged the states to reduce the Value Added Tax (VAT) on fuel "in the spirit of cooperative federalism", the Tamil Nadu government had rejected the rate cut demand last November itself. Pointing out the Centre's decision to reduce the excise duty on petrol and diesel last November, Modi said some states reduced the taxes while many others did not. The opposition parties in Tamil Nadu have been demanding the DMK government to fulfil its poll promise of reducing the petrol price by Rs 5/litre and that of diesel by Rs 4/litre.

states," he added.

While listing out the states that did not reduce VAT on fuel during the steep hikes, Prime Minister Modi said, "I am not criticising anyone, just discussing".

The Prime Minister said it's natural that the states that reduced their taxes will suffer losses in revenue but several states took that "positive step" anyway.

ECONOMY HAS TO BE KEPT IN MIND: K'TAKA CM

Bengaluru: Indicating that no further cuts in sales tax of fuels is on cards in BJP-ruled Karnataka, Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai on Wednesday stated that the economy of the state has to be kept in mind for any such decision. Answering a question on Prime Minister Narendra Modi chiding the Opposition-ruled states for high petrol prices, and asked whether he would like to cut the taxes further, he said: "We have to see our economy also, a decision will be taken based on it."



VAT RATE ON PETROL ALREADY LOW, NO FURTHER CUT POSSIBLE: BENGAL MINISTER

Our VAT is already low compared to states like Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, and Kerala. Despite our financial constraints we have not increased the rate so far. Rather, we are continuing with our subsidy of Re 1 per litre petrol and diesel. Still, we are ready to cut our rates further but to enable us to do that the Union government needs to clear our dues which is hovering at Rs 95,000 crore."



FED UP WITH ITS PERFORMANCE, TN MAN SETS HIS OLA SCOOTER ON FIRE

Chennai: At a time when some electric two-wheelers are catching fire spontaneously, a Tamil Nadu physiotherapist, fed up with his Ola scooter's poor performance and service, set the vehicle on fire. Prithviraj said he had bought an Ola scooter in January and it was delivered at his hometown Ambur.



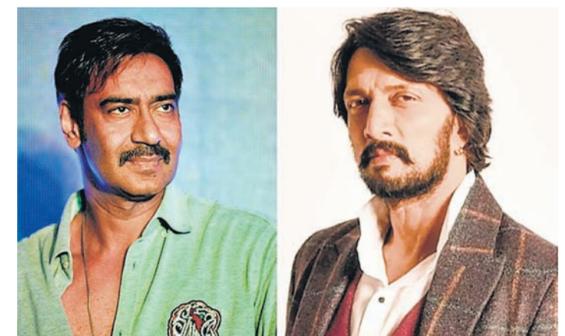
According to him, he started facing problems with the vehicle from January end onwards like noise due to improper fitting of the panels, issues with the brakes, and more importantly, the low mileage - about one-third as against the promised mileage of about 180 km per battery charge.

Prithviraj said complaints were lodged about the problems and the vehicle had been serviced a couple of times. The bigger problem was the vehicle was not registered by the company with the Regional Transport Office (RTO). The company finally made arrangements for registration at Gudiyatham. However, on Tuesday, the Gudiyatham RTO refused to register the vehicle as Ambur has a vehicle registration office. On his way back home, the scooter stopped midway.

According to him, the vehicle showed the battery range of about 57 km but within 5-6 km of riding, it stopped and the range showed zero. Stranded midway in the summer sun on him, he contacted Ola but the company said it would pick up the scooter at about 5.30 p.m. The company declined to pick up the vehicle at a safer location. At this point of time, he got fed up and decided to set the vehicle on fire.

WAR OF WORDS ON HINDI

Kiccha Sudeep recently stated that Hindi is no longer the national language while speaking at an event discussing the success of pan-India films such as KGF Chapter 2 in Kannada and Pushpa and RRR in Telugu. Ajay Devgn strongly reacted on his words with tweet in Hindi. In reply, Kiccha Sudeep clears the air.



Team Absolute | Mumbai

It all started with actor Ajay Devgn tweeting to Kannada actor Kiccha Sudeep, asking him why he was releasing movies in his mother tongue by dubbing them in Hindi, if Hindi was not our national language.

Netizens were aware of his statement when the video went viral and began criticizing him on social media.

Some people backed Sudeep, while others condemned him. This statement made by actor Kiccha Sudeep did not sit well with actor Ajay Devgn, who expressed his dissatisfaction on Twitter.

Ajay, in response to his statement, tweeted in Hindi, "My brother, according to you if Hindi is not our national language then why do you release your mother tongue movies by dubbing them in Hindi? Hindi was, is, and always will be our mother tongue and national language."

"Hello, @ajaydevgn sir, the context to why I said that line is entirely different to the way I guess it has reached you. Probably will empha-

size why the statement was made when I see you in person. It wasn't to hurt, provoke, or start any debate. Why would I sir", Sudeep wrote in response to Ajay Devgn's tweet.

"I love and respect every language of our country sir. I would want this topic to rest, as I said the line in a totally different context," he continued on Twitter. "Much love and wishes to you always. Hoping to see you soon".

"And sir @ajaydevgn, I did understand the text you gave in Hindi," Sudeep followed up with another tweet. That is only because we have all respected, loved, and learned Hindi. No offense, sir, but was wondering what'd the situation be if my response was typed in Kannada!! Don't we too belong to India sir."

"Hi @KicchaSudeep," Ajay tweeted in response to Sudeep's tweet. "You are a friend. Thanks for clearing up the misunderstanding. I've always thought of the film industry as one. We respect all languages and we expect everyone to respect our language as well. Perhaps, something was lost in translation".

CABINET APPROVES REVISED OUTLAY FOR INDIA POST PAYMENTS BANK

New Delhi: A Union Cabinet meeting chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday approved the revision of the project outlay for India Post Payments Bank (IPPB) from Rs 1435 crore to Rs 2255 crore as equity infusion to meet regulatory requirements. The Cabinet also granted in principle approval for future fund infusion to the tune of Rs 500 crore for meeting regulatory requirements and technological upgradation. India Post Payments Bank had a nationwide launch on September 1, 2018 with 650 branches/controlling offices. The IPPB has enabled 1.36 lakh post offices to provide banking services and has equipped nearly 1.89 lakh postmen and gram in dak sevaks with smartphones and biometric devices to provide doorstep banking services.

RUSSIA WON'T HESITATE TO USE 'WEAPONS NO OTHER COUNTRY POSSESSES', WARNS PUTIN

MOSCOW | Agencies

Russian President Vladimir Putin has warned outside forces against interfering in the Ukraine conflict, promising a "lightning-speed" response to such actions, with the use of Moscow's most advanced weaponry.

"If someone decides to intervene in the ongoing events from the outside and create unacceptable strategic threats to us, they should know that our response to those oncoming blows will be swift, lightning-fast," Putin said in an address to lawmakers on Wednesday, RT reported. "We have all



the tools to do this. Tools that no one except us can brag about. But we're not going to brag. We'll use them if such a need arises," the President said, without specifying which tools could be deployed.

Russian authorities have already made all necessary decisions to prepare for such a response, he added.

CALLING KASHMIR 'OCCUPIED' DOES NOT ENJOY PROTECTION UNDER ART 19(A), RULES J&K HC

Srinagar: The Jammu and Kashmir High Court ruled on Wednesday that calling Kashmir "occupied Kashmir" and its residents as "slaves" does not enjoy protection under the Constitution's Article 19 (A), on right to freedom of speech and expression. A bench of Justice Sanjay Dhar, hearing a petition filed by advocate Muzamil Butt seeking quashing of an FIR against him under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, remarked: "It is one thing to criticise the government for its negligence and express outrage on the violation of human rights of the people, but it is quite another to advocate that the people of a particular part of the country are slaves of the government of India or that they are under the occupation of armed forces of the country."

online portal Bar and Bench reported. Police had registered an FIR against Butt for his Facebook post in which he criticised the killing of seven civilians in an explosion at the encounter site in Larnoo village in October 2018.

Eleven electrocuted in TN religious chariot procession

Chennai | Agencies

Eleven persons were electrocuted and 16 others injured when the top of a chariot belonging to Appar mutt touched the overhead power cable in Thanjavur district in Tamil Nadu on Wednesday morning. According to police, the accident took place in Kalimedu village. The top of the chariot came into contact with a high transmission-line, which was about 30 ft high, at a road turning just near its destination.

District officials rushed to the spot to carry out rescue efforts. Police said while three people died on the spot, eight others who were severely injured succumbed to their injuries later.

An eyewitness to the accident said the car turned into a road and suddenly people started falling. A fire department official told the media that the organisers did not get any permission from the department which is normally done. The officials said the car had several decorative lights at the top and when it touched the high tension cable, the accident happened. Condoling the death of Chief Minister M.K. Stalin announced a solatium of Rs 5 lakh to the families of the dead. Stalin will be travelling to Thanjavur and meet the families of the dead and injured to console them.

A condolence resolution was passed in the state Assembly. Investigation into the accident is on.

HATE-IN-INDIA AND MAKE-IN-INDIA CAN'T COEXIST: RAHUL GANDHI

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Wednesday attacked the Centre over reports of exit of automobile companies from India and alleged that government is driving out business.

"The ease of driving business out of India. 7 Global Brands, 9 Factories, 649 Dealerships, 84,000 Jobs Modi ji, Hate-in-India and Make-in-India can't coexist! Time to focus on India's devastating unemployment crisis instead," the Congress leader tweeted.

Recently, Japanese auto manufacturer Nissan announced that it is halting the production of its Datsun vehicles in India.

Leader of the Opposition



in the Rajya Sabha, Mallikarjun Kharge, had on tweeted on Monday: "Nissan, Ford, General Motors, Fiat, United Motors, Premier Automobiles, Harley Davidson."

"One after another, these automobile majors have quit India due to 'sleaze of business' & fall in incomes. No one has failed Indian economy & embarrassed India internationally as BJP."

Elon Musk's \$44 Billion Twitter Acquisition

Rhydhima Raj | Los Angeles

Twitter Inc. on Monday accepted Elon Musk's bid to take over the company, giving the world's richest man control over the influential social-media network where he is also among its most powerful users.

The value of the sale is estimated at around \$44 billion. Once the sale goes through, Twitter will become a private company owned by Musk. The popular billionaire has committed to purchasing the company at \$54.20 USD a common share, with board members now considering the offer.

"Free speech is the bedrock of a functioning democracy, and Twitter is the digital town square where matters vital to the future of humanity are debated," said Musk in a statement. "I also want to make Twitter better than ever by enhancing the product with new features, making the algorithms open source to increase trust, defeating the



spam bots, and authenticating all humans."

After weeks of back and forth conversations between Twitter's board and Musk, Twitter agreed to accept his offer, quickly sending the Internet in a frenzy.

Immediately after the sale was announced, the platform exploded with many fans and critics expressing their opinions on the business deal. Some were concerned that President Donald Trump will be making a return to the platform, while others celebrated Musk's pledge to encourage freedom of speech. The topic of censorship became a major discussion with Senator Marsha Blackburn chiming into the conversation hoping that, "Elon Musk will help rein in Big Tech's history of censoring

\$1 BN FEE FOR DEAL TERMINATION

San Francisco: Tesla CEO Elon Musk will have to pay Twitter \$1 billion in termination fee if he drops the \$44 billion takeover deal, according to a new filing with the US Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) filing. The filing also said that the microblogging platform will have to pay the same amount if it terminates its takeover deal. As part of the deal, Morgan Stanley and other financial institutions have committed to providing \$13 billion in financing, along with \$12.5 billion in margin loans to Musk, against his shares in Tesla and other companies. Musk is expected to provide equity financing of approximately \$21 billion on his own. If Musk's financing falls through, Twitter will get \$1 billion.

users that have a different viewpoint."

SOCIAL MEDIA NORMS WON'T CHANGE: MINISTER

New Delhi: Minister of State for Electronics and IT Rajeev Chandrasekhar said, "Despite Elon Musk's takeover of Twitter, IT guidelines governing the social media platforms remain the same. Social media needs to go beyond mere criminality and also expand focus on user harm when it comes to regulations."

While Twitter spotlighted two divisive viewpoints on freedom of speech, internet trolls also took the opportunity to point out that Musk spent \$44 billion USD on a platform that is offered for free on the app store. A look at some of Twitter's biggest reactions to Elon Musk's \$44 billion USD acquisition is a must.



