

# absolute india

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## PETITION IN ALLAHABAD HC TO OPEN 20 ROOMS IN TAJ MAHAL

A petition has been filed in the Lucknow bench of the Allahabad high court seeking directives to the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) to open 20 rooms inside the Taj Mahal in Agra to ascertain whether the Hindu idols and inscriptions are hidden there.



Team Absolute | Lucknow

A petition has been filed in the Lucknow bench of the Allahabad high court seeking directives to the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) to open 20 rooms inside the Taj Mahal in Agra to ascertain whether the Hindu idols and inscriptions are hidden there. Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) media in-charge of Ayodhya district, Dr Rajneesh Singh has filed the petition which is yet to come up for hearing. Advocate Rudra Vikram Singh is representing the petitioner in court. "There is an old controversy related to the Taj Mahal. Around 20 rooms in Taj Mahal are locked and no one is allowed to enter. It is believed that in these rooms there are idols of Hindu gods and scriptures," said Dr Rajneesh Singh.

"I have filed a petition in the high court seeking directives to ASI to open these rooms to ascertain facts. There is no harm in opening these rooms and setting to rest all controversies," said Singh on Sunday. In the plea, the petitioner has sought directives from the court to the state government to constitute a committee that would examine these rooms and look for any evidence related with the Hindu idols or scriptures there. Rajneesh Singh said he has been trying to ascertain facts about the 20

locked rooms of Taj Mahal since 2020 through the Right to Information Act (RTI). Singh had filed an RTI in 2020 with the Union ministry of Culture seeking information about the rooms. "Since 2020, I have been trying to ascertain facts about the locked rooms of Taj Mahal. I had filed an RTI. Replying to the RTI, the Union ministry of Culture informed the Central Information Commission (in Delhi) that these rooms were locked due to security reasons and no detail was provided about these rooms," he added.

"In the RTI, I had sought details about the locked rooms (what is inside them) and directives to open them," Singh said. "When all my efforts failed then I have approached the Lucknow high court seeking directives to the government to open these rooms and constitute a fact-finding committee to find out whether Hindu gods and scriptures are inside them," he added. It may be pointed out that several right-wing organisations claim Taj Mahal to be Tejo Mahalaya, a Hindu temple.

### Khalistan posters appear at Himachal Assembly campus



Posters of Khalistan on Sunday surfaced at the main entrance of the state legislative Assembly campus in this Himachal Pradesh town, home to Tibetan spiritual leader the Dalai Lama, the police said.

**Dharamsala:** Posters of Khalistan on Sunday surfaced at the main entrance of the state legislative Assembly campus in this Himachal Pradesh town, home to Tibetan spiritual leader the Dalai Lama, the police said. The posters, written in Punjabi, surfaced in the morning. Also the wall near the gate was inscribed with the word Khalistan, a separatist movement seeking to create a homeland for Sikhs by establishing a sovereign state. Dharamsala is some 250 km from the state capital. The police said investigations were on and also asked the locals not to feel threatened by the posters. "It is an act by some mischievous elements carried out in the night," a senior police official told IANS. The legislative Assembly in Dharamsala has been hosting the winter session annually outside the state capital since 2005.

### Top Pakistani terrorist commander among 2 ultras neutralised in Kashmir

Two terrorists, including Pakistani terrorist commander Haider, were neutralised in an encounter with security forces in Jammu and Kashmir's Kulgam district on Sunday, police said.

Srinagar | Agencies

Two terrorists, including Pakistani terrorist commander Haider, were neutralised in an encounter with security forces in Jammu and Kashmir's Kulgam district on Sunday, police said. Police said acting on specific information generated by police regarding the presence of terrorists in Cheyan Devsar area of Kulgam, police and army launched a joint cordon and search operation. "During the search operation, as the joint search party approached towards the suspected spot, the hiding terrorists fired indiscriminately upon the joint search party which was effectively retaliated leading to an encounter. Later on, a team of CRPF also joined the operation," police said. In the ensuing encounter, two terrorists of proscribed terror outfit LeT, including Haider, were killed and their bodies were retrieved from the site of encounter. The other killed terrorist has been identified as Shahbaz Shah of Kulgam. As per police records, Haider was a categorised terrorist who was active for more than two years in north Kashmir and had recently shifted his base to south Kashmir. "The killed terrorist was part of groups involved

in several terror crimes, civilian atrocities and various killings including recent killings of police personnel SgCT Mohammad Sultan and Ct Fayaz Ahmad on November 10, 2021 at Gulshan Chowk Bandipora. Besides, he was also involved in an attack on Naka party near Nishat Park Bandipora on February 11 in which SPO Zubair Ahmad attained martyrdom while as four other security personnel got injured including three police personnel and an ASI of BSF," police said. "The other killed terrorist belonging to minority community namely Satish Kumar Singh on April 13 at Kakran area of Kulgam. After this attack said terrorist was categorised." IGP Kashmir Vijay Kumar termed this operation a big success and congratulated the joint team for conducting successful operation and eliminating the top wanted Pakistani terrorist. Incriminating materials, arms and ammunition including an Ak-56 with four magazines, a Pouch and ID cards of LeT were recovered from the site of encounter. Police have registered a case and investigations have been initiated.

## IED filled with RDX seized in Punjab, two held

Team Absolute | Chandigarh

Averting a possible terrorist attack, Punjab Police on Sunday arrested two people and recovered an IED, filled with RDX and packed in metallic box, weighing over 2.5 kg from Naushehra Pannuan village in Tarn Taran district close to the Pakistan border. The improvised explosive device (IED) was equipped with timer, detonator, battery and shrapnel. Those arrested have been identified as Baljinder Singh and Jagtar Singh. The police have also recovered a motorcycle and two mobile phones from their possession. Baljinder Singh was working as a nursing assistant in a private hospital in Ajnala, while Jagtar Singh is a labourer. Both were involved in the alleged terrorist act for money and drugs, a police official said. Their arrest came three days after four persons were arrested with recovery of three IEDs packed in a metallic case (2.5 kg each) and one pistol from Karnal by Haryana Police following the inputs from Punjab Police. Divulging details, ADGP, Internal Security, R.N. Dhoke said the police in Tarn Taran had a received a tip-off that the duo carrying



explosives were planning to carry out a blast. SSP Ranjit Singh sent police teams to conduct raids in the area and the accused were arrested with an IED in metallic box when they were going on a motorcycle, he said. As per the SSP, initial investigation revealed that the accused had gone to retrieve the IED on the instructions of their accomplice, Jobanjit Singh, who is facing criminal cases and has been declared a proclaimed offender. The SSP said a bomb disposal team later defused the IED, laden with nearly 1.5 kg RDX.

## BJP WILL NAME CANDIDATE WITH AN EYE ON 2024 GENERAL ELECTIONS

Amid all the speculations and names doing the rounds for its Presidential nominee, the BJP may nominate a candidate either belonging to the Other Backward Class (OBC) or a woman to win their support in the run-up to the 2024 general elections.

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Amid all the speculations and names doing the rounds for its Presidential nominee, the BJP may nominate a candidate either belonging to the Other Backward Class (OBC) or a woman to win their support in the run-up to the 2024 general elections. The OBC and women are the largest constituents of the country's population. A lot of theories like a candidate from Schedule Tribe (ST), Schedule Caste (SC) or from south India are playing in the political circles, and by all probability, the BJP-led NDA will nominate a candidate with an eye on the 2024 Parliamentary elections. Amid the demand of caste-based Census, political parties know that OBC constitutes over 40 per cent of the

country's total population, while women account for nearly half of India's population. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has on several occasions said that women are the new votebank of the BJP. BJP sources said that the party might nominate either an OBC or a woman for the post of President or go for a woman OBC candidate. "Lots of names are doing the rounds and every name has its own weight, but it is important to consolidate OBC and women votes by nominating a Presidential candidate from among them," the sources said. A party insider said that among all the social equations, a Presidential candidate from the SC community is unlikely as current President Ram Nath Kovind belongs to the community. "It is most unlikely that a



leader from the SC community will be given a chance this time. Among all, the OBC and women are most preferred right now for Presidential candidate," he said. The OBCs are a major force in all the states, from Uttar Pradesh to Maharashtra. In the recent Uttar Pradesh Assembly elections, despite the exit of some

the party will surely win their support in the next Lok Sabha polls and the upcoming state elections. When asked who, the person quoted above said, "It could be anyone from the community from any part of the country." Both women and OBC are independently the largest chunk of voters in the country. The party will either woo them individually or together by nominating an OBC woman candidate for the post," a senior party functionary said. Currently, the names of Anusuya Uikey, Tamilisai Soundararajan and Arif Mohammad Khan, presently the Governor of Chhattisgarh, Telangana and Kerala, respectively, and Draupadi Murmu, the former Governor of Jharkhand, are doing the rounds for the Presidential nominee of the BJP.

## Probable candidates in Presidential polls: The favourites and dark horses

Two months ahead of the election, the contest to choose the next occupant of the Rashtrapati Bhavan has yet to pick up pace with both the government and opposition yet to clear the air on their candidates.

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Two months ahead of the election, the contest to choose the next occupant of the Rashtrapati Bhavan has yet to pick up pace with both the government and opposition yet to clear the air on their candidates. The names of Kerala Governor Arif Mohd Khan, Vice President M Venkiah Naidu, Telangana

Governor Tamilisai Soundararajan, Assam Governor Jagdish Mukhi, former Jharkhand Governor Draupadi Murmu, and Chhattisgarh Governor Anusuya Uikey are being taken on the government side and of NCP supremo Sharad Pawar and former Lok Sabha Speaker Meira Kumar among the opposition. If Pawar throws his hat in the ring, then he could emerge as a joint opposition candidate, with his political experience - a three-time Maharashtra Chief Minister and Defence and Agriculture Minister at the Centre - and his relations across party lines, leaving the BJP on the backfoot. President of the Nationalist Congress Party (NCP), which he founded in 1999 after parting ways from the Congress, he is currently a

Rajya Sabha member. Pawar was the Chairman of the Board of Control for Cricket in India BCCI from 2005 to 2008 and the President of the International Cricket Council. From Congress, it could be Meira Kumar, who has been a Union Minister too and contested elections in the past too. On the government's side, several names are doing the rounds, but with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's penchant for surprises - picking up Bihar Governor Ram Nath Kovind in 2017 - could be displayed again Kerala Governor Khan could be a choice to display the government's inclusive side, while he has been a vocal supporter of government policies on various issues. Starting his political career as a student leader, he rose to become the President of Aligarh

Muslim University Students' Union in 1972-23 before his political debut in 1977 when he was elected to the UP Assembly. He subsequently joined the Congress and was elected to the Lok Sabha in 1980 from Kanpur and 1984 from Bahraich. In 1986, he quit Congress due to differences over the passage of the Muslim Personal Law Bill, nullifying the Shah Bano judgment, by the Rajiv Gandhi government. Khan joined the Janata Dal and was re-elected to the Lok Sabha in 1989 and served as Civil Aviation and Energy Minister in the V.P. Singh government. He subsequently joined the Bahujan Samaj Party and was again elected to the Lok Sabha in 1998 from Bahraich. In 2004, he joined the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) but only gained prominence after he was appointed

Kerala Governor in 2019. Venkiah Naidu is another strong possibility. Beginning his career as an MLA in Andhra Pradesh Legislative Assembly, he was in 1983, elected a member of the Rajya Sabha from Karnataka in 1998. He has served as Union Minister both in the Atal Bihari Vajpayee government and then the Narendra Modi government, before being elevated as Vice President. If the Modi government decides to field a sitting Governor as a candidate like in 2017, probables range from Chhattisgarh's Uikey, to Soundararajan if it seeks to choose someone from the South, while Mukhi could be the pick if it seeks to gain ground in Delhi. However, there could be dark horse candidates as either sides are keeping the cards close to their chest.

## INDIA LOGS 3,451 NEW COVID CASES, 40 DEATHS



**New Delhi:** India on Sunday reported 3,451 new Covid cases, a decline against the 3,805 infections registered the previous day, the Union Health Ministry said. The active caseload of the country has increased to 20,635 cases, accounting for 0.05 per cent of the country's total positive cases. The recovery of 3,079 patients in the last 24 hours took the cumulative tally to 4,25,57,495. Consequently, India's recovery rate stands at 98.74 per cent. Meanwhile, India's daily positivity rate stood at 0.96 per cent and the weekly positivity rate at 0.83 per cent. Also in the same period, a total of 3,60,613 tests were conducted across the country, increasing the overall to 84.06 crore. As of Sunday morning, India's Covid-19 vaccination coverage exceeded 190.20 crore, achieved via 2,36,46,697 sessions. Over 3.04 crore adolescents have been administered with a first dose of Covid-19 jab since the beginning of vaccination drive for this age bracket.





