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MAHARASHTRA POLITICAL CRISIS:

CM UDDHAV THACKERAY ANNOUNCES RESIGNATION AHEAD OF FLOOR TEST

▶ THE SUPREME COURT HAS ALLOWED THE FLOOR TEST ORDERED BY MAHARASHTRA GOVERNOR BHAGAT SINGH KOSHYARI TOMORROW IN A HUGE SETBACK FOR THE UDDHAV THACKERAY-LED MAHA VIKAS AGHADI GOVERNMENT.

▶ CM UDDHAV THACKERAY HAS RESIGNED AHEAD OF THE FLOOR TEST TOMORROW. EKNATH SHINDE HAS CLAIMED THE SUPPORT OF NEARLY 40 (OUT OF 55) SENA MLAS THUS PUSHING IT TO THE BRINK OF COLLAPSE.



Team Absolute | New Delhi

Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray resigned on Wednesday, minutes after the Supreme Court ruled that he must prove tomorrow that his government still has a majority.

The Supreme Court today allowed a no-trust vote to be held tomorrow in the Maharashtra Assembly. But the court said that both parties will have two days to file a rejoinder, and the final result of no-trust vote will be dependent on the outcome of the writ petition. The petitions, if any, will be heard on July 11.

The vacation bench of Justices Surya Kant and JB Pardiwala orally remade, "We don't think the matter will become infructuous. Suppose if we find later that floor test was conducted without authority, we can annul it. It is not an irreversible situation." Meanwhile, the Court has issued notice on Prabhhu's petition and directed the Respondents to file their response.

The matter was listed for urgent hearing after a mentioning made by Senior Advocate Dr AM Singhvi earlier today. He argued that rebel MLAs who have defected cannot

represent the will of the people and hence, unless the issue with respect to their disqualification is decided by the Speaker, the floor test cannot be conducted. Senior Advocate Neeraj Kishan Kaul appearing for the rebel MLA Eknath Shinde argued that Deputy Speaker cannot proceed with the disqualification proceedings when the resolution seeking his removal is pending. He further argued that mere pendency of disqualification proceedings is no ground to interdict the floor test.

Disqualification and floor test are two distinct fields he argued.

He claimed that 39 out of 55 MLAs are in the dissident group, supported by 9 independent MLAs. Of these, 16 were served disqualification notices. He added that the Chief Minister's reluctance to face the floor test will be prima facie construed that he lost majority in house; it is the hopeless minority of 14 who are opposing the floor test.

Advocate Maninder Singh for the Respondents argued that the aid of ministers is not required for the Governor to order floor test. Thus, the Petitioner's argument that the Governor acted without aid and advice of the council of ministers is not relevant.

Solicitor General Tushar Mehta appearing for the Governor argued that the parameters (malafide conduct) for challenging Governor's order are not met by the Petitioners.

Maharashtra Governor Bhagat Singh Koshyari had called for a test of strength in the state assembly tomorrow, in the latest turn of events in the Eknath Shinde-led rebellion against Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray.

Eknath Shinde has claimed the support of nearly 40 (out of 55) Sena MLAs, thus pushing it the Maha Vikas Aghadi government - comprising Shiv Sena, Sharad Pawar's Nationalist Congress Party (NCP), and Congress - to the brink of collapse.

EC announces Vice Presidential election on August 6

The Election Commission on Wednesday announced the Vice Presidential election to be held on August 6 (Saturday).

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Election Commission on Wednesday announced the Vice Presidential election to be held on August 6 (Saturday).

The date on which counting, if required, shall be taken on the same day, said the EC in an official statement.

The term of the office of Vice President M. Venkaiah Naidu is ending on August 10. The last date for the filing of nominations is July 19 and the date for the scrutiny of nominations is July 20, it said. "As per Article 68 of the Constitution of India, an election to fill the vacancy caused by the expiration of the term of office of the outgoing Vice-President is required to be completed before the expiration of the term," the election watchdog said. As per Article 66 of the Constitution of India, the Vice-President is elected by the members of the Electoral College consisting of the members of both Houses of Parliament in accordance with the system of proportional representation by means of the single transferable vote.

For this year, 16th Vice-Presidential Election, the



Electoral College consists of 233 elected members of the Rajya Sabha, 12 nominated members of the Rajya Sabha, and 543 elected members of the Lok Sabha, it said. Electoral College comprises of a total of 788 members of both Houses of Parliament.

Since, all the electors are members of both Houses of Parliament, the value of vote of each Member would be the same i.e. 1 (one).

The Election Commission, in consultation with the Central Government, appoints the Secretary General of Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha, by rotation, as the Returning Officer. Accordingly, the Secretary General, Lok Sabha will be appointed as the Returning Officer for the present election to the Office

of the Vice-President of India. The Commission has also decided to appoint Assistant Returning Officers in Parliament House (Lok Sabha) to assist Returning Officer, it said.

The EC also clarified that political parties cannot issue any whip to their MPs in the matter of voting in the Vice-Presidential election.

It is further clarified that as per Section 18 of the Presidential and Vice-Presidential Elections Act, 1952, the offence of 'bribery' or 'undue influence' as defined in Sections 171B and 171C of IPC, by the returned candidate or any person with the consent of the returned candidate are among the grounds on which the election can be declared void by the Supreme Court in an election petition.

'ABHYAS' aerial target successfully flight-tested

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The "ABHYAS" high-speed expendable aerial target (HEAT) was successfully flight-tested from the Integrated Test Range (ITR), Chandipur, off the Odisha coast on Wednesday, the Ministry of Defence said.

The performance of the aerial target, at low altitude including sustained level and high manoeuvrability, was demonstrated during the test flight.

ABHYAS was flown from a ground-based controller in a pre-designated low altitude flight path, which was monitored by various tracking sensors deployed by ITR, including radar and electro-optical targeting system.

ABHYAS is designed and developed by the Aeronautical Development Establishment of the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO).

Launched using twin under-slung boosters which provide the initial acceleration, it is powered by a small gas turbine engine to sustain a long endurance flight at high subsonic speed. The target, which is programmed for



fully autonomous flight, is equipped with micro-electromechanical systems-based inertial navigation system, along with the flight control computer for guidance and control along with indigenous radio altimeter for very low altitude flight and data link for encrypted communication between the ground control station and target Aircraft.

