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CONDITIONS FAVOURABLE FOR ADVANCEMENT OF SOUTHWEST MONSOON: IMD

- ▶ **CONDITIONS WOULD CONTINUE TO BECOME FAVOURABLE FOR FURTHER ADVANCE OF MONSOON INTO MORE PARTS OF MAHARASHTRA, ENTIRE KARNATAKA, MORE PARTS OF ANDHRA PRADESH AND MORE PARTS OF WEST CENTRAL AND NORTHWEST BAY OF BENGAL DURING SUBSEQUENT TWO DAYS.**
- ▶ **CONDITIONS WOULD LIKELY TO BECOME FAVOURABLE FOR FURTHER ADVANCE OF MONSOON INTO SOME MORE PARTS OF EAST INDIA AND SOME PARTS OF CENTRAL INDIA TOWARDS END OF THE IMD'S FORECASTING WEEK, I.E., AROUND JUNE 15.**

“Conditions are favourable for further advance of monsoon into some more parts of central Arabian sea, Goa, some parts of south Maharashtra, some more parts of Karnataka, remaining parts of Tamil Nadu, some parts of south Andhra Pradesh, some more parts of west central & northwest Bay of Bengal during next 48 hours.”

Team Absolute | New Delhi

After almost a week of slow progress, conditions are favourable for the advancement of the Southwest Monsoon, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) said on Thursday. Against the normal progress when it reaches Maharashtra at this time, the crucial for agriculture SW Monsoon had advanced over more parts of Tamil Nadu, Puducherry, Karaikal, southwest, and west-central Bay of

Bengal.

Now, the IMD said that the Northern Limit of Monsoon (NLM) continued to pass through Karwar, Chikmagalur, Bengaluru, and Puducherry on the one side and Siliguri on the other side. On Tuesday, a senior IMD meteorologist had said that between May 31 and that day, there were no major systems (to drive the monsoon rainfall) and had said that the winds were supportive for rainfall over peninsular southern India for advance of monsoon.



PROPHET ROW: PROTESTS ERUPT ACROSS SEVERAL STATES

▶ A Delhi court on Friday sent 30 All India Majlis-e-Itehadul Muslimeen (AIMIM) party activists to 3-day judicial custody on various charges, including rioting, during a protest against suspended BJP leaders' controversial remarks against Prophet Mohammed.

▶ A curfew has been imposed in some parts of Ranchi after some policemen were injured while trying to control an irate mob near Hanuman Temple. Hundreds of protesters are demanding the arrest of suspended BJP spokesperson Nupur Sharma. Police fired in the air and took to lathi-charge to control the mob after they threw stones at the security personnel. The protest began after the Friday prayers.

▶ Incidents of violence and slogan shouting were reported from Uttar when people began protesting against former BJP spokespersons. Trouble began in Atala in Prayagraj after the prayers when protesters started shouting slogans. The police tried to prevent the protesters from moving in different directions. However, some of the protesters pelted stones at the police that retaliated with tear gas shells. In Saharanpur, protesters shouted slogans seeking action against the former BJP spokespersons. Similar scenes were reported from Moradabad and Lucknow.

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Protests erupted across several parts of the nation on Friday against the Prophet row, with the agitators demanding action and arrest of the suspended BJP spokesperson Nupur Sharma and her former party colleague Naveen Jindal.

The said leaders had allegedly made controversial remarks against Prophet Mohammed.

Protests were witnessed in Delhi, Uttar Pradesh, Ranchi, Ahmedabad, Navi Mumbai, Ludhiana, Hyderabad and Jammu & Kashmir.

The protest turned violent in Prayagraj and police had to take action against many people. However the situation is under control.

In Delhi, shops were partially closed in some minority areas as massive police deployment was enforced to avoid untoward situation.

A massive protest broke out at Jama Masjid in the national capital.

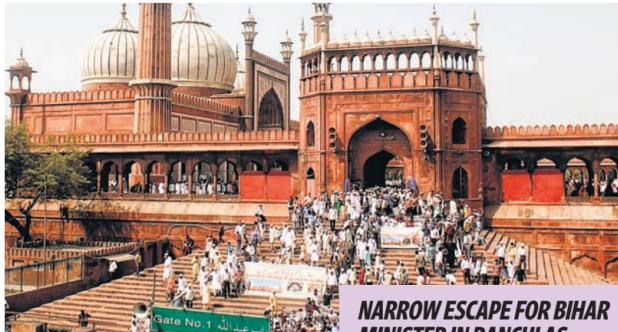
"People had gathered in large numbers for just 15-20 minutes after which the crowd dispersed. The situation is now under control," a senior Delhi Police official said.

The people of the minority community, soon after the Friday prayers, had gathered on the stairs just outside the Jama Masjid, holding placards against the former BJP spokespersons Nupur Sharma and Naveen Jindal.

The agitators were demanding immediate arrest of the suspended BJP leaders. "As the protest was carried out without any prior permission from the Delhi Police, a legal action will be initiated," the official said.

Jama Masjid's Shahi Imam Ahmed Bukhari said no call was given for the protest. "I don't know who the protesters are," Bukhari claimed.

India faced a major pushback on the Prophet row after the Muslim countries protested on the issue, envoys were summoned and Qatar, Kuwait, UAE and Iran issued statements. The government has, however, said that the statements does not reflect its view but of the fringe elements.



"BE ON ALERT MODE", CENTRE TO POLICE CHIEFS

New Delhi: The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) on Friday asked the police heads of states and Union Territories to be prepared and alert as they will be on target. On Friday, the ministry issued a statement to all state and Union Territory police after several incidents of violence were reported from different parts of the country over the controversial remarks of suspended BJP leader Nupur Sharma and expelled leader Naveen Jindal against Prophet Muhammad. A senior official from the Ministry of Home Affairs informed that they sent alerts to all state and Union Territory police to remain vigilant as they can be targeted during the violence. The Ministry of Home Affairs has asked all the states to take preventive actions, keep a check on borders and identified sensitive areas. The order have been issued after the violence broke out in Uttar Pradesh's Prayagraj and protests were held at Moradabad, Saharanpur and Ferozabad. Meanwhile, several other states including Delhi, Maharashtra, Karnataka, Jharkhand, Punjab, Hyderabad, and Gujarat also faced massive protests against the leader's controversial remarks.

NARROW ESCAPE FOR BIHAR MINISTER IN RANCHI AS PROTESTORS PELT STONES

Patna: Bihar minister Nitin Navin had a narrow escape in Ranchi after a group of protestors pelted stones at his convoy on Friday afternoon. Minister for road construction in the Nitish Kumar government, Navin reached Ranchi on Friday afternoon. His convoy was intercepted by protestors at Ranchi's Albert Ekka Chowk. The local police managed to rescue his convoy after firing several rounds at the protestors.

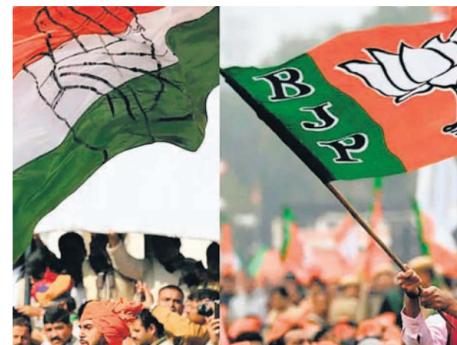
The Ranchi administration has now imposed curfew in the violence affected areas. Sources said that Surendra Kumar Jha, the SSP of Ranchi and Awadesh Thakur, SHO of Daily market police station and at least 3 more police personnel sustained injuries in the clash. Protests were also held in Bihar's Nawada and Arrah on Friday afternoon.

B'desh sees protests, calls to boycott Indian products

Dhaka: Several political parties and Islamists of Islami Andolon Bangladesh (IAB), Jamiat Ulama-e-Islam Bangladesh, and Islami Oikyajote demonstrated countrywide after prayers on Friday noon against the remarks on Prophet Mohammad by BJP leaders. The Islamists also called upon all to boycott Indian products. Pro-Pakistan political parties also held demonstrations.

Rajya Sabha Polls: Congress wins 3 seats in Raj, BJP bags one

▶ **THE COUNTING WAS HELD UP IN MAHARASHTRA AFTER THE OPPOSITION BHARATIYA JANATA PARTY ALLEGED THAT THREE MLAS OF THE RULING MAHA VIKAS AGHADI (MVA) -- CABINET MINISTERS JITENDRA AWHAD (NATIONALIST CONGRESS PARTY), YASHOMATI THAKUR (CONGRESS), AND SHIV SENA LEGISLATOR SUHAS KANDE -- VIOLATED THE MODEL CODE FOR VOTING. THE BJP HAS ALLEGED THAT AWHAD AND THAKUR HANDED OVER THEIR BALLOTS TO THEIR PARTY AGENTS INSTEAD OF ONLY SHOWING THEM THE BALLOTS, WHILE KANDE SHOWED HIS BALLOT TO TWO DIFFERENT AGENTS. THE COUNTING HAS BEEN PUT ON HOLD IN HARYANA FOR IDENTICAL REASONS.**



Team Absolute | Jaipur

The Congress won three of the four Rajya Sabha seats in Rajasthan that went to the polls on Friday, while the BJP bagged the remaining one seat.

The first Congress candidate, Randeep Singh Surjewala, got 43 votes; the party's second candidate, Mukul Wasnik, managed 42 votes; while its third candidate, Pramod Tiwari, garnered 41 votes.

BJP candidate Ghanshyam Tiwari won with 43 votes. However, the Independent nominee backed by the BJP, Subhash Chandra, could manage just 30 votes.

Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot said, "Congress winning three Rajya Sabha seats in Rajasthan is a victory for democracy. I congratulate all the three newly-elected MPs."

Meanwhile, Rajasthan BJP has suspended Dholpur MLA Shobharani Kushwah on charges of cross-voting during the RS polls. Kushwah reportedly cast her vote for Congress candidate Pramod Tiwari.

BJP WON 3, CONGRESS 1; JD-S DRAWS A BLANK IN KARNATAKA

Bengaluru: The ruling Bharatiya Janata Party in Karnataka had the last laugh as it won all the three Rajya Sabha seats it had contested in, out of total of four from the state that went for polls on Friday, while the Congress managed to win only one of the two seats to which it had fielded its candidates.

The Janata Dal-Secular, which had fielded one candidate despite not having enough votes, failed to win any, as the Congress did not accept its request for support in the name of secularism. Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, actor-politician Jaggesh, and outgoing MLC Lehar Singh Siroya of the BJP, and former Union minister Jairam Ramesh of the Congress were declared victorious by the poll officials after counting of votes.

BJP LEADER 'ANNOUNCES' ELECTION CODE OF CONDUCT DATE, SPARKS DEBATE OVER AUTHORITY

Team Absolute | Rajkot

BJP state vice-president on Friday "announced" that the model code of conduct for Gujarat Assembly election will come into effect from October 15, triggering a political debate over his authority to do so. While addressing the district BJP working committee meeting, party vice-president Bharat Boghra said: "Assembly election's model code of conduct will be effective from October 15, which means we hardly have 100 to 125 days to pull up our socks. State leaders too are working for the elections, now we at the district level have to work harder."



Reacting to it, Lalit Kagathra, Congress

MLA from Tankara said: "I am not surprised with BJP leader's forecast of elections date as the ruling party has degraded all constitutional institutes' sanctity. Tomorrow, if BJP leader forecast Supreme Court's judgement on any particular case in advance, it should not come as a surprise," he said. He even questioned the authority of BJP vice-president and also asked whether it was the party or the Election Commission who planned the elections. Before announcing the date, did Boghra speak to Chief Election Commissioner or any other officers to get inside information?, he added.