MAX TEMP TO RISE BY 2 DEGREES C DURING NEXT THREE DAYS OVER NW INDIA: IMD

Team Absolute | New Delhi

If you thought Wednesday was cruelly hot, wait! Maximum temperatures are set to rise by about 2 degrees Celsius very likely over most parts of northwest India during next three days

India Meteorological Department (IMD) said: "Heat wave conditions would continue over Vidarbha, Rajasthan, and Madhya Pradesh during next five days, over Uttar Pradesh, Jharkhand, interior Gangetic West Bengal and interior Odisha till April 30, over Punjab, Haryana, Chandigarh, Delhi till May 1, Bihar till April 29, over Chhattisgarh during April 28-30, and northern parts of Gujarat on April 28." On Wednesday, heat wave conditions prevailed in some parts of Gangetic West Bengal and in isolated pockets over Bihar, western Rajasthan, Odisha, Vidarbha and Saurashtra Kutch. Across these states, maximum temperatures ranged between 43 degrees Celsius and 45.6 degrees Celsius (at Rajgarh in Madhya Pradesh, followed by 45.5 degrees Celsius at Jhansi in Uttar Pradesh), IMD data showed. Under the influence of a fresh Western Disturbance, light/moderate isolated rainfall accompanied with hunder-



storm/lightning/gusty winds (speed reaching 30-40 kmph) are very likely over Jammu-Kashmir, Ladakh, Gilgit-Baltistan, Muzaffarabad, and Himachal Pradesh during April 28 and May 1 and over Uttarakhand during April 29 and May 1. Isolated hailstorms are also likely over Jammu-Kashmir and Himachal Pradesh on April 29 and over Uttarakhand on April 30 and May 1. Very light isolated rainfall with dust

storms/thunderstorms is likely over Punjab, Haryana, Chandigarh, Delhi, West Uttar Pradesh on April 29 and over Rajasthan on both April 29 and 30. Meanwhile, under the influence of another fresh Western Disturbance likely to affect northwest India from May 2, light/moderate scattered to fairly widespread rainfall accompanied with thunderstorm/lightning likely over Western Himalayan Region during May 2-4.

NORMAL TO ABOVE NORMAL RAINFALL FOR SOUTHWEST MONSOON: SASCOF FORECAST

New Delhi: Normal to above normal rainfall is most likely during the 2022 southwest monsoon season (June-September) over most parts of South Asia, according to an authoritative seasonal forecast from the South Asian Seasonal Climate Outlook Forum.

The South Asian Seasonal Climate Outlook Forum (SASCOF) is being held virtually from April 26 and will continue till April 28 and is being attended by experts from the National Meteorological and Hydrological Services (NMHS) of nine South Asian countries as well as from global and regional climate centres and agencies, including World Meteorological Organisation (WMO), WMO Regional Climate Centre Pune (RCC-Pune), UK Met Office, and Regional Integrated Multi-Hazard Early-warning System for Asia and Africa. Accounting for 75-90 per cent of the annual rainfall in most parts of South Asia (excepting Sri Lanka and southeastern India), the SW monsoon has an all-pervading influence on the socio-economic fabric of the region and thus of the national economies of South Asian countries. The India Meteorological Department (IMD) had recently announced its stage I forecast for southwest monsoon and said rainfall is likely to be normal over most parts of the country. SASCOF-22 is followed by the Climate Services User Session for climate sensitive sectors: agriculture, water, disaster risk reduction and health. It focuses on sharing, understanding, and interpreting the seasonal climate information to make effective use of it to manage climate risks in the region. The session will also identify further needs of the sectors in terms of customized products and tools to support decision-making.

NDMA issues guidelines for Covid-19 death compensation claims



Team Absolute | New Delhi

The National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) on Wednesday issued guidelines for filling an application for Covid-19 death compensation.

Issuing a public notice, it said that the outer time limit of 60 days to file the claims for compensation in case the death occurred due to Covid-19 prior to March 20, 2022, is with effect from March 24, 2022.

For future deaths, 90 days' time shall be provided from the date of death due to Covid-19 to file the claim for compensation, it said. The guidelines issued after the decision of the Supreme Court on March 24, 2022.

The earlier order to process the claims and to make the actual payment of compensation within a period of 30 days from the date of receipt of claim shall contin-

ue to be enforced, the NDMA said. It also said in case of extreme hardship where any claimant could not make an application within the time prescribed, the claimant shall approach the Grievance Redressal Committee to make the claim. The Redressal Committee will consider on a case to case basis and if it is found that a particular claimant could not make the claim within the stipulated time, the case may be considered on merits.

The NDMA also said that with an aim to minimise the risk of fake claims, a random scrutiny of the five per cent of the claim applications shall be made at the first instance. "If it is found that anybody has made a fake claim, the same shall be considered under Section 52 of the Disaster Management Act, 2005 and liable to be punished accordingly," it added.

Terrorist killed, soldier injured in Pulwama encounter

SRINAGAR | Agencies

One terrorist was killed and a soldier injured in an ongoing encounter between terrorists and security forces in Jammu and Kashmir's Pulwama district on Wednesday, police said.

"One terrorist killed. Operation in progress," police said. Police said a group of two to three terrorists were holed up in Mitragam area and the priority is to prevent collateral damage and to evacuate the civilians. "2-3 terrorists including foreign terrorist of JeM terror outfit trapped inside cordon. Ops was halted for evacuation of civilians. One soldier injured.



Precautions being taken to avoid collateral damage. Trapped terrorists will be neutralised at the earliest," Jammu and Kashmir Police said in a tweet, quoting Inspector General of Police, Kashmir, Vijay Kumar. The firefight broke out as a

joint team of security forces, which cordoned off the area and launched a search operation on the basis of specific information about presence of terrorists, came under heavy fire as they zeroed in on the spot where terrorists were hiding.

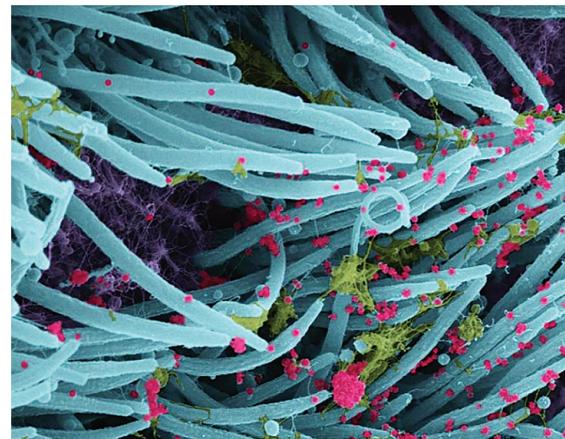
VERY FEW RECOMBINANT VARIANTS OF COVID FOUND IN INDIA: INSACOG

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Indian SARS-CoV-2 Genomics Consortium (INSACOG) on Wednesday said that based on genome sequencing analysis, very few recombinant variants of Covid have been discovered in India.

"Based on genome sequencing analysis, very few recombinant variants have been discovered in India. So far, none showed either increased transmission (locally or otherwise) or associated with severe disease or hospitalization," it said in its weekly bulletin of April 18 which was published on Wednesday evening.

The INSACOG said that the incidences of suspected recombinants and the possible public health relevance are being closely monitored. The number of new Covid-19 cases has decreased for a second consecutive week, with a 16



per cent decline during the week. The number of new deaths also decreased as compared to the pre-

vious week, said INSACOG on global Covid scenario. On the global scenario, the

INSACOG said two recombinant variants - XD and XE - are being closely monitored worldwide. XD, which has an Omicron S gene incorporated into a Delta genome, is found primarily in France.

"XE is a BA.1/BA.2 recombinant, with the majority of the genome including the S gene belonging to BA.2. XE shows slightly higher transmission rate. XE also shows a higher growth rate above that of BA.2; however, this finding requires further confirmation," it said.

The INSACOG conducts genomic surveillance of SARS-CoV-2 across the country through sequencing of samples from sentinel sites and international passengers arriving in India. A total of 2,05,807 samples have been sequenced by INSACOG as on April 8. It said that total 2,04,697 sequences have been analysed so far.

'Should be more cautious': SC questions Telangana for nixing over 19 lakh ration cards

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Supreme Court on Wednesday questioned the Telangana government for cancelling over 19 lakh ration cards and asked it to undertake physical verification of ration cards, which were cancelled on the basis of a computer algorithm.

A bench of Justices L. Nageswara Rao and B.R. Gavai said: "We direct the state of Telangana to conduct verification of all the ration cards cancelled pursuant to the directive issued by the Central government in 2016."

It noted that 17 parameters were taken into account before cancellation and sought reply from the Chief Secretary explaining how these cards were cancelled,



which deprived the people of their right to have free ration. Senior advocate Colin Gonsalves, representing the petitioner, contended the ration cards were cancelled without giving an opportunity to the people. He added

those whose ration cards were cancelled, they had to apply for fresh cards.

The bench directed the authorities to conduct field verification of all the cards and also deal with representation of any aggrieved card

holder expeditiously.

Gonsalves contended that the cards were cancelled on the basis of computer algorithm including wrong entry of Aadhaar card, which violates the K. Puttaswamy judgement. The top court was also informed that people were denied food grains, despite the Centre saying that Aadhaar card is not mandatory for it. The bench said the state should have been more cautious before cancelling the cards. The top court made these observations while hearing a plea filed by social activist S.Q. Masood, challenging the Telangana High Court order, which refused to entertain his PIL against the cancellation of ration cards.

TWO DIE IN DELHI SEWER

New Delhi: Two men, including one person who went to rescue the other, died inside a sewer pit in the national capital on Wednesday, an official said. The deceased have been identified as Chittaranjan (26) and Abdul Salam (18). According to the official, the incident took place in the city's Bawana area when Abdul Salam, a rag picker, had removed the cover of the sewer on Ganga Toli Road near Balaji Chowk in Bawana and entered inside to collect waste plastic. "As he did not come out after some time, his younger brother Sahil (12) raised an alarm and sought people's help," Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP) Brijender Kumar Yadav said.

A passing driver Chitrnanjan Choudhary went to rescue the man inside the pit. Unfortunately, after sometime the second man also became unresponsive. The Delhi Fire Service and the police received information about the incident and rushed to the spot. Both the persons were taken out from the pit and shifted to MV hospital where the doctors declared them brought dead.



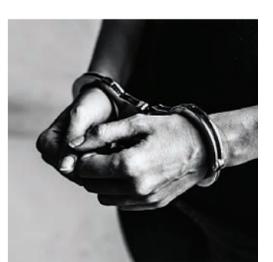
Sex racket busted in Delhi, 7 held

Team Absolute | New Delhi

A sex racket being operated from a spa has been busted and seven persons, including five prostitutes, arrested in this connection, Delhi Police said on Wednesday.

According to the police, information regarding a sex racket being run in a spa and massage parlour named "The Space Spa" was received on Tuesday and a raid was conducted by the Special Staff of the Central District and seven persons arrested, including the spa owners - Deepak Kumar and his wife Babita.

The police have registered a case under section 3, 4 and 5 of the Immoral Trafficking Prevention Act 1956 at the Patel Nagar police station. During interrogation, it was revealed that the accused couple was the mastermind and they were



running this sex racket in the garb of spa and massage parlour.

Huge cache of obscene material was also recovered from the spot, the police said. "Sustained interrogation is done to know the previous similar crime committed by them and details of their other associates, if any," police added.

Allahabad HC judge recuses himself from Ashish Mishra case



LUCKNOW | Agencies

An Allahabad High Court judge has withdrawn himself from hearing the bail plea of Union Minister of State for Home Ajay Mishra's son Ashish Mishra in the Lakhimpur Kheri violence case.

Justice Rajeev Singh of the Lucknow bench of the high court, who had granted bail to Ashish Mishra earlier, recused himself from hearing it again after the Supreme Court cancelled his bail order last week on April 18.

While cancelling Mishra's bail, the Supreme Court had also asked the high court to decide his bail plea afresh and the plea came up for hearing before Justice Singh's bench. But he recused himself from hearing it afresh. Justice Singh, however, gave no reason for withdrawing himself from the single-judge bench hearing the bail plea. The next hearing of the bail plea too was not scheduled and it would be fixed for the next hearing after the constitution of a new bench to hear it, a court official said.

Nitish Kumar likely to meet Tejashwi Yadav again in Iftar party

PATNA | Agencies

Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar and leader of opposition Tejashwi Yadav are likely to meet in another Dawat-E-Iftar party in Patna on Thursday.

This time, the Dawat-E-Iftar party is being organised by Salim Parvej, president of JD-U minority wing of Bihar. "We have personally invited CM Nitish Kumar for the Iftar party and he has accepted our invitation. Besides, I have also sent invitations to former CM Rabri Devi, leader of opposition Tejashwi Yadav, Tej Pratap Yadav, Jagadanand Singh, leaders of BJP, Congress, CPI, CPM, CPI (ML), AIMIM, HAM and VIP. I am expecting all leaders will come to the Iftar party. The venue of the Iftar party is Patna HAJ Bhawan," Pravej said.



"Iftar is a cultural event meant for social harmony in the state. We have to give a strong message to people of our state and country that the political leaders are united in Bihar to secure social har-

mony in the society," Parvej said. One such event was organised in Rabri Devi's residence in April when leaders of all political parties, including Nitish Kumar went there for the Iftar party. Though, on

that occasion, political circles were agog with speculation of Nitish Kumar's changing political equation with the RJD.

