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MAHARASHTRA CRISIS:

17 Sena MLAs Ready To Come Back To Mumbai: Sources

► THE POLITICAL IMPASSE IN MAHARASHTRA ENTERED ITS SECOND DAY ON WEDNESDAY WITH EKNATH SHINDE REACHING GUWAHATI FROM SURAT ALONG WITH SCORES OF LAWMAKERS OF THE PARTY.

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Senior Shiv Sena leader Eknath Shinde's name has been suggested for the Chief Minister post by Sharad Pawar and the Congress - Uddhav Thackeray's allies in Maharashtra - said the Congress sources, even as his rebellion against his own party has plunged the state into a political crisis. They also said that 17 Shiv Sena MLAs, currently in Guwahati, are ready to come back to Mumbai. Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray said on Wednesday that he was "ready to resign if even one of the disgruntled MLAs come forward and demand so." The Shiv Sena boss spoke shortly after 30 MLAs of his party declared rebel Eknath Shinde as their leader. "Hindutva is our identity and we are never going to leave it," said Thackeray after Eknath Shinde claimed that he, along with the MLAs camping with him, will carry Balasaheb Thackeray's Hindutva. Shinde, along with other MLAs was staying at a hotel in Gujarat's Surat following the cross-voting in Maharashtra Legislative Council (MLC) polls and later took a flight to reach Guwahati. The political impasse in



Maharashtra entered its second day on Wednesday with Eknath Shinde reaching Guwahati from Surat along with scores of law-makers of the party. Shinde has claimed 46 MLAs are with him and asserted that he will not switch parties. He had demanded that the Sena restore its alliance with the BJP and jointly rule the state, sources said. Uddhav Thackeray chaired a crucial meeting of his cabinet virtually after he tested positive for Covid. Shiv Sena has now called a meeting of all MLAs at 5 pm at the Chief Minister's residence.

'Uddhav Won't Quit:' Raut as Thackerays Leave CM House



Mid the ongoing political turmoil, Shiv Sena spokesperson Sanjay Raut on Wednesday, refuted reports of rebel leader Eknath Shinde being offered the CM post by the party and said that Uddhav Thackeray will remain the chief minister. He also said that the party will prove majority on the floor of the House, if need be. Meanwhile, the Thackeray family left the official CM residence 'Varsha' to return to their private residence 'Matoshree.' CM Thackeray in his speech earlier in the

evening had said that he will leave the official residence to prove that the post does not matter to him. Earlier in the day, NCP Chief Sharad Pawar and MP Supriya Sule met Thackeray at the latter's residence in Mumbai to discuss the crisis. The visit came after Thackeray, in an address to the state, told Shinde and the rebel MLAs that he is willing to resign but they must "talk to him directly and not play games." Shinde later took to Twitter after Thackeray's address to say that the Maha Vikas Aghadi alliance only benefited the Congress and the NCP and led to the weakening of the Shiv Sena. However, Raut refuted reports of rebel leader Eknath Shinde being offered the CM post by the Shiv Sena and said that Uddhav Thackeray will remain the chief minister. He also said that the party will prove majority on the floor of the House, if need be. "These reports are untrue. No such talks (of making Shinde the CM) have taken place. Uddhav Thackeray will remain the Chief Minister of Maharashtra," he told the media. "If it comes to it, we will also prove majority on the ground," he said.

TOLL RISES TO 1,000 IN AFGHANISTAN EARTHQUAKE

Kabul | Agencies

The toll from an earthquake that jolted Afghanistan on Wednesday has crossed 1,000, while more than 1,500 people were injured, an official said, adding the number of casualties might rise further. "More than 1,000 people were killed and 1,500 injured as a result of the earthquake and subsequent landslide in two districts of Gajan and Barmal of Paktika province," Mohammad Amin Haddifa, chairman of the provincial directorate of information and culture, told Xinhua news agency. In the neighbouring Khost province, at least 25 people were killed and 100 others wounded after more than 600 houses, mosques, and shops were destroyed by the quake, according to provincial officials. Hours after the quake, Acting Prime Minister Mullah Mohammad Hassan Akhund chaired an emergency cabinet meeting on Wednesday morning, the prime minister's office wrote on Twitter. Hassan Akhund also ordered a grant of 1 billion afghanis (more than \$11.2 million) to assist the victims of the natural disaster. "The meeting has ordered all concerned agencies to rush to the spot immediately. Use all available resources to save the lives of the affected people and provide all necessary assistance," he said. The quake, with a magnitude of 5.9, jolted 44 km southwest of Khost. Gajan district was the worst-hit area in Paktika. The quake has destroyed and damaged scores of houses in the region and also caused land sliding in Paktika. The quake struck the mountainous areas, and the authorities have dispatched helicopters with life-saving equipment and medical personnel to the area, while medical and rescue teams were also on the way to the affected areas.



CBI CONDUCTS RAIDS AT 15 LOCATIONS IN MUMBAI IN DHFL'S RS 36,615 CR LOAN FRAUD

The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) is conducting raids at 15 locations in Mumbai in connection with a bank loan fraud case of Rs 36,615 crore involving Dewan Housing Finance Corporation Ltd. (DHFL), its Director and its former CMD.

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) is conducting raids at 15 locations in Mumbai in connection with a bank loan fraud case of Rs 36,615 crore involving Dewan Housing Finance Corporation Ltd. (DHFL), its Director and its former CMD. A CBI source said that Vipin Kumar Shukla, DGM and Branch head of Union Bank of India, Nariman Point, Mumbai lodged an FIR in this connection. It was alleged in the complaint that DHFL, Kapil Wadhawan it's former CMD, Dheeraj Wadhawan, the Director, Sudhakar Shetty and other accused entered into a criminal conspiracy to cheat the consortium of 17 banks led by Union Bank of India. "Wadhawan and others induced the consortium banks to sanction huge loans aggregating to Rs. 42,871.42 crores and siphoned off and misappropriated a significant portion of the said funds by falsifying the books of DHFL and dishonestly defaulted on repayment of the legitimate dues of the said consortium



banks. They caused a wrongful loss of Rs. 36,615.00 crores to the consortium lenders," said the CBI source. The CBI after conducting an inquiry lodged the case under section 120-B of the IPC and Section 13(2) of the Prevention of Corruption Act. The FIR was lodged against DHFL, its former CMD Wadhawan, MD Dheeraj Rajeshkumar Wadhawan, present Director Sudhakar Shetty, Amaryllis Realtors LLP (ARLLP), Gulmarg Realtors LLP (GRLLP), Skylark Buildcon Pvt. Ltd., Darshan Developers Pvt. Ltd., Sigia Constructions Pvt. Ltd., Creator Builders Pvt. Ltd., Township Developers Pvt. Ltd., Shishir Reality Pvt. Ltd., Sunblink Real Estate Pvt. Ltd. and other unknown persons including public servants. The raids are currently going on. The CBI has not commented on the matter so far.

Thackeray lobbs emotional bomb at rebels, says ready to quit as CM, Sena chief

Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray on Wednesday declared that he is ready to quit his post and also as party chief provided the rebels come and talk to him face-to-face while denying that he had discarded Balasaheb Thackeray's Hindutva.

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray on Wednesday declared that he is ready to quit his post and also as party chief provided the rebels come and talk to him face-to-face while denying that he had discarded Balasaheb Thackeray's Hindutva. In a direct, emotional challenge to the group of rebels led by Minister Eknath Shinde who are presently in Assam, Thackeray lamented the present situation in which he said, "my own (Shiv Sainiks) don't want me as CM". "But why go to Surat or some other places to say this. Shinde could have just come and told me right here. I would have quit immediately," Thackeray said. He said that ever since the political crisis erupted late on Monday, both Nationalist Congress Party President Sharad Pawar and Congress observer Kamal Nath categorically told him that they fully support him, and Congress President Sonia Gandhi

regularly speaks with him. "Today, my own Shiv Sainiks don't want me to continue as CM. So, I am ready to resign, leave 'Varsha' (official CM residence) and go to my 'Matoshri' (private home). I am even ready to quit as Sena President. I shall be very delighted if some other Shiv Sainik becomes the CM," said Thackeray. Saying that he would pen his resignation letter, he urged the rebels - who have 'disappeared' or were made to disappear, to come and deliver his resignation letter to Raj Bhavan. "Let any rebel Sena MLA come and tell me face-to-face that we don't want you. Not on social media. They can come and take my resignation letter to Raj Bhavan as I am down with Covid-19," asserted Thackeray. Dwelling back to Oct-Nov 2019 when the Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) was born out of the Shiv Sena-Nationalist Congress Party-Congress alliance, he said that after everything was finalised, Sharad Pawar spoke to him privately.

"Pawar Saheb told me that I would have to take over the responsibility (of CM), or it would be difficult to continue the MVA alliance. I said I had no experience in such things, but he insisted and I agreed as there was no other option," said Thackeray, indicating he was neither 'power-hungry' as alleged nor has he lost the confidence of the MVA partners. "Now, if the Sainiks do not want me, then I am prepared to quit the government and party. I have nothing to fear, I have no greed for the post of CM. I have nothing to feel ashamed of and am not under any compulsion. But come and talk to me," the CM stated. Dismissing the contentions of Shinde and other rebels that he had deserted 'Hindutva', Thackeray hit back, pointing out how only last week (June 15), Aaditya Thackeray along with Shinde and Raut and others went to Ayodhya. "Where have I erred. I was the first CM to speak on Hindutva? Hindutva is in our breath and in our blood. In

2014, 63 Sena MLAs were elected solely on the basis of Hindutva. We are carrying forward Balasaheb Thackeray's Hindutva, we ensured it continued after him today and will continue tomorrow," Thackeray said. Stating that he had performed well as CM for two-and-a-half years as the head of the Maharashtra family, he said people are remembered not by their positions but by their contributions. "What are the numbers, it's not even a challenge. The only thing I need is your love," concluded Thackeray. The CM's address to the state got a flood of bouquets - and expectedly, even a few brickbats - from various quarters. While the All India Majlis-E-Itehadul Muslimeen MP Syed Irtiaz Jaleel praised Thackeray's honesty in the speech, the Maharashtra Navnirman Sena Spokesperson Sandip Deshpande flayed the CM's plea saying Sainiks may be emotional but are not fools to fall for it.

Will not allow institutions to be weaponised against political opponents: Yashwant Sinha

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Terming it a contest between two ideologies and not individuals, the Opposition's presidential candidate and former Union Minister Yashwant Sinha on Wednesday said that the leaders of the other ideology are intent on throttling the Constitution and "Making a mockery of the people's mandate in elections." If elected, he said, "I shall not allow the independence and integrity of democratic institutions to be weaponised against political opponents, as is happening now." "The ongoing attacks on the federal structure of the Constitution, whereby the government is attempting to rob the state governments of their legitimate rights and powers, will be treated as totally

unacceptable. I shall also use the authority of my office to check the menacing power of ill-gotten money that is killing the soul of Indian democracy and making a mockery of people's mandate in elections." Sinha told media persons here. A dozen-odd opposition parties declared Sinha as their candidate on Tuesday, the same day the BJP declared Draupadi Murmu as its candidate for the post of the President, elections for which are due on July 18. "This is not a contest between individuals. But this is a battle between two opposing ideologies. Leaders of one ideology are hell bent on throttling the Constitution. They believe India's Rashtrapati should not function with a mind of her/his own and should merely serve as a rubber stamp to do the government's bid-



ding," Sinha said, adding that "I am proud to belong to the other ideology that is determined to save the Constitution and the Republic." He stated that if elected, he will conscientiously uphold, without fear or favour, the basic values and guiding ideals of the Indian Constitution. "In particular, as a custodian of the Constitution, I shall not allow the

light of democracy and secularism to be dimmed by the executive." Sinha said that after filing his nomination papers on June 27, he plans to begin his campaign by visiting as many state capitals as possible to meet or speak with the leaders as well as the MPs and MLAs of all the political parties to seek their support. Congress leader Jairam Ramesh, who had announced Sinha's candidature on Tuesday on behalf of the opposition parties after their combined meeting, had said that Sinha would be forming a campaign committee. The committee would be formed when Sinha files his nomination papers on June 27. June 29 is the last date for filing the nomination for the Presidential poll and voting will take place on July 18. Counting of votes will be on July 21.

ED ACCEPTS SONIA GANDHI'S REQUEST TO DEFER HER QUESTIONING

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has accepted the request of Congress chairperson Sonia Gandhi to defer her questioning in connection with National Herald case.

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has accepted the request of Congress chairperson Sonia Gandhi to defer her questioning in connection with National Herald case. She was to be questioned on June 23. As the ED has accepted her request, now she will be given a new date to get her statement recorded.



ed. In coming days the ED will decide the next summons to the Congress president. "She was suffering with Covid complications and was not fit for the questioning," said a source. Earlier, Rahul Gandhi was questioned for about 51 hours in five days in the same case. Gandhi was reportedly questioned about a few transactions made by Kolkata-based Dotex Merchandise Pvt Ltd.



