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PUBLISHED SIMULTANEOUSLY FROM NEW DELHI, MUMBAI AND BHOPAL

NATION > 02

Delhi reports rise at 1,656 new Covid cases, no death...



HOLLYWOOD > 06

Saying 'No' is Kim Cattrall's success mantra...



SPORTS > 07

Nobody is unbeatable in the international badminton...



GOVT PANEL FINDS DEFECT IN BATTERY CELLS IN ALMOST ALL EV FIRES

VERY UNSAFE RIDE

In what could put EV two-wheeler manufacturers in a tough spot, the preliminary findings from the government-constituted probe committee on electric vehicle (EV) fires have found issues with battery cells/design in nearly all of the electric two-wheeler (2W) fire incidents in the country.

▶ ACCORDING TO SOURCES CLOSE TO THE DEVELOPMENT, THE EXPERTS HAVE FOUND DEFECTS IN BATTERY CELLS AS WELL AS BATTERY DESIGN IN NEARLY ALL EV FIRES, INCLUDING THE DEADLY BATTERY EXPLOSION IN TELANGANA.

▶ SOURCES SAID THAT THE EXPERTS WOULD NOW WORK INDIVIDUALLY WITH THE EV MANUFACTURERS TO RESOLVE RESPECTIVE BATTERY ISSUES IN THEIR VEHICLES.

▶ TO DATE, THREE PURE EV, ONE OLA, THREE OKINAWA AND 20 JITENDRA EV SCOOTERS HAVE CAUGHT FIRE IN THE COUNTRY, RAISING BURNING QUESTIONS ABOUT THEIR SAFETY.

▶ SEVERAL EV MAKERS HAVE RECALLED THE FAULTY BATCHES AMID THE HEAT.



Team Absolute | New Delhi

The committee was constituted last month in the wake of EV fires and battery blasts in e-scooters belonging to Okinawa Autotech, Boom Motor, Pure EV, Jitendra EV, and Ola Electric.

An 80-year-old man was killed and two others injured when the battery of a Pure EV electric two-wheeler exploded in their house in Telangana's Nizamabad district.

Ola Electric said in a statement to reporter that they have commissioned world-class agencies, "in addition to our own investigation, to perform an internal assessment on the root cause".

"As per the preliminary assessment of these experts, it was likely an isolated thermal incident," the

company said.

Ola Electric has already voluntarily recalled 1,441 vehicles to conduct pre-emptive diagnostics and health checks on scooters in that specific batch.

"Our battery pack already complies and is tested for AIS 156, the latest proposed standard for India, in addition to being compliant with the European standard ECE 136," the company added.

Okinawa Autotech declined to comment on the development.

The Delhi High Court this week issued notice to the Centre and the Delhi government on a plea seeking directions for mandatory insurance for electric two-wheelers.

Apart from insurance coverage, the plea also sought to ensure reliable and long-lasting batteries in the vehicle by the manufacturers in

a way to avoid overheating and fire accidents.

Earlier, cautioning the EV manufacturers, Union Road Transport and Highways Minister Nitin Gadkari said that the government will soon issue quality-centric guidelines for electric vehicles.

Gadkari warned EV makers last month that if any company is found negligent in their processes, "a heavy penalty will be imposed and a recall of all defective vehicles will also be ordered".

"We have constituted an Expert Committee to inquire into these

incidents and make recommendations on remedial steps. Based on the reports, we will issue necessary orders on the defaulting companies," he had said.

In another tragic incident involving an electric two-wheeler, a 40-year-old man died in Andhra Pradesh's Vijayawada after a blast occurred in an e-scooter belonging to Boom Motors while being charged at home.

The incident also left the Kotakonda Siva Kumar's wife and two daughters with severe burn injuries.

The Union Ministry of Road Transport and Highways has referred media reports that claimed the government has asked electric two-wheeler manufacturers to refrain from launching any new products in the market in the wake of EV fires.

Stressing that the government seeks to make EVs more popular among the masses, Gadkari had said the EV industry has just started.

"We don't want to put a hurdle but safety is first and foremost priority," he noted.

COAL INDIA TO OFFER ITS 20 CLOSED UNDERGROUND MINES TO PRIVATE PLAYERS

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Coal Minister Pralhad Joshi on Friday said that with the target to minimise the import of thermal coal, Coal India Ltd is going to offer its 20 closed/discontinued underground mines to private players on a revenue sharing model.

"Extractable reserve in the closed/discontinued coal mines is around 380 million tonnes... 30-40 million tonnes of coal can be easily extracted from the mines," he said at an Investors meet in Mumbai, an official statement said.

Continuation of mining activities will help in increasing coal supply to thermal power plants while creating employment opportunities for local people, he added.

The Ministry has allowed concession of 50

per cent in revenue share for coal gasification.

Joshi also said the country is witnessing a revolution in the energy sector. "Government's efforts for electrification in remote areas, changing fuel choices in transport, modern lifestyle have led to increased demand for electricity," he said.

Minister of State for Coal, Mines, and Railways Raosaheb Patil Danve said India has the 5th largest reserve of coal in the world and the government's aim is to increase domestic coal production to 1.2 billion metric tonnes by FY 23-24.

"As a fuel, coal is the biggest contributor in the energy mix," he said.

Danve also said the initiative will pave the way for deployment of latest mining technology, robust systems and processes.

BJP leader Bagga arrested by Punjab Police from his Delhi residence

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Punjab Police on Friday arrested BJP leader Tajinder Pal Singh Bagga from his Delhi residence over his remarks against Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal.

Confirming the arrest from his West Delhi's residence, Punjab Police later tweeted: "SIT of SAS Nagar Police is looking after the matter. A notice of 41 CrPC was issued against Bagga. This morning he has been arrested. After arrest, he was taken to Mohali for interrogation, sources said. Bagga's family has alleged that his father was allegedly slapped by the police."

As per the FIR, a complaint against him was lodged with the Mohali Police by Dr Sunny Singh Ahluwalia (Lok Sabha In-charge and Spokesperson, Aam Aadami Party, Punjab). In his complaint, Ahluwalia had alleged that the BJP leader and other unknown persons were causing instigation,



incitement, criminal intimidation to cause violence, use of force, imminent hurt to Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal and other AAP leaders, in a pre-designed, well planned, orchestrated manner by making, publishing provocative, false, communally divisive and inflammatory statements.

Later, the Delhi Police on Friday lodged two separate cases against Punjab Police in connection with the arrest of BJP spokesperson Tajinder Pal Singh Bagga from his West Delhi residence, lawyer representing Punjab Police said. R.K. Rathore, the lawyer representing Punjab Police said that following all standard operating procedures, the Punjab Police had duly informed Delhi Police about the matter. He also produced a few photographs to prove his claims. However, the Delhi Police officials remained unavailable for any comment.

OLDEST SURVIVING HIZB TERRORIST AMONG THREE MILITANTS KILLED IN KASHMIR

Srinagar: The Jammu and Kashmir Police along with the Army on Friday neutralised three wanted terrorists belonging to proscribed terror outfit Hizbul Mujahideen (HM), including its oldest surviving member Ashraf Molvi, in an operation at Sirchan Top in Anantnag district.

"On Thursday, Anantnag Police along with the Army had arrested a Hizbul Mujahideen terrorist who was identified as Mohd Ishfaq Shergojri, a resident of Nowgam Verinag. During sustained interrogation, leads were developed and several cordone and search operations (CASOs) were conducted in various areas of Anantnag. One such operation launched in the forest area of Sirchan Top in Anantnag turned into an encounter," the police said.

During the operation, as the joint party proceeded towards the suspected spot, the hiding terrorists fired on the joint party which was retaliated, leading to an encounter. In the ensuing encounter, three terrorists of proscribed terror outfit HM were killed and their bodies were retrieved from the site of encounter.

The slain terrorists have been identified as Mohd Ashraf Khan alias Ashraf Molvi/Mansoor ul Haq, Mohd Rafiq Drangay and Roshan Zameer Tantray alias Aqib.

As per police records, all the three slain terrorists were part of groups involved in several terror crime cases, including attacks on police, security forces and civilian atrocities.

Using loudspeakers not a fundamental right: Allahabad HC

Team Absolute | Prayagraj

The Allahabad High Court has dismissed a petition that sought its installation of loudspeakers in mosques, saying it is "not a fundamental right". A division bench comprising Justice Vivek Kumar Birla and Justice Vikas said: "The law says that it is not a constitutional right to use loudspeakers in mosques." The petition, filed by one Irfan, challenged the order issued by the Bisauli Sub-Divisional Magistrate (SDM) of Badaun district on December 3, 2021. The SDM had earlier refused permission to install a loudspeaker at Noori Masjid in Dhoranpur village for 'azaan'. In his plea, the petitioner said that the SDM's order was "illegal" and that it "violates fundamental rights and legal rights".

The controversy over the use of loudspeakers at religious places sparked across several states, including Maharashtra and Uttar Pradesh. Recently, Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath said that the sound from loudspeakers at religious places should not be heard outside the premises.



Yogi had also said loudspeakers can be used at religious places with permission, but the sound must not come out of the premises. He further said that no new permits will be issued for loudspeakers.

Following Yogi's statement, the volume of loudspeakers at 17,000 religious sites in the state was lowered to the standards set for all the religious places, including temples and mosques in the state.

RELIANCE NET PROFIT UP 26%, ANNOUNCES RS 8 DIVIDEND

New Delhi: Reliance Industries' annual consolidated revenue for FY22 stood at Rs 792,756 crore (\$104.6 billion), up 47 per cent year on year.

The company's annual profit after tax neared the \$10 billion mark, as it stood at Rs 67,845 crore (\$9 billion) increasing by 26.2 per cent.

Annual consolidated EBITDA stood at Rs 125,687 crore (\$16.6 billion) up by 28.8 per cent

"Despite the ongoing challenges of the pandemic and heightened geo-political uncertainties, Reliance has delivered a robust performance in FY2021-22. I am pleased to report strong growth in our Digital Services and Retail segments," said Mukesh D. Ambani, Chairman and Managing Director, Reliance Industries. "Our O2C business has proven its resilience and has demonstrated strong recovery despite volatility in the energy markets," he added. Further, the Board of Directors of the company recommended dividend of Rs 8 per share for the financial year ended in March. "This payment of dividend is subject to approval of members of the Company at ensuing Annual General Meeting of the Company," it said in the statement.

SRI LANKAN PUBLIC GAVE ULTIMATUM TO PREZ TO STEP DOWN

Colombo | Agencies

Burdened by growing food crisis and shortages of fuel and gas, Sri Lankans launched an island-wide 'hartal' on Friday, giving ultimatum to President Gotabaya Rajapaksa and his government to resign by March 11. Organised by the trade unions representing different state sector institutions, the hartal brought the entire country to a standstill as the private sector, including various trades, banks, exporting companies such as the apparel sector stayed away from work.

Public protests were conducted in almost all the cities demanding the government to step down immediately. "What we did today was only to

tell Gotabaya Rajapaksa to step down. If he doesn't leave by May 11, we will launch island-wide trade union action using over 2,000 trade unions, and will bring the country to a continuous standstill. There will be no electricity, water, gas and fuel," Lal Bangamuwage, President of Independent Harbour Trade Union, told the media.

Meanwhile, the police used tear gas and water cannons to disperse thousands of university students and public who blocked all entrances to the Parliament, protesting against 225 lawmakers from all parties for their failure to solve the current crisis.

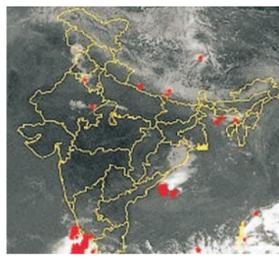
The protesters complained that all the lawmakers have failed and demanded their immediate resignation.

Low Pressure Area over South Andaman Sea, to intensify into cyclonic storm by Sunday: IMD

▶ The PA formed over South Andaman Sea and adjoining southeast Bay of Bengal after intensifying into a cyclonic storm is very likely to continue to move northwestwards and reach west-central Bay of Bengal off north Andhra-Odisha coasts by May 10.

▶ Under its influence, scattered to fairly widespread light/moderate rainfall is very likely over Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram, and Tripura during next five days with isolated thunderstorm/lightning over Assam and Meghalaya till May 8.

▶ The IMD also predicted that isolated heavy rainfall is very likely over Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram, and Tripura on May 10 and over Assam, and Meghalaya on May 9 and 10.