If Nitish Kumar and Tejashwi Yadav will share a cultural programme again in a short span of time, it will be a positive sign for both the parties.

The sources close to the Bihar Chief Minister believe that he wants to give a strong message to BJP to avoid "creating communal disturbance" in Bihar. Hence, he is showing close proximity with Tejashwi Yadav and RJD.

Earlier, Nitish Kumar had also given a Dawat-E-Iftar party but Tejashwi and Rabri Devi had skipped it.

However, the relations between JD-U and RJD seem to have improved after Nitish Kumar visited Rabri Devi's residence on April 22 for the Dawat-E-Iftar.

Reliance, Viacom18 ink pact with Bodhi Tree Systems to form TV, digital streaming platforms



Team Absolute | New Delhi

Reliance and Viacom18 on Wednesday announced a strategic partnership with Bodhi Tree Systems -- a platform of James Murdoch's Lupa Systems and Uday Shankar - to form one of the largest TV and digital streaming companies in India.

Bodhi Tree Systems is leading a fund raise with a consortium of investors to invest Rs 13,500 crore in Viacom18, to jointly build India's leading entertainment platform and pioneer the Indian media landscape's transformation to a "streaming-first" approach. Viacom18 is amongst the

leading players in the core linear television business with 38 channels across nine languages and a pan-India presence. The transaction is expected to close within six months and is subject to closing conditions and requisite approvals.

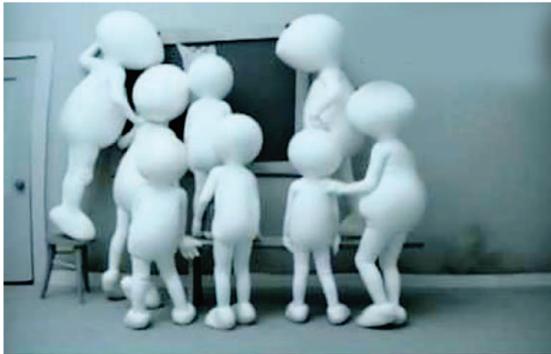
Reliance Projects and Property Management Services, a wholly-owned subsidiary of Reliance Industries which has significant presence in television, OTT, distribution, content creation, and production services, will invest Rs 1,645 crore.

In addition, the popular JioCinema OTT app will be transferred to Viacom18.



MADHYA PRADESH BOARD ANNOUNCES CLASS 10, 12 RESULT DATE, TIME

THE MP BOARD WILL DECLARE THE CLASS 10TH AND 12TH RESULTS ON APRIL 29 AT 1 PM. THE MP BOARD 10TH, 12TH RESULT 2021 WILL BE AVAILABLE ON OFFICIAL WEBSITES INCLUDING MPRESULTS.NIC.IN, MPBSE.MPONLINE.GOV.IN AND MPBSE.NIC.IN.



First Division against 3,42,390 in 2020. Last year, as many as 9,14,079 students had qualified for admission to Class 11 out of the total 9,25,213 students registering for the Class 10th MP board exams. The Class 12th MP Board result last year was declared on July 29. Out of the total 6,60,682 students appearing for the exam last year, 3,43,064 students have secured the first division and 2,64,295 students were placed in the second division. MP Board results Class 10, 12 will also be made available on MPBSE mobile app. The app can be downloaded from Google Play Store.

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Madhya Pradesh Board of Secondary Education (MPBSE) has announced the MP board Class 10, 12 result date and time. The MP board will declare the Class 10th and 12th results on April 29 at 1 pm. The MP Board 10th, 12th Result 2021 will be available on official websites including mpreresults.nic.in,

mpbse.mponline.gov.in and mpbse.nic.in. Some private portals will also host the MPBSE Class 10, 12 results. Announcing the Class 10, 12 result date and time, a social media post of the Madhya Pradesh government said: "The examination results of High School, Higher Secondary, Higher Secondary

(Vocational), Diploma in Pre-School Education (DPSE) Physical Education Training Patropadhi Main Examination 2022 organized by the Board of Secondary Education will be declared on 29 April 2022 at 1.00 PM." Last year MPBSE declared the Class 10th results on July 14. 3,56,582 students have bagged the

Here's How To Check Result Online

Go to official website, mpre-results.nic.in, click on the exam result link for Class 10, 12 result. Enter the required credentials including roll numbers and dates of birth and submit and view your result.

CM Chouhan takes part virtually

Prime Minister Narendra Modi reviews status of Covid-19

Team Absolute | Bhopal

In a meeting of Chief Ministers of the state held on the current situation of Covid-19 in the country under the chairmanship of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan took part virtually. Medical Education Minister Vishwas Sarang, Public Health and Family Welfare Minister Prabhuram Choudhary, Additional Chief Secretary Health Mohammad Suleman were also present in the Chief Minister's residence. PM Modi said that vigilance is must in view of the increased cases of Corona in the last two weeks. The Center and the states have dealt with the previous waves of Corona through mutual dialogue and coordination. It must be kept mind that the challenge of Corona is not over yet. Prime Minister Shri Modi called for expediting the work of vaccination of



children and adults, motivating the general public to be aware and alert and adopting Corona appropriate behaviour in public places. Modi said that the works going on to strengthen health infrastructure should be completed on priority. All states should remain alert and proactive to maintain the

health facilities in functional condition. He sought information from the Chief Ministers of Delhi, Uttar Pradesh, Mizoram, Karnataka, Haryana about the situation of Corona in their states and the precautions being taken and the efforts being made for infrastructure.

MP govt to promote Auto Industry



Team Absolute | Bhopal

To promote the state's auto industry, the state government will organize the state's biggest auto show for three days in the presence of the state's Minister for Industrial Policy and Investment Promotion, Vardhan Singh Dattigaon, from 28 to 30 April near the Indore airport. Super Corridor! On the first day of the session, today a session will be organized on the

topic of 'Accelerating the economic development of India by the automobile industry' and cultural programs will also be held! Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan Micro-Small Industries Minister Omprakash Saklecha is also likely to participate in this event on the second day. Various companies from all over the country and abroad are expected to come to this auto show, in which apart from cars, they will showcase their various products. During this various events will be organized by natrax (national automotive test track) in which 14 types of automotive test tracks spread over 3000 acres will be visited in which brake speed and other types of tests are done for various high speed vehicles. Overall this auto show will open doors of various opportunities for the auto world of the state.

Chief Minister Pays Tribute to Sant Shiromani Sen Maharaj



Team Absolute | Bhopal

Bhopal: Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan paid homage to Sant Shiromani Sen Maharaj on his anniversary. Chouhan paid floral tributes by garlanding his picture in the auditorium at his residence office. Sant Shiromani Sen Maharaj was born about five hundred years ago in Bandhavgarh of Madhya Pradesh. He worked rising above caste and religion and gave the message of true humanity. He consid-

ered service, love, devotion and amiable behaviour as the main characteristics of the saints. He made every effort for reforming the society by telling that the evil practices spread in the society are unfair. His biggest practice was to love everyone equally, not considering anyone as small or big on the basis of religion and caste. Chief Minister Chouhan greeted the people of the state on the birth anniversary of Sant Shiromani Sen Maharaj.

CGST OFFICIALS GET BAIL

Bhopal: Special CBI Court, Bhopal granted bail to two government servants, arrested upon a raid conducted by the Bhopal unit of CBI in the CGST office of Bhopal. CBI had registered a complaint under the Prevention of Corruption Act after which the said raid was conducted and made arrests of two CGST Superintendents Ankur Khandelwal and Chetan Saxena. Advocate Dr. Vijay Choudhary and Vivek Choudhary had moved bail applications on behalf of the arrestees, which was decided today by the Special Judge CBI Hon'ble Shri Rajendra Sharma wherein bail was granted to both the accused persons on a bail bond of Rs. 50,000/- each.

Ensure cent percent supply of medicines in AYUSH hospitals as per the requirement

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Minister of State for AYUSH Ramkishore Kavre has directed the departmental officers to ensure the supply of medicines as per the requirement in the AYUSH hospitals of the state. He directed the officers to complete all the construction works of the department within the stipulated time frame. Kavre was addressing a meeting of departmental officers in Mantralaya. Principal Secretary Prateek Hajela and Commissioner Shri Ramesh Kumar were also present. Kavre reviewed the purchase related matters, the time scale pay scale of the employees, the cases prevailing in the court and the progress of the works under construction. Kavre gave instructions to set up yoga sheds in 362 health wellness centers operating in the state. He said that the progress of the schemes run under the National AYUSH Mission should be continuously reviewed. He also directed the officers to review the fixed period of employees on deputation in colleges. It was informed in the meet-



ing that the process of recruitment to the vacant posts in the department is being done expeditiously. There are also 200 community health officers among them. Kavre also reviewed the preparations for the proposed visit of President Ram Nath Kovind to Ujjain on May 29 in the meeting. On May 29, the President will attend the 59th general convention of All India Ayurveda Mahasammelan. Free trade of Ayurveda medicines and other related issues will be discussed in the convention. Kavre also reviewed the preparations for the proposed visit of Governor Mangubhai Patel to Balaghat on May 8. The Governor will also participate in the programmes to be organised in Paraswada on the same day.

CM Chouhan Will Attend GOVERNOR PATEL WILL INAUGURATE PH. D. COLLOQUIUM AT AGPA

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Atal Bihari Vajpayee Institute of Good Governance and Policy Analysis (AGPA) in collaboration with ICSSR New Delhi will organise Ph. D. Colloquium for young Ph. D. scholars of the state on 28 and 29 April at RCVP Noronha Academy of Administration. The Colloquium will be inaugurated by Governor Shri Mangubhai Patel on 28 April at 10 am. During this, Higher Education Minister Dr. Mohan Yadav will also be present. Chief Minister Shri Shivraj Singh Chouhan will attend the colloquium on April 29 at 10 am Seven subjects have been identified for PhD colloquium, which are in priority areas of the

Government of Madhya Pradesh. These topics include tribals and their development, natural resources, management and sustainability, urbanisation, agriculture and rural development, health and AYUSH, biodiversity and traditional knowledge systems and trade, industry, financial inclusion and knowledge economy. The objective of the colloquium is to provide a mentorship platform for young scholars in Madhya Pradesh and to guide them in PhD research work. The colloquium will not only provide a platform to young researchers, but it will also prove to be helpful in introducing new dimensions to research activities through mutual participation. Also, it will

be helpful in improving the quality of research in the state. The colloquium will consist of PhD scholars enrolled in various educational institutions located in the state. Synopsis and research proposals will be presented by PhD scholars in the Colloquium. It will also have sessions to explain the introductory course of research methodology with empirical reference to the specific features of PhD research, the theoretical and social framework. Scholars enrolled in PhD in any of the Central Universities, State Universities, Private Universities, IITs, NITs, IIFM, CSIR, ICMR and ICAR laboratories located in Madhya Pradesh will join the colloquium.

Riot-hit Khargone gets 121 CCTVs, buses to ply during curfew relaxation

THE KHARGONE DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION IN MADHYA PRADESH HAS STARTED THE WORK OF INSTALLING 121 CCTV CAMERAS AT DIFFERENT LOCATIONS FOLLOWING THE VIOLENCE ON RAM NAVAMI.

Team Absolute | Bhopal

The Khargone district administration in Madhya Pradesh has started the work of installing 121 CCTV cameras at different locations, including those where stone-pelting was reported during the Ram Navami celebration earlier this month, an official said on Tuesday.

Local administration relaxed the curfew in the violence-hit town for nine hours - from 8 am to 5 pm - for the fourth day in a row on Tuesday and allowed plying of passenger buses during that period. Communal clashes had erupted in Khargone on April 10, during which shops and houses were damaged, vehicles torched and stones hurled. Subsequently, curfew was clamped in the city. The police administration has given a list of locations where CCTVs need to be installed. Based on the list, work has been started to install 121 CCTV cameras at 36 locations, at a cost of Rs 64 lakh, Khargone Municipal Council's chief municipal officer Priyanka Patel said in a statement. The areas where incidents of stone-pelting took place are also among these 36 locations, she said

The gadgets to be installed at these places include 14 special cameras which can detect the registration number of a vehicle passing from there, the official said. There are 10 cameras which can rotate 360 degrees to record movements in these areas, she said. Besides, 97 varifocal cameras will also be put up, she said, adding that more cameras will be installed if there is a demand from police authorities. Meanwhile, Khargone's in-charge Superintendent of Police Rohit Kashwani said they have recovered a pistol used by Mohsin aka Waseem, who was arrested in connection with the firing at SP Siddharth Chaudhary during the violence on Ram Navami. The accused told the police that he had purchased the pistol from

one Toofan Singh, who will also be questioned, the official said. The police had arrested Mohsin last Friday from Kasrawad police station area in the district. Khargone SP Siddharth Choudhary is currently on leave as he is undergoing treatment after sustaining a bullet injury in his leg. Since April 14, the local administration has been relaxing the curfew for some hours. As per the district administration's order, the curfew relaxation will not be applicable to petrol pumps, religious places and for the sale of kerosene from Public Distribution System (PDS) shops. During the curfew relaxation period, shops selling milk, vegetables, medicines, and barber's shops among others, are allowed to remain open, said the order.