REBEL SENNA LEADER EKNATH SHINDE CLAIMS 40 MAHA MLAS IN GUWAHATI

Rebel Shiv Sena Minister Eknath Shinde on Wednesday claimed that 40 MLAs have accompanied him to Guwahati and they are devoted to Balasaheb Thackeray's 'Hindutva' ideology.

GUWAHATI | Agencies

Rebel Shiv Sena Minister Eknath Shinde on Wednesday claimed that 40 MLAs have accompanied him to Guwahati and they are devoted to Balasaheb Thackeray's 'Hindutva' ideology.

Shinde and 32 Shiv Sena MLAs and seven other legislators belonging to smaller parties and independents arrived in Guwahati on Wednesday and are now staying at a luxury hotel in the city. "Myself and 39 other MLAs accompanied me. We are loyal to Balasaheb Thackeray's ideology of 'Hindutva' and we are keen to take it forward," the dissident Shiv Sena leader said, refusing to disclose details and their future course of action.

When asked by the reporters why they have come to the BJP ruled Assam, Shinde said: "It is a nice place."

With the latest development, Shiv Sena-led Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) government in Maharashtra seemed to be stumbling on the brink of a possible collapse.

The dissident legislators were received at the Guwahati international airport by Assam's BJP MP Pallab Lochan Das and MLA Sushanta Borgohain, who months after his election to the state Assembly last year on a Congress ticket joined the BJP and subsequently became a member again in the bypoll as the saffron party nominee.



The Maharashtra legislators immediately after their arrival at the Guwahati's Lokpriya Gopinath Bordoloi International Airport were taken to a hotel on the outskirts of the city in three luxury buses of the government owned Assam State Transport Corporation with police escort led by an IPS officer.

With the deployment of a huge security contingent led by senior officials, tight security has been put in place in and around the hotel.

For the first time, rebel MLAs from outside the region have been brought to the Northeastern region. "The MLAs are known to us. They came here and we have received them as a matter of courtesy," Borgohain told the media sarcastically. There is speculation that Chief Minister Himanta

Biswa Sarma, BJP's key strategist in the Northeast region, is expected to meet the rebel MLAs.

While talking to the media, Sarma said: "40 people came to Assam. This is good. We are happy if more people come. We hardly have any tourists during this time."

The Assam Chief Minister said that Guwahati has good hotels and if Guwahati is the epicentre of politics even if of foreign country, we would meet them. "Some of our colleagues are there (with the Maharashtra MLAs). Today or tomorrow (Wednesday or Thursday), if I find time I will meet them. Now I am going to see flood relief activity," the Chief Minister said before leaving for flood affected districts.

The Congress criticised the Assam Chief Minister for conspiring to break the Uddhav Thackeray-led government in Maharashtra at a time when the people of Assam are in serious distress due to devastating floods.

Assam Congress President Bhupen Kumar Borah alleged that some 40 MLAs of Maharashtra were held to ransom in Guwahati. "Sarma is involved in a shameful act," the Congress leader said.

"CM Assam Himanta Biswa should concentrate on his own job and provide adequate relief and rehabilitation and help the flood-affected people of Assam. He can do his politicking in happier times, not now when people are crying for the govt help," Borah tweeted.

Shiv Sena-rebels group lock horns to wrest control over party



▶ AS THE SUSPENSE OVER THE MAHA VIKAS AGHADI (MVA) FATE CONTINUED, A POWER STRUGGLE ERUPTED BETWEEN THE SHIV SENNA AND REBELS GROUP TO WREST CONTROL OVER THE PARTY, HERE ON WEDNESDAY.

Team Absolute | Mumbai

As the suspense over the Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) fate continued, a power struggle erupted between the Shiv Sena and rebels group to wrest control over the party, here on Wednesday.

Sena's chief whip Sunil Prabhakar shot off a letter to all party MLAs to attend a meeting convened by Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray -- who's down with Covid-19 infection, on Wednesday evening.

"If you fail to attend the meeting, it will be presumed that you voluntarily intend to leave the party and your membership is liable to be can-

celled as per the laws and further action will be initiated, which must be noted," said Prabhakar.

Hitting back, the rebel group leader, Minister Eknath Shinde has termed the meeting called by the Chief Minister through the Whip as 'illegal'.

Shinde -- who claims to enjoy the support of around 45 MLAs, further said from Guwahati that a Sena MLA Bharat Gogavale has been appointed as the new Chief Whip of the party.

The developments came after Prabhakar sent the letter through social media, e-mail and messages to all the 55 MLAs -- including those in the rebel group, for the meeting at 5 pm.

JD(S) expels 2 MLAs for cross voting in RS polls in K'taka

■ The Janata Dal (Secular), a regional party of Karnataka, has expelled two of its MLAs who violated the party whip and cast vote for the ruling BJP and opposition Congress candidates in the recently held Rajya Sabha elections.

Bengaluru | Agencies

The Janata Dal (Secular), a regional party of Karnataka, has expelled two of its MLAs who violated the party whip and cast vote for the ruling BJP and opposition Congress candidates in the recently

held Rajya Sabha elections. The decision was taken in the core committee meeting of the party headed by former Prime Minister HD Deve Gowda, his son former CM HD Kumaraswamy and party President CM Ibrahim.

The expelled JD(S) MLAs are -- K. Srinivas Gowda, a lawmaker from Kolar constituency and S.R. Srinivas, an MLA from Gubbi constituency. They have been expelled from the primary membership of the party. The core committee president Bhandappa Kashempur made this announcement here on Wednesday.

The meeting has also decided to make an appeal to Speaker Vishveshwara Hegde Kageri to terminate the expelled MLAs' membership from the state legislature. A written complaint will be given in this regard to

the Speaker in two days, Bhandappa Kashempur said. JD(S) had put up Kupendra Reddy as its candidate for the Rajya Sabha election but he lost.

The party had issued a whip for its MLAs to give their first preference vote to Kupendra Reddy. However, MLA SR Srinivas gave his first priority vote to BJP candidate Leher Singh and second preferential vote to Congress candidate Mansoor Ali Khan.

K. Srinivas Gowda, MLA from Kolar, gave his first preferential vote to Congress candidate Mansoor Ali Khan and second preferential vote to BJP candidate Leher Singh.

The report in this regard was given by H.D. Revanna, another son of H.D. Deve Gowda and former minister of JD(S).

SPECULATIONS RIFE OVER FORMER MAYOR'S RETURN TO TMC

Kolkata | Agencies

Speculations over former Kolkata Municipal Corporation (KMC) Mayor Sovan Chatterjee's return to Trinamool Congress gained momentum on Wednesday after he, accompanied by his girlfriend Baisakhi Bandopadhyay, held an hour-long meeting with Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee at the state secretariat Nabanna.

Although neither Chatterjee nor Bandopadhyay gave any direct reply to questions regarding the former Mayor's possible return to Trinamool, both said that whatever might happen will be as per the instructions of the Chief Minister, whom both of them addressed as 'Mamata didi'.

However, Trinamool insiders said that in all probability, Chatterjee's return might be officially announced on July 21, when the party will hold its annual 'Martyrs' Day' programme.

The gap between Chatterjee and Trinamool started widening ever since the former Mayor filed a divorce suit against his wife and Trinamool legislator Ratna Chatterjee, who is known to be close to the Chief Minister. Chatterjee's closeness to Bandopadhyay had also resulted in mud-slinging at the personal level at that point of time.

In 2019, both Chatterjee and Bandopadhyay



had joined the BJP. Before the 2021 Assembly polls, Chatterjee was made BJP's observer for Kolkata while Bandopadhyay was made the party's additional observer.

However, soon differences between the duo and the BJP's state leadership emerged over

the selection of candidates, following which both resigned from the saffron party.

After that for about a year both took a sabbatical from politics before emerging in the limelight again on Wednesday following their meeting with the Chief Minister.

"All the differences between Mamata-didi and Sovan have been resolved. I feel Sovan still has a lot to give when it comes to politics," Bandopadhyay told mediapersons after the meeting.

However, not all in the Trinamool seem to be happy with the development. According to Ratna Chatterjee, both said a lot of things against Mamata Banerjee and Abhishek Banerjee. "People surely have not forgotten those comments. Now if Sovan Chatterjee wants to come back after admitting his mistakes and the Chief Minister approves that, I have nothing to say," Ratna Chatterjee said.

Officially, she still continues to be Sovan Chatterjee's wife since the divorce case is yet to be resolved. Trinamool spokesman Kunal Ghosh said, "It is up to the Chief Minister to decide whether Sovan Chatterjee will return to Trinamool Congress. But all I can say is that many who joined the BJP with some sweet dreams before the 2021 Assembly elections are now trying to come back after their dreams turned into nightmares."

Agnipath is BJP's jumla, not fit for defence, scrap it: Goa Congress

■ Citing Chanakya's advice to emperor Chandragupta Maurya that the nation will not survive if farmers and soldiers have to seek their rights, Congress functionary Capt Viriato Fernandes on Wednesday demanded that the 'Agnipath' scheme should be scrapped as it is not fit for defence.

Panaji | Agencies

Citing Chanakya's advice to emperor Chandragupta Maurya that the nation will not survive if farmers and soldiers have to seek their rights, Congress functionary Capt Viriato Fernandes

on Wednesday demanded that the 'Agnipath' scheme should be scrapped as it is not fit for defence.

Fernandes, a former Captain in the Indian Navy, on Wednesday addressed a press conference here, and slammed the BJP over the Agnipath scheme saying that it will 'use and throw' youths after the 2024 Lok Sabha elections.

"(Prime Minister) Narendra Modi has failed to keep his word of bringing black money back and depositing 15 lakhs in bank accounts of public. This is another jumla by the BJP, which will push youths in the dark as they will not get social security after completing four years as 'Agniveer' in defence," he said.

"Central government made farmers suffer. They brought laws against farmers to benefit crony capitalists. Now their buri nazar (evil eye) is on defence with an ill-conceived policy

called Agnipath and they are justifying saying it is introduced as there is severe shortage of trained manpower in three services. I want to ask Modi, if they were facing shortage, then why in the last two years recruitment was stopped," Fernandes questioned. He said that there was an unwritten rule or a policy followed by various governments that never ever interfered with the policies of armed forces. "How to fight? How to plan? What are the equipment? Whatever is required, technology, (earlier) defence used to plan and decide and then tell the government (to execute). But today, the situation has become the opposite," Fernandes said.

He demanded that the Agnipath policy be scrapped and a free hand given to the armed forces for their requirements. "Leave anything to do with defence to the armed forces. They know best," he said.

He said that after completing four years training as Agniveer, the youths will not have proper education or training to get ahead in life. "No gratuity and no pension, means no social security to these Agniveers. When they complete 4 years they will be without a job and education and no proper training. What does he do (after that)?," Fernandes asked.

"Today arms, ammunition and equipment are with advanced technology, without education and proper training how will they man it?," he questioned. Fernandes said that BJP MPs and MLAs should tell how many of their children are serving in the defence forces. "I want to appeal to youths: don't indulge in violence, and be peaceful. Your concern will be placed before the President of India," he said.

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AAP alleges Surat police tortured Shiv Sena MLAs

SURAT / Ahmedabad:

Shiv Sena's rebel MLAs were flown to Guwahati early morning on Wednesday from Surat, but controversy related to them is not likely to die down soon. The Aam Aadmi Party has alleged that while they were in Surat, the city police tortured MLAs in hotel.

MLA Nitin Deshmukh has alleged that Surat police forcefully admitted him in the government hospital. Even when he was in hospital some 20 to 25 persons confined him against his wish. He alleged he was abducted. He

Surat Police Commissioner Ajay Tomar was not reachable, he has not responded to text messages too. AAP state unit president Gopal Italia alleged that some of the Shiv

Sena MLAs who were brought from Maharashtra on Monday night were threatened, tortured by the Surat police on the instruction of BJP leaders. He further alleged that some lawmakers wanted to return back to Maharashtra, but were not allowed and were confined in their hotel rooms. Now, Shiv Sena MLA Nitin Deshmukh has come out with a damning allegation that Surat police

forcefully admitted him in the government hospital. Even when he was in hospital some 20 to 25 persons confined him against his wish. He alleged he was abducted. He said he has no health issues,

but was treated for chest pain.

Nitin Deshmukh escaped and finally reached Nagpur.

Shiv Sena's two more MLAs Prakash Kadam and Nirmala Gavir reached Surat on Wednesday morning, from where they were flown to Guwahati. Though the BJP has preferred to keep mum on the issue, there was official embargo on party spokesman not to give comments and reactions, but former Deputy Chief Minister Nitin Patel jumped in and said, "Shiv Sena MLAs are influenced with BJP's development work, so they want to ally with BJP and form the government in Maharashtra."

K'taka Hindu outfit slams BBMP on Idgah Maidan statement

Bengaluru | Agencies

A Hindu outfit in Karnataka has slammed the statement by Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike's (BBMP) Chief Commissioner, Tushar Girinath that Bengaluru's Idgah Maidan does not belong to the civic agency.