Team Absolute | New Delhi

Under the influence of the cyclonic circulation over South Andaman Sea and neighbourhood, a Low Pressure Area (LPA) has formed over South Andaman Sea and adjoining southeast Bay of Bengal, India Meteorological Department (IMD) announced on Friday.

The associated cyclonic circulation extends up to mid-tropospheric levels and it is very likely to move northwards and intensify into a depression during the next 48 hours, said IMD's meteorological analysis based on 5.30 a.m. observations.

Heavy to very heavy rainfall at isolated places is very likely over Andaman & Nicobar Islands till May 8 because of this system and fishermen have been asked not to venture into Andaman Sea during next three days; into south-east and central Bay of Bengal during next five days.

Squally with wind speed reaching 40-50 kmph gusting to 60 kmph likely to prevail over Andaman Sea & adjoining Southeast Bay of Bengal and it is likely to increase to 55-65 kmph gusting to 75 kmph by May 8 over north Andaman Sea & adjoining Southeast and Eastcentral Bay of Bengal.



PEOPLE WILL NEVER ACCEPT CAA, ASSAM PARTY ON AMIT SHAH'S ANNOUNCEMENT

GUWAHATI | Agencies

A day after Union Home Minister Amit Shah announced in West Bengal that the government would implement the Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA) as soon as the Covid-19 pandemic ends, an influential Assam party on Friday threatened to launch an agitation if the Centre goes ahead with it in the state.

Rajiv Dal President and Independent MLA Akhil Gogoi said that the people of Assam would never accept this "anti-people" law.

"The people of Assam would not accept the dictation of the Centre on CAA," Gogoi told the media terming the CAA as a "draconian act".

The firebrand peasant leader said that BJP should realise that all sections of people are against the CAA as

it is "an anti-people law". Gogoi, who is also the President of the Krishak Mukti Sangram Samiti, had spearheaded the massive protests against the contentious citizenship law in Assam since 2019. He was arrested in connection with violent protests in the state in 2019 and was charged under the stringent anti-terror law Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act.

He was in detention for over one and a half years before being elected to the state Assembly as an independent MLA in the March-April assembly elections last year. Amit Shah, while addressing a public rally at the Railway Institute Ground in Siliguri in north Bengal on Thursday, said that some people are saying that CAA would never be implemented in West Bengal.

"But I want to assure you that CAA will be implemented for sure once the Covid-19 situation is totally under control. CAA still has relevance and the Chief Minister (Mamata Banerjee) cannot do anything to stop it from getting implemented," he said. All eight northeastern states and neighbouring West Bengal witnessed violent protests for many since 2019 and early 2020 against the CAA. At least five people were killed in Assam in police firing and clashes during the violent agitation.

The CAA 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.

Congress promises loan waiver, investment support to Telangana farmers

WARANGAL (TELANGANA) | Agencies

The opposition Congress in Telangana on Friday launched its preparations for the next year's Assembly elections with a slew of promises to farmers including Rs 2 lakh loan waiver and Rs 15,000 direct benefit per acre annually.

At the massive public meeting titled 'Kisan Sangharsh Sabha' addressed by party leader Rahul Gandhi, the party announced a 'Warangal declaration' which also includes Minimum Support Price (MSP) for agriculture produce.

State party chief A. Revanth Reddy read out the nine-point declaration. The Congress promised that after coming to power it will waive off crop loans of Rs.2 lakh, at one go.

'Indiramma Rythu Bharosa' scheme will be introduced to provide investment support of Rs 15,000 per acre per annum to both land-owning farmers as well as to tenant farmers, reads the declaration.

Every landless farm labourer registered under MGNREGS will be provided Rs 12,000 per year. It promises



to procure all crops grown by farmers in the state with improved MSP.

The Congress also promised to reopen closed sugar factories and set up a Turmeric Board. A better crop insurance scheme will be introduced

to cover crop losses due to natural calamities or other reasons.

Agricultural work will also be integrated into MGNREGS scheme. The declaration promises pattas to farmers who are farming 'Podu'

lands. Beneficiaries of assigned lands will get ownership and sale-resale rights. The opposition party also promised to abolish Dharani portal launched by Telangana Rashtra Samithi (TRS) government saying it is proving to be a bane for farmers. It instead plans to bring a new revenue system.

It also promises new laws to end the menace of spurious seeds and pesticides. If voted to power, the party will also ensure corruption free, time bound construction of pending irrigation projects.

A 'Rythu Commission' will be established to permanently resolve the issues faced by farmers and protect their rights. A new agricultural policy will be framed to make agriculture profitable.

Gandhi told the gathering that every word of the declaration is the guarantee of Congress. He said all the promises made in the declaration will be fulfilled and pointed out that the party has implemented the promises made to farmers of Chhattisgarh after coming to power in that state.

SC COLLEGIUM RECOMMENDS 7 ADVOCATES AS DELHI HC JUDGES

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Supreme Court Collegium has recommended 15 judges, including eight advocates, as judges in Delhi, Patna, and Andhra Pradesh High Courts.

The Supreme Court Collegium is headed by Chief Justice N.V. Ramana.

"The Supreme Court Collegium in its meeting held on May 4, 2022 has approved the proposal for elevation of the following advocates as judges in the Delhi High Court: Vikas Mahajan, Tushar Rao Gedela, Manmeet Pritam Singh Arora, Sachin Datta, Amit Mahajan, Gaurang Kanth, and Saurabh Banerjee," said a statement uploaded on the top court's website.

The collegium also approved the proposal for elevation of advocate Mehabub Subhani Shaik alias S.M.



Subhani, as judge at the Andhra Pradesh High Court. Besides, the collegium also recommended for elevation of seven judicial officers as judges to the Patna High Court.

A statement said: "The Supreme Court Collegium in its meeting held on May 4, 2022 has approved the

proposal for elevation of the following Judicial Officers as Judges in the Patna High Court: 1. Shailendra Singh, 2. Arun Kumar Jha, 3. Jitendra Kumar, 4. Alok Kumar Pandey, 5. Sunil Dutta Mishra, 6. Chandra Prakash Singh, and 7. Chandra Shekhar Jha." In the recently held

Chief Ministers and Chief Justices conference, Chief Justice Ramana said currently out of 1,104 sanctioned posts of high court judges, there are 388 vacancies, and out of 180 recommendations, 126 appointments have been made for various high courts.

Delhi reports rise at 1,656 new Covid cases, no death for second consecutive day

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Delhi on Friday reported 1,656 fresh Covid cases in last 24 hours, a considerable rise against 1,365 on the previous day, but there was no new death for the second consecutive day, as per the Health Department bulletin.

Meanwhile, the Covid positivity rate has slightly dipped to 5.39 per cent, while the number of active cases has risen to 6,096. With 1,306 patients recovering in the last 24 hours, the total number of recoveries has gone to 18,59,152. The number of patients being treated in home isolation stands at 4,269. With new Covid cases,



the total caseload of the city has jumped to 18,91,425, while the death toll continues at 26,177. The number of Covid containment zones stand at 1,597 in the city.

A total of 30,709 new tests -- 20,710 RT-PCR and 9,999 Rapid Antigen - were con-

ducted in the last 24 hours, taking the total to 3,79,95,367, while 42,547 vaccines were administered - 4,594 first doses, 19,439 second doses, and 18,514 precaution doses.

The total number of cumulative ben

BJP accuses Rahul of doing politics over Covid-19 deaths

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Accusing Congress leader Rahul Gandhi of doing politics over Covid-19 deaths, the BJP on Friday said that both -- the World Health Organisation's (WHO) data and Congress' 'beta' (son) -- are wrong.

Addressing a press conference at party headquarters here, BJP national spokesperson Sambit Patra said that methodology to calculate the estimated death due to Covid-19 by the WHO is flawed and the Government of India had conveyed its objections to the global health body.

"Rahul Gandhi has repeatedly tried to sully Prime

Minister Narendra Modi's image since 2014 and in the process, has harmed India's image. India has a proper mechanism for registration of birth and death. The WHO's data and the Congress' 'beta' (Rahul Gandhi) are wrong," he said.

Patra asked for death analysis of BJP and non-BJP ruled states.

He noted that the way India fought Covid under leadership of Prime Minister Modi is an example for the whole world. "In such a situation, it is very saddening to do politics over death figures. India has fought Covid better than developed countries," he said. The World Health Organisation (WHO) has said

that almost 15 million deaths globally were directly or indirectly associated with the Covid-19 pandemic by the end of 2021.

Earlier today, Rahul Gandhi tweeted: "47 lakh Indians died due to the Covid pandemic. NOT 4.8 lakh as claimed by the Govt. Science doesn't lie. Modi does. Respect families who've lost loved ones. Support them with the mandated Rs 4 lakh compensation."

On Thursday, the union health ministry said: "India has objected to the methodology adopted by the WHO to project excess mortality estimates based on mathematical models.

3 KILLED IN FIGHT OVER LAND DISPUTE IN TRIPURA

Agartala: An elderly couple and their son were killed and four others critically injured during a fight over an alleged land dispute between two families in Tripura's Dhalai district, police said on Friday. A police official said the kin of the two families attacked each other at Kamalpur on Thursday afternoon, injuring seven people.

Of the seven injured persons, Rajani Das, 70, died on his way to Agartala Government Medical College and Hospital, while his wife Bilasi, 67, and son Pratyus Das, 41, succumbed to their injuries early on Friday.

The injured persons, including a woman, are currently undergoing treatment at the Dhalai district hospital. The police have detained two people in connection with the incident.



Jewellery worth Rs 1.45 lakh recovered from TN man's stomach

CHENNAI | Agencies

Chennai police has recovered jewellery worth Rs 1.45 lakh from the stomach of a 32-year-old man who swallowed it with biryani during the Eid celebrations at a friend's residence on May 3.

Police said that doctors gave him enema to recover the jewellery from his stomach. The man along with his girlfriend was invited by a friend for Eid celebrations at her home.

The host noticed that jewellery including a diamond necklace, a gold chain, and a diamond pendant worth Rs 1.45 lakh was missing from her home. She told police that she suspected this 32-year-old man to be behind the crime. The woman lodged a com-



plaint at the Virugambakkam police station and the man was questioned, who confessed to the crime. On scanning at a private medical centre, doctors identified the jewels in his stomach and he was given enema to retrieve the swallowed jewels.

Virugambakkam police told IANS that the jewels were recovered on Thursday. After the jewels were recovered, the woman withdrew

her complaint and said that she didn't want to proceed with the case. Police said that the man was drunk during the Eid party.

A senior officer with the Virugambakkam police station told reporter that as the woman had withdrawn the complaint, the identity of the persons involved in the crime and the complainant could not be revealed.

CORONAVIRUS SHOULD BE A PRIORITY, NOT CAA: NITISH

Patna: Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar on Friday made an oblique reference to his stand on Citizenship Amendment Act which the Centre is hinting to implement in the country after coronavirus abates.

Nitish Kumar, while reacting to Union Home Minister Amit Shah's statement on the issue, said that the way cases of coronavirus are increasing in the country, he should concern himself on a prevention plan. "The way cases are increasing in the country, it is a biggest challenge for us. They should have to look after its prevention. We will think about any policies that would come before us," he said. His statement indicates that he wants to wait for the decision of the Centre on CAA implementation, before disclosing his plan of action.

The CAA, NRC and Uniform Civil Code are the three issues on which the stand of Nitish Kumar is different from the BJP, and are responsible for sour political relations between them despite being alliance partners in Bihar and the Centre. Nitish Kumar's JD-U believes that if it would support the BJP on these three issues, it would deeply hurt its minority vote bank. On the other hand, BJP wants to apply pressure on JD-U to support these measures.

Amit Shah on Friday said that the Centre will implement CAA in the country after the fourth wave of pandemic gets over.

India now working for bigger purpose of global welfare: PM Narendra Modi

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday said that today everyone feels that India is now moving beyond 'probability and potential' and performing a bigger purpose to ensure global welfare.

Modi was virtually addressing the inaugural session of Jain International Trade Organisation's 'JITO Connect 2022'.

The Prime Minister noted the spirit of 'Sabka Prayas' in the theme of the programme, and said today the world is considering India's development resolutions as a means of achieving its goals. "Be it global peace, global prosperity, the solutions related to the global challenges or strengthening of the global supply chain, the world is looking towards India with great confidence. I have just returned after informing many European countries about India's resolution for the 'Amrit kaal'," he said.

