

absolute india

VOL. 7, ISSUE 174, BHOPAL | WEDNESDAY, MAY 04, 2022 | ₹5 | PAGE 08

PUBLISHED SIMULTANEOUSLY FROM BHOPAL, MUMBAI AND NEW DELHI



NATION > 02
No future for any more parties in Bihar, says Sushil Modi...



HOLLYWOOD > 06
Cara Delevingne strips off to show gold-painted body...



SPORTS > 07
Murray overcomes Thiem in first clay-court challenge...

PLAY 'HANUMAN CHALISA' IF YOU HEAR 'AZAANS', SAYS UNDETERRED RAJ THACKERAY

RELIGIOUS POLITICS

▶ REITERATING TO THE MUSLIMS THAT THIS WAS A SOCIAL ISSUE AND NOT A RELIGIOUS ONE, RAJ THACKERAY SAID HE WHOLE-HEARTEDLY WELCOMED THE DECISION OF THOSE MOSQUES THAT HAVE TRIED TO STOP THE USE OF LOUDSPEAKERS OWING TO THE MISUSE AND DISTURBANCES CAUSED BY IT, AND ALSO DIRECTED THE HINDUS NOT TO HARASS SUCH MOSQUES THAT HAVE STOPPED USING LOUD-SPEAKERS.

▶ ACKNOWLEDGING THAT THE ISSUE CANNOT BE TACKLED IN A DAY, HE CALLED UPON ALL HINDUS TO TAKE THE CALL AHEAD OF SHUTTING DOWN LOUDSPEAKERS, BECOME MENTALLY PREPARED FOR IT, ALL POLITICIANS SHOULD ALSO WORK TOWARDS IT, AND "EACH CITIZEN SHOULD SHOW THE STRENGTH OF WHAT IT IS TO BE A HINDU".



Aurangabad/Mumbai: The political temperature in Maharashtra soared as Aurangabad police on Tuesday filed a FIR against Maharashtra Navnirman Sena President Raj Thackeray for alleged violations of police conditions at his mega-rally held in that city late on Sunday. Simultaneously, a Mumbai Police team is likely to go and serve a prohibitory notice under CrPC's Section 149 on Raj Thackeray, even as senior MNS leaders expressed apprehensions of his possible arrest in the case. Earlier on

POLICE BOOK RAJ, MNS FEARS ARREST

Tuesday, Home Minister Dilip Walse-Patil held meetings with DGP Rajnish Seth, Mumbai Police Commissioner Sanjay Pande and other top officials. DGP Seth had said before that the Maharashtra Police would initiate action against Raj Thackeray "today itself" - a day ahead of his 'Now OR Never' ultimatum to the state government to remove loudspeakers from all mosques by Wednesday (May 4) failing which his workers would blare Hanuman Chalisa at double volumes.

In a statement released here, the MNS chief alleged that Hindu festivals are restricted by silence zones under the facade of schools or hospitals, but mosques are exempt from such restrictions. "I appeal to all Hindus that, make them hear Hanuman Chalisa, all local mandals and vigilant citizens

should start a signature drive against it and submit the appeal letter with signatures daily to the local police station, if one hears the masjids playing the loudspeakers, the citizens should dial 100 and lodge a complaint. One must complain everyday," he said. The estranged cousin of Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav

NON-BAILABLE WARRANT IN 14-YEAR-OLD CASE

Sangli: A court in western Maharashtra's Sangli district has issued a non-bailable warrant against Maharashtra Navnirman Sena (MNS) chief Raj Thackeray in connection with a 14-year-old case. In 2008, Thackeray was booked under sections 109 and 117 (abetment of offence) of IPC for allegedly making inflammatory speeches. While issuing the non-bailable warrant on April 6, Judicial Magistrate, First Class at Shirala in Sangli district asked Mumbai police commissioner to arrest the MNS chief and present him before the court.

Thackeray called upon the police to show that the country is "governed by law and order, they should maintain and follow the law, and nauthorised mosques, loudspeakers and the prayers being held in the middle of the roads need to be addressed duly". He referred to the Supreme Court guidelines on the timings, the decibel levels and other aspects for the use of loudspeakers by all religions for the duration of their festivals, but it is not supposed to be for 365 days, etc.

Targeting his cousin and Chief Minister, Raj Thackeray sought to remind him of the late Shiv Sena founder Balasaheb Thackeray who wanted all loudspeakers to be silenced. He added that the country doesn't have so many jails that can arrest the Hindus, and this fact should be recognised by the governments.

Curfew clamped in parts of Jodhpur as violence erupts

At least 97 people have been arrested in connection with the clashes that broke out between two groups in Rajasthan's Jodhpur on Monday night and continued on Tuesday following which Internet services were suspended while curfew was clamped in 10 police station areas.



Team Absolute | Jaipur

Curfew was clamped in ten police station areas of Rajasthan's Jodhpur on Tuesday after clashes occurred again between two groups. The clashes had first erupted late Monday night.

The violence erupted again on Tuesday morning at the Jalori Gate over the unfurling of a flag. The police lathi-charged the miscreants, fired tear gas shells and dispersed the mob. In view of the tense situation, curfew was imposed in 10 police station areas. At the same time, the Internet has been suspended in the district till Tuesday

midnight.

Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot, meanwhile, cancelled all his significant scheduled programmes in the wake of this violence. He also called a high-level meeting to take feedback of the situation. The Chief Minister appealed to people to maintain peace. On Tuesday morning in the Shanchik police station area of Jodhpur, miscreants smashed glasses of more than 20 vehicles and also ransacked many ATMs.

There has also been a ruckus outside the house of the Soorsagar MLA. Additional Director General, Crime and other officers from

Jaipur have been sent to Jodhpur. Another policeman was injured in stone pelting during the Tuesday morning clashes taking the total number of injured personnel to three since Monday.

The violence began after some people were raising flags at the Jalori Gate intersection around 11.30 p.m. on Monday. A person making a video of this was beaten up by some youths. When some people came to his rescue, they beat them also. After this, the other group started throwing stones. Deputy Commissioner of Police East and Udaymandir SHO were injured in the stone pelting.

One confirmed case of XE variant detected in India: INSACOG

Team Absolute | New Delhi

One confirmed case of the XE Covid variant has been detected in India, according to the latest bulletin of the Indian SARS-CoV2 Genomics Sequencing Consortium (INSACOG).

However, the location of this variant was not identified in the bulletin for April 25 released on Tuesday.

"As compared to the previous week, 12 states have shown an increase in cases, while 19 states have shown a decline," said the bulletin said.

It said that suspected recombinant sequences are under further analysis.

"BA.2.10 and BA.2.12 are BA.2 sub-lineages that have been detected and many old BA.2 sequences have been reclassified into these new



sub-lineages. So far these sub-lineages are not reported to be associated with increased severity of disease," the bulletin said, adding that so far there are no reports of XE clusters across India.

Also in an April 18 bulletin, the INSACOG had mentioned one XE variant

case in the country. The INSACOG reports genomic surveillance of SARS-CoV-2 across the country through sequencing of samples from Sentinel sites and International passengers arriving in India.

As per the latest bulletin, INSACOG has sequenced total 2,43,957 samples.

SEER DETAINED IN AGRA, WANTED TO OFFER PRAYERS AT TAJ MAHAL

Agra: A seer from Ayodhya Jagat Guru Paramhans Das was stopped by police in Agra on Tuesday.

He had announced that he would visit the Taj Mahal, to perform 'shudhikaran' with mantras on Akshaya Tritiya.

The seer was earlier denied entry on April 26 at the Taj Mahal for trying to enter the premises with a 'brahmhanda' (a wooden stick carried by Hindu seers).

Agitated with police action, the seer has said that while members of other communities are allowed inside, he was stopped because he was wearing saffron clothes. "Why was I invited if they had to insult me," he had said. Meanwhile, the seer has announced that he would give up food and water until he was allowed to offer prayers inside the Taj Mahal.

Cong, BJP trade barbs over Rahul's viral video

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Congress and BJP on Tuesday exchanged barbs after the video of Rahul Gandhi in a Kathmandu nightclub party went viral.

Both the parties were attacking each other over the video and the Congress raked up Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Pakistan saying that he was not an "uninvited guest like the Prime Minister when he visited Pakistan".

The Congress said Rahul Gandhi is in Nepal to attend the wedding of a journalist friend. Congress General Secretary Randeep Singh Surjewala said, "Rahul Gandhi has gone to Nepal, a friendly country, to attend a



journalist's wedding. There is nothing wrong. It's a matter of our culture. It's not a crime. Maybe the PM and BJP will soon decide it's a crime to participate in weddings of friends and family members," he added.

BJP leader Amit Malviya put out a video on Twitter showing Rahul Gandhi at a nightclub in Kathmandu, where he has gone to attend a wed-

MAHUA MOITRA COMES OUT IN SUPPORT OF RAHUL GANDHI

"How on earth is it anybody's business whether Rahul

Gandhi or anybody else is in nightclub or at a wedding in private time? Sick BJP trolls in-charge should stick to doing what they do best -- leading double lives with beer in teapots," Moitra tweeted.

ding. "Rahul Gandhi was at a nightclub when Mumbai was under seize. He is at a nightclub at a time when his party is exploding. He is consistent," Malviya tweeted.

'AARTI', 'AZAAN' GO TOGETHER IN THIS UP TEMPLE, MOSQUE WITH ONE ENTRANCE



Kanpur: On Tuesday morning, when devotees thronged the Hanuman temple to offer prayers, the neighbouring mosque had hundreds of Muslims offering 'namaaz' on Eid.

The Hanuman temple and mosque at Tatmill crossing in Kanpur share a common entrance and members of the two communities share an unmatched bonhomie.

"For years, 'aarti' and 'azaan' have been taking place with both the communities extending their full cooperation. We believe in inclusiveness and there has never been any problem or trouble," said Roshan Lal, a local businessman.

"The temple and mosque have a common entrance and we have to cross the temple and then enter the mosque. We are coming here to pray for the past several years and no one has ever demanded a separate entrance," said the priest.

Brisk walking may reduce 16 years from your biological age

▶ Telomeres are the acaps' at the end of each chromosome, and hold repetitive sequences of non-coding DNA that protect the chromosome from damage, similar to the way the cap at the end of a shoelace stops it from unravelling.

▶ Each time a cell divides, these telomeres become shorter - until a point where they become so short that the cell can no longer divide, known as 'replicative senescence'. Therefore, scientists consider LTL a strong marker for 'biological age', independent from when an individual was born.

▶ Although the relationship between telomere length and disease is not fully understood, the build-up of these senescent cells is believed to contribute to a range of symptoms we associate with ageing, such as frailty and age-related diseases.



LONDON | Agencies

Forget botox, just doing brisk walking daily may shave off 16 years from your biological age by midlife, finds a study. Researchers from the University of Leicester in the UK in a new study of genetic data of more than 400,000 adults revealed a clear link between walking pace and a genetic marker of biological age. In the paper published in the journal Communications Biology, they confirmed a causal link between walking

pace and leukocyte telomere length (LTL), an indicator of biological age; and found that a faster walking pace, independent of the amount of physical activity, was associated with longer telomere.

The team estimated that a lifetime of brisk walking could lead to the equivalent of 16 years younger biological age by midlife.

Data from wrist-worn wearable activity tracking devices used to measure habitual physical activity also supported a stronger role of habitual activity intensity (e.g. faster walking) in relation to telomere length.

The study "suggests measures such as a habitually slower walking speed are a simple way of identifying people at greater risk of chronic disease or unhealthy ageing, and that activity intensity may play an important role in optimising interventions", said Dr Paddy Dempsey, Lecturer and Research Fellow at the University.

PM MODI APPEALS TO RUSSIA AND UKRAINE TO HAVE CEASEFIRE, TAKE PATH OF DIALOGUE

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday again appealed to Russia and Ukraine to have an immediate ceasefire and to take path of dialogue as his Danish counterpart Mette Frederiksen hoped that India will influence Russia to stop the crisis.

The appeal was made by Modi, while making a statement following talks with the Danish Prime Minister in Copenhagen, where he reached on the second leg of his three-nation European tour.