NEW AD GUIDELINES PUT CURBS ON SURROGATE ADVERTISEMENTS

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Have you cringed at a top brand whiskey's ad for club soda by the same name, showing exactly similarly packaged bottles? Or for that matter, have you been sold a mineral water bottle bearing a name very similar to an established brand with a similar looking logo but having a minor difference in spelling? Such advertisements are now banned under the new guidelines issued for advertisement by the Ministry of Consumer Affairs. "The advertisement which indicates directly or indirectly that it is an advertisement for goods, products or services whose advertising is prohibited or restricted by law, or advertisement that use any brand name, logo, colour, layout and presentation associated with such goods, products or services, whose advertisement is prohibited or restricted will not be allowed," said Nidhi Khare, Additional Secretary in the Department of Consumer Affairs, told mediapersons.

She was addressing the media in connection with the Central Consumer Protection Authority (Prevention of Misleading Advertisements and Necessary Due Diligence for



Endorsement of Advertisements) Guidelines, 2022 issued by the Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA) late on Thursday night and effective from Friday itself.

The relevant clause of the guidelines said: "No surrogate advertisement or indirect advertisement shall be made for goods or services whose advertising is otherwise prohibited or restricted

by law, by circumventing such prohibition or restriction and portraying it to be an advertisement for other goods or services, advertising of which is not prohibited or restricted by law."

The other relevant provision said: "Provided that mere use of a brand name or company name which may also be applied to goods, products or services whose advertising is prohibited or restricted shall not be considered to be surrogate advertisement or indirect advertisement, if such advertisement is not otherwise objectionable as per the provisions set out in these guidelines."



'CAN'T COMPROMISE MEDICAL EDUCATION', SC TURNS DOWN PLEA FOR EXTRA ROUND FOR NEET-PG 2021 COUNSELLING

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Supreme Court on Friday refused to entertain a plea by MBBS students seeking a stray round of counselling for admission in NEET-PG, 2021, as 1,456 seats were still vacant.

A bench comprising Justices M.R. Shah and Aniruddha Bose said nine rounds of counselling have been conducted so far and a fresh counselling at this stage would delay the academic session.

The top court said the quality of medical education cannot be compromised which affects public health. It further added that petitioners are not entitled to relief, and if a relief is granted now then it may affect medical education and public health.

On Thursday, the Supreme Court orally observed that there should be a limit for every exercise and admissions made after 1.5 years might compromise medical education and health of the people, while reserving order on pleas seeking a special stray round of counselling for NEET-PG



2021, to fill vacant seats.

The top court said there must be a limit on the number of rounds of counselling to fill vacant seats. "Since many years, the seats have remained vacant and it's not for the very first time...There has to be a limit for every exercise, and seats may remain vacant even after 10 rounds," said Justice Shah.

The bench further added that after 8 or 9 rounds of counselling, the seats are still vacant and students cannot claim rights after 1.5 years. "Can it be said now that after 1.5 years, you will be given admission and compromise the health of people," the bench orally remarked.

Noting that it's a three-year course, the bench added, "There

cannot be any compromise with education.... Suppose you're hungry for six months, can you eat everything in 1 day? No...education is like that."

The Centre's counsel submitted that those who qualified NEET PG-2021 have already started attending classes since February, and if vacant seats are filled up now then they would be behind the class for over six months. He further pointed out that teachers would also have to teach the students who will come in NEET PG 2022.

The Centre's counsel clarified that out of 1,456 vacant seats, the majority are in non-clinical or teaching, and nobody wants to go into the teaching area, and also nobody came for the deposits. "These are seats taken, but admission not taken," added Additional Solicitor General Balbir Singh, representing the central government.

The top court order came on the pleas by MBBS students seeking a stray round of counselling for admission in NEET-PG, 2021, to fill over 1,400 vacant seats.

By ignoring Chinese incursion govt betraying India: Rahul Gandhi

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Former Congress president Rahul Gandhi on Friday attacked the government for ignoring the Chinese threat. He was commenting on reports about China's military build up near Ladakh.

Rahul Gandhi tweeted, "China is building the foundations for hostile action in the future. By ignoring it, the Govt is betraying India."

The comments come in wake of a US senior military official flagging the issue which was rejected by the Chinese officials who had alleged that it's like adding fuel to fire.

Chinese foreign ministry spokesperson Zhao Lijian said, "This border issue is between China and India. The two sides have the will and capability to properly resolve the issue through talks."

On June 1, the 24th meeting of the Working Mechanism for Consultation and Coordination on India-China Border Affairs (WMCC) was held -- the Indian delegation was led by Additional Secretary, East Asia, from the Ministry of External Affairs, while the Director General of the Boundary and Oceanic Department of the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs led the Chinese side.



The two sides reviewed the situation along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in the western sector of the India-China border. They recalled that since the last meeting of WMCC in November 2021, both sides have held the 14th and 15th meetings of the Senior Commanders in January and March 2022, respectively. The two sides exchanged views on the current situation along the LAC in eastern Ladakh. They agreed that as instructed by the two Foreign Ministers, both sides should continue the discussions through diplomatic and military channels to resolve the remaining issues along the LAC at the earliest to create conditions for restoration of normalcy in bilateral relations. In this context, they agreed to hold the next (16th) round of the Senior Commanders meeting at an early date to achieve the objective of complete disengagement from all friction points along the LAC in the western sector in accordance with the existing bilateral agreements and protocols.

Moosewala murder: Two shooters of Maharashtra module identified

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Special Cell of Delhi Police has identified two shooters of Maharashtra module that were involved in the brutal killing of Punjabi singer Shubhdeep Singh, popularly known as Sidhu Moosewala.

The identity of the two accused shooters -- Santosh Yadav and Nav Nath Suryawanshi -- was revealed during the interrogation of their close aide, Sidhesh Hiraman Kamle a.k.a. Mahakaal, who was arrested from Pune during a joint operation by the Delhi Police and the Maharashtra Police.

Special Commissioner of Police, H.S. Dhaliwal, said both the shooters were paid Rs 3.5 lakh each to commit the gruesome murder of the Punjabi singer. "It was



Mahakaal who introduced both these shooters to the main perpetrators and got Rs 50,000 for it," the senior police official said.

He also said that the Special Cell has so far identified six of the eight shooters, and among those "the police can confirm the role of 4 shooters". During the last media briefing on June 8, Dhaliwal said since the killing of Sidhu Moosewala,

four teams of Special Cell were working on it and the probe has so far revealed that Lawrence Bishnoi is the mastermind behind the singer's killing.

Moosewala, 28, was shot dead on May 29 while he was travelling in a car and around a dozen assailants fired over 30 shots at him. The singer's autopsy report revealed that his body bore 19 bullet injury marks.

WOMAN RAPED IN DELHI HOTEL BY HYD MAN SHE MET ON DATING APP

New Delhi: A 28-year-old woman was allegedly raped at a five-star hotel in the national capital whom she had met on a dating app, an official said on Friday.

According to the official, a case was registered on June 3 based on the woman's complaint in which the victim alleged that she was raped by a man at a hotel in Dwarka area of Delhi on May 30. "The victim woman, who used to work in a shop, alleged that she met the accused through Tinder (dating app)," Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP) (Dwarka) M. Harsha Vardhan said.

The accused, who is a resident of Hyderabad, did not pick up her calls after allegedly committing the crime.

"Thus, based on her complaint, a case was registered. Efforts are on to nab the accused," the senior official added.

Suspended students shun hijab to attend classes, K'taka edu dept relieved

BENGALURU | Agencies

In a relief to the Education Department of Karnataka government, students insisting on wearing hijab have started to shun it and attend classes.

Sources said that it is a welcome development which could encourage other students insisting on wearing hijab to shun it.

Seven girl students, who were suspended from the Government First Grade College at Uppinangady in Dakshina Kannada district for insisting on wearing hijab, have submitted apology letters and started attending classes.

College principal Shekar M.D. has confirmed this and stated that the students are attending classes from Wednesday after the



completion of their suspension period.

The issue has been discussed with their parents. Forty-five students resumed attending classes out of the 101 who insisted

that they will attend classes only with hijab, Shekar said.

Twenty-four girl students were suspended for wearing of hijab to classrooms from the

Uppinangady college earlier this week.

Sources in the Education Department stated that it is relieved with the development, which would send across a good message.

India reports 7,584 new Covid Cases, 24 deaths in last 24 hrs

Team Absolute | New Delhi

India on Friday reported 7,584 fresh Covid cases in last 24 hours, an increase against the 7,240 infections registered the previous day, the Union Health Ministry said.

Also in the same period, there were 24 new Covid fatalities which increased the nationwide death toll to 5,24,747.

Meanwhile, the active caseload also rose to 36,267 cases, accounting for 0.08 per cent of the country's total positive cases.

The recovery of 3,791 patients in the last 24 hours took the cumulative tally to 4,26,44,092. Consequently, India's recovery rate stands at 98.70 per cent. While the daily positivity rate spiked to 2.26 per cent, the weekly positivity rate stood at 1.50 per cent. Also in the same period, a total of 3,35,050 tests were conducted across the country, increasing the overall tally to over 85.41 crore.

As of Friday morning, India's Covid-19 vaccination coverage exceeded 194.76 crore, achieved via 2,49,36,054 sessions.

Over 3.49 crore adolescents have been adminis-



tered with a first dose of Covid-19 jab since the beginning of vaccination drive for this age bracket.

COP FIRES INDISCRIMINATELY ON KOLKATA STREET, KILLS WOMAN BEFORE SHOOTING SELF

Kolkata: In a shocking incident, a policeman fired indiscriminately from his service rifle in broad daylight near the Park Circus crossing in Kolkata, killing one woman pillion rider before shooting himself dead.

The policeman was posted at the Bangladesh Deputy High Commission and the place of firing was hardly 50 metres away from the office. Locals said the cop was deputed at the guard outpost outside the office of Bangladesh Deputy High Commission.

According to eyewitnesses, the policeman started firing indiscriminately from his service rifle, hitting a woman riding in an app-bike. She died on the spot.

Eyewitnesses said the driver of the app-bike was also injured in the firing, but he managed to flee. Later, the policeman shot himself with the same rifle and died on the spot.

The entire sequence took place within a span of five minutes in which at least nine rounds were fired.

Telangana BJP chief placed under house arrest

HYDERABAD | Agencies

Telangana BJP chief Bandi Sanjay was Friday placed under house arrest here to prevent him from staging a protest at Jubilee Bus Station (JBS) against hike in bus fares.

Sanjay was scheduled to lead a protest by the party at JBS against the imposition of additional diesel cess by the Telangana State Road Transport Corporation (TSRTC).

Policemen were deployed around the house of Sanjay in Banjara Hills to stop him from coming out. However, the police action was in view of the possibility of Sanjay staging a protest at the Director General of Police (DGP) office against the arrest of a party leader Jitta Balakrishna Reddy.

Reddy was arrested in the wee hours of Friday near Hyderabad in connection with a case booked against him for organising a derogatory skit against Chief Minister K. Chandrababbar Rao on Telangana Formation Day (June 2).

Sanjay, who is also a Member of



Parliament, later reached JBS in Secunderabad. He interacted with bus passengers and enquired about the problems faced by them.

The BJP leader condemned his house arrest. He told reporters that the downfall of Telangana Rashtira Samithi (TRS) government has started.