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh congratulated the DRDO, armed forces and the industry for the successful flight trial of ABHYAS and said that development of this system will meet the requirements of aerial targets for the armed forces.

INDIA'S 1ST INDIGENOUSLY DEVELOPED MRNA

The apex drug regulator Drugs Controller General of India (DCGI) has approved India's first indigenously developed mRNA vaccine against Covid-19. The vaccine has been given approval for restricted emergency use for those aged 18 years and above.

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The apex drug regulator Drugs Controller General of India (DCGI) has approved India's first indigenously developed mRNA vaccine against Covid-19. The vaccine has been given approval for restricted emergency use for those aged 18 years and above.

"Gennova Biopharmaceuticals Ltd., a subsidiary of Emcure Pharmaceuticals Ltd., announced that its mRNA vaccine -- GEMCOVAC-19 -- against Covid-19 received



the Emergency Use Authorization (EUA) from the office of the Drugs Controller General of India (DCGI)," said a statement from the vaccine manufacturer Gennova Biopharmaceuticals on Wednesday. It is a two dose vaccine to be administered intramuscularly at 28 days apart. The vaccine will be sold under the brand name GEMCOVAC-19.

GEMCOVAC-19 is the very first mRNA vaccine developed in India and only third mRNA vaccine to be approved for Covid-19 in the world. "These vaccines

are highly efficacious because of their inherent capacity of being translated into the protein structure inside the cell cytoplasm. mRNA vaccines are considered safe as mRNA is non-infectious, non-integrating in nature, and degraded by standard cellular mechanisms," said the vaccine manufacturer. This technology provides flexibility to quickly tweak the vaccine for any existing or emerging variants of the virus and this technology platform will empower India to be pandemic ready. The Pune-based manufacturer said that the clinical data was evaluated by the Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation (CDSCO). The vaccine was found to be safe, well-tolerated and immunogenic. The company claimed that it aims to produce around 40-50 lakhs of doses per month and this capacity can be quickly doubled.

JAMIAT ULEMA HIND TERMS UDAIPUR KILLING TRAGIC, UN-ISLAMIC, INHUMANE

New Delhi: A day after the gruesome killing of a tailor in Udaipur, the Jamiat Ulema Hind termed it "un-Islamic" and condemned the killing in the name of the Prophet while demanding the arrest of those responsible for using derogatory language. Maulana Arshad Madani, President Jamiat Ulama-i-Hind said "the Udaipur incident is a very tragic, un-Islamic and inhumane act, it is highly condemnable. The law of the state would work accordingly in this case as well. As we had opposed mob-lynching in many places, we also consider this inhumane act to be extremely dangerous to law and order. We are always against everyone taking the law into their own hands." Maulana Madani said that whatever happened due to the derogatory words against the Prophet was bad, but in order to maintain law and order and communal harmony in the country, it is necessary to show tolerance and patience. He added that just as we oppose this incident, we strongly oppose insulting the dignity of any religious figure or hurting the feelings of those who believe in a religion by using derogatory words. Maulana Madani stated that the silence of powerful people in the country, and not arresting the perpetrators has tarnished the image of the country all over the world. "Therefore, we once again demand the government immediately arrest those who have insulted the Prophet and punish them severely according to the law so that no one will dare to do so again in the future, as well as Muslims all over the world can find peace and contentment," he added.

Mangoes worth Rs 2.5 lakh per kg being grown in Jabalpur

▶ You may be surprised to hear that a variety of mango is sold at Rs 2.5 lakh per kg, but it's a fact. A mango lover in Jabalpur, Madhya Pradesh, is growing such a mango that is priced in Japan at Rs 2.5 lakh per kg.

Team Absolute | Jabalpur

You may be surprised to hear that a variety of mango is sold at Rs 2.5 lakh per kg, but it's a fact. A mango lover in Jabalpur, Madhya Pradesh, is growing such a mango that is priced in Japan at Rs 2.5 lakh per kg. Sankalp Singh of Jabalpur has two orchards spread over 12 and a half acres, in which mangoes are being grown. In both these orchards, he has planted different types of mango trees. There are varieties from



'Hapus' mango to Japan's 'Taiyo No Tamago.' Its specialty is that this mango is sold in Japan for up to Rs 2.5 lakh per kg. Sankalp Singh took up horticulture in 2013. After that he focused on mango cultivation, at present there are more than 24 varieties of trees in his orchards. He had found a tree of the 'Taiyo No Tamago' variety of Japan while travelling. "The variety of 'Taiyo No Tamago' mango is attractive in appearance as

well. I offered the first fruit to Baba Mahakal. This mango weighs an average of 900 grams. This is the reason that a large number of people come to my orchard to see this mango," he says.

"Earlier it was a difficult task for me to protect this mango during the night. That's why I kept 12 dogs to guard at night. But now I have kept security guards during the day, despite this there is a fear of mango theft," he adds.

Though 'Taiyo No Tamago' is priced at Rs 2.5 lakh per kg in Japan, in India it has not got this price so far. "This mango is expensive and only financially capable people can buy it, yes it has been sold up to Rs 50,000 a kg in the country too. I also run a restaurant here and these mangoes are the centre of attraction for the people who come here," Sankalp Singh says.

Four AIMIM MLAs join RJD in Bihar

Four out of the AIMIM's five MLAs in Bihar left the party to join the Rashtriya Janata Dal on Wednesday.

Patna | Agencies

Four out of the AIMIM's five MLAs in Bihar left the party to join the Rashtriya Janata Dal on Wednesday. The four MLAs are Muhammad Izhar Aasfi, the MLA from Kochadhaman, Shahnawaz Alam from Jokihat, Sayyad Ruknuddin Bayasi, and Azhar Naimi of Bahadurganj Assembly constituencies - all in Bihar's Seemanchal area.

With this, the RJD has become the single-largest party in the 243-member Bihar Assembly with 80 MLAs, overtaking the BJP with 77 MLAs. Tejashwi Yadav came to the Assembly with the four MLAs to meet Speaker Vijay Kumar Sinha and inform him about the development. With this, the AIMIM has been left with

only one MLA - Akhtarul Imam, who is also the party's leader in the Assembly.