Vishva Sanatan Parishat President S. Bhaskaran has alleged that Tushar Girinath has made a "deal" with Muslims.

Earlier on Wednesday, taking a U-turn, BBMP announced that it does not own the property.

Tushar Girinath, BBMP Chief Commissioner on Wednesday said that Idgah Maidan located in Chamarajpet is not owned by

the BBMP. He also said that BBMP does not have any authority to respond to the submissions seeking permission to celebrate Independence Day in the premises of the ground.

After his statement, Bhaskaran alleged, "BBMP Chief Commissioner has gone mad. He should confess if he had made any deal with Chamarajpet Congress MLA Zameer Ahmad Khan."

He further said that RTI documents given by BBMP clearly state that Idgah Maidan is its property. There are no documents which prove Wakf Board's claim that the land belongs to them. "I have documents which prove that the Idgah Maidan belongs to BBMP. I had doubts about the deal

when BBMP Chief Commissioner Tushar Girinath held a meeting with MLA Zameer Ahmad Khan," Bhaskaran said.

He appealed to Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai to take cognisance of the matter and give justice to Hindus. "If Chief Minister Bommai is not capable of managing this issue, let him submit resignation. We will speak to the next CM. I will release details of the discussion between Tushar Girinath and Zameer Ahmad Khan," he said. "They (BJP) forget Hindutva after attaining power," he charged. Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai said that he will speak to the BBMP Chief Commissioner and get details about the development.

CBI GETS 7 DAYS CUSTODY OF SANJAY GUPTA IN NSE CO-LOCATION SCAM

▶ THE CENTRAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION (CBI) ON WEDNESDAY GOT SEVEN DAYS CUSTODY OF SANJAY GUPTA, THE MANAGING DIRECTOR OF DELHI BASED OPG SECURITIES PRIVATE LTD IN CONNECTION WITH THE NATIONAL STOCK EXCHANGE (NSE) CO-LOCATION SCAM INVOLVING ITS CEO AND MD CHITRA RAMKRISHNA AND OTHERS.

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) on Wednesday got seven days custody of Sanjay Gupta, the managing director of Delhi based OPG Securities Private Ltd in connection with the National Stock Exchange (NSE) co-location scam involving its CEO and MD Chitra Ramkrishna and others.

Gupta was produced before the Rouse Avenue Court where the CBI moved a plea demanding his



fourteen days custody. The court after hearing the argument granted them seven days custody.

Gupta had allegedly made profits by getting early access to the stock market. A Mumbai based group helped Gupta in reaching SEBI officials. The CBI will try to learn who he paid the bribes to.

In April the CBI had filed its first chargesheet in the case against Ramkrishna and Anand Subramanian, the ex Group Operating Officer of the NSE. Subramanian was arrested by the CBI on February 24 while Ramkrishna was placed under arrest on March 6.

The CBI is probing the matter since May 2018 but it has not found any concrete evidence to identify the mysterious Himalaya Yogi with whom

the classified information was shared by Ramkrishna. Recently, the SEBI had imposed a fine of Rs 3 crore on her, following the market regulator finding that she allegedly shared vital inputs about the NSE with the yogi. "Information regarding organisational structure, dividend scenario, financial results, human resource policies and related issues, response to regulator, etc., were shared by her with the yogi," said the source. Between 2014 and 2016 she sent emails at rigyajursama@outlook.com.

On April 1, 2013, Ramkrishna became the CEO and MD of NSE. She brought Subramanian to the NSE as her advisor in 2013.

Subramanian was made the Chief Strategic Advisor of NSE. He served at this post between 2013 and 2015 before being made Group Operating Officer and Advisor to the MD between 2015 and 2016, despite having no exposure to the capital market. Previously working as a mid-level manager in Balmer and Lawrie, he had seen his salary increased from Rs 15 lakh to Rs 1.68 crore annually, and then to Rs 4.21 crore.

Subramanian quit the NSE in October 2016 and Ramkrishna in December 2016. The CBI swung into action in the case in 2018 and since then it has been probing the matter.



PM Gati Shakti is an effective tool for planning and implementation: CM

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has said that PM Gati Shakti is an effective tool for planning and execution. Its effective use will ensure better and economical implementation of schemes along with saving time. Orientation through PM Gati Shakti of officers-employees up to the field level should be ensured in the state. If there is a need to add any information or data related to the state in PM Gati Shakti, its fulfillment should be ensured within the time frame. The development of the state should not be affected under any circumstances.

Chouhan was addressing the review meeting of PM Gati Shakti Madhya Pradesh at his residence office. Chief Secretary Iqbal Singh Bais, Additional Chief Secretary General Administration Vinod Kumar, Principal Secretary Industrial Policy and Investment Promotion Sanjay Shukla, Principal Secretary Science and Technology Amit Rathore, Managing Director Madhya Pradesh State Electronics



Development Corporation Limited Nand Kumaram and other officers were present.

It is noteworthy that, Prime Minister Narendra Modi had launch PM Gati Shakti on October 2021 for multi-modal connectivity. It includes 16 Ministries of the Government of India and state governments to facilitate coordinated implementation of integrated planning and infrastructure connectivity within country. Economic zones like textile cluster,

pharmaceutical cluster are also included in this to make the country's businesses more competitive. This will increase coordination and cooperation at the ministerial and departmental level in infrastructure related schemes. Also, there will be a significant shift in the methods of preparing development schemes. It will ensure optimum utilization of resources and capabilities. Along with increasing efficiency, it will also avert possibilities of duplication in work while

ensuring the proper utilization of time. An empowered group of secretaries and a network planning group have been constituted under the chairmanship of the Chief Secretary for the implementation of PM Gati Shakti in the state. This includes officials from Ministries and departments dealing with infrastructure. A technical support unit is being formed in the state including experts from different fields.

PM Gati Shakti will develop a system for strengthening and better coordination of overall infrastructure, including Roads, Water Resources, Energy, Industry, Urban Development and Housing and Food and Civil Supplies departments. 27 officers from different departments of the state attended the training held at Bhaskaracharya National Institute for Space Application and Geo Informatics, Gandhi Nagar, Gujarat. They will conduct capacity development activities at various levels in the state. The Industrial Policy and Investment Promotion Department is the nodal department of PM Gati Shakti in the state.

CM EXPRESSES GRIEF

Four killed, 13 injured in collision between SUVs in Vidisha

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has issued instructions to provide assistance to the district administration



untimely death of five civilians in road accidents near Ichhawar in Sehore district and Gyaraspur in Vidisha district. Chouhan has prayed to God to grant peace to the departed souls. Sehore and Vidisha district administrations have also been directed to provide financial assistance to the families of the deceased in the accident as per the provision and proper treatment to the injured. The accident occurred around 7 am near Naulai vil-

lage in Gyaraspur police station limits on Vidisha-Sagar Road, some 95 km from the state capital, additional superintendent of police (ASP) Sameer Yadav said.

Four persons, all residents of Mhow in Indore district, died, while 13 others travelling in the two vehicles were injured in the collision, the official said.

The deceased, included a couple aged 60 and 55 years, their daughter and the driver of their vehicle, he said.

The injured victims were undergoing treatment in different hospitals, the official said, adding that a case has been registered in this regard and further investigation is underway.

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Four persons were killed and 13 injured in a head-on collision between two SUVs in Vidisha district on Wednesday, police said.

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has expressed grief over the

Cultivation of medicinal plants is well timed: CM



Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has said that cultivation of medicinal plants is beneficial for the farmers. The importance and demand of herbs has increased as a result of changing global conditions and health needs. The Devaranya scheme being run to encourage the cultivation of medicinal plants is well timed. To ensure its effective implementation in the state, farmers should be identified through suitable and competent voluntary organizations. Arrangements should be made to establish proper market linkages for farmers for necessary training, capacity development and sale of products. The cultivation of medicinal plants in the state should be encouraged as per the demand of the companies dealing in Ayurvedic products. Farmers should also be linked in processing work. Chouhan was addressing the review meeting of Devaranya Yojana at the residence office.

Chief Secretary Iqbal Singh Bains, Additional Chief Secretary Horticulture and Food Processing JN Kansotia, Principal Secretary Forest Ashok Varnwal, Principal Secretary Panchayat and Rural Development Umakant Umrao, Principal Secretary AYUSH Prateek Hajela and other officers were present. Additional Chief Secretary Agriculture Ajit Kesari attended the meeting virtually.

Devaranya Yojana is being implemented by the Department of Agriculture, Horticulture, AYUSH and Panchayat and Rural Development along with the Forest Department.

It was informed that initially the scheme is being implemented in Anuppur, Narmadapuram, Satna, Jabua, Dindori, Betul and Sehore. Projects related to lemongrass and pomarosa at Anuppur, asparagus, stevia, moringa, tukumari and lemongrass at Narmadapuram are planned for implementation. The crop of medicinal plants is being grown by 132 self-help groups of 21 development blocks of the state by Madhya Pradesh State Rural Livelihood Mission. Cultivation of Amla, Surjana, Ashwagandha, Safed Muesli, Isabgol and Stevia is being encouraged in Dhar, Jabua, Mandla, Anuppur, Umara, Sehore, Alirajpur and Sheopur.

Companies like Dabur, Maharishi Ayurveda, Omni Active, Botanic Health, Natural Remedies, Cipla and Emami have been approached for market linkages of medicinal plants. Arrangements have been made to make training available from Krishi Vigyan Kendras, Universities, Research Centers, to farmers for preparation of high quality plants, seeds and product testing from Facilitation Centers and cultivation of plants, extraction of medicinal drugs, processing, storage, packaging and marketing.

Students should get caste and domicile certificates in the school itself: CM

Campaign will be run at village level to upload necessary documents
Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan reviews Single Citizen Database

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has directed to establish such a system in the state in which people do not have to make frequent visits to government offices for domicile and caste certificates and land related records.

The Chief Minister has also instructed to ensure that caste and domicile certificates are given to eligible students in the school itself. Chouhan was addressing a review meeting on Single Citizen Database at the residence office.

Chouhan said that a cam-

paign should be launched at the village level to upload the necessary documents of all the people. The Chief Minister said that information of people of the state who have got the benefits of various government schemes and those who have not, should be made available on one platform. Also, a system should be developed to identify issues, shortcomings and problems faced by the beneficiaries in the implementation of the schemes using the latest technology.

Science and Technology Minister Omprakash Sakhlecha, Chief Secretary Iqbal Singh Bains, Additional Chief Secretary General Administration Vinod Kumar, Principal Secretary Finance Manoj Govil, Principal Secretary Science & Technology Amit Rathore, Managing Director Madhya Pradesh State Electronics Development Corporation Nand Kumaram and other officials were present. It was told that the basic objective of Single Citizen Database is to create a single citizen database by including the databases of various departments in a holistic manner.

E-KYC of registered citizens will be done through the campaign. With this, the benefits of various schemes availed by one Samagra member will easily be available. By enabling Samagra, services of various departments like registration of Ladli Laxmi Yojana, application for caste certificate etc. can be given.

Aadhar reference number, caste and domicile certificate, details of land related information and class 10th and 12th marksheets are being added to the entire database with the aim of including the database of various departments in Samagra. So far mapping with Samagra has been completed with a total of about 48 lakh caste certificates.

In the meeting, discussion was held to ensure the use of Samagra in various beneficiary-oriented schemes, to create a single form to provide the benefits of various schemes, to give the right to provide services of various departments by a level competent officer and to develop the entire process of making marriage certificate on the Samagra portal.

Woman who honey-trapped men for money nabbed

The Crime Branch of Delhi Police has arrested a woman who used to honey-trap men and then blackmailed them, an official said on Tuesday.

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Crime Branch of Delhi Police has arrested a woman who used to honey-trap men and then blackmailed them, an official said on Tuesday.

The accused, identified as Johri Jabi alias Parveen (56), was arrested from Bhopal. Deputy Commissioner of Police (Crime Branch), Rohit Meena, said that a man, who is doctor by profession, had filed a complaint in 2018 alleging that he was honey-trapped by a woman named Parveen on the pretext of her treatment. The complainant also alleged that she visited his clinic for treatment stating that she is a resident of Saudi Arabia and lives alone. It was also alleged by the complainant that the woman called him to her residence citing an emergency medical condition, and made physical relations with him after intoxicating him using cold drinks laced with drugs.

Her associates already present there made a video of the doctor with the woman and after that they started demanding Rs 50 lakh from him. As per the complaint, a case under Section 384 (punishment for extortion) of the Indian Penal Code was lodged at the Jamia Nagar police station and investigation was taken up by the local police. During investigation, her two accomplices, namely Noor Majhar alias Aslam and Mahender, were arrested by the Special Cell in April 2019. But the woman could not be arrested as she absconded immediately after registration of the case. On June 16, information was received by the Crime Branch that the woman was staying in Bhopal under a false identity. Subsequently, a police team was constituted which went to Bhopal and arrested the accused woman. During interrogation, Johri Jabi disclosed that she used to trap rich people as per the direction of the kingpin of the gang, who has been identified as Jahangir alias Shekhu, while another gang member Mahender used to make videos.