**ED QUESTIONS IAS OFFICER POOJA SINGHAL'S HUSBAND IN RANCHI ILLEGAL MINING CASE**

**▶ THE ENFORCEMENT DIRECTORATE (ED) HAS STARTED QUESTIONING ABHISHEK JHA, THE HUSBAND OF JHARKHAND IAS OFFICER POOJA SINGHAL, IN CONNECTION WITH AN ILLEGAL MINING CASE.**

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The ED had on Saturday arrested Chartered Accountant Suman Kumar, who works for the IAS officer and her husband. Kumar is in the custody of ED for five days. On Friday, the ED had recovered Rs 19.31 crore cash and a few incriminating documents from the premises of Kumar. Kumar came on the radar during the course of investigation. He also handles the

accounts of Singhal's husband. The Enforcement Directorate (ED) had on Friday morning conducted raids at more than 18 places -- Ranchi, Chandigarh, Faridabad, Gurugram, Noida, Mumbai, Kollata, Muzafarpur, Saharsa, and in several parts of NCR, including Faridabad and Gurugram. The raids started early Friday and came to end at 8 p.m. The ED had also recorded the statements of the CA after seizing the whole cash. They had to take help of the bank officials and a currency counting machine.

"Hariom Tower of Ranchi's Lalpur area, Faridabad and other places are being searched. We have recovered a few incriminating documents in the raid. Residents of senior government officials are being searched by the teams," a source had said.

It is important to be noted that Jharkhand Chief Minister Hemant Soren also hold the charge of the mining ministry.

**IMA Covid task force co-chair slams WHO data: 'Glorified term for guesswork'**

**■ The World Health Organisation's finding that 4.7 million people died in India directly due to Covid-19 or due to the pandemic's impact is a glorified term for guesswork, said Dr Rajeev Jayadevan, Co-Chairman, National IMA COVID Task Force.**

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The World Health Organisation's finding that 4.7 million people died in India directly due to Covid-19 or due to the pandemic's impact is a glorified term for guesswork, said Dr Rajeev Jayadevan, Co-Chairman, National IMA COVID Task Force.

In an exclusive conversation with IANS, Dr Jayavedan said that whatever statistical model or assumptions are used, they are only as good as the limited data that were fed into the model by WHO's statisticians.

"With so much heterogeneity, without systematically collecting reliable data from official sources in each state and region, it would be impossible to correct for each one of these factors and arrive at accurate total

numbers for the whole country by using methods themed at extrapolation, which, by the way, is a glorified term for guesswork," he told IANS.

The world health body had said that 14.9 million people were killed across the world by Covid-19. It said the fatality in India was 4.7 million or 47 lakhs as opposed to the 5.24 lakh deaths.

Following the report, India strongly objected to the use of mathematical models by the WHO for projecting excess mortality estimates linked to the coronavirus pandemic in view of the availability of authentic data. The health ministry said that the validity and robustness of the models used and the methodology of data collection are questionable.

"Despite India's objection to the process, methodology and outcome of this modelling exercise, WHO has released the excess mortality estimates without adequately addressing India's concerns. India had also informed WHO that in view of the availability of authentic data published through Civil Registration System (CRS) by Registrar General of India (RGI), mathematical models should not be used for projecting excess mortality numbers for India," said the ministry, objecting to the methodology adopted by WHO to project excess mortality estimates based on mathematical models. Talking to IANS, Dr Jayavedan said that

pandemic is not restricted to the boundary of any country, instead it is spread throughout the world. "But, when talking about death data, we have to systematically go through data from each and every country. It is easy to calculate Covid-19 deaths among smaller nations with robust data reporting systems. But it must also be noted that many such small nations are smaller than the smallest states in India," he added.

Giving an example, the IMA COVID task-force Co-Chairman said, "Imagine that we are collecting death data for wealthy nations like the US, its healthcare infrastructure and databases among various regions is relatively more uniform than some other large countries. Hence, extrapolation from one region might work to some extent in that context."

In the context of India, he said, which is as big as a whole continent, between different regions, there is substantial variation in population density, local mobility, geography, interstate or international travel, impact of previous wave, uptake of vaccination, social behaviour and culture, healthcare access, infrastructure, public attitude, literacy, local super spreading events, and even nutritional status of the individual. Other factors like humidity and the temperature in the region also affect the spread of disease, Dr Jayavedan added.

**TWO SC JUDGES TO TAKE OATH OF OFFICE ON MONDAY**

**New Delhi:** Gauhati High Court's Chief Justice, Justice Sudhanshu Dhulia and Gujarat High Court judge, Justice Jamshed B. Pardiwala, who have been elevated to the Supreme Court, will be sworn in by Chief Justice of India NV Ramana on Monday. On Saturday, the Central government notified their appointment as judges to the apex court two days after the Supreme Court Collegium recommended their elevation. After their appointment, the Supreme Court will function with a full sanctioned strength of 34 judges after a gap of 30 months.

The Supreme Court collegium is headed by Chief Justice NV Ramana and comprises Justices UU Lalit, AM Khanwilkar, DY Chandrachud, and L Nageswara Rao. In August 2021, the collegium had cleared a record nine names for appointments in the top court, which included Justice B.V. Nagarathna -- from the Karnataka high court -- who will become the country's first woman Chief Justice in 2027.

The swearing-in ceremony will be held in the newly-built auditorium of the additional building complex of the Supreme Court on Monday morning. Chief Justice Ramana would be creating a record by administering oath of office to 11 Supreme Court judges during his term.

**Ahead of Amit Shah's Assam visit, NE parties warn of stir against CAA**

**▶ AHEAD OF UNION HOME MINISTER AMIT SHAH'S THREE-DAY ASSAM VISIT, VARIOUS ORGANISATIONS IN THE NORTHEAST HAVE ONCE AGAIN THREATENED TO RESTART THEIR AGITATIONS AGAINST THE CITIZENSHIP (AMENDMENT) ACT (CAA) IF THE CENTRE TRIED TO IMPLEMENT IT IN THE REGION.**

GUWAHATI | Agencies

Ahead of Union Home Minister Amit Shah's three-day Assam visit, various organisations in the northeast have once again threatened to restart their agitations against the Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA) if the Centre tried to implement it in the region.

Shah, who is likely to arrive in Guwahati late on Sunday night, would attend at least eight different events on Monday and Tuesday, coinciding with completion of one year of the Bharatiya Janata Party-led second government in Assam, headed by Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, who was sworn in on May 10 last year.

The All Assam Students' Union, the Rajgor Dal, a political party headed by Independent MLA Akhil Gogoi, the Asom Jatiyabadi Yuba Chhatra Parishad in Assam, and the Khasi Students' Union (KSU) in Meghalaya announced to resume their agitations against the CAA after Shah on Thursday announced in West Bengal that the government would implement the CAA as soon as the Covid-19 pandemic ends.

KSU President Lambokstar Margar said in Shillong that any attempt to implement the CAA would provoke unrest in the hill state.

"The Centre, instead, responding the Meghalaya Assembly's unanimous resolution and demands of all most all political parties, should

extend the Inner-Line Permit system, an 1873 regulation, in the entire Meghalaya to curb the entry of illegal immigrants," Margar told the media.

The Confederation of Meghalaya Social Organisations (CoMSO), an umbrella body of more than 17 organisations, has been spearheading the agitation since 2019 for the introduction of ILP in the remaining parts of the state.

If the ILP - a temporary official travel document that allows an Indian citizen into a protected area for a limited period - is enforced in the entire Meghalaya, like in four other north-eastern states -- Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Mizoram and Manipur, the state would keep itself out of the purview of the CAA.

Gogoi said that the people of Assam would never accept this "anti-people" law.

Gogoi, who is also the President of the Krishak Mukti Sangram Samiti, said that the BJP should realise that all sections of people are against the CAA as this is an anti-people law.

He had spearheaded the massive protests against the contentious citi-

zenship law in Assam since 2019 and was arrested in connection with violent protests in the state in 2019 and was charged under the stringent anti-terrorism law Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act.

The Central government had earlier announced that the CAA would not apply to the ILP and the Tribal Autonomous District Council (TADC) areas. In the northeastern states, there are 10 TADCs, constituted under the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution.

While Assam, Meghalaya and Mizoram have three TADCs each, Tripura has one. All the eight north-eastern states and neighbouring West Bengal witnessed violent protests in 2019 end and early in 2021 against the CAA, which seeks to grant Indian citizenship to non-Muslims minorities -- Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists, Jains, Parsis and Christians, who have migrated from Bangladesh, Pakistan and Afghanistan till December 31, 2014, after facing faith-based persecution. At least five people were killed in Assam in police firing and clashes during the violent agitation.

**NO RELIGIOUS EVENT ON ROADS, WARNS YOGI**

**Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has warned that no religious programme should be permitted on the roads.**

JHANSI | Agencies

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has warned that no religious programme should be permitted on the roads.

He said that all such events should take place inside the premises of religious places.

The chief minister, who was on a visit to the Bundelkhand region on Sunday, also took a strong note of the recent rape case of a girl in a police station in Lalitpur.

He directed the district magistrate and the superintendent of police to take strict action against the culprits. "Our government is committed to serving people through development and public welfare works. Any slackness will not be tolerated," he said, adding that strict measures should be taken to curb the activities of the mafia. Yogi Adityanath also directed the officials and employees at every level to



reach their offices on time and hold 'jan sunwai' between 10 a.m. and 11 a.m. every day.

"A dialogue should be held with traders, Udyog Bandhu and banks at least once a month to look into the possibilities of generating employment opportunities in the region. All pending works related to pharma park in Lalitpur should be completed at the earliest," he said. He further said that

Aarogya Melas should be held regularly while organic and natural farming be promoted in Bundelkhand.

The chief minister also inspected a 500-bed under construction hospital block in the Jhansi Medical College.

In Babina, he inspected an under-construction water treatment plant, where Jhansi Mayor Ramteerath Singh informed him that there was a delay in the completion of the project.

**Delhi govt took kickbacks to liberalise liquor policy: Congress**

**▶ CONGRESS' DELHI UNIT ON SUNDAY ALLEGED THAT THE CITY'S ARVIND KEJRIWAL GOVERNMENT HAS TAKEN HUGE AMOUNTS FROM THE LIQUOR MAFIA IN KICKBACKS TO LIBERALISE THE LIQUOR POLICY EVEN THOUGH LIQUOR CONSUMPTION IS BEHIND 70 PERCENT OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE.**

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Congress' Delhi unit on Sunday alleged that the city's Arvind Kejriwal

government has taken huge amounts from the liquor mafia in kickbacks to liberalise the liquor policy even though liquor consumption is behind 70 percent of domestic violence.

Delhi Congress President Anil Kumar said that this "has not only shattered domestic peace, but also brought economic ruin to many families, as the bread-winners and unemployed youth have become addicted to liquor".

He alleged that the government has not only allowed 3-4 liquor outlets in every ward, but also extended liquor shop timings, to make liquor available almost round-the-clock,

and with the latest order to extend bar/restaurant timings till 3 a.m., the crime graph, particularly offences against women, will soar in Delhi. Anil Kumar said that Kejriwal had promised to end the liquor mafia's reign before coming to power, "but the lure of thousands of crores in commission from the liquor mafia, became too irresistible for him, to liberalise the liquor policy, blatantly flouting all his principled postures".

A Delhi Congress delegation has sought time to meet the Police Commissioner to complain against the "reckless and destructive" state liquor policy.

**INTENSIFY ATTACK ON AAP GOVT: NADDA TO DELHI BJP**

**▶ THE BJP CHIEF JP NADDA HAS ASKED THE PARTY UNIT IN THE NATIONAL CAPITAL TO INTENSIFY ATTACKS ON THE AAM AADMI PARTY (AAP) GOVERNMENT.**

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The BJP chief JP Nadra has asked the party unit in the national capital to intensify attacks on the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) government.

Nadra held a meeting with the Delhi BJP leaders on

Saturday in which he was also briefed about the Punjab Police action against party youth wing national secretary Tajinder Pal Singh Bagga.

Sources said that national vice president and Delhi in-charge Bajiyant Jay Panda, party state unit president Adesh Gupta and state general secretary (organisation) Siddharthan were present in the meeting with party chief Nadra.

Sources said that discussion took place about the organisational functioning in Delhi, Bagga and working of the Kejriwal government. "Delhi BJP leaders briefed party chief Nadra about the current political development in the city and

the Bagga incident and the way the party handled the situation. A detailed discussion was also held about the functioning of the organisation in the national capital and upcoming future organisational programmes were also discussed," sources said.

It is learnt that Nadra asked the party leaders to intensify attacks against the misgovernance of the Kejriwal government. "Nadra ji suggested that failure and misrule or misgovernance of the Kejriwal-led AAP government must be highlighted," sources said.

In a midnight development, the Punjab and Haryana High Court stayed the arrest of Bagga

and directed the Punjab government to not take any coercive action against him until the next hearing which is scheduled for May 10.