The merger of the AIMIM MLAs with the RJD assumes significance, as with this, the party-led alliance's strength has reached 96, along with 16 MLAs of Left parties. While, the Congress is out of the Mahagathbandhan in Bihar, it may back the RJD in case the party comes in a position of forming the government. If the 19 Congress MLAs are included, the number reaches 115 - just 7 short from a majority. After the meeting with the Speaker, the four former AIMIM MLAs will meet RJD national President Lalu Prasad Yadav.

Earlier this month, Akhtarul Imam had said that his party members were being approached by bigger parties ever since the 2020

Assembly election but had remained loyal. However, most of the AIMIM MLAs were apprehensive about their future, given their party's showing in the recent Uttar Pradesh Assembly elections where it had contested more than 90 seats but failed to win even a single one. The AIMIM is seen as the BJP's "B team" to cut the votes of parties having a secular ideology. They hit the RJD's chances in more than 20 Bihar seats in the 2020 polls and five of them managed to win.

With this outcome, the AIMIM was enthusiastic about the Uttar Pradesh Assembly election but got no traction. With this, the AIMIM MLAs knew that the voters of Bihar may not support them in 2025 election and were wanting to merge with the RJD well before it.



VIVEK PHANSALKAR NAMED NEW MUMBAI POLICE COMMISSIONER

Senior IPS officer of 1989 cadre, Vivek Phansalkar, has been appointed as the new Mumbai Police Commissioner, an official announcement said here on Wednesday.

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Senior IPS officer of 1989 cadre, Vivek Phansalkar, has been appointed as the new Mumbai Police Commissioner, an official announcement said here on Wednesday. Phansalkar replaces the incumbent Mumbai Police chief Sanjay Pandey, who retires on Thursday. Currently, Phansalkar is the Managing Director of Maharashtra State Police Housing & Welfare Corporation Ltd in the rank of DGP.

In his long career, Phansalkar has served as Thane Police Commissioner, Additional DGP, Anti-Corruption Bureau and the Anti-Terrorism Squad, Joint Police Commissioner in Mumbai (Crime and Administration), Director Vigilance of Cotton Corporation of India, ADC to former Governor P.C. Alexander, and in Superintendent of Police rank in various districts.

Opposition, ruling party to pick candidates for V-P poll

As the Election Commission announced the schedule for the Vice President poll, the ruling BJP-led NDA and the opposition will have to pick candidates in July itself.

Team Absolute | New Delhi

As the Election Commission announced the schedule for the Vice President poll, the ruling BJP-led NDA and the opposition will have to pick candidates in July itself.

The ruling party has no dearth of candidates but the opposition has to field a joint candidate in the election to challenge the BJP as the numbers are stacked in favour of the latter.

Incumbent Vice President M Venkaiah Naidu could be given a second term while West Bengal



Governor Jagdeep Dhankhar, Minority Affairs Minister Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi and Jammu Kashmir LG Manoj Sinha are said to be front runners from the ruling camp. But as of now there has been no official deliberations for the post, sources said.

Though opposition has not dis-

ussed the issue but sources said that they will field a joint candidate for the post, however, the opposition has very less chance since in this election the voters are members of Parliament and the BJP has huge mandate in the lower house while in the upper house it is the single largest party

having more than 95 seats.

Sources say that in view of the political turmoil in the Maharashtra, someone from the state could be fielded from the opposition camp. The opposition in the Presidential election has fielded Yashwant Sinha but not all the opposition parties are on board yet.

In the last election, the opposition fielded Gopal Krishna Gandhi but he lost to Venkaiah Naidu. This time also Gandhi's name was proposed for the Presidential candidate but he declined the offer. Venkaiah Naidu in 2017 polled 516 votes defeating the opposition's Gopal Krishna Gandhi, who could manage only 244 votes.

The Election Commission on Wednesday announced the Vice Presidential election which is scheduled to be held on August 6 (Saturday). The date on which counting, if required, shall be taken on the same day, said the EC in an official statement.

MAHA TO RENAME AURANGABAD, OSMANABAD, NEW INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

The Maharashtra cabinet presided over by Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray approved the contentious proposals of renaming Aurangabad and Osmanabad as well as the new upcoming Navi Mumbai International Airport, here on Wednesday.

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The Maharashtra cabinet presided over by Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray approved the contentious proposals of renaming Aurangabad and Osmanabad as well as the new upcoming Navi Mumbai International Airport, here on Wednesday. Accordingly, Aurangabad and Osmanabad shall be rechristened as 'Sambhajinagar' and 'Dharashiv', respectively, in deference to the wishes of many locals and political groups. The Navi Mumbai International Airport currently being constructed by the Adani Group in adjoining Raigad to decongest Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport in Mumbai shall be renamed after the late 'Dinkar Balu Patil', a prominent leader of the coastal Konkan belt, instead of the Shiv Sena founder, the late Balasaheb Thackeray, as earlier contemplated. These major decisions among several others came at what is billed as the Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) government's 'final cabinet' meeting, with all ministers of the Shiv Sena-Nationalist Congress Party-Congress alliance present. The renaming of Aurangabad was among the crucial demands of the group of rebels who left Maharashtra late on June 20 putting the MVA government in a limbo and now the stage is set for a critical floor test to prove its majority on Thursday.

J&K Lt Guv invites political leaders to discuss smooth conduct of Amarnath Yatra

JAMMU AND KASHMIR LT. GOVERNOR MANOJ SINHA ON WEDNESDAY INVITED LEADERS OF ALL POLITICAL PARTIES FOR DISCUSSION ON THE SMOOTH CONDUCT OF THE AMARNATH YATRA 2022.

SRINAGAR | Agencies

Jammu and Kashmir Lt. Governor Manoj Sinha on Wednesday invited leaders of all political parties for discussion on the smooth conduct of the Amarnath Yatra 2022.

Officials said Sinha has



invited leaders of political parties, including the National Conference (NC), Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), Congress, Peoples Conference (PC), Apni Party and some individual senior politicians like former deputy Chief Minister Muzaffar Hussain Beigh and Hakeem Muhammad Yasin.

"These political leaders have been invited for discussion on the smooth conduct of Amarnath Yatra 2022. They have been invited on

tea at 6 p.m. today," officials said.

First batch of Yatris, including 3,699 pilgrims bound for the south Kashmir Pahalgam base camp and 717 bound for the north Kashmir Baltal base camp left Bhagwati Nagar base camp in Jammu for the Valley earlier in the day.