4 KILLED IN BUS-CAR COLLISION IN UP



AURRAYIA | Agencies

Four persons were killed and five critically injured when a speeding roadways bus collided with a car on Friday morning on Bela Bidhuna Marg.

The roadways bus, going from Bidhuna to Kanpur, rammied into a car coming from the opposite direction. Four occupants of the car

died on the spot in the accident, while five others were seriously injured.

The car passengers were returning to Etawah after taking a bath in the Ganges from Kannauj. On information, the police reached the spot and sent the injured to the hospital. The deceased have been identified as Anmol, 7, Geeta, 50, Sushila, 45, and driver Shailendra Kumar, 30. The

injured persons are Jogesh, Deepu, Jagat Singh, Kallu and Prem Kumar. All of them have been admitted to the community health centre in Bidhuna. Station house Officer (SHO) Bela Jivaram said that no passenger in the bus was injured. The crashed vehicles have been seized. The bus driver fled from the spot, search is on for him, said police.

As many as 85% accidents due to electricity occur in 11 states

Team Absolute | New Delhi

A state-wise analysis of accidents due to electricity has indicated that 85 per cent of them occur in 11 states, a discussion paper by a think-tank released on Thursday said while pointing out that "electricity safety is tragically slipping through governance gaps".

Stating that there is a need to strengthen efforts to reduce accidents in the following states - Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Kerala, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Telangana and Uttar Pradesh - the discussion paper said, "Within the states, there is variation in the number of accidents based on consumer mix, state of maintenance of the distribution network, climatic conditions and safety awareness."

This was highlighted in the discussion paper Electricity safety: Tragically falling through the governance gaps' by think-tank Prayas, which tracks and analyses energy and water sector developments. Prayas is registered as a Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (SIRO) with the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research under the Ministry of Science and



Technology. It also offered a range of solutions. Two major sources which provide information on electrical accidents are the annual Accidental Deaths and Suicides in India (ADSI) report prepared by the National Crime Records Bureau and the annual General Review of the Central Electricity Authority (CEA). As per the 2020 ADSI report, 15,258 people died between January and December 2020 due to electrical shock and fire, while CEA reports 7,717 fatal human accidents between April 2019 and March

2020. "The numbers are vastly different perhaps due to data collection and reporting issues, which is an area of major concern," the paper pointed out, adding, "Even when the major immediate cause of accidents is contact with live conductors, the root causes include low priority to safety, bad design, poor maintenance, un-authorised repair, bad quality earthing, and inadequate protection systems." "The CEA prepares safety regulations, which all utilities are expected to follow. The electrical inspector at the national and state levels has a mandate to implement these regulations. The State Electricity Regulatory Commissions (SERCs) have a broad mandate over the functioning of the sector, but do not explicitly have a role in safety," it pointed out. Accident reduction requires technical and management measures over a period of many years, the paper said as it suggested crucial solutions such as specific safety initiatives by the Central government; increased priority to safety by the distribution companies; proactive efforts by electricity regulators to ensure implementation of safety measures; and building safety awareness in the general public - if the accidents are to be reduced.



IT IS MY GOAL TO SEE THE YOUTHS MOVING AHEAD ON THE PATH OF PROGRESS: CM

CM met the students of Sambhavna Skill and Social Development Institute. Students of the institute greeted Sadhna Singh on her birthday

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan today met the students of Sambhavna Skill and Social Development Institute. Chouhan said that it is my goal to see the youths of the state moving ahead on the path of

progress. The state government is making every effort for this. All the facilities are being provided by the government to the youths to move ahead in sports and other streams along with studies. The children of the institute greeted Sadhna Singh, wife of Chief

Minister Chouhan and President of All India Kshatriya Kirar Mahasabha, on her birthday.

Sadhna Singh said that it is my best wish that the students of the institute should achieve success in various competitive examinations with hard work and studiousness. The suc-

cess of the students will be the present on their behalf on my birthday. Sadhna Singh accepted the good wishes by offering sweets to the students of the institute. This programme took place at the Centre of the institute located in Swami Dayanand Nagar.



CM Chouhan plants saplings with Sadguru Vasudev Jaggi

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan and Sadguru Vasudev Jaggi planted Banyan, Peepal and Eczora saplings in the premises of Atal Bihari Vajpayee Institute of Good Governance, Bhopal. Chief Minister's wife Sadhna Singh was present. Friday was the birthday of Sadhna Singh, she also planted sapling on this occasion. Sadguru, who has set out on the save soil public awareness campaign, reached the Institute of Good Governance on a motorcycle.

Chief Minister Chouhan and Sadhna Singh welcomed him by presenting him with medicinal plants.

Banyan has religious significance among the saplings planted today, according to Ayurveda it is possible to cure many diseases. Peepal is a shady tree. It purifies the environment. It has religious and Ayurvedic importance. Eczora plants have large clusters of red, yellow, white and orange flowers, which keep coming out continuously throughout the year like balls from evergreen leaves.



Save soil campaign will run in villages of MP

Team Absolute | Bhopal

An agreement has been signed between Jan Abhiyan Parishad and Isha Foundation for this campaign to save soil will be carried out in every village of Madhya Pradesh. Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan and Sadguru Vasudev Jaggi were present on this occasion. Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has said that Sadhguru Vasudev Jaggi's message of saving soil will be taken to every village and

block of the state. The state government will work in this direction in collaboration with Isha Foundation. To save soil, public awareness activities will be run by Madhya Pradesh Jan-Abhiyan Parishad in the Save Soil campaign. Chief Minister Chouhan has given Isha Foundation and M.P. MoU between Jan Abhiyan Parishad Talking to reporters after the signing, he said, the roadmap prepared by the state government and Isha Foundation to save the soil, it will be implemented

jointly by Jan Abhiyan Parishad and Isha Foundation. The MoU was signed in the presence of Chief Minister Chouhan and Sadhguru Vasudev Jaggi. This MoU Regarding conducting a campaign to save soil. In the program held at Atal Bihari Vajpayee Institute of Good Governance, Director General of Madhya Pradesh Jan Abhiyan Parishad, B.R. Naidu, Vice President Dr. Jitendra Jamdar and representatives of the Foundation were present.

BJP is eyeing new faces in MP

Team Absolute | Bhopal

The election of the mayor of the municipal corporation has become the most important in the urban body elections in Madhya Pradesh, because the mayor is going to be elected directly from the public and their defeat and victory is very important for the political party. While the Congress has announced 15 candidates, there is a churning going on in the BJP regarding new faces.



There are 16 municipal corporations in the state and in the last tenure all the municipal corporations have been occupied by the BJP. In this time municipal elections, Congress has nothing to lose and everything to gain, whereas BJP has not much to gain but a lot to lose. For this reason both the political parties are pushing hard. Congress has announced its candidates for the post of mayor of 15 out of 16 municipal corporations, has fielded three MLAs. Now only the candidate for Ratlam Municipal Corporation is yet to be announced. On the other hand, BJP has not been able to announce a single name of the Mayor candidate of the Municipal Corporation so far. The party has called a meeting of the core committee in the next two days and only after that the names will be announced.

If party sources are to be believed, the BJP has made up its mind to bet on new faces for the election of the Mayor of the Municipal Corporation, for this the party has also conducted a survey at its level and the survey report that has come is for new faces instead of old leaders. In favor. Discussions of tussle among senior leaders are also coming to the fore regarding the mayor's candidature in BJP. Bhopal, Indore, Gwalior and Jabalpur are the places where senior leaders are pushing their supporters to make them candidates.

Regarding the BJP's candidature, Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has said, it is the Bharatiya Janata Party, whose candidate is a lotus

flower. Our candidates have not been announced yet, but the work has started from today, because we are a party working for development and public service.

At the same time, political analysts believe that the election of the mayor in the urban body is of utmost importance, because the victory and defeat of the mayor will decide the party's hold in the urban areas.

This is more of a challenge for the BJP because in the last term all the mayors belonged to the BJP. If BJP puts bets on old faces then trouble can also arise in many places, that is why BJP is insisting on new faces. BJP can also bring such names as mayor's candidate which can surprise.

CONGRESS TO RAISE ISSUE OF MISGOVERNANCE AND CORRUPTION IN MAYORAL ELECTIONS: KAMAL NATH

Bhopal | Congress has started announcing the names of candidates for the urban body elections to be held in Madhya Pradesh. Congress state president Kamal Nath has said that the Congress mayor's candidate will go to the public regarding the issues of misgovernance and corruption. Congress State President Kamal Nath has said that, for our party, the civic elections are not just a question of defeat and victory, but this election is only a means of embodying our sense of public service. We are beautiful, safe, capable, We are in front of you with the resolve to provide a well-governed and well-equipped city.

Taking forward his point, Kamal Nath said, the public servants of your city, who are concerned with you, have been entrusted to you as mayor candidates with hope and confidence.

Kamal Nath said, all my mayor candidates should go to the public with such a great resolve that the people should start a new dawn together with you in the midst of misgovernance and corruption all around. Move forward firmly to give shape to the goal of the city of the mind of the people. It is known that the Congress has announced the names of 15 candidates for the election of the mayor to be held in 16 municipal corporations of the state. Now only the name of the candidate of Ratlam Municipal Corporation area is left to be announced.



MUSLIM AUTO DRIVER STICK PM'S IMAGE ON VEHICLE, FACES THREAT

Team Absolute | Burhanpur

Putting Prime Minister Narendra Modi's picture on his auto has become a cause of trouble for Sheikh Akbar of Burhanpur district of Madhya Pradesh. Only the people of his society are threatening him, due to which he has appealed to the police. Sheikh Akbar is happy because he got the money to build a house under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana and has bought an auto under the self-employment scheme. To express his happiness after the benefits received from the central government's schemes, Sheikh Akbar put up a poster in the rear part of the auto, which has the picture of Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh's Sarsangchalak Mohan Bhagwat and Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Sheikh Akbar alleges that some people of his society are angry and harassing him after he put the picture of the Prime Minister on his auto. Not only this, people are also troubling him in various ways, his mother who works as a vegetable seller. He has given a memorandum to Superintendent of Police Rahul Lodha, demanding security.

Superintendent of Police Rahul Lodha has told reporter that there was a dispute between two auto drivers, in which the matter of putting up posters also came to the fore. After that there was also a fight over the hire. Reports have been filed from both the sides.

Girl kidnapped and tortured in capital, 2 arrested



Team Absolute | Bhopal

In Bhopal, the capital of Madhya Pradesh, a 12-year-old girl was kidnapped and tortured, assaulted and electrocuted. Police have also arrested two accused in this case.

According to the information received from the police, the matter is of Shantikunj area of Berasia area. A 12-year-old girl studying in the seventh grade was kidnapped late on Wednesday evening.

neighborhood, grabbed her hand by the way and locked her in the room. After that, he was beaten up and tied with a rope and locked in a plastic sack. When he tried to shout, he was electrocuted.

The girl has told the police that the accused were trying to sell her to someone, for this they were also talking on the phone. The accused had also given injection for unconsciousness.

It has been told that when the police were searching for the girl, the sound of crying of the girl came from a house. On this, the women informed the police, after which the police interrogated Narmada, who lived in that house, then the secret was revealed.

According to Bhopal Rural Area Superintendent of Police Kiran Karrate, the girl was recovered safely. The baby girl is safe.

Nomination papers will be received for urban body elections from today

Team Absolute | Bhopal

State Election Commissioner Basant Pratap Singh has informed that nomination papers will be taken from June 11 for urban body elections. He said that all the preparations for receiving nomination papers have been made by the Collectors and District Election Officers.