CM GREETES THE CITIZENS OF SHAHGANJ

Shahganj is the first Nagar Panchayat in the state where all the 15 Corporators have been elected unopposed, that is the election of Nagar Panchayat has been completed unopposed.

Shahganj became the first Samras Nagar Panchayat

ALL 15 CORPORATORS OF SHAHGANJ NAGAR PANCHAYAT ELECTED UNOPPOSED

Bhopal: Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has greeted the citizens of Shahganj Nagar Panchayat of Sehore district for getting elected unopposed. CM Chouhan said that this is the first Nagar Panchayat in the state where all the 15 Corporators have been elected unopposed, that is the

election of Nagar Panchayat has been completed unopposed. Chouhan said this in a message issued to the media from the residence office.

Chouhan said that this would be the first Samras Nagar Panchayat. The people of Shahganj have presented a wonderful example of harmony, coordination and accord.

CM said that Shahganj has shown harmony in the midst of fierce competition for elections. In this Samras Nagar Panchayat, development and public welfare works will be done in an ideal way. No stone will be left unturned to complete these tasks. Ideal development of Shahganj will be done.

CM PLANTS BANYAN, KARANJ AND MOULSHREE SAPLINGS

Bhopal: Chief Minister Shivraj Singh planted saplings of Banyan, Karanj and Moulshree in Smart City Park along with local editor of newspaper Navdunia Bhopal Sanjay Mishra, State Bureau Chief Dhananjay Pratap Singh and members of Womens Power Jan-Kalyan Samiti. Members of the Chanchal Singh Rajput, Reena Soni, Abhilasha Sharma, Manisha Rathore, Deepshikha Shrivastava and Smt. Mona Shrivastava participated in the plantation. The Samiti encourages people to plant saplings on the birthdays, marriage anniversaries and sacred remembrance of family members and friends. Tree plantation is done especially during the sanitation campaigns and the rainy season. The Samiti is also cooperating in the campaigns conducted by the Municipal Corporation against non-standard level polythene and single use plastic for environmental protection. Among the saplings planted today, banyan has religious significance. Also, according to Ayurveda, the treatment of many diseases is possible with the banyan tree. Karanj is considered important in Ayurvedic medicine. It is also used in religious works. Moulshree is a medicinal tree, it has been used in Ayurveda for centuries. Its bright green leaves, beautiful texture of the tree captivate the people.



PUBLIC AWARENESS CAMP ORGANISED UNDER DE-ADDICTION CAMPAIGN

Bhopal: A public awareness camp was organised at the Kolar Tiraha slum area of Bhopal city on Wednesday under the liquor de-addiction campaign fortnight. In this, the people living in the slum area were made aware about liquor de-addiction. They were informed about the adverse effects of addiction. People were administered oath to quit using intoxicating substances and their health was checked. Homeopathic medicines were distributed to prevent addiction.

Can 'Arya Samaj Vivah Mandir Trust' solemnize marriage between Hindu boy and Muslim girl?

MADHYA PRADESH HIGH COURT SET TO LOOK INTO THE LEGAL STATUS OF THE TRUST'S ACTIONS

Zafar Alam Khan | Bhopal

The Madhya Pradesh High Court is set to examine that whether a self-styled Trust the Arya Samaj Vivah Mandir Trust can solemnize marriage between a Hindu boy and a Muslim girl.

Hearing the writ petition filed in the nature of habeas corpus, a division bench of Justice Rohit Arya and Justice MR Phadke raised a few queries and appointed an Advocate of the Court seeking his assistance with relevant literature and recitals of holy Quran including whether a Trust can solemnize marriage between a Hindu boy and a Muslim girl? Does the Trust have authority in law to issue marriage certificate and whether in accordance with its aims and objects, the trust can indulge in such activities. Also, if the bylaws of the Trust are duly ratified by the Registrar Public Trust or either under any Public Trust Act or other Act?

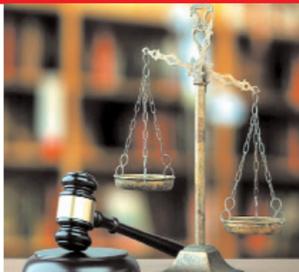
The Court will also find out that whether on a mere declaration on affidavit or a notarized affidavit the Trust can convert religion of a

Muslim girl as Hindu? Whether Arya Samaj Vivah Mandir Trust by itself can be held to be ad Arya Samaj Mandir which is solely for the purposes of solemnization of marriage having no affiliation or permission by the State/National body of the Arya Samaj Mandir!

The Court order came while hearing a plea filed by one Rahul alias Golu who alleged that his wife, Hina has been illegally confined by police in the Nari Sudhar Grah in Morena, and thus, he prayed that his wife be released from the said Grah.

The petitioner claimed that they had a relationship and after running away from their home, they married each other and for this purpose, Hina even converted her religion from Islam to Hinduism.

To prove his claim, the petitioner submitted



a conversion certificate and marriage certificate issued by the Arya Samaj Sammelan Trust Ghaziabad (UP). The Court took serious note of the facts of the case as in April 2022, it sought for the personal presence of the General Secretary of the Arya Samaj Vivah Mandir Trust to explain to the Court regarding the codified/customary law under which the said institution can convert the religion of a person taking into account the facts of the case, the Court additionally raised the following queries:

Can the trust accept such affidavit without verification and issue a certificate of marriage
endorsing conversion and does girl's pledge have any evidentiary value as regards religious conversion!

Whether act of seeking a declaration of conversion and thereafter solemnization of marriage with petitioner tantamounts to an illegal activity which may have severe penal consequences?
Whether such action has a serious impact on public order disturbing the social fabric of the society?
Whether an extensive inquiry by a senior police official is warranted into the conduct and affairs of the Trust as the vulnerability of the conversion of the marriage is well evident from the fact that the petitioner and Hina Khan, residents of Shivpuri are said to have solemnized the marriage in Ghaziabad (UP) and there is no identification or verification of their status by known persons?
Before the court, the additional Advocate General also referred to an order of the Allahabad High Court wherein the court had taken note of similar types of vulnerable activities and had ordered a high-level inquiry in the context of solemnization of marriages by such so called Arya Samaj Vivah Mandirs

1ST PHASE CAMPAIGNING WILL END FROM JUNE 23 EVENING

Bhopal: The first phase of voting in the three-tier Panchayat election will be held on June 25 from 7 am to 3 pm. In the first phase, in the village Panchayat areas where voting is to be held, public meetings will be prohibited from 3 pm on June 23. Secretary State Election Commission Rakesh Singh has informed that instructions have been given to keep liquor shops closed from 48 hours before the time of end of polling.

DIPLOMA ENGINEERING ADMISSIONS NOW ON 10TH CLASS MERIT

Bhopal: In the academic session 2022-23, admission to diploma engineering courses conducted in poly-technic colleges of Madhya Pradesh will be done on the basis of merit of marks obtained in Class 10th examination of 10+2. Earlier, the Entrance Test (PPT) was conducted by the Professional Examination Board.



EDITOR'S SPECS

MURMU, SINHA SHARE DEEP CONNECT WITH JHARKHAND

It is a unique coincidence that both the presidential poll candidates -- Droupadi Murmu and Yashwant Sinha -- share a deep connection with Jharkhand. Murmu, who has been declared a presidential candidate by the NDA alliance, has previously served as the Jharkhand Governor for six years, while Yashwant Sinha has been a three-time MP from Hazaribagh Lok Sabha constituency in Jharkhand. Droupadi Murmu has remained with the BJP, but Yashwant Sinha, who was previously a national-level BJP leader for nearly two decades and a minister in Vajpayee-led government, left the party and was with the Trinamool Congress before resigning to be a candidate for the President's post. Murmu was sworn in as the Governor of Jharkhand on May 18, 2015 and served it for 6 years and 48 days. Now exactly a year later, in July 2022, the ruling NDA alliance has nominated her for the country's highest constitutional post. Murmu started her political career in 1997 being elected as the Councillor of the district board in Rairangpur, Odisha. Murmu was elected twice as an MLA in Odisha and also got a chance to work as a Minister in the Naveen Patnaik government when the BJD-BJP coalition government was in power. The Opposition Presidential candidate, Yashwant Sinha started his political career in 1984 after taking voluntary retirement as an IAS officer. He was fielded as a Janata Party candidate from the Hazaribagh parliamentary constituency in the 1984 Lok Sabha elections, but faced a huge electoral defeat. Later in 1988, he was elected to the Rajya Sabha and served as the Union Finance Minister during the Chandrashekar-led government at the Centre. Later, he was elected to the Lok Sabha from the Hazaribagh constituency in 1998, 1999 and 2009. He also served as a Cabinet Minister during the then Vajpayee government at the Centre.

THE TRIBAL WOMAN DRAUPADI MURMU GIVES HEIGHTS TO PRESIDENTIAL RACE

Lalit Garg

Droupadi Murmu has been declared by the Bharatiya Janata Party as its presidential candidate for the fifteenth presidential election 2022, which shows good political skills and maturity. She is a tribal representative who will be the first tribal to reach the highest constitutional post and the second woman President of the Republic of India, which will give new strength to the democracy of India, along with the world. India is also changing rapidly. A new political vision, a new political environment is taking shape in the all-pervading turmoil, in this era, with Droupadi Murmu becoming the President, not only the dignity of this highest constitutional post will get a new record, but the national existence and identity will also be strengthened. Because her image has been that of a knowledgeable and soft-spoken politician of settled democratic traditions. It is hoped that her presence as the constitutional head of the country will reassure every Indian, especially women, tribal for their peaceful and safe life. Only the tribal can feel the pain of the tribal - that is, the pain of the reality that has been experienced. It is no surprise, in my view, that Droupadi Murmu emerged as the greatest female representative to raise the voice of the tribal's and the oppressed in today's world. Former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee had sent a Muslim APJ Abdul Kalam to Rashtrapati Bhavan and now Narendra Modi is consecrating first a Dalit, Ramnath Kovind and then Droupadi Murmu, a Scheduled Tribe, to the highest post of the executive, which is certainly a healthy & progressive decision. The credit for the presentation of Droupadi Murmu as a brilliant and historic presidential candidate goes to Prime Minister Narendra Modi and BJP President J.P. Nadda's strategy. Murmu's nomination is only sharpening the edge of lower class



politics on which BJP has been working hard for a long time. The neglect of the tribal community across the country has been in discussion since independence, Modi has been active since the beginning for the interest and welfare of the tribals, affecting about 11 percent of the total electorate and about 25 percent of the total voter turnout. Particularly, the BJP, comprising Narendra Modi, Amit Shah and Nadda, is giving special attention to the tribal community so that it can bring itself out of the limited identity of the urban party. When the names of presidential candidates were being discussed, I was hoping to get some names from the tribal community itself. Murmu was on top of them. Certainly, having a tribal woman in Rashtrapati Bhavan will enhance the image of BJP among the tribal community, whose direct impact can be seen in states like West Bengal, Odisha, Jharkhand, Gujarat. Narendra Modi has not only stunned, surprised, but has been doing miracles with his decisions, the same has been done by announcing the name of Droupadi Murmu. Because many targets have been hit with this one arrow. The BJP has been struggling hard in these states due to the presence of very powerful regional parties like Mamata Banerjee's Trinamool Congress in West Bengal, BJD in Odisha and Jharkhand Mukti Morcha in Jharkhand. Whereas in

these three states the dominance of Congress is negligible. In such a situation, by sending Droupadi Murmu to Rashtrapati Bhavan, BJP will not only be able to ease its fight, but will also be successful in making its place in these states. The elections are in front of Gujarat, there is also a tribal community in abundance, the effect of this decision will be seen there as well. On the other hand, for the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh, its fight against the conversion of a large number of tribals on behalf of Christian missionaries may also become easier now. BJP has been showing efficient and mature politics in these years. His leadership, while showing strategic acumen, made a man from a caste-backward background as the Prime Minister, first from a Dalit background as the President and now by declaring a tribal woman as the Presidential candidate. The meaning of bulge has changed. It has been given the name of social harmony, after a tribal politician becomes the President, there will be justice for the tribal and backward classes, it is believed. It is wrong to say that the President in India is only an office of symbolic importance. Coming from a Dalit background, President K. R. Narayan took a tough stand on the communal violence in Gujarat in 2002, forcing the then state government to change its stand on some matters, while President Giani Zail Singh, who came from a backward background, stunned the intoxicated Rajiv Gandhi government with a thumping majority. The issues were blown away. Ramnath Kovind also strengthened the democracy of the country with his decisions taken from time to time. There is ample possibility that Droupadi Murmu will be elected as the President and after taking oath of this office, she will also display the same determi-