Yatra 2022 begins on June 30 and will end on August 11 on Shrawan Purnima coinciding with the Raksha Bandhan festival.

Video of dramatic arrest of two Udaipur murder accused goes viral

The video of the dramatic arrest of two accused in Udaipur tailor's murder namely, Ghaus Mohammad and Riyaz Jabbar, from Bhima area of Rajsamand district, is going viral on the social media.

JAIPUR | Agencies

The video of the dramatic arrest of two accused in Udaipur tailor's murder namely, Ghaus Mohammad and Riyaz Jabbar, from Bhima area of Rajsamand district, is going viral on the social media.

The event of the capture of these killers is quite dramatic. Both tried their best to escape, but eventually got caught in the trap laid by the



police. The video which has surfaced on social media shows that as soon as the accused were caught, the police thrashed them black and blue. The sequence of arrest of these criminals starts from a police hunt for the accused. Rajsamand police received information that both

accused had fled on a bike towards Bhim-Devgarh area. Their location was immediately traced. The area outside Dak Bungalow on National Highway-8 was blocked. Seeing the police here, the two accused entered Bhim-Devgarh. Riding on their bike, they escaped through the town and

came on the highway in front of the college via Badnore intersection.

From here they were going towards Ajmer when the Bhima town police, chasing the accused, caught both of them at Adawala turn around 6.30 p.m. As soon as the information of both of them being near Rajsamand came, the SP left Udaipur on a bike wearing a helmet and reached Bhim-Devgarh area of Rajsamand. The police of Udaipur and adjoining districts were active since the incident. Barricading was set up to check all the vehicles. A total of ten police teams were in the chase for the killers.

Soon after seeing the police, both the accused -- Ghaus Mohammad and Riyaz Jabbar started running, but were caught on the road. The police beat them black and blue on the road using kicks, punches and sticks, grabbed their hair and put them in the car.

India records 14,506 new Covid cases, 30 deaths

India reported 14,506 new Covid-19 cases in a span of 24 hours, which is a substantial increase over the previous day's count of 11,793, said the Union Ministry of Health and Family Affairs on Wednesday.

Team Absolute | New Delhi

India reported 14,506 new Covid-19 cases in a span of 24 hours, which is a substantial increase over the previous day's count of 11,793, said the Union Ministry of Health and Family Affairs on Wednesday.

In the same period, the country has reported 30 more Covid deaths, taking the nationwide toll to 5,25,077.

The active caseload of the country has also surged to 99,602 accounting for 0.23 per cent of the country's total positive cases.

The recovery of 11,574 patients in the last 24 hours took the cumulative tally to 4,28,08,666. Consequently, India's recovery rate stands at 98.56 per cent. Meanwhile, India's daily positivity rate has also surged to 3.35 per cent, while the weekly positivity rate currently stands at 3.30 per cent.

Also in the same period, a total of 4,33,659 tests were conducted across the country, increasing the



overall tally to over 86.19 crore.

As of Wednesday morning, India's Covid-19 vaccination coverage exceeded 197.46 crore, achieved via 2,56,78,429 sessions. Over 3.65 crore adolescents have been administered with a first dose of Covid-19 jab since the beginning of vaccination drive for this age bracket.

CHENNAI CORPORATION APPOINTS TRANSPERSON TO-FLY DRONES, TO APPOINT MORE

Chennai: The Greater Chennai Corporation has appointed a transperson for flying drones used for spraying larvicide to control the mosquito menace in the corporation.

The corporation in its council meeting on Tuesday adopted a resolution to this effect. The appointment which is on a contract basis will be provided to E. Prem (19), a transperson from Vellore. Corporation officials told IANS that seven drone operators are required for spraying the mosquito larvicide but presently the Corporation would be hiring two, including the transperson. However, in the days to come, the rest of the five will be hired and transpersons will be given preference for the same.

Prem will start to work from July and will be paid a consolidated amount of Rs 25,000 as his monthly salary, corporation officials said.

The transperson was trained in flying drones at the Remote Pilot Training Organisation, Chennai operated by retired wing commander KR Srikanth. The retired wing commander has trained 15 transpersons in drone operating and has provided them jobs in various places after identifying them through NGOs that are working for the rights of transgender community.

BJP using ED, CBI to suppress voice of opposition: Goa Cong

COMMENTING ON THE ONGOING POLITICAL CRISIS IN MAHARASHTRA, CONGRESS' GOA UNIT PRESIDENT AMIT PATKAR ON WEDNESDAY SAID THE BJP IS USING AGENCIES SUCH AS THE CENTRAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION (CBI) AND THE ENFORCEMENT DIRECTORATE (ED) TO SUPPRESS THOSE WHO RAISE VOICE AGAINST THEM.

PANAJI | Agencies

Commenting on the ongoing political crisis in Maharashtra, Congress' Goa unit president



Amit Patkar on Wednesday said the BJP is using agencies such as the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) and the Enforcement Directorate (ED) to suppress those who raise voice against them.

"In Maharashtra also, the BJP is using the same tactics. Because they are raising a voice against the BJP government (at the Centre), and this is happening," Patkar said. According to him, the Congress, Shiv Sena and the NCP (alliance partners in Maharashtra) leaders were vocal against the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). "This government suppresses the voice of those who raise their voice against them. They

have various government machineries like the CBI and the ED for the purpose," he said. across the country is to suppress the voice of the Opposition by attacking them. This is happening in our state also. At Centre, they are targeting our leader (Rahul Gandhi) and here (Goa), they are targeting our Leader of Opposition Michael Lobo," Patkar said.

Earlier, the Town and Country Planning (TCP) department had served showcause notice to 'Baga Deck' and 'Nazri Resort', reported to be belonging to Leader of Opposition and Calangute MLA Michael Lobo, for allegedly violating TCP norms. Earlier, on June 13, the Congress party in Goa had protested in the capital city for summoning former party president Rahul Gandhi by the ED in the National Herald case, terming it "vindictive politics by the BJP."

Will Rahul & Priyanka Gandhi visit beheaded tailor's residence?: BJP

POINTING TO THE GRUESOME BROAD DAYLIGHT BEHEADING OF A TAILOR IN UDAIPUR, BJP ON WEDNESDAY ASKED WHETHER RAHUL GANDHI AND PRIYANKA GANDHI WILL VISIT KANHAIYA LAL'S RESIDENCE AND SEEK AN ANSWER FROM RAJASTHAN CHIEF MINISTER ASHOK GEHLOT FOR THE BRUTAL MURDER.