The Prime Minister said whatever may be the area of expertise, area of concern and whatever be the differences of opinion of the people, they are all united by the rise of New India.



"Today everyone feels that India is now moving beyond 'probability and potential' and performing a bigger purpose for global welfare," the Prime Minister said.

Reiterating his earlier assertion of clean motives, clear intention and favourable policies, Modi said that the country is encouraging talent, trade and technology as much as possible. "Today the country is registering dozens of startups every day, creating a unicorn every week," he said.

Talking about the Government e-Marketplace (GeM) portal, the Prime Minister said ever since the GeM portal has come into existence, all the purchases are done on one platform in front of everyone.

"Now people from remote villages, small shopkeepers and self-help groups can directly sell their products to the government. Today more than 40 lakh sellers have joined the GeM portal," he said.

The Prime Minister mentioned that the path and destination for the future was clear. "Aatmanirbhar Bharat is our path as well as our resolve. Over the years, we have worked continuously to create every necessary atmosphere for this," he said.

The Prime Minister urged the gathering to Work for EARTH -- Environment, Agriculture, Recycle, Technology and Healthcare.

"Today, the government is doing a lot of work for the arrangements like healthcare, and medical colleges in every district in the country," he added and asked the gathering to think about how their organisation could encourage this.

MAN HELD AFTER 113 COMPLAINTS OF WOMEN HARASSMENT IN UP

Lucknow: A man has been arrested on the charges of teasing, blackmailing and even stalking girls and women from Uttar Pradesh's Kaushambhi. The accused identified as Raghavendra Maurya was arrested after 113 complaints were received against him by the 1090 Women Power Line. The complaints were received from 36 districts over a period of time. "He had been warned several times but he continued with his activities. We had set up a team to arrest Maurya," said a senior official. Details are awaited.

NTAGI nod for precaution doses before 9 months for those going abroad



Team Absolute | New Delhi

The National Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation (NTAGI) has recommended allowing administration of the precautionary dose of Covid vaccine before nine months for those flying abroad, sources said.

At present, the Union Health Ministry has set a nine month gap after the administration of precaution dose.

The source also confirmed that this recommendation has not been made for all. So, the gap of nine months between second doses and precaution doses will continue for those in India. The NTAGI discussed and rec-

ommended this in a meeting held on Wednesday.

India began administering precaution doses of vaccines to healthcare and frontline workers and 60 plus population from January 10 this year. From April 10, all those above 18 years of age were eligible to get the precaution dose after the completion of 9 months of their second doses.

Meanwhile, India's Covid-19 vaccination coverage has crossed 189.79 crore on Thursday evening. More than more than 14 lakh (14,41,596) vaccine doses have been administered till 7 p.m.. As of now, a total of 2,90,75,352 precaution doses have been administered so far in India.



STATE GOVERNMENTS' PRIORITY IS TO PLANT SMILE ON THE FACE OF POOR: CM

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has said that ensuring a smile on the face of the poor and their respect is the top priority of the state government. The welfare of those who are backmost and poor comes first. I am the Chief Minister only to change the lives of such people. Chouhan was addressing a conference of cobblers organized at the Chief Minister's residence. Cobblers community of Budhni region participated in the conference.

Chouhan informed about the training being imparted by CRISP and National Institute of Footwear Designing, New Delhi and the Mukhya Mantri Paduka Yojna for skill upgradation of cobblers and to provide better market for their products. Chief Minister also presented a cheque of Rs 10 thousand as financial assistance and a kit containing equipment and tools needed by cobblers for their work to expand their business. Chouhan inaugurated the conference organized for the cobblers of Budhni region by lighting a lamp and performing kanyapujan during Sant Ravidas Jayanti celebrations in the Azadi ka Amrit



Mahotsav at Chief Minister's residence.

Chief Minister said that the state government is working in accordance with the Sant Ravidas' desire, "Aisa chahu raj me, jahan mili saban ko anna- chhote bado sam basen, Ravidas rahe prasanna". All families should get ration, housing and no family should remain deprived of the benefits of these schemes. The state government has made all necessary arrangements for all the families to have gas stove, Ayushman

card, which is useful in illness, and to enable families to take advantage of the Sambal Yojana. Chief Minister said that there are schemes of the state government to help daughters to pursue their higher education beginning from Ladli Laxmi Yojana. Chouhan inspired everyone to educate and promote daughters. He said that Sant Ravidas Jayanti would be celebrated every year with splendor in the state. The cobblers will be specially sent to Varanasi to visit the birth place of Sant Ravidas.

Giving information about the street vendors scheme, Chief Minister said that this scheme is very useful for expanding business. With the availability of loans and the provision of providing double the amount on loan repayment, business can be expanded by taking advantage of this scheme. Chouhan also inspired them to expand their business by forming self-help groups. Chief Minister said that 'Mukhya Mantri Paduka Yojana' is being started to make the Charmakar Samaj self-dependent and to connect them with the mainstream by inclusive development of the society as the scheme has all the arrangements. The training of footwear designing by advanced machines and experienced trainers will be made available by opening a common facility center under the scheme. This will enable the charmakars to get used to the use of modern techniques and machines along with their traditional techniques. Advanced toolkit will also be made available to the trainees under the scheme. The Common Facility Center will be operated by CRISP in association with National Institute of Footwear Designing, New Delhi.

Manthan-2022 Focused on Introspection of Employees of Power Companies

Team Absolute | Bhopal

On the second day of three-day 'Manthan-2022' focusing on 'introspection' of engineers and employees of all the power companies of Madhya Pradesh, Principal Secretary Energy Sanjay Dubey in his presentation at Tarang auditorium of Jabalpur told that the issues like greater Aggregate Technical and Commercial losses (AT&C losses), gap in annual revenue requirement and revenue receipts, over-dependence on subsidies, mixed feeders, energy accounting, power theft, hooking, tampering of meters and overloaded infrastructure are the present challenges of the power distribution companies. On the second day of Manthan-2022, the success, challenges and future action plans of the three power distribution companies of the state were discussed in Dubey said that with the introduction of smart meters and DBT (Direct Bank Transfer of Subsidy), the problems of the distribution sector of the state will be solved to a great extent. He described performance based funding, prepaid metering,



more use of power based home appliances and farmers taking third crop as the future challenges for the power companies.

Dubey clearly said that new electricity consumers should be given connections expeditiously within seven days as per rules. He said that accurate metering and consumption of every single unit is important for the consumer. In the presentation, Dubey called upon the power distribution companies to achieve the target of consumer and transformer indexing quickly with accuracy. He asked to replace the overloaded and faulty transformers immediately and establish high capacity transformers in their place. Dubey said that there is a need for speedy resolution of complaints of CM Helpline and Call Centres. The Principal Secretary said that the

demand for electricity is increasing due to the increasing number of electric vehicles in the state and charging them for a long time. This is a new challenge for the power distribution companies. Cases of electrical irregularities are coming to the fore in the charging of electric vehicles, which will have to be monitored by the field engineers of power distribution companies. D Vivek Porwal while setting the goals of the distribution companies said that the situation can become better by improving the foundation. He said that system label improvement and rationalisation of human resource is necessary. With the improvement of the human resource system, it will also have to be made transparent. Porwal said that the cost-effective tariff of Madhya Pradesh is the best in the country.

Home Guard jawans should get better work facilities: Narottam Mishra

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Home Minister Narottam Mishra has instructed to ensure necessary arrangements to provide better work facilities to the Home Guard jawans. Mishra gave these instructions during the review of Home Guard Department in Mantralaya on Friday. Additional Chief Secretary Home Rajesh Rajoura, Additional Chief Secretary Finance Manoj Govil, Director General Home Guard Pawan Jain and other officers were present. Mishra directed that the



discrepancy regarding call off of Home Guard should be removed. The meeting considered to remove the discrepancy regarding call off before and after 2016. It

is expected that the discrepancy will be rectified soon. In the meeting, discussion was also held to increase the currently sanctioned 550 posts of State Disaster

Emergency Response Force (SDERF). It was decided that a proposal should be sent to the Cabinet to increase the number of posts to 1500. In the meeting, discussion was also held on the construction of the new office of District Commandant in 7 new districts like Niwari. Discussions were also held regarding the purchase of new vehicles in lieu of the vehicles auctioned after the year 2005 of various District Commandant offices of the state and sending force from the district headquarters to the accident site for better management in case of disaster.

RS. 9 LAKH WILL BE GIVEN ON DEATH OF UNSKILLED LABORER

Bhopal: A 28-year-old unskilled labourer, Matadin Singh Tomar, son of Gyan Singh, resident of Umraiya village, was electrocuted on May 5 near Khadiyar village in Morena district. Energy Minister Pradyuman Singh Tomar directed that the payment of Rs. 4 lakh on behalf of the power distribution company and Rs. 5 lakh insured by the service provider company should be made to the family of the deceased at the earliest. Along with this, the wife of the deceased, Ruchi Tomar has also been asked to get work as unskilled or skilled labourer as per her qualifications in the outsourced employee service provider company.

Celebratory firing in Gwalior injures 2 kids

▶ TWO CHILDREN WERE INJURED DURING CELEBRATORY FIRING AT A BIRTHDAY PARTY IN GWALIOR, POLICE SAID ON FRIDAY.

According to the police, Shyam Soni, who opened fire at his son's birthday party on Thursday night, has been arrested.

As per information, Soni fired the shots at about 8.30 p.m. after the cake was cut. Pallets from the third fire ricocheted and hit the two children who were near him.

The injured children were taken to nearby hospitals where doctors said that they were out of danger.

The Gwalior-Chambal region has witnessed several similar incidents,

some fatal, in recent years despite a ban on celebratory firing was imposed in 2011.

Addressing the media, Gwalior collector Kaushendra Vikram Singh said he is going to issue a special advisory to take stringent action against such incidents.

While imposing the ban, the Madhya Pradesh government warned that offenders will be exiled, charged under National Security Act (NSA) and lose their gun licence.

Since most of the shootings happen at weddings and family

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Two children were injured during celebratory firing at a birthday party in Gwalior, police said on Friday.

CM Chouhan Paid Homage to Jagatguru Adi Shankaracharya Ji



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Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan paid homage to Jagatguru Shankaracharya on his Prakatotsav. Chief Minister Chouhan paid floral tribute by garlanding the picture of Acharya Shankar in the auditorium at the residence office.

Adi Shankaracharya was born in 'Kaldi village' of Kerala. He was the founder of Advaita Vedanta, a Sanskrit scholar, Upanishad lecturer and religious preacher. He travelled almost all over India. Most of his life was spent in North India. Adi Shankaracharya founded the Sringeri Sharada Peeth at Rameshwaram in the south of India, the Govardhan Math at Puri

in Orissa, the Sharada Math at Dwarka in Gujarat and the Jyotirmath at Badrikashram in Uttarakhand. Shankaracharya has an important place among the highest philosophers of the world.

Chief Minister in his congratulatory message on the Prakatotsav, has said that "Acharya Shankar propounded the principle of Advaita from Madhya Pradesh itself and visited India and illuminated the entire nation." Due to his efforts, the voice of Vedas and Upanishads reverberated all over India. New life was infused in the society and a new era started in Madhya Pradesh. Madhya Pradesh has naturally been the focal point of his cultural unity journey from north to south and east to west. The Madhya Pradesh government has decided to establish Acharya Shankar International Advaita Vedanta Sanshan on the banks of Narmada at Omkareshwar in Khandwa district. There a grand multi-metal 108 feet high statue of Adi Shankaracharya will be installed.

CM CALLED ON BY BRITISH HIGH COMMISSIONER



Bhopal: British High Commissioner Alex Ellis and Deputy High Commissioner Allen Gammel called on Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan at the residence office. Chouhan welcomed Alex Ellis by offering the famous Gamcha (towel) of Chanderi. Chouhan discussed about the Global Investors Summit to be held in the state, the possibilities of encouraging exchanges between the United Kingdom and Madhya Pradesh in the fields of education and culture.

Chief Minister also informed about the ongoing activities in the state for environmental protection, natural farming, global warming besides tourism. Business prospects were also discussed in view of the progress made in the state in the fields of fruits and vegetables including food grains, oilseeds, pulses. Principal Secretary Industrial Policy and Investment Promotion Sanjay Kumar Shukla and Principal Secretary Urban Development and Housing Manish Singh were present.