The work of publication of election information, reservation of seats and list of polling stations and taking nomination papers will start from 10:30 am on June 11. The last date for receipt of nomination papers is June 18 (up to 3 pm). The scrutiny of nomination papers will be held on June 20. The last date for withdrawal of candidature is June 22 (up to 3 pm). The election symbols will be allotted to the candidates on the same day.

VOTING

The first phase of voting will be held on July 6 and the second phase of voting will be held on July 13 from 7 am to 5 pm. The counting and declaration of results for the first phase of polling will take place on July 17 and the counting and declaration of results for the second phase of polling will begin at 9 am on July 18.

DEPOSIT AMOUNT

Along with the nomination forms, the candidate will also have to deposit the deposit amount. The amount is fixed 20 thousand for the mayor, 5 thousand for the corporator of the municipal corporation, 3 thousand for the municipal council and one thousand rupees for the corporator of the city council. In the case of Scheduled Caste, Scheduled Tribe and Other Backward Classes and women candidates, half of the prescribed deposit amount will have to be deposited.

Along with the nomination form, the candidate has to submit an affidavit in



the prescribed format. The affidavit will declare the candidate's criminal record, assets, liabilities and educational qualification. This information will be publicly displayed by the Returning Officer on the notice board of the office. The option of

"NOTA" (none of the above) will be available in the urban body elections. During the submission of nomination papers in the Returning Officer's room, a maximum of 3 persons can enter along with the candidate.

ELECTIONS WILL BE HELD IN 347 URBAN BODIES

The election will be held in 347 urban bodies. There are 16 municipal corporations, 76 municipal councils and 255 city councils. The election of corporators of 347 urban bodies and mayors of 16 municipal corporations is being conducted by the Commission through the direct system.

CAN ALSO BE FILLED ONLINE

Optional facility of online (OLIN) has been made available to the candidates of urban bodies for submission of nomination papers. The candidate can himself fill his nomination form through Laptop-Desktop or Cyber Cafe, MP Online Kiosk or Lok Seva Kendra. One can fill his nomination form through online kiosk or through Lok Seva Kendra. It is mandatory to present the hard copy of the online filled nomination form to the Returning Officer within the stipulated time period.

CANDIDATES OF RESERVED CATEGORY POSTS WILL HAVE TO GIVE CASTE CERTIFICATE

It is necessary for the candidate to clearly mention his/her caste/category at the relevant place in the nomination paper. Candidates contesting from the reserved post will be required to attach the caste certificate in the prescribed form of government issued by the competent authority of Madhya Pradesh government along with the nomination paper. The nomination paper of the candidate (in case he is not a member of the reserved category) may be cancelled if he does not present the caste certificate issued by the competent authority of the Madhya Pradesh government.



EDITOR'S SPECS

Climate disturbance (La Nina) to continue

The World Meteorological Organization (WMO) on Friday of a high probability that the ongoing protracted La Nina event, which has affected temperature and precipitation patterns and exacerbated drought and flooding in different parts of the world, will continue until at least August and possibly to the northern hemisphere fall and start of winter. Some long-lead predictions even suggest that it might persist into 2023. La Nina refers to the large-scale cooling of the ocean surface temperatures in the central and eastern equatorial Pacific Ocean, coupled with changes in the tropical atmospheric circulation, namely winds, pressure and rainfall. It usually has the opposite impacts on weather and climate as El Nino, which is the warm phase of the so-called El Nino Southern Oscillation (ENSO). The ongoing drought in the Horn of Africa and southern South America bear the hallmarks of La Nina, as does the above average rainfall in Southeast Asia and Australasia and predictions for an above average Atlantic hurricane season. However, all naturally occurring climate events now take place in the context of human-induced climate change, which is increasing global temperatures, exacerbating extreme weather and climate, and impacting seasonal rainfall and temperature patterns. The current La Nina event started in September 2020 and continued through mid-May 2022 across the tropical Pacific. There was a temporary weakening of the oceanic components of La Nina during January and February 2022, but it has strengthened since March 2022. WMO Global Producing Centres for Long Range Forecasts indicate that there is about a 70 per cent chance of the current La Nina conditions extending into boreal summer 2022, and about 50-60 per cent during July-September 2022. There are some indications that the probability may increase again slightly during the boreal fall of 2022 and early boreal winter of 2022-23.

TIME TO FOREGO RELIGIOUS HATRED

Asad Mirza

For the past fortnight the largest minority in the country has been put at unease due to a controversy that is not political but religious in nature. The incident is related to controversial remarks made by some ambitious politicians, trying to get noticed by their party's leadership for creating a surcharged and divisive atmosphere in the country on religious lines.

The unpleasant remarks against the most venerated personality in the Islamic community affronted the Muslims not just in India but also globally. The establishment in a hurried response had to heed to the international outcry in a crisis mode.

Instead of adopting a mature and sensible strategy to handle the crisis and assuage the hurt feelings of the largest minority community of the country, the media and politicians tried to portray these remarks as non-consequential and as a litmus test for the minority's followers and refused to apologize till the courts stepped in.

Common Muslim's Unease

Still worse, the controversy also exposed the common Muslim's inability to explain their history in a logical and contextual manner. Everyone from the common Muslim to its religious leaders was mum, as they couldn't counter the controversy in a contextual manner. Let's try to analyse the controversy and what would have been a better strategy to handle the currently volatile situation and the response by the Muslim community.

It all started by derogatory remarks made by two former spokespersons of the ruling-BJP party against Prophet Muhammad, the most venerated personality amongst Muslims, blaming that he married Hazrat Bibi Aisha (RA), who was only six-years old, when married and nine-years old when the marriage was consummated,

while the Holy Prophet was in his 50s.

Notwithstanding the age difference, as perceived by the current generation's mindset, it is worth mentioning that when the marriage proposal was put forward to Hazrat Abu Bakr, by Hazrat Khoula, he pointed out that Aisha's marriage was already fixed with the son of Muta'im bin Jubair. But when he talked to Muta'im bin Jubair, Muta'im said that since Abu Bakr has forsaken his ancestors' religion, he couldn't marry his son with Aisha. Abu Bakr then accepted the proposal brought by Hazrat Khoula.

Historical context

Before we analyse the response of the Muslim community and its leaders to these remarks, let's have a brief look at the current situation of girls and women in other religions and what is the minimum age prescribed in their scriptures.

Myriam Francois-Cerrah in her article written for The Guardian in 2012 on the issue opines that western and now even India media base their criticism on a saying attributed to Bibi Aisha herself (Sahih Bukhari volume 5, book 58, number 3894), and the debate on this issue is further complicated by the fact that some Muslims believe this to be a historically accurate account, and indeed it is. But before leveling charges we should also analyse the reasoning or motive behind this action.

She points out that, in seventh-century Arabia, adulthood was defined as the onset of puberty. (This much is true, and was also the case in Europe: five centuries after Prophet Muhammad's, marriage to Aisha, 33-year-old King John of England married 12-year-old Isabella of Angouleme). Interestingly, of the many criticisms of Prophet Muhammad, made at the time by his opponents, none focused on Aisha's age at marriage, as that was the norm during those days.

At the age of 25 Prophet Muhammad married his first wife Khadija bint Khuwaylid, who was a



widow 15 years older to him. This marriage lasted for 25 years. He married her to encourage widow remarriage and care for destitute women in the emerging Muslim society, which was not a usual practice in that age.

After Bibi Khadija's death in 619 CE, he married a total of 12 women over the remaining years of his life. All of Prophet Muhammad's wives were widows, with the exception of Aisha.

Italian Orientalist Laura Veccia Vaglieri in her book, "An Interpretation Of Islam" writes that Prophet Muhammad was a faithful husband to Bibi Khadija for 25 years, and did not marry another woman, except after her death. He at that time was 50 years old. He married each of his wives thereafter for a social or political purpose; such that he wanted to honour the pious women, or wanted the loyalty of certain tribes so that Islam would spread amongst them. All the wives Muhammad married were not virgin, nor were they young or beautiful. So how can anyone claim that he was a lustful man?

Other religions' views

Hallett JP in her book "Fathers and daughters in Roman society in Rome" (1984), wrote that noble women in Rome or earlier Christianity were known to marry as

young as 12 years of age.

The Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics mentions Manusmriti, in this regard explained by other authorities in (verses 9.88-89), Gautama (18-21): "A girl should be given in marriage before puberty," and Vasistha (17.70): "Out of fear of the appearance of the menses, let the father marry his daughter while she still runs about naked. For if she stays in the home after the age of puberty, sin falls on the father."

But this leads us to another issue to ponder. This relates to the physical and physiological status of our ancestors. Several scientific reports mention that our ancestors were much superior and stronger in physical health and structure to the current generation of Homo Sapiens, and thus the girls attained puberty much earlier than as of now. Even recently there were some medical reports mentioning that girls currently reach puberty at around 13, much earlier than our and previous generation.

This whole episode teaches us to adopt a sincere and respectful attitude for different religions of the world in today's global village based on tolerance and coexistence and respect for others' religion, and avoid unfounded allegations.

Instead these two people, though

correctly mentioned the fact, but they made the remarks in such a derogatory and foul language that the Muslims all across the world were bound to feel hurt and demand action against them.

First, these people should have not adopted such an incourteous behaviour and secondly, the Muslims should have seen through their game that by using derogatory and foul language, these fringe elements were trying to provoke them and reap political benefit by unsettling them and gain political mileage, at their cost. Also these offenders didn't anticipate the strong international condemnation.

Additionally, since the day this controversy started no Muslim leader worth his salt has spoken candidly or correctly against these derogatory remarks. Even Muslim members of most political parties kept mum, except two regional political parties and one individual leader. This teaches us yet again the lesson to be proactive and logic-oriented in our response instead of just being emotional.

(Asad Mirza is a political commentator based in New Delhi. He writes on Muslims, educational, international affairs, interfaith and current affairs)

international

'RUSSIA IS NOW EARNING MORE MONEY FROM FOSSIL FUEL EXPORTS'

Moscow: Russia is now earning more money from fossil fuel exports than before its ongoing invasion of Ukraine which prompted Western nations to target Moscow with a barrage of sanctions, US Senior Advisor for Global Energy Security Amos Hochstein said. Global energy prices, already on the rise before the February offensive, have been driven higher by the embargoes, which have helped Moscow alleviate the impact of restrictions, RT News quoted Hochstein, who had previously served as the US energy security envoy, as saying. When asked whether Moscow was receiving more money from its oil and gas trade compared to several months ago, Hochstein told the Senate Subcommittee on Europe and Regional Security Cooperation: "I cannot deny that."

The US moved to restrict all imports of Russian crude oil, some petroleum products, liquefied natural gas, and coal in early March as part of the sanctions sparked by the invasion. On Wednesday, Russia's State Duma speaker Vyacheslav Volodin said that oil deliveries from Moscow to Washington had "almost doubled in March compared to February", RT reported. Meanwhile, media reports have suggested that the sanctions have hardly affected Moscow's energy trade so far. In April, the Wall Street Journal reported that Russian oil shipments had grown by 300,000 barrels a day that month alone.



UKRAINE LOSING UPTO 200 TROOPS A DAY: PRESIDENT'S AIDE

Kiev | Agencies

An aide to Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky has said that the country is losing up to 200 troops a day while fighting on the front line with Russian forces.

According to the aide Mykhaylo Podolyak, hundreds of Ukrainian troops are under relentless bombardment as Russian forces attempt to take control of the whole of the eastern Donbas region, the BBC reported on Friday.