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Pointing to the gruesome broad daylight beheading of a tailor in Udaipur, BJP on Wednesday asked whether Rahul Gandhi and Priyanka Gandhi will visit Kanhaiya Lal's residence and seek an answer from Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot for the brutal murder.

The BJP also asked if they would protest against 'nikamma' (useless) chief minister Ashok Gehlot. "Will Hathras vultures Rahul Gandhi and Priyanka Gandhi visit the residence of Kanhaiya Lal in Udaipur?", party national general secretary CT Ravi tweeted.

"Will they protest against Nikamma chief minister Ashok Gehlot for his massive

failure? Will they demand his resignation for the brutal murder of a Hindu by two Muslims?"

BJP Lok Sabha Member P.C. Mohan tweeted: "Complete failure of law and order machinery in Rajasthan. Ashok Gehlot has lost the moral right to govern. He must resign. We request an NIA investigation into the horrific beheading of Kanhaiya Lal in Udaipur as well as the threats issued to harm PM Modi."

The victim was identified as Kanhaiyalal Teli (40), a resident of Bhima town in Rajsamand district, who ran a tailoring shop in Udaipur.

Meanwhile, Rajasthan police on Tuesday evening arrested two persons for the gruesome killing in Udaipur.

ODISHA VIGILANCE TRAPS THREE GOVT OFFICIALS IN A DAY

The vigilance wing of Odisha government on Wednesday trapped three officials including one assistant engineer on charges of corruption, officials said.

BHUBANESWAR | Agencies

The vigilance wing of Odisha government on Wednesday trapped three officials including one assistant engineer on charges of corruption, officials said.

The vigilance sleuth caught Prakash Chandra Sahoo, additional commercial tax officer, enforcement unit, Paradeep while accepting bribe of Rs 2 lakh from a glass and ply dealer.

Following the trap, simultaneous searches have been launched on the residential house of Sahoo in Kendrapara district and his office room at Paradeep. He has been arrested and is being forwarded to the court, the officials said.

Similarly, Himansu Sekhar Panda, a junior assistant of Badampahad community health centre (CHC) in Mayurbhanj district has been apprehended by the Odisha vigilance while accepting a



bribe of Rs 25,000 from a complainant. Panda has been arrested and will be forwarded to the court,

they said.

Further, based on a complaint, the anti-corruption wing officials raided properties of Pravat Kumar Rout, assistant engineer of Dampada block in Cuttack district on Wednesday.

During the raids at four places in Cuttack & Kendrapara districts, the vigilance has found one triple storey building worth Rs 1.25 crore in Cuttack, four plots of Rs 29 lakh, bank & insurance deposits worth Rs 70.31 lakh and gold & silver ornaments of total value of Rs 28.23 lakh.

Besides, a Hyundai i-20 (Asta) car worth Rs 11.17 lakh along with two motorcycles, cash and household articles of Rs 12.89 lakh were detected during the raid, the vigilance officials said.

During house searches, movable and immovable assets worth Rs 2.76 crore have been detected from Rout till now. Further searches are continuing, they added.



'WE ARE READY FOR FLOOR TEST', SAYS EKNATH SHINDE

Guwahati | Agencies

Rebel Shiv Sena leader Eknath Shinde on Wednesday said they are ready for the floor test. He said this after visiting the famous Kamakhya Temple here, along with other four MLAs.

The temple management committee welcomed Shinde and other MLAs in the temple.

Shinde and other rebel Shiv Sena MLAs have been camping in Guwahati's Radisson Blu hotel for over a week now, and earlier a report came that the hotel was booked till June 30 for their stay. "Will return to Mumbai tomorrow, prayed for the wellbeing of the people of Maharashtra here in the Kamakhya temple," said Shinde after visiting the temple. He added, "Maharashtra Governor has convened. We will take part in the floor test



in Maharashtra Assembly and will follow all the protocols."

After the temple visit, the Shinde camp held a meeting in the hotel where all the rebel MLAs were present as was seen in a video that surfaced on Wednesday.

In this meeting, as sources reported, the rebel MLA Gulabrao Patil claimed, "People are with us and we will win the floor test tomorrow. We will form the government and there is no need to worry." Looking into the flood situation in Assam, Eknath Shinde tweeted on Wednesday, "Shiv Sena MLAs

and allied MLAs, a decision has been made to contribute Rs 51 lakh to the Assam CM's relief fund to help the flood-affected people of Assam."

Sources said, "The rebel Shiv Sena MLAs are likely to leave for Goa from Guwahati this afternoon. A SpiceJet flight is en route to Guwahati to take all the rebel Shiv Sena MLAs from Guwahati to Goa today." The flight is expected to leave Guwahati's Lokpriya Gopinath Bordoloi International Airport for Goa's Dabolim airport around 3 pm, said the sources.

Governor's call for floor test illegal, didn't consider disqualification notices, Sena to SC

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Shiv Sena chief whip Sunil Prabhhu, in his plea in the Supreme Court, termed the Maharashtra Governor's direction to the Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) government to take a floor test and prove its majority on Thursday (June 30) illegal, as he didn't take into account the Deputy Speaker's disqualification notices to 16 rebel MLAs.

Prabhhu's plea said the Governor's communication, issued on June 28, which was received by them at 9 a.m. on Wednesday, is in complete defiance of the fact that the top court is seized of the issue of the disqualification proceedings against the rebel Sena MLAs.

It contended that the top court is considering the validity of the disqualification proceedings and has kept the matter for hearing on July 11, and the issue of disqualification is directly connected/interlinked with the issue of floor test.

"The Governor has also not bothered about the pendency of disqualification petitions nor has he taken into consideration that this court, while being seized of writ petitions challenging the issuance of notice by the Deputy Speaker has, vide order dated June 27, issued notice and directed the matter to be listed on July 11 for further consideration," said the plea.



As Senior advocate Abhishek Manu Singhvi mentioned the plea before the court in the morning, the vacation bench of Justices Surya Kant and J.B. Pardiwala agreed to take up the plea at 5 p.m. The plea said: "It is most respectfully submitted that the said communications of the Governor are

liable to be set aside since the Governor has illegally invoked Article 175(2) of the Constitution to send a message to the Assembly for conduct of a floor test.."