MP will become Atma-Nirbhar with MP Startup: Sakhlecha

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Atma-Nirbhar Bharat and Atma-Nirbhar Madhya Pradesh with a view to fulfil its objectives MP Startup Policy and implementation plan 2022 has been implemented in Madhya Pradesh. Prime Minister Narendra Modi will do a virtual launch of this policy on 13 May. The main function will be held in Indore.

Minister for Micro small medium Enterprise Omprakash Sakhlecha told that Madhya Pradesh will become self dependent with MP Startup. The dynamism of innovation and startups taking place in the global economics environment. According to the thinking of Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan the new Startup Policy has been made holistic and effective. He said in terms of area the Madhya Pradesh is the second largest state in the country. And is also in the category of leading states in economic development. The investment friendly policies of the industry and the process of sim-

plification in the business sector special efforts in economic and social infrastructure have led to a significant increase in the investment climate in the state.

Sakhlecha told that it has been the endeavour of the State Government to create more employment for the local youth of the State through innovation and entrepreneurship. Many startup policies have been applied in this series. In the new policy the State Government has made special efforts to inculcate the spirit of innovation and startup among the students from the college level to the school level. For comprehensive implementation of the policy and for effective adoption of various provisions of the Governance many arrangements have been made.

Sakhlecha told that by not keeping the policy limited to financial assistance only the objectives is to provide institutional ease of doing business infrastructure, states procurement policy, marketing and other incentive support to startups. The special aspect of the policy is to

incorporates special financial and non financial facilities to encourage the product based startup.

Through positive intervention and other catalytic programs the development of the startup ecosystem is included in the policy. In addition to achieving hundred percent growth rate in startup India registered and recognized startups in the Government of India, achieving 200 percent growth rate in startup India in the agriculture and food sector is prominent. Similarly the policy aims to increase the number of product based startups.

Sakhlecha said that the objective of the policy is to give higher place to the state in the startup Ranking of the Government of India. He said that the policy focuses on following five pillars to achieve the objectives. Institutional support including ease of doing business, promotion of product based startups, promotion of innovation and entrepreneurship, marketing support and providing financial and non financial support are prominent in the policy.

WILL LEAVE NO STONE UNTURNED TO SERVE THE PEOPLE: CM

- Mahayagya for women empowerment is starting in the state
- PG classes will start in Kirnapur and Paraswada College, college will open in Hatta
- Ladli Laxmi Diwas will be celebrated in the state on May 8
- SHG Conclave and health camp held at Kirnapur on Late Dilip Bhatere's death anniversary

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Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has said that he will leave no stone unturned to serve the people. The government will treat the people who come to the health camp. People should not worry about anything. Wherever there is a need for health facilities, treatment will

be provided. No one will remain untreated in the health camp. Chouhan was addressing a district level health camp and women's conference of Aajeevika Mission held on the 15th death anniversary of Late Dilip Bhatere at Kirnapur of Balaghat. He said that Dilip Bhatere had the spirit of service, dedication and development. The work started by him will be continued.

Chouhan said that the government will also bear the pension of Rs 5 thousand per month payable to the children who have lost their parents during the Covid period besides the cost of their further education to ensure their future. He congratulated the women of self-help groups for the innovation of road roller and said that women will now go beyond Badi, Papad, Pickle, Food items, Soap, Detergent powder and make village roads. This is the beginning of the Mahayagya for women empowerment. In the state, the work of distribution of nutritious food, school uniform and ration for children from self-help groups is also being done by the

group. He said that the self-help groups have an annual turnover of Rs 20 thousand crore in the state.

Chouhan said that crop production is done by farmers in the agriculturally dominated Balaghat district throughout in all seasons. There will be no shortage of electricity to irrigate crops. He said that about 85 thousand names have been added in the list of Pradhan Mantri Awas Plus in Balaghat district. The intention of the state government is that everyone should have a pucca house, for which a provision of Rs 10 thousand crore has been made for the construction of 10 lakh houses this year. He said that Post Graduate classes will be started in Late Dilip Bhatere College, Kirnapur. College in Hatta will start in this session. Post Graduate classes will be started in Paraswara. Lamta Primary Health Center will be upgraded into Community Health Center. Railway over bridge at Sarekha on Balaghat-Gondia route has been approved in the budget and its construction will start soon. This

will facilitate easy movement of the public. Chouhan said that local language is being encouraged in the state. Under this, medical and engineering education will also be conducted in Hindi.

The work of recovery of tap-water tax, lighting tax, property tax and sanitation tax from 179 gram panchayats of the district has been done by self-help groups. In lieu of this tax recovery work, it has been decided that 15 percent of the recovery amount will be given to the groups as remuneration. So far, Rs 67 lakh 52 thousand 834 have been recovered by the groups. In the programme, Chief Minister Shri Chouhan paid a commission of Rs 10 lakh 12 thousand 925 for the total amount recovered through a symbolic single click.

At the outset, Chouhan inaugurated development works worth Rs. 169 crore and performed bhoomi-pujan and visited the development exhibition based on various schemes. Chief Minister offered floral tributes to the photo of Late Dilip Bhatere.

CM Planted Khirni and Cassia Saplings



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Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan planted saplings of Khirni and Cassia along with the office bearers of Sagar Royal Vilas Residents Association in the Smart City Garden. Gurucharan Singh, Parimal Yadav, Omvir Singh Rana and Sanjeev Khare of the Residents Association planted saplings. Chouhan inspired the office bearers to

remain active in cleanliness campaigns and tree-planting activities. Residents Association works for cleanliness and environment in their colony and encourages citizens to be active in this direction. Also, environmental and cleanliness activities are conducted along with senior citizens, women and children. The walls of the colony have been made beautiful and attractive with paintings.



EDITOR'S SPECS

40% MLCS in UP have criminal records

The recent 'Vidhan Parishad' (Legislative Council) elections to 36 seats in Uttar Pradesh have nearly 40 per cent members having criminal antecedents. According to the analysis report released by Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR) on Wednesday, out of the 35 MLCS analysed, 14 MLCS have declared criminal cases against themselves. Nine MLCS have declared serious criminal cases including cases related to murder, attempt to murder, bribery etc while three MLCS have declared cases related to murder (IPC Section-302) against themselves. Four MLCS have declared cases of attempt to murder (IPC Section-307). Out of 33 MLCS from BJP, 13 have criminal cases against them while one of the two independents have declared criminal cases against themselves in their affidavits. Out of the 35 newly-elected MLCS, 33 are crorepatis. Thirty-three MLCS from BJP and two Independent MLCS have declared assets worth more than Rs 1 crore. The average of assets per MLC in the Uttar Pradesh Legislative Council elections is Rs 17.39 crore. Meanwhile, seven MLCS have declared their education qualification to be between 8th pass and 12th pass while 28 MLCS have declared having an educational qualification of graduation or above. Meanwhile, Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, on Friday, offered prayers at Hanuman Garhi and Ram Lalla temple on his third visit to Ayodhya after being re-elected as the chief minister for the second term. The BJP swept the biennial polls to the state's legislative council by winning 24 out of 27 constituencies where polling took place on April 9. The party was earlier elected unopposed in nine seats, taking its total to 33 out of the 36 constituencies.

WILL KCR EMERGE AS A UNIFYING FORCE BEFORE PRESIDENTIAL POLLS?

Presidential elections are not too far off as by the last week of July 2022 the incumbent President Ram Nath Kovind will complete his tenure of five year but before he completes it a new President of the country has to be elected. Various names are doing rounds like Vice President M Venkaiyah Naidu, former UP CM Mayawati, Kerala Governor Arif Mohammad Khan and many more names. But any conjecture in all likelihood might fall flat, the way top BJP leadership works.

Vinod Kumar Shukla



There is always a surprise quotient involved in every such appointment. Now, since the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) is short of 9000 votes to win the presidential elections, the role of opposition parties has become important. Though the opposition tries to project itself as a monolith but fissures appear every now and then when they try to step out to corner the BJP. The Congress with over 50 Lok Sabha

seats and a good number of seats in the Rajya Sabha has all-India reach albeit contracting like touch me not with every touch of various organized opposed to it and the actual role is being played by the regional satraps whether Sharad Pawar of Maharashtra, Mamata Banerjee of West Bengal, Jagan Mohan Reddy of Andhra Pradesh, M K Stalin of Kerala, Naveen Patnaik of Odisha or K Chandrashekar Rao of Telangana. Meanwhile, something is cooking up between Bihar CM Nitish Kumar and RJD's Lalu Prasad. Akhilesh Yadav of the SP may join the bandwagon of the OBC leaders of Bihar or vice versa. But mobilization of these Opposition leaders will certainly matter not only in the Presidential polls but also for the 2024 Lok Sabha elections as some of them are solidly in the saddle in their areas of influence. Positioning of these regional satraps has already started. The most interesting being moves of Nitish Kumar who is reportedly not at all amused with the offer of being nominated as the NDA's Vice Presidential candidate rather he wants to become the President for which the BJP is not ready. But the way Nitish Kumar is conducting himself, his days in the NDA are numbered. Sharad Pawar and Mamata Banerjee are very active as they want somehow to pull down Narendra Modi from the seat of power and presidential elections could be a beginning of the process if the opposition manages to put up a challenge to the NDA's Presidential candidate. As argued earlier, the opposition is a divid-

ed house from the very beginning with Patnaik and Reddy indicating to go along with the NDA. They don't feel threatened with the NDA and they feel that they need the Centre's support for development of their respective states. But moves by other players are interesting to watch for. The NCP is in the government in Maharashtra but as an organization it is not very strong in the state and so is the case with the Shiv Sena. The DMK will certainly go against the NDA and will join the opposition hands for its candidate if they are able to zero in on the name of any candidate. Mamata Banerjee is not only very strong in West Bengal but aggressive and ambitious as well. But the problem is that she is incoherent and unpredictable in her decisions. She cannot impress people or leaders of the rest of the country except West Bengal, so accepting her as the leader appears imprudent. The third leader from the opposition party that is not only aggressively working in his state but also meeting other opposition leaders to make a front against the NDA is K Chandrashekar Rao. He is a good communicator who speaks well and has the secular credentials that can be helpful to glue this opposition alliance as a solid mass to counter the ruling alliance. Rao is engaging with leaders of opposition from across the country. He has already met with Shiv Sena Leader Uddhav Thackrey and NCP leader Sharad Pawar. He has plans to meet Jharkhand Mukti Morcha Leader and Jharkhand CM

Hemant Soren, SP leader Akhilesh Yadav and Janata Dal (S) leader HD Deve Gowda of Karnataka. The BJP is also very aggressively working in Telangana and so is being responded by Chandrashekar Rao in the country. Rao's proficiency in Hindi mixed with Urdu is proving to be very helpful for him to communicate with leaders of the rest of the country. None of the opposition leaders has such quality. This will help him to address people of north India in the bargain. With a strong Muslim support base and All India Majlis e Ittehadul Musalmeen as its ally, he can become a unifying factor. The leader that never stepped out of the electoral territory beyond Telangana is now looking for an all India role. If he succeeds and is able to take along the rest of the opposition political parties that will start showing results during run up to the presidential polls but among the various regional satraps, he is the only leader who has the required quality to take the opposition together and connect with the people of the rest of the country. Will other leaders join him to dislodge the NDA government as all these leaders aspire to do so? Developments in a month's time will reveal which way politics will unfold. Till then, keeping a close watch is the only option for all!

(Vinod Kumar Shukla is a freelance journalist and writer based in Delhi. The views expressed are personal.)

international

SHEHBAZ GOVT TO SCRUTINISE IMRAN'S ASSETS, INCOME

Islamabad | Agencies

After ousting Imran Khan from power and tackling his claims of corruption against opposition party leaders, the incumbent government of Pakistan Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has decided to scrutinise the legality and value of the former premier's assets and income.

As per sources, the federal government has decided to launch a thorough inquiry and scrutiny of Khan's assets and income, including details of at least four of his employees, who are under the payroll of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) and dig deeper into finding irregularities, which may be used to book the ousted leader on assets beyond means, undeclared income and illegal inflow of huge sum of funds from unknown sources and accounts.

The four PTI employees are Tahir Iqbal, Muhammad Noman Afzal, Muhammad Arshad and Mohammad Rafique. "Records of huge sums of money into the private accounts of four PTI employees are being sought



from the SBP and arrests will also be made in the light of the evidences," an informed source said about the development. "Forensic examination of records will be carried out by independent auditors while FIA (Federal Investigation Agency) and FBR (Federal Board of Revenue) will take action by obtaining records at their respective levels." The government has also decided to extend the scrutiny of Khan and his party's funding to

foreign countries, from where, huge funds have been allegedly sent to various PTI accounts and members.