"We call for an immediate ceasefire in Ukraine and take path of dialogue and diplomacy to resolve the issue," he said. Frederiksen said that as India is close partner, she

and Modi discussed war in Ukraine. "We discussed consequences of horrible crimes committed against civilians and humanitarian crisis in Ukraine."

She said that killings of civilians in Bucha are deeply shocking. Both the Prime Ministers condemned these killings and stressed the need for an independent investigation.

Frederiksen said that Denmark and the entire European Union strongly condemn Russia's unlawful and unprovoked invasion of Ukraine.

"My message is very clear - (Russian President Vladimir) Putin has to stop this war and end the killings," she said. She also said that she hopes that India will influence Russia to stop the war.



MARRIED WOMEN ARE EXTREMELY POSSESSIVE: ALLAHABAD HC

PRAYAGRAJ | Agencies

The Allahabad High Court has said that a married woman is extremely possessive about her husband and cannot bear to share him with others.

The bench of Justice Rahul Chaturvedi made the observation as it upheld a trial court order dismissing a discharge application filed by a man accused of abetting his wife's suicide.

The court went on to state that the accused, Sushil Kumar, had married for the third time and this was apparently the sole reason why his wife committed suicide.

The court went on to add that for a wife, her husband marrying another woman in secret is "sufficient reason" to end her own life.

"They (Indian wives) are literally possessive about their husband. It would be biggest jolt for any married woman that her husband is being shared by some other lady or he is going to marry some other



lady. In such awkward situation, it would be impossible to expect any sanity from them. Exactly same thing happened in this case too,"

the bench said. The matter pertains to an instant revision plea filed by the husband of the woman who died

by suicide.

The deceased woman had lodged an FIR at Manduadih police station in Varanasi against her husband and his six family members under multiple sections of the IPC.

This included the charges of voluntarily causing hurt, criminal intimidation and marrying again during the lifetime of the spouse.

In the FIR, the wife alleged that her husband was already married with two children, but he tied the knot for the third time without getting a divorce.

The victim also stated that she was assaulted and mentally tortured by her husband and in-laws. Soon after filing the FIR, the woman reportedly consumed poison and died.

Police began an investigation and filed a chargesheet against the husband and his family members.

The accused first moved a discharge petition in the trial court, which was rejected.

Heat wave abates for next 5 days from most of India

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Except for isolated pockets of northwest Rajasthan and south Haryana, no heat wave was recorded over the country on Tuesday even as maximum temperature did not cross 45 degrees Celsius anywhere.

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) said maximum temperatures further fell by 2-4 degrees Celsius over Rajasthan, Punjab, Delhi, and Haryana during the past 24 hours, while also predicting no heat wave conditions are likely over most parts of northwest, central, and east India during next five days.

The highest maximum temperature was recorded at 44.5 degrees Celsius at Wardha (Maharashtra) and Rajnandgaon (Chhattisgarh).

The IMD predicted no significant change in maximum



temperatures very likely over most parts of central India during the next three days and rise by 2-3 degrees Celsius thereafter.

No significant change in maximum temperature is very likely over most parts of Central in the next three days

and rise by 2-3 degrees Celsius.

The IMD also said, maximum temperatures over Maharashtra would rise by 2-4 degrees Celsius from Wednesday while there is no significant change expected over the rest of the country.

Three labourers killed in tank blast at ZACL plant in Goa

PANAJI | Agencies

Three labourers died on the spot following a blast which took place in a condensate tank at the Zuari Agro Chemicals Limited (ZACL) plant in the port town of Vasco in South Goa on Tuesday.

Sources said that the accident occurred while maintenance work was being carried out in the plant.

Maintenance of the condensate tank area was being carried out since April 30.

Soon after the fatal accident, Chief Minister Pramod Sawant termed the incident as unfortunate, and said that there was no gas leakage in the plant as he urged people not to believe in rumours.

"It is very unfortunate to hear about the tragic death of three labourers in a blast of the under-maintenance



ammonia tank at Zuari Agro Chemicals plant in Vasco. The state machinery has immediately responded and is making every effort to bring normalcy to the situation," Sawant tweeted. "I urge the locals not to panic and not to believe in any rumours. There is no gas leakage and the matter is being monitored by the government," he added.

Speaking to IANS, Goa's Minister for Factories and Boilers, Nilkanth Halarnkar, said that ministry officials are investigating the accident.

"We will take strict action if negligence is found on the part of the management of the factory. Life is precious. Hence our officials are conducting an investigation and will submit a report soon," Halarnkar said.

7 KILLED AS BOLERO-TEMPO COLLIDE IN UP'S KASGANJ

Kasganj (UP): Seven persons, mostly women, were killed and eight others injured after a Bolero and tempo collided on Kayamganj road here on Tuesday.

All those who died were the occupants of tempo. The injured were mainly seated in Bolero.

The impact of the collision was so severe that the tempo was turned into a mangled heap of iron.

According to the information received so far, the people in the tempo were going to attend a 'satsang' in Patiala.

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has expressed grief over the incident and directed the officials concerned to ensure proper treatment of the injured.

Gurugram: Masked youth beat students inside school premises

GURUGRAM | Agencies

In a daring incident, three masked youth barged into the government senior secondary school at Abhaypur village in Sohna block and beat up several Class XII students with sticks.

Following the incident on Monday, angry villagers held a panchayat against the alleged attackers in the school premises on Tuesday.

The villagers decided that they will not send their children to the senior secondary school. Instead, the educated youth of the village will teach the students.

They have also identified a spot near a bus stop in the village which will be suitable for the classes.

"This was not the first time that such an incident took place in the village. We had demanded that the state government should convert the middle school of the village into a senior



secondary school to avoid such incidents, but in vain," a villager said. "All the injured students are residents of Damdama village. We are probing the matter. The accused will be nabbed soon," Jai Singh, SHO of Sohna Sadar police station, said.

On Monday, nine students were thrashed with sticks by some unknown youth. The victims included five girl students. Some of the victims suffered severe injuries in the attack and were admitted to the civil hospital in Sohna.

No future for any more parties in Bihar, says Sushil Modi

In a veiled attack on political strategist Prashant Kishor over his rumoured entry in Bihar politics, as well as other smaller outfits, BJP leader Sushil Kumar Modi on Monday said there are only four mainstream political parties in the state.

PATNA | Agencies

Apart from these four political parties, there is no future for other political parties. In democracy, anyone has the right to do political experiments or make political parties. There are hundreds of political parties in the country. If anyone wants to make a new canal, it would not affect evergreen rivers," he said.

The statement of Sushil Kumar Modi, the former Deputy Chief Minister, may not be taken kindly by smaller parties, especially Jitan Ram Manjhi-led HAM. It has 4 MLAs in Bihar and he is playing a role of king maker in the current NDA government led by Nitish Kumar. Still, Sushil Modi has not given any weightage to it.

It will be interesting to see what would be the reaction of HAM. Manjhi is critical of the BJP's



stand on several issues. The Pasupati Kumar Paras-led RLSP is also an important alliance partner of the NDA. Paras is close to BJP and currently in position of doing politics in the Centre.

ENTIRE COMPANY OF DELHI ARMED POLICE SUSPENDED FOR ABANDONING SENSITIVE ZONE

Atul Krishan | New Delhi

In a major action for dereliction of duty, personnel of an entire company of a Delhi Armed Police battalion were placed under suspension for not being found at the locations they were deployed in old Delhi to prevent any untoward incident on Eid-ul-Fitr on Tuesday.

Correspondent is in possession of the order by DCP, North, suspending 60 constables of a company of the DAP's 3rd Battalion. A source told correspondent that this battalion was called from Vikas Puri to perform duty on Eid at Sadar Bazar and nearby area of Red Fort as these are most sensitive zones. "It was 3rd Battalion of our force called from Vikas Puri. Chandni Chowk and nearby area is sensitive. On Eid, we wanted to deploy more security personnel to maintain law and order situation and to avoid any untoward incident. But these personnel were not found at their locations. We marked all of them as absent and placed them under suspension," the source said. Ahead of Eid, police had got information that anti-social elements could disrupt peace and harmony across Delhi and in a bid to thwart their nefarious plans, a number of such companies were deployed at various locations. "At 9.15 p.m. the company left without any information. They were not on at duty point.

Man accused in gang-rape, murder of unsound girl held after gun battle

Team Absolute | New Delhi

One of the two men accused of gang-raping and murdering a 14-year-old unsound girl, was arrested following a gun battle in which he suffered a bullet injury in leg in Outer North Delhi.

The accused was identified as Sunil. He, along with his aide Ram Sachche alias Sachin, sexually assaulted a minor girl and then murdered her. Sachin was held while he was on the run.

According to information, in February, a case was registered on the statement of one Santosh Tiwari regarding the kidnapping of his unsound minor daughter against unknown person.

On February 19, an information was received from one Rahul Rai that a foul



smell was emanating from his work place in Sannoth village and that his labourer Sunil was missing. His Shop was searched where a partially decomposed body of the missing girl was found.

One Ram Sachche, alias Sachin, was arrested from outskirts of Sannoth Village in the intervening night of February 20 and 21 while he was trying to flee to Mumbai. Sachche told police that he, along with Sunil, raped the girl after consuming liquor

and later killed her by using her clothes.

"On the intervening night of May 2 and 3, we got a tip-off that Sunil would come near Shahpur Garhi area. A team was formed and a trap laid. Sunil was asked to surrender but he tried to run away from the spot by opening fire. Police launched a counter attack in which he suffered a gun wound in his right knee and was caught," police said. Further probe is the matter is on.

Tejashwi Yadav appeals to Bhumihars to support RJD in Bihar

RJD leader Tejashwi Yadav on Tuesday said that if the Bhumihars and the Yadavs become united in Bihar, no one has strength to defeat them.

PATNA | Agencies

Addressing an event organised by the Bhuhar-Brahmin Ekta Manch (BBEM) in Babu Sabhagar Patna on the occasion of Parshuram Jayanti, the younger son of Lalu Prasad said that he believes in walking together.

"In the last MLC election for the 24 seats, we gave five tickets to Bhumihar candidates and three of them managed to win the election. It indicates that if you take initiative toward us for the betterment of society and state, we always support you.

"The relations cannot sour or improve suddenly. We are not here to take your vote or do the politics of vote bank. We came here to win your trust," Tejashwi Yadav said.

His statement assumes importance keeping in view that the Yadav community was almost "anti-Bhumihar" in Bihar



during the governments of Lalu Prasad and Rabri Devi. At that time, the slogan "Bhura Baal Saaf Karo", referring to the generally brownish hair of Bhumihar, was quite common.

Citing present conditions, Tejashwi Yadav said: "At present, unemployment is at a massive level in all castes or communities. Bhumihar is a learned, intellectual and conscious community in Bihar. You are capable of removing unemployment and price rise from the state." Tejashwi said.

About the 2020 Assembly election, he said that the Mahagathbandhan had obtained 1 crore 56 lakh votes, which was 44 per cent and it was just 12,000 votes less than the NDA's share. "They have stolen the mandate last time. I have promised to the people of Bihar that if I become the Chief Minister of Bihar, I would give 10 lakh jobs with my first signature," Tejashwi Yadav said.

Muslims, Hindus celebrate Eid together in Delhi's Jahangirpuri

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Muslims and Hindus on Tuesday celebrated Eid together in the national capital's Jahangirpuri area that witnessed communal violence last month during a Hanuman Jayanti procession.

People greeted each other on the occasion of Eid to spread the message of peace and harmony. Last month, clashes broke out between two communities during a Hanuman Jayanti procession in Jahangirpuri.

After the violence on April 16, an anti-encroachment drive was undertaken in the area on April 20. During the drive that was termed a "routine exercise", many shops and houses in the area were bulldozed.

Meanwhile, adequate security arrangements have been ensured in the area on the occasion of Eid to avoid any untoward incident. Heavy police deployment in the area was also seen.

"We all want to live here with each other with peace and harmony together. We hope the full normalcy returns soon in the area... and it has started to return in the area," said a person from the Muslim community who did not want to be named.

He also said that the situation is improving in the area now.



A week after violence erupted in the area, both communities took out a 'Tiranga Yatra' to send out the message of peace and harmony.