CM Chouhan chairs Cabinet meeting

Incentive Scheme for Madhya Pradesh Crop Diversification

- Constitution of Natural Agriculture Development Board will be setup
Decision to implement 3 new schemes of Scheduled Castes Welfare

Team Absolute | Bhopal



A meeting of the Cabinet was held in Mantralaya on Tuesday under the chairmanship of Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan. The Cabinet has decided to implement incentive scheme for crop diversification in Madhya Pradesh in view of the increase in the area and production of wheat and paddy in the state, increase in the cost of procurement on support price and environmental imbalance in the state due to the above crops. According to the proposal of the Crop Diversification Scheme, the proposals received from the applicant company/institution after being examined by the Director, Farmers Welfare and Agriculture Development will be granted approval by the Cabinet Committee for Investment Promotion (CCIP) after the recommendation of the State Level Project Screening Committee headed by the Chief Secretary. The implementation, monitoring of the proposals approved in the scheme will be carried out by the Director, Farmers Welfare and Agriculture Development. The scheme will cover non-MSP crops sown in place of wheat and

paddy. This will reduce the dependence on chemical fertilizers in the state and environmental protection, biodiversity and sustainable farming will be possible. Along with this, there will be reduction in procurement on support price and dependence on import of pulses and oilseeds will be reduced. Decision was taken to constitute the 'Madhya Pradesh Natural Agriculture Development Board' as an independent organization with the financial assistance of the state government in order to increase the spread of natural agriculture in the state and to provide encouragement and cooperation to the farmers with constant guidance. An apex body headed by the Chief Minister and a task force under the chairmanship of the Chief Secretary will be constituted at the state level for

monitoring and review of the Madhya Pradesh Natural Agriculture Development Board. Additional Chief Secretary, Farmers Welfare and Agriculture Development Department will be the State Project Director of Madhya Pradesh Natural Agriculture Development Board and Director Agriculture will be the Executive Director. Bhopal will be the headquarters of Madhya Pradesh Natural Agriculture Development Board. At the district level, the scheme will be implemented by the District Project Director, Aatma, under the direction of the Aatma Governing Board, chaired by the Collector. Approval was given to create 17 posts in the board. There will be a financial burden of about Rs 5 crore per annum for the salary, allowances and other administrative expenses etc. of the staff of the Board. Decision was taken to implement new schemes namely Sant Ravidas Swarozgar Yojana, Dr. Bhimrao Ambedkar Economic Welfare Scheme and Mukhya Mantri. The Cabinet granted administrative approval for the creation of total 69 new posts including upgradation of one pre-approved post of Accounts Officer in Nursing College, Indore in the pay scale of 15600-39100+5400 GP and one post of Finance Officer (Deputy Director) in the pay scale 15600-39100+6600 GP and 19 posts of Finance Officer (Assistant Director) in the pay scale 15600-39100+5400 GP, one post of Deputy Registrar on fixed pay scale, 7 posts of hospital manager, 23 posts of hospital assistant manager and 18 posts of biomedical engineer.

CASE AGAINST IAS OFFICER AS WIFE ACCUSES HIM OF DOWRY HARASSMENT

BUNDAS, A 2011 BATCH OFFICER, IS CURRENTLY POSTED AS THE DEPUTY SECRETARY OF FOREST DEPARTMENT, WHILE HIS WIFE, THE COMPLAINANT, IS AN INDIAN REVENUE SERVICE (IRS) OFFICER, POLICE SAID.

Team Absolute | Bhopal

The Madhya Pradesh police have registered a case against a 38-year-old Indian Administrative Service (IAS) officer after his wife, also a government officer, lodged a complaint, accusing him and his family

members of harassing her for dowry, an official said on Wednesday. Bundas, a 2011 batch officer, is currently posted as the deputy secretary of Forest Department, while his wife, the complainant, is an Indian Revenue Service (IRS) officer, police said. "Based on the complaint lodged by his wife, a case was registered against IAS officer Mohit Bundas, his mother and sister on Tuesday night for dowry harassment and assault," Bhopal's Mahila Police Station in-charge Ajita Nair said. The IAS officer was booked under Indian Penal Code (IPC) sections 498A (husband or relative of husband of a woman subjecting her to cruelty), 323 (voluntarily causing hurt) and 506 (criminal intimidation), she said. No arrest has been made in this connection so far, she said.



EDITOR'S SPECS

Unlucky Indian Leopards

The first four months of 2022 haven't gone too well for the Indian Leopard, or so it seems. If figures published by the Wildlife Protection Society of India (WPSI) are to be believed, 73 of them have been poached this year. In addition to this, 140 were found dead inside forested areas across the country. It can't be confirmed whether these 140 animals died due to natural causes, such as old age or fights with other Leopards over mating and territorial rights. Some of them may even have even fallen victim to human-animal conflicts. In 2021, the total number of Leopard deaths in the country was 614. Of these, 182 animals were poached. WPSI has itself maintained that the poaching figures could be much higher. It has pointed out how Customs officials multiply the figure of seizures by 10 to arrive at a true picture. With human habitation slowly but surely invading forest space, leopards are coming into close contact. Take the forests of north Bengal for instance. There is little in the form of natural prey for the Leopards inside the forests that are accessible to all. The leopards choose the thick undergrowth of tea bushes as a place to deliver their cubs. To sustain themselves and the cubs, they prey on goats, dogs and cattle on occasions. This leads to a conflict between humans and the Leopard. If one believes that the Indian Tiger is in better condition, think twice. It has been claimed that there are nearly 3,000 Bengal Tigers in the wild in India today. WPSI figures reveal that 13 Tigers have already been poached in 2022. In 2021, 56 of them were poached. If wildlife laws in India are stringent enough and forest department staff equipped adequately, one wonders whether such crimes can take place.

CHINA'S MILITARY SALES IN INDIA'S NEIGHBOURHOOD: SOUTH ASIAN NATIONS BE WARY!

N.C.Bipindra

Of late, China has raised security concerns in the Indian Ocean region with strategic military sales like submarines to Bangladesh and Pakistan. China contends to be a key defence exporter to many Asian and Southeast Asian countries in India's neighbourhood.

Many of these countries, who are unable to acquire expensive military technology from other reliable sources, procure seemingly inexpensive weapons and systems from the Chinese market.

To this effect, the Bangladesh military imported two Type-035G submarines of 1970s vintage and Type-053H frigates from China, with its import dependence on Chinese hardware touching nearing 85 per cent.

Myanmar, after the military coup in 2021 and sanctions by the West, has turned towards China for procuring majority of its military hardware. Pakistan is shifting its reliance to cheap Chinese hardware with its procurement of Yuan class submarines, J-10/JF-17 fighter's aircraft and Type-054 stealth warships.

Sri Lanka has been given warships and military aircraft (Harbins, J-7) in recent times. Nepal is also being aggressively pursued by China in the recent years for procuring Chinese military hardware with NPR 2.5 billion grant for the Nepalese Army.

Chinese development of overseas bases in the region is also bothering Indian military planners. Commissioning of the Djibouti military base in 2017, development of Gwadar port in Pakistan and taking over of Hambantota port in Sri Lanka gives them a credible infrastructure to position military assets in the region.

The new entrant in this club is Pekua port in Bangladesh. China plans to develop this port and offer it for berthing and maintenance of

submarines given to Bangladesh. However, its real intent might be to establish a transit base for its nuclear submarines, which are likely increase their forays in the Indian Ocean region in the future. Hence, if we envisage a conflict with China or our neighbouring countries, we can anticipate that stance of these countries will be largely driven by Chinese interest in the region.

However, everything is not so rosy for Beijing's customers as it seems. They, at their own peril, however, do not factor the life cycle costs and reliability factors of Chinese products. Poor quality and workmanship of these Chinese military weapons and systems has turned out to be the bane for its clients. Countries like Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Nepal has found this out the hard way.

Thai Prime Minister Prayut Chan-o-cha on April 4, threatened to cancel a deal for purchase of Chinese S26T Yuan Class submarines, unless Beijing includes the German-made MTU 396 engine.

Beijing has supposedly requested modification in the contract to replace the German engines with Chinese MWM 620 engines.

Considering the poor reputation related to anything Chinese made, the Thai don't appear willing to go ahead with the deal unless their demands are met.

Earlier in January, Nepal Airlines had grounded six Chinese-made aircraft, saying that it was proving to be unaffordable to fly them. These sub-standard planes delivered extremely poor serviceability rates and required heavy maintenance.

The loan from China for these aircraft has, however, continued to haunt the airlines. Dues worth \$35.1 million, at a steep interest rate along with a service charge and management expenses, are still pending.

Beijing had gifted two 1970s era Ming class Type-035G submarines to Bangladesh valued at \$100-million each in 2017. These were later re-inducted by the Bangladesh Navy



as BNS Nobojatra and BNS Joyjatra.

However, both the platforms have been lying idle due to technical issues and could not be used as intended. The year 2020, witnessed China gifting Dhaka with two Chinese 053H3 frigates -- BNS Umar Farooq and BNS Abu Ubaidah.

According to sources, the Type-053H3 frigates gifted to the Bangladesh Navy have defects in fire control system as well as in the helicopter fuelling and defueling system.

Defects have also been discovered in the gyro compass. The frigates were supplied by Poly Technologies Inc. Poly Technologies is a subsidiary of China Poly Group Corporation, a trade company with headquarters in Beijing, which deals with missiles and other military hardware.

With regard to naval platforms built by China Shipbuilding and Offshore International Co. Limited, issues that have surfaced are poor metallurgy, lack of spare part support, machinery failure, defective radars and poor armaments.

Defects have also been detected in basic trainer aircraft and K-8 aircraft for the Bangladesh Air Force and short-range air defence system for the Bangladesh Army.

Pakistan, despite being closest to Beijing, has also faced similar issues. Pakistan armed forces, which have been traditionally used to superior quality products made in the West, has had to deal with defective military equipment supplied by China.

The Chinese-supplied WL II UCAVs was grounded within days of induction into the PAF due to serious defects. A similar story has emerged with the joint production JF-17 fighters.

As per reports, approximately 40 aircraft are not airworthy due to a shortage of spare parts and the RD-93 engine have reportedly experienced frequent cracks in guide vanes, exhaust nozzles, and flame stabilizers.

The Chinese are desperately trying to replace the existing engine with the Chinese made WS-13 engines. However, when these will be made available to Pakistan remains the moot issue. Similar is the case with the SAM system on the Zulfiqar class frigate procured through a multi-million-dollar loan from the Chinese EXIM Bank.

The system, itself a clone of the French Crotale system, has

been plagued with serviceability issues leading to the Pakistan Navy turning to European suppliers for future inductions.

Other cases of supply of poor-quality drones, armoured personnel carriers, missiles and even warships across the globe are well documented. In some cases, loss of lives due to malfunctioning equipment has also been reported. The lack of quality of military hardware from China is increasingly coming under scanner and has brought to fore the standard capabilities being sold to economically weaker countries in the garb of supporting them.

The world over, reliability and quality of defence equipment are known as the true mark of a nation's technology, manufacturing ability and maintenance practices.

One would have expected Chinese defence manufacturers to have taken this onboard as an invaluable fundamental. If one is to believe open-source narratives, here too China seems to have missed the mark entirely, opting for quantity and quick delivery over quality.

Buyers beware!

international

SL PRESIDENT WILLING TO FORM ALL-PARTY GOVT AFTER PM, CABINET RESIGN

Colombo | Agencies

On the face of the country's worst-ever economic crisis and a political deadlock, Sri Lankan President Gotabaya Rajapaksa on Wednesday said he is willing to form an all-party government after the current cabinet, led by his elder brother Mahinda Rajapaksa, resigns.

Gotabaya Rajapaksa has informed coalition partners that he is, in principle, ready to form an all-party government with the political parties represented in the parliament. "As a solution to the crisis facing the country right now, I agree, in principle, to an all-party government representing all parties in parliament be formed," he said. He has invited leaders of



parties and independent groups that helped form his government to meet him on Friday. "The composition of the said all-party government, which will be formed after the resignation of Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa and the cabinet, the duration of its

term, appointments to be made in that government and other relevant matters need to be decided upon discussion," a statement issued by the President's office said.

President Rajapaksa has openly suggested resigning of his brother, Prime

Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa, who has been refusing to step down and insisted that he would be the Premier of whatever interim government that would be formed. However despite public demand, the President too has not made any sign of resigning from his position. The Indian Ocean island nation is facing the worst ever economic crisis since its Independence and people had been forced to spend days in queues to get fuel and gas while number of essential items including food, fuel, and medicine are in shortage. For the last three weeks, people in capital Colombo and around the country have taken to the streets demanding the resignation of government with all Rajapaksas and the cabinet.