While reiterating that Ukraine still requires Western artillery, he said: "The Russian forces have thrown pretty much everything non-nuclear at the front and that includes heavy artillery, multiple rocket launch systems and aviation."

Podolyak added that the "complete lack of parity" between the two rival armies was the reason for Ukraine's heavy casualty rate.

"Our demands for artillery are



not just some kind of whim, but an objective need when it comes to the situation on the battlefield," the BBC quoted the aide as saying, who went on to add that Kiev needs 150-300 rocket launch systems to match Russia, which is a much higher number than it has received so far.

He also stressed that peace talks between Kiev and Moscow can resume if Russia surrendered the territory it has gained

since it launched the invasion on February 24.

Meanwhile, Russian forces have concentrated their assault on the eastern city of Severodonetsk.

On Wednesday, President Zelensky said "the fate of the Donbas is being decided there" and officials said it has been reduced to rubble by intense Russian artillery and missile barrages.

Pakistan becomes Asia's third worst performing stock market

Islamabad | Agencies

The Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX), which had won the title of Asia's best performing stock market in August 2020, took a U-turn and became the third worst performing market in the region amid the boiling political temperature and melting economy.

Investors witnessed the wipeout of 16.27 per cent (or 1.35 trillion PKR) of investment at the PSX, as market capitalisation (the total value of all listed companies) slumped to a multiyear low at 6.95 trillion PKR on Thursday, compared to the peak of 8.29 trillion PKR in June 2021, The Express Tribune reported.

The petroleum refinery was the worst-hit sector in terms of losing market capitalisation. The sector's capitalisation halved to 66 billion PKR in March, compared to 146.56 billion PKR at the end of June 2021.

The cement sector lost 24 per cent of market capitalisation while automobile assemblers' capitalisation went down 13 per cent during July-March FY22, according to the Pakistan Economic Survey 2021-22.



PSX became the third worst performing market in Asia after the benchmark KSE-100 index dropped 5.1 per cent (or 2,427 points) in the first nine months (July-March) of the outgoing fiscal year and closed at 44,929 points on March 31, The Express Tribune quoted the survey as saying.

The latest data suggests that the PSX has become the second worst performing market in the region after Sri Lanka in the entire current fiscal year (July-June FY22), it has been learnt.

Afghan flag carrier to resume India, China, Kuwait flights

Kabul | Agencies

Afghanistan's flag carrier, Ariana Afghan Airlines, announced that it will soon resume flights to India, China and Kuwait.

"Flights will soon start to India, where there are a lot of goods and a number of our passengers are there for treatment. Our flights to India, China and Kuwait will soon start," TOLO News quoted airline chief Rahmatullah Agha as saying.

The airline currently flies twice a week to Doha and it remains unclear how much a ticket for the three new routes will cost.

As India is one of the largest markets for Afghan agricultural and horticultural products, the Afghanistan Chamber of Agriculture and Livestock (ACAL) says that with the start of flights between Kabul and Delhi, the



country's exports will increase.

"India's market is a good opportunity for our agricultural sector, now here in Afghanistan it is the season of grapes, pomegranates, apricots, saffron, medicinal plants, we hope that our exports will increase to other countries through air corridors," Mirwais Hajizada, a member of ACAL, was quoted by TOLO News as saying.

Amir Khan Muttaqi, acting

Minister of Foreign Affairs, is also optimistic about the growth of the economy and the development of the country's transit.

"Afghanistan is now becoming a transit and economic centre, hundreds of vehicles pass through Afghanistan daily in transit," he said. After the Taliban took over Kabul in August last year, the flag carrier resumed domestic flights the following month.

Over 40 killed in Congo diamond mine collapse

Kinshasa: More than 40 people were killed after a diamond mine collapsed in central Congo, local authorities said.

The incident took place on late Tuesday, the authorities confirmed on Thursday.

Alain Tshisungu Ntumba, Interior Minister of the Kasai provincial government, confirmed before the media the provisional casualty of the incident in the town of Samba, noting that at least six bodies have already been found and the search continues by rescue teams, who are working to pull out people from the ruins, Xinhua news agency reported.

The victims are all artisanal diamond diggers operating in underground wells, said the Minister, adding that the tragedy affected more than 40 wells with a depth of 15 to 18 metres.

6.0-magnitude quake hits China's Sichuan province

Beijing | Agencies

A 6.0-magnitude earthquake hit the Maerkang city of Aba Tibetan-Qiang Autonomous Prefecture in southwest China's Sichuan province, at 1:28 a.m. on Friday, according to the China Earthquake Networks Center (CENC). The epicentre, with a depth of 13 km, was monitored at 32.25 degrees north latitude and 101.82 degrees east longitude, the CENC said.

A 5.8-magnitude earthquake was monitored earlier on Friday in the city, Xinhua news agency reported. Disaster relief operations are underway, Xinhua news agency quoted the department as saying.

The province has activated a



level-III emergency response for the earthquake.

More than 750 people from the fire department have been dispatched to the epicentre.

Meanwhile, a level-IV national emergency response has also

been activated.

Earlier this month, a 6.1 magnitude quake struck Sichuan's city of Ya'an, which claimed the lives of four persons, injured 42 others and affected a total 14,427 people.



LAKHS OF MUSLIMS PROTEST AGAINST BJP SPOKESPERSONS' ANTI-PROPHET REMARKS

No HC relief for Nawab Malik to vote in RS polls

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Lakhs of Muslims trooped out on the roads after the customary Friday afternoon 'namaaz' in Aurangabad, Solapur, Raigad, and other places in Maharashtra protesting against the anti-Prophet Mohammed remarks of Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) spokespersons recently.

The protestors peacefully marched outside the mosques on the roads, shouted slogans against two BJP spokespersons Nupur Sharma and Naveen Jindal, demanded their immediate arrest, and condemned the Central government.

In some places, the marchers halted and burnt photos or effigies of the BJP spokespersons who recent utterances have been condemned by many Arab and Muslim countries worldwide. Several organisations and political parties including All India Majlis-E-Ittehadul Muslimeen (AIMIM) and local groups organised what were described as 'spontaneous protests' by the outraged Muslims after offering the Friday afternoon prayers.

In Aurangabad, AIMIM MP Syed Imtiaz Jaleel joined the protests,



plunging headlong into the crowd of several thousands of Muslims without his security personnel around as many raised slogans against the Sharma-Jindal duo.

During the protests, most shops remained shut in these towns, road traffic was paralysed to make way for

the marchers but there were no reports of any untoward incidents from anywhere.

Sharma is facing a FIR registered by Mumbai police of Thane on June 7 and the police have summoned her for questioning in the matter of blasphemy targeting the Prophet

Mohammed on June 22. Police were present in strength in the three cities and also were on watch outside thousands of mosques elsewhere in the state especially Muslim-dominated towns, and the massive crowds dispersed peacefully after a couple of hours.

Team Absolute | Mumbai

A day after the Special PMLA Court rejected Maharashtra Minister Nawab Malik's plea for temporary bail to cast his vote in Rajya Sabha polls, the Bombay High Court also refused to entertain his appeal, here on Friday.

Malik had moved the high court challenging the lower court order, but Justice P.D. Naik declined immediate relief and asked him to approach the appropriate bench dealing with bail applications.

Thereafter, Malik's legal team of Amit Desai, Tarq Sayed and Kushal Mor, briefed by Rashmikant and Partners, moved the bench of Justice Bharati Dongre.

However, Justice Dongre declined to entertain the plea on grounds that Malik could not be allowed to go and cast his vote with a police escort when permission had already been refused by the Special Court on Thursday. Malik is currently in judi-



cial custody after his arrest by Enforcement Directorate (ED) in an alleged money-laundering pertaining to a tainted land deal involving the absconder mafia don Dawood Ibrahim Kaskar. Another NCP leader, ex-home minister Anil Deshmukh has also been

declined relief by the Special PMLA Court Judge R. Rokade to go and cast his vote for the Rajya Sabha elections.

The ED lawyers had strongly opposed the pleas by both Deshmukh and Malik in the Special PMLA Court and the Bombay HC in the matter.

Amazon planning to pull out of IPL streaming rights bid: Reports

MVA, BJP claim violation of rules

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Mid fierce competition to wrest the media rights of the money-spinning Indian Premier League (IPL), there are reports that one of the big players, Amazon.com Inc., is planning to pull out, leaving the likes of giants such as Walt Disney Co. and Mukesh Ambani's Reliance Industries Ltd. to bid for the streaming rights of one of the most lucrative leagues in the world.

The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) is expecting a windfall from the telecast and streaming rights deal, with several networks, such as Sony Sports Network, global giants Disney Star Network, Reliance-Viacom 18 and Amazon among others, in the fray to grab the rights for the 2023-2027 cycle. Reports have suggested that



the BCCI could earn almost three times the sum it grossed for the 2018-2022 cycle, when Star India bought the media rights for more than Rs 16,347 crore. Before Star India, Sony Pictures Network had held media rights for a decade for the sum of Rs 8,200 crore. Media reports on Friday suggested that American giant, Amazon, was planning to pull out of the fierce competition. Reports, quoting a source on condition of anonymity, said that Amazon had already invested USD six billion in the country, and spending more for

IPL's online streaming rights didn't make great business sense.

The reports added that Amazon had not responded to a request for comment. With Amazon reportedly planning to pull out, three major players -- Reliance, Disney and Sony Group Corp -- would be keen to get the steaming rights, given that it would give them a big boost in the online consumer market. Whoever bags the deal will also get a massive fillip in its aspirations to become a leading media player in India. Amazon was earlier reported to be very keen on the getting the IPL property in its portfolio, given that the retail giant had spent big on European football rights and wanted to expand into Indian sports market. BCCI's revenue from IPL media and streaming rights had multiplied manifold since the league came into existence.

Team Absolute | Mumbai

All 285 MLAs who were eligible for voting exercised their franchise for Rajya Sabha election for six seats in Maharashtra by 3.30 pm on Friday.

The crucial, neck-to-neck contest was necessitated as the Bharatiya Janata Party fielded three candidates while Shiv Sena put up two and Congress and the Nationalist Congress Party one each. Thus, there were seven candidates in the fray against six vacancies. The BJP fielded Union Commerce minister Piyush Goyal, former state minister Anil Bonde and former MP Dhananjay Mahadik.

The Sena fielded Sanjay Raut and Sanjay Pawar. The NCP fielded Praful Patel while Congress fielded Imran Pratapgarhi.



There were objections to some votes from both the Maha Vikas Aghadi (Shiv Sena-NCP-Congress alliance) and the BJP.

The BJP claimed that Yashomati Thakur (Congress), Jitendra Awhad (NCP) and Suhas Kande (Shiv Sena) violated the

rule of showing ballot paper to the authorised agent. "Each voter has to display his vote to the authorised agent from a distance. But Thakur and Awhad handed their ballot papers to their respective agents, while Kande displayed his ballot

paper to the agents of two different parties," claimed Parag Alavani, BJP MLA and polling agent.

While PWD minister Ashok Chavan said Congress's polling agent Amar Rajurkar objected to the vote cast by Sudhir Mungantiwar (BJP) as he handed his ballot paper to Ashish Shelar, the BJP polling agent.

Industries minister Subhash Desai said all objections were ruled out by the election officials.

The quota of first preference votes needed by each candidate to win is 41 as the total number of voters came down to 285 from 288. NCP leaders Nawab Malik and Anil Deshmukh, currently in jail, were denied one-day bail to vote by the courts.