The Punjab Police on Friday arrested Bagga from his Delhi residence over his remarks against Chief Minister Kejriwal. Delhi Police, which reports to the Union Home Ministry, on Friday took Bagga's custody and later released him after a legal process. It also lodged two cases against the Punjab Police in connection with Bagga's arrest. Bagga moved to the High Court while challenging the non-bailable arrest warrant issued against him by a Mohali Court on Saturday.

**WITH 4% VOTE SHARE, JAGAN'S YSRCP CAN ENSURE SMOOTH RUN FOR NDA**

**▶ ANDHRA PRADESHS RULING YSR CONGRESS PARTY (YSRCP) MAY ONCE AGAIN BAIL OUT THE BJP-LED NDA, WHICH APPEARS TO BE TRAILING BEHIND THE OPPOSITION BY ABOUT 2 PER CENT VOTES IN THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS SCHEDULED IN JULY.**

AMARAVATI | Agencies

Andhra Pradeshs ruling YSR Congress Party (YSRCP) may once again bail out the BJP-led NDA, which appears to be trailing behind the opposition by about 2 per cent votes in the Presidential elections scheduled in July.

Chief Minister Jagan Mohan Reddy-led YSRCP and Biju Janata Dal (BJD) are the two parties which have always come to the rescue of the Narendra Modi-led government whenever it needed the support from outside the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) to pass crucial Bills in the Parliament.

Though YSRCP leaders have still not revealed the stand they will take in the Presidential polls, political observers say that it is a foregone conclusion given the political compulsions of Jagan Mohan Reddy and the track record of the party in coming to the rescue of NDA in critical times.



As YSRCP's value of votes is estimated to be 4 per cent in the electoral college for the Presidential polls, its role is likely to be crucial to ensure victory of the NDA candidate in the event of the opposition parties fielding a joint candidate.

The electoral college comprises members of both Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha and all state assemblies. Considering its strength of MPs in both the Houses of Parliament and its tally in the Andhra Pradesh Assembly, YSRCP's vote value is estimated at 43,674, the highest among the parties considered as fence-sitters. "In the present circumstances, Jagan Mohan Reddy is not compelled to take an anti-BJP stance. He also has the comfort of claiming elections to

Constitutional positions must not be politicised," said political analyst Palwai Raghavendra Reddy. Ever since YSRCP formed the government in Andhra Pradesh in 2019, the party enjoyed friendly relations with the Modi government.

Even in the 2017 elections for three President and Vice-President, YSRCP had backed NDA candidates. It also supported the Modi government in the Parliament for passing crucial Bills like criminalisation of triple talaq and abrogation of Article 370.

The party also sailed with the NDA government on three controversial farm laws.

Political observers say that at a time when it is not having any problems with the Modi government, there is no reason why it should go against it in the Presidential polls. The cordial relations with the Centre are also helping YSRCP deflect criticism of the state government by BJP's state leadership. "YSRCP might not be prepared for a multi-frontal attack from all opposition parties in Andhra Pradesh," said Raghavendra Reddy.

Since the BJP-led NDA is in a comfortable position after the saffron party's victory in four out of five state Assemblies recently, YSRCP would not like to create problems for itself by opposing its candidates, as such a move could push the BJP closer to the Telugu Desam Party (TDP) in the state.

BJP's central leadership appears to be in no mood to revive their alliance with the TDP, though TDP President N. Chandrababu Naidu appears keen to join hands with the saffron party once again to put up a united front by the opposition parties against the Jagan Mohan Reddy government in the state.

**Punjab & Haryana HC stays arrest of Bagga till May 10**

**In a midnight development, the Punjab and Haryana High Court stayed the arrest of BJP leader Tajinder Bagga and directed the Punjab government to not take any coercive action against him until the next hearing which is scheduled for May 10.**

CHANDIGARH | Agencies

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The BJP leader moved to the High Court while challenging the non-bailable arrest warrant issued against him by a Mohali Court on Saturday.

The urgent hearing of the plea was held at the resi-



dence of Justice Anoop Chitkara in Chandigarh.



Hanuman Chalisa row:

MAHARASHTRA GOVT LIKELY TO CHALLENGE RANA COUPLE'S BAIL FOR FLOUTING RELEASE TERMS

MAHARASHTRA GOVERNMENT IS LIKELY TO FILE A CONTEMPT PLEA AGAINST RANA COUPLE FOR SPEAKING TO MEDIA ABOUT THE HANUMAN CHALISA CASE. THE COURT HAD ASKED BOTH THE ACCUSED NOT TO ADDRESS THE MEDIA REGARDING THE SAME.



ment acted in an unacceptable way. The city commissioner acted as per CM's instructions. The cruelty meted out towards them in the Santacruz police lockup. Just to recite Hanuman Chalisa is a crime? They are scared of Lord Hanuman."

Earlier on Saturday, former chief minister of Maharashtra and leader of the opposition, Devendra Fadnavis had met Amrawati MP Navneet Rana at the Lilawati Hospital in Mumbai.

The Ranases were arrested on charges of trying to incite communal violence by reciting Hanuman Chalisa in front of CM Uddhav Thackeray's residence. They were granted bail by a Mumbai court on May 4. The court warned the couple against tampering with evidence and also forbade them from speaking to the media about the case.

Breach of these conditions will lead to the cancellation of the bail. Apart from sedition, they were charged under Indian Penal Code sections pertaining to promoting enmity among different groups, criminal act by a group with common intention, disobeying orders to maintain law and order and assault to deter a public servant from discharging duty.

press on any subjects related to the Hanuman Chalisa recital case."

Despite this condition in the bail order, MP Navneet Rana spoke to the media after stepping out of the Lilawati Hospital. She said, "I challenge Uddhav Thackeray to contest elections from any constituency and I will contest against you and show you what woman power is."

"I want to ask the Thackeray government what mistake I committed for which I was punished. I would like to ask if reciting Hanuman Chalisa is a crime, then I am ready to go to jail, not just for 14 days but

for 14 years," she added.

The Amrawati MP was admitted to the hospital immediately after she was released from the Byculla jail where she was lodged. She complained of high BP, chest pain and body pain. Her lawyers had earlier complained that she was not being allowed a check up and that if her condition deteriorated then the state would be responsible for her condition.

BJP leader Ram Kadam met the Rana couple at their residence. He said, "What happened to them is condemnable. Maharashtra govern-

Navneet Rana again targets CM Thackeray, vows to uproot BMC's 'Lanka of Corruption'

After her stint in jail and hospital, independent MP Navneet Kaur-Rana on Sunday targeted Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray, daring him to get "directly elected by the people".

Team Absolute | Mumbai

After her stint in jail and hospital, independent MP Navneet Kaur-Rana on Sunday targeted Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray, daring him to get "directly elected by the people".

Navneet, 36, challenged Thackeray to contest and win any seat of his choice in the state as she would stand against him in the upcoming elections.

She also announced plans to campaign for the ensuing BrihanMumbai Municipal Corporation elections and uproot what she alleged was the 'Lanka of corruption' built by the Shiv Sena which is ruling it for over two decades.

"If chanting Hanuman Chalisa is a crime, then why only 14 days, I am ready to go to jail for 14 years," declared Navneet, who stepped out on bail after 12

days in jail and had to be admitted to a private hospital for treatment, where the BJP's Leader of Opposition Devendra Fadnavis called on her on Saturday evening.

Navneet was referring to the arrest of her husband and herself on April 23 after they planned to go to the private residence of Thackeray in Bandra east and recite Hanuman Chalisa.

Though the Court had barred her from speaking to the media, she told media-persons that she was allegedly ill-treated by the authorities at the Byculla Women Jail, forced to lie on a mat on the floor, and slammed the Sena and its leaders.

Referring to Sena MP and Chief Spokesperson Sanjay Raut, Navneet warned: "That 'Popat' (parrot) said in Nagpur that he would bury me 20 feet underground. Wait and see, with the Lanka of cor-

ruption they have erected in the BMC, the people of Mumbai and Maharashtra will dump them 20 feet below the earth."

Her husband and independent MLA from Badnera (Amravati) Ravi Rana, who was also granted bail last week, repeated the BJP's threats before media-persons that "Sanjay Raut and Minister Anil Parab will go to jail soon".

Pointing out that she is a Mumbaichi 'mulgi' (daughter of Mumbai as she was born here), Navneet promised to campaign in the BMC elections for like-minded parties to throw out the Shiv Sena and its corrupt rule from the country's biggest and richest civic body.

The MP-MLA couple also plan to visit New Delhi and complain against the Maha Vikas Aghadi government to top BJP leaders and Union Home Minister Amit Shah.

Mumbai Police crackdown on 2 mosques for pre-dawn 'azan' on loudspeakers

Cracking down, the Mumbai Police have lodged first information reports against two mosques for allegedly flouting noise pollution rules and many more are under a scanner, officials said.

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Cracking down, the Mumbai Police have lodged first information reports against two mosques for allegedly flouting noise pollution rules and many more are under a scanner, officials said.

The Noorani Masjid, Bandra west and Muslim Kabrastan Masjid in Santacruz west will face action under the Maharashtra Police Act and Indian Penal Code Section 188, and other laws for play-

ing loudspeakers to blare out the morning 'azan' and prayers on Saturday.

The police have also booked the Imams of the two mosques -- Anwar A. M. Shabbir Shah and Arif M Siddiqui, respectively, and the Managing Trustee of the Santacruz mosque M. Shoaib A. Sattar Shaikh -- for allegedly permitting the relay of the 'azan' before the Supreme Court's stipulated deadline of 6 a.m.

Of the estimated 1,140 mosques in Mumbai, more than 90 per cent have either removed or muted their loudspeakers to use them within the permissible 45 decibel levels, but switching off between 10 p.m.-6 a.m.

An official from the Additional Commissioner of Police said that certain other mosques are on the police scanner and all others are being closely monitored to ensure they strictly adhere to the guidelines, with one case from Kandivali being probed

for reported violations.

Besides, the local police are also in regular touch with various mosques managements in their jurisdiction and counsel them to follow the SC guidelines and noise pollution laws for public good with a vast majority already complying and others in the process of compliance. The development came a week after the Maharashtra Navnirman Sena President Raj Thackeray launched a state-wide anti-loudspeakers campaign and threatened to play Hanuman Chalisa at double volumes outside mosques which don't remove their public address systems.

However, the agitation has also affected the religious operations at other places of worship like temples, churches, gurudwaras, Buddhist Chaityas, Jain Derasars, etc., with protests from some quarters in different parts of the state.

Girl from Bihar found dead in Swaraj Express at Palghar

In a mystery development, the body of a young girl from Bihar was found in the toilet of the S4 coach of the Swaraj Express in Palghar, a Western Railway official said here on Sunday.

Team Absolute | Mumbai

In a mystery development, the body of a young girl from Bihar was found in the toilet of the S4 coach of the Swaraj Express in Palghar, a Western Railway official said here on Sunday.

The incident was reported nearly two hours post the train left Bandra Terminus at 11 a.m. today after passengers on the Mumbai-Vaishnodevi Katra (Jammu) train complained.

Accordingly, the train was given a special halt at Dahanu Road station in Palghar at 13.10

pm. The co-passengers informed that the girl had gone inside the toilet but did not come out for a long time so they summoned the Traveling Ticket Examiner (TTE) on board the train.

The TTE, along with help from the passengers, tried to break open the door of the washroom but failed as it was locked from inside. After the train halted, the railways staff managed to open the door latch and found the girl lying on the floor with a cloth around her neck, apparently motionless and not responding.

Her Aadhar Card was recovered which showed her identity as Aarti Kumar, age 20 and a resident of Bihar, Western Railway Chief Spokesperson Sumit Thakur confirmed. The body has been shifted to the Cottage Hospital in Dahanu Road and the medicos' report is awaited and the police have been informed for further investigations. It is not immediately known whether it was a suicide or murder or accident, and whether she was travelling alone or with someone else.

Aditya Thackeray to visit Ayodhya on June 10

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Maharashtra Tourism Minister Aditya Thackeray, son of Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray, will visit Ayodhya on June 10 to offer prayers at the upcoming Ram Temple, a top official said here on Sunday.

"Minister Aditya Thackeray will travel to Ayodhya for taking darshan of Ram lalla... It's not a political visit but purely with religious intentions," Sena MP and chief spokesperson Sanjay Raut told mediapersons.