FRANCE, SAUDI ARABIA PLEDGE \$30 MN TO SUPPORT LEBANON

Beirut: France and Saudi Arabia has announced the creation of a joint development fund worth \$30 million to support crisis-hit Lebanon, a statement released by the French Embassy in Lebanon said.

The funds will be spent on humanitarian projects by providing emergency aid, including food and healthcare services to the most vulnerable populations in Lebanon, in addition to supporting the main public hospital in the northern city of Tripoli, Xinhua news agency reported.

The funds will also be used to provide cash aid benefitting around 7,500 people and provide baby milk for families in need, the French Foreign Ministry said in a tweet.

Lebanon has been suffering from a severe crisis, leading to the collapse of the local currency while plunging over 70 per cent of the population into poverty.

AUSTRIA WILL PAY IN RUBLES FOR RUSSIAN GAS

Austria has accepted the new ruble gas payment mechanism, introduced by

Moscow | Agencies

Austria has accepted the new ruble gas payment mechanism, introduced by Russia earlier this month, and will abide by it, Chancellor Karl Nehammer announced on Wednesday. "We, that is, (state energy company) OMV, accepted the terms of payment, as did the German government. They (the terms) were found to be in line with the terms of the sanctions. For us, this was important," he said at a press conference, RT reported.

Nehammer added, however, that Austria still supports Ukraine-related anti-Russia sanctions.

"Before the fake news of Russian propaganda steps in," he stressed, "of course, OMV continues to pay for gas supplies from Russia in euros. Austria adheres to the point of view and supports the jointly adopted EU sanctions."



According to him, Austrian oil and gas company OMV has already opened an appropriate account with a Russian bank for transferring payments. Nehammer noted that during his recent trip to Moscow, Russian President Vladimir Putin explained the new payment mechanism and assured him of further gas supplies in full.

On March 31, Putin signed a decree that defined a new procedure for paying for Russian gas supplies by buyers from "unfriendly" countries, which placed sanctions on Moscow in response to its military operation in Ukraine.

SYRIAN AIR DEFENCE RESPONDS TO NEW ISRAELI MISSILE STRIKE IN DAMASCUS

Damascus: Syrian air defence responded to a fresh Israeli missile strike in the capital Damascus after midnight, according to the state news agency SANA.

People in the capital heard two powerful explosions as a result of the attack and the interception of the Syrian air defenses. Xinhua reported citig SANA. The attack is the latest in a string of Israeli strikes against Syrian military sites over the pretext that it's targeting pro-Iran militias and weapons shipments.

On Tuesday, Israel's army said that one of its drones fell into Syrian territory. "An IDF (Israel Defense Forces) unmanned aerial vehicle fell in Syria," a military spokesperson said in a statement, adding that no information from the drone was breached. The spokesperson noted that the drone fell during "routine operations" and that the incident is being investigated.

The cause was not immediately clear.

Nepal bans import of luxurious items as economic crisis deepens

Kathmandu | Agencies

Nepal government has imposed a total ban on the import of 10 luxurious goods until mid-July 2022 after the country's economic crisis deepened.

The measure has been taken to stop further depleting the country's foreign exchange reserve. According to a notice issued in the Gazette on Wednesday, the goods whose import has been banned include cigarettes and tobacco-related products, diamonds, mobile phone sets, colour TVs with screens bigger than 32 inches, automobiles except for ambulances and hearses, motorcycles above 250cc, toys of all kinds, alcoholic beverages and playing cards.

According to the Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Supplies, the ban will not apply to those who complete the banking process before April 30.

Besides this measure, the government has taken other steps to check the foreign reserve from depleting further. Earlier in the first week of this month, Nepal's central bank had issued a directive to the traders to "discourage" them from opening letters of credit (LC) to import non-essential goods in an effort to stem the outflow of the country's rapidly depleting foreign exchange reserves. Ballooning imports in recent months have led to massive amounts of foreign currency going out of the country, pushing the balance of payments into the red and raising concerns of a crisis.

The central bank has discouraged the traders not to import 300 different items besides banning the opening of letters of credit.

According to the central bank, an immense portion of bank loans has gone into paying for imports, so the country is short of money to finance economic activities needed to

recharge the economy devastated by Covid-19.

In case they needed to open letters of credit, the traders need to keep a 100 per cent margin amount to open them to import alcoholic drinks, tobacco, silver, furniture, sugar, sweets, glucose, mineral water, energy drinks, cosmetics, shampoos, hair oils and colours, caps, footwear, umbrellas and construction materials such as bricks, marble, tiles and ceramics, among others.

Imports jumped by 42.8 per cent to Rs 1.14 trillion during the first seven months of fiscal 2021-22, against an increase of 0.01 per cent last year.

Purchases of petroleum products, medicine, crude palm oil, crude soybean oil, transport equipment, vehicles and parts, among others, have increased sharply.

According to NRB, the country has a foreign currency reserve that is

enough to meet its import expenses only for the next six months.

Currently, the country has a foreign currency reserve of just \$9 billion. Gross foreign exchange reserves had plunged by 16.2 per cent to Rs 1.17 trillion as of mid-February 2022, down from Rs 1.39 trillion in mid-July 2021. Similarly, the government of Nepal has also decided to announce public holiday on Saturday and Sunday in order to limit government-owned vehicular movement so that consumption of petroleum products reduce. The import of petroleum product consumes the larger chunk of imports of the country.

According to the Department of Customs, Nepal's imports soared by 38.64 per cent year-on-year to Rs 1.30 trillion in the first eight months of the current fiscal year ended mid-March. The total trade deficit rose by 34.50 per cent to Rs 1.16 trillion during the period under review.

'BLASTS IN TRANSNISTRIA POSE RISKS TO MOLDOVA'

Bucharest: Moldovan President Maia Sandu has warned that the recent explosions in the country's breakaway Transnistria region may endanger peace within the country.

Following a special meeting of the country's Supreme Security Council on Tuesday, Sandu said that the explosions in the past two days show that "there are tensions between different forces within the region interested in destabilising the situation," Xinhua news agency reported.

"This makes the region vulnerable and poses risks to Moldova," he noted.

"We condemn any provocations and attempts to involve Moldova into actions that could threaten peace in the country," Sandu said, adding that the government "continues to insist on a peaceful settlement of the Transnistrian conflict."

According to media reports from Chisinau, the capital of Moldova, unknown assailants fired grenade launchers at the headquarters of the Transnistrian region's Ministry of State Security late on Monday.

Two more explosions were reported early on Tuesday at the Transnistrian radio and television centre, damaging two radio antennas that broadcast Russian radio in the region, all without casualties.

The Russian president's Press Secretary, Dmitry Peskov, expressed concern about the situation in Transnistria, telling journalists that "we are very closely watching how the situation develops there."

Eric Mamer, chief spokesperson of the European Commission, said in Brussels that "the European Union is following the situation in Transnistria with concern and calls for an end to any violent acts."



CENTRE METING OUT 'STEP-MOTHERLY TREATMENT TO MAHARASHTRA': CM UDDHAV AFTER PM'S CALL TO REDUCE VAT ON FUELS

Thackeray said that Maharashtra contributes 38.3 per cent of direct taxes and 15 per cent of Goods and Services Tax (GST) but in return gets just 5.5 per cent of the total taxes it sends to the Centre. Even now, Maharashtra has to get Rs 26,500 crore as its dues from Centre, he added.



Team Absolute | Mumbai
Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray said Wednesday that the Centre has been meting out "step-motherly treatment" to the state when it comes to financial aid. Thackeray's comments followed Prime Minister Narendra Modi's statement that some states did "injustice" to the people by not reducing value-added tax (VAT) on petrol and diesel even as the Centre cut the excise duty last November. Thackeray said that Maharashtra has contributed a lot for the country's development and people should know about the Centre's step-motherly treatment to it. He said that Maharashtra contributes 38.3 per cent of direct taxes and 15 per cent of Goods and Services Tax (GST) but in return gets just 5.5 per cent of the total taxes it sends to the Centre. Even now, Maharashtra

has to get Rs 26,500 crore as its dues from the Centre, he added. "The state gets paltry aid through the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) when it comes to natural calamities. The state has been requesting more aid but the Centre does not pay heed. When Cyclone Tauktae hit last year, Gujarat got more aid than Maharashtra," he said. He said that in the state capital Mumbai, the Centre charges Rs 31.58 per litre of petrol as taxes and the state Rs 32.55. For diesel, the Centre charges Rs 24.38 per litre as duties and the state Rs 22.37 and hence it is unfair to say that the state alone is responsible for the price rise. He said that the state had reduced duties on compressed natural gas (CNG) used in gas run-vehicles. Thackeray claimed that Maharashtra not only waived off farm loans but also ensured that farmers got aid. The

state government started Shiv Bhojan thali for the poor, he said. He also talked about the schemes his government had introduced for traders to pay their tax dues. Earlier, Maharashtra Congress chief Nana Patole and the party's Mumbai chief Bhai Jagtap had written to CM Thackeray that the government must roll back state taxes by Rs 5 per litre after Centre had reduced the price by Rs 5 per litre. But the government refused to do so. Later, the Congress, an ally of Thackeray's Shiv Sena in the MVA government, protested against the Narendra Modi government at the Centre for high prices of petroleum products. Meanwhile, a senior bureaucrat in Maharashtra said that for every one rupee of tax on fuel, the state earns Rs 800 crore (per year) and if Rs 5 tax per litre of petrol was reduced, it would mean a huge loss.

Maha power shortage artificial, due to wrong policies, says union

The Maharashtra State Electricity Workers Federation (MSEWF) on Wednesday made a startling claim that the ongoing power crisis in different states is "man-made", owing to the "faulty policies" of the Central government.



Team Absolute | Mumbai
The Maharashtra State Electricity Workers Federation (MSEWF) on Wednesday made a startling claim that the ongoing power crisis in different states is "man-made", owing to the "faulty policies" of the Central government. MSEWF President Mohan Sharma said that the current power demand in the state is 28,276 MW from its 2.89 crore consumers of all categories. While the total production by Maharashtra State Power Generation Company is 12,972 MW, the rest is supplied by others - private 5,785 MW, non-traditional sources 8,140 MW and Centre's 5,952, totaling to 32,849 MW - or, a surplus of 4,573 MW over the demand of 28,276 MW, he pointed out. Presently, MahaGenCo has 27 sets to generate power from coal, including one - Nashik - set to resume operations by the weekend after repairs/maintenance. Accordingly, he said recent statements blaming the MahaGenCo's that its power generation sets are not operational due to repairs/maintenance are "wrong".

With an installed capacity of 9,540 MW, the MahaGenCo's thermal electricity generating sets produce 7,275 MW, and the workers, engineers and officers are making all out efforts in the scorching heat to increase it to 8,000 MW, Sharma said. The MSEWF has questioned the contentions of "non-availability" of coal in the country which is allegedly hampering power generation in at least 12 states - the worst-hit Maharashtra, besides Tamil Nadu, West Bengal, Odisha, Punjab, Rajasthan, Telangana, and to some extent in Uttar Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, Karnataka, Bihar, and Assam. "Despite abundant coal availability, the current situation has arisen due to the Centre's policy on regulation and the shoddy working of the Union Energy Ministry, whereby even a week's supply is not available. Instead of imports, there is a need for a Coal Policy with production targets and provision for railway wagons to transport the coal from the mines," Sharma said. Maharashtra alone needs more than 140,000 tonnes coal for its 27 sets, but presently hardly 110,000 tons is supplied, hampering the work of the thermal power plant sets that cannot work to produce electricity as per their full installed capacity, he said.

Another problem is the poor quality of coal with mud-stones mixed in it, leading to a shortfall in the calorific value necessary for power production, while the pollutants jam the boilers or damage equipment, which break down, and hit power generation. Even the privatisation policy of mining with 43 coal blocks handed to private players has been a disaster as they are producing only 89 million tons - or, 16 per cent of India's total 750 million ton production. Added to this is the manner in which certain private companies in Maharashtra are functioning to the detriment of the consumers and in protest, the MSEWF workers had resorted to a two-day token strike on March 28-29, Sharma added. Sharma rued how in these critical times the private companies are trying to give a bad name to MSEDCL when at least four of them are not even producing any power at all, adding to the consumers' misery with long hours of load-shedding due to the shortfall. Meanwhile, as per Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar and State Power Minister Nitin Raut's recent statements, MSEDCL has been allowed to procure electricity from the open market and even toying with the idea of direct coal imports or getting a coal-mine allotted in Chhattisgarh, plus intensifying attempt to recover the unpaid bills arrears of around Rs 65,000 crore from the consumers.