TWO TRIBALS LYNCHED IN SEONI ON SUSPICION OF COW SMUGGLING

▶ TWO TRIBALS WERE LYNCHED BY MOBS ON SUSPICION OF COW SMUGGLING IN SEONI DISTRICT OF MADHYA PRADESH. ONE OTHER PERSON HAS RECEIVED SERIOUS INJURIES.



Team Absolute | Seoni

Two tribals were lynched by mobs on suspicion of cow smuggling in Seoni district of Madhya Pradesh. One other person has received serious injuries. The Congress has alleged that Bajrang Dal activists were involved in the incident. According to the information received here, some people reached Simaria village under Kurai police station in Seoni district after coming to know of alleged cow smuggling in the area. They started beating those who were allegedly involved in the act. Two people were killed and one person received serious injuries in the incident, which took place on Monday night. In protest, members of the tribal community blocked the road on National Highway 44, demanding justice. Congress MLA from Kurai, Arjun Makodia, along with his supporters reached the spot and blocked the road, resulting in a massive traffic jam for several kilometres on

both sides of the road. The administration tried to pacify the agitating people, but they demanded compensation of Rs one crore for the victims' family and jobs for the next of kin of the deceased. Meanwhile, the Congress has alleged that Bajrang Dal activists were involved in the lynching incident. Makodia said this is nothing but 'jungle raj'. State Congress President Kamal Nath said, "Saddened to know about the brutal murder of two tribal youth in Kurai tribal block of Seoni district. Another tribal youth is seriously injured. It has come to our knowledge that Bajrang Dal activists were involved in the incident." Kamal Nath also demanded a high-level inquiry into the incident and strict action against the culprits. He said all possible help should be given to the families of the victims and there should be proper arrangements for the treatment of the injured youth at government's expense.

Parashurama to be part of school curriculum, scholarship for Sanskrit students

■ A key announcement is the inclusion of the teachings of Bhagwan Parashurama (considered the sixth avatar of Lord Vishnu) in the school syllabus.

Team Absolute | Bhopal

The Madhya Pradesh chief minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan on Tuesday made a slew of announcements to coincide with the Bhagwan Parashurama Jayanti and Akshaya Tritiya. A key announcement is the inclusion of the teachings of Bhagwan Parashurama (considered the sixth avatar of Lord Vishnu) in the school syllabus. "Though the books would have been published by now, I'll still call the curriculum committee and direct them to include a lesson on Bhagwan Parashurama in the curriculum. All the students should learn Sanskrit, Bhagwan Ram, Parashurama, Krishna, and Bhagavad Gita. None can object to it, as this is our Sanatan culture, which should be taught to students," Chouhan announced at an event to unveil the giant statue of Bhagwan Parashurama in the Lal Ghati Gufa Temple in Bhopal. Importantly, four years back in April 2018, a decision was reportedly taken by the then Shivraj Singh Chouhan government to include a



chapter on Bhagwan Parashurama in the state's school curriculum. He also announced the increased appointment of Sanskrit teachers/scholars in the state. "So far 1900 posts of Sanskrit teachers have been filled, while the process of recruiting Sanskrit teachers for remaining posts will continue. Till the time the requisite posts of Sanskrit teachers aren't filled, we'll utilize the services of qualified Atithi Shikshaks (guest teachers) to ensure that Sanskrit education continues uninterrupted in the state." Chouhan further announced starting scholarships for Sanskrit Karma Kand students. "If students becoming doctors can get scholarships, then similar scholarships need to be started for Sanskrit students as well." Further, the CM announced to raise the monthly remuneration of temple priests (who don't get proper donations, are located in remote villages, and don't even have land) to Rs 5,000.

He further announced that no land of any temple in the state will be auctioned by the state, if at all the land is auctioned it will be done by the Pujari (temple priests). "The seers are seated on the stage of this event, so a committee of seers and scholars will soon be formed, which will ensure that temple land remain intact, as such lands have been sold/fragmented at many places in the past. Many people have donated land in the memory of their parents and forefathers, so the sale of such land shouldn't be allowed. The committee will look into the matter to ensure that there is no government interference in issues of temple land, decisions pertaining to temple lands across the state will be taken by the temple priests and no one else." The announcements were made from a stage, which was graced by senior Brahmin politicians of BJP and Congress, including state BJP president VD Sharma, ex-Bhopal mayor

and senior BJP leader Alok Sharma, senior Congress leader and ex-union minister Suresh Pachauri and ex-MP minister and sitting Congress MLA PC Sharma, who was the minister for religious affairs and spirituality department in the erstwhile Kamal Nath-led Congress government in MP. Also, seated on the same stage was a top Hindu spiritual guru Swami Avdeshanand Giri Maharaj, who is the Acharya Mahamandaleshwar of the biggest Akhara, the Juna Akhara. The announcements at the event not only formed part of the BJP government's saffron agenda but were also intended to appease the Brahmins, whose vote is crucial in parts of Gwalior-Chambal, Vindhya and Bundelkhand regions. It should be noted that the state goes to the polls next year. Tuesday's announcements by the MP CM came nearly a week after he had made public plans to teach Bhagavad Gita to college students in the state. Last year, the MP government decided to start lectures on RSS founder Dr KB Hedgewar, Jan Sangh icon Deendayal Upadhyaya, spiritual leader Swami Vivekananda, Dr BR Ambedkar, Mahishi Charak and sage Sushruta in the month-long NMC foundation course of MBBS First Year students. Also, the government had decided to teach Applied Philosophy of Ramcharitmanas as an optional subject to BA First Year students in colleges and universities.

MAN MARRIES THREE GIRLFRIENDS AT ONCE AFTER 15 YEARS OF LIVE-IN RELATIONSHIP

▶ SIX CHILDREN OF ALIRAJPUR COUPLES ALSO PARTICIPATED IN THE MARRIAGE CEREMONY

Team Absolute | Bhopal

A marriage in tribal-dominated Alirajpur district of Madhya Pradesh is making waves on social media. A former sarpanch married his three girlfriends in a single ceremony on April 30 after being in a live-in relationship with them for 15 years. Six children of Samrath Maurya and his three girlfriends also participated in the marriage ceremony. They had a great time, local sources said. Polygamy and live-in relationships are nothing new among tribal communities in Madhya Pradesh. Also, polygamy is legal for tribal communities, according to the Constitution.



Nonetheless, the fact that Maurya (35) decided to formally marry his three girlfriends to be able to participate in community rituals that was hence prevented for them, is making a splash. Maurya, former sarpanch of Nanpur, married Nan Bai Mujalda,

formerly of village Kharpai, Mela Solanki, formerly of Ajanda village and Sakri Chaungad, formerly of Kharkuan village in a ceremony organised at Nanpur (Moriphalia) over three days from April 29 to May 1. The main marriage ritual was held on April 30, according to a wedding

invitation card. Sources said Samrath fell in love with the three women at different times and was in a live-in relationship with them for the past 15 years. He had four children with Nan Bai (33) and a son each with Mela (29) and Sakri (28). At the time he fell in love with the women, the economic condition of Samrath was not good enough for formal marriage that requires quite some spending on feast and other rituals. Though they were happily living together in one home, Samrath, his three partners and their children could not attend the traditional rituals of the Bhilala tribal community to which they belong, as their marriages had not been solemnised. Now that he is quite comfortable economically, so Samrath decided to undergo the marriage ceremony with three of his partners at once, sources said. The ceremony was attended by relatives, community members and even some local leaders.

CM Planted Guava and Gulmohar Saplings in Smart City Garden

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan planted saplings of guava and Gulmohar along with the journalist of Bundeli Baughar website Sachin Chaudhary and members of Awadhपुरी Kanchan Nagar Resident Jan-Kalyan Samiti in the Smart City Garden. The saplings were planted by Rita Singh, Ajay Singh Sengar, Praveen Deshpande and Shyam Krishna Soni of the Samiti. Published in Bundeli language, Bundeli Baughar specially publicises messages related to environment-protection. Sachin Chaudhary, editor of the website active in the field of environment, planted a sapling on the occasion of his birthday. Awadhपुरी Kanchan Samiti



has been working continuously in the field of environment protection and takes care of about 60 saplings planted by it every year. While working in the field of cleanliness, wet and dry waste is got collected separately from each house of the colony. Along with better cleanliness in the colony with its resources, residents and

citizens are also made aware. Among the saplings planted today, Gulmohar is considered one of the most beautiful trees in the world. It is also rich in medicinal properties. The ancient Sanskrit name of guava is Amrit (nectar) or Amrit Phal (nectar fruit). Guava is not only tasty but also full of medicinal properties.

CM ATTENDS MASS MARRIAGE CONFERENCE OF DHAKAD SAMAJ



Bhopal: Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan took part in the mass marriage conference of Dhakad (Nagar) Samaj at Obaidullaganj on Tuesday and blessed the newly-weds. 23 couples got married in the mass marriage conference. Chouhan also performed Shila Pujan of Dhakar Samaj's host and Manglik Bhawan. Chief Minister Chouhan said that mass marriages are being organized by the Samaj for the last 37 years. During the Corona period, mass marriages were not organized for 2 years. Till date more than 1800 marriages have been conducted. Even today 23 couples tied the knot. MP Ramakant Bhargava, MLA Surendra Patwa, Chief Minister Chouhan's wife Sadhana Singh, public representatives and officials of Dhakad Samaj were present.

CM GREETES FORMER CM UMA BHARTI

Bhopal: Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan extended good wishes and greetings to former Chief Minister Uma Bharti on her birthday. Chouhan has prayed to God for her healthy, happy and long life. Chief Minister has said in his tweet that - "Best wishes on birthday to our Didi Umashree Bharti ji, a symbol of public service and political uprightness."

CM RECEIVED BLESSINGS FROM MAHAMANDESHWAR AWADHESHANAND GIRI JI MAHARAJ



Bhopal: Chief Minister Chouhan received Param Pujya Acharya Mahamandaleshwar Junapeethadhishwar Swami Awadhesanand Giri Ji Maharaj on his arrival at the Chief Minister's residence. Chouhan along with his wife received blessings from Junapeethadhishwar Swami Awadhesanand Maharaj, who arrived at his residence on Akshaya Tritiya. On the auspicious occasion of Akshaya Tritiya, Chouhan along with his wife prayed to Maa Lakshmi and Lord Vishnu and wished for the state's everlasting (Akshaya) happiness, prosperity, welfare and glory.

Congress to bring back old pension scheme if voted to power in 2023 polls

■ Madhya Pradesh Congress chief Kamal Nath said the old pension scheme for government employees will be brought back if his party is elected to power in the state in the 2023 Assembly

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Madhya Pradesh Congress chief Kamal Nath on Sunday said the old pension scheme for government employees will be brought back if

his party is elected to power in the state in the 2023 Assembly polls. The old pension scheme for government employees was discontinued nationwide from April 1, 2004 and was replaced by the new National Pension Scheme (NPS). He was speaking at an event of the Madhya Pradesh Shikshak Congress. "If a Congress government is formed in Madhya Pradesh in 2023, the old pension scheme for government employees will be implemented like how other states ruled by our party have done," Nath said. Hitting back, MP Agriculture Minister Kamal Patel told PTI the Congress was

now non-existent and people were never going to vote for it again. "The Congress cheated people and farmers by failing to fulfill promises of loan waiver, regularization of jobs of daily wagers, providing unemployment allowance etc. Now people know the truth about the Congress and are never going to vote for it again," Patel said. In February, the Congress government under Ashok Gehlot in Rajasthan had announced in the annual budget about the resumption of the old pension scheme for over three lakh government employees who were appointed on or after January 1, 2004.

Row over razing of national-level hockey player's home

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Already faced with wide-spread allegations over the "bulldozer drive" against the minority community in Khargone town, the BJP government in Madhya Pradesh was confronted with a fresh controversy after a national-level hockey player's small family home was demolished during an anti-encroachment drive in Mandausar on Monday. Failing to stop the anti-encroachment team from demolishing her and neighbours' huts, the 18-year-old hockey player Sagudawar

allegedly tried to commit suicide by pouring kerosene over self. However police personnel foiled it. "The local administration suddenly arrived and started demolishing our huts where we've been living for decades. I won't leave this place till a new dwelling is built for my family at an alternate place," Sagu said. The local SDM Bihari Singh, however, denied the allegations that the "encroachments" were removed in haste. "The process has been on for the last six months, as the land is owned by the education department.