nation and make her tenure memorable for the country, which is free from terror, free from scams, inflation and free from communalism. In which Dalit, Adivasi and Backward Classes should get an egalitarian and fair lifestyle of living. Being a candidate from a simple family to the highest office of the country is a testimony to the glory of Indian democracy. Nothing could be better than being Droupadi Murmu's candidate as President and marching towards getting elected is an inspiration to crores of people with similar backgrounds. This will not only give more strength to Indian democracy, but will also increase its fame. There is no doubt that Droupadi Murmu has been an ordinary politician, but India has a history that ordinary people have done 'extraordinary' things. Droupadi Murmu was born on 20 June 1958 in Baidposi village of Mayurganj district of Odisha. His father's name is Biranchi Narayan Tudu. They belong to the tribal ethnic group, the Santhals. She graduated from Rama Devi Women's College. After this Droupadi started the job from the State Secretariat of Odisha. She is married to Shyam Charan Murmu. In 1997, she became a local councillor for the first time by winning the election of the Nagar Panchayat for the first time. Three years later, he got the opportunity to become an MLA from the same constituency of Rairangpur, first in 2000, and then a minister in the BJP-BJD government twice. In 2015, she was made the first woman governor of Jharkhand. Former President V.V. Giri was also born in Odisha, but he was originally from Andhra Pradesh. Murmu's life witnessed many crises and struggles, which shows her vitality. Apart from being a widow in her youth, she did not break even with the death of two sons. During this, she continued to encourage the whole family including

her only daughter Itishree. Her eyes moistened when she was being administered oath as the Governor of Jharkhand. She is an ideal and courageous woman of religious rites. There is a special influence of Indian culture and rituals in them. Two days before the announcement of the name of her presidential candidate, she went to a cowshed in Rairangpur which is in law's town of my son Gaurav Garg while feeding the cows there, and told the operators there that you pray for me. Perhaps she had some hope and possibility that her name might be announced and fortunately Gaumata heard the call of her heart. Today, the fire of communal hatred is being deliberately fuelled in the country. All kinds of crises are being created; it is a great irony of democracy that heads are counted here, not brains. Our democracy is suffering because of this, it has been suffering. More heads are coming, not the brain. There are more masks of caste, religion and class and less faces of humanity. By deceitful use of intelligence, they create a maze of equations, from which Abhimanyu did not learn to get out. In fact, the people who drive democracy need such training so that a new definition of democracy can be rewritten. This vision made Droupadi Murmu's role not only important but also decisive. Therefore, by placing this burden on Droupadi Murmu, the country wants to assure that the governance of the Constitution from Arunachal Pradesh to West Bengal; it will run uninterrupted and the country's borders will be completely safe because the President is the Supreme Commander of the armies. This will be the first time in the history of India that the dignity of the office of a tribal woman will be increased by placing her as the President.

international

ASEAN DEFENCE MINISTERS VOW TO STRENGTHEN BLOC'S CENTRALITY, UNITY

Phnom Penh | Agencies

The defence ministers of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) vowed on Wednesday to strengthen the bloc's centrality, unity and rules-based order for the benefit of the people in the region, said a joint declaration. The declaration was released after the 16th ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting (ADMM), which was held in Phnom Penh, capital of Cambodia, under the chair of Cambodian Deputy Prime Minister and Defence Minister Gen Tea Banh, Xinhua news agency reported. "We reaffirm our adherence to the fundamental principles and purposes enshrined in the ASEAN Charter and Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia (TAC) in strengthening ASEAN centrality and unity and upholding a rules-based regional order anchored in international law for the benefit of the people," the declaration said. The ministers also reaffirmed the central role of ASEAN as the primary driving force in enhancing defense and security cooperation and confidence building measures with its external partners with the common objective to maintain peace, security and prosperity in an open, transparent and inclusive regional architec-



ture. They also reiterated joint efforts and commitment to enhancing strategic dialogue and practical defense cooperation, through the ADMM and the ADMM-Plus as the region's key security architecture, in response to non-traditional security challenges, the declaration added. The ministers also pledged to uphold the principles of ASEAN centrality, unity, and cooperation for peace, security and sustainable development in the region. Gen. Banh said the presence of ASEAN defense ministers in Cambodia underscored the bloc's commitment to maintaining ASEAN centrality, unity, and cooperation for peace, security and sustainable development in the region. "ASEAN must stay united to maintain its strength and resilience while the whole region is confronting the

pressures of increasing geopolitical competition, transnational crime, terrorism, security and technological challenges, climate change, disasters and epidemics," he said at the meeting. "We must all be ready to accept those obstacles at all times and try to solve them together based on the spirit of peace, non-discrimination, cooperation, trust and respect for each other," he added. At the end of the meeting, the ASEAN defense ministers adopted three concept papers -- the Enhancing Cooperation Amongst Defense Forces of ASEAN Member States in Cross Border Pandemic Containment, the Enhancing Support Mechanism for ASEAN Women Peacekeepers, and the Establishment of ASEAN Defense Educational Institutions' Collaboration, according to the declaration. They also endorsed the Phnom Penh vision on the role of defence institutions in supporting the post-Covid-19 pandemic recovery, it added. Established in 1967, ASEAN groups Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam. According to the declaration, the 17th ADMM will be held in Indonesia next year.

EUROPE TOLD TO PREPARE IMMEDIATELY FOR RUSSIA TO TURN OFF ALL GAS EXPORTS

London | Agencies

Europe needs to prepare "immediately" for Russia to turn off all gas exports to the region this winter, according to the head of the International Energy Agency, who has called on governments to work on reducing demand and keeping nuclear power plants open. Fatih Birol said that the reductions in supplies in recent weeks the Kremlin has attributed to maintenance work could, in fact, be the beginning of wider cuts designed to prevent the filling of storage facilities in preparation for winter, as Russia seeks to gain leverage over the region, The Guardian reported. "Europe should be ready in case Russian gas is completely cut off," he said in an interview with the Financial Times. "The nearer we are coming to winter, the more we understand Russia's intentions." "I believe the cuts are geared towards avoiding Europe filling storage, and increasing Russia's leverage in the winter months." EU countries are racing to refill storage sites, with Germany hoping to reach 90 per cent of capacity by November. Its stores are only half full, The Guardian reported. Member states have also been working to reduce their reliance on Russian fossil fuels, by sourcing gas from other countries, including the US, and by speeding up the switch to renewable energy, although officials have



conceded that the race to phase out Russian oil and gas would mean burning more coal and keeping nuclear plants going. Birol said emergency measures taken by European governments to reduce energy demand probably not gone far enough, and urged countries to work on preserving energy supplies. "I believe there will be more and deeper demand measures as winter approaches," Birol said. He added that gas supplies may need to be rationed, if Russia were to further reduce gas exports. Moscow has reduced or even cut off gas deliveries to several EU countries in recent weeks, in response to their decision to impose sanctions on the Kremlin over its invasion of Ukraine. Russian gas supplies to Europe received through the Nord Stream 1 pipeline - which runs under the Baltic Sea to Germany - have been falling, The Guardian reported.

INDONESIAN PREZ TO VISIT RUSSIA, UKRAINE

Jakarta | Agencies

Indonesian President Joko Widodo will visit Moscow and Kiev by the end of June and meet with Russian President Vladimir Putin and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky respectively, Indonesian Foreign Minister Retno Marsudi told a press briefing on Wednesday. Retno said that during the visits, Widodo will discuss the food crisis caused by the Russia-Ukraine conflict, Xinhua news agency reported. The "special visits" would show that Indonesia, as the host country of Group of 20 (G20) Summit in November, was "actively responding" to the ongoing geopolitical issue. Indonesia has fully expected that Russia, one of G20 members, will attend the summit, while Ukraine was also invited for the meeting



as a guest country. "We fully understand that the situation now is very complicated, and all of the countries in the world know that. Thus, through the visits, the president wants to contribute to overcoming the food crisis that has been caused by the war and has impacted the poor countries. The President wants to push for the spirit of peace," Retno said. She pointed out that President Widodo would be the first president from the Southeast Asia region to visit both countries since the conflict broke out in February. The conflict between Russia and Ukraine has been going on since then, which has been widely reported to trigger a rise in global food and energy prices. Before travelling to Moscow and Kiev, Widodo will first attend the G7 Summit in Germany.

PAKISTAN ANNOUNCES BROAD AGREEMENT WITH IMF

Islamabad | Agencies

Pakistan has reached a broad agreement with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in reference to the 2022-23 fiscal budget of Rs 9.9 trillion with the government agreeing to announce and impose new taxes on earnings and petroleum levy from July 1. As per official sources, IMF and Pakistan have mutually agreed to impose at least Rs 50 per litre petroleum levy, which will be done through a gradual and consistent increase from August 2022 onwards. Miftah Ismail, Federal Minister for Finance said, "we have locked the budget for fiscal year 2022-23 in con-

sultation with the IMF and now the Fund will consult with the State Bank of Pakistan on monetary targets." Miftah also confirmed that the fiscal budget will be increased to Rs 9.9 trillion, which will be an increase of at least Rs 400 billion against Rs 9.5 trillion budget, presented earlier this month. As per details shared of the broad agreement with the IMF, the budget's surplus target, revenues excluding interest expenses has remained unchanged to Rs 152 billion while the overall budget target also remains the same at Rs 3.8 trillion, which makes 4.9 per cent of the GDP (Gross Domestic Product). However, the target for the Federal

Board of Revenue (FBR) has been revised to Rs 7.440 trillion against previously set target of Rs 7 trillion. "The government has also decided to impose 1 per cent Income Support Levy on people and companies earning Rs 150 million a year, 2 per cent on those having income of Rs 200 million, 3 per cent additional rate has been proposed for Rs 250 million annual earners and 4 per cent for Rs 300 million annual income", said an official of the finance ministry. "We have had to agree to IMF demand to impose 2.5 per cent income tax on those earnings from Rs 600,000 to Rs 1.2 million per annum. It is still half of the rate the people in this income bracket are currently pay-

ing," said Miftah Ismail. It is pertinent to mention that the broad agreement with the IMF falls short of a staff level pact, for which, Pakistan has been in negotiating with the IMF team; experts believe that the broad agreement will bring some confidence in the market and get it out of its uncertainty that took a heavy toll on the country's currency, triggering a wave of inflation and eroding the confidence of the markets and investors. Pakistani rupee has been shedding its value against the US dollar and closed at Rs 211.52 to a dollar in the inter-bank, which is by far, the country's highest rate of currency against the dollar in history.



'READY TO QUIT AS CM', SAYS UDDHAV THACKERAY TO SENA REBELS

STOUTLY DENYING THAT THE SHIV SENA HAD DISCARDED HINDUTVA, MAHARASHTRA CHIEF MINISTER UDDHAV THACKERAY ON WEDNESDAY SAID THAT HE IS READY TO QUIT HIS POST AND ALSO AS PARTY CHIEF PROVIDED THE REBELS COME AND TALK TO HIM FACE-TO-FACE.

Team Absolute | Mumbai
Soutfully denying that the Shiv Sena had discarded Hindutva, Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray on Wednesday said that he is ready to quit his post and also as party chief provided the rebels come and talk to him face-to-face.

come and told me right here. I would have quit immediately," Thackeray declared. He said that since the political crisis erupted late on Monday, both Nationalist Congress Party President Sharad Pawar and Congress observer Kamal Nath categorically told him that they fully support him.

MAHA GUV DOWN WITH COVID, IN HOSPITAL AND STABLE

Mumbai: At the height of a major political crisis that is unfolding in the state, Maharashtra Governor Bhagat Singh Koshyari tested Covid-19 positive, officials said on Wednesday. The 80-year-old Governor has been admitted to the Sir H. N. Reliance Foundation Hospital in south Mumbai for treatment and his condition has been described as 'stable'.

Maha crisis: BJP in wait and watch mode

Team Absolute | New Delhi
As Maharashtra Chief Minister faces a revolt from his own MLAs, there is a serious question mark on the stability of his government. The rebellion of Eknath Shinde, a strong Shiv Sena leader and once close to Balasaheb Thackeray and Uddhav Thackeray, has put a question mark on the fate of the coalition government in the state.

Shinde and their future strategy, the BJP is also waiting to know the stand of Governor Bhagat Singh Koshyari. Though the Governor has been admitted to hospital as he has tested positive for the Coronavirus. BJP says this is an internal matter of Shiv Sena. Talking to IANS, a senior BJP leader said, "For the sake of power, Shiv Sena formed the government in alliance with Congress and the NCP by leaving the path of Hindutva, insulting the mandate and betraying us (BJP). This immoral and unusual alliance had to be broken. It is the failure of Uddhav Thackeray that he could not even handle his party."

is in no mood to be in a hurry. That's why the command of the entire tussle is still in the hands of Shiv Sena's rebel minister Eknath Shinde. Shinde, along with other rebel Sena MLAs, is now in another BJP-ruled state of Assam. They landed in Guwahati on Wednesday morning from Surat. Shinde has claimed that 40 out of 55 MLAs of the party are with him. He has also claimed the support of seven Independent MLAs. During the phone conversation with Uddhav Thackeray on Tuesday, Shinde put several conditions for returning back to the party fold. So far he has not got the answers. Till then the BJP is keeping a close watch on the entire development from behind the scenes.