During his visit, thousands of Shiv Sainiks and Yuva Sainiks will join Aditya from Maharashtra and other parts of India, he added. The visit will come five days after Maharashtra Navnirman Sena President Raj Thackeray's trip to Ayodhya. The mood has been set for Aditya's trip there with posters and banners proclaiming that the "real" one is coming and people should beware of the fake, a swipe at his uncle Raj Thackeray. However, Raut said he wasn't aware of who had put up such posters-banners in Ayodhya and reiterated that Aditya's visit will be only for Lord Ram's darshan. The estranged brother of



Uddhav Thackeray, Raj Thackeray's proposed pilgrimage to Ayodhya has raised the heckles of BJP MP Brijbhushan Singh, who has threatened to stop him from entering the holy city unless he apologises for the treatment meted out by the MNS to North Indians in the past. The Sena, Nationalist Congress Party and Congress have asked the Maharashtra BJP to clarify its stance in view of the Opposition to Raj Thackeray by its own unit in Uttar Pradesh. The MNS last week kicked off a row after it started a campaign to remove all mosque loudspeakers, creating tense moments for the Maha Vikas Aghadi government. However, it apparently fizzled out quickly as mosques complied on their own by muting or yanking off loudspeakers while Hindu places of worship complained they were also hit by the MNS ban.

No compromise: Stung by probe agencies, MVA firm on backing Oppn choice

As the first calculated moves begin for the Presidential elections due in July, the main political parties in Maharashtra, the ruling Maha Vikas Aghadi allies Shiv Sena-Nationalist Congress Party-Congress, and the opposition Bharatiya Janata Party, have adopted a 'wait-and-watch attitude.

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For the real drama will unfold at the Centre with the national Opposition parties comprising the Congress and others, which are expected to finalise the Presidential poll strategy, taking into confidence the state or regional forces, vis-a-vis the BJP-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA) candidate.

Last December, Trinamool Congress supremo and West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, and later in February Telangana Rashtra Samithi founder and Telangana Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao had travelled to Mumbai to meet the MVA leaders.

One of the points touched upon by both Banerjee and Rao with Shiv Sena President and Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray as well as NCP President Sharad Pawar was the ensuing Presidential elections.

"The visiting leaders agreed that there is a need to put up a united Opposition candidate against the BJP-NDA nominee for the President's post... That could be the confidence builder for a united Opposition challenge to the BJP in the 2024 Lok Sabha elections," a senior NCP leader said.

"As far as the Sena is concerned, it will go by the decision of MVA and the national Opposition parties...



Things are still at a preliminary stage and will pick up momentum by early-June," said a prominent Sena leader.

Similar is the stand of the Congress, which will go by the party high command's decision and act as directed, a party leader made it clear. Ditto will be the stance of the Opposition BJP in Maharashtra, which would follow the Central leadership and NDA directives only.

Though Pawar, 81, has repeatedly ruled himself out as a possible contender for the President's post, political sources hint that there may be many a slip between the cup and lip and nothing can be discounted.

In recent past, there has been speculation of the BJP making an offer of friendship to Pawar, or even make amends by making him a consensus candidate for the President's post, but the wily Maratha supremo has pooh-poohed all such talks.

Nevertheless, in December 2021, Pawar had revealed how Prime Minister Narendra Modi wanted the

NCP to join hands with the BJP in Maharashtra after the 2019 Assembly elections, but he had spurned the offer coming from his self-professed shishya'.

Presently, besides Pawar, there are a couple of Congress leaders and at least one Sena leader all in their early-to-mid 80s of stature with national political experience and acceptability, who could fit the Presidential shoes, but nobody is keen to enter the name guessing game. The electoral college of Maharashtra is the second biggest in the country with 48 Lok Sabha MPs, 19 Rajya Sabha MPs and 288 MLAs who will vote for the Presidential elections.

The BJP currently has 23 Lok Sabha and 8 Rajya Sabha MPs, and on the MVA side Shiv Sena has 18 in LS and 3 in RS, NCP 4 each in LS and RS, Congress has 1 in LS and 3 in RS, besides AIMIM and an Independent 1 each in LS while RPI has 1 in RS. In the 288-member Assembly, the ruling MVA's strength

is: Shiv Sena has 57 MLAs, NCP (53), Congress (44), others and Independents (16); on the Opposition side BJP has 106, plus its allies (7), besides others and Independents (5).

It may be recalled that in the past, the Shiv Sena -- then a part of the NDA -- had strayed and supported Congress' Pratibha Patil who had created history as the first woman and first from Maharashtra to occupy the country's highest office (2007-2012).

Much to the chagrin of the NDA, for the second time, the Sena had backed Congress candidate, the late Pranab Mukherjee, for President, owing to the excellent personal rapport he enjoyed with the Sena founder, the late Balasaheb Thackeray. MVA leaders though feel such possibilities are remote in 2022 as the BJP's stand on the incumbent President Ram Nath Kovind is not clear and it may seriously consider a tribal or someone from other unrepresented categories for the top post with hopes to make him/her a consensus candidate, given the current scenario. Moreover, the MVA -- like the other non-BJP ruled states in the country -- is at the receiving end of the stick brutally wielded by various central investigating agencies and is unlikely to fall easily for any political olive twigs' that may be thrown its way.

Two climbers from Mumbai died in Nepal in two days

TWO CLIMBERS FROM MUMBAI DIED IN SEPARATE INCIDENTS IN NEPAL IN THE LAST TWO DAYS WITH QUESTIONS BEING RAISED ON THE DEATH OF NARAYAN IYER, WHO REPORTEDLY DIED WHILE ATTEMPTING TO SUMMIT MOUNT KANCHENJUNGA, THE WORLD'S THIRD-HIGHEST MOUNTAIN PEAK.

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Two climbers from Mumbai died in separate incidents in Nepal in the last two days with questions being raised on the death of Narayanan Iyer, who reportedly died while attempting to summit Mount Kanchenjunga, the world's third-highest mountain peak.

Narayanan Iyer, from Ghatkopar in Mumbai, reportedly died during a summit push on Kanchenjunga on Thursday (May 5) while Dr Pradnya Samant, who is from Goregaon and was part of a group of doctors that was attempting to reach the Everest base camp from the Gokya route, died while trekking to the Mount Everest base camp.

Iyer, 52, died due to dehydration, according to a sherpa guide who was accompany-

ing the expedition. "We started for Camp 4 on May 4 and reached on May 5. He was the slowest among all climbers in the group and fell ill after Camp 4 and just before the final push to the summit. We advised him to abort his attempt and descend but he refused to do so," said Pasang Sherpa, a guide with the company that organised the expedition.

He claimed that the other climbers in the group decided to leave Iyer along with two sherpas at around 8,200 metres (26,900 feet, above sea level) while trying to reach the 8,586 metres (28,169 feet) peak.

When they returned, Iyer was already dead. "He looked very slow and had no energy. The two sherpas who stayed back with him told us that they again tried to persuade him to descend but he refused," Pasang Sherpa told IANS from Kathmandu.

Doubts are being raised in Maharashtra mountaineering circles on the veracity of their claims regarding Narayanan Iyer as people remember him as a very cautious climber who would not take a major risk.

"He was a very cautious and experienced climber. I remember a few years back on an expedition in Nepal, he felt unwell at the first base camp and immediately decided not to go any further. It is unlike him to disregard advice and push for the summit," said a senior member of the Maharashtra mountaineering community who didn't want to be named.

The member said the incident needs to be thoroughly investigated as the private companies that organise these expeditions tend to put the blame on the climbers and shun their responsibilities.

While condoling Iyer's death, Umesh Zirpe, president, Akhil Maharashtra Giryarohan Mahasangh, said, "Death of Narayanan on Mt. Kanchenjunga is very sad and shocking news. Mt Kanchenjunga is one of the toughest 8000er peaks with a very long summit push. The importance of hardcore preparations and to know where to stop on the mountain are the key factors while climbing in the death zone."



EDITOR'S SPECS

CONGRESS' 'CHINTAN SHIVIR'

The Congress will take a call on the Presidential polls after the Chintan Shivir scheduled in Udaipur next week. While the grand old party has no strength of its own to defeat the yet to be named NDA nominee, all eyes are on the joint opposition candidate, as and when it is announced. However, the ruling coalition is short of votes to get simple majority and the 1,17,000 approx. votes of non-NDA and non-UPA parties can play the game in the elections. Congress sources said that the party may go for a joint opposition candidate, which can test the opposition unity ahead of the 2024 Lok Sabha polls. Many feel that it's not possible to come up with a joint opposition candidate given that many regional parties are likely to go with the BJP, including the BJD and YSRCP, which have good number of MPs in the Parliament. The biggest vote share among the regional parties is with the DMK, Trinamool Congress and the Samajwadi Party (SP). And the SP had supported Kalam in 2002, who was an NDA candidate. The electoral college, comprising 776 MPs from both the Houses and 4,120 MLAs of all the states and Union Territories, has 1,098,903 votes, and a majority is 549,452 votes. As far as the value of votes is concerned, Uttar Pradesh has the highest number of votes, approximately 83,824, followed by Maharashtra and West Bengal. The BJP has a majority in the Parliament, but in terms of big states, which are key to the Presidential elections, its strength has reduced in Uttar Pradesh, while some other crucial states are ruled by the opposition parties, whose unity can pose a challenge for the saffron camp.

Multi-sectoral development program changing the destiny of Muslims in 90 districts

Dr. Shujaat Ali Quadri

Conditions are changing in 90 districts of India because of the developmental plans in the minority-majority districts. These 90 districts were classified as MCD in 2008. It is a regional developmental initiative to remove the developmental deficiencies of minority concentrated areas by building and developing social infrastructure and providing basic amenities. Muslims, Sikhs, Christians, Buddhists, Parsis and Jains have been identified as minority communities under section 2 (c) of the National Commission for Minority Act, 1992. The actual name of this scheme is 'Multi-Sectoral Development Program for Minorities'. The significance of this scheme, overseen by the Union Ministry of Minority Affairs, in the context of Muslims is heightened because of the high poverty rate among Indian Muslims. While 53 per cent of Dalit men have jobs, only 48 per cent of Muslims have jobs. Similarly, 23 per cent of Dalit women are employed while the percentage of Muslim women is only 9.6 per cent. According to the 2001 census, the literacy rate of the country is 64.80 per cent, while among Muslims it is only 59.10 per cent. Muslims are also becoming more ill on average because only 19 per cent of their homes have plumbing for clean drinking water. Now that the situation is extremely serious, it is clear that the Centre will also work to improve their situation. Today, the multi-sectoral development program has completed 14 years and is beginning to show good consequences in lots of districts. The 90 districts identified are mostly in Uttar Pradesh. In this plan, 21 districts have been identified here. Assam 13, West Bengal 12, Bihar and Arunachal Pradesh 7-7, Manipur 6, Jharkhand and Maharashtra 4-4, Haryana, Uttarakhand, Karnataka and Mizoram 2-2, Delhi, Meghalaya, Andaman and Nicobar, Orissa 1-1 Districts. The scheme covers Madhya Pradesh, Kerala, Sikkim and Ladakh. Along with this, 338 towns and 1228 blocks of class 1 are also listed in this scheme. The basis of the scheme is that the minority population in the district or town should be 25 per cent or more. The advantage of going to town and block level is that many states are not included in the district list but their minority areas have been included at town and block level. For example, Punjab and Rajasthan are not in the national list of 90 districts but 26 towns of Punjab and 16 towns of Rajasthan are



covered on the basis of town list. But this does not mean that the towns or blocks of the districts of the states which are included in it have been left out. For example, Uttar Pradesh has the highest number of 21 districts covered under the MCD scheme, while Uttar Pradesh has 71 additional towns under the scheme in addition to these 21 districts. It aims to provide better infrastructure for education, skills development, health, sanitation, shelter, roads and drinking water, and to create income opportunities for minorities. This is due to the joint efforts of the Centre and the States. The scheme also seeks to fill the gaps in the existing schemes of the government by providing additional resources and also undertakes new minority welfare projects so that the development gap created during this period can be filled up expeditiously. In 2017, the Indian Institute of Public Administration presented a detailed report on the MCD scheme. Chapter 4 of the report states that "these items appear to be related to three main areas: education, health and drinking water. Given the improved quantity or duration of water supply for better access to healthcare facilities or access to secondary school in this case, the recorded data confirms the impact of MSDP on their daily life. This may sound ridiculous, even trivial to some, but we see very little satisfaction on the faces of those who felt basically isolated from being ignored for so long. It is true that not everyone has benefited, but with these small actions, MSDP has been able to stem the tide of frustration in the minds of a large segment of the population in minority areas." It would appear that these items are essentially related to three sectors: education, health and drinking water. Staring from improvement in volume or duration of water supply to improved access to health care facilities or access to secondary school for that matter, the recorded data confirms impact of MSDP on their day-to-day life. It may sound mundane, even trivial to some but we noticed little satisfaction on the faces of the people who were until necessarily feeling alienated because of prolonged neglect. True, everybody has not reaped benefits but with these small gestures, MSDP has been able to arrest the drift from the psyche of a sizeable section of people in minority populated areas. Muslims have three needs -- education, employment and health. In the budget for the year 2022-23, Rs 50.50 crore has been allocated to the Ministry of Minority Welfare. This is Rs 674 crore more than the previous budget. Obviously, it also aims at the development of minority populated areas. Minority Welfare Minister Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi described the budget as promoting confidence and development amid the Covid pandemic. If full dedication and purposeful social workers in all 90 selected districts do with hard work, these districts can become an example for the Muslims of India. It is hoped that with the light of 90 districts, minorities across India will be able to shed light on their development. (The author is a freelance journalist and chairman of the Muslim Students' Organization of India. Views expressed are personal)

UN REPORT CALLS FOR STRATEGIC APPROACH TO ADDRESS PALESTINIAN CRISIS

Ramallah | Agencies

A UN report has called for a strategic approach to address the economic and fiscal crisis facing the Palestinian Authority and urged all parties "to respond in a coordinated and integrated way to solve this precarious situation." The current political, economic and security challenges in the Palestinian territories risk perpetuating a continuous cycle of crisis management," said the report issued by the office of the UN Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, ahead of an upcoming meeting of the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee (AHLIC) in Brussels on Tuesday. The report noted some improvements since the last meeting of the AHLIC in 2021 through increased activity and integration between Israeli and Palestinian economies. The number of Palestinian workers crossing from the West Bank into Israel has risen to 153,000. At the same time, nearly 12,000 entry permits have been issued for the Gaza Strip's residents to work or trade in Israel, said the report, noting such initiatives will improve Palestinian livelihoods and ease tensions in the short term.