"The government has decided to write a letter to the International financial institutions for the record of PTI and Imran Khan's international bank accounts," the source said.

PTI is currently under scrutiny on charges of foreign funding from countries, including India and Israel. A case was filed by one of its founding

members with the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) seeking a ban on the political party and also put Khan to trial for getting foreign funding for his campaigns.

"The record of PTI foreign funding from 2013 to 2022 is also being sought," the source revealed.

The Pakistan government had reached a data exchange agreement with the International financial institutions was reached during the tenure of former Finance Minister Ishaq Dar and the same will be used to take action in the current scrutiny process. "Under the agreement, FBR has the legal authority to take records from foreign banks," the source confirmed. Khan's income will also be scrutinised and any irregularity or illegality will be checked.

It seems that after Khan's three and a half years in power and consistent pursuit to book the Sharif and the Zardari families under charges of illegal assets beyond means and financial crimes, the former Prime Minister is now facing the same challenge by his political archrivals in power.

US gave intel that helped Ukraine sink iconic Russian warship: Report

Washington | Agencies

The US provided intelligence that helped Ukraine sink the Moskva, Russia's flagship Black Sea missile cruiser, the media report.

Unnamed officials said Ukraine had asked the US about a ship sailing to the south of Odessa, to which Washington said it was the Moskva and helped confirm its location, the BBC reported. Ukraine then struck it with two missiles, the officials were quoted as saying.

The officials said they did not know that Ukraine would target the Moskva after helping determine its location.

The 510-crew missile cruiser had led Russia's naval assault on Ukraine, and its sinking in April was a major symbolic and military blow, BBC reported. At the time,



the Russian Defence Ministry said ammunition on board the Moskva exploded in an unexplained fire and the ship tipped over while being towed back to port.

The US is yet to directly address the reports about the Moskva. However Pentagon spokesman John Kirby denied earlier media reports that the US was providing information about the locations of senior Russian gen-

erals on the battlefield, so that Ukrainian forces could kill them. "We do not provide intelligence on the location of senior military leaders on the battlefield or participate in the targeting decisions of the Ukrainian military," he said.

Kirby said Ukraine combined information that the US and others provided with their own battlefield intelligence.

NKOREA DENOUNCES SWEDEN, FINLAND OVER NATO BIDS

Seoul: North Korea's Foreign Ministry on Friday denounced Sweden and Finland for their expected applications to join the NATO and accused the US of political motives behind the move. In a post on its website, the Ministry said that the NATO membership of the Nordic countries will only aggravate military confrontation with Russia and "upset" military balance in the Baltic Sea area, reports Yonhap News Agency. "The above facts prove that the US and the West are taking the Ukrainian situation as a golden opportunity to compress the strategic space of Russia by tightening the encircling net around Russia," it argued. The Ministry then warned that such moves by the US and other western nations will inevitably provoke stronger reaction from Russia. Pyongyang's message came as the White House stated that Washington can "address any concerns either country may have about the period of time between a NATO membership application and the formal accession to the alliance". In a separate statement, the ministry stressed that US sanctions against Russia have proven to be futile, saying that Moscow posted a current account surplus of \$58 billion in the first quarter this year. It also claimed that European countries are "recently crying out in fear" that the suspension of gas imports from Russia could lead to a serious economic crisis.

CAN STILL WIN ELECTION DESPITE TRAILING IN POLLS: AUS PM

Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison on Friday declared he can still win the May 21 federal election despite trailing in the polls.

Canberra | Agencies

Morrison said that opinion polls that show his Coalition set for defeat in the election are not necessarily conclusive, with many voters yet to make up their mind, reports Xinhua news agency.

According to the polls, the opposition Labor Party is likely to win up to 80 out of 151 seats in the lower house of Parliament -- the House of Representatives -- and form the government for the first time since 2013.

"People have not made up their mind and they're looking to determine what is going to drive their choice," Morrison was quoted by the Australian Financial Review (AFR) on Friday.

"And at the end of the day, that is going to come down to who they think has got the credibility to be able to deal with these pressures."

Friday marked day 26 out of 41 of the election campaign and the end of a week domi-



nated by cost of living issues. The Reserve Bank of Australia (RBA) recently increased the official cash rate by 25

basis points to 0.35 per cent.

It was the first rate rise in about 11 years and has been regarded as a blow to Morrison's campaign, which has been largely focused on the Coalition's economic record.

A survey published by the Australian National University (ANU) on Friday found that reducing cost of living tops voters' list of concerns leading up to the election.

Of more than 3,500 participants, 64.7 per cent identified the high cost of living as an issue that needs to be "urgently addressed".

It found that cost of living transcended the political divide, with more than 60 per cent of supporters of both major parties choosing it as major issues.

It also found the second highest priority was fixing the aged care system, with 60.1 per cent of voters highlighting this as a key issue.

The economy, reducing the cost of healthcare and addressing climate change also rated highly as concerns.

Ukraine launches global fundraising platform

Kiev | Agencies

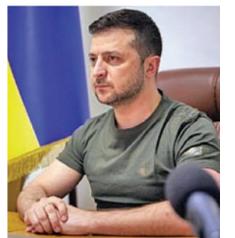
Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky has announced the launch of United24, a global fundraising platform to collect donations for the war-torn nation.

In his latest video address, Zelensky said that it is expected that this platform will become the main channel for collecting donations in support of Kiev, Ukrayinska Pravda reported.

"Fundraising is only the first part of the United24 initiative, and other projects and programs will soon join it," the President said.

United24 makes it possible to make a donation in one click from any country through the site u24.gov.ua.

Funds will be distributed over three areas of assistance: defence and demining; humanitarian and medical care; and the reconstruction of Ukraine.



"Donate to protect. Donate to save. Donate to rebuild," said Zelensky.

All funds will be automatically transferred to the accounts of the National Bank of Ukraine and assigned to the Ministries of Defence, Health and Infrastructure.

The bank will report on the receipt of charitable contributions through United24 every 24 hours, while the Ministries will report on how contributions are being assigned once a week.



MAHARASHTRA CONGRESS SAYS 326 SEDITION CASES FILED IN FIRST TERM OF PM MODI; SLAMS BJP

THE BJP LEADERS HAVE TERMED THE MVA GOVERNMENT IN THE STATE AS BRUTAL FOR BOOKING LOK SABHA MP NAVNEET RANA AND HER MLA HUSBAND RAVI RANA IN A SEDITION CASE



The Maharashtra Congress on Friday said 326 sedition cases have been filed between 2014 and 2019 during the first term of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The BJP leaders have termed the MVA government in the state as brutal for booking Lok Sabha MP Navneet Rana and her MLA husband Ravi Rana in a sedition case, he said.

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The Maharashtra Congress on Friday said 326 sedition cases have been filed between 2014 and 2019 during the first term of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The BJP leaders have termed the MVA government in the state as brutal for booking Lok Sabha MP Navneet Rana and her MLA husband Ravi Rana in a sedition case, he said.

The BJP leaders have termed the MVA government in the state as brutal for booking Lok Sabha MP Navneet Rana and her MLA husband Ravi Rana in a sedition case, he said. "I want to remind the state BJP leaders who are celebrating the court observation (that there is not sufficient ground to invoke sedition against the Rana couple) that under Modi rule from 2014 to 2019, a total of 326 cases of sedition were filed. There is no data after 2019," Sawant said.

MUMBAI CITY FC CELEBRATE UNIQUE FOOTBALL-BASED WATER EDUCATION FESTIVAL

Mumbai: To create awareness about the importance of clean drinking water and safe hand washing practices among children, Indian Super League (ISL) club Mumbai City FC celebrated the unique football-based water education festival at the Neville D'Souza Football Ground in Bandra here. Around 120 kids took part in the grass-roots football festival, where they showcased their skills, talent and love for the game along with learning the importance of clean water and sanitation. They also got a chance to interact and learn from the Mumbai City FC stars Rahul Bheke, Amey Ranawade and Raynier Fernandes, who were also part of the event. The water awareness programme was organised by Mumbai City FC in association with their official water technology partner Xylem.

Maharashtra Home Minister urges Centre to bring policy on use of loudspeakers

Maharashtra Home Minister's remark comes amid a controversy over Maharashtra Navnirman Sena (MNS) chief Raj Thackeray's warning to play Hanuman Chalisa if mosques are found broadcasting 'azaan' on loudspeakers. Walse-Patil thanked people from both Hindu and Muslim communities for cooperating with the state government in the maintenance of peace amid the row.

in the state, and asked his party workers to play the Hanuman Chalisa at higher volumes if his demand is not fulfilled. Walse-Patil thanked people from both Hindu and Muslim communities for cooperating with the state government in the maintenance of peace amid the row. "The Centre should bring a policy (on loudspeakers) for the entire country. But I will thank the Muslim and Hindu communities. This issue could be handled peacefully and law and order could be maintained in the state because of their cooperation," Walse-Patil said, PTI reported. The minister was speaking to reporters after a review meeting over the law and order situation in the state. The MNS chief's strong pitch for removing loudspeakers from mosques triggered a war of words between him and the ruling Shiv Sena leaders. Earlier, Shiv Sena MP Sanjay Raut had said that there was no violation of loudspeaker guidelines in Maharashtra and added that no one should teach Hindutva to his party. "There is no violation of loudspeakers (guidelines) in Maharashtra. The state is working according to the guidelines on loudspeakers laid down by the Supreme Court. If anyone is violating the law, then the government is capable of (tackling) it."

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Maharashtra Home Minister Dilip Walse-Patil on Friday said that the Centre should come out with a policy on the use of loudspeakers. His remark comes amid a controversy over Maharashtra Navnirman Sena (MNS) chief Raj Thackeray's warning to play Hanuman Chalisa if mosques are found broadcasting 'azaan' on loudspeakers. The MNS chief had last month demanded that loudspeakers be removed from mosques

Six-year-old Ashwath Kaushik clinches Under-8 World Cadets chess gold

India's six-year-old chess player Ashwath Kaushik has made history by winning gold in the Open Under-8 category in the World Cadets and Youth Championships 2022 for Rapid and Blitz in Rhodes, Greece from May 1-3.



Netherlands. Starting as the seventh seed, he worked his way up to finish the campaign with 8.5 points out of a possible nine, eventually beating eight of the top 12 finishers. Ashwath's coach, FIDE master Balaji Guttula of SMCA, credited his performance to his sharp memory. Ashwath can recall the entire game of 30-plus moves he plays in any tournament, said Balaji. His mother Rohini said that besides chess, Kaushik likes building intricate lego car models, cycling and watching Formula 1. He aims to become a Grandmaster by playing attacking chess like his role model Mikhail Tal and will be playing in the Indian school nationals next.

Team Absolute | Mumbai

India's six-year-old chess player Ashwath Kaushik has made history by winning gold in the Open Under-8 category in the World Cadets and Youth Championships 2022 for Rapid and Blitz in Rhodes, Greece from May 1-3. More than 330 players from 40 countries participated in the tournament, which was the first big event on the FIDE calendar this year. En route to victory, Kaushik beat top seeds ModithAarohMutyalapati (ELO 1598) from Canada in Round 3 and Raghav Pathak (ELO 1355) from the

India among worst-hit by anaemia, World Congress in Mumbai to discuss remedies

AS INDIA REMAINS AMONG THE COUNTRIES WORST-HIT BY ANAEMIA, THE DAY-LONG SECOND WORLD CONGRESS OF ANAEMIA (WCA) WILL DISCUSS REMEDIAL MEASURES, PREVENTION, AND CONTROL, THE ORGANISERS ON FRIDAY.