How 2 Sena MLAs 'escaped' dramatically from rebels' camp!

TWO SUSPECTED TURN-COAT SHIV SENA MLAS MADE A DRAMATIC ESCAPE FROM THE REBELS' CAMP - LED BY SENIOR MINISTER EKNATH SHINDE AND OTHERS WHO HAD PITCHED TENT IN A FIVE-STAR HOTEL IN SURAT, GUJARAT - AND REACHED MAHARASHTRA SAFELY IN THE PAST 24 HOURS.

Team Absolute | Mumbai
Two suspected turncoat Shiv Sena MLAs made a dramatic escape from the rebels' camp - led by senior Minister Eknath Shinde and others who had pitched tent in a five-star hotel in Surat, Gujarat - and reached

Maharashtra safely in the past 24 hours. The Sena MLAs who 'escaped' are: Kailas Patil from Osmanabad and Nitin Deshmukh from Akola, who claimed they were "misled and taken against their wishes" by the rebels group late on Monday. Recounting his tale to the Sena bigwigs, Patil said when the group of MLAs was heading for a purported party to Thane he sensed something amiss as the vehicle changed route and headed towards Gujarat from the Ghodbunder Road on Mira Road. Under the pretext of relieving himself, Patil managed to get down at Talasari near the Maharashtra-Gujarat border Police Check Post at that late hour, before entering the Bharatiya Janata Party-ruled adjoining state. Taking advantage of the darkness, he started walking briskly for around five km towards Mumbai and then managed to hitch a bike ride towards the state capital. En route, Patil called up Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray and briefed him on the upcoming political crisis spearheaded by Shinde and others. He finally reached Thackeray's private residence 'Matoshri' in

Bandra from where he was escorted to a safe house and he remains lodged there since. Coming back with a sensational ordeal of survival and escape, Deshmukh claimed he was 'kidnapped' and then taken to Surat in the rebels' group which landed there during the night of Monday-Tuesday. "Around 3 a.m. on Tuesday, I managed to escape from the hotel and went outside, to hitch a ride from some passing vehicles. I was pursued by over a hundred Gujarat Police personnel who prevented me from sitting in any vehicle and they forcibly took me to some hospital," Deshmukh told mediapersons on Wednesday at Nagpur. At the hospital, Deshmukh claimed that they performed some medical procedures on his body, tried to prove that he had 'suffered a heart attack' and gave him some injection, though he was perfectly healthy. "They treated me like some terrorist. Somehow I could manage to flee from the hospital and here I am - absolutely fit and fine, no heart problems as the police contended," said a relieved Deshmukh. Both Patil and Deshmukh reiterated that

they are "of course with CM Thackeray and there was no question of them joining anti-party activities or rebelling. The duo could not provide the exact number of rebels allegedly supporting Shinde though Deshmukh said "many more will return" to the Sena fold. Earlier, Deshmukh's wife had lodged a missing complaint with the local police that she suspected threats to his life as he was not available on phone after 7 p.m. on Monday (June 20). Sena Chief Spokesperson and MP Sanjay Raut drew the media attention to the successful escape by the two MLAs - Patil and Deshmukh - and said such treatment meted out to them was condemnable. Minister Shinde, who has shifted camp from Surat to Guwahati in Assam, on Wednesday claimed that he now enjoys the support of more than 42 Sena MLAs. Maharashtra Governor Bhagat Singh Koshyari and CM Thackeray have both tested Covid-19 positive, and the rebels prepared for a 'wait-and-watch' spell and the Opposition BJP made preparations to topple the MVA and grab power.

Maha Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray tests Covid positive

Team Absolute | Mumbai
Among the massive political upheaval in the state, Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray tested Covid-19 positive here on Wednesday afternoon. State Congress President Nana Patole confirmed the developments though there was no comment from the CM Office. The development came hours after Governor Bhagat Singh Koshyari tested Corona positive this morning. While the Governor has been admitted to a private hospital for treatment, the CM decided to conduct a 'virtual cabinet' meeting this afternoon. After the huge power-game unleashed with the



rebellion by Sena Minister Eknath Shinde, a few ministers and around three-dozen plus MLAs, the Maha Vikas Aghadi allies Sena-Nationalist Congress Party-Congress are engaged in a massive fire-fighting operation to save the government.

Maha crisis: Rebel Sena Minister claims 34 MLAs with Eknath Shinde

Team Absolute | Mumbai
Shiv Sena Minister Eknath Shinde, who has raised a banner of revolt, has the support of 34 MLAs, claimed his supporter and Minister of State Omprakash Babarao Kadu alias Bachhu Kadu. Kadu, of the Prahar Janshakti Party (PJP), further contended that the number of legislators supporting Shinde is increasing and could even cross 40 as the Maharashtra political drama shifted from Surat in Gujarat to the Northeast state of Assam. "Whatever decision Shinde takes shall be acceptable to all of us," said Kadu, speaking to a private Marathi channel. Earlier, claiming that he had not left the Shiv Sena nor revolted, Shinde said there were 40 MLAs with him who travelled to Guwahati - ruled by the Bharatiya Janata Party, early on Wednesday.



However, Shiv Sena and Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) declined to comment on the issue and claims made by the rebels, saying that many of the MLAs will return to the party fold soon. Sena Chief Spokesperson Sanjay Raut, MP, said that the party team had gone to meet Shinde on Tuesday and heard him out. "He had certain issues and we shall discuss further. We have always fought and shall continue to struggle," said Raut. The MVA government plunged into its gravest crisis early on Tuesday after Shinde suddenly revolted along with a group of Shiv Sena MLAs and Ministers, and reached Surat early on Tuesday morning. While the Shiv Sena with help from allies Nationalist Congress Party-Congress, launched all-round fire-fighting operations, the BJP stirred the political cauldron first in Gujarat and then in Assam early today.

IGNORING MAHA MLAS' PLEAS FOR MONTHS COST CONGRESS DEAR

New Delhi: It is now evident that a few Congress MLAs in Maharashtra had cross-voted in the MLC elections on Monday and the party is on damage control mode and trying hard to keep its flock together amid the ongoing threat to the MVA government. "There is crisis within the Congress... many MLAs had not voted for the designated Congress candidate in the MLC polls," former Maharashtra Chief Minister Prithviraj Chavan told media. Sources say that the Congress is likely to replace Congress Legislature Party leader Balasahab Thorat to placate party MLAs and state in-charge H.K. Patil has been rushed to Maharashtra. While the party maintains that the political upheaval is an internal Shiv Sena crisis but party leaders say that ignoring the MLAs plea was a mistake by the party. About two dozen Congress MLAs from Maharashtra had met party President Sonia Gandhi in April to discuss party issues in the state, and share their grievances. They had complained that Congress ministers in the Maha Vikas Aghadi government ignore them and party workers and appraised her that there is a strong resentment against the ministers due to this. Gandhi had given them a patient hearing and assured them of amicable solution within a week but there was no movement. The MVA government on Tuesday faced its worst political crisis as at least one Shiv Sena Minister along with other ministers and several MLAs veered towards a revolt and are now parked in Gujarat.

Eknath Shinde touted Balasaheb Thackeray's 'Hindutva' to shake MVA

Team Absolute | Mumbai
As the Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) government tottered on the brink of collapse, rebel Minister Eknath Shinde strategically used the 'Hindutva' taught by the late Shiv Sena founder-supremo Balasaheb Thackeray to attract Sena MLAs to his side. "We are Balasaheb (Thackeray)'s staunch Shiv Sainiks. Balasaheb has taught us Hindutva. We have never and will never compromise on the teachings of Balasaheb and 'dharma' Anand Dighe for power," said Shinde, in his first tweet on Tuesday after leading the rebellion. While collecting the Shiv Sena MLAs' flock, Shinde is also understood to have sent a proposal to the Sena, virtually handing over power to the Opposition Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) with Leader of Opposition Devendra

Fadnavis as the Chief Minister and himself as Deputy CM in the possible new dispensation. This implies that Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray, his son and Minister Aditya Thackeray, as well as their staunch loyalists, would have no role to play in the probable next government. Signalling a 'vertical split' in the Shiv Sena, the new regime would effectively push the left-over Sena along with Nationalist Congress Party and Congress to the opposition side. A confident Shinde, who shifted camp from Surat (Gujarat) to Guwahati (Assam) early on Wednesday along with his supporters, has contended that he enjoys the backing of over 40 Sena MLAs -- but this has been challenged by several MVA leaders. Sniffing power, hectic political activity got underway in the BJP camp since late Tuesday with top leaders, a

couple of Central Ministers and others to hammer out various possibilities in a bid to form the government with Shinde's support. Meanwhile, Sena Chief Spokesperson and MP Sanjay Raut made a telling tweet indicating that the situation in Maharashtra is headed towards 'dissolution' of the Legislative Assembly. Interacting with mediapersons briefly, Raut said: "At the most what will happen.. Our government will lose the majority in the state. We can always return to power, but the party's image is above all..". However, Congress President Nana Patole, senior leader Prithviraj Chavan and others scoffed Raut's statement and said there's no proposal to 'dissolve' the Legislative Assembly. They also claimed that the government is 'stable' and will continue as usual with hopes that the rebel Sena MLAs would return.

Now, special pilgrimage weather forecast for Pandharpur Waari

On the lines of the special pilgrimage forecast for the Char Dham Yatra in Uttarakhand, the IMD has announced a special forecast for the annual Waari pilgrimage in Maharashtra.

Team Absolute | Mumbai
On the lines of the special pilgrimage forecast for the Char Dham Yatra in Uttarakhand, the IMD has announced a special forecast for the annual Waari pilgrimage in Maharashtra. India Meteorological Department (IMD) issues such a forecast for the duration of the pilgrimage, which is not just helpful for the pilgrims but more so for the planners, administrators and disaster management personnel in view of the lakhs of people converging at a place over a short duration. Another recent example of special pilgrimage forecast by IMD was the one issued for Ambubachi Mela, the famous pilgrimage at Kamakhya temple in Guwahati, where too thousands of devotees throng over a short duration from July 22 to 26 annually. Waari essentially is a pilgrimage on foot wherein people walk with a 'palkhi' from Dehu and Alandi near Pune to Pandharpur - nearly 450 kms - in Solapur district, very near to the Karnataka border. Every year, thousands of devotees walk from the two places for the Waari to culminate at Pandharpur on Aashadhi Ekadashi that falls



on July 10 this year. Over the years, people travel in vehicles too, only adding to the crowds. On Aashadhi Ekadashi day, there are an estimated 12 lakh people in the small town of Pandharpur that has a population of little over one lakh. The presiding deity Vitthal of Pandharpur has a wide fan following and hence, the Ashadhi Ekadashi waari witnesses participation from both Karnataka and border areas of Telangana and Andhra Pradesh. "We started on Monday when the Tukaram Maharaj palkhi embarked from Dehu. Similarly, the Dnyaneshwar Maharaj palkhi embarked from Alandi on Tuesday. Both travel via Pune to reach together on July 10 at Pandharpur. We would be issuing a special forecast for this entire duration," said K.S. Hosalkar, a senior meteorologist from IMD Pune. The forecast would be available on IMD Pune website for all to access. The IMD also works in tandem with the government agencies by providing direct inputs to them in view of the smooth management of Waari.

SANJAY RAUT'S TELLING TWEET HINTS AT FATE AWAITING MVA



Mumbai: As the political crisis continued to worsen, Shiv Sena Chief Spokesperson and MP Sanjay Raut made a telling tweet that the situation in Maharashtra is headed towards 'dissolution' of the Legislative Assembly, here on Wednesday. Interacting with mediapersons briefly, Raut said: "At the most what will happen.. Our government will lose the majority in the state. We can always return to power, but the party's image is above all..". He also said that it's not easy for the Sena or the rebel Minister Eknath Shinde to leave each other. In another development, Tourism Minister Aditya Thackeray dropped his ministerial credentials from social media handles but retained himself as 'Yuva Sena President' and other charges.





Lea Seydoux joins 'Dune Part Two' as Lady Margot

Los Angeles | Agencies

Actress Lea Seydoux has joined 'Dune: Part Two' in the critical role of Lady Margot, a vital ally to Paul Atreides in his war with the House of Harkonnen. According to 'Variety', director Denis Villeneuve is set to start filming the 'Dune' sequel later this year, with Chalamet, Zendaya, Rebecca Ferguson, Josh Brolin, Javier Bardem, Stellan Skarsgard and Dave Bautista set to reprise their roles. They will be joined by new actors Austin Butler (as Feyd-Rautha Harkonnen, heir to the House of Harkonnen), Christopher Walken (as Emperor Shaddam IV) and Florence Pugh (as the Emperor's daughter, Princess Irulan).

Villeneuve is co-writing the screenplay with Jon Spaihts. Villeneuve, Mary Parent, Cale Boyter and Tanya Lapointe are producing, and Josh Grode, David Valdes, Herbert W. Gains, Brian Herbert, Byron Merritt, Kim Herbert, Thomas Tull, Spaihts, Richard P. Rubinstein and John Harrison are executive producing, reports 'Variety'.