It added that "increasing economic integration requires updating the regulatory framework that governs the relationship between the Israeli and Palestinian economies". Direct peace talks between Israel and the Palestinians stopped in 2014 following deep disputes on Israeli settlements and establishing a Palestinian state on the 1967 borders. Norway has chaired the AHLIC since its founding in 1993 and it usually meets twice a year in New York or Brussels. The main task of the committee is to coordinate international aid to Palestine.

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Philippine presidential candidates wrap up campaign

Manila | Agencies

Philippine presidential candidates have wrapped up a fiesta-like campaign period of 90 days for Monday's general election that decides the next six years of this Southeast Asian country of a 110 million population. Over 65.8 million Filipinos will troop to 37,211 polling stations to elect a new president, vice president, 12 senators, and over 300 members of the House of Representatives, reports Xinhua news agency. Poll body data showed that over 18,000 national and local positions are up for grabs. In April's final opinion poll of registered voters, former Senator Ferdinand Marcos Jr., 64, the son of former President Ferdinand Marcos, led Vice President Maria Leonor Robredo, 56, and eight other candidates. On Saturday, the last day of the campaign period, millions of Filipinos took to the streets to support their preferred presidential aspirants. Ferdinand Marcos Jr.'s camp claimed that up to a million attended the miteing de avance of the candi-



date and his running mate Davao City Mayor Sara Duterte-Carpio on Saturday night in Paranaque City in the capital region. In the Philippines, a miteing de avance is traditionally the final campaign event for the candidates running for local and national posts. Ferdinand Marcos Jr. called for unity, saying he longs for the day when Filipinos unite to better the country. "Filipinos are starting to unite even before the election after heeding the message of our UniTeam," he told his supporters wearing red and

green, the campaign colour of Ferdinand Marcos Jr. and Carpio, respectively. Robredo's organisers claimed nearly 800,000 came to support the incumbent vice president and her running-mate, Senator Francisco Pangilinan, gathering at the heart of Makati City's central business district in a final show of force on Saturday. "Let's celebrate a historic campaign tonight. Let's go! Let's win this for the Filipino people," Robredo told her pink-clad supporters. Boxing icon-turned-senator Emmanuel Pacquiao, 43, ended his campaign in his hometown of General Santos City in southern Philippines; Manila City Mayor and former actor Francisco Domagoso, 47, in the Tondo district in Manila City; and former-national-police-chief-turned senator Panfilo Lacson, 73, in his hometown of Cavite province. For the past three months, presidential aspirants crisscrossed the archipelago to win the hearts and minds of voters amid the Covid-19 pandemic. On the campaign trail, politicians seek first to entertain voters by singing and dancing on stage and even hire popular actors to join them in the hustings.

SINN FEIN'S WIN IN N.IRELAND POLLS RAISES QUESTION OF RE-UNIFICATION

Dublin | Agencies

Sinn Fein, the Irish nationalist party, has been declared the winner in the elections for the 90-seat devolved Assembly in Northern Ireland. It means Sinn Fein leader Michelle O'Neill will replace the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) leader Jeffrey Donaldson as First Minister, effectively the devolved Parliament's Prime Minister, reports Xinhua news agency. Both were re-elected in Thursday's election. Victory for Sinn Fein came when the party reached an unbeatable 27 seats in the Assembly late Saturday night. It is the first time since the partition of the island of Ireland in 1921 that the unionists have been pushed into second place in what is a historic victory for the Irish nationalists. O'Neill described it as a defining moment for Northern Ireland, which is still part of the United Kingdom. "Today ushers in a new era which I believe presents us all with an opportunity to reimagine relationships in this society on the basis of fairness, on the basis of equality and on the basis of social justice," she said in a speech at the election count. Professor Jon Tonge from the University of Liverpool, a renowned expert on Irish politics, told Xinhua that the result was a seismic triumph for Sinn Fein, which he said was once regarded as a pariah party. "Sinn Fein has become the largest party in a state which had a built-in unionist majority." Tonge said Sinn Fein's advance will not itself bring about a referendum on a united Ireland. But he added: "If its success in Northern Ireland is combined with the party becoming the largest south of the border in the Irish republic, a likely prospect, it increases the pressure for such a vote on a united Ireland." Political commentators said the success of Sinn Fein has brought closer the prospect of a referendum for Irish Unity, one of the long-standing aims of Sinn Fein. Nationally, Sinn Fein has always demanded reunification since the partition of the island by the British in the 1920s.



During The Troubles, the Northern Ireland conflict from about 1968 to 1998, Sinn Fein was referred to as the political wing of the pro-unity Irish Republican Army (IRA). Under the Northern Ireland peace accord signed in 1998, decades-long The Troubles came to an end and a system of power sharing was introduced. This has meant the leader of the main party takes on the role of First Minister, and the winner of the second party name the Deputy First Minister. Under power sharing, if one of the two main leaders refuses to take part in the assembly or its executive, it cannot function. Donaldson said a decision will be made in a few days on whether the DUP will take up the number 2 role. The DUP indicated earlier it would not sit in the assembly, citing its opposition to the Northern Ireland protocol agreement which has seen a trade border down the Irish Sea as part of a Brexit deal between the British government and the European Union (EU) to prevent a hard border on the island of Ireland. Oliver Dowden, chair of the British ruling Conservative Party, told local media on Saturday that the British government will honour a constitutional obligation to hold a border poll on the future of Northern Ireland if there is a sustained majority in favour of unification. Dowden, however, insisted it was too early to start talking about a referendum on Northern Ireland's future.

John Lee elected as new HK Chief Executive

Hong Kong | Agencies

John Lee, a former security chief, was elected on Sunday as the new Chief Executive of Hong Kong. He won a total of 1,416 votes, surpassing the threshold of 750 votes to win the election held earlier in the day, reports Xinhua news agency. The 64-year-old made a short speech after the announcement of the election results, expressing gratitude to members of the Election Committee who turned out to vote and to the Hong Kong residents. The polling hours ran from 9 a.m. to 11.30 a.m.. Members of the Election Committee cast their secret ballots on a one-person-one-vote basis at the main polling station at the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Center. Lee's term in office will run from July 1, 2022 to June 30, 2027. According to a BBC report, he is known for his pro-Beijing headline views and garnered only 34.8 points out of 100 in a recent popularity survey. He replaces Carrie Lam, who announced last month that she would not seek a second term. Lam, who became the Chief Executive in 2017, had said that her decision was "entirely" based on family considerations.





## PM MODI TO VIRTUALLY LAUNCH MP'S STARTUP POLICY

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Prime Minister Narendra Modi would unveil the startup policy of on May 13. Preparations have started in right earnest for the same.

Our sources said, chief minister had met the PM in New Delhi on April 23.

During the meet he requested him to launch Madhya Pradesh's startup policy in May.

The PM would virtually launch the state startup policy, which is expected to motivate and streamline the startup ecosystem in the state.

The work on the startup policy of the state was going on since February this year. This policy and its implementation plan was made in February; the main function of the startup policy is proposed in Indore.

Chouhan on May 2 said that a hub will be set up in Indore to provide a fabulous platform for various startups working in the state.

The startup policy and startup portal will provide a better environment for the implementation of innovations in the state, said senior officials. CM addressed a meeting regarding the startup policy and plan implementation recently with the officials.

It was informed in the meeting that the implementation process would begin soon on different fronts.

The implementation will start on the basis of virtual partnership with all the universities, colleges and incubation centres of the state, said our sources on condition of anonymity.

The Department of Industry Promotion



and Internal Trade, Government of India and Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises are working together for the implementation of the startup policy and portal, said sources.

Along with this, national-level institutions including CII, FICCI, PHD Chamber of Commerce, NASSCOM and TIE are also collaborating with the state government.

Soon, there will also be a discussion on funding the startups, ongoing activities for promotion, incubation of eco-system at the state and national level and implementation of the policy.

## Services of medical experts will be available with studies in medical college: CM

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan performed bhoomipujan of a medical college in Mandasaur district to be constructed at a cost of Rs.270 crore 59 lakh with the joint contribution of Central and State Government. Chouhan said that three medical colleges are being built in one parliamentary constituency. This medical college will prove to be a boon for the region. Treatment will be done by a team of best doctors in these medical colleges. More than 73 thousand square meters of land has been selected at three different places to build the medical college.

Chouhan said that the Medical College would prove to be a milestone in promoting health facilities in the city. Medical college will be ready in next 3 years. After this, the citizens of the district will not have to go to big cities like Udaipur, Ahmedabad, Indore for treatment. The people of the district will get better health facilities. Trauma center, neuro experts will also be arranged in the medical college, so that citizens will be able to get better treatment at least cost. Along with this, economic activities will increase rapidly in the city.

Chouhan said that a campaign for purification of Shivna river would be started in the city of Pashupatinath. For this, funds will also be made available by making an action plan.



He called for ensuring the participation of the society in this holy work.

Chouhan also donated 50 e-rickshaws provided by Ganediwal Charitable Trust to needy women. Also hand over the license and insurance related documents prepared by the RTO department to the women. The Chief Minister reached the stage by riding an e-rickshaw along with public representatives. The training of auto e-rickshaws made available to women for self-employment has also been given. Chouhan appreciated this initiative of the Trust. While wishing everyone a Happy Mother's Day, Chouhan said that everyone should bow at the feet of the mother. There is no greater wealth than a mother.

When someone talks about opening an old age home, I feel very upset. It is a product of western civilization. The Chief Minister said that a law has been made in Madhya Pradesh that despite being competent, there is a provision to send them to jail with fine, who do not take care of their parents. Chouhan said that there should be no discrimination between sons and daughters. Give everyone equal right to progress. A campaign for women empowerment is being run in the state. Contractors will no longer do the work of making nutritious food, in their place the women of self-help groups have been entrusted with the responsibility. 8 factories have been opened for manufacturing

nutritional food. Women's groups are also running them. The Chief Minister said that in order to make women financially empowered, they have been given the task of distributing ration, purchasing crops and preparing school uniforms. He said that a large number of women's groups are preparing local products in the state. The state government is also doing the work of making their products available in the market.

Chouhan was presented with garlic chutney and pickles by the women of self-help groups. It is noteworthy that garlic has been selected in Mandasaur district in "One District - One Product". With this, women's groups are preparing various products at the local level. Appreciating the products prepared by the women, Chouhan said that I will keep the garlic pickles and chutneys presented to me with me and will also promote it.

Chouhan announced to make Gram Panchayat Daloda as Nagar Panchayat. He said that the pride day of Mandasaur would be celebrated every year on 8th December. On this day Emperor Yashodharman had conquered Huno. In the program, women of self-help groups were given electric sewing machines and electronic shell chaw was given to the Kumbhakar who did the work of soil art. 5 people who got Indian citizenship after coming from Pakistan also met the Chief Minister.

### MP building fire:

## Jilted lover caused blaze, says police

The Madhya Pradesh Police claimed to have arrested a person who had allegedly ignited a fire in a three-storey residential building that left seven people dead and nine injured here.

Team Absolute | Bhopal

The Madhya Pradesh Police claimed to have arrested a person who had allegedly ignited a fire in a three-storey residential building that left seven people dead and nine injured here.

Police on Sunday identified the accused as Sanjay Dikshit (27), who had committed the act in a rage after being rejected by a woman.