Team Absolute | Mumbai

As India remains among the countries worst-hit by anaemia, the day-long second World Congress of Anaemia (WCA) will discuss remedial

measures, prevention, and control, the organisers on Friday. "Organised by the 88-year-old Mumbai Obstetric & Gynaecological Society, the WCA theme is 'Iron Deficiency Anaemia', tools for effective prevention, management and control. The WCA is an initiative to achieve the goals of reducing iron deficiency anaemia in India and across the globe," Mumbai Obstetric and Gynaecological Society President Niranjan Chavan told IANS. Affording a curtain-raiser to the mega-event, Chavan, of BMC's Sion hospital, said anaemia is widely prevalent among all age groups in India and the most vulnerable are pregnant women with 58 per cent prevalence, and 50 per cent among other women, 56 per cent adolescent girls, 30 per cent adolescent boys and a staggering 80 per cent among all children aged below two years. Anaemia is a condition in which the blood doesn't have enough healthy red blood cells (RBCs) or dysfunctional

RBCs in the body which results in reduced oxygen flow to the body's organs. "The symptoms may include fatigue, skin pallor, breathlessness, light-headedness, dizziness or quickened heartbeats, and treatment would depend on the diagnosis," Chavan said. Usually, iron supplements are used for iron deficiency, Vitamin B for low-vitamin levels, blood transfusions for blood losses and medication to induce blood formation if the body is unable to produce enough blood. Citing World Health Organisation and Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare data, he said the global prevalence of anaemia is nearly 30 per cent in women of the reproductive age or equivalent to more than 50 crore women aged between 15-49 years worldwide. Its prevalence was slightly less at 29.6 per cent in non-pregnant women of the same age group, but it poses a major threat to maternal and child survival in India and other countries in the world. It can result in low-

birth weight of the child, lower resistance to infections, poor cognitive development and decreased work productivity. "The magnitude of anaemia along with the associated adverse health, developmental and economic consequences highlight the need for intensified action to address this major public health issue," Chavan said. The WCA supported by the World Anaemia Forum is an environment that puts their expertise to work in translating global science into recommendations and observations for clinicians, creating guidelines, policies and processes, he added. The WCA held on Saturday will attract 16 national and international speakers from 14 major organisations worldwide and would be chaired by President-elect, FIGO, Anne Beatrice Kihara; former President, FIGO, C. N. Purandare and Guest of Honour, FIGO President Jeanne Conry, besides Shyam Desai, Nandita Palshetkar, Sanjay Gupte, among others, Chavan said.

FIR against ALTBalaji, MX Player for alleged plagiarism over 'Lock Upp'

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Television czarina Ekta R Kapoor has landed in trouble just as her show 'Lock Upp' is heading towards its finale as the Hyderabad Police has registered an FIR against ALTBalaji, MX Player and Endemol Shine for alleged plagiarism. As per the reports Hyderabad Police have begun their inquiry. Hyderabad-based Sanobar Baig, managing director of Prime Media filed a complaint in the Supreme Court demanding the show be stopped and was directed to approach the lower court. Later, the city civil court ordered to stop airing of the show from April 29. He had been fighting a legal battle with the makers of the show as he alleged plagiarism against them for copying his concept of 'Jail'. Recently, he said that it is shocking for him that the show is still going on. "Shocked that the airing of the show has not stopped, I had to knock on the doors of the police. The Hyderabad Police after



understanding and verifying the situation in detail have registered an FIR in the matter under sections 420, 406 and 469 of the IPC. The FIR dated 4th May 2022 at Kanchanbagh Police Station of Hyderabad and bearing the number 86/22 mentions the details." In February, he had accused the show producer Abhishek Rege of stealing his idea.

He added: "I am aware that Ekta Kapoor has multiple FIRs against her for objectionable content and indecent representation of the families of the Indian Armed Forces and am appalled that the law is being misused by her and her organization brazenly. We have heard the police and the judges bemoan the fact that the rich and the powerful get in the way of the proceedings of the law. I believe the bigger a person is, the more responsibility they have to maintain the law and order." "There cannot be two sets of laws -- one for the powerful and one for the ordinary citizens. As we celebrate the 75 years of democratic governance in India, the trust of ordinary citizens in institutions such as the police and judiciary should not be broken. I am sure that due to our persistent efforts; eventually, there will be a fair trial and prosecution of the accused - who are seated in powerful chairs," he said. "Hyderabad police are reaching Mumbai for further investigation today, May 6. The finale has been preponed keeping in light these developments to May 7 from May 9."

PUBG addicted 12-year-old boy left his home alone from Nanded reached Nashik; reunited with family by police

WHEN KAPILE STOPPED THE BOY AND ASKED WHY HE WAS ALONE, THE BOY SAID THAT HIS RELATIVES WERE STANDING OUTSIDE THE STATION.

Team Absolute | Nashik

A 12-year-old boy, who had left his home in Nanded district of Maharashtra and reached Nashik in an express train, was reunited with his family, police said on Friday.

According to police, the boy was addicted to mobile phone games. "The boy from Raheer village in Naigaon tehsil of Nanded had gone missing. His father had lodged a complaint with the local police, following which an alert was sent to the railway police stations in all districts to help trace the minor. Nashik Road railway police started checking all trains coming from Nanded to Nashik. A photograph of the boy was posted on the railway police's WhatsApp group also and search was launched," an official said. When the Nanded-Mumbai Tapovan Express reached Nashik Road railway station on Thursday, police constable Vijay Kapile checked the

train. He spotted some children disembarking from the train, although one of them was hiding his face, he said. When Kapile stopped the boy and asked why he was alone, the boy said that his relatives were standing outside the station. However, during a probe later, it came to light that the boy had reached Nashik from Nanded in Tapovan Express without a ticket. The police then took him into confidence and informed their counterparts in Nanded. On being informed, his father reached Nashik and took the boy into his custody on Thursday, police said, adding that the minor was addicted to some mobile phone games like Free Fire.

NO CASE FOR SEDITION AGAINST RANA COUPLE, OBSERVES MUMBAI COURT

IN AN EMBARRASSMENT TO MAHARASHTRA'S RULING MAHA VIKAS AGHADI, THE MUMBAI CITY CIVIL AND SESSIONS COURT HAS OBSERVED THAT THE MUMBAI POLICE DID NOT HAVE SUFFICIENT GROUNDS TO INVOKE SEDITION CHARGES AGAINST THE INDEPENDENT POLITICIAN COUPLE, MP NAVNEET KAUR-RANA AND HER HUSBAND MLA RAVI RANA.

Team Absolute | Mumbai

In an embarrassment to Maharashtra's ruling Maha Vikas Aghadi, the Mumbai City Civil and Sessions Court has observed that the Mumbai Police did not have sufficient grounds to invoke sedition charges against the independent politician couple, MP Navneet Kaur-Rana and her husband MLA Ravi Rana.

The observations came in Special Judge Rahul Rokde's bail order for the Ranans - who were granted relief on Wednesday and walked out of jail on Thursday - 12 days after they were arrested on April 23 for threatening to chant Hanuman Chalisa outside the private residence of Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray.



Among other charges, the couple was slapped with Indian Penal Code Sec. 124A that deals with sedition and is

already under a heated legal debate. In the order that was available on Friday, Special Judge Rokde has said: "It may be not that neither the applicants

called anyone to bear arms nor any violence was incited in general as a result of the speech delivered by the applicants. In view of the matter, I am of the considered view that prima facie, decisive ingredients of section 124 A of the IPC are not made out at this stage." The Special Judge, however, also said that the Rana couple had undoubtedly crossed the line of freedom during their agitation, which they had subsequently called off in view of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Mumbai the following day. "Undoubtedly, the applicants (Ranas) have crossed the lines of freedom of speech and expression guaranteed under the Constitution. However, mere expression of derogatory or objectionable words may not be a sufficient ground for invoking the provisions contained in section 124A of IPC," he added. Home Minister Dilip Walse-Patil said that the sedition charge was invoked by the police only after proper studying the case, and Transport Minister Anil Parab said that there's a difference between "observations" and "verdict" and the MVA government would study the court order. In a strong reaction, Bharatiya Janata Party's Leader of Opposition Devendra Fadnis, said: "The court has exposed the draconian and undemocratic policies and actions of this MVA Govt to shut the dissenting voices. Will the MVA government now apologise for wrongly confining the public representatives." Ravi Rana merely said: "We would not be saying anything on the order of the court. We respect it," and pointed out that the people have witnessed the manner in which a woman (his wife Navneet Kaur-Rana) was allegedly mistreated by the state government.



AMANDA SEYFRIED

STANDS UP FOR REFUGEES, ABORTION RIGHTS AT POWER OF WOMEN

Los Angeles | Agencies

Actress Amanda Seyfried in her Power of Women speech honoured the International Network for Aid, Relief and Assistance, a nonprofit that connects refugee children with crucial medical and mental health care. "This evening, we are gathered to recognise the Power of Women, and I can think of few women more powerful in vision and spirit than my friend, CNN senior international correspondent and the founder of INARA, Arwa Damon, who is sitting right there with us tonight," Variety quoted Seyfried as saying.

"It is her passion, her dedication, her fearlessness that has inspired me and inspired so many people." She shared the story of Mia, a Syrian girl whose mother fled their neighbourhood during an attack and fell into the rubble, shattering Mia's bones. "INARA has provided the surgeries and the physical therapy that will allow Mia to fully recover, and ease the heart of her mother, her extraordinary mother," Seyfried said.

She also touched on the Supreme Court's drafted decision to overturn Roe v. Wade, saying that "women's safety and security, as we have just been reminded, is far too often negotiable. And it's not negotiable to me".

"There's no better moment, not just to celebrate the power of us women, but to use it," Seyfried continued. "In these very desperate times where theocrats are diligently working to eradicate our most basic right, we need to be the unstoppable force that creates and sustains community and who make the future better than the present." Seyfried was introduced by her friend and 'Million Ways to Die in the West' co-star Sarah Silverman, who also discussed Roe v. Wade while wearing a 'Bans Off Our Bodies' pin.



Los Angeles | Agencies

'Aquaman' and 'Game of Thrones' star Jason Momoa is set to star in the tentatively titled 'The Executioner', which will be produced by Warner Bros. after the studio won an intense bidding war, reports 'Deadline'. As per 'Deadline', the project will be penned by Kaz and Ryan Firpo, who are known for their work on Chloe Zao's 'The Eternals'.

With a storyline that's under wraps, it is billed as a fun, action-murder mystery in the spirit of 'Knives Out' meets 'The Lord of the Rings'.

A director is yet to be finalised.

The project puts Jason back in business with his 'Aquaman' producer Peter Safran, who is producing the Firpo-scripted feature project.

Warner Bros EVP Jesse Ehrman is steering the feature at the Burbank lot.

'Deadline' also reports that Safran is a force behind Warner Bros. lucrative franchises including the \$2 billion-grossing 'Conjuring' movies and DC fare 'Suicide Squad', its DC/HBO Max's hit series spinoff 'The Peacemaker', as well as the 'Shazam' and 'Aquaman' franchises.

Last week, Warner Bros. showed off trailers for the upcoming Christmas tentpole 'Shazam! Fury of the Gods' (opening December 21) and next year's 'Aquaman and the Lost Kingdom' (March 17). To date, 'Aquaman' remains the highest-grossing DC movie of all time with \$1.1 billion worldwide.

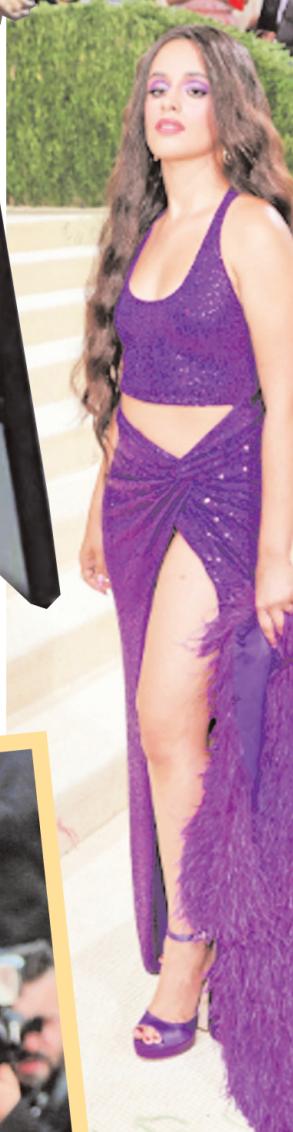
Jason Momoa to star in film tentatively titled 'The Executioner'



CAMILA CABELLO CALLS FOR 'REPRODUCTIVE JUSTICE' IN POWERFUL SPEECH

Los Angeles | Agencies

Singer Camila Cabello was honoured at Variety's Power of Women event, presented by Lifetime, for her work with the Movement Voter Fund to launch the Healing Justice Project. Alongside fellow honourees Drew Barrymore, Kim Cattrall, Queen Latifah and Amanda Seyfried, Cabello took to the white carpet ahead of the event and used the opportunity to talk about the ongoing debate over abortion rights - it was revealed earlier this week that the United States Supreme Court has privately voted to overturn Roe v. Wade, striking down the case that has guaranteed basic abortion rights in the US since 1973, reports 'Variety'. "It's atrocious," said Cabello. "Obviously it's going to affect poor women the most, because women that have resources - even like me - will be able to handle things if they're needed. The idea of having one moment transform the course of a woman's life is tragic. And it's tragic (that) the people affected are not having a say." Cabello encouraged women to "get involved voting at the local level so that we have state and local legislators that are representing our interest is really important. Obviously, donating can make a difference. And also being loud and angry about it."