Eid celebrated with joy

- ▶ CALL GIVEN FOR CORRUPTION FREE COUNTRY
- ▶ YOUTH TOLD TO STAY AWAY FROM DOWRY
- ▶ TAKING COGNIZANCE OVER INCREASING GLOBAL WARMING CALL WAS GIVEN FOR NOT ONLY PLANTING SAPLINGS BUT TAKING CARE OF THEM AS CHILDREN

Team Absolute | Bhopal

For the first time since the two years of the Covid-19 pandemic, lakhs of Muslims in Bhopal and other parts of the state trooped out in full strength to celebrate Eid-ul-Fitr and offer the traditional 'Salat-al-Eid namaz' (prayers) peacefully at thousands of mosques and Eidah on Tuesday. In Bhopal, Eid prayers were offered at major venues like Eidgah, Jama Masjid, Taj ulMasajid, Moti Masjid and other mosques of the city. Taking advantage of the huge crowd at Eidgah Bhopal Shahar Qazi Syed Mushtaq Ali Nadvi called on the people to develop corruption free country. He also told the youth to stay away from the evil of dowry and expressing concern over the environment he said that everyone should plant a sapling to make the city green, not only planting saplings but taking care of them as

For the first time since the two years of the Covid-19 pandemic, lakhs of Muslims in bhopal and other parts of the state trooped out in full strength to celebrate Eid-ul-Fitr and offer the traditional 'Salat-al-Eid namaz' (prayers) peacefully at thousands of mosques and Eidgah grounds.



children. After offering the Salat-al-Eid, it was time for feasting, wishing each other 'Eid Mubarak' with handshakes and hugs, partaking the special milk-vermicelli-dry fruits preparation of Sheer Korma' and indulging in merry-making after a month of penance, fast and prayers. In many areas in the city, the Muslims went to meet and greet police personnel and offered them 'Sheer Korma' as a mark of respect for their 24x7 services to the people. Elsewhere, lakhs of Muslims and non-Muslims mingled freely, greeting, hugging and felicitating each other on Eid-ul-Fitr, displaying harmony and brotherhood for which the city is famed. Muslim localities were decorated with festoons, moon and stars, homes, mosques and community buildings lit up brightly with twinkling fairy lights with the mouth-watering aroma of Eid goodies like 'Sheer Korma', 'biryanis', 'kebabs', other special preparations wafting in the air. The afternoon witnessed many non-Muslims going out to the homes of their Muslim friends or neighbours for feasts laid out, or restaurants and hotels offering special Eid menus for the entire week.



EDITOR'S SPECS

Rift widens in Punjab Congress

The Congress state in-charge of Punjab has written to party president Sonia Gandhi for action against former state party president Navjot Singh Sidhu for speaking against the party line. The letter written by Harish Chaudhary says that Sidhu can't be allowed to portray himself above the party. In the letter he said, "I am forwarding Shri Raja Warring's detailed note regarding Shri Sidhu's current activities along with this letter." He wrote that Sidhu's actions are inexcusable and he should be asked for an explanation and disciplinary action should be initiated. The Congress was wiped out in the Punjab elections due to the internal rift. After the unceremonious exit of former Chief Minister Amarinder Singh and the party's mauling the Congress relied on the feedback of Navjot Singh Sidhu who was against Singh. Later the Congress ignored Sidhu to make Charanjit Singh Channi the Chief Minister, irking both Sunil Jakhar and Sidhu and all were speaking in different voices during the state elections. The Congress has taken action against Jakhar recently. Sonia Gandhi, on the recommendation of the Congress disciplinary committee, has stripped Sunil Jakhar of all posts and he will not be given any post till two years. After this decision Jakhar has been more vocal on the issue. While Sunil Jakhar had spoken about former Punjab Chief Minister Charanjit Singh Channi, his comments have offended the Dalit leaders in the party, and Udit Raj had demanded his expulsion. "Mr Sunil Jhakhar, Punjab Cong leader, must be expelled from the Party for his casteist & feudal comment that Mr Channi, being lowest caste, couldn't have been made CM. His place is on his feet instead of on head."

2020 DATA SHOWS NSCN-IM MOST 'ACTIVE': BACK CHANNEL PUSH ON NOT TO ABROGATE CEASEFIRE

Narendra Dev

A fresh Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) report says though on a decline, insurgency-related incidents still persist and in 2020, the Isak-Muivah faction of the National Socialist Council of Nagaland, NSCN-IM, remained the most active group with about 44 per cent of incidents perpetrated by it.

It further says in Arunachal Pradesh too, the NSCN-IM was involved in 11 incidents in 2020, while the NSCN/K-YK in five incidents and the NSCN/U and ENNG in two and one incidents, respectively.

As many as 21 cases of kidnapping were also reported in Arunachal Pradesh in 2020. Peace is cool; and when you have 'peace', perhaps there is no much realisation of what life would be like in the absence of peace.

But some well meaning citizens and intellectuals have given unto themselves the task of making Naga militant groups and leaders of all factions understand the futility of confrontation either among themselves and or even 'others'. The apprehension of abrogation of ceasefire has risen as reports have suggested that the government of India could ensure deployment of additional forces and armoured men in some select pockets in Nagaland and in Manipur.

Although AFSPA has been relaxed in some pockets, the harsh law continues in other areas.

A number of leaders and well meaning personalities reportedly are meeting Naga underground leaders in various factions in the last one week or so and have tried to pursue them to see reason and give up obstinate stance wherever necessary.

The Naga peace talks, according to one version, were over by October 31, 2019. But hurdles and differences have remained and hence efforts are being made to end the deadlock.

A number of formal and informal interactions have taken place between Centre's new peace emissary A.K. Mishra and underground leaders including from NSCN-IM and Naga National Political Group (NNPG).

While the issues of Flag and a separate Naga Constitution were flagged off by NSCN-IM, the NNPG under the leadership of N Kitovi Zhimomi is keen to sign a final peace pact at the earliest. There are pressures from all quarters on the Central government and Prime Minister Narendra Modi too.

The Nagaland Tribes Council (NTC) has lately written to Modi urging him to expedite



the resolution of the Naga peace process, saying Nagas were "impatient now on the non-resolution and the extensive policy of negotiations for a solution to the Naga political issue".

In the meantime, one data has come out lately from the Union Home Ministry.

The NSCN-IM, was reportedly involved in 44 per cent of insurgency related incidents in Nagaland in 2020. It, notably, never agreed to the argument that all parleys were over by October 31, 2019. Thus more than the statistical data, the timing of the report is seen in some quarters as the most critical part. It suggests the NSCN-IM, which began talks formally in 1997, is still active on ground with boots and bullets.

Of course, there are some figures/data that suggest that the violence and other insurgency-related activities saw a significant drop between 2019 and 2020 in Nagaland. But it is also true, the incidents still persisted.

The MHA report says that in 2020, Nagaland witnessed a 45 per cent decline in the number of violent incidents compared to 2019. It actually came down to 23 in 2020 from 42 the previous year (2019).

Moreover, in 2020, the state of Nagaland witnessed no civilian and security forces'

deaths though counter-insurgency operations led to neutralisation of two insurgents, arrest of 222 insurgents and recovery of 84 weapons.

The report is categorical: "Though steps have been taken by the government from time to time to control insurgency, the NSCN factions continue to indulge in factional violence and other violent/illegal activities affecting normal life in the state."

The 2020-21 annual report said that, "presently, various factions of the NSCN viz. NSCN(NK), NSCN(R) and NSCN(K-Khango) are under ceasefire with the Government of India. Currently, only one faction of the NSCN/K-Yung Aung faction, largely based in Myanmar, remains active".

In 2020, the number of kidnapping/abduction cases also declined by 33 per cent compared to 2019 (2019 - 49, 2020 - 33).

Security analysts say the message should go to the other side that statistics suggest things often go out of hand and the authorities are well aware of the movement(s) of some underground leaders and their cadres.

Some Naga militant cadres could be still hiding in Myanmar or beyond, sources said.

Prime Minister Modi himself says: "Efforts are continuing, they are being pursued with all seriousness." The Prime Minister's emphasis on the word "ghambirta" (seriousness) at the Diphu rally on April 28 in Karbi Anglong adjoining Nagaland border has its own significance.

A.K. Mishra, the Centre's peace emissary, who returned to Delhi after a week-long stay in Nagaland, has been reportedly categorical to NSCN (IM) that there is no question of revisiting the contentious issues of Flag and a separate Naga Constitution. Security experts are now trying to assess situations beyond "talks and solution". The source said: "All pros and cons are being examined. We do not wish it, but in case there is abrogation of ceasefire, security of life and properties ought to be ensured." While the Prime Minister is keen to ensure permanent withdrawal of AFSPA, there cannot be any compromise on safety and security measures too, sources said.

(Narendra Dev is a New Delhi-based journalist. Views are personal.)

international

TOP NUKE ENVOYS OF S KOREA, CHINA HOLD TALKS ON PYONGYANG

The top nuclear envoys of South Korea and China met here on Tuesday to discuss security situations on the Korean Peninsula amid concerns about North Korea's growing nuclear and missile threats.

Seoul | Agencies

Liu Xiaoming, Beijing's special representative on Korean Peninsula affairs, is on his first visit to Seoul since assuming the post in April 2021 at a time of heightened tensions over Pyongyang's recent spate of missile launches and reported signs of preparations for another nuclear test, reports Yonhap News Agency.

In his first public activity here, he had a meeting with his South Korean counterpart, Noh Kyu-duk, at the foreign ministry building, apparently to share their assessments of the regional security situation.

Liu expressed concerns over the rising tension on the peninsula and reaffirmed China's commitment to play a "positive role" but said the key to a resolution to the issue is in the hands of Pyongyang and Washington.

"China is concerned about the tense situation on the Peninsula. We call on all parties to stay cool-headed and exercise restraint, and

we disapprove (of) actions by any party that could escalate tension," he wrote on his Twitter page Sunday.

China is ready to work with South Korea to push forward "the political settlement process" on the matter, he said, describing the two sides as "important cooperation partners."

Last month, the chief South Korean and US nuclear envoys agreed to jointly push for a new UN Security Council resolution against the North for its recent missile launches. But its prospects remain dim, with China and Russia, both veto-wielding permanent members, having maintained a lukewarm stance toward imposing additional sanctions on the North.

On Tuesday afternoon, Liu will visit the Ministry of Unification, which handles inter-Korean affairs, for a meeting with Vice Minister Choi Young-joon, followed by a courtesy call on Unification Minister Lee In-young.

CHINA TO FURTHER REIN IN DOMESTIC TECH GIANTS TO REVIVE INTERNET SECTOR

Beijing | Agencies

Alarmed at the slowing tech and internet sector, China is now planning to further shift its policies to control domestic tech giants like Alibaba and Tencent, as the country battles Covid-19 lockdowns, the media reported on Tuesday.

According to a report in Nikkei Asia citing sources, Chinese President Xi Jinping "intends to shift policies regarding its control over the country's major tech companies such as Alibaba Group and Tencent Holdings".

"The move is apparently aimed at revitalising the internet sector and propping up the Chinese economy, which is losing momentum amid the Russian invasion of Ukraine and the country's zero-Covid policy," the report noted.

Since last year, Chinese regulatory authorities have been cracking down harder on domestic tech giants to end their dominance in the internet sector. Last month, Tencent said it will shut down its game streaming platform Penguin Esports by June due to "changes in business strategies".

Tencent already owns the country's



two largest game streaming platforms, Douyu and Huya.

Together, the two services commanded over 70 per cent of the game streaming market in China.

The platform faces rising competition from Bilibili, which is known for its popular user-generated video streaming service, and Kuaishou, the short video app that's the nemesis of Douyin (TikTok's Chinese version).

Moreover, the ongoing gaming license freeze in China has intensified competition between platforms as hosts are running out of content to talk about. In March, Covid-19 lockdowns and China's position on the

Ukraine conflict led to tech shares rout, slashing billions of dollars from the likes of Alibaba Group Holding and Tencent Holdings in Hong Kong.