Indore's Vijay Nagar police station in-charge Tehzeeb Qazi said the accused was nabbed in the intervening night of Saturday and Sunday and booked under the Indian Penal Code Sections 302 (murder) and 436 (mischievous by fire intending to cause destruction of any building), the police said. He had allegedly torched the scooter of a woman residing in the residential building in Vijay Nagar locality on Saturday after she rejected his marriage offer. Dikshit, a resident of Jhansi in Uttar Pradesh, was working in a private firm here for

the last couple of months, the police said.

Meanwhile, a video surfaced on social media purportedly showing Dikshit, having blood on hands and legs, lying on a stretcher in a hospital here, writhing in pain. The police said he had tried to flee the spot after committing the crime and in the process fell on the road in the Lohamandi area and got injured.

As per the police, Dikshit allegedly torched the woman's scooter in the building's parking area and soon the fire spread upwards, engulfing the premises.

"Earlier it had appeared that fire broke out due to short-circuit but after scanning CCTV footage of the

houses near the gutted building, we found that a man ignited the blaze by setting fire to a vehicle in the building parking area," the police said.

The police further said that Dikshit had vacated a rented flat in the building six months ago. He wanted to marry the woman who lived in the same building, but the woman was not interested and was going to marry someone else. After setting the woman's vehicle on fire, Dikshit fled to his friend's place in the Niranjapur area and later moved to the Lohamandi area, the police said.

As per the police, as many as seven people, including two women, were killed and five others received burn injuries in the incident.

## Tantrik performs exorcism ritual on woman patient at Govt hospital

Doctors who were on duty at that time will be served notices in connection with the incident, says CMO

Team Absolute | Ashok Nagar

A video showing a tantrik performing rituals on a woman in a government hospital in Ashok Nagar district to rid her of 'evil spirit' has surfaced.

The incident occurred on Friday night at the district hospital, following which the health authorities said notices will be served to the doctors who were on duty there at that time. Confirming the incident, the District Hospital's Civil Surgeon DK Bhargava on Sunday said the staffers reached the medical facility after being informed that some tantrik

rituals were being performed on a 65-year-old woman, identified as Kachhiya Bai Ahirwar.

When confronted, the family members entered into an argument with the hospital employees, and said the rituals were necessary as the woman was possessed by an evil spirit, he said. According to Bhargava, the woman had been admitted to the hospital on Friday night as she had fallen ill after attending a marriage ceremony. Meanwhile, Chief Medical and Health Officer (CMHO) Neeraj Chhari said he was aware of the video.

The doctors who were on duty at that time, will be served notices in connection with the incident, he said, adding that the rituals should not have been performed at the hospital. In the purported video, the tantrik is seen taking water in his palm and throwing it on the face of the woman by chanting some mantras.

## No kick from Liquor, shop to be sued in consumer court

LOKESH SOTHIA'S LAWYER SAID THEY WOULD FILE A CHEATING CASE IN A CONSUMER FORUM AS HIS CLIENT HAD BEEN CONSUMING ALCOHOL FOR THE PAST SEVERAL YEARS AND KNEW THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN REAL AND FAKE LIQUOR.

Team Absolute | Ujjain

In a bizarre development, the district officials in Ujjain have initiated a probe against a shop accused of allegedly selling adulterated liquor to a 42-year-old man who com-

plained he did not get a 'kick' after consuming it. The excise commissioner acted on the complaint and asked the officials to probe the matter.

According to the report, Lokesh Sothia, a resident of Bahadur Ganj area in his complaint said he bought four sealed 'quarter' bottles of country liquor from a shop on April 12.

"My friend and I consumed liquor from two of those bottles (each of 180 ml), but I did not feel high (intoxicated)," Sothia, who manages a parking lot, told the agency. Sothia alleged that the bottles contained water instead of liquor, adding that he had kept the two other bottles intact to be submitted as proof when required. "There had been reports of adulteration in food, oil and other things, now it is being done in liquor as well. This is very disturb-

ing. I am going to move the consumer forum," he said, claiming that he has been consuming liquor for last two decades and is "well aware of its taste and quality." The man said he has sent a complaint to Madhya Pradesh Home Minister Narottam Mishra and Ujjain Excise Commission Inder Singh Damor about the "adulterated liquor" sold to him. When contacted, the excise commissioner said he has asked an official to look into Sothia's complaint.

"After the probe, action will be taken accordingly," he added.

Sothia's lawyer Narendra Singh Dhakde said they would file a cheating case in a consumer forum. "My client runs a paid parking lot. He has been drinking for many years and knows the difference between genuine and fake liquor," the lawyer said.

## Why Anusuiya Uike's name is doing the rounds as possible presidential candidate

As the tenure of the country's 14th President Ram Nath Kovind is ending in July, many names for presidential candidates are doing the rounds.

Team Absolute | Bhopal/ Raipur

As the tenure of the country's 14th President Ram Nath Kovind is ending in July, many names for presidential candidates are doing the rounds.

One such name is Anusuiya Uike, who is the Chhattisgarh Governor and a tribal leader.

Born in Rohana Kala village in Madhya Pradesh's Chhindwara district, Anusuiya has seen many ups and downs in life.

Right from school, she was interested in social and political activities. Anusuiya has tried different levels to work for the uplift of the tribals. She is a post-graduate in econom-

ics and worked as a lecturer in the university. At that time, she entered politics. In 1985, she was elected to the Madhya Pradesh Legislative Assembly from Damua and after that there was no looking back.

In 2006, she became a member of the Rajya Sabha.

She served as Minister for Women and Child Development in Arjun Singh's Cabinet in MP and as a member of various commissions at the national level. She took many steps for the uplift of the tribals. She was conferred the 'Jagruk (vigilant) MLA' award and also the Bhim Rao Ambedkar fellowship. According to tribal representative Gulzaar Singh



Markam, Anusuiya has worked for the uplift of the tribals and that is the reason that the people of the community respect her. Whenever she got an opportunity to work for the tribals, she neither hesitated, nor stepped back. Her work for the tribals can

be understood from the fact that for the empowerment of the women of the tribal community, she visited more than 80 districts in 22 states, made a report and submitted it to then Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee.

Political analyst Girija Shankar says

that the "presidential post may be constitutional but the process for the presidential election is political. That is the reason that names are decided on the basis of political compulsions."

"Abdul Kalam Azad was made the President due to political compulsion. The same was the case when Ram Nath Kovind was elected President and if Anusuiya Uike's name will be suggested, it will also be only due to that," he said.

Elaborating further, Girija Shankar said that the "political scenario in our country is like if a large community is not connected with the stream of development, then symbolically a person from the community is given a plum post to show that work has been done for the development of the community, but actually things are different." It is just to show that minorities are also included in the mainstream. Likewise, people of the Scheduled Class and Scheduled Tribes are entrusted with a big responsibility," he added.

## More than 49 lakh rural families benefitted from Jal Jeevan Mission

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Under the Jal Jeevan Mission, the work of water supply schemes is going on to provide water to all the rural families of the state through tap connections. Till now 49 lakh 32 thousand 223 rural families have been provided tap water. Water projects are being operated and maintained by Village Water and Sanitation Committees. Under the mission, tap connections are also being provided in schools and anganwadis operating in rural areas. Water has been supplied to 70 thousand 163 schools and 40 thousand 763 Anganwadi centers in rural areas, which is about 60 percent of the target number.

After completing the water supply schemes in the mission, water facility has been

provided to 100% households of 4 thousand 385 villages through tap connections. Public Health Engineering Department and Jal Nigam are continuously working on various water structures in the state, so that it is possible to reach 100 percent rural households. According to the estimates of rural population in the state, the target is to provide tap connections to one crore 22 lakh rural families, out of which more than 40 percent of the target has been achieved.

Continuous work is going on to supply water from tap to every household of 35 thousand 641 villages of the state. Of these, 90 percent of water supply schemes in 3637 villages, 80 in 2155 villages, 70 in 1794 villages and 28 thousand 055 villages have completed more than 60 percent.

## Now, outfit seeks ban on non-Hindus at Narmada ghats

YOGESH AGRAWAL, STATE PRESIDENT OF THE SAFFRON OUTFIT HINDU DHARMA SENA, HAS ACCUSED NON-HINDUS OF 'POLLUTING THE HOLINESS' OF THE RIVER BY VENTURING INTO IT WEARING SHOES AND SLIPPERS.

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Forget the viral videos of Hindu women taking pledge to boycott Muslim shops or a DJ vehicle appealing not to trade with Muslims in Madhya Pradesh.

In Jabalpur district of the same BJP-ruled central Indian

state, a Hindu outfit leader has demanded a ban on the entry of non-Hindus on the ghats of Narmada in the entire district.

Yogesh Agrawal, state president of the saffron outfit Hindu Dharma Sena, has accused non-Hindus of "polluting the holiness" of the river by venturing into it wearing shoes and slippers.

"They also make indecent remarks and indulge in eve-teasing of Hindu women and girls bathing in Narmada at ghats in Jabalpur. This will not be tolerated at any cost. We demand that the government to ban the entry of non-Hindus on the entire Narmada riverbank and ghats in Jabalpur," Agrawal was seen demanding in a video.

The Hindu outfit leader made the demand following a viral video which showed some

boys and youths being chased away and hit with sticks for bathing in the river wearing slippers at the Jilehari Ghat. According to Jabalpur district police sources the video could date back to Tuesday, when Eid coincided with Akshaya Tritiya and Parashurama Jayanti.

According to Jabalpur police superintendent Siddharth Bahuguna, there was no complaint from anyone on the matter. "We're ensuring that no one vitiates the tranquillity in Jabalpur city and district," the police officer said.

A police official in Jabalpur said there were rumours about some non-Hindus cooking non-vegetarian food at Jilehari Ghat, but on reaching there it was found that "some Hindu youths were cooking vegetarian food."

## CM PLANTED SAPLINGS OF KARANJ AND HARSINGAR IN SMART CITY

Bhopal: Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan planted saplings of Karanj and Harsingar along with Anita Ahirwar, Ashok Kumar, RK Sharma and DK Jharia of Avadhuri Home Construction Cooperative Society in Smart City Park. Plantation has been done by the committee in the colony. For the maintenance of plants and trees, compost pit is constructed in the colony itself and compost is made from wet waste. The committee constantly motivates the residents of the colony to maintain cleanliness and take the responsibility of nurturing the plants. There is a program of plantation on a large scale in the coming monsoon. Harsingar (Parijat) plant planted today is the best medicine. According to medical experts, it is used to cure many diseases. Karanj plant is considered important in Ayurvedic medicine. This plant is also used for religious purposes.





**'DOCTOR STRANGE 2' SET TO CAST BIGGEST OPENING SPELL OF 2022**

Los Angeles | Agencies

**B**enedict Cumberbatch-starrer 'Doctor Strange in the Multiverse of Madness' is set to emerge as the film with the biggest opening in 2022, so far, reports 'Variety'.

The film, which already raked in nearly \$100 million from 4,534 locations, should outpace the \$134 million debut of Warner Bros' comic book competitor 'The Batman' to become the biggest domestic box office opening of the calendar year.

As per 'Variety', the current projections indicate that the film could land a tally higher than \$200 million once all the numbers are finalised. When all the numbers are tallied, it looks like 'Multiverse of Madness' will land a domestic opening more than twice as high as the original 2016 'Doctor Strange' which bowed to \$85 million.

The sequel, 'Doctor Strange 2' has been made on a budget of \$200 million, and as is the case with almost any Marvel Studios film, it shouldn't be long before the movie recoups those costs in ticket sales. 'Variety' states that the film already minted \$27 million internationally on its opening day overseas. The film had sold \$65 million worth of tickets in domestic pre-sales alone.

Directed by Sam Raimi, 'Doctor Strange in the Multiverse of Madness' follows Doctor Stephen Strange essayed by Benedict Cumberbatch as he casts a dangerous spell that lands him in the multiverse, where he must compete with alternate versions of himself. The film also stars Chiwetel Ejiofor as Karl Mordo, Elizabeth Olsen as Wanda Maximoff aka Scarlet Witch, Benedict Wong as Wong and Xochitl Gomez as America Chavez.

## 'Jealous' Johnny Depp kicked me over Franco 'affair', says Amber Heard

Los Angeles | Agencies

**A**ctress Amber Heard says a perceived affair with fellow actor James Franco led to ex-husband Johnny Depp assaulting her on a cross-country flight in 2014.

Taking the stand for a second day as part of a multi-million dollar defamation trial, Heard cast Depp as deeply troubled by jealousy and drugs, reports *bbc.com*.

Depp is suing Heard for \$50 million over an article in which she said she was a victim of abuse, reports *bbc.com*.

She is countersuing for \$100 million. On Thursday, Heard reportedly said that much of her ex-husband's anger was caused by his belief that she was seeing James Franco, whom she said Depp "hated". Franco starred alongside Heard in 'Pineapple Express' and 'The Adderall Diaries'.

That jealousy, she claimed, led an angry Depp to repeatedly question her on a flight from Boston to Los Angeles, in which he allegedly kicked her.