All Maharashtra universities to conduct offline exams from June 1

Team Absolute | Mumbai
Students of Maharashtra universities and colleges have been constantly demanding online or hybrid exams but as per the latest news, the universities in the state are ready to conduct offline exams. However, instead of holding the exams in May, they will begin from June 1, informed Maharashtra Technical and Higher Education Minister Uday Samant. The state government made the announcement of the delayed exams in offline mode after consulting the vice chancellors of several universities in Maharashtra who were of the opinion that the best option now was conducting offline exams. The college and university exams in Maharashtra will be held from June 1 to July 15. It is also expected that there will be a gap of two days between all the papers. The offline exams will have students writing proper theory answers. College and university students in the state had taken to social media for a while requesting for the summer exams to be held offline. Certain Mumbai University colleges had even started off exams in hybrid mode. Nagpur University had also announced that it would be holding exams online with an option of appearing offline as well. With Uday Samant's announcement, it is not known yet whether Nagpur University will be changing its decision.

Navneet Rana lodges complaint against Sanjay Raut with Delhi Police

Member of Parliament from Maharashtra's Amravati, Navneet Rana has lodged a complaint with Delhi Police Commissioner Rakesh Asthana against Shiv Sena MP Sanjay Raut.



Team Absolute | New Delhi
Member of Parliament from Maharashtra's Amravati, Navneet Rana has lodged a complaint with Delhi Police Commissioner Rakesh Asthana against Shiv Sena MP Sanjay Raut. She lodged the complaint against Raut with the Delhi Police as her house is in New Delhi's North Avenue area. "I belong to the Scheduled Caste. In 2014 I fought the elections against the

Raut also spoke against her on television. "Raut called me and my husband 'Bunty and Babli'. He called us 420 with the intention to defame us in our community. On April 22 and 23, when I was at my home in Khar area, Raut sent his party workers to my home who not only created a ruckus but also threatened me with dire consequences. They had brought an ambulance and didn't let me go out of my home. Raut in fact went on saying that he would bury us 20 feet deep," read her complaint. She has urged the Delhi Police to lodge an FIR against Raut and others for calling her and her husband Bunty and Babli, 420 and using derogatory caste related words. The Delhi Police has not made any official statement in this matter so far. A copy of the complaint has been accessed by IANS.

FOOTBALL-SIZE FIBROID REMOVED FROM WOMAN

▶ A LARGE FOOTBALL-SIZED FIBROID, AMONGST OTHERS, WERE REMOVED FROM THE UTERUS OF A 28-YEAR-OLD WOMAN IN MAHARASHTRA'S THANE, WITH THE SPECIMENS WEIGHING JUST ABOVE 1 KG.
Team Absolute | Mumbai
This patient, a resident of Mumbai, was experiencing abdominal pain while at work. The pain interfered with her ability to perform daily activities with ease. She got an ultrasound done and was diagnosed with large tumours in her uterus. The patient was referred to SRV Mamata Hospital, Dombivli. "When she walked into my consulting, I initially thought she was a pregnant lady, 8 months into pregnancy. Later to my surprise, she produced her ultrasound report showing multiple fibroids, said Dr Jaimesh Doctor, gynaecologist and laparoscopic surgeon at SRV Mamta Hospital. "Using advanced imaging techniques her uterus was mapped for the fibroids and a 3D reconstruction was done so that we could

save her uterus for future childbearing and preserve her fertility. The next day, I performed a laparoscopic myomectomy and removed the entire 1 kg mass from a small 1.2 cm incision using advanced instruments and techniques. The surgery lasted for 4 hours. The patient started walking within 12 hours of the surgery. She got discharged after 3 days and resumed her routine life and work in days to follow," he added. "I was shocked to see such a large tumour inside me. I was unaware of it and neglected symptoms of bloating, pain during menses, and the feeling of something heavy moving in my stomach. My symptoms have vanished now. I have lost 1 kg of weight as a bonus," the patient said.

Minor girl blackmailed, raped by boyfriend and his friends

Team Absolute | Nagpur
A minor girl from Maharashtra's Nagpur was gang raped by his boyfriend and two other associates after the latter blackmailed her with a video which he had recorded earlier. According to a report, the victim who belongs to the Jaripatka locality of Nagpur lived in a rented room of Butibori area, with a friend. The victim, who is also a student of an engineering college, came in contact with the accused name Yash Anand Kamble of his class and the two got into a relationship. When they were in their relationship period, the couple came close together and on one such occasion, the private moment of the couple was secretly recorded by the boyfriend. On April 17, the boy called his classmate to his house and showed her the video which he had recorded unknowing to the girl and demanded sexual favours for his two friends namely Bittu Khobragade and ChikuKhobragade and himself.

Case Against Unidentified Persons For Submitting Fake Land Documents



Team Absolute | Thane
The sub-divisional office at Bhiwandi paid a compensation to those who submitted their documents. Police have registered an FIR against unidentified persons for allegedly submitting fake documents to receive a collective compensation of Rs 11.66 crore for land acquisition in Maharashtra's Thane district, the police said on Wednesday. The acquisition of land for the proposed Vadodara-Mumbai Expressway is underway here. In the process, revenue authorities

Maharashtra govt may discuss VAT, fuel prices in April 28 cabinet meeting

▶ THE DENIOR MINISTER SAID THAT MAHARASHTRA'S SHARE IN VAT ON PETROL IS MARGINALLY HIGHER THAN THAT OF THE CENTRE, AND THIS ISSUE WOULD BE DISCUSSED IN THE CABINET MEETING.

Team Absolute | Mumbai
The Maharashtra government may discuss the twin issues of Value Added Tax (VAT) and fuel prices in the state cabinet meeting scheduled for Thursday, a senior minister said on Wednesday. Notably, during his virtual interaction with chief ministers of various states on Wednesday, Prime Minister Narendra Modi flagged higher fuel prices in many opposition-ruled states and urged them to reduce VAT in "national interest" to benefit the common man and work in the spirit of cooperative federalism in the... After the virtual meeting, Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray's office issued a statement detailing the Centre and the state government's share of taxes charged on fuel - mainly petrol and diesel. The CMO stated that the Centre gets Rs 24.38 on a litre of diesel sold in Mumbai, while the state receives Rs 22.37. The same share of a litre of petrol sold in Mumbai is Rs 31.58 and Rs 32.55, respectively. "It is not correct that prices of petrol and diesel are going up because of the state govern-



ment's VAT," Thackeray stated. The CM pointed out that Maharashtra's (VAT) share on petrol is 97 paise higher than the Centre. "To match the Union government's tax share, Maharashtra may bring down VAT on fuel by 97 paise (per litre). However, such decisions have to be discussed in Cabinet meetings and the final approval comes from the chief minister. We may discuss the fuel price issue in the state cabinet meeting," the senior minister said. He has asked his ministry's staff to include a note regarding the prices of petrol and diesel and the taxes imposed by the state and Union governments in the note for Thursday's cabinet meeting. Maharashtra is a huge state in terms of

the number of state employees and their salaries and pension are concerned. It takes a large share of the state's earnings just to pay the monthly salaries and pension, he said. A state finance department official said that Maharashtra's annual earnings are Rs 4 lakh crore of which Rs 1.5 lakh crore are spent on paying salaries and pension of the state employees. Around 14 lakh employees are working either in various departments of the Maharashtra government or in semi-state departments. According to the official, 7.50 lakh people get monthly pensions under the old pension scheme which also puts a huge burden on the state's finances.

MAN TRIES TO GIVE DAUGHTER AS HUMAN SACRIFICE FOR HIDDEN TREASURE; NINE HELD

Yavatmal: The police have arrested the victim's father, a tantrik and seven others over the incident that took place in Babulgaon tehsil on Monday. Nine persons have been arrested for allegedly attempting to kill an 18-year-old girl for human sacrifice on the belief of finding some hidden treasure in Maharashtra's Yavatmal district, police said on Wednesday. The police have arrested the victim's father, a tantrik and seven others over the incident that took place in Babulgaon tehsil on Monday, an official said. One of the accused, who had two daughters, allegedly sexually exploited and threatened the eldest, superintendent of police Yavatmal Dilip Bhujbal said. The girl, who used to stay at a relative's place for studies, had recently come to her house in Madni village, he said. The accused had started performing tantrik rituals at home over the last few days and had dug a pit in the house to bury his daughter on April 25, the official said. The victim somehow managed to inform her friend about the rituals and the police were subsequently alerted, he said. An offence under sections 307 (attempt to murder), 376 (rape) and other relevant provisions of the IPC and other acts has been registered in this regard, the official added.



'AMBER HEARD SHE SHOWED SIGNS OF PERSONALITY DISORDERS'

A clinical and forensic psychologist who evaluated actress Amber Heard and who was hired by Hollywood star Johnny Depp's legal team has testified that she showed signs of borderline and histrionic personality disorders, but not post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

Los Angeles | Agencies

On day nine of Depp's defamation trial against Heard, Dr Shannon Curry told the court that she was asked to "provide a psychological evaluation of Ms Heard" back in October 2021, but was never asked to do so for Depp, reports people.com. Dr Curry reviewed "all the case documents" as part of her evaluation of the 'Aquaman' actress, as well as Heard's medical records (including for "mental-health treatment"), audio and video recordings, photos and "multiple witness statements." She said she met with Heard "on two separate dates," December 10 and December 17, 2021, for about 12 hours total face time. "The results of Ms. Heard's evaluation supported two diagnoses: borderline personality disorder and histrionic personality disorder," Dr Curry said. Dr Curry also said she saw no evidence of PTSD in her evaluation of Heard but noted: "Just because somebody doesn't have PTSD doesn't mean that they weren't harmed psychologically by whatever is being alleged - in this case, Ms Heard is alleging that she was psychologically harmed and that she suffered PTSD because of abuse that she alleges occurred by Mr Depp." During cross-examination, an attorney for Heard asked the psychologist whether she was board certified. Dr Curry responded that she is not.

Robert Pattinson's 'The Batman' gets a sequel

Los Angeles | Agencies

British actor Robert Pattinson is all set to return as Gotham city's caped crusader as his recent release 'The Batman' is getting a sequel, reports 'Variety'. Hollywood studio Warner Bros revealed its plans for another Batman story during a recent evening presentation at CinemaCon, the annual trade show for theatre owners. As per 'Variety', 'The Batman' director Matt Reeves was on hand to announce the news that he will write and direct the follow-up. However, Reeves did not furnish any details about the movie's plot, storyline or its characters. 'The Batman', which is a gritty three-hour superhero adventure, debuted on the big screen in March, raking in \$134 million in the US domestic market. Those ticket sales still rank as the biggest opening weekend of 2022, as well as only the second pandemic-era movie to cross the \$100 million mark in a single weekend following 'Spider-Man: No Way Home'. With \$759 million to date at the global box office, 'The Batman' is currently the highest grossing movie of the year. Along with Bruce Wayne's follow-up, Warner Bros. has several DC properties in the works, including the animated 'DC League of Super-Pets', which is set to bow down in theatres on July 29 and 'Shazam! Fury of the Gods', which opens on December 22. For the next year, Jason Momoa is returning for 'Aquaman and the Lost Kingdom' (set for March 17) and Ezra Miller is starring in 'The Flash' (June 23).

Margot Robbie-starrer 'Barbie' to release in 2023

Los Angeles | Agencies

Actress Margot Robbie's upcoming film 'Barbie' has been locked for July 21, 2023 release in the US. The release date for the much-anticipated live-action adventure from the iconic doll, played by Margot Robbie with a star-studded supporting cast, was announced during the Warner Bros. presentation at Las Vegas' CinemaCon, reports 'Variety'.

A first-look image was shared on stage of Robbie in the aforementioned pink convertible, flashing a megawatt smile and donning a polka dot headband behind the wheel.

Notably, this movie will open against Christopher Nolan's sprawling ensemble film 'Oppenheimer' but Barbie came to play, and has a dream cast of her own.

Ryan Gosling, Kate McKinnon, Alexandra Shipp, America Ferrera, Simu Liu, 'And Just Like That' actor Hari Nef and Will Ferrell all co-star in the reimagining of Barbie's world.

Directed by Greta Gerwig, who co-wrote the script with her partner Noah Baumbach, production is currently underway on the Mattel Films and WB project.

Producers on 'Barbie' also include Robbie via LuckyChap with Tom Ackerley; Mattel's Robbie Brenner; and David Heyman from Heyday Films. LuckyChap's Josey McNamara and Mattel's Ynon Kreiz are executive producers.

In a 2021, Robbie said taking on the beloved toy "comes with a lot of baggage... and a lot of nostalgic connections. But with that comes a lot of exciting ways to attack it. People generally hear 'Barbie' and think, 'I know what that movie is going to be', and then they hear that Greta Gerwig is writing and directing it, and they're like, 'Oh, well, maybe I don't.'"

Production began earlier this year in London.