The plea said the impugned directions ought not to have been issued without the aid and advice of the Council of the Ministers led by the Chief Minister.

"It is surprising that the Leader of Opposition admittedly meets the Governor at 10 p.m. on June 28 and the impugned communications are also of the same date. This only shows the undue haste with which the Governor has acted without even asking the CM of his views in respect of the political scenario in the state," it added.

The plea claimed that the directions, it seems, have been issued on the "aid and advice of the Leader of Opposition", which is clearly not contemplated under the constitution.

"In view of the undue haste with which the Governor has proceeded to act on the request of the Leader of Opposition to direct the conduct of a floor test, it is submitted that the impugned communication/directions is completely arbitrary and illegal and therefore violative of Article 14 of the Constitution, apart from giving a fillip to the Constitutionally abhorrent sin of defection which the Tenth Schedule seeks to curtail," it said.

SC to hear pleas of Anil Deshmukh, Malik seeking permission to vote in Maha floor test

Jailed Maharashtra MLAs Anil Deshmukh and Nawab Malik moved the Supreme Court on Wednesday seeking permission to vote when the floor test takes place in Maharashtra Assembly. The top court has agreed to hear their petitions.

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Jailed Maharashtra MLAs Anil Deshmukh and Nawab Malik moved the Supreme Court on Wednesday seeking permission to vote when the floor test takes place in Maharashtra Assembly. The top court has agreed to hear their petitions.

Advocate Sudhanshu S Choudhari, representing Deshmukh and Malik,

mentioned the matter before a vacation bench comprising Justices Surya Kant and J.B. Pardiwala. He submitted that the plea is regarding permission for his clients to vote when the floor test takes place in Maharashtra assembly. The bench agreed to hear the plea later in the day.

Earlier during the day, Shiv Sena chief whip Sunil Prabhhu moved the Supreme Court challenging the Maharashtra Governor's direction to the Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) government to take a floor test and prove its majority in the House on Thursday (June 30). The court agreed to hear the case at 5 p.m. Wednesday.

Senior Adv Dr Abhishek Manu Singhvi mentioned Prabhhu's plea before the top court. He said the matter involves "illegal floor test" and urged the court to list it urgently. Singhvi said floor test is illegal as it cannot include persons facing dis-

qualification. "I am only requesting for a listing today evening. Otherwise, matter will become infructuous..", he said.

He added that the notice for floor test came today morning and that they will make sure that filing is done by 4 p.m. Justice Kant said, "unless you give a paper book to us, how do we know...". Senior advocate Neeraj Kishan Kaul, appearing for the Eknath Shinde's faction, opposed the plea for a hearing and said disqualification proceedings have nothing to do with the floor test. Singhvi insisted that the plea should be heard on Wednesday. Kaul said calling for the floor test is the prerogative of the Governor, and the pendency of a disqualification application has nothing to do with floor test.

Justice Kant told Singhvi that the court will hear the matter today at 5 p.m... "Whatever may be the out-

come...we will hear the matter today," said Justice Kant.

The bench asked Singhvi to circulate the paperbook to all the parties involved in the matter and the court by 3 p.m. Justice Kant said, "We will keep the case at 5 p.m.."

The Special Maharashtra Assembly will be convened at 11 a.m. and will end at 5 p.m. Thursday. The day's proceedings shall be video-graphed and telecast live, with provisions for adequate security both inside and outside the legislature, the Governor has directed.

A 3-page letter to the effect was issued to the Maharashtra Legislature Secretary by the Raj Bhavan late on Tuesday -- soon after a delegation of the Opposition Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) met the Governor and urged him for immediate directions to the MVA to prove its majority.

Rebel Sena MLAs leave Guwahati hotel; head to Goa

The rebel Shiv Sena MLAs of Maharashtra and their leader Eknath Shinde on Wednesday left Guwahati's Radisson Blu hotel where they were staying for the last eight days.

Guwahati | Agencies

The rebel Shiv Sena MLAs of Maharashtra and their leader Eknath Shinde on Wednesday left Guwahati's Radisson Blu hotel where they were staying for the last eight days.

The Sena legislators left the hotel premises in three luxury Assam State Transport Corporation buses -- one carrying their luggage, and the other buses transporting the rebels and their leader Shinde.

The MLAs have left the city amid tight security. They are reportedly heading to Goa

from here. Media reports had earlier said the dissident MLAs will wait till the Supreme Court hearing which is scheduled on Wednesday evening. However, the rebels reached the Lokpriya Gopinath Bordoloi International Airport at Guwahati to board a chartered flight.

At airport, the Sena MLAs were heard raising slogans such as "Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj ki Jai" (Hail Chatrapati Shivaji Maharaj), and "Eknath Shinde sahab, tum aage badho, hum tumhare saath hain" (Eknath Shinde, you go ahead, we are

with you). "We are not rebels. We are Shiv Sena. We are carrying forward the ideology and agenda of Balasaheb Thackeray's Shiv Sena. We will work for the development of Maharashtra following the Hindutva ideology," Shinde told the journalists at the airport.

"We will respect the decision of the Supreme Court. Tomorrow (Thursday), we will reach Mumbai and participate in the floor test. After the trust vote, there will be a party meeting where the further course of action will be decided."

MVA Crisis: BJP leaders meet Govt, want MVA govt to prove majority

In a major political development late on Tuesday, a delegation of the Opposition Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) called on Maharashtra Governor Bhagat Singh Koshyari with a plea to ascertain the majority of the ruling Maha Vikas Aghadi government.

Team Absolute | Mumbai

In a major political development late on Tuesday, a delegation of the Opposition Bharatiya Janata

Party (BJP) called on Maharashtra Governor Bhagat Singh Koshyari with a plea to ascertain the majority of the ruling Maha Vikas Aghadi government.

The BJP's move came after a group of 39 Shiv Sena MLAs along with 11 other legislators - who switched over to a rebel faction headed by state minister Eknath Shinde on June 20-21 - sent an email to the Raj Bhavan on Tuesday.

They have informed the Governor that the rebel group has withdrawn support to the government headed by Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray, Leader of Opposition Devendra Fadnavis told mediapersons.