Chinese stocks in the US also suffered their biggest sell-off since 2008 after US regulators identified five companies that could be subject to delisting for failing to comply with auditing requirements.

The new regulation on online food delivery platforms in China also hit the industry hard, especially the Meituan food delivery app being run by Alibaba.

The Chinese authorities announced that the food delivery

platforms should further reduce the service fees charged to restaurants in order to lower the operating costs for food and beverage businesses.

In December last year, Alibaba announced a major reshuffle at the top, as the country tightened its stand against domestic Big Tech companies over data and internet regulations.

Alibaba also unveiled major reorganisation plans to boost its strategy of domestic and international e-commerce. Founded in 1999, Alibaba went through a major reshuffle when Jack Ma passed the baton as CEO to Zhang in 2015 and further appointed him as Chairman in 2019.

China's market regulator in November fined tech giants Alibaba, Baidu, Tencent and e-commerce platform JD.com Inc and Suning for violating the country's anti-monopoly rules in 34 mergers and acquisitions (M&A) deals in which they failed to declare illegal implementation of operating concentration.

The State Administration for Market Regulation (SAMR) has fined a raft of companies, especially in the internet platform sector, since the start of this year over their monopolistic behaviours.

Putin could officially declare war on Ukraine as soon as May 9

Washington | Agencies

Russian President Vladimir Putin could formally declare war on Ukraine as soon as May 9, a move that would enable the full mobilisation of Moscow's reserve forces as invasion efforts continue to falter, US and Western officials believe.

May 9, known as "Victory Day" in Russia, commemorates the country's defeat of the Nazis in 1945, reports CNN.

Western officials have long believed that Putin would leverage the symbolic significance and propaganda value of that day to announce either a military achievement in Ukraine, a major escalation of hostilities, or both.

Officials have begun to hone in on one scenario, which is that Putin formally declares war on Ukraine on May 9.

To date, Putin has insisted on



referring to the brutal months long conflict as a "special military operation", effectively banning words

such as invasion and war.

"I think he will try to move from his 'special operation'," UK Defence Secretary Ben Wallace told LBC Radio last week.

"He's been rolling the pitch, laying the ground for being able to say 'look, this is now a war against Nazis, and what I need is more people. I need more Russian cannon fodder.'"

Throughout the conflict, Putin has continuously framed his invasion of Ukraine, a country with a Jewish president, as a campaign of supposed "denazification", a description dismissed by historians and political observers alike, CNN reported. Wallace added that he "would not be surprised, and I don't have any information about this, that he is probably going to declare on this May Day that 'we are now at war with the world's Nazis and we need to mass mobilize the Russian people.'"

Israel wants apology from Russia over Lavrov's Hitler remark

Jerusalem | Agencies

Israel has summoned the Russian Ambassador in the wake of Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov's statement that Adolf Hitler may have had some Jewish blood, and that the "most ardent" anti-Semites are Jews themselves.

"Foreign Minister Lavrov's remarks are both an unforgivable and outrageous statement as well as a terrible historical error," Israeli Foreign Minister Yair Lapid said in a tweet.

"Jews did not murder themselves in the Holocaust. The lowest level of racism against Jews is to accuse Jews themselves of anti-Semitism."

Lapid said Israel expects an apology, and that the Russian Ambassador was being summoned "for a tough talk", reports RT news.

Other Israeli officials expressed outrage over Lavrov's comments as well, including Prime Minister Naftali Bennett, who accused Russia's top diplomat of using the Holocaust "as a political tool".

The Yad Vashem Holocaust Museum in

Jerusalem also denounced Lavrov's words as false and dangerous.

Moscow has not commented on the matter.

Speaking to Italy's Mediaset media company on Sunday, Lavrov confirmed that one of the objectives of Russia's military campaign in Ukraine is the "denazification" of the country.

After a reporter mentioned that Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky is Jewish, Lavrov said: "I could be wrong, but Hitler, too, had Jewish blood in him. This means absolutely nothing. Wise Jewish people say the most ardent anti-Semites are usually Jews. Every family has a black sheep, as we like to say."

Earlier in the interview, the Minister pointed to Ukraine's Azov Battalion, saying that the fighters include "people with openly nationalist and Nazi views".

He said captured fighters from Azov and other units display "Nazi symbols on their uniforms and have swastika tattoos".

They "openly read and promote 'Mein Kampf'," Lavrov added, referring to Hitler's autobiographical manifesto.

SL TO PROVIDE SPECIAL ALLOWANCE FOR LOW-INCOME FAMILIES

Colombo: The Sri Lankan government will provide special cash allowance to low-income families affected by the current economic crisis for three months from May, Minister of Mass Media Nalaka Godahewa said on Tuesday. During a press briefing, the minister noted that low-income families have been severely affected by the current economic crisis in the country, adding that there is a need to provide immediate relief to them, reports Xinhua news agency. Godahewa said that the cabinet of ministers on Monday approved providing the special allowance from May to July under the framework of Contingent Emergency Response Component (CERC) Pool funding, an emergency response mechanism under the World Bank Group.



UDDHAV THACKERAY MEETS PATIL AHEAD OF RAJ THACKERAY'S LOUDSPEAKER 'DEADLINE' REPORT

Notices under section 149 of CrPC (preventing cognizable offences) have been issued to over 13,000 persons in Aurangabad, Maharashtra police chief Rajnish Seth said.

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray held a meeting with state home minister DilipWalse Patil over the law-and-order situation in the backdrop of the Maharashtra NavnirmanSena (MNS) leader Raj Thackeray's deadline over the removal of loudspeakers from mosques. The chief minister ordered that the police should take all measures to maintain law and order, and not wait for anyone's order.

Maharashtra police chief Rajnish Seth and senior police officials also held a review meeting. The Maharashtra home department has received inputs that people from other states might come to Maharashtra to disturb the law and order situation in the state. The CM meeting was held even as Seth said the Aurangabad Police will take appropriate legal action against Raj Thackeray over his recent speech in the city against loudspeakers atop mosques. Notices under section 149 of CrPC

(preventing cognizable offences) have been issued to over 13,000 persons, Seth said. "The Aurangabad CP is looking into the speech. He will take whatever legal action that is needed," Seth told reporters, two days after Thackeray, at a rally in Aurangabad, called for "silencing" loudspeakers from the mosques from May 4. In the Aurangabad rally, Raj Thackeray had asked people to play Hanuman Chalisa outside mosques from May 4 if loudspeakers there were not removed.

"The Maharashtra Police is capable of handling any kind of law-and-order situation. SRPF and home guards have been deployed in the state," news agency PTI quoted Seth as saying. "I appeal to everyone to maintain peace," he added. Seth said police are prepared to maintain law and order in the state and stern action will be taken against anyone seeking to disturb communal harmony. Leave of all police personnel has been cancelled, he said.

People from other states might come to Maharashtra to disturb law and order: State home department

Earlier today, Maharashtra Home Minister DilipWalse Patil held a review meeting regarding the law and order situation. Patil also briefed Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray on the law and order situation in the state. The Chief Minister ordered that police should take all measures to maintain law and order and not wait for anyone's order.

received reports that people from other states are expected to come to the state to disturb law and order. Shiv Sena leader Sanjay Raut also claimed that he came to know that people from outside the state are being brought and a conspiracy for rioting is being hatched. "It's Maharashtra, against which a conspiracy is being hatched. I have information that people from outside the state are being brought and a conspiracy for rioting is being hatched. State government and police are capable to handle it," Raut alleged, ANI reported. Earlier today, Maharashtra Home Minister DilipWalse Patil held a review meeting regarding the law and order situation. Patil also briefed Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray on the law and order situation in

the state. The Chief Minister ordered that police should take all measures to maintain law and order and not wait for anyone's order. Thackeray also spoke to Maharashtra DGP Rajnish Seth over the phone and discussed the law and order situation. The Maharashtra police chief earlier today said that they will act against anyone trying to disturb communal harmony. The statement came after MNS chief Raj Thackeray's announcement of protest from May 4 against loudspeakers atop mosques. "Maharashtra police are capable of handling any kind of law-and-order situation. SRPF and Home Guards have been deployed in the state," Seth said. The state police chief appealed to everyone to maintain peace.

Loudspeakers row

Maha police crackdown on Raj Thackeray, MNS

Not willing to take any chances, the Maharashtra Police launched a state-wide crackdown on Raj Thackeray's Maharashtra Navnirman Sena (MNS) leaders and activists ahead of its May 4 deadline to remove loudspeakers from mosques and then other places of worship.



(Tuesday) itself. The Aurangabad Police are studying his speech in Aurangabad (May 1) and will act accordingly," Seth told mediapersons as the MNS chief was booked on various counts for his last Sunday rally. The state police have arrested around 15,000 MNS activists and slapped prohibitory notices to another 14,000 workers to prevent them from creating law and order issues by blaring out Hanuman Chalisa from loudspeakers at double volume near mosques. Besides Raj, the Aurangabad Police have booked several other MNS leaders like Rajeev Javlekar, under various charges in an attempt to ensure that the situation remains under control. Shiv Sena MP Sanjay Raut,

Congress president Nana Patole, Nationalist Congress Party's Walse-Patil and other leaders have made it clear that anybody who violates the law would have to face the consequences. "The Maha Vikas Aghadi government works according to the laws and Constitution, not on the basis of any ultimatum served by some individual," Raut said grimly. Senior MNS leaders like BalaNandgaonkar, Nitin Sardesai and others have said that the party is remaining within the legal parameters and was prepared to face any action from the police. In some areas, the police have also seized public address systems kept ready by MNS workers to play Hanuman Chalisa on Wednesday, which the authorities apprehend could result in tensions. At his Sunday rally, Raj said that all mosque loudspeakers must be removed by Wednesday (May 4) or his men would boom Hanuman Chalisa at double volumes and he would not be responsible for the fallout. The MNS chief -- who is the estranged cousin of Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray -- also claimed that the issue was not religious but a social one as loudspeakers cause nuisance to all.

JILTED AIMIM SAYS 'KATTI' TO RAJ THACKERAY FOR 'IFTAR' REBUFF!

AN IRKED ALL INDIA MAJLIS-E-ITTEHADUL MUSLIMEEN (AIMIM) ON TUESDAY SAID IT HAS CUT OFF RELATIONS WITH MAHARASHTRA NAVNIRMAN SENA PRESIDENT RAJ THACKERAY AFTER HE REBUFFED ITS OFFER TO JOIN THE 'IFTAR' ON SUNDAY.

Team Absolute | Mumbai

An irked All India Majlis-E-Ittehadul Muslimeen (AIMIM) on Tuesday said it has cut off relations with Maharashtra Navnirman Sena President Raj Thackeray after he rebuffed its offer to join the 'Iftar' on Sunday. AIMIM MP from Aurangabad Syed Imtiaz Jaleel said that ahead of his rally in that city three days ago (May 1), he had extended a personal invite to Raj to partake in their 'Iftar' (breaking the Ramzan fast with evening prayers) that evening. "However, he did not honour our invitations... Now, we wish him 'Eid Mubarak' from afar only... We shall not

invite him to savour our delicious 'Sheer Korma' today," a dejected Jaleel told mediapersons after performing the Eid-ul-Fitr 'namaz' here this morning. He said the 'Iftar' gesture to Raj was intended to foster and nurture communal harmony and harmony among the Hindu-Muslim brethren ahead of his public meeting that had created huge apprehensions among the minorities with his campaign to remove mosque loudspeakers by May 4 (today). "Unfortunately, there was no response from him. If he had come a very positive message would have gone to the masses. I had insisted that he should join our 'Iftar' and all could have appreciated. Yet he remained aloof," said Jaleel. The AIMIM MP made it clear that it was the good security arrangements by the Aurangabad Police which ensured the MNS rally went off peacefully without untoward incidents. "We did our duty... We extended a hand of friendship to Raj Thackeray, but he doesn't deserve it, and he proved it in his speech also," the MP said with a smile. He said now there's no question of any negotiations nor sup 'Sheer Korma' with him... and the AIMIM would greet him 'Eid Mubarak' from a distance and the party congratulated the Aurangabad Police for its excellent security arrangements that day. It may be recalled that in his rally, Raj thundered 'Now or Never' and demanded that all loudspeakers must be yanked off mosques and after that even from

other places of worship. He had earlier issued a May 3 (today) deadline, but in view of Eid-ul-Fitr postponed it by a day till Wednesday (May 4), as the Maha Vikas Aghadi geared to face the possible ramifications of the MNS campaign. On his part, Raj has been fervently claiming that the anti-loudspeakers matter is not a religious one directed at any particular community, but a social issue that has been hanging for long. Calling upon the Aurangabad Police to take immediate measures and remove the loudspeakers from mosques, he warned that if this was not done, the MNS workers would glare out 'Hanuman Chalisa' at double volume and he would not be responsible for the consequences. Major parties in the state, including the ruling MVA allies Shiv Sena-Nationalist Congress Party-Congress leaders, Abu Asim Azmi of Samajwadi Party, Raju Shetti of Swabhimani Shetkari Sanghatana, Pravin Gaikwad of Sambhaji Brigade, Kishore Tiwari from Vidarbha Jan Andolan Samiti, Vanchit Bahujan Aghadi and India Against Corruption were those who slammed Raj for his utterances with hidden threats. Interestingly, after Raj announced his anti-loudspeakers campaign, the AIMIM President Asaduddin Owaisi had clamped a gag order on his partymen from making any comments on the issue, last month.