Los Angeles | Agencies

For 'Sex and the City' star Kim Cattrall, saying 'no' at crucial moments of her life has borne fruits of success, the British-Canadian actress, who's remembered for her iconic role of Samantha Jones, said in her speech at Variety's Power of Women dinner presented by Lifetime. Sharing one of her most famous quotes, she said, "I don't want to be in a situation where I'm not enjoying myself for even an hour." As per 'Variety', there are other times she has said "no," most notably when asked to reprise her iconic role as Samantha Jones in various reboots of the 'Sex and the City' franchise.

Saying 'No' is Kim Cattrall's success mantra

She recently spoke about her decision to retire the role in a cover interview with 'Variety' executive editor Ramin Setoodeh, in which she said that, after filming the second 'SATC' movie, "Everything in me went, 'I'm done.'" She further mentioned other examples where saying "no" brought her immense satisfaction like, "No, that salary is unacceptable" and "No, we are not having a meeting in your hotel room." On Thursday evening (Pacific Standard Time), Cattrall encouraged other women to own their power in the same way, reminding the room of entertainment executives and fellow Power of Women honourees, "Saying no to the past is saying yes to the future, because you are the screenwriter in the movie of your own life."



Amber Heard cries on witness stand while recounting sexual assault

Los Angeles | Agencies

Hollywood actress Amber Heard broke down as she told a jury that her former husband and actor Johnny Depp had sexually assaulted her with a bottle during a fight in Australia. According to 'Variety', Heard took the stand for the second day on Thursday, as she continued to recount a series of violent incidents that marked their relationship.

She said the fight in Australia during filming of the fifth 'Pirates of the Caribbean' film in March 2015 was prompted by Depp's jealousy and her concern about his drug use.

She said Depp had repeatedly hit her, threw bottles at her and choked her against a refrigerator, before finally getting her on top of a countertop and penetrating her with a bottle. "I remember just not wanting to move," 'Variety' quoted the actress as saying.

She said she remembered thinking: "Please, God, I hope it's not broken." She said Depp repeatedly said: "I'll f***ing kill you." Heard is defending herself in a \$50 million defamation trial. Depp has accused her of fabricating her domestic violence allegations to advance her career.

I knew 'Spider-Man: No Way Home' would be successful

London | Agencies

English actor Benedict Cumberbatch knew that 'Spider-Man: No Way Home' was going to be a success. The 45-year-old actor featured in the movie as Dr Stephen Strange and felt that the acclaimed blockbuster, which starred Tom Holland as the web-slinging superhero, was a celebration of 'Spider-Man' on the big screen, reports femalefirst.co.uk. Speaking on 'The Tonight Show with Jimmy Fallon', Cumberbatch said: "Well, I think it's a testament to Jon Watts and the three... Jacob (Batalon), Z (Zendaya), and Tom. "They've got this beautiful John Hughes homage mixed in with the ultimate universal love there is for that kid. That hero, for Spider-Man and Peter Parker. And it was such a good script. Such a good concept. And then there was that 'little secret'. It was so much fun." The 'Doctor Strange in the Multiverse of Madness' actor enjoyed the blend of humour and drama in the movie, which saw the return of previous Spideys Tobey Maguire and Andrew Garfield. Cumberbatch said: "And what I think they did so blindingly well was just to mix humour with pathos. To mix surprise with elation and expectation and confound expectation. They managed to pull off a huge feat. Which apart from anything else, because throwing in Tobey and Andrew meant that you were celebrating like 20 years worth of filmmaking on top of all that."



ABSOLUTE PIC OF THE DAY



Alessandra Ambrosio



IPL 2022

MUMBAI INDIANS BEAT GUJARAT TITANS BY 5 RUNS

Team Absolute | Mumbai opens Shubman Gill and Wriddhiman Saha struck half-centuries and shared a 106-run partnership for the opening wicket but Mumbai Indians fought back strongly to reel them in for a 5-run win in Match 51 of IPL 2022 here on Friday.

Saha struck a superb 40-ball 55, hitting six boundaries and two sixes while Gill blasted 52 off 36 deliveries, hitting six fours and two sixes as they went neck-and-neck in scoring runs to give their team a brilliant start as they chased the target of 178 set by Mumbai Indians after being asked to bat first on a humid and muggy evening here.

But after both of them got out in quick succession, Gujarat Titans lost their way and were eventually restricted to 172/5 in 20 overs, falling ago-



nisingly short in a thrilling encounter in which the Titans needed 9 runs off the last over. Daniel Sams bowled a brilliant over to deny David Miller any chances while Rahul Tewatia was run out going for a quick single. This was Mumbai Indians' second win in 10 matches as they moved up four

points. Gujarat Titans slumped to their third defeat in 11 matches but remained at the top of the table with 16 points. This was their second successive defeat.

Gujarat Titans' skipper Hardik Pandya tried to hold the innings together when his two openers were out after laying a

solid foundation, but the all-rounder was run out to a smart effort by keeper Ishan Kishan. Sai Sudharshan (14), David Miller (19 not out) and Rahul Tewatia (3) could not complete the task, needing 40-odd runs off 24 deliveries.

However, at one stage Gujarat Titans were cruising towards the target with Saha and Gill going great guns. However, the never-say-die attitude of the Mumbai Indians helped them snatch victory in a close finish.

Briefscores:

Mumbai Indians (Ishan Kishan 45, Rohit Sharma 43, Tim David 44 not out, Tilak Varma 21; Rashid Khan 2/24) beat Gujarat Titans (Wriddhiman Saha 55, Shubman Gill 52, Hardik Pandya 24, David Miller 19 not out; Murugan Ashwin 2/29) by 5 runs.

Frankfurt edge West Ham to book UEFA Europa League final berth

Berlin | Agencies

Eintracht Frankfurt overpowered 10-man West Ham United 1-0 (3-1 on aggregate) and advanced into the Europa League final thanks to the sole goal from Rafael Santos Borré in the second leg of the semifinal.

On Thursday night, both teams started with a shock into the encounter as Frankfurt lost its veteran defender Martin Hinteregger to a hamstring injury in the seventh minute before West Ham's Aaron Cresswell received his marching orders 10 minutes later following a professional foul.

Filip Kostic almost opened the scoring, but the subsequent free-kick went just wide of the right post, Xinhua reports. However, Frankfurt benefited from its numerical advantage in the 26th minute when Ansgar Knauff had all-time on the right-wing to set up for Borré, who made no mistake and tapped home Knauff's square pass from close range.

The hosts controlled the proceedings on the pitch without doing much damage, but they were lucky in the closing stages of the first half as Evan Ndicka cleared a West Ham free-kick from Jarrod Bowen off the goal line.

After the restart, the "Eagles" started brightly into the second half as Kostic unleashed a dangerous effort from 25 metres. As the match progressed, West Ham took over but lacked in accuracy in Frankfurt's final third.

West Ham kept Frankfurt's defence busy but that also opened space for Frankfurt's counterattacks as Kostic rattled the side netting with 74 minutes gone.

The visitors increased the pressure in the closing stages, knowing that two goals would force Frankfurt into overtime. However, Frankfurt's defense stood firm



and secured their first European final since 1980. They will face Glasgow Rangers in Sevilla on May 18.

Nobody is unbeatable in the international badminton circuit, says P.V. Sindhu

Panaji (Goa) | Agencies

India's ace badminton player P.V. Sindhu has said that irrespective of high rankings and previous records, none of the players are unbeatable in the international badminton circuit.

"I feel nobody is tough and at the same time, anybody is beatable," the 26-year-old badminton star said during the ongoing Goa Fest 2022 on Friday.

Sindhu who is the first and only Indian to become World Champion in badminton and only the second individual athlete from India to win two consecutive medals at the Olympic Games, said that everybody is of the same standard in the international circuit.

"Right now everybody is of the same standards, you can't



think that a higher ranking player will be hard or not beatable and at the same time when you are playing with the low ranking player, you can't expect that it is going to be an easy win," the two-time Olympic medallist said. "So you have to give

your hundred percent, no matter what. I can't say that one person is the toughest opponent and she is unbeatable, everybody is beatable," the winner of sports honours Arjuna Award and Major Dhyan Chand Khel Ratna said.

IWL: Odisha Police edge Sirvodem SC 2-1

Bhubaneswar | Agencies

Odisha Police edged Sirvodem SC 2-1 in their Indian Women's League 2022 clash at the Capital Ground, here on Friday.

Sarojini Tirkey gave the local side the lead in the 18th minute. The No 9 leaned forward to take a shot from an awkward position but found the back of the net wonderfully to make it 1-0.

Despite the scoreline suggesting otherwise, the two sides were evenly matched until the halftime break. Odisha Police had a slight advantage in terms of ball possession but they had a solitary shot on target, equal to their counterparts in the first 45 minutes. In the 75th minute, the local side made it 2-0 as substitute Sasmita Ekka set Shibani Mundari up inside the box. The No 2 made no mistake in converting from close range and strengthening her side's hold of the game.

Defender Femina Raj Valappil made a case for Sirvodem in the 85th minute by pulling one back. However, it was too late for the Goan side to earn anything from the game and Odisha Police ended up taking all the three points.



Madrid Open

DJOKOVIC DOWNS HURKACZ TO REACH SEMIFINALS

Madrid | Agencies

Maintaining the quest for his first title of the season, World No 1 Novak Djokovic defeated Pole Hubert Hurkacz 6-3, 6-4 to reach his seventh Madrid Open semifinal, here on Friday.

Djokovic struck the ball with relentless depth, accuracy and power as he controlled points with his water-tight groundstrokes to advance after 78 minutes and improve his perfect ATP Head-to-Head series record against Hurkacz to 4-0.

The Serbian reached the final in Belgrade last month and is looking to build further momentum in the Spanish capital in his fourth event of the year. Earlier this week, Djokovic eliminated Gael Monfils in his opening



match to ensure himself of a record-extending 369th week as World No 1 in the ATP Rankings from Monday, before he received a walkover from Andy Murray.

The top seed will face World No 3 Rafael Nadal or Spaniard Carlos Alcaraz in what will be his 72nd ATP

Masters 1000 semifinal. Only Nadal (76) has reached the last four at a Masters 1000 event more than him.

Djokovic is also chasing his 38th Masters 1000 crown and his fourth title in Madrid, after triumphing in Spain in 2011, 2016 and in his previous appearance in 2019.

Women's hockey nationals: Anjali stars for Karnataka with four goals; U.P, Delhi win on opening day

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Anjali H.R started with four goals as Hockey Karnataka started their campaign with a comprehensive 10-0 win against Hockey Arunachal Pradesh in the 12th Hockey India Senior Women's National Championship 2022 here on Friday.

Uttar Pradesh Hockey and Delhi Hockey too registered wins over their respective opponents on the opening day of the competition.

In the tournament opener, Anjali scored in the 39th minute, 48', 53' and 55th minute as Hockey Karnataka outplayed Hockey Arunachal in Pool F. Yashika M.G (15', 27') and Nisha P.C (32', 55') each bagged a brace while Vidya K.S (25'), Shaina Thangamma M.P



(31') contributed a goal each for Hockey Karnataka. In the second Pool F match,

the Hockey Unit of Tamil Nadu were declared 5-0 winners after their opponent Hockey Andaman & Nicobar forfeited the match. In Pool G, Uttar Pradesh Hockey Academy beat Goans Hockey 8-0. Archana Bhardwaj (20', 30', 40') slammed a hat-trick, while Pallavi Kumari (10'), Shreya Singh (17'), Bramhacharimayum Sarita Devi (26'), Komal Sahani (29') and Vinamrata Yadav (35') scored a goal each for the winning team. In another Pool G match, Delhi Hockey outplayed Hockey Gujarat 13-0. Vidhi Koli (9', 12', 30') and Sonali (33', 38', 60') bagged a hat-trick each, while Manisha (11', 59') and Subham (50', 52') netted twice each whereas Nancy (22'), Manshi (42') and Priyanka (47') contributed a goal each for Delhi Hockey.