In Frank Herbert's novel 'Dune', Lady Margot factors early on into the story, when she leaves a critical warning to Paul's mother, Lady Jessica (Ferguson), about the treachery that awaits them on Arrakis after House Atreides takes over from House Harkonnen.

That sequence didn't make Villeneuve's movie, but as a member of the Bene Gesserit, Lady Margot does have a major part to play in the second half of the story, involving Feyd-Rautha and her husband, Count Fenring (a role that has yet to be cast).

Perhaps best known for her performance in the latest James Bond movies, 'Spectre' and 'No Time to Die', Seydoux most recently starred alongside Viggo Mortensen and Kristen Stewart in director David Cronenberg's 'Crimes of the Future'.

First look of the Orcs from 'The Lord of the Rings: The Rings of Power' unveiled

Los Angeles | Agencies

The first exclusive look from the forthcoming series 'The Lord of the Rings: The Rings of Power' has been released. The new series aims at showing the crucial role played by the Battalions of Orcs, in a more realistic way. The Amazon series is set in the Second Age, and the Orcs will be seen in a different form.

Looking back to the series when towards Tolkien's First Age, the Orcs were demolished nearly to the point of extinction in the War of Wrath. Since the highly anticipated 'The



Rings of Power' will be taking place in the Second Age, we will meet the creatures as they're scattered across Middle-Earth.

Thousands of years before they become the earth-shattering force that helps level the realms of elf and man, Orcs are low in numbers, down on their luck, and fighting for survival.

Head of The Rings of Power's prosthetic department Jamie Wilson and executive producer Lindsey Weber, both prolific minds, says Weber "Well, I love Orcs".

"I love creature design, so I'm very happy to talk about this stuff. JD and Patrick - the showrunners - the very first page of their bible was about Orcs. They have a real passion for them, they love practical prosthetics and design, and they felt that they needed exploration given that this is the Second Age and thousands of years before the events of the Third Age." "It was really important to them to treat them as their own culture and explore their world on its own two legs in its own right."



'X-FACTOR' ALUM TOM MANN'S FIANCEE DIES SUDDENLY ON THEIR WEDDING DAY

Los Angeles | Agencies

'X-Factor' alum Tom Mann confirmed that his fiancée, Dani Hampson, died on what would have been their wedding day. "I can't believe I am writing these words but my darling Dani - my best friend, my everything and more, the love of my life - passed away in the early hours of Saturday morning, 18th June," the songwriter, 28, wrote via Instagram, alongside a photo of his late partner holding their son, Bowie, reports usmagazine.com.

"What was supposed to be the happiest day of our lives ended in irreversible heartbreak. I feel like I have cried an ocean." Mann continued: "We never made it to the altar; or got to say our



vows, or dance our first dance, but I know you know that you were my entire world and the best thing that has ever happened to me, Danielle. I will wear this ring that I was always supposed to wear as a sign of my unconditional love to you."

Hampson, 34, had no apparent health issues and the cause of her death has not been publicly revealed. The publicist and Mann, who were forced to postpone their September 2020 wedding due to the coronavirus pandemic, welcomed Bowie in October 2021.

According to usmagazine.com, in his post, the former Stereo Kicks member wrote that while he was "completely broken" by the loss of Hampson, he was using "any strength I can muster" in order to be there for the infant. "I will not be a mark on the parent that you had already become but I promise I will do my everything to raise Bowie just the way we always wanted," Mann wrote.

Beyoncé's new song is a huge hit with Michelle Obama

Los Angeles | Agencies

Former US president Barack Obama's wife Michelle Obama has hailed singer Beyoncé's comeback single 'Break My Soul' as "the song we all need right now". The former First Lady of the United States is a good friend and long-time fan of the 'Single Ladies' hitmaker, and she's thrilled to have her back and "can't wait" for her upcoming album, 'Renaissance', reports femalefirst.co.uk.

Alongside a picture of the 40-year-old megastar performing, she wrote: "Queen @Beyoncé, you've done it again! 'Break My Soul' is the song we all need right now, and I can't help but dance and sing along while listening to it. Can't wait for the album!"

Michelle and husband Barack Obama - the 44th President - had Beyoncé perform at the 2009 inaugural ball and the 2013 inauguration.

What's more, the 'Formation' singer penned an essay for TIME magazine's annual list of the 100 most influential people in the world for 2019, in which she hailed the 58-year-old attorney and author "regal".

She wrote: "When I first met her, I was embraced by a warm, regal, confident woman who possessed a reassuring calm, on the eve of President Obama's historic first Inauguration."

Los Angeles | Agencies

Madonna is getting fans hyped up for her upcoming concert in celebration of Pride Month in New York City. The bonafide 'Queen Of Pop,' 63, posed up around the performance venue for a slideshow of snaps that were shared to her Instagram Story on Tuesday.

'Backstage B****es,' captioned Madonna, who rocked a sexy velvet romper styled with a pair of thigh-high stockings.

The Like A Virgin hitmaker accessorized with a pair of black lace gloves, a studded waist belt and she layered a number of chunky chains around her neck.

She also donned a pair of stylish seeing glasses.

Madonna's signature blonde strands were parted down the middle and styled straight. She added height to her petite frame with a pair of lace-up platform boots.

Madonna gets dolled up and poses with son



KHLOE KARDASHIAN TURNS UP THE HEAT

Los Angeles | Agencies

Khloé Kardashian will have her work cut out for her when she attempts to make it all the way to the end on the YouTube talk show Hot Ones. The 37-year-old Kardashians star announced Tuesday on Instagram that she had filmed an interview for the series, which will be available to stream starting on Thursday, June 23.

The interview will test her mettle, as she will have to eat progressively spicier chicken wings, all while being interviewed by the host and co-creator,



Sean Evans.

In an odd move, Khloé didn't share any posts about the interview on her own account, but instead reposted the announcement from her clothing label Good American's account.

@khloekardashian on @hotones premieres Thursday at 11 am ET," read

the initial post, which also included a timer ticking down to the premiere.

Khloé posed with Sean while both held glasses of milk in a behind-the-scenes photo from the taping.

She looked casual yet playful for the appearance with a figure-hugging pink tank top that she wore without a bra.

ABSOLUTE PIC OF THE DAY



Emma Hernan



Mission Olympic

BAJRANG PUNIA TO GO US FOR TRAINING, CYCLISTS TO GET FASTER T20 BIKES FOR PREPARATION OF CWG

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Sports Ministry's Mission Olympic Cell on Wednesday approved financial assistance for Olympic bronze medallist wrestler Bajrang Punia's 35 days training camp in the US.

The Ministry's Target Olympic Podium Scheme (TOPS) would be funding Bajrang's travel, boarding, and daily costs towards training camp in Michigan, USA from June 25 to July 30 (35 days) and would also cover the expenses for his personal coach and physiotherapist.

The training stint in the USA will help Bajrang prepare for the upcoming Commonwealth Games and World Championships. During the meeting, the MOC also approved financial assistance towards the procurement of two T20 Proteam Look TT track bikes for TOPS Development cyclists Ronaldo Singh and David



Beckhame. The T20 bikes are new top-of-the-range track bikes that were also used by the French National Team at the Tokyo Olympics. The bike is said to be lighter, stiffer, and more aerodynamically efficient than its predecessors. The mentioned bikes will also help the athletes prepare for the forthcoming Commonwealth Games this year. The MOC also approved financial assistance for

Sharath Kamal (financial assistance towards support staff fees, fitness training, physiotherapy, rehab & fitness testing, and nutritionist fees) and shooter Anish (towards foreign training and competition in Germany at Shooting Sport Center, Suhl for 20 days).

Anish wants to train under Pistol coach Ralf Schumann in Germany and prepare for upcoming competitions.

Ranji Trophy Final

Mumbai reach 248/5; MP fight back in second session

Bengaluru | Agencies

Yashasvi Jaiswal slammed 78 as Mumbai reached 248/5 at stumps on day one of Ranji Trophy final against Madhya Pradesh at the M Chinnaswamy Stadium on Wednesday.

Jaiswal, in company of skipper Prithvi Shaw, added 87 for the first wicket, but the 41-time champions were unable to string a 50+ stand thereafter. For Madhya Pradesh, off-spinner Saransh Jain took 2/31 while Anubhav Agarwal was impressive in his 2/56.

Resuming from 201/4 in 64 overs at tea, Sarfaraz Khan survived a loud lbw appeal off left-arm spinner Kumar Kartikeya Singh. The ball hit his pad, popped up and was caught by Rajat Patidar running from slip. He and Hardik Tamore got going with a couple of boundaries, but the latter nicked to slip off Saransh Jain, departing for 24.

Post Tamore's fall, Madhya Pradesh kept things tight by dry-

ing up the runs for Sarfaraz as well as Shams Mulani. Eventually, Sarfaraz and Mulani ensured no further loss of wickets for Mumbai.

Earlier, Madhya Pradesh bounced back in the second session by picking three wickets to reduce the 41-time champions to 201/4 in 64 overs at tea. For Mumbai, Jaiswal made a fine 78 before falling to Anubhav Agarwal.

Mumbai lost their second wicket when Armaan Jaffer got a thick inner edge on a drive off a slower ball from Kumar Kartikeya Singh and was snapped by a diving short mid-wicket. After Jaiswal reached his fifty with a single through mid-wicket, Suved Parkar slammed a brace of boundaries before playing the flick too early and leading edge popped to mid-wicket off Saransh Jain.

But Jaiswal had no such issues, hitting Gaurav Yadav for three boundaries - driving with full face of the bat, outside edge running past gully and cutting over gully. He was elegant while using his



feet to cream Kartikeya through extra cover. But for the third time in the session, Mumbai lost a wicket against run of play as

Jaiswal went for an expansive drive, only for it to fly towards gully.

● Mumbai 248/5 in 90 overs (Yashasvi Jaiswal 78, Prithvi Shaw 47; Saransh Jain 2/31, Anubhav Agarwal 2/56) against Madhya Pradesh

Rothsay International Eastbourne

Giorgi ousts Muguruza to reach quarterfinal

Eastbourne | Agencies

Italy's Camila Giorgi reached the quarterfinal of the Rothsay International here on Wednesday after beating Spain's Garbine Muguruza 7-5, 6-3 in 1 hour and 53 minutes in the third round.

With this win, Giorgi moved into her third career quarterfinal in Eastbourne, having first reached the last eight here in 2014 and then the semifinals in 2021. The Italian also notched back-to-back quarterfinals on grass in 2022, following her last-eight run in Birmingham last week.

Giorgi's victory is her 15th career Top 10 win, and second of 2022 following her upset of Aryna Sabalenka in the third round of Roland Garros. She improved her head-to-head against Muguruza to 3-2, posting a win over the former World No.1 for the first time since the 2014 New Haven quarterfinals.



The 30-year-old Giorgi will next face lucky loser Viktoriya Tomova, who overcame qualifier Kirsten Flipkens 3-6, 6-3, 6-4 in exactly 2 hours of play.

Tomova had lost to Flipkens 4-6, 6-2, 7-6(4) in the final round of qualifying, but got into the draw following the withdrawal of No 2 seed Ons Jabeur. The No.128-ranked Bulgarian came from a set and a breakdown to exact revenge and reach her first WTA 500 quarterfinal.

WASHINGTON SUNDAR SIGNS UP WITH COUNTY SIDE LANCASHIRE

Manchester: County side Lancashire on Wednesday announced that they have signed up India all-rounder Washington Sundar as their overseas player. Washington, who has been missing in action due to hand injury sustained while playing for Sunrisers Hyderabad in IPL 2022, is set to join the team after his rehab at National Cricket Academy (NCA) gets over.

This will be his first stint in England's domestic cricket and would be the second Indian after Cheteshwar Pujara to play county cricket. Pujara, who is with the India Test team ahead of their four-day tour match against Leicestershire, scored 720 runs in eight innings at a stunning average of 120 for Sussex in the first half of division two of the County Championship. Lancashire are currently third on the County Championship division one points table, behind Surrey and Hampshire, with 108 points. They will resume red-ball cricket with a clash against Gloucestershire from June 26 after their Vitality Blast T20 games.



Shakib closes gap on Jadeja's No. 1 spot in Test rankings for all-rounders

Dubai | Agencies

Bangladesh captain Shakib al Hasan has moved closer to reclaiming his crown as the best all-rounder in Test cricket by jumping to second on the latest list of ICC Test Player Rankings.

Shakib moved up two spots to second on the latest all-rounder rankings that were released by the ICC on Wednesday, with India left-hander Ravindra Jadeja the only player now in front of him.

Shakib has been in action for Bangladesh in the ongoing Test series against West Indies in the Caribbean and the 35-year-old produced an excellent performance with the bat in particular during



the first Test of the two-match series.