AFTER COVID, AMID LOUDSPEAKER ROW, EID CELEBRATED WITH JOY

For the first time since the two years of the Covid-19 pandemic, lakhs of Muslims in Mumbai and other parts of the state trooped out in full strength to celebrate Eid-ul-Fitr and offer the traditional 'Salat-al-Eid namaz' (prayers) peacefully at thousands of mosques and Eidah grounds amid the looming loudspeakers row, here on Tuesday.



Masjid, mosques in Mazagaon, Byculla, Bhandi Bazaar, Colaba, Bandra, Andheri, Jogeshwari, Malad, Kandivali, Borivali, Kurla, Sion, Ghatkopar, Powai, besides temporary Eidgah grounds at Churchgate, Bandra, Kurla and Bhandup. "To accommodate the huge rush of faithful for the auspicious prayers marking the end of the Holy Ramzan month of fasting, many mosques had arranged two-

three congregations and prevented the crowds from spilling onto the roads or public spaces that could inconvenience others," Juma Masjid of Bombay Trust Chairman Shuaib Khatib told IANS. Top dignitaries in the state including Governor Bhagat Singh Koshyari, Shiv Sena President and Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray, Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar, Nationalist Congress

Party President Sharad Pawar, Congress President Nana Patole, NCP State President Jayant Patil, Samajwadi Party President Abu Asim Azmi and others extended warm greetings to Muslims for a happy, healthy and charitable Eid-ul-Fitr. With the threats of the loudspeakers controversy lurking on the political horizon, the Maharashtra Police have taken full precautions and deployed tight security all over the state to prevent any untoward incidents, said Director General of Police Rajnish Seth. After offering the Salat-al-Eid, it was time for feasting, wishing each other 'Eid Mubarak' with handshakes and hugs, partaking the special milk-vermicelli-dry fruits preparation of 'Sheer Korma' and indulging in merry-making after a month of penance, fast and prayers. In many areas in the city, the Muslims went to meet and greet police personnel and offered them 'Sheer Korma' as a mark of respect for their 24x7 services to the people. Elsewhere, lakhs of Muslims and non-Muslims mingled freely, greeting, hugging and felicitating each other on Eid-ul-Fitr, displaying harmony and brotherhood for which the city is famed.

Man Held For Torching Police Chowki

The incident took place on Monday evening and the blaze was immediately doused.

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Police have arrested a 30-year-old man for allegedly setting a fire at a police chowki here in Maharashtra, an official said on Tuesday. The incident took place on Monday evening and the blaze was immediately doused, he said. The accused, Sunny Sadanand Kadam, was angry over the Mira Road earlier registering an offence against him, the official said but did not specify the case details. On Monday, Kadam went to the Shanti Park

police chowki under Mira Road police limits, sprayed an inflammable material in the premises and set it ablaze using a match stick, the official said. The personnel present there immediately doused the fire and caught hold of the accused, he said. The man was arrested and a case was registered against him under sections 435 (mischief by fire or explosive substance with intent to cause damage) and 506 (Criminal intimidation) of the Indian Penal Code and provisions of the Public Property (Prevention of Damage) Act, the police added.

COP INJURED IN ENCOUNTER WITH NAXALS

Mumbai: The ultras, who had gathered in the forest, opened fire at the police patrolling team, following which the security personnel retaliated. A police constable suffered serious injuries in an encounter with Naxals in Maharashtra's insurgency-hit Gadchiroli district on Tuesday, a senior official said. The skirmish took place near Dodraj forest in Bhamragad, located over 900 km from the state capital Mumbai, when a team of C-60 commandos, a specialised combat unit of the Gadchiroli police, was patrolling in the area, he said. The ultras, who had gathered in the forest, opened fire at the police patrolling team, following which the security personnel retaliated. After the exchange of fire for some time, Naxals fled into the forest, the official said. A police constable was seriously injured in the face-off and rushed to a hospital, he said. A search was on in the Bhamragad forest, he added. In November last year, 26 Naxals, including senior cadre Milind Telumbde, were killed in a fierce encounter with the C-60 commandos in Gadchiroli.

Aurangabad hospitals mandate RT-PCR test before surgeries

THE DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION HAS ALSO DECIDED TO ISSUE SHOW-CAUSE NOTICES TO HEADS OF 10 HEALTH CENTRES TO EXPLAIN THE LOW COVID-19 VACCINATION PERCENTAGE THERE, THE COLLECTOR'S RELEASE SAID.

Aurangabad | Agencies

The Aurangabad district disaster management authority in Maharashtra has mandat-

ed the RT-PCR test for COVID-19 detection mandatory for patients before undergoing any surgery in Maharashtra, an official said on Tuesday. Hospital authorities in Aurangabad have also been asked to check the patient's COVID-19 vaccination status, Collector Sunil Chavan said in a release but did not specify any reason for these decisions which were taken after a meeting to review the pandemic situation. Medical facilities have been asked to make a note of the patient's vaccination status on his/her case papers, which will be checked by authorities, the collector said. Aurangabad did not report any new COVID-19 cases on Monday. As of now, there is only one active COVID-19 case in Aurangabad and the patient is in home isolation, a district adminis-

tration official said. The district administration has also decided to issue show-cause notices to heads of 10 health centers to explain the low COVID-19 vaccination percentage there, the collector's release said. The administration will conduct awareness programmes for citizens to encourage them to get inoculated against the coronavirus, it said. So far, 83.39 per cent people in the district have taken the first dose of the COVID-19 vaccine and 62.02 per cent of them have taken both doses, as per official data. On Monday, Maharashtra reported 92 new COVID-19 cases, a majority of them in the Mumbai Circle, and one more death, taking the overall tally in the state to 78,77,993 and the toll to 1,47,844, a health department official earlier said.

Father, Son Jailed For Raping Mentally Challenged Daughter

THE PROSECUTOR TOLD THE COURT THAT THE 52-YEAR-OLD MAN AND HIS SON REPEATEDLY RAPED THE MAN'S DAUGHTER AT THEIR HOME SINCE 2017, WHEN SHE WAS 15-YEAR-OLD.

Team Absolute | Thane

A special POC SO court in Maharashtra's Thane has sentenced a man and his son to 10 years' rigorous imprisonment for raping the man's mentally challenged minor daughter on various occasions since 2017. Special POC SO judge Kavita D Shirbhate in her order on Monday also imposed a fine of Rs 5,000 each on the two accused, while pronouncing them guilty of various offences punishable under the Indian Penal Code and the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act. Special Public Prosecutor Sanjay More told



the court that the 52-year-old man and his son, aged 25, repeatedly raped the girl at their home in Bhiwandi town of Thane since 2017, when she was 15-year-old. The girl later became pregnant and complained to her neighbours, who helped her lodge a complaint at Kongoan police station in Bhiwandi. The two accused were subsequently arrested. More said they had examined nine witnesses, including the survivor, to prove the case against the accused. The judge in her order said the prosecution had successfully proved all the charges against the accused duo beyond reasonable doubt, and the duo needed to be convicted and sentenced.

Cara Delevingne strips off to show gold-painted body

Met Gala red carpet

Los Angeles | Agencies

Model-actress Cara Delevingne's make-up was hidden under her clothes as she stripped off at the star-studded Met Gala event. She stepped out in a red Dior Haute Couture suit complete with a walking stick and platform heels in matching color. She then took everyone by surprise as she took off the jacket and revealed her naked chest covered in shimmering gold body paint, reports aceshowbiz.com.

The 29-year-old wore only a pair of gold covers to protect her modesty and accessorised with a series of gold chains that extended down her bust in suspenders of sorts. She cheekily stuck out her tongue while posing for photographers after going topless. Delevingne had her long blonde hair styled in loose waves. She also had hoards of rhinestones glued to her eyes in a cat-eye shape with shimmering shadow swiped across her brown bone.

Delevingne has attended the Met Gala since she made her debut in 2011. Last year, she made a statement with her Dior number which had the phrase "peg the patriarchy" emblazoned across her chest.



KIM WEARS ICONIC MARILYN MONROE 'HAPPY BIRTHDAY' DRESS

Los Angeles | Agencies

Reality TV star Kim Kardashian made heads turn at the Met Gala as she looked stunning dressed in a Marilyn Monroe's dress from her iconic 1962 performance of 'Happy Birthday, Mr. President'.

According to 'Variety', the sparkly sheer dress has been on display at Ripley's Believe It or Not museum in Orlando. Since its purchase in 2016 for a whopping \$4.81 million, a price that makes it one of the most expensive dresses ever sold. Kardashian's visit to the museum April 23 with boyfriend Pete Davidson led fans to speculate that she could be wearing the dress on Monday.

Coupled with Kardashian's previous comments about what she would wear to this year's event, at which she has become a mainstay, the dress became a leading theory for what the reality star could choose to arrive in, reports 'Variety'.

But it was confirmed to 'Vogue' on the night of the big ball. Kardashian arrived bleached blonde and sporting the historical frock.

On the 'Vogue' live stream, the reality TV star and business owner revealed that she had to lose 16 pounds in three weeks to fit into this look.

As a follow-up to last year's American fashion theme, this year's dress code is "Gilded Glamour".

Monroe's Jean Louis dress certainly fits the bill, as it represents the historic actress and singer at her most spectacular.

Notably, the dress was so tight on Monroe that she had to be sewn into it before her performance at President John F. Kennedy's 45th birthday event at Madison Square Garden, which may be the most iconic rendition of 'Happy Birthday' to ever be sung.



Drew apologises for 'making light' of Depp-Heard trial, 'offending' fans



Los Angeles: Actress Drew Barrymore issued an apology on social media for "making light" of Hollywood star Johnny Depp's \$50 million defamation lawsuit against former-wife Amber Heard.

The 'Pirates of the Caribbean' actor is suing Heard after she alluded to their allegedly abusive relationship in an op-ed piece written for The Washington Post. Barrymore called the trial "a seven-layer dip of insanity" on her daytime talk show, reports 'Variety'.

"It's like one layer of crazy, it's a seven-layer dip of insanity. I know that these are two people's real lives and I know what it's like to have your life put out in public," Barrymore said.

"I understand all the feelings, but they are actually offering up this information that nobody had to know.

"This is crazy!" The trial has been live-streaming since it started April 11. Barrymore's comments generated backlash from her viewers, to which the host responded in a video post: "It has come to my attention that I have offended people with making light of Johnny Depp and Amber Heard and for that I just want to deeply apologise and appreciate everyone who spoke out because this can be a teachable moment for me and how I move forward and how I conduct myself."

"All I want to do is be a good person," Barrymore added.

"I can be a more thoughtful and better person moving forward because all I want to do is be a good person and I very much appreciate the depth of this and I will grow and change from it. And I thank everyone helping me grow along the way and teaching me. Thank you." Barrymore is far from the only celebrity who has spoken out during the trial.