Following this, the BJP has submitted a letter to the Governor urging him to issue directions to the CM to prove his majority, added Fadnavis.

"We are hopeful that given the present political circumstances and the Supreme Court directions of Monday, the Governor will take the necessary steps in the matter," Fadnavis said.

Earlier on Tuesday, Fadnavis had gone to New Delhi to meet the top BJP leaders, including party President J.P. Nadda, to discuss the political situation in Maharashtra.

The rebel group is likely to reach Mumbai from Guwahati in the next couple of days.

Realty tycoon Pallonji Mistry accorded funeral with full state honours

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The funeral of Pallonji Shapoorji Mistry - the billionaire realty tycoon - was performed with full state honours at the Parsi Tower of Silence, here on Wednesday morning.

Mistry, 93, the Chairman Emeritus of the venerable 157-year-old Shapoorji Pallonji Group, passed away early on Tuesday at his home.

He is survived by his wife Patsy, daughters Laila and Aloo, and sons Shapoor and Cyrus.

A large number of family members, colleagues and other industrialists were present at the solemn ceremony with the Mumbai Police band paying their respects and a gun salute as Mistry's mortal remains draped in the National Tricolour were brought.

The prayer ceremony 'uthamna' shall be held at the Tower of Silence later this afternoon and the family has requested no condolence visits.

Born on June 1, 1929 in a Parsi family from Gujarat, Pallonji Mistry had his schooling in Mumbai and went to London for his higher studies



and joined the family business later. Pallonji Mistry enabled the family's business to venture into Middle East countries. His father Shapoorji had bought shares in Tata Sons in 1930 and the stakes now are about 18 per cent.

It was in 2003, Pallonji Mistry surrendered his Indian citizenship and became an Irish citizen. He was married to an Ireland born national Patsy Perin Dubash. Pallonji Mistry was awarded Padma Bhushan in 2016, India's third highest civilian

award for his contribution to industry. Top Indian personalities led by President Ram Nath Kovind, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray and other dignitaries expressed grief over Mistry's passing. The Shapoorji Pallonji Group started in 1865 with a notable construction history dating back to 1887 - Littlewood Pallonji & Co was one of the companies that helped to build a large Malabar Hill reservoir - is now a global diversified conglomerate with 18 major companies operating in six business segments - Engineering & Construction, Infrastructure, Real Estate, Water, Energy and Financial Services.

With a workforce of over 50,000 in over 50 countries, the group has developed several mega and iconic structures like RBI headquarters, SBI, HSBC, Grindlays Bank, Hongkong & Shanghai Bank and others in south Mumbai, besides other major infrastructure projects.

The Group had also produced the iconic Hindi film, K. Asif's 'Mughal-E-Azam' (1960), then the most expensive one and till date it reigns among the top popular movies of Bollywood.

ANS-C Voter National Mood Tracker: Indians divided over Uddhav Thackeray's ability to win floor test

The high-voltage political drama in Maharashtra that began with the revolt of senior Shiv Sena leader Eknath Shinde on June 21 continues as Sena chief Uddhav Thackeray, heading the Maharashtra Vikas Aghadi (MVA) government, faces the worst ever crisis of his political career.



Team Absolute | New Delhi

The high-voltage political drama in Maharashtra that began with the revolt of senior Shiv Sena leader Eknath Shinde on June 21 continues as Sena chief Uddhav Thackeray, heading the Maharashtra Vikas Aghadi (MVA) government, faces the worst ever crisis of his political career.

The strength of the rebel Sena camp led by Shinde, currently camped in Guwahati, has grown continuously. Shinde has been claiming that he has the support of around 40 Shiv Sena MLAs and several Independent legislators.

The rebellion in Shiv Sena has put the fate of the MVA government in jeopardy. In a bid to save his government, Thackeray had on June 24 filed a petition against the rebel MLAs and demanded the Deputy Speaker of the Maharashtra Assembly to disqualify 16 MLAs from the Shinde camp.

On June 27, the apex court extended the deadline given to the lawmakers to file their responses to the disqualification notices issued

against them till July 11. On Tuesday, Thackeray reached out to the rebel Sena legislators. In an emotional message to the rebel MLAs, he said, "You are still with the Shiv Sena from the heart."

The alliance partners of MVA -- the Congress and Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) -- have assured support to Thackeray till the last moment in the current political crisis.

Sena heading the MVA government has 55 MLAs. NCP with 53 legislators and the Congress having 44 MLAs are the alliance partners in the state government. The opposition BJP has 106 MLAs in the Maharashtra Assembly which has a total strength of 288 members.

Amid the ongoing political crisis in Maharashtra, CVoter-IndiaTracker conducted a nationwide survey on behalf of IANS to know people's views about the fate of the MVA government. During the survey, people were divided in their views about the Thackeray-led MVA government surviving a floor test.

According to the survey data, while 46 per

cent respondents said that Thackeray will succeed in saving his government, 54 per cent of those interviewed did not share the sentiment.

Interestingly, during the survey, while the majority of NDA voters -- 66 per cent -- said that Thackeray will fail in the floor test, views of opposition supporters were divided on the issue. As per the survey data, while 55 per cent opposition voters asserted that Thackeray will survive the floor tests, 45 per cent believed otherwise.

The survey highlighted differences in the opinions of different social groups on the issue. While 69 per cent upper caste Hindus and 60 per cent Other Backward Classes stressed that the MVA government will fail in the floor test, 75 per cent Muslims and 67 per cent Scheduled Tribes (ST) expressed completely different views on the issue.

The views of the Scheduled Caste (SC) voters were also divided on the issue. As per the survey data, while 48 per cent of SC respondents opined that Thackeray will sail through the floor test, 52 per cent did not agree with the

sentiment.

The survey further highlighted that majority Indians don't see any possibility of Thackeray and the BJP joining hands. During the survey, while 65 per cent respondents asserted that Thackeray and BJP will not come together, 35 per cent of those who participated in the survey said that the two can form an alliance.

Interestingly, during the survey, the majority of both the NDA and opposition voters opined that it is unlikely that Thackeray and BJP will forge an alliance. As per the survey data, 69 per cent NDA voters and 63 per cent opposition supporters clearly stated that the two former alliance partners will not come together once again.