Justin Lin will not direct 'Fast and Furious 10'

Los Angeles | Agencies

'Fast & Furious' director Justin Lin announced that he will no longer direct the franchise's next instalment 'Fast X', which began filming last week. The filmmaker, who co-wrote the movie's script with Dan Mazeau, will remain involved with the project as a producer, reports 'Variety'.

Lin shared the news with a statement posted to social media, which read: "With the support of Universal, I have made the difficult decision to step back as director of Fast X, while remaining with the project as a producer."

"Over 10 years and five films, we have been able to shoot the best actors, the best stunts, and the best damn car chases," the filmmaker's statement continued.

"On a personal note, as the child of Asian immigrants, I am proud of helping to build the most diverse franchise in movie history. I will forever be grateful to the amazing cast, crew and studio for their support, and for welcoming me into the FAST family." Production on 'Fast X' started on April 20, with franchise stars Vin Diesel, Jordana Brewster, Michelle Rodriguez, Tyrese Gibson, Chris 'Ludacris' Bridges, Nathalie Emmanuel, Sung Kang and Charlize Theron returning.

'Anatomy of a Scandal' dethrones 'Bridgerton 2' as Netflix No. 1

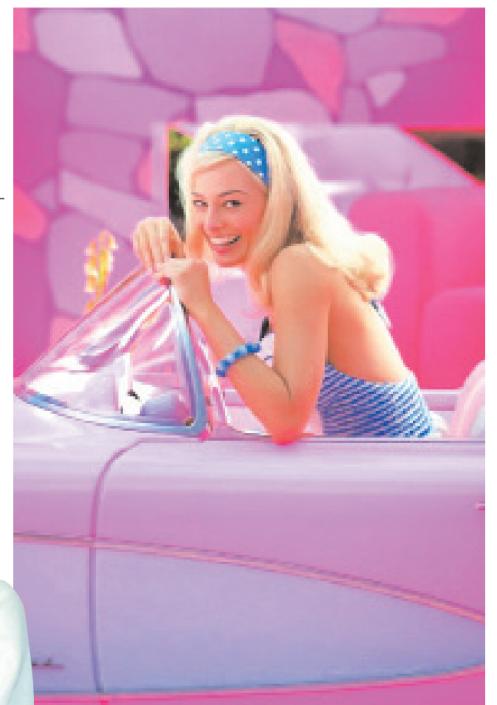
Los Angeles | Agencies

Miniseries 'Anatomy of a Scandal' has ended 'Bridgerton 2's number one position as English-language TV series on Netflix, according to the streaming service's newly released Top 10 rankings.

For the week of April 18-April 24, 'Anatomy of a Scandal' was viewed for 75.6 million hours in its second week of availability, while 'Bridgerton' racked up 46 million and landed in the No. 2 slot on the list for the first time since it debuted the week of March 21, reports 'Variety'.

In third was new limited series 'Conversations With a Killer: The John Wayne Gacy Tapes' with 37.5 million hours, and new reality dating series 'The Ultimatum: Marry or Move On' was in fourth with 29 million.

The rest of the Top 10 English-language TV series included 'Selling Sunset' Season 5 (28.4 million hours), 'Bridgerton' Season 1 (17.3 million hours), 'Heartstopper' Season 1 (14.6 million hours), 'The Creature Cases' Season 1 (13.6 million hours), 'Married at First Sight' Season 10 (12.8 million hours) and the Obamas' new show 'Our Great National Parks' (11.8 million hours).



Why Megan Fox and Machine Gun Kelly drink each other's 'blood'!

Los Angeles | Agencies

Actress Megan Fox sees her blood-drinking ceremonies with rapper beau Machine Gun Kelly as "a passage". Fox shared: "When I do it, it's a passage or it is used for a reason. And it is controlled where it's like, 'Let's shed a few drops of blood and each drink it.' He is much more haphazard and hectic and chaotic, where he's willing to just cut his chest open with broken glass and be like, 'Take my soul.'"

The loved-up couple travelled to Costa Rica in 2021, when they consumed together the psychoactive plant brew ayahuasca, which is thought to open the mind and heal past traumas, reports femalefirst.co.uk.

The Hollywood star has now explained how their romance benefited from the experience. She said: "It bound us together in a way. It confirmed a lot of things for us that I needed to know or I needed to feel. It opened a door for a lot of healing for me, from a personal experience I had with him, that allowed us to get to a place where we were now seeking the right outlets to heal moving forward." Fox went public with their relationship in 2020, having previously been married to actor Brian Austin Green. The 'Transformers' star thinks she's been manifesting her fiancé since she was just four years old. She explained: "He's literally my exact physical type that I've been manifesting since I was four."

ABSOLUTE PIC OF THE DAY



Tommy Dorfman



IPL 2022

RASHID, TEWATIA OVERCOME UMRAN'S FIFER AS GT BEAT SRH BY 5 WICKETS

Mumbai | Agencies

Sensational batting by Rahul Tewatia (40 not out off 21) and Rashid Khan (31 not out off 11) in the slog overs overcame pacer Umransingh Chahal's maiden fifer (5/25) as Gujarat Titans beat Sunrisers Hyderabad by five wickets in a thrilling IPL 2022 match at the Wankhede Stadium, here on Wednesday.

Invited to bat first, brilliant fifties by Abhishek Sharma (65 off 42), Aiden Markram (56 off 40) and a late blitz by Shashank Singh (25 not out off 6) powered Sunrisers Hyderabad to 195/6 in 20 overs.

Chasing a big total, Wriddhiman Saha and Shubman Gill gave Gujarat a flying start. Saha, in particular, was very aggressive and dealt in boundaries, to take his team 59/0 at the end of the powerplay.

It was Umransingh Chahal, who gave SRH their first breakthrough by removing Shubman Gill (22) in the fourth ball of the 8th over. In the very next ball, he hit Hardik Pandya on the shoulder with a thunderbolt. In his second over, Umransingh again troubled Hardik (10) and eventually dismissed the Gujarat skipper with a short ball.

Both sides didn't want to give any inch to their opposition at the half-way stage, GT had reached 91 for 2 with Saha and David Miller at the



crease. While Malik was hogging all the limelight with his sheer pace, Saha continued his good job with the bat for Gujarat as he brought up a 28-ball fifty.

Just when it looked like Saha and David had brought GT back into the game, Malik bagged his wicket by

dismissal Saha. Saha (68 off 38) failed to dig out a yorker from Malik, leaving GT to 122/3, needing 74 more in 40. Umransingh completed his demolition job of the GT batting order in his final over when he blew away David Miller and Abhinav Manohar in back to back deliveries

to record his first five-wicket haul in the IPL. Gujarat were in a spot of bother at 140/5 after 16 overs with Tewatia and Rashid in the middle. The duo went on to crack a slew of shots to break open the game. With 35 needed off 12 balls, the left-handed Tewatia used the left-arm angle to his advantage by smacking T Natarajan for a boundary and six - slog-sweep over cow corner.

Gujarat needed 22 runs in the last over of the innings and Tewatia began on the right note by clubbing Marco Jansen over deep midwicket for another six but could eke out only a single off the next ball. Rashid then showcased his pyrotechnics and managed to smash three sixes in the four balls to take their team over the victory line. Earlier, invited to bat first,

Gujarat Titans pulled things back by getting rid of SRH batters finished with 195/6 in 20 overs.

Mohammed Shami (3/39), Yash Dayal (1/24), Alzarri Joseph (1/35) were the wicket-takers for Gujarat.

Brief scores:

Sunrisers Hyderabad -- 195/6 in 20 Overs (Abhishek Sharma 65, Aiden Markram 56; Mohammed Shami 3/39) lost to Gujarat Titans 199/5 in 20 Overs (Wriddhiman Saha 68, Rahul Tewatia 40 not out; Umransingh 5/25) by 5 wickets

Badminton Asia Championships

PV Sindhu, Saina move to second round; Lakshya, Praneeth crash out



Manila (Philippines) | Agencies

Manila (Philippines): Top Indian shuttlers - PV Sindhu and Saina Nehwal -- won their first round women's singles matches and moved to the second round at the 2022 Badminton Asia Championships but Lakshya Sen and B Sai Praneeth crashed out of the tournament after losing their respective matches, here on Wednesday.

Double Olympic medallist Sindhu was made to work hard by 39th ranked Pai Yu Po of Chinese Taipei in the opening round match that lasted one hour and 17 minutes. The Indian ace dropped the opening game and saved a match point in the second before taking the decider and winning the contest by 18-21, 27-25, 21-9 at the Muntinlupa Sports Complex.

World No 7 and former world champion Sindhu will now take on Singapore's Yue Yann Jaslyn Hooi in the next round on Thursday.

On the other hand, London 2012 bronze medallist Saina Nehwal was also stretched to

three games by South Korea's Sim Yu Jin but the Indian eventually prevailed 21-15, 17-21, 21-13 in 54 minutes. However, Lakshya Sen, the highest ranked Indian in the men's singles, was knocked out in the opening round. Sen, who is currently ranked ninth in the badminton world rankings, was beaten 21-12, 10-21, 21-19 by world No 64 Li Shi Feng of China. Meanwhile, Tokyo 2020 Olympian B Sai Praneeth also faced a first-round exit, following a 17-21, 13-21 loss to this year's Swiss Open winner Jonatan Christie of Indonesia. Another Indian shuttler Aakarshi Kashyap was knocked out from the women's singles by reigning world champion Akane Yamaguchi. Aakarshi lost 15-21, 9-21. The women's doubles pairs of Ashwini Bhat-Shikha Gautam and Mirran Sanghi and Ritika Thaker were also ousted in their opening contests.

Later in the day, world championship silver medallist Kidambi Srikanth and youngster Malvika Bansod will take the court for their respective singles matches.

UEFA Champions League semifinal

City take first-leg honours with 4-3 win over Real Madrid

City, who are also leading the Premier League table, held a two-goal advantage on three separate occasions, but were pegged back each time by Real who refused to buckle on an enthralling night.



Belgian guided a low header past international team-mate Thibaut Courtois to make it 1-0, reports mancity.com.

For the third time in the contest, City went two goals clear. In the 74th minute, Oleks Zinchenko cut inside a challenge on the edge of the box and was brought down. The referee played the advantage and while a clutch of Real defenders seemed to stop, Bernardo picked up the loose ball and thumped it into the top left corner to make it 4-2.

But Real were not giving up just yet. A

cross into the City box saw the ball strike the arm of Aymeric Laporte as he went up for a header and the referee pointed to the dreaded spot. Benzema was never going to miss, and he slotted the penalty home to make it 4-3 with 82 minutes on the clock.

Result: Manchester City 4 (Kevin De Bruyne 2nd min; Gabriel Jesus 11th, Phil Foden 53rd, Bernardo Silva 74th) beat Real Madrid 3 (Karim Benzema 33rd and 82nd; Vancius Junior 55th).

WORLD NO.1 IGA SWIATEK WITHDRAWS FROM MADRID OPEN

Madrid: World No.1 Iga Swiatek has withdrawn from the Madrid Open 2022 on Wednesday, citing a right shoulder injury.

The 20-year-old Polish star is riding a 23-match win streak after winning her fourth consecutive title at the Porsche Tennis Grand Prix. The win on indoor clay came after becoming the first player to win the first three WTA 1000 events of the season at the Qatar Total Open, BNP Paribas Open, and Miami Open.

By winning Indian Wells and Miami back-to-back in March, Swiatek became the fourth and youngest woman to win the Sunshine Double.

Set to play as the top seed in Madrid, Swiatek was due to open her tournament on Friday against a qualifier. The next player to be seeded, Leylah Fernandez, will move to Swiatek's place at the top of the draw.



IWL: Odisha Sports ease past Sirvodem SC with a dominant win

Bhubaneswar | Agencies

Odisha Sports bagged full points with a dominant 9-1 win against Sirvodem SC in the Hero Indian Women's League at the 7th Battalion Stadium on Wednesday.

Odisha made a quick start by finding the opener as soon as in the 2nd minute of the game. Satyabati Khadia struck from the left and sent the ball straight into the net. They continued to maintain a dominant show all across the game. In the 14th minute, Odisha doubled their lead with Satyabadi adding a brace to her name.

Ahead of the half an hour mark, Odisha made it 3-0. Pyari Xaxa pulled the trigger for Odisha this time.



In the 37th minute, a howler from the Sirvodem custodian lead to a ball landing to Jabamani Tudu and she did no mistake to slot it home. Going into the halftime Odisha Sports earned a 4-0 lead for themselves. After the breather, Sirvodem seemed a better side as they kept on creating chances. It was in the 53' minute that Sirvodem got their breakthrough with Ernestina pulling one back from the spot.

But things turned tough for the Goan side as Odisha scored three back-to-back goals in the 58', 59', and 61' minutes making it 7-1. Pyari, Jasoda, and Deepa found the net respectively. The goal shower continued as Jasoda Munda earned a brace for herself in the 63rd minute making it 8-1 for Odisha. Finally in the 90+3' minute Pyari bagged the winner for her making it a hat-trick for herself from a free space inside the box.