Shiv Sena MLA Ramesh Latke died recently.

Bullet Train Project: Compensation Amount Not Taxable Says High Court

Maharashtra Villagers Risk Lives For 'A Bucket Of Water'

Team Absolute | Mumbai

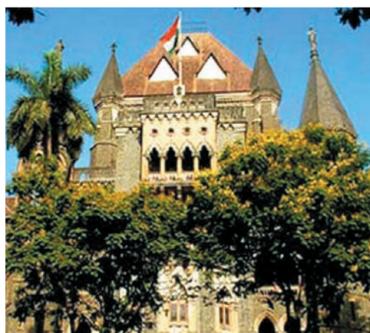
The Bombay High Court has held that income tax cannot be deducted from an amount given by way of compensation for property the National High-Speed Rail Corporation Ltd (NHSRCL) acquired for the Mumbai-Ahmedabad bullet train project.

A division bench of Justices S V Gangapurwala and M G Sewlikar passed its order on Thursday, on a petition filed by one Seema Patil, who sought a refund of the income tax deducted at the source by the NHSRCL after it acquired her property at Bhiwandi in Thane district for the project.

The court in its order noted that the petitioner's land was acquired for a public project and that acquisition of property through private negotiations and purchases was permitted to expedite the process for implementation of a public project.

"If the parties would not agree with the negotiations and direct purchase, then compulsory acquisition is resorted to," the bench said.

"No income tax can be levied in the present matter for the amount of compensation. Hence,



the NHSRCL could not have deducted the TDS amount from the compensation paid to the petitioner. Income received by the petitioner on account of property acquired by the NHSRCL by private negotiations and sale deed is exempted from tax," the bench said.

The court directed the NHSRCL to file a correc-

tion statement within a month to the effect that the TDS deducted by it while paying the compensation amount to Patil was not liable to be deducted.

"The Income Tax department shall process the correction statement and take steps for refund of the amount," the court directed.

Patil's advocate Devendra Jain had argued that the provisions of the Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act exempt payment of income tax on an amount of compensation paid under an award/agreement.

The NHSRCL, however, claimed that the amount received by the petitioner was taxable as the acquisition was by an agreement between the parties and not compulsory acquisition. It further claimed that a sale deed was entered between Seema Patil and the NHSRCL through direct purchase method and tax was deducted as per the Income Tax Rules. According to the NHSRCL, the deducted tax has already been deposited with the Income Tax department and the TDS certificate has also been provided to Patil.



Team Absolute | Melghat, Maharashtra

A group of villagers in Maharashtra's Khadial village hurling their plastic and metal cans, buckets and bottles strung with ropes down a deep well to fetch water is now a common sight. In the peak of summer, the parched residents of the village in Melghat district are facing a severe water crisis.

According to the villagers, they are 'risking their lives for a bucket of water'.

Speaking to news agency, a villager said, "There are only two wells in the village which have almost dried up. A village of 1,500 people is dependent on 2-3 tankers for water every day. "With the onset of summer, water scarcity has been reported from different parts of the

country, including Maharashtra. "Water is supplied to the village through two tankers that pour water into dry wells. People risk their lives to draw water from wells. Diseases are increasing after drinking dirty water," said another villager.

According to the villagers, the condition of the road is also bad. "If a person gets sick, there is no road to take them to the hospital," added a villager. In Chichlekhare vil-

lage in Igatpuri, Nashik, women travel arduous three km-long treks to fetch water. People in the village are forced to fetch muddy water by going down into a deep well, where the water level has plummeted below the base of the well. Rohile village in Nashik is also facing the scarcity of water and women from the village have put their lives at stake to fetch drinking water, as they step into the well to fetch water.

THANE GIRLS RESCUED FROM FLESH TRADE, TWO HELD

Thane: Police have rescued two teenage girls, who were allegedly forced into flesh trade, from Kashmirira area of Mira Road in Maharashtra's Thane district, and arrested two women in this connection, officials said on Friday.

The action was taken by the anti-human trafficking cell of the Mira Bhayandar-Vasai Virar police commissionerate, a release said.

Acting on a tip-off that some persons were pushing minor girls into sex trade, the police laid a trap on Wednesday at a roadside eatery in Kashmirira. After sending a fake customer, the police team arrested the two women. They were striking a deal for Rs 2 lakh, it said. One of the arrested women is an aunt of the girls. The police rescued two teenage girls, they said. The police have now launched a search for a man, who was also part of the group. An offence has been registered in this connection.

BJP RESPONSIBLE FOR THREATS BY AL-QAEDA: SANJAY RAUT

The Shiv Sena on Thursday blamed the BJP for the threats issued allegedly by terrorist organisation Al-Qaeda over the controversial remarks made against Prophet Mohammad by former BJP spokespersons Nupur Sharma and Naveen Kumar Jindal.

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Talking to reporters, Shiv Sena MP Sanjay Raut alleged that when everything was going on fine in the country, the BJP spokespersons were trying to vitiate its atmosphere and pit one religion against the other.

"The BJP is responsible for the threats and the possible rise in terrorism in the country. If anything happens in the country, then only the BJP is responsible for this.

The BJP doesn't represent the country," Raut said in response to a question about Al-Qaeda's threat to

India following the controversial remarks on Prophet Mohammad.

He said when the BJP spokesperson made remarks on Prophet Mohammad, the believers of Islam were hurt.

"Which is why if there is any danger in the country then the BJP is responsible for it," he said.

The controversial remarks also led to an outrage in the Islamic world with many Arab countries lodging a protest against it.

At a rally in Aurangabad on Wednesday, Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray said because of the BJP, the country had to face an

embarrassing situation at the international level as it was "brought to its knees and was forced to apologise" by the Arab countries over the controversial remarks made by the party spokesperson on Prophet Mohammad.

The BJP had on Sunday suspended Sharma and expelled its Delhi unit media head Naveen Kumar Jindal after a row over their alleged derogatory remarks against the Prophet. The Centre has distanced itself from the remarks, saying they do not reflect the views of the government.





ANGELINA JOLIE TO DIRECT 'WITHOUT BLOOD'

STARRING SALMA HAYEK, DEMIAN BICHIR

Los Angeles | Agencies

Angelina Jolie is set to wear multiple hats for her upcoming film 'Without Blood' as she will write, direct and produce the feature which stars Salma Hayek Pinault and Demian Bichir, reports 'Variety'. Jolie is making the film with super-indie Fremantle, with which she struck a three-year international filmmaking agreement in March. 'Variety' further

states that the principal photography of the film already has begun in the Puglia (Apulia) and Basilicata regions of southern Italy, as well as in Rome. The film, Angelina's fifth directorial, is based on the international-best-selling novel of the same name by Italian writer Alessandro Baricco, and set in the aftermath of an unidentified conflict. It's billed as exploring "universal truths about war, trauma, memory and healing." Hayek Pinault and Bichir will

star alongside an international cast and production team. Talking about her film Angelina Jolie said in a statement accessed by 'Variety', "I'm honoured to be here in Italy to bring this very special material to film, and to have been entrusted by Alessandro Baricco with the adaptation of his book - with its unique poetry and emotion and way of looking at war, and the questions it poses about what we search for after trauma or loss or injustice."



Did Kourtney, Travis Barker drink each other's blood at bachelor bash?



Demi Lovato releases hard-hitting single

'Skin of My Teeth'

Los Angeles | Agencies

'Heart Attack' hitmaker Demi Lovato has released a brutally honest new single titled 'Skin of My Teeth', which sees the Grammy-nominated singer embracing a pop-punk sound and opening up about their struggle with addiction, reports 'Variety'.

The guitar-heavy track bears some sonic resemblance to Hole's 'Celebrity Skin' and gives a grunge twist to the new era of pop-punk that has bubbled up in recent years, with Lovato's powerhouse vocals urgently conveying their most upfront lyricism yet. Speaking about the experience of working on the track, Lovato said in a state-

ment accessed by 'Variety', "The process of making this album has been the most fulfilling yet, and I'm grateful to my fans and collaborators for being on this journey with me."

"Never have I been more sure of myself and my music, and this record speaks that for itself. To my Lovatics who have been rocking out with me since the beginning and those who are just now coming along for the ride, thank you. This record is for you," she added.

'Skin of My Teeth' is produced by Warren "Oak" Felder and written by Lovato, Alex Niceforo, Keith Sorrells, Laura Veltz and Lil Aaron. Earlier this week, Lovato announced that their eighth studio album, 'Holy Fvck', will be released on August 19. Lovato will also tour the album starting in August.

Los Angeles | Agencies

Reality TV personality Kourtney Kardashian has shared a picture of a blood vial on her Instagram from her and Blink 182 rocker Travis Barker's bachelor party. Kourtney has now shared 10 photographs from the party, which she captioned: "Romeo and Juliet vibes for the Bach."

One of the snaps is getting more attention than any of the others, though, one of what is seemingly a vial of blood on the table, reports femalefirst.co.uk.

Friend of the Kardashian family, model Allie Rizzo Sartiano, seemingly confirmed some blood-drinking was involved.

She commented: "Was the most romantic dinner with a touch of Dracula vibes." Another friend of the family, Malika Haqq, wrote "bleeding love" under the post.

The table was decorated with a red love heart cake with 'Kris 4Ever' in icing, and lined with Gothic candelabras and red roses.

The couple seemingly copied pals Megan Fox and Machine Gun Kelly, who sip a "few drops" of each other's blood for "ritual purposes".

Fox spilled: "Yeah. So, I guess to drink each other's blood might mislead people or people are imagining us with goblets and we're like 'Game of Thrones', drinking each other's blood. It's just a few drops, but yes, we do consume each other's blood on occasion for ritual purposes only."

MARVEL SUPERVILLAIN COLLECTIVE FILM 'THUNDERBOLTS' IN EARLY DEVELOPMENT WITH JAKE

Los Angeles | Agencies

A new Marvel movie, based on Marvel comics' 'Thunderbolts' -- a team of supervillains' is in early development, with its plot under the wraps. The film will be directed by Jake Schreier from 'Black Widow' writer Eric Pearson's script. Marvel Studios president Kevin Feige will produce the film, reports 'Variety'.

Earlier, Schreier directed 2012's 'Robot and Frank' and 2015's 'Paper Towns'. In addition, he has made several music videos for artists like Kanye West, Selena Gomez, Chance the Rapper, Baby Keem, Benny Blanco, Francis and the Lights, Cashmere Cat and more.

'Variety' further states that the casting of the film is yet to be finalised. In the Marvel comics, the Thunderbolts are made up of villains, anti-heroes and reformed baddies -- some of whom have already appeared within the Marvel Cinematic Universe.

The villains include Florence Pugh's Yelena Belova from 'Black Widow' and 'Hawkeye'; Hannah John-Kamen's Ghost from 'Ant-Man and the Wasp'; Tim Roth's Abomination from 'The Incredible Hulk' and this 'She-Hulk: Attorney at Law'; Wyatt Russell's John Walker (aka U.S. Agent) from 'The Falcon and the Winter Soldier'; or 'Black Widow' villain Taskmaster, played by Olga Kurylenko.

Even some 'Avengers' members, like Jeremy Renner's Clint Barton or Sebastian Stan's Bucky Barnes, could make the list of Thunderbolts characters.