Tobias Menzies, Julia Louis-Dreyfus join the cast of 'Beth & Don'

Los Angeles | Agencies

Tobias Menzies, who is known for his work as Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh in the third and fourth seasons of 'The Crown' has been signed for 'Beth & Don' along with Julia Louis-Dreyfus. The feature is to be directed by Nicole Holofcener, who has also written the script. The movie is set to go on floors this week, reports 'Deadline'.

Production company A24 has acquired all US rights out of AFM last year. As per 'Deadline', Michaela Watkins, Arian Moayed, Owen Teague, Jeanne Berlin, Bill

Camp and Elizabeth Marvel are also a part of the cast.

The movie follows the story of Beth, a New York novelist in an unbelievably happy marriage to Don, who loves her and supports her in every way. One day, when Beth overhears him admitting that he hasn't liked her writing in years, it threatens to undo all that's good in their lives.

Ben & Don is produced by Likely Story's Anthony Bregman and Stefanie Azpiazu, Louis-Dreyfus and Holofcener. Bregman and Azpiazu produced Enough Said, and are longtime collaborators with both Holofcener and Louis-Dreyfus.

LOUIS LETERRIER TO REPLACE JUSTIN LIN AS DIRECTOR FOR 'FAST X'

Los Angeles | Agencies

Filmmaker Louis Leterrier, who is known for his work in films such as 'The Incredible Hulk' and the first two 'Transporter' film is set to take over the director's chair on 'Fast X' from Justin Lin.

According to 'Variety', the decision comes less than a week after Lin's surprise departure from the helm of the 10th installment in the main 'Fast and Furious' movie franchise.

He comes to the franchise with a wide array of experience in the action realm. He expanded his directing career in 2005 with two modestly budgeted action showcases for Jet Li ('Unleashed') and Jason Statham ('Transporter 2'), and he transitioned into studio tentpoles with 2008's 'The Incredible Hulk', 2010's 'Clash of the Titans' and 2013's 'Now You See Me'.

The French filmmaker turned to television with two hit Netflix series: 2019's 'The Dark Crystal: Age of Resistance' and 2021's 'Lupin'.

Even in Lin's absence, cameras have still been rolling: With stars like Vin Diesel, Charlize Theron and newcomer Jason Momoa already on set, Universal paused production on the main unit while the second unit continued filming in the UK.



NATASHA POONAWALLA DON GOLDEN SAREE

Los Angeles | Agencies

Natasha Poonawalla, an Indian socialite and businesswoman, wore Indian fashion on the Met Gala 2022 red carpet and looked absolutely stunning. Natasha nailed the night's theme of 'Gilded Glamour.' She looked gorgeous in a golden saree and jewellery by Sabyasachi Mukherjee, while the bustier was by Schiaparelli.

Natasha was undoubtedly one of the best-dressed celebs of the night thanks to the combination of desi elegance and the American-inspired theme. Designer's official Instagram account shared photos of Natasha's appearance at the event. The image was captioned by the designer: "For me, the sari is a truly unique and versatile garment that owns its identity even as it transcends boundaries and geographies."

Natasha wore a "Schiaparelli hand-forged metal bustier paired with a custom couture sari and trail."

A sleek open haircut, nude blush pink lip colour, adorned nails, dramatic winged eyeliner, metallic eye shadow, blushed complexion, dazzling highlighter, and sharp contouring were used by Natasha to create the look.

ABSOLUTE PIC OF THE DAY



Lily James



IPL 2022

RABADA, DHAWAN LEAD PUNJAB TO 8-WICKET WIN OVER GUJARAT

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Kagiso Rabada's excellent four-fer (4/33) and Shikhar Dhawan's fine fifty (62 not out off 53) led Punjab Kings to a convincing eight-wicket win over Gujarat Titans in Match No. 48 of IPL 2022 at the Dr. D.Y. Patil Stadium, here on Tuesday.

With this win, Punjab jumped to the fifth spot in the table with 10 points while it was only the second loss for table-toppers Gujarat in the ongoing IPL 2022 season.

Rabada's superb four-fer helped Punjab Kings restrict Gujarat Titans to 143/8 in 20 overs despite a hard-fought fifty by Sai Sudharsan (64 not out off 50) after losing the toss and bowling first. Sudharsan, who came to bat at No 3, was the lone warrior with the bat for Gujarat, who kept losing wickets at regular intervals during their innings.

After Sudharsan, Wriddhiman Saha (21 off 17) was the second-highest scorer for GT. Apart from Rabada (4/33), the likes of Rishi Dhawan (1/26), Liam Livingstone (1/15), and Arshdeep Singh (1/35) also chipped in with one wicket each for Punjab.

Chasing a modest target, Punjab tried a different opening combo where Jonny Bairstow replaced Mayank Agarwal alongside Shikhar Dhawan. However, Bairstow (1) fell cheaply getting a top edge against a Mohammad Shami short ball in the 3rd over of the innings. The early wicket brought an



opportunity for Gujarat while defending a small total but Shikhar Dhawan and Bhanuka Rajapaksa played counter-attacking knocks. Dhawan was ruthless with anything having a little width, and played the lofted drive to perfection during the powerplay while Rajapaksa relied a lot more on his power and managed to muscle the ball for boundaries as soon as he came in.

The duo of Dhawan and Rajapaksa (40 off 28) stitched a vital partnership of 87 off 58 balls for the second wicket before the Sri Lankan batter was trapped LBW in the 12th over.

With eight wickets in hand, Punjab had the opportunity to finishing the game early and Liam Livingstone (30 off 10) did it with perfection.

Livingstone smashed 6, 6, 6, 4, 2, 4 against Mohammed Shami which allowed Punjab to finish the chase inside 16 overs and give their net run rate a fillip. Mohammed Shami (1/43) and Lockie Ferguson (1/29) were the wicket-takers for Gujarat.

Earlier, Gujarat were off to a terrible start, losing the wickets of both openers -- Wriddhiman Saha (21 off 17) and Shubman Gill (9 off 6) -- inside the first four overs. Though Sudharsan was struggling to find his timing for a majority of his innings, he held one end up. However, the left-hander didn't get any kind of support from the lower down batters -- Rahul Tewatia (11), Rashid Khan (0), Pradeep Sangwan (2) Lockie Ferguson (5) -- who couldn't do much.

With 129-8 after 18.2 overs, Gujarat were in a position to get bowled out but Sudarshan showed his temperament and hit a few precious boundaries, in the end, to help Gujarat Titans finish with 143/8 in 20 overs. Apart from Rabada (4/33), the likes of Rishi Dhawan (1/26), Liam Livingstone (1/15), and Arshdeep Singh (1/35) also chipped in with one wicket each for Punjab.

Brief scores :

Gujarat Titans 143/8 in 20 overs (Sai Sudharsan 64 not out, Wriddhiman Saha 21; Kagiso Rabada 4/33) lost to Punjab Kings 145-2 in 16 overs (Shikhar Dhawan 62 not out, Bhanuka Rajapaksa 40; Lockie Ferguson 1/29) by 8 wickets

BCCI announces schedule, venue for IPL playoffs and Women's T20 Challenge



Team Absolute | Mumbai

The Indian Premier League (IPL) playoffs and final will be played from May 24 to May 29 in Kolkata and Ahmedabad.

As per a BCCI release, Qualifier 1 will be held in Eden Gardens, Kolkata on May 24 followed by the Eliminator on May 25. The Narendra Modi Stadium in Ahmedabad will host Qualifier 2 and the final on

May 27 and May 29 respectively.

Meanwhile, the Women's T20 Challenge 2022 to be played from May 23 to May 28 will be held in Pune.

SCHEDULE OF THE IPL 2022 PLAYOFFS:

May 24: Qualifier 1 - Team 1 vs Team 2, Kolkata
May 25: Eliminator - Team 3 vs Team 4, Kolkata
May 27: Qualifier 2 - Winner of Eliminator vs Loser of Qualifier 1, Ahmedabad
May 29: Final - Winner of Qualifier 1 vs Winner of Qualifier 2, Ahmedabad

Women's T20 Challenge

May 23: Match No.1, Pune (19:30 IST)
May 24: Match N.2, Pune (15:30 IST)
May 26: Match No.3, Pune (19:30 IST)
May 28: Final, Pune (19:30 IST)

I-League

Churchill Brothers edge past RoundGlass Punjab 2-1

Kolkata | Agencies

Churchill Brothers FC defeated RoundGlass Punjab 2-1 in the Hero I-League at the Kalyani Stadium here on Tuesday.

With this win, they have moved into the top 3 on the table. They are now just seven points behind top-placed Gokulam Kerala. Bryce Miranda and Gnohere Krizo were on the target for Churchill Brothers while Kurtis Owen Guthrie netted the lone goal for Punjab.

Churchill Brothers and RoundGlass Punjab enjoy dominating the midfield, and it was no different in this encounter. Both teams came out firing early on, looking to take control of the game by gaining possession of the ball.

RoundGlass Punjab also had several chances in the first 15 minutes of the game, including winning a free-kick and nearly converting it in the 12th minute, but Shilton Paul stood tall to deny their rivals any early lead.

During first-half stoppage time, Miranda sought to create a wonderful opportunity for his side from the left wing, but his effort was cleared from the six-yard box thanks to a brilliant block by Josef Charles Yarney.

Much like the first half, Churchill Brothers



began the second half on the front foot as they looked to double their lead. Meanwhile, RoundGlass looked to alter their strategy as they named the first round of substitution in the 46th minute with Robin Singh replacing Ashish Jha on the field.

Finally, Gnohere Krizo scored a late goal in the 85th minute to put his team ahead. Despite the fact that Krizo slammed the ball into the net, it was Saurav Mandal who put in the most effort as he sprinted down the right side with the ball and outplayed several RoundGlass players before passing it to Krizo.

The Punjab players were hyperactive on the field in the final 10 minutes of the game, searching for an equaliser that never came. As a result of the loss, they have dropped to fourth place on the standings.

NICHOLAS POORAN NAMED WEST INDIES WHITE-BALL CAPTAIN

St. John's (Antigua & Barbuda): Cricket West Indies (CWI) confirmed on

Tuesday the appointment of Nicholas Pooran as the West Indies men's One-Day International (ODI) and T20 International (T20I) captain, following the international retirement of Kieron Pollard.

The appointment will include the ICC Men's T20 World Cup in 2022 and the ICC Men's Cricket World Cup in October 2023. Shai Hope has been named as vice-captain of the ODI team. Pooran will take over the captaincy for the West Indies ODI and T20I teams after being Pollard's deputy over the last year.

Giving the information about Pooran's appointment, CWI's Director of Cricket Jimmy Adams said, "We believe Nicholas is ready for the challenge of leading our white-ball teams given his experience, performances, and the respect he has within the playing group. The experience he has gathered playing in various franchise leagues around the world was also a factor in the decision to recommend him for the T20 Captaincy."



Mitchell Marsh's brain fade has DC coach Ponting fuming; video goes viral

Team Absolute | Mumbai

A video has gone viral where Delhi Capitals head coach Ricky Ponting is seen fuming after a Mitchell Marsh brain fade in the match against Lucknow Super Giants at the Wankhede Stadium on May 1.

The KL Rahul-led Super Giants won the thriller of a contest by just six runs as Delhi Capitals could muster 189/7 chasing 195.

After a miserable opening show by Prithvi Shaw and David Warner, who were out for five and three runs respectively, Marsh and skipper Rishabh Pant seemed to be cruising along well, just when Australia's T20 World Cup hero fell foul to a questionable umpiring decision, returning to the dugout after he had 'nicked' a Krishnappa Gowtham delivery to LSG wicketkeeper Quinton de Kock. However, replays seemed to suggest that the ball never made contact with Marsh's bat and the Australian cricketer would have earned a reprieve had he gone for the review. But the 30-year-old limit-



ed-overs specialist decided to walk back to the dugout, much to the chagrin of his coach Ponting.

At the time Marsh was dismissed, he was batting fluently on 37 from 20 balls. In fact, the umpire too hesitated initially to give Marsh out but later raised his finger. Marsh has had a very ordinary IPL 2022, having scored 64 runs for the Delhi Capitals in three outings, while missing a large chunk of the lucrative tour-

nement due to Covid-19.