The Bangladesh skipper top-scored in the first innings with a stylish 51 and backed that up in the second innings with an even more impressive knock of 63 that helped force West Indies to bat a second time. If Shakib was to re-

claim the top ranking for all-rounders it would cap off a massive turnaround for one of Bangladesh's greatest players of all time.

Shakib first claimed the top ranking for Test all-rounders way back in December of 2011 and has since maintained his position near the top despite some injury concerns late in his career. He currently has a rating of 346 points, but still has a long way to go if he wants to overtake Jadeja at the head of proceedings who has an outstanding 385 rating points. Shakib also jumped 14 places to 32nd on the latest Test batting rankings, with new No.1 Joe Root hanging on to top spot following his exploits against New Zealand earlier this month.

India all-rounder Rumeli Dhar hangs her boots

Kolkata | Agencies

India's pace all-rounder Rumeli Dhar on Wednesday announced her retirement from all-formats of the game, ending a career where she starred with crucial match-winning contributions for the national side, including being their captain, for 15 years since her debut against England in 2003.

In all, she represented India in four Tests, 78 ODIs and 18 T20Is from 2003 to 2018. She also had the rare achievement of opening both the batting as well as bowling for India in a T20I against the West Indies in 2012.

Overall, Rumeli scored 236 runs at an average of 29.50



and picked eight wickets at an average of 21.75 in Test cricket. In ODI cricket, she amassed 961 runs, including six half-centuries at an average of 19.61 while picking 63

wickets at an average of 27.38. In T20I cricket, Rumeli made 131 runs with a best score of unbeaten 66, averaging 18.71 and took 13 wickets at an average of 23.30.

Fans hoping for another classical Nadal-Djokovic clash at Wimbledon

London | Agencies

In what will be heartening news for the fans of Spanish stalwart Rafael Nadal and Serbian world No. 3 Novak Djokovic, the two top tennis players have started training at SW19 ahead of the season's third Grand Slam at Wimbledon, and there is anticipation of another classic clash between two of the greatest tennis players of all time.

Djokovic, Nadal, Great Britain's Andy Murray and Swiss player Stan Wawrinka are among the stars who have been spotted training on the hallowed grass. Djokovic will pursue his seventh title at The Championships, where he owns a 79-10 record. The Serbian has won 21 consecutive matches at the tournament, having emerged victorious at



the past three editions of the event.

On the other hand, Nadal, who recently won his 14th title at Roland Garros to take his Grand Slam tally to a record-extending 22, would be hoping to add to the two Wimbledon titles he won in 2008 and 2010, especially after the 36-year-old recently said his debilitating left-foot injury had shown signs of improvement.

Daniel Vallverdu, the current coach of Wawrinka and a former member of Andy Murray's team, posted a photo with Murray and Wawrinka as they continued their preparation for the grass-court major. Also in the image was Ivan Lendl, Murray's coach.

The main draw action at The Championships will be played from June 27 through July 10. The prize money for the event will total a record 40,350,000 pounds.

With an eye on Commonwealth Games, India and Sri Lanka aim for fine-tuning their combinations

Dambulla | Agencies

With the women's T20 event of Commonwealth Games a little over a month away, both India and Sri Lanka will be aiming to fine-tune their combinations from the first T20I, starting from Thursday at the Rangiri Dambulla International Cricket Stadium.

For India, who last played a T20I during their trip to New Zealand ahead of the 50-over World Cup, the trip to Sri Lanka serves them a chance to zero in on their first-choice combination which will be there for the Commonwealth Games, something which head coach Ramesh Powar and skipper Harmanpreet Kaur had stressed on ahead of their departure.

With Shafali Verma and Smriti Mandhana set to open the batting, it will be interesting to witness where Harmanpreet would bat along with a returning Jemimah Rodrigues, who had a brilliant time in the Women's T20 Challenge, especially with a 44-ball 66 for Supernovas.



Then, there is Sabbhineni Meghana's emergence as a dependable batter, especially seen from her 47-ball 73 for Trailblazers in the

Women's T20 Challenge, in a year where she made 4, 49, and 61 in ODI series against New Zealand earlier this year. Eyes will be on the Indian team management over how Meghana fits in the T20I eleven, given that the side has an issue of lack of consistency in maintaining the momentum while batting first or chasing a target.

On the bowling front, India would want spin quartet of Deepti Sharma, Poonam Yadav, Radha Yadav and Rajeshwari Gayakwad to prosper in spin-friendly conditions while wishing for Megha Singh (uncapped in T20Is), Pooja Vastrakar and Renuka Singh to do an admirable job with fast bowling. Sri Lanka, on the other hand, are coming fresh off their first bilateral series in nearly two years, a tour of Pakistan, where they were swept 3-0 while managing to win the third and final ODI after losing the series as well.

They will be heavily reliant on skipper Chamari Athapaththu's all-round skills, especially with the bat in her opening partnership with youngster Harshitha Madhavi.

Golf: Four Indian women from WPGT set to play in Asia Pacific Cup

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The domestic Hero Women's Pro Golf Tour in India has provided a massive boost for the top Indian stars, who have done well on the local tour.

Four of its players will get a chance to play in the Simone Asia Pacific Cup, which in its inaugural year will carry as much as US\$ 750,000 in prize purse.

Two Indian teams of two players each have been invited for the inaugural edition of the Simone Asia Pacific Cup in Jakarta, Indonesia. The event is to be held from August 15 to 20, 2022. The tournament will be held under the aegis of the Asia Golf Leaders Forum (AGLF).

The tournament will feature a total prize purse of US\$ 750,000, out of which US\$ 500,000 is for the individual event and US\$ 250,000 for the Team event.

The event will be a 54 hole stroke play event over three



days. Initially, India was allotted one team and the two leading stars Aditi Ashok and Tvesha Malik were invited, but as per Women's Golf Association of India, they conveyed their regrets. They were replaced by Diksha Dagar and Gaurika Bishnoi.

WGAI then made a strong pitch to be allowed a second Team, from their Hero Order of Merit players. The request was accepted and Amandeep

Drall and Vani Kapoor, the top 2 on the 2020-21 combined Order of Merit were chosen.

All four players have conveyed their readiness. They have all been regulars on the WPGT and also playing on the Ladies European Tour, besides making starts in South Africa and Australia.

Champika Sayal will travel as the Team Principal-cum-Captain.



NEETU KAPOOR SPILLS BEANS ON WHAT KIND OF HUBBY, SON RANBIR KAPOOR IS?

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Neetu Kapoor has nothing but admiration for her daughter-in-law Alia Bhatt ever since she got hitched to Ranbir Kapoor. On April 14, the couple exchanged vows at their home in Bandra. Only close friends and family members were present for the ceremony. No, Neetu discussed her son Ranbir's post-marriage balancing act between his mother and wife Alia Bhatt in a recent interview.

Neetu shared her happiness on Ranbir and Alia's wedding in an interview with a news portal. She added that she had the same bond with the Gangubai Kathiawadi actress as she does with her own mother-in-law. "I feel the relationship between a mother-in-law and daughter-in-law is the husband's fault. Because you love your mother so much, and jab tum joru ka gulaam ban jaate ho na, fir maa ko prob-

lem hoti hai. If you balance your love for your mother and your wife, it is always nicer. She will love you more. When you become too much of your wife, that's when the mother feels."

She further said that because Ranbir is a very intellectual man and balances his affection, she is not receiving that emotion from him. Neetu claimed that Ranbir does not act like a helicopter parent; instead, he calls her once every five days to see how she is doing, and for her, that is sufficient. The actress also admitted that she doesn't offer Ranbir and Alia any marriage counselling.

On the professional front, Neetu Kapoor is now preparing for the release of Jugjugg Jeeyo, her upcoming comedy-drama movie, which is scheduled for June 24, 2022. Varun Dhawan, Kiara Advani, and Anil Kapoor also appear in the key roles. Her final appearance was in the 2013 movie Besharam, which also starred her deceased husband Rishi Kapoor.



Krissann Barretto joins MTV's new reality show

Team Absolute | Mumbai

'Kaisi Yeh Yaariaan' actress Krissann Barretto will be seen on the new reality show MTV's 'Ex or Next'. The show brings three popular ex-couples together in the Maldives. These contestants will go on the show and there they will meet their exes. Three ex-couples including Krissann Barretto-Salman Zaidi, Nikita Bhamidipati-Samarthya Gupta and Saloni Sehra-Varun Verma will be seen on the show.

Speaking about her experience on 'Ex or Next', Krissann shared: "Reuniting with one's ex is not as easy as it may appear to a lot of people, especially when all your private conversations and moments are getting filmed and aired on national television."

"Having said that, I really had the time of my life shooting for MTV's 'Ex or Next' in the Maldives. This one-of-a-kind reality brings a novel format to the audience, one that has never been witnessed on Indian television before. It is full of cliffhangers, which will make viewers come back for more. I'm sure that MTV 'Ex or Next' will make for a fun and entertaining watch," adds 'Ace of Space 2' fame.

Kriti Sanon and Aditya Roy Kapur come together for SLB's next

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Ace filmmaker Sanjay Leela Bhansali's recent outing, Gangubai Kathiawadi strike gold at the box office



with a humongous collection. The film continues to top the charts on OTT as well. The filmmaker is known for his extensive filmography and films, which ostensibly address themes like glory, pride, heartache, betrayal, conflict, romance, and much more.

Sanjay Leela Bhansali is prepping up for his next romantic saga. If reports are to be believed, it will involve working with the dashing Aditya Roy Kapur and the stunning Kriti Sanon. The two will be seen romancing each other and sharing screen space for the first time. According to a source close to Aditya and Kriti, they can't confirm or deny anything until it's official, but they have hinted at the partnership and the details being worked out.

WORKING IN MULTIPLE LANGUAGES HAS ENRICHED ME: WAMIQA GABBI

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actress Wamiqa Gabbi, who is seen in series such as 'Modern Love: Mumbai' and 'Mai', has talked about working in movies in multiple languages such as Hindi, Tamil, Malayalam, Gujarati and Punjabi. She says the experience has enriched her as an actor. Wamiqa says: "It has definitely made me understand different cultures and that really adds up to my experience as an actor."

She added that whenever she is doing a movie in a particular language, the actress make it a point to closely observe how the people of that culture carry themselves.

"The added advantage and my personal favourite takeaway from doing a regional project is the opportunity to learn a new language. Being a person who is always up for learning a new language, doing a multi-lingual project gives me the perfect opportunity to do so."

She added: "I enjoy each and every bit of the schedule and make sure that I make the most of the experience every time I sign on a new regional film."



Subhi's latest music video deals with women's empowerment

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Indian-American singer-songwriter Subhi talks about her latest music video 'Empire' which is all about women empowerment. As she explains: "It's time for the women of the world to rise and create their own Empire. This song is a call to all women out there, to let them know that our dreams and desires are powerful and we can achieve anything we want. Fight for it and build your empire, your world your way."

Subhi has always released songs with strong messages and this time around the song resonates with women and self-empowerment. "The song 'Empire' is about dreams, manifestation and believing in yourself. I am so proud to have created the music video for this track with an all women team. I feel the women I worked with connected with the song in a similar way. It made us all feel powerful, inspired and united," she adds. Her previous releases have been debut English EP called 'Define Me' and post that she has released singles like 'Better', 'Water Raft'.

I ALWAYS TRY TO KEEP THE DOORS OF CREATIVITY OPEN FROM ALL SIDES: RAJPAL YADAV

Dinesh Zala | Mumbai

Renowned actor Rajpal Yadav, who has been seen in a bang roles in films like 'Hungama', 'Garam Masala', 'Hara Pheri', Bhagam Bhag, and Bhoole Bhooleya, is going to complete twenty-five years in the Bollywood film industry. And these days, there are a lot of headlines about his film ARDH. Apart from this, he was seen in Bhoole-Bhooleya 2, when we had a conversation with Rajpal Yadav during the interview, he spoke openly about many interesting things:-

Ardh is the story of a struggling artist, which part of the film matches your real life?

The speech in the climax of the film matches my opinion, and there are two human beings in every man, one only you know how you are inside, every man lives two characters, no matter from which department why not, and if I had not been Rajpal, it would have been Shiva, who is the character of this film. And in this, every scene, every movement, is close to me, and I consider every movement in them as my own, because I do not want to keep myself outside that movement.

How different was the experience of playing the same character in Bhoole Bhooleya 2 after fifteen years from the first film?

The foundation was the same, the building was fifteen years old, so the building was removed and a new building was placed. I congratulate director Anees Bhai, and got a chance to go from red to white in this film.

You are going to complete twenty-five years in the film industry, memories you would like to remember?

In these twenty-five years, I only found that what I have done in twenty-five years is not to be carried forward, what I can do in the next twenty-five years. Every day is new, and every day is learning day. But twenty-five years gave me the confidence that the way we were fighting, if I get a chance to field in every corner of the film industry, I will field, if I get a chance to betting, I will be betting. But what I've learned in twenty-five years in the film industry, I will try that he old data must be there, but nothing should be repeated.



INSTAGRAM PIC OF THE DAY



Esha Gupta