Jeff reveals 'secret'

WhatsApp group chat with 'JW' cast

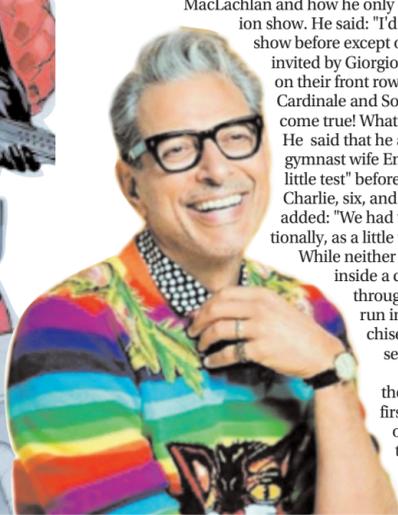
Los Angeles | Agencies

Actor Jeff Goldblum is in a "secret" WhatsApp group chat with his 'Jurassic World: Dominion' co-stars including Laura Dern, Sam Neill and Chris Pratt. The 'Jurassic Park' star revealed the cast and crew -- which includes Laura Dern, Sam Neill and Chris Pratt -- were "still talking" to each other via text when after filming wrapped, reports femalefirst.co.uk. He told the Evening Standard newspaper: "I shouldn't show you this, but we're still talking to each other in a very secret collective thing. There's Laura. There's Chris Pratt. There's Sam. There's my groomer, David Cox, who was there the whole time to do my hair and make-up." The 69-year-old actor remarked on his catwalk debut when he walked the Prada runway alongside the "Twin Peaks" star Kyle

MacLachlan and how he only "once" attended a fashion show. He said: "I'd never been to a fashion show before except once. Decades ago, I was invited by Giorgio Armani's people to sit on their front row between Claudia Cardinale and Sophia Loren. A dream come true! What happened to my life?" He said that he and his former Olympic gymnast wife Emilie, 39, got a dog "as a little test" before they had their two sons, Charlie, six, and River, five. The actor added: "We had that dog, kind of intentionally, as a little test. It worked out well."

While neither of their kids have been inside a cinema, the pair "made it through" their father's original run in the 'Jurassic Park' franchise and might take them to see the new installment.

He shared: I showed them 'Jurassic Park', the first one and the second one, and they made it through that. I have a free Sunday coming up so we'll take them in the daytime."



ABSOLUTE PIC OF THE DAY

Molly Smith



Chateauroux World Cup

JAKHAR SHINES WITH TWO GOLD MEDALS; FRANCIS CLAIMS SILVER

After four days of competition, India's medals tally stands as 5 gold and 3 silver.

Chateauroux (France) | Agencies

Rahul Jakhar took the individual gold in P5-Mixed 10m Air Pistol Standard SH1 finals and also helped the country win the Team gold at the ongoing Chateauroux 2022 World Shooting Para Sport World Cup here on Friday.

On yet another fruitful day for Team India, Jakhar, who finished fifth in the Mixed 25m Pistol final at Tokyo 2020 Paralympics, defeated fellow Indian shooter Rubina Francis for the gold medal with a score of 367-6x in the final four series. He maintained a 90+ score in the first three series as Francis settled with 355-7x.

France's Eden Gaele claimed the bronze with the same score of 355, but with 4x. "I am happy to have been able to execute my plans. I was able to control my breathing and that was the key to the win. Though this is not a Paralympic event, winning a gold medal always gives you confidence," Jakhar told the Paralympic Committee of India, looking forward to the AI Ain 2022 World Shooting Para Shooting Championships in November 2022.



The 35-year-old Jakhar had won the Men's 10m Air Pistol gold with a world record effort in Croatia's 2019 World Cup. Jakhar's score was later combined with Deepender Singh and Akash, who shot 342-2x and

338-4x respectively, and it helped India (1047-12x) bag the gold ahead of France (1031-9x). Poland (956-5x) settled for the bronze.

On Saturday, Paralympic medalists Manish Narwal, Singhraj and Nihal Singh will be in action in P1-

Men's 10m Air Pistol SH1, while Francis, Sumedha Pathak and Nisha Kanwar will compete in P2-Women's 10m Air Pistol SH1 event.

The Chateauroux 2022 World Cup, which is a Paris 2024 qualifying event, culminates on Sunday.

Ranji Trophy Quarters: Bengal qualify for semifinals after draw against Jharkhand



Bengaluru | Agencies

Bengal qualified for the 2020-21 Ranji Trophy semifinals based on the first-innings lead after their quarterfinal match against Jharkhand ended in a draw on the fifth and final day, here on Friday.

The possibility of a result ended when Bengal decided to bat a second time on the fourth day despite a lead of 475 runs. The play ended early on the final day when Bengal were 318 for 7 in their second innings and both teams decided to shake hands.

Manoj Tiwary's innings of 136 on the inconsequential fifth day was a big positive for Bengal ahead of their semifinal. Tiwary, who is also a minister in the West Bengal government, had also scored

73 in the first innings. Apart from him, there were valuable contributions from other Bengal batters such as Shahbaz Ahmed (46), Anustup Majumdar (38) and Abhishek Porel (34).

On the other hand, Shahbaz Nadeem (175 for 2 and 59 for 5) was the lone bright spot in Jharkhand's bowling across two innings. And with the bat, Virat Singh's was a one-man show as he hit an unbeaten 113 the only time Jharkhand batted.

Jharkhand were bowled out for 298, with Shahbaz Ahmed and Sayan Mondal picking up four wickets each. Shahbaz Ahmed also hit 78 in Bengal's first innings as Bengal declared after posting a mammoth total of 773 for 7 on Day 3 and keeping Jharkhand on the field for

nearly 219 overs.

Bengal had also produced a rare moment of statistical quirk on the third day after each of their top-nine batters (everyone who walked out to bat) went past 50 -- with Player of the Match Sudip Gharami top-scoring with 186, and Majumdar hitting 117. Bengal now play Madhya Pradesh in the semifinal while Mumbai and Uttar Pradesh face off in the other semifinal. Both matches will start in Bengaluru on June 14.

Brief scores:

Bengal 773 for 7 decl. and 318 for 7 decl. (Tiwary 136, Nadeem 5-59) drew with Jharkhand 298 (Virat 113 not out, Siddiqui 53, Shahbaz Ahmed 4-51, Mondal 4-71) - Bengal qualify for semifinals based on first-innings lead

Indonesia Masters

India's campaign ends after Sindhu, Lakshya lose in quarters

Jakarta (Indonesia) | Agencies

India's campaign at the Indonesia Masters 2022 badminton tournament came to an end after both PV Sindhu and Lakshya Sen lost their respective quarterfinal matches at the Istora Stadium, here on Friday.

Sindhu, seventh in the badminton world rankings, suffered a heavy 12-21, 10-21 defeat against world No. 8 Ratchanok Intanon in the women's singles quarterfinal, which lasted for just 33 minutes.

Intanon settled early into the match and built a strong 11-5 lead till the first break. Sindhu, a former world champion, could score only two points on her serve in the game and was penalised heavily by a tactically astute Ratchanok Intanon.

In pursuit of quick points, the Indian tried to keep the rallies short in the second game and as a consequence, made a series of unforced errors. Thai shuttler Intanon then used the corners and the dip shots well to move into the semifinals of the BWF Super 500 tournament. Notably, this was Sindhu's fifth consecutive loss against the 2013 world champion Intanon and her ninth overall in 13 games. Meanwhile, Lakshya Sen lost his quarterfinal match to world No. 4 Chou Tien Chen



of the Chinese Taipei 16-21, 21-12, 14-21 in one hour and two minutes.

The Indian shuttler, ranked ninth in the world, lost the first game convincingly but mounted a comeback to draw level in the second game. The third game saw both players engage in longer rallies. However, the 32-year-old Chen used his experience well to counter 20-year-old Sen and seal a spot in the semifinal. This was Lakshya's second straight defeat against Chen in as many matches. He had lost to Chou Tien Chen 21-19, 13-21, 21-17 in the Thomas Cup group stage match last month.

Sindhu and Sen, along with other top Indian badminton players Kidambi Srikanth, HS Prannoy and Saina Nehwal, will be in action at the Indonesia Open -- a BWF Super 1000 tournament starting next week.

Pranav, Shreeniti emerge champions in AITA Champions Series 7 U-16 event

Bengaluru | Agencies

Pranav M.S and Shreeniti Chowdhary emerged as the boys' and girls' champions respectively in the All-India Tennis Association (AITA) Champions Series 7 U-16 tennis tournament that concluded at the Karnataka State Lawn Tennis Association (KSLTA) stadium here on Friday.

In contrasting finals, the St. Peter's School student Shreeniti won the first set at love but despite a fightback by her opponent Kasturi G. in the second set, pre-



ailed 6-0, 7-5.

On the other hand, Pranav, a student of Jain Sports School, was

stretched by Aabhradeep Bhattacharya before winning 6-4, 0-6, 7-6(5) in a thriller.

Results (finals):

Boys' U-16: Pranav M. S. bt Aabhradeep Bhattacharya 6-4, 0-6, 7-6(5)
Girls' U-16: Shreeniti Chowdhary bt Kasrturi V. G. 6-0, 7-5.

KOHLI WILL HAVE TO FIND A SOLUTION TO HIS BATTING WOES, QUICKLY: PONTING

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Former Australian skipper Ricky Ponting has said that India batting stalwart Virat Kohli will have to find a solution to his batting woes himself, adding that given the "absolute professional" that he is, the former captain "work it out pretty quickly".

"There was a lot of talk and conjecture around the IPL about how tired and burnt out he (Kohli) might be. That's for him to work out and assess and find ways to improve, whether it's a technical thing or a mental thing. I'm sure, being the absolute professional that he is, that he'll work it out and work it out pretty quickly," said Ponting in a Review.

"One thing I do know from experience is that quite often you bluff yourself as a player that you're not actually tired, that you're not physically or mentally tired. You always find a way to get yourself up for training; you always find a way to get yourself up for game. It's not until you actually stop and have a couple of days do you realise how



tired and fatigued you are. "So that might be exactly where Virat Kohli is at now, but I'm pretty sure he won't stay down for too long," said Ponting.

With Dinesh Karthik finding his form in the Indian Premier League and returning to the India fold riding on his performance for Royal Challengers Bangalore, Ponting felt the wicketkeeper-batter was superb in the death overs, and he should be used in the T20 World Cup campaign.

WIMBLEDON ANNOUNCES 11 PER CENT HIKE IN PRIZE MONEY FROM LAST YEAR

London: The total prize money for the 2022 Wimbledon Championships will be a record 40.35 million pounds, the All England Lawn Tennis Club (AELTC) has announced. It shows an 11.1 per cent increase from 2021, and a 5.4 per cent increase on the most recent full capacity Championships in 2019.



The men's and women's singles winners in the grass-court Grand Slam this year will receive two million each with an increase of 17.6 per cent on last year but is still shy of the 2.35 million in 2019.

The AELTC insisted that the prize money distribution for 2022 continues to place importance on supporting players in the early rounds of the event.

Therefore, the qualifying competition prize money fund has received a 26 per cent increase on 2021 and the main draw singles players competing in the first round will be playing for 50,000 pounds, a 4.2 per cent increase on 2021 and an 11.1 per cent increase on 2019. This year's Wimbledon is scheduled to run from June 27 to July 10. As the AELTC decided to ban Russian and Belarusian players from competing in this year's tournament, both ATP and WTA have announced that they will not award ranking points to the competition. Ian Hewitt, chairman of the All England Club, said, "From the first round of the Qualifying Competition to the Champions being crowned, this year's prize money distribution aims to reflect just how important the players are to The Championships as we look to continue to deliver one of the world's leading sporting events, and with a particularly special tournament ahead of us as we celebrate 100 years of Centre Court on Church Road."