"He just kicked me in the back. I fell on the floor," she said.

"No one said anything. No one did anything. It's like you could

hear a pin drop on that plane."

The court also heard a recording allegedly of Depp on the flight, which Heard said showed him "howling" while suffering from the effects of drug use.

Following the incident, Heard said he met her in New York to apologise and to prove he was sober and committed to change. Jurors have repeatedly heard about the incident on the flight. In his own testimony, Depp said that he took Oxycodone pills and fell asleep to avoid her.

During her testimony, Depp could sometimes be seen closing his eyes or donning his sunglasses. At one point, he shook his head quietly.

Heard alleged she had the fight with Depp after an argument about his daughter Lily-Rose, who was about 14 at the time.

"She was so young," Heard said. "I felt protective."



**JAMES GUNN WRAPS UP SHOOT OF 'GUARDIANS OF THE GALAXY VOL. 3'**

Los Angeles | Agencies

**F**ilmmaker James Gunn has wrapped up the shoot of 'Guardians of the Galaxy Vol. 3' as he took to Twitter on Friday to make the announcement that he'd wrapped principal photography, also teasing that the Marvel film will feature an appearance from an as-yet "unannounced actor", reports 'Deadline'.

His first message to fans accompanied a photo of him with a number of Guardians' stars, including his brother Sean Gunn, Pom Klementieff, Chris Pratt, Karen Gillan and Dave Bautista. He wrote, "And that's a picture wrap on the Guardians of the Galaxy trilogy. I love this amazing cast & crew & their beautiful talent & kind souls. I'm a lucky human to have them on the journey with me for nearly a decade (sic)."

Although Zoe Saldana, who played Thanos' adopted daughter Gamora in all three films, wasn't pictured, Gunn was quick to note that the actress was, in fact, on site for the wrap celebration, he wrote, "(And yes Zoe was with us," he wrote, "but the only picture I have with her has an unannounced actor with us!)"

As per 'Deadline', while the superhero pic's plot has been kept under wraps, past instalments have followed the half-human, half-alien Peter Quill aka Star-Lord (Pratt) and his gang of intergalactic criminals as they've looked to fend off various threats to their universe.

## New Queen Elizabeth documentary with unseen footage set to premiere this month

Los Angeles | Agencies

**W**ith Queen Elizabeth II completing 70 years of her reign, a new documentary featuring never-before-seen footage of the British royal is set to premiere on May 29.

The documentary, titled 'Elizabeth: the Unseen Queen', has a run-time of 75 minutes, and will shed light on the early years of Queen Elizabeth's life, from her birth to her coronation at the age of 27 in 1953, reports 'Variety'.

As per 'Variety', the BBC television documentary features several home recordings from the Royal Family, which have until this point been privately held in the British Film Institute vaults.

Queen Elizabeth gave BBC Studios permission to access footage and the producers and editors viewed over 400 reels of film. The home recordings include previously lost newsreels and several behind-the-scenes recordings of officially sponsored state events.

According to the BBC, the documentary will feature several landmark events from the Queen's life, including Prince Philip's 1946 visit to Balmoral Castle, shortly before the pair's engagement became public.

Other major moments that will be depicted in the film include rare captures of the Queen with her uncle Prince George, the Duke of Kent, and footage of the royal family at Balmoral in 1951, a year before King George VI passed away. The film will combine the footage with newsreel audio and public



speeches from the Queen, in lieu of traditional narration or interviews.

'Elizabeth: The Unseen Queen' has been helmed by Simon Finch, with Julia Harrington and Harvey Lilly serving as executive producers. Clare

Sillery, the BBC head of commissioning for documentaries, commissioned the project, while Claire Popplewell served as the creative director. BBC Studios produces. The film will air on BBC One and BBC iPlayer.

## 'ELVIS' CLIP SHOWS TRANSFORMATION OF AUSTIN BUTLER'S ROCK AND ROLL ICONA



Los Angeles | Agencies

**A** new clip from the musical drama 'Elvis' shows the transformation of its lead character of Elvis Presley into the rock and roll legend. The film produced by Warner Bros is set for its debut in the U.S. on June 24, following its world premiere at the Cannes Film Festival, reports 'Deadline'.

The film from Oscar-nominated director Baz Luhrmann, who has earlier directed 'The Great Gatsby', promises to examine the life and music of Elvis Presley essayed by Austin Butler through the prism of his complicated relationship with his manager, Colonel Tom Parker played by Tom Hanks. As per 'Deadline', it will chart their dynamic over the course of 20 years, from Presley's rise to fame, to his unprecedented stardom.

The recently released clip from the film sees Parker observing as Elvis tunes out trolls telling him to "get a haircut" and wails on a guitar on stage, generating cries from hordes of impassioned fans. This was, in his view, the moment Elvis transformed from a "skinny boy" into a full-fledged musical "superhero."

In addition, the biopic also stars Helen Thomson, Richard Roxburgh, Olivia DeJonge, Luke Bracey, Natasha Bassett, David Wenham, Kelvin Harrison Jr., Xavier Samuel, Kodi Smit-McPhee and more. Luhrmann, Sam Bromell, Craig Pearce, and Jeremy Doner wrote the script, which was based on a story by Luhrmann and Doner. Luhrmann also produced alongside Catherine Martin, Gail Berman, Patrick McCormick and Schuyler Weiss.

## ABSOLUTE PIC OF THE DAY



**Bella Thorne**

**IPL 2022**

## CHENNAI SUPER KINGS THRASH DELHI CAPITALS BY 91 RUNS

**Team Absolute** | Mumbai

A clinical all-round performance helped Chennai Super Kings thrash Delhi Capitals by 91 runs in the 55th match of the IPL 2022 at the Dr. D.Y. Patil Stadium, here on Sunday.

An excellent half-century from Devon Conway (87 off 49) powered Chennai Super Kings to 208-6 against Delhi Capitals in 20 overs, after being invited to bat first.

Apart from Conway, Ruturaj Gaikwad (41 off 33) and Shivam Dube (32 off 19) also made vital contributions with the bat for CSK. Lower down the order, M.S Dhoni (21 off 8) and Moeen Ali (9 off 4) gave the finishing touches to Chennai's innings.

Anrich Nortje (3/42), Khaleel Ahmed (2/28), and Mitchell Marsh (1/34) were the wicket-takers for Delhi.

In reply, the likes of David Warner (19 off 12), Mitchell Marsh (25 off 20), and Rishabh Pant 21 off 11) got quick-fire starts but they couldn't play big innings for Delhi. In the end, Delhi were bowled out for 117 in 17.4 overs, losing by a huge margin of 91 runs.

Moeen Ali (3/13) was the star performer with the ball for CSK while Dwayne Bravo (2/24), Mukesh Choudhary (2/22), Srimarjet Singh (2/27) and Maheesh Theekshana (1/29) also picked crucial wickets.



**Brief scores:** Chennai Super Kings 208/6 in 20 overs (Devon Conway 87, Ruturaj Gaikwad 41; Anrich Nortje 3/42, Khaleel Ahmed 2/28) lost to Delhi Capitals 117 all-out in 17.4 overs (Mitchell Marsh 25, Rishabh Pant 21; Moeen Ali 3/13) by 91 runs.

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## Hasaranga's five-wicket haul seals Bangalore's crushing 67-run win over Hyderabad

Wanindu Hasaranga's five-wicket haul led Royal Challengers Bangalore's crushing 67-run win over Sunrisers Hyderabad at the Wankhede Stadium on Sunday.

**Team Absolute** | Mumbai

Wanindu Hasaranga's five-wicket haul led Royal Challengers Bangalore's crushing 67-run win over Sunrisers Hyderabad at the Wankhede Stadium on Sunday.

After an unbeaten 73 from Faf du Plessis and a sensational eight-ball 30 from Dinesh Karthik took Bangalore to a daunting 192/3, Hyderabad's batting order wilted under scoreboard pressure, crashing to 125 all out in 19.2 overs.

They had some solace in Rahul Tripathi's incredible 58 and some big hits from Aiden Markram and Nicholas Pooran, which didn't prove sufficient to avoid their fourth straight defeat.

Hyderabad's start of chasing 193 was an unfortunate one, losing their opening pair of Kane Williamson and Abhishek Sharma for nought in the span of first five balls. While Williamson was run-out by a direct hit from Shabbaz Ahmed with his bat on the line, Sharma was castled by a slider from Glenn Maxwell, rattling his off-stump.



Markram and Tripathi joined forces for a fifty-run partnership off 45 balls, hitting six boundaries between themselves before the former holed out to deep mid-wicket off Hasaranga.

Tripathi continued to snatch fours with some glorious shots and found company in Pooran smashing some boundaries. But Hasaranga came back to break the 38-run promising stand, taking out Pooran with a googly, taking an outer edge on an attempted slog to third man. Tripathi brought up his fifty in style with a superb inside-out lofted six over extra cover off Mohammed Siraj and earned a reprieve when Hasaranga put down a sitter at deep backward point. But the leg-spinner came back to

have Jagadeesha Suchith stumped and when Tripathi pulled straight to deep square leg off Josh Hazlewood, the result was a foregone conclusion. Hazlewood, Hasaranga and Harshal Patel took out the remaining batters to register a thumping win for Bangalore.

**Brief scores:**

Royal Challengers Bangalore 192/3 in 20 overs (Faf du Plessis 73 not out, Rajat Patidar 48; Jagadeesha Suchith 2/30, Kartik Tyagi 1/42) beat Sunrisers Hyderabad 125 all out in 19.2 overs (Rahul Tripathi 58, Aiden Markram 21; Wanindu Hasaranga 5/18, Josh Hazlewood 2/17) by 67 runs

## Sr women's hockey nationals: Karnataka, Uttar Pradesh, Goa win pool matches

Hockey Karnataka defeated the Hockey Unit of Tamil Nadu and Uttar Pradesh Hockey outplayed Hockey Delhi in matches between neighbours at the 12th Hockey India Senior Women's National Championship 2022 on Sunday.

**Team Absolute** | Bhopal

Hockey Karnataka defeated the Hockey Unit of Tamil Nadu and Uttar Pradesh Hockey outplayed Hockey Delhi in matches between neighbours at the 12th Hockey India Senior Women's National Championship 2022 on Sunday. In the thrilling Day 3 action, Hockey Karnataka picked up a solid 3-0 win over Hockey Unit of Tamil Nadu in the Pool G match. In the second game of the day, Uttar Pradesh Hockey beat Delhi Hockey 7-0 in a Pool G match. The third match of the day was a Pool G contest in which Goans Hockey beat Hockey



Gujarat 5-1. The final game of the day was a Pool H contest between Kerala Hockey and Hockey Himachal, who picked a 3-1 win. The Pool F match between Hockey Arunachal and Hockey Andaman & Nicobar was forfeited with Hockey Arunachal picking a default 5-0 win. Meanwhile, in the final match on Day two, Hockey Jharkhand beat Le Puducherry Hockey 36-0.

## Dhanush, Priyasha extend India's shooting gold rush at Deaflympics

Dhanush Srikanth teamed up with Priyasha Deshmukh to win gold in the 10m air rifle mixed team competition at the 24th Deaflympics 2021 in Caxais do Sul, Brazil.

**Team Absolute** | New Delhi

Dhanush Srikanth teamed up with Priyasha Deshmukh to win gold in the 10m air rifle mixed team competition at the 24th Deaflympics 2021 in Caxais do Sul, Brazil.

Shooting on competition day six on Saturday, Dhanush and Priyasha beat Germany's Sebastian Herrmann and Sabrina Eckert 16-10 in the gold-medal match. This was Dhanush's second gold of the games after having won the men's 10m air rifle individual title. India now have three gold medals in shooting at Deaflympics 2021 with Abhinav Deshwal winning the men's 10m air pistol event on Friday. India also have two bronze through Shourya Saini in men's 10m air rifle and Vedika Sharma in women's 10m air pistol, for a total of five medals from shooting.



Shourya and Natasha Joshi, the second Indian pair in the 10m air rifle mixed team competition, also made it to the bronze-medal match, but went down 8-16 to the Ukrainian pair of Oleksandr Kostyk and Violeta Lykova. Dhanush and Priyasha were in their elements from the qualification round itself, where they topped

the eight-team field with a combined effort of 414.0 to ensure a shot at gold. The Germans who followed them to the title round were a distant second with 408.7. Shourya and Natasha finished third with 407.4 but the fourth finishing Ukrainian pair turned the tables on them in the medal round.

## Delhi Capitals member tests Covid-positive ahead of match vs CSK: Report

**Team Absolute** | Mumbai

The entire Delhi Capitals team has undergone a fresh round of Covid-19 tests following a member testing positive for the virus, and there is a question mark over their clash against Chennai Super Kings (CSK) late on Sunday, a report in Espncricinfo said.