Against Royal Challengers Bangalore, Marsh was criticised for his sluggish batting (14 off 24 balls). Had he gone for a review, Marsh could probably have guided the Capitals to a win.

A renowned sports reporter, Nic Savage, tweeted the image from 'Ultra Edge', the ball-tracking device, which showed Mitchell Marsh was clearly not out.

Madrid Open

MURRAY OVERCOMES THEM IN FIRST CLAY-COURT CHALLENGE IN TWO YEARS

Madrid | Agencies

Great Britain's Andy Murray, who returned to clay for the first time in nearly two years, defeated Dominic Thiem of Austria 6-3, 6-4 to secure a Round-of-32 clash against Denis Shapovalov at the Madrid Open here.

Murray was ranked world No. 1 in the ATP Rankings when he last took the court at the Madrid Open in 2017 and his performance against the Austrian on Monday night belied his current world ranking of No. 78.

It was the two-time Madrid champion's first victory on the surface since the 2017 French Open quarterfinals, when he beat Kei Nishikori of Japan.

Murray, who has undergone a hip surgery, last played a clay-court game at Roland Garros in 2020. He had initially planned to continue his break from clay and compete in hard-court ATP Challenger Tour events during the European clay swing. But when the events got cancelled, he changed his plan.

Murray showed few signs of rust as he dished out a dominant display. Thiem, still seeking the first win of his comeback from a right-wrist injury, was only brilliant in patches. Murray next faces 14th seed Denis Shapovalov of Canada, who got past lucky



loser Ugo Humbert of France, 7-6(1), 6-3. The 23-year-old Shapovalov won his only previous meeting with Murray in straight sets one year ago in the Wimbledon third round.

Madrid: Andrey Rublev survived a major scare on Tuesday at the Madrid Open, edging past NextGen ATP star Briton Jack Draper 2-6, 6-4, 7-5 to reach the third round.

The World No. 8 arrived in Madrid high in confidence following his title run at the Serbia Open in Belgrade last month. However, he was tested to his limits against wild card Draper in a heavy-hitting clash as he rallied from 0-3 in the third set to eventually advance after two hours and 19 minutes. Draper has captured four ATP Challenger Tour titles in 2022 and showed everyone why with his relentless aggression on Manolo Santana Stadium, the ATP said in a report on its website. The 20-year-old, who is fifth in the ATP Race To Milan, caused Rublev problems throughout as he swung his lefty serve with accuracy before ultimately fading near the end in the lively conditions. Rublev is making his second appearance at the ATP Masters 1000 event and recovered after a stuttering start against World No. 121, finding greater control from the baseline as the match went on to reach the third round in Madrid again.

Smashing Cottrell in IPL 2020 has given Tewatia the confidence: Gavaskar

Mumbai | Agencies

Legendary India cricketer Sunil Gavaskar believes that Rahul Tewatia's hard-hitting and pulverising knocks in IPL 2022 for Gujarat Titans have got to do with him smashing West Indies pace bowler Sheldon Cottrell in IPL 2020 in Sharjah.

Tewatia, then playing for Rajasthan Royals, turned the run chase on its head when he smashed five sixes in Cottrell's 18th over as he



stunned Kings XI Punjab, helping his team chase down 224. Gavaskar feels that the

whirlwind innings in 2020 had given the all-rounder the confidence to blast any bowler into submission. On April 30 against Royal Challengers Bangalore, it was due to his unbeaten 43-run effort (25 balls) that Gujarat Titans won the nail-biter by six wickets with only three balls remaining. Gavaskar said he had nicknamed the 28-year-old cricketer the 'ice-man' and lauded Tewatia's ability to remain unruffled during tense moments.

KP compares Kohli with Ronaldo, says the two are legends in terms of greatness

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Former England cricketer Kevin Pietersen has compared former India skipper and Royal Challengers Bangalore stalwart Virat Kohli with Manchester United legend Cristiano Ronaldo in terms of greatness, and added that both are at the top of their game.

Following a prolonged lean patch for RCB in IPL 2022, Kohli finally broke the jinx, scoring 58 off 53 balls against Gujarat Titans on April 30 at the Brabourne. And while the half-century came in a losing cause -- RCB lost by six wickets -- Pietersen felt it was an important juncture for Kohli in his cricketing career, given his lean patch.

Pietersen felt the score could probably become a watershed event in Kohli's career, given his strug-



gles with the bat. "What he (Kohli) needs to do is to have a look at Manchester United and Cristiano Ronaldo. Two similar brands in their different teams and in their sports. You have Virat Kohli right at the top of cricket, his brand is right at the top of cricket. Cristiano Ronaldo is right at the top of foot-

ball." "One plays for Manchester United, and one plays for RCB and India. Those are big brands and they are going to be talking points. Those big brands also want to maintain their status in the game by winning," said Pietersen on Star Sports.

"Virat Kohli's greatest attribute, how many games he has won for India while chasing. Virat Kohli is my greatest batter in this country because he has won so many games for India chasing. That is something you look at, that is something he cherishes and is so proud of."

Pietersen concluded by saying, "This knock (against Titans), he would be looking and thinking some beautiful shots, absolutely fantastic shots and I felt good. But I know he is a champion, he is a winner and I know that he would be fuming that those weren't enough for the win."



A Sneak Peek into Alia Bhatt's Gallery

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Alia Bhatt, who is currently shooting for her film Rocky Aur Rani Ki Prem Kahani, has posted a number of stunning images. From January to April, the actress shared her selfie life with her social media family. Her first photo in the post is a sun-kissed selfie wearing an olive green jacket and golden hoop earrings. In the following photo, Alia is wearing an all-white attire and flaunting her million-dollar smile while holding Amitabh Bachchan's handwritten note praising her work in Gangubai Kathiawadi. Her third photo appears to be from the shoot of the movie Brahmastra's Kesariya song. Her hair is adorned with marigold petals, and we can see antique houses surrounding the Varanasi ghats in the backdrop. Alia can be seen taking a selfie while relaxing in the pool in the last photo. The actress captioned the photo "Jan-April ISL (In Selfie Life)" when she shared it on her social media. Her supporters swamped the comment section shortly after she uploaded the post. "Your selfies," one fan said, while another referred to her as "Oh my Baby Girl." Meanwhile, Alia Bhatt and Ranbir Kapoor married last month in an intimate ceremony in presence of their family and close friends. She released lovely photos from the ceremony and wrote a long comment that said, "Today, surrounded by our family and friends, at home ... in our favourite spot - the balcony we've spent the last 5 years of our relationship - we got married. With so much already behind us, we can't wait to build more memories together ... memories that are full of love, laughter, comfortable silences, movie nights, silly fights, wine delights and Chinese bites. Thank you for all the love and light during this very momentous time in our lives. It has made this moment all the more special. Love, Ranbir and Alia"



Team Absolute | Mumbai

Widely called 'Sanju Baba', Sanjay Dutt is one of the most loved actors in Bollywood by the fans and industry people. Moreover, He is a very family-oriented person and shares a great bond with everyone, especially with her mother, late Nargis Dutt. Her mother was the backbone of the family and had always shown great support towards him. Recently, the actor took to his social media and shared a heartfelt note about her mother late Nargis Dutt on her death anniversary. He wrote a heart-touching caption. "Not a single moment goes by when I don't remember you. Ma, you were the basis of my life and the strength of my soul. I wish my wife and kids

SANJAY DUTT REMEMBERS HIS MOTHER, NARGIS DUTT ON HER DEATH ANNIVERSARY

would have met you for you to give them all your love and blessings. I miss you today and every day!" Sanjay Dutt's recently released KGF: Chapter 2 is breaking the records globally and his character of 'Adheera' is also garnering immense love from the audience. Sanjay Dutt has some exciting projects coming up like Shamsheera, Ghudchadi, and Prithviraj. Apart from that, he has signed up for some more interesting projects and the official announcements are expected soon.

Poonam Pandey evicted from show just before the finale

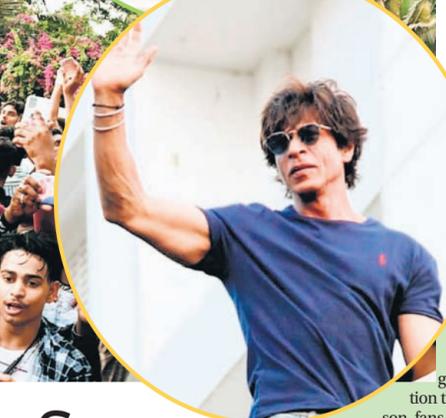
Team Absolute | New Delhi

'Nasha' actress Poonam Pandey recently got evicted from reality show 'Lock Upp'. Poonam lost the game and despite being a strong contestant she got eliminated during a task. In an arena task between Poonam and Saisha Shinde, there is a tunnel in which there is a (safety) buzzer, both of them had to enter the tunnel and press the buzzer marked on each letter. Saisha eventually won, Poonam lost and was locked out from the 'Lock Upp'. Poonam cried a lot after her loss, before leaving Karan Kundrra praised her and said: "You have had a commendable journey". Poonam was seen on the show revealing her secret about facing abuse from her ex-husband. She also shared how her family was thrown out of a housing society because it was her family. Even none of the family members told her the reason why they were thrown out because she was the only earning member. She also took off her T-shirt in one of the episodes as she promised to her fans. She was one of the contestants who was close to the finale but got evicted.



SALMAN KHAN AND SHAHRUKH KHAN GREET FANS ON EID-UL-FITR

Mumbai: Thousands of fans gathered in front of Galaxy flat and Mannat to celebrate Eid, and to wish their bhaijaan and king khan, Eid Mubarak. As always, the Khans did not disappoint their fans, greeting them from the balconies of their respective homes. It's a tradition that has been continued this year. Every year, during the festive season, fans gather in front of Salman and Shahrukh's homes to hear from the stars. This year's scenes outside their homes reflect the audience's affection for them.



Language row: Sonu Nigam says 'it's a pointless debate'

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Singer Sonu Nigam has come down heavily on the recent language row which was sparked after a Twitter showdown between Bollywood actor Ajay Devgn and Kannada superstar Kiccha Sudeep.

The singer has said that it is not correct to put an imposition on anyone especially in terms of languages. The National Award-winning singer was speaking at the FICCI Flo event, where he said that it's pointless to engage in such debates and add fuel to the fire as people are already getting divided on multiple lines across the country and this will seriously dent the integrity of our nation and make the society weak.

FICCI Flo is the women's wing of Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FICCI), which is an



India-based non-governmental trade association and advocacy group.

He mentioned that from what he knows (having spoken with experts in the field), the Constitution of India, the document which binds the country's law and order, does not recognise Hindi as the state's national language. "Nowhere in the Constitution is it written that Hindi is our national language. It might be the most spoken language, but not the national language."

He went on to state that although debatable, Tamil is the oldest language in the world. "In fact, Tamil is the oldest language. There is a debate between Sanskrit and Tamil. But, people say Tamil is the oldest language in the entire world."

Nigam that country is already reeling with enough issues that need to be resolved with other nations and initiating a new problem within the country will only add to the troubles that the people are already plagued with.

SURPASSED ALL OUR EXPECTATIONS: KARTIK AARYAN

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Young Bollywood star Kartik Aaryan is all set to be seen in 'Bhool Bhulaiyaa 2' and he went on a four-city tour in one day for the launch of the title track. Released on Monday, the track has fast become a rage on the Internet.

Talking about the response to this song, Kartik shares, "I am so elated seeing the reaction to the title track, it is for the first time that a song had such a massive launch where we covered four cities in a day, and the kind of response we have got, it has truly surpassed all our expectations."

Talking about acing such complex choreography, Kartik explains "I love the fact that Bosco sir challenges me everytime, but its consequently that much more rewarding."

The 'Bhool Bhulaiyaa 2' star has been receiving showers of praises from fans to the critics about how cool and uberhot he looks sporting a black tuxedo in the song, channeling spooky cool vibes as he does his zig zag hookstep.

As 'Bhool Bhulaiyaa 2' gets set to hit the screens on May 20, Kartik will next be seen in 'Shehzada', 'Freddy', 'Captain India' and Sajid Nadiadwala's untitled next.



INSTAGRAM PIC OF THE DAY



Sushmita Sen