AFC Asian Cup Qualifiers

STIMAC CAUTIONS INDIA AGAINST PHYSICALLY STRONG AFGHANISTAN

Team Absolute | Kolkata

India football team head coach Igor Stimac has cautioned his team against Afghanistan, saying their players are physically very strong and could pose a bigger challenge than Cambodia in the Asian Cup Qualifiers.

India defeated Cambodia 2-0 in their opening match of the third round of AFC Asian Cup 2023 Qualifiers, but speaking ahead of the match against Afghanistan on Saturday, Stimac



said, "We need to stay disciplined, concentrated and be composed on the ball.

"Afghanistan players are physically very strong. Positioning will be the key, and good reading of the game will be crucial. We need to keep tight lines, and win more duels. We need to be clever," he added. Cambodia take on Hong Kong in the other match on Saturday here. As the situation stands, India and Hong Kong are on three points each from one match, while the others are yet to open their account.

Tied at same points, India face Belgium in crucial FIH Pro League double-header

Antwerp (Belgium) | Agencies

The Indian men's hockey team will return to FIH Pro League action when they take on the Olympic champions Belgium in a crucial two-legged contest on June 11 and 12 at Sportcentrum Wilrijkse Plein here.

Currently placed second on the pool table with 27 points in 12 matches, the Indian team is coming off a successful home leg. After starting their home leg with a 5-4 win and a 3-5 loss against Spain, the Indian team went on to secure match points against every team they played against -- Argentina (2-2 (1-3 SO) and 4-3), England (3-3 (3-2 SO) and 4-3) and Germany (3-0 and 3-1). Speaking ahead of the two-legged tie against hosts Belgium, men's captain Amit Rohidas said, "We've had a successful home leg, and I must say we have gone from strength to strength in the



season so far. This will be the most important phase of the Pro League. We will be facing two strong teams at their home, so it will be challenging. "We also got a good amount of time at the national camp in SAI, Bengaluru to introspect our performances. From structure to finishing, we've worked on all the aspects of the game. The plan will be to simply repeat what we've done in the training,"

added Rohidas. Meanwhile, vice-captain Harmanpreet stated, "It's been a great season so far. Many young players got a chance to play against top teams and they've grown with each match. We are in a good position, and our focus will be to carry forward the momentum we have gained from the home leg. "The last time both teams faced each other was during the 2020 Tokyo Olympics semifinal where India lost 2-5 and Belgium went on to win the Olympic gold.

"Look it was in the past; and this is a different stage. Of course, our aim will be to win both the matches and put ourselves in a strong position in the points table, but for that, we will have to play good hockey. Our focus will be on executing our skills," Rohidas said. Belgium are also tied at the same points (27 points in 12 matches) but are placed third in the pool table due to a lesser goal difference compared to India.

WILLIAMSON TESTS COVID-POSITIVE; RULED OUT OF SECOND TEST VS ENGLAND



Nottingham: New Zealand skipper Kane Williamson has tested positive for Covid-19 and will miss the second Test against England starting at Trent Bridge later on Friday.

New Zealand head coach Gary Stead gave an update on the charismatic captain of the World Test championship side on the eve of the match, saying Hamish Rutherford will replace him in the squad. New Zealand Cricket (NZC) tweeted, "Coach Gary Stead confirms captain Kane Williamson will miss the second Test against England in Nottingham on Friday, after testing positive for Covid-19 the night before the match. Hamish Rutherford will replace him in the squad #ENGvNZ." Williamson undertook a Rapid Antigen Test (RAT) after experiencing minor symptoms during the day and will now begin five days of isolation, said NZC.

The rest of the touring party has returned negative RATs and will continue following the tour health protocols of symptom reporting and subsequent testing if required. "It's such a shame for Kane to be forced to withdraw on the eve of such an important match," said Stead in a video posted on the NZC website.



Allu Arjun under activist's fire for promoting educational institution

Team Absolute | Hyderabad

'Pushpa' star Allu Arjun has come under fire from a social activist for endorsing an educational institution. Kotha Upender Reddy, a social activist, claimed that the particular advertisement, which featured Allu Arjun as the face of it, was deceptive and provided incorrect information. The social activist also called for action to be taken against such misleading advertisements. He also filed a complaint with Ambarpet police against Allu Arjun for appearing in the advertisement and against Sri Chaitanya Educational Institutions for providing fake information. Kotha Upender Reddy urged that Allu Arjun and Sri Chaitanya Educational Institutions be prosecuted for deceiving the people.

Allu Arjun has already faced flak for marketing a food delivery app, and he was given a warning for promoting a bike app by disparaging government transit services.

BHAGYASHREE TO MAKE HER DEBUT AS JUDGE ON A DANCE REALITY SHOW

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Veteran actress Bhagyashree Dassani will be seen judging the new season of 'DID Super Moms' for the very first time alongside Remo D'Souza and Urmila Matondkar.

On judging 'DID Super Moms', Bhagyashree shares, "It will be an absolute honour for me to take up the responsibility of a judge for the very first time in my career with Zee TV's exciting dance reality show. I am really looking forward to meeting the super talented moms from across our country and inspiring them to achieve their dreams. Judging these talented women will not be an easy task, but I will try my level best. Most importantly, I am really thrilled to be sharing the stage with the famous choreographer - Remo D'Souza and the immensely talented Urmila Matondkar for this show. I am sure we all will have a gala time and entertain the audience," she added. Auditions for the show have already started across the country.

Online auditions have been a huge hit, on-ground auditions also took place in cities like Mumbai, Delhi, Kolkata, Bhopal, Chandigarh, Lucknow, and Guwahati. 'DID Super Moms' new season is all set to premiere soon on Zee TV.



ABHIMANYU DASSANI: BEING A STARKID NEVER WORKED IN MY FAVOUR

Aakruti Bagla | Mumbai

After making waves internationally with his debut film, 'Mard Ko Dard Nahi Hota', Abhimanyu Dassani wooed us with his stint as a simple romantic guy in Meenakshi Sundareshwar. And now the actor is back in an action-packed avatar with Nikamma. The actor indulges in a fun conversation with Absoluteindia where he talked about his role in the film, his fitness routine, the directors on his wishlist and much more. Sharing his experience of working on the film and how he worked on his fitness, Abhimanyu said, "For Meenakshi Sundareshwar I had to lose 10 kgs and for Nikamma, I had to gain 7 kgs from there. So at times, it was challenging, but it was adventurous. And because it was challenging I took up this role." The actor has played diverse characters so far. Talking about his process to adapt the character, Abhimanyu avers, "It takes a lot of time as it is a deep process. It sometimes affects my personal life as well. As an actor, I like to meticulously adapt myself because that's what an artist should do. That is why, fortunately, my characters are bigger than me."

Talking about his struggles and how terms like Starkid and nepotism are perceived in a wrong way by people, Abhimanyu quipped, "People believe I have it easy since I come from a film background. That is not the case. The word Starkid is a title, and the term nepotism is entitlement. People interpret the meaning of the term erroneously. All I can say about my journey is that I gave hundreds of auditions to get my first break. Being a star kid never worked in my favour. There was a time when I could not pay for my gym and to extend my sessions I worked out on my own. And I don't call it a struggle, I call it an adventure."

When asked about his process for choosing films and his parent's involvement in the decision-making process, Abhimanyu averred, "I always do a thing keeping in mind that I have to make my parents proud. If someone recognizes my mother as Abhimanyu's mom then that will be an achievement for me." Talking about directors on his wishlist, he said, "Ayan Mukerji, Zoya Akhtar, and Neeraj Pandey to name a few"

In Nikamma, Abhimanyu Dassani is essaying the role of a young, jobless, carefree boy Adi who transforms into a responsible and reliable person when it comes to his family.



Mrunal Thakur Content reigns supreme, language not a barrier anymore

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Mrunal Thakur, who is gearing up for her Telugu debut opposite south star Dulquer Salmaan in 'Sita Ramam', feels that south Indian cinema has emerged as a game-changer in the last few years with the pandemic further propelling the audience's interest in exploring new content. She also opines that content is the first priority for the audience today with the language of it not making much of a difference.

Commenting on the same, the actress said, "When someone talks about Indian films, one is likely to think first about Bollywood and Hindi music. However, in the past few years and amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, that has changed somewhat as regional cinema steps in a bigger way, courtesy OTT platforms." "South cinema, especially, has been the game-changer in the last couple of years and has catered phenomenal content that one can't stop talking about. Movies like 'Baahubali', 'KGF: Chapter 2' are surely the game changers of south Indian cinema but the content, entirely, is getting wider reach globally now," she added. Talking about 'Sita Ramam', the movie is a romantic entertainer with a war backdrop and has been directed by Hanu Raghavapudi.

Aamir Khan to visit Haryana for KIY Games 2022

Mumbai: Aamir Khan, who is also popularly known as one of the biggest Sports aficionados is all set to leave for Panchkula, Haryana to attend Khelo India Youth Games 2022 on the 12th, Sunday. Aamir will be present there as a celebrity guest and will be seen addressing the young athlete talent across schools and colleges of India. Aamir's presence will boost enthusiasm and help in recognition of the talent present there. This is the first time Aamir Khan is going back to Haryana after Dangal.

This is not the first time that Aamir Khan has shown enthusiasm for grass root sports. From wrestling, and table tennis to cricket, the star is often seen indulging in different types of sports. Aamir, who is an avid viewer and a supporter of sports is also the unofficial brand ambassador of the grass root sports. Back in 2016, Aamir introduced the world to the never before told story of Geeta and Babita Phogat through Dangal. Dangal turned out to be one of the biggest films worldwide which put out the untold journey of Mahavir Singh Phogat and his daughters in limelight. Recently, the star hosted the finale of T-20 and proved his zeal for sports. Meanwhile, on the work front, Aamir Khan's Laal Singh Chaddha is gearing up for its release on 11 August 2022.



BHUVAN BAM TO APPEAR AS LEAD IN NEW WEB SERIES

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Celebrated digital content creator and actor Bhuvan Bam is gearing up to play the protagonist in the upcoming comedy drama series 'Taaiza Khabar'.

Directed by Himank Gaur, the show is a Hotstar special, and is currently under production.

Bhuvan Bam said, "I feel grateful that I got to explore a completely new side to wishful thinking with my character in TK. It has been a humbling experience prepping for this character and his antics. As we begin shooting, I'm confident that emoting this character is going to be fun, I already relate to this character so much. To think that I get to play this comical yet emotional character in my very first association with Disney+ Hotstar feels very special."

Director Himank Gaur said, "Receiving miraculous powers is a wish every human being harbours whenever faced with hardships. With this web we relook at the idea of wishful thinking and the consequences it can have if and when granted. Bhuvan Bam brought to this realistic role his own personal flair that I am confident will win over viewers."

The show has been penned by powerful writer duo Hussain and Abbas Dalal. Based on the life of a sanitation worker, the series light-heartedly depicts class-based poverty and the human desire to lead a better life.

The show is produced by Rohit Raj who said, this web series is a plunge into a brand new genre and we as a team are always excited to delve into a new space. The script is very exciting and I'm looking forward to presenting a show that can be viewed and enjoyed by all".

The show also stars Shriya Pilgaonkar, JD Chakravarthy, Deven Bhojani, Prathmesh Parab, Nitya Mathur, Shilpa Shukla and Mithilesh Chaturvedi in pivotal roles.

It is to be streamed on Disney+ Hotstar.



Nia Sharma