SIX-YEAR-OLD ASHWATH KAUSHIK CLINCHES UNDER-8 WORLD CADETS CHESS GOLD

Mumbai: India's six-year-old chess player Ashwath Kaushik has made history by winning gold in the Open Under-8 category in the World Cadets and Youth Championships 2022 for Rapid and Blitz in Rhodes, Greece from May 1-3. More than 330 players from 40 countries participated in the tournament, which was the first big event on the FIDE calendar this year. En route to victory, Kaushik beat top seeds Modith Aaroh Mutyalapati (ELO 1598) from Canada in Round 3 and Raghav Pathak (ELO 1355) from the Netherlands. Starting as the seventh seed, he worked his way up to finish the campaign with 8.5 points out of a possible nine, eventually beating eight of the top 12 finishers. Ashwath's coach, FIDE master Balaji Guttula of SMCA, credited his performance to his sharp memory. Ashwath can recall the entire game of 30-plus moves he plays in any tournament, said Balaji.



Alcaraz beats Nadal to set up semifinal with Djokovic

Madrid | Agencies

Continuing his impressive rise, Spain's Carlos Alcaraz beat his countryman and World No 4 Rafael Nadal to reach the Madrid Open semifinal, here on Friday.

The 19-year-old Spaniard withstood a trademark Nadal fightback and registered a 6-2, 1-6, 6-3 win in an absorbing two-hour, 29-minute quarterfinal encounter of the ATP Masters 1000 event in the Spanish capital.

The win elevates Alcaraz to No 6 in the ATP Live Rankings, although Andrey Rublev can claim that slot if he beats Stefanos Tsitsipas, later in the



night. Alcaraz will now face a semifinal clash with another ATP Tour legend, World No 1 Novak Djokovic, in a maiden ATP Head to Head meeting between the two.

Despite his opponent's strong start, there was no panic from 36-time Masters 1000 champion Nadal, whose return game began to fire as he sensed a drop in Alcaraz's level.

Just told Rishabh to trust me at No 5, reveals Powell after his match-winning knock

Team Absolute | New Delhi

After playing a match-winning knock against Sunrisers Hyderabad in the ongoing IPL 2022 season, Delhi Capitals' hard-hitting batter Rovman Powell revealed that he tried to convince skipper Rishabh Pant about his ability to bat against spinners and request to send him back at No 5 in the batting order.

The 28-year old Powell had started this IPL season at No. 6, then batted twice at No. 5 in the middle, before being pushed down to No 6 again, and was even held back to No. 8 against Rajasthan Royals, in a game in which they were chasing 223 and fell short. Infact, bowling all-rounders like Axar Patel and Shardul Thakur were sent in ahead of him. Before the game against SRH on Thursday, the West Indian had scored just 135 runs in eight innings at 19.28. Since the right-hander had batted at various positions



and was not having a great IPL season, Pant went to his room after their previous game and asked him where he wanted to bat to which Powell replied, "Just trust me and let me bat at No 5."

Batting at No 5, Powell played an attacking knock

(67 not out off 35) and stitched an unbeaten 122-run partnership with David Warner (92 not out), which helped Delhi Capitals defeat Sunrisers Hyderabad by 21 runs in Match 50 of the IPL 2022 at the Brabourne Stadium.

Hangzhou Asian Games 2022 postponed; fresh dates to be announced soon

Tashkent | Agencies

The Olympic Council of Asia (OCA) on Friday postponed the 2022 Asian Games in Hangzhou, scheduled between September 10 to 25, following "detailed discussions with the Chinese Olympic Committee (COC)".

The OCA took the decision at its Executive Board meeting currently underway in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, where its director general, Husain Al Musallam, and acting president, Randhir Singh, were present.

The fresh dates for the quadrennial continental showpiece will be announced in "due course", said the statement. The decision has come after several provinces of China reported a spurt in Covid-19 cases.

The 2020 Tokyo Olympic Games too were postponed by a year because of Covid-19 and held last year. "Following detailed discussions with the Chinese Olympic Committee (COC) and the Hangzhou Asian Games Organising Committee (HAGOC), the OCA



Executive Board (EB) today decided to postpone the 19th Asian Games, which were scheduled to be held in Hangzhou, China, from 10 to 25 September 2022. The new dates of the 19th Asian Games will be agreed between the OCA, the COC and the HAGOC (Hangzhou Asian Games Organising Committee) and announced in the near future," said the OCA statement. Media reports

had been speculating about the postponement of the Asian Games for the last fortnight, and the decision did not come as a surprise, given the prevailing pandemic situation in China and other Asian countries. "HAGOC has been very well prepared to deliver the Games on time despite global challenges. However, the above decision was taken by all the stakeholders after

carefully considering the pandemic situation and the size of the Games. The name and the emblem of the 19th Asian Games will remain unchanged, and the OCA believes that the Games will achieve complete success through the joint efforts of all parties," said the OCA statement. China had previously hosted the Asian Games in Guangzhou in 2010.



MRUNAL BOOKS MOVIE TICKETS FOR ENTIRE STAFF OF MUMBAI COFFEE HOUSE

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actor Mrunal Thakur visited a coffee house based out of Powai in Mumbai and booked tickets for her recent film 'Jersey' for the entire staff as a gesture for their generous and friendly hospitality.

Mrunal says: "It's incidents like these that really touch my heart and make me feel grateful for getting the opportunity of doing work that is credible enough to be recognised and appreciated by so many people around me."

"The staff at this coffee house was so sweet and generous in their hospitality and wished to see 'Jersey' whenever they get time from their busy schedule with this thought that I couldn't help but do something in return for their kind behaviour and love for the film."

"Each and every one of them greeted and congratulated me for Jersey, spoke about how much they loved me in my previous films as well. My heart was full and it truly made my day."

Mrunal will be next in a family comedy film 'Aankh Micholi' with Abhimanyu Dasani followed by war drama biopic 'Pippa' with Ishan Khatter and Priyanshu Painyuli

Saisha Shinde evicted from reality show just before finale

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Trans-woman designer Saisha Shinde has been evicted from Kangana Ranaut-hosted reality show 'Lock Upp'. Just before the finale, Karan Kundrra entered the house to interact with inmates. He mentioned how good their game was, their special moments and journey in the house.

He welcomed warden Tejaswi Prakash and said: "How beautiful is she looking" to which she replied: "You guys have a sweet Jailor!" Eventually Karan and Tejaswi had dinner with all the contestants. During dinner time, Prince Narula shared how Karan has helped him in his career.

After these sweet moments between them, Tejaswi mentioned that has a special power "queen card" to eliminate someone from the house. She announced that Saisha is evicted because of getting less votes.

Saisha got emotional and said: "I am super glad I got a chance to be a part of this show, this show means everything to me! I love it!" Saisha was very vocal about her opinions. She was eliminated earlier also when she had a heated argument with the host, Kangana Ranaut, and then made a re-entry in the show. But this time, the audience voted her out before she could be a finalist.

HOW RANVEER PREPARED FOR HIS DEBUT FILM?

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Bollywood actor Ranveer Singh revealed how he would roam around Delhi University only to absorb the culture of Delhi for his role of Bittoo Sharma of 'Band Baaja Baram', on 'The Kapil Sharma Show'.

The actor, who will now be seen in 'Jayeshbhai Jordaar', a comedy-drama and to promote the movie he reached the sets of the show with his co-actor Shalini Pandey.

Ranveer said: "I gave the audition for 'Band Baaja Baram', and I was told that the role is of a 21-year-old boy from Delhi. So, I worked on my accent by watching all the Delhi based films that were being made during that time, such as Dibakar Banerjee's 'Oye Lucky Lucky Oye'. Aditya (Chopra) sir couldn't believe it when everyone told him that I was born and raised in Mumbai." "So, in essence, I was able to convince him in the audition round. Then, to absorb Delhi's culture, Maneesh Sharma (Director) suggested I join them for the location recce,

where my task was to do people's recce. He told me to absorb the culture, as that would help me understand the character better," he added.



THE CONVERSION: A GUT-WRENCHING TALE OF WOMEN'S COURAGE



FILM REVIEW

BY AAKRUTI BAGLA

Director: Vinod Tiwari

Duration: 2 hours 14 minutes

Cast: Vindhya Tiwari, Prateek Shukla, Ravi Bhatia, Vibha Chhibber, Manoj Joshi, Amit Behl

Rating: -3.5/5

Story: The film explores the dilemma of religious conversions that happen during love marriages in India. Set in Benaras, Sakshi (Vindhya Tiwari) has fled her house to marry Bablu Iqbal Sheikh (Prateek Shukla) against the will of her parents since he belongs to a Muslim Family. Sakshi on the other hand belongs to a renowned Pandit family. But unfortunately, her life turns upside down when she becomes the victim of Love Jihad.

Bablu pretends to be in love with Sakshi and marries her, promising her to let her live her life on her own terms despite being from another caste. But, she is eventually forced to



accustom herself according to Muslim traditions. She even is a victim of terrible Halala tradition.

Well, how do Sakshi overcomes this ruth-

lessness?

Will she be able to fight against Bablu's family? The answer to these questions forms the crux of the story.

Performances: Vindhya Tiwari is amazing as fierce, ballsy yet scared Sakshi. The role of her parents is played by Vibha Chhibber and Manoj Joshi, is a fabulous job. Ravi Bhatia, as Dev, who helps his college friend and lover Sakshi to fight against these devils shines in his part. Although, his screen presence is limited. Prateek Shukla as Bablu is fantastic. Be it being head over heels in love with Sakshi or turning ruthless towards her, he has depicted the emotions convincingly.

The rest of the supporting cast could have done a better job.

Technical Aspects: Well, this is a topic, a certain section of society is oblivious of. But the way Vinod Tiwari has managed to keep it gripping while conveying an important message is praiseworthy.

One cannot question the grasp and understanding he has of this concept. He has paid attention to every detail and presented it authentically. The subtext of molestation is showcased sensitively.

Talking about music, the songs just add to the runtime of the film and are forgettable.

While the first half of the film seemed exaggerated, the second half of the film is engaging and manages to hold attention.

Final verdict: Overall, the conversion is a straightforward film with a clear message.

INSTAGRAM PIC OF THE DAY



Nora Fatehi

MERE DESH KI DHARTI: AN INSPIRING TALE OF YOUTH AND FARMERS



FILM REVIEW

BY SHACHI CHATURVEDI

Directed by: Faraz Haider

Produced by: Vaishali Sarwankar

Runtime: 1 hour 52 minutes

Cast: Divyenndu Sharma (Ajay), Anant Vidhaat (Sameer), Anupriya Goenka (Jhumki), Inaamulhaq (Pappan Khan), Brijendra Kala (Dubey Ji) and others

Rating: - 4/5

'Mere Desh Ki Dharti' is a lighthearted but inspirational portrayal of the lives and journeys of young engineers Ajay and his companion Sameer, from dismal urban failures to rural India's heroes.

Story: The film is divided into two parts, each with a distinct yet interwoven tale. The first portion of the film is about two young engi-

neers who are fed up with their failures, while the second part is about the challenges faced by farmers in our country.

The first half of the film is slow, yet it holds the audience's attention until the second half. The film conveys an important message to both urban and rural audiences. This film motivates individuals to labour in local communities rather than chasing the glamour of a metropolis. This film is a lovely depiction of the importance of educating our farmers. Along with motivation, the film also shed light on mental health issues and how some nowadays prefer death to life.

Performances: When it comes to the performance, Divyenndu Sharma once again outshines himself and does an excellent job, while Anant Vidhaat completely supports Divyenndu's role and gives the film its final touches. Even though Anupriya Goenka didn't have much, she made a significant and genuine contribution. The movie's supporting cast helped to make it a success.

Technical aspects: This isn't the first time Faraz Haider has taken on the role of director. Faraz has done a fantastic job as a filmmaker in Mere Desh ki Dharti in comparison to his previous movies. The film is divided into two parts. When it came to technicalities, there wasn't much, although the camera had a few problems in a few scenes when we could see some undesired pans.

The script is captivating. There would be nothing to complain about if the editing had been a little tighter. Hari K. Vedantami's cinematography is stunning, and some scenes will send chills down your spine. With a couple of fantastic one-liners and several punch lines, the dialogue is fairly good.

When it comes to music, the Mere Desh ki Dharti song is well-integrated into the story and instils patriotism in the audience.

Overall, the film gains momentum in the second half after a slow start. The film is indeed worth watching.