The Rishabh Pant-led Delhi Capitals are scheduled to play the late evening match against CSK at the DY Patil Stadium and the report also said that the players of both sides had supposedly 'mingled' on Saturday during a training session.

The report added that the IPL authorities have asked the Delhi Capital players to stay in their hotel rooms until further notice. The report also said that a Capitals member testing for Covid-19 was first reported by Indian Express, which said that "the person who tested positive was sharing a room with another player".



The IPL authorities have, however, not issued any statement regarding the positive test or whether the match will go ahead. Earlier this season, Delhi Capitals had been hit by the virus, with several of their members testing positive for Covid-19 ahead of the game against Punjab Kings on April 20. The match, which was scheduled at the MCA Stadium in Pune, was finally played at the Brabourne Stadium. The change in venue was caused due to Australia all-rounder Mitchell Marsh, physiotherapist Patrick Farhart, sports massage therapist Chetan Kumar, team doctor Dr Abhijit Salvi and social media content team member Akash Mane testing positive for Covid-19. Farhart was the first to test positive for Covid-19 on April 15, followed by Kumar on April 16. Then, on April 18, Marsh, Dr Salvi and Mane returned Covid-19 positive results. Delhi Capitals head coach Ricky Ponting too has to isolate for five days after a family member had tested positive.

## Thomas Cup Finals: India start campaign with 5-0 win against Germany

**Team Absolute** | Mumbai

The Indian men's team started its campaign in the Thomas Cup finals in Bangkok, Thailand by thrashing lowly Germany 5-0 in its opening Group C match on Sunday.

India, who have Canada and Chinese Taipei besides Germany in the four-team Pool C, blanked Germany with World Championship bronze medallist Lakshya Sen giving them a perfect start by beating Max Weisskirchen 21-16, 21-13. Sen, who enjoyed a 3-1 advantage in head-to-head over his rival, was totally in control and never allowed Weisskirchen any chances. The top doubles pair of Satwaksairaj Rankireddy and



Chirag Shetty made it 2-0 for India by beating Jones Ralfy Jansen and Marvin Seidel in tough three games 21-15, 10-21, 21-13. Kidambi Srikanth too needed three games to subdue Kai Schaefer, coming back from a game down to beat 18-21, 21-9, 21-11 to make 3-0. MR Arjun and Dhruv

Kapila defeated Bjarne Geiss and Jan Colin Voelker in straight games, 25-23, 21-15 to make it 4-0. And H.S Prannoy rounded off the match in an emphatic manner for India with a 21-9, 21-9 win against Matthias Kicklitz. India will next play Canada in their second match in the group on Monday.

## Indian Grand Prix 3, 4 to be held in Bhubaneswar on May 21, 24

Indian Grand Prix 3 and 4 will be held in Bhubaneswar on May 21 and 24 respectively, the Athletics Federation of India (AFI) has said in a statement on Sunday.

**Bhubaneswar** | Agencies

Indian Grand Prix 3 and 4 will be held in Bhubaneswar on May 21 and 24 respectively, the Athletics Federation of India (AFI) has said in a statement on Sunday.

"The Grand Prix Meets have been shifted from Madurai in Tamil Nadu to the Odisha capital to provide better facilities to the athletes. These Athletics meets have special importance as the athletes can achieve the qualification standard for the World Athletics, Commonwealth Games and the postponed Asian Games," it said. There will be a total of



17 events in both the meets which includes nine for women and eight for men. The meets will be held in the evening on both days, AFI said in a release. The Government of Odisha along with Athletics Federation of India and Odisha Athletics Association will conduct the event.

Events for women participants include sprint in 200m, 8,000m, 5,000m categories, 100m hurdles, high jump, triple jump, shot put, discus and hammer throw while men can participate in 100 m, 400 m, 1,500m sprints, pole vault, long jump, discus and javelin throw events.

## PREPARATIONS FOR 2023 HOCKEY WORLD CUP GOING ON 'SMOOTHLY': AMIT ROHIDAS

With exactly 250 days to go for the FIH Odisha Hockey Men's World Cup in Bhubaneswar and Rourkela, India's hockey stalwart Amit Rohidas has said that the team's preparations were going on 'smoothly' in spite of Covid-19 disrupting the international schedule.

**Bhubaneswar** | Agencies

With exactly 250 days to go for the FIH Odisha Hockey Men's World Cup in Bhubaneswar and Rourkela, India's hockey stalwart Amit Rohidas has said that the team's preparations were going on 'smoothly' in spite of Covid-19 disrupting the international schedule. India will host the showpiece hockey event from January 13-29,



with the top-16 teams in the world competing for the trophy.

"We are back in SAI (Sports Authority of India), Bengaluru; the atmosphere here is excellent with six hockey teams currently based out of the same centre. With Covid continuing to disrupt the international hockey calendar, we are taking each day as it comes and don't want to be worried about things that are not in our control," said Rohidas, who recently

captained the India team in a couple of FIH Pro League engagements at home. "Our preparations are going on smoothly with our focus on improving the areas we felt needed work post the FIH Pro League home games." Speaking about the emotions of the people of Odisha in the build-up to the tournament, Rohidas said, "The people of Odisha, particularly those who live in Rourkela and Sundergarh are extremely excited

that an event as big as the World Cup is happening in their city.

"The craze for hockey in this region is unmatched, and with the biggest stadium in the country being developed there for hockey, people are counting days to experience a world class event. For us players, it will be great to play in Rourkela and experience this hockey craze."

Having produced multiple international hockey stars, Sundergarh has been the hockey nursery of the sport in the country. Along with the Kalinga Stadium in Bhubaneswar, which had hosted the 2018 Men's World Cup, the stadium in Rourkela will be the second venue for the 2023 edition of the World Cup. "The stadium in Rourkela will be top notch, with the Odisha state government putting in great efforts to complete the work well in time for the World Cup. At the Kalinga Hockey Stadium too, there is upgrade work going on in full swing," said Gyanendro Ningombam, president, Hockey India.



## MOTHERS DAY 2022

# Bollywood Divas shared heartwarming posts on social media



## KAJAL AGGARWAL

The actress who recently became mum to a baby boy, penned a heartwarming poem for her mommy and gave a glimpse of her newborn baby boy. Taking to her Instagram, Kajal had shared a 7-page creative where she wrote, "Dear Mum, In the past, I've thanked you "For all that you've done for me". Yet recently I've come to learn what those words truly mean. Something has changed within me, Mum, I'm no longer that same girl I've crossed over a threshold, stepped into another world. It seems the light is different here, it's changed all that I knew, And now I have come face-to-face with another side of you."

Team Absolute | Mumbai

**M**other's day honours the bond of love and affection that exists between a mother and her child, as well as the spirit of motherhood. In order to celebrate the spirit of motherhood, Bollywood stars like Katrina Kaif, Kareena Kapoor, Kajal Aggarwal, and others took to their social media and shared endearing posts showering love on their dearest mummies. While some expressed gratitude towards their mom, some shared their experience of motherhood.

Check out all the celeb Mother's Day wishes here:

## KAREENA KAPOOR KHAN

Kareena Kapoor Khan shared a mushy picture with her baby boys Tim and Jeh, calling them the length and breadth of her life.



## ANUSHKA SHARMA:

Actress Anushka Sharma, acknowledged the power and courage of her mommy while thanking her for being a huge support.



## ALIA BHATT:

Alia Bhatt shared an adorable wish for not just her mother Soni Razdan but also her mother-in-law Neetu Kapoor. Sharing a picture she wrote, "My beautiful beautiful mothers. Happy Mothers Day - ALL DAY EVERYDAY!"



## KATRINA KAIF:

Newlywed, Katrina Kaif shared adorable pictures with her mommy and mother-in-law.



Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actress Isha Koppikar, who was recently seen in the webseries 'Dahanam' and is also a mother, recently shared her feeling on Mother's Day. She feels that every child acquires the greatest learning from their mother's heart as it teaches them love, compassion and empathy.

Talking about the importance of mother in a child's life, Isha said, "While a mother gives her everything to the child, the most important thing she gives is her legacy and good values. One thing that has been running as a legacy through every generation of women, from my grandma to my mom to me and now to my daughter is love and affection for all."

She continued, "We pay extreme attention towards family values and every child in the family is brought up with values embedded in their hearts. Children learn mostly from observation. When they say an apple doesn't fall far from the tree, I wish that it is for the right reasons when it comes to me and my daughter as well as my mother and me. As I have always said, I feel a mother's heart is a child's classroom."

She opines that Mother's day is beyond superficial celebrations and finds its true meaning in gaining awareness, "Whatever the child learns emotionally, mentally is through the mother. And this is the legacy, what I have given my daughter and what I have learned through mine. Mother's day is not just a superficial celebration but rather a good opportunity for awareness, for bringing attention to the love, the sacrifice and the dedication of all mothers."

**MOTHER'S HEART IS CHILD'S CLASSROOM: ISHAKOPPIKAR**



## THE WOULD-BE PARENTS, ANAND AHUJA AND SONAM KAPOOR CELEBRATED THEIR FOURTH WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

**Mumbai:** On Sunday it was the fourth wedding anniversary of Bollywood actress Sonam Kapoor and her spouse Anand Ahuja.

To commemorate their special day, the Raanjhana actress took to social media and shared love-filled photographs with Anand, along with a beautiful statement.

She stated, "Happy happy Anniversary @anandahuja I've always been an incurable romantic and believed in all the love stories ever written. You've surpassed all expectations of what I dreamt and wished for."

"I thank the universe every day that gave me the best man in the world! Love you the most most my baby. 6 years down and an eternity to go. #everydayphenomenal," Sonam further said.

Anand too used his social media to wish Sonam a happy anniversary by sending her PDA-filled images.

"My #everydayphenomenal @sonamkapoor... happy anniversary", Anand captioned. Sonam and Anand married on May 8, 2018, and are expecting their first child together.



## KV COMPARES SINGING SHOW CONTESTANT SARVSHRESTHA MISHRA TO MANNA DEY

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Renowned poet and judge Kumar Vishwas has compared 'Swarna Swar Bharat' contestant Sarvshrestha Mishra to legendary singer Manna Dey.

He mentioned: "Singing this song is definitely not an easy task, but you sang it so well. Certainly, Rafi Sahab and Lata didi had a large following in the music industry. The very few artists who grew from such reality platforms took it upon themselves to reach out to such a level with respectful greetings by putting their hands together."

Kumar Vishwas further praised him by saying: "There was a voice from the '50s we had all been missing for a long time. His style of classical and playback singing was legendary. I believe India now has Sarvshrestha's voice as an alternative to our beloved Manna Dey's voice."

"Everyone listening to you on the set was mesmerized by the melody, and you really captured everyone's attention," he added.

The devotional singing reality show - 'Swarna Swar Bharat' has renowned poet Dr. Kumar Vishwas and veteran singers Kailash Kher and Suresh Wadkar as judges and popular actor Ravi Kishan is seen as the host.



## Palak Muchhal: I've literally studied every song sung by Lata Mangeshkar

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Popular singer Palak Muchhal is feeling honoured to pay tribute to the 'Nightingale of India' Lata Mangeshkar on the eight-part series 'Naam RehJaayega'. She recalls Lata and shares what she imbibed from the legendary singer.

As she mentions: "It's an absolute honour to be a part of this heartfelt, genuine, tribute given to my idol Lata ji. Lata ji has been my ultimate inspiration."

The singer adds how she got inspired by Lata's singing style and shares: "I've idolized her in many ways ever since I was a kid I've grown up listening to her songs learning her songs I've literally studied every song sung by her like a chapter, she's been my role model she has inspired me in so many ways that I can't describe in words." Like many other singers, Palak also imbibed a lot from the late singer, she adds: "Lata ji has inspired my journey many days that I've said. When I started singing I was two and a half and I come from a Marwari family so any idea that my mom had about music was Lata ji and Lata ji's songs. Whenever we would read somewhere that Lataji had learned Urdu so my mom got me trained in Urdu." Palak followed Lata Mangeshkar in every possible way from her singing style to eating aachaar, she considered her as her biggest idol. "My mom actually got Molvisahab to teach me Urdu. I got to know that Lata ji ate aachaar so that her voice became melodious so even I started eating aachaar."

"I had a big poster of Lata ji in my room. Now I have a picture of her in my temple. It's not only her songs but whatever she would do I would actually try to follow in her footsteps and she has played a huge role in my life in my singing and in my music."

The 30-year-old singer, who has given her voice in films such as 'EkTha Tiger', 'Aashiqui 2', 'Kick', 'Baaghi 2' and many more, recalls her meeting with the singing icon.

"I met Lata ji when I was a kid. I remember I'd gone to meet her directly from my school. She was in Indore and I was living in Indore that time and Indore was her birthplace as well. She was happy with my charity work and asked me to continue even when I became a well-known singer. The memory is going to remain with me forever."

## INSTAGRAM PIC OF THE DAY



Kubra Sait