KERALA SCRIPT FOURTH SUCCESSIVE WIN; CHENNAIYN, RFYC PLAY GOALLESS DRAW

Goa | Agencies

The Kerala Blasters FC juggernaut rolled on unabated as they recorded their fourth successive victory with a 2-0 win over Jamshedpur FC in a fourth-round Reliance Foundation Development League (RFDL) match here at the Benaulum Ground on Wednesday.

In another game, Reliance Foundation Young Champs (RFYC) and Chennaiyin FC played a goalless draw at the Nagoa Ground.

In front of a good turnout despite the searing heat,



Nihal Sudeesh (27th, 84th) scored a brace on either side of halftime to help Kerala maintain their 100% record and also a fourth clean sheet in as many

matches. Kerala now have 12 points from four outings, while Jamshedpur remain on seven from four games.

KIUG 2021: ANN MARIYA TOPPLES NATIONAL RECORD; JAIN UNIVERSITY STAY TOP OF MEDAL TABLE

Bengaluru: Five games records and one national record were broken on Day five at the Khelo India University Games 2021 here on Wednesday. Day five at the Khelo India University Games 2021 (KIUG) offered 17 medals across five sports as Jain University tightened their grip on top spot in the medal table (G10, S4, B1) with 10 gold, four silver and one bronze medals. By the end of the day, 63 universities had made their presence felt on the medal table, and 29 had already logged a gold. The day also saw an end to the weightlifting, basketball and badminton competitions. The most eye catching of the day's performances came from the weightlifting arena, where a new national record was set in the +87kg women category. Mangalore University's MT Ann Mariya decimated the competition to win gold. The 24-year-old lifted 129kg to break Manpreet Kaur's clean and jerk record (128kg) set at the National Championships earlier this year. Ann Mariya trains at the SAI National Centre of Excellence in Bengaluru. Although she missed out on equalling her national record in the combined (231kg) set at the National Championships, Mariya was delighted to have bettered her personal best in the clean and jerk in Bengaluru.



Pull out of the IPL, for all you care: Shastri to Kohli

Mumbai | Agencies

It is no secret that IPL 2022 has seen Virat Kohli struggle to get runs consistently for Royal Challengers Bangalore (RCB). In nine matches, Kohli had amassed just 128 runs at an average of 16 and strike-rate of 119.62.

Amidst registering consecutive golden ducks and recently nine against the Royals at Pune, many former cricketers have asked Kohli to take a break in order to get some rest. Joining the 'take a break' bandwagon is former India head coach Ravi Shastri, who has advised Kohli to pull



out of IPL 2022 if he wishes to extend his cricketing career. "I think it (a break) is ideal for him because he has played non-stop cricket and has captained the side across all formats. It will be wise of him to take a break. Sometimes you have to draw the balance. This year he is already into

the tournament (IPL 2022), tomorrow if push comes to shove and you want to prolong your international career and make a mark there for 6-7 years, pull out of the IPL, for all you care," Shastri said on sports presenter Jatin Sapru's YouTube channel. Shastri has said that the advice is not only for Kohli but for other Indian cricketers as well. "If that is the case, you have played for 14-15 years. Not only Virat, I'll tell that to any other player. If you want to play and do well for India, you have to draw the line where you want to take that break.

Stokes could be unveiled as England captain in 'next 48 hours': Report

London | Agencies

England's charismatic all-rounder Ben Stokes could be unveiled as the new Test captain soon after Joe Root stepped down recently following the team's humiliating losses in the Ashes and the away series in the Caribbean, a report said on Wednesday.

A report in iNews said that England men's cricket's new managing director, Rob Key had travelled to Durham for a "face-to-face" meeting with Stokes to "discuss the role", and that the 30-year-old all-rounder could be officially unveiled as



England's new Test skipper "in the next 48 hours". Stokes has long been touted as Root's successor, given his standing in the England side and also

the fact that he enjoys a good rapport with the former captain. Stokes himself had said recently that while there was "a lot of speculation" that he might be given the responsibility to lead the Test, the decision will be taken by the new England managing director Rob Key. The report also stated that Stokes was keen on accepting the job and the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) are "expected to announce his appointment by the end of this week".

Kasparov plays Djokovic for his stance on Russian athletes

London | Agencies

Garry Kasparov, the all-time great Russian chess grandmaster, has criticised world No.1 tennis player Novak Djokovic for supporting Russian athletes, saying that all those who do not condemn President Vladimir Putin's "war of extermination in Ukraine are supporting it with silence".

Serbia's Djokovic, while speaking on the issue of the All England Club barring Russian and Belarusian players from competing at this year's Wimbledon, said recently that while he condemns the war, the



Wimbledon ban on tennis players from Russia and Belarus was unacceptable. "I will always condemn war. I will never support war being myself a child of war. I know how much emotional trauma it leaves. In Serbia we all know what happened in 1999. In the Balkans we have had many wars in recent history. However, I cannot support the decision of Wimbledon. I think it is crazy. When politics interferes with sport, the result is not good," Djokovic said in Belgrade recently. Kasparov took to twitter to remind Djokovic of the traumas of war faced by Serbia.



DEEPIKA PADUKONE TO BE A PART OF JURY OF THE 75TH CANNES FILM FESTIVAL

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actor Deepika Padukone will be a part of the Cannes Film Festival as a competition jury this year. According to the current speculation, Deepika, who has been a red carpet regular at the festival since 2017, would be expected to walk for all ten days.

French actor Vincent Lindon will be the president of the jury of the 75th Cannes Film Festival. Joining him on the jury along with Deepika are actor-director Rebecca Hall,

Noomi Rapace and Italian actor-director Jasmine Trinca, as well as directors Asghar Farhadi, Ladj Ly, Jeff Nichols and Joachim Trier.

In a statement to the press, Cannes described the icon as, "Indian Actress, producer, philanthropist, and entrepreneur Deepika Padukone, is a huge star in her country. With over 30 feature films to her credit, she made her English language film debut as the female lead in xXx: The Return of Xander Cage, co-starring with Vin Diesel. She also owns a production company which has produced films like Chhapaak and '83, in which she also starred, as well as the upcoming film The Intern. Credits include

Gehraiyaan and Padmaavat, along side the award-winning and critically acclaimed film Piku. In 2015, she had set up a foundation, whose programs and initiatives aim to destigmatize mental illness and raise awareness about the importance of mental health. In 2018, a Magazine named her one of the 100 Most Influential People in the World."

For the unversed, the Cannes Film Festival takes place from May 17-28.



Yami Gautam handled fans brilliantly while shooting in Kolkata

Kolkata: The underbelly of Kolkata will be showcased in Yami Gautam starrer upcoming emotional investigative drama, LOST. In order to capture the essence of West Bengal, the three-time National Award-Winning director shot most of his next in the lively streets of the city to keep it authentic. The hustle-bustle of Kolkata would definitely look spectacular on-screen, but shooting for the same to maintain the authenticity was not a cakewalk!

While Yami Gautam has wrapped up shooting for the film, a source revealed how challenging it was to control the crowd as Yami boasts a massive fandom.

The source said, "Fans would flock to the set locations to catch a glimpse of Yami Gautam. The lead actress would talk to them or click a picture with them to make her fans at ease and not disrupt the shooting. She made the entire process go smoothly!" For the unversed, Yami Gautam will play the author-backed role in LOST. The film that comments on media integrity also stars Pankaj Kapoor, Rahul Khanna, Neil Bhoopalram, Pia Bajpiee, and Tushar Pandey in pivotal roles.

TRIBUTE TO NIGHTINGALE



INDIA'S NOTABLE SINGERS COME TOGETHER TO PAY TRIBUTE TO THE LEGENDARY SINGER LATA MANGESHKAR

Kumar, Jatin Pandit, Javed Ali, Aishwarya Majumdar, Sneha Pant, Palak Muchhal and Anvesha take the stage to sing Lata Mangeshkar's most iconic songs.

Lata Mangeshkar has impacted many lives and inspired millions over the course of her illustrious career. The singers will be seen reminiscing fond memories from their meetings and interactions with the legendary singer. Talking about this development, says one of India's greatest vocalists Shaan, "It's an absolute honour to be part of this grand tribute. Lata ji is not just someone I respect, admire and love but also someone who every Indian is deeply connected to. I consider this among the best moments of my life and I feel incredibly lucky to have the opportunity to pay a tribute to the country's greatest singer on a grand platform like this." Also present at this tribute event will be Lata Mangeshkar's family, as they join in this special evening showcasing her work.

Produced by Gajendra Singh the 8 episode, hour-long series will be out on 1st May 2022.

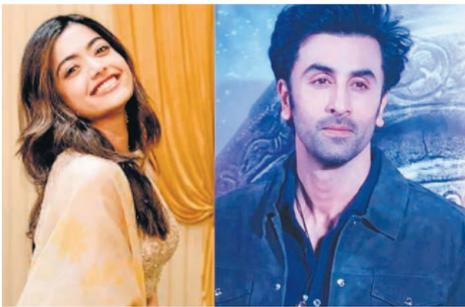
Team Absolute | Mumbai

Legendary Singer Lata Mangeshkar left for heavenly abode on 6 February 2022, leaving a void that definitely cannot be filled. Fondly known as the Nightingale of India, her songs never ceased to leave an indelible mark in every Indian's mind. To cherish her fond memories, eighteen of India's most prominent singers will come together to pay special tribute to the Queen of Melody. A leading channel via their exclusive series brings these popular voices together as the music industry stands in solidarity to honour the legendary Lata Mangeshkar. The grand tribute will see Sonu Nigam, Arijit Singh, Shankar Mahadevan, Nitin Mukesh, Neeti Mohan, Alka Yagnik, Sadhana Sargam, Pyarelal ji, Udit Narayan, Shaan, Kumar Sanu, Amit

Rashmika Mandanna in Mumbai for her upcoming film with Ranbir Kapoor

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The 'IT' Girl of Indian cinema, Rashmika Mandanna currently is working on 5 films across languages. The actress is now shooting nights and days, for her much awaited film, 'Animal' co starring Ranbir Kapoor in Mumbai. A source close to the actress reveals, "Rashmika has been shooting for 'Animal' in Mumbai for more than a week now. The schedule consists of several patches of day and night shoots in the suburbs. She has been juggling different cities to concentrate on her acting projects in Telugu, Tamil and Hindi." "Post this, Rashmika will travel to Hyderabad for a short period of time, and then return to Mumbai to fulfill her brand commitments." Recently, Rashmika was spotted stepping out of a studio in Mumbai. Paparazzi who were waiting for her continuously called her Srivalli. The actress couldn't stop smiling and showed her love by making a Korean-style heart sign with her fingers. She now has Sidharth Malhotra's Mission Majnu and Amitabh Bachchan's Goodbye in the pipeline. The actress will soon start shooting for her upcoming film, Pushpa: The Rule with Allu Arjun. After Sulthan, she signed her second Tamil film with Thalapaty Vijay, which is currently progressing at a swift pace.



'Waiting for the opportunity'

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Urvashi was questioned about the same. She says: "I feel my fans love me so much that they now know me. I would really wish and wait for the opportunity to share screen opposite Shahrukh Khan. It's any actress' dream. Hope that happens soon. Keeping my fingers crossed."

Urvashi who was crowned Miss Diva Universe 2015 and later represented India at the Miss Universe 2015 pageant and was also first youngest judge for Miss Universe Pageant 2021 enjoys 48 millions followers on social media.

She adds: "Social media has turned out to be a easy way to stay in touch with fans. I can't be more blessed to have so much of love. I just wish to keep my audience entertained and keep winning hearts. They are like family to me."

Actress Urvashi Rautela was spotted with Bollywood star Shah Rukh Khan at Baba Siddique's Iftar party on April 17. After that fans went to trend the 'Pagalpanti' actress on social media along with SRK and wanted to see them romancing on screen.



Sonakshi Sinha campaigns for PETA against leather

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Bollywood actor Sonakshi Sinha has featured in a new campaign for People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) India that encourages fans to ditch leather and wear vegan. For the campaign, Sonakshi is seen holding a bag that's dripping with "blood", she calls attention to the more than 1.4 billion cows, dogs, cats, sheep, and goats and millions of other animals who are slaughtered for leather each year.

"Cows and buffaloes are intelligent, emotional animals who mourn the loss of and separation from loved ones, so I choose vegan leather and other compassionate materials when I shop," says Sinha.

"Through this campaign with PETA India, I hope to inspire more people to keep fashion fun, not grisly, by wearing vegan." Sonakshi has previously joined other stars in calling for the strengthening of animal protection laws, starred in a pro-adoption campaign for PETA India, and penned a letter on behalf of the group pushing for the transfer of an abused elephant near Jaipur.



INSTAGRAM PIC OF THE DAY



Kiara Advani