Similarly, majority of the respondents from different social groups opined that Thackeray will not go with the BJP. During the survey, 6 per cent ST, 64 per cent SC, 65 per cent OBC, 59 per cent upper caste Hindu and 83 per cent Muslims said that Thackeray will continue with the MVA and he will not join hands with the BJP.



EDITOR'S SPECS

Judicial intervention should strengthen anti-defection law, not undermine it

Time is of the essence when it comes to executing political manoeuvres to reduce a government to a minority. Dissident legislators need time to gather enough numbers to vote out the regime. Ruling parties need to close the window of opportunity soon, often using the threat of disqualification for defection. It is in this backdrop that judicial intervention in matters relating to disqualifying lawmakers for defection takes place either buying the dissidents time or allowing disqualification proceedings to go on unhindered. By its order granting time until July 12 to dissident Shiv Sena legislators in the Maharashtra Assembly to reply to the Deputy Speaker's notice under the anti-defection law, the Supreme Court has effectively made it possible for them to actualise their objective without the threat of disqualification for now. It is doubtful whether the Court should have done this in the face of a specific bar on judicial intervention in disqualification proceedings at any stage prior to final adjudication under the Tenth Schedule. The Deputy Speaker's grant of just two days for the MLAs to reply may have occasioned the intervention; but it is doubtful whether the Court should concern itself with the question now, when it can be decided after their possible disqualification. There are Court judgments that say compliance with natural justice is not based on the number of days given, but on whether sufficient opportunity was given before a decision. If courts countenance manoeuvres to pre-empt a decision on whether legislators camping in another State and questioning the Chief Minister's majority have incurred disqualification by "voluntarily giving up membership" of their party, they undermine the anti-defection law and render nugatory rulings by Constitution Benches. When defection is seen as a serious menace by the Constitution, courts should not act in furtherance of it. The duty to protect those wrongly disqualified is important, but so is calling to account defectors whose motives are suspect.

PREZ POLL: DRAUPADI MURMU'S NOMINATION TACTICAL OUTREACH TO TRIBALS

On an impressionistic view, this may appear plausible. However, a deeper study of the way Modi has changed the architecture of BJP over the past 40 years brick by small brick, block by big block as his stature in the party grew, reveals that Murmu's nomination is but a natural outcome of the political values that the new BJP stands by. It fits in with the ethos of the BJP re-modelled by Modi with a much more inclusive and substantially altered social base. This kind of neutral and analytical study of BJP as an organization is now available, thanks to the painstaking efforts of Ajay Singh, the writer, who has put together a perspicacious yet in-depth work on organization building, growth and dynamics of BJP. He has located the analytical study amid the dramatically dynamic political eco-system in which Modi built the BJP as a formidable organization. The book titled 'The Architect of the New Party: How Narendra Modi Transformed the Party' has an enduring academic weight to it without it being a dull and ponderous reading. Most importantly, it is not a hagiography, though Modi captures centrestage as the very subject of the study. It is a racy reading which recounts many defining political incidents that shaped India since the 1970s. That's when Modi began to contribute to the making of BJP at its grassroots. Concepts and words like design thinking, system building, organic growth, holistic approach and proactive strategies have become trite with overuse. But they make eminent sense when used in a case study or a context which is authentic. All these concepts, as Ajay Singh highlights in the book find vindication in the organisational journey of BJP guided by the single mindedness of Modi. This single mindedness is, however, multi-dimensional and multi-layered encompassing the government, the party apparatus from top to bottom, social and economic issues in the various regions of India, management of change, disaster management, social psychology, dealing with pressure groups and what have you. The erudite foreword of the book is written by the eminent author Walter Andersen, a former head of South Asia Studies at Johns Hopkins University, USA.

Andersen mentions a weakness common to most of the writings in the space of practical politics and organisations. He says many scholars analyzing political parties either avoid the difficult task of developing a deep insight into its functioning or make do with a cursory analysis. Ajay Singh is an exception, Andersen says. Coming from a serious author like Andersen, that's a compliment which Singh's book totally justifies. Andersen's concluding lines in the foreword sum up the essence of the book. In fact, he quotes Singh to substantiate the point that the ideological vision behind Modi's organisation building and electoral projects has been to replace the Congress system conceived by a Western-educated elite with a BJP that is the sole contender for the claim of a wholly Indian, home-grown way of party building. Singh thinks that this project will continue after Modi because of the robust organisation he has built which is capable of throwing up new leadership options. The conclusion of the book is like an apotheosis after the reader goes through a very racy and interesting recounting of political incidents, many of which are likely to have skipped attention of even the alert political observers. The conclusion may well be a part of a book on political science or an academic political history as it relates the political incidents and Modi's organization-building-responses with concepts in seminal works like 'Party Building in a New Nation: The Indian National Congress' by Myron Weiner published in 1967 and 'Party Politics in India: The Development of Multi-Party System' (1957). Christophe Jaffrelot's 'The Hindu Nationalist Movement in India' (1996), Craig Baxter's 'The Jana Sangh: A Biography of an Indian Political Party' and several other major books. Ajay Singh has managed to weave in serious conceptual interludes without burdening the lightness of the reading experience. The book is full of information and nuggets that educate even those who justifiably feel that they are quite knowledgeable about the political affairs of India. "Often great political turns begin with apolitical events." This quote by Singh is followed by a brief account of the disastrous flood that inundated Morbi town

in Saurashtra in August, 1979, claiming 25,000 lives. The relief operations organised by the young Narendra Modi stand out in bold relief. Modi's role in the success of the 'Khedu' protest by the farmers of Gujarat (the phonetic association with 'Khedu' is not irrelevant at all) is also among the less known events which are not less significant for that. Much later, his giving the call for a new green revolution in water starved regions in Gujarat was based on holistic thinking and organisational preparedness. Often, he makes ordinary citizens partners in the organisational endeavours of BJP. He does it through effective organisational communication using conventional and state-of-the-art methods and technologies. His political messaging is fully baked because of its being fully thought through. He decided to have Ambedkar's complete works translated into Gujarati. He launched a state government initiative to encourage inter caste marriages and named it after the second wife of Dr. Ambedkar, Savita Ambedkar, who was from a Brahmin family. He started yet another programme for large group-weddings of under privileged couples and named it after Ramabai, the first wife of Babasaheb. This integrated invoking of the Ambedkar symbol is unique in its sweep and effect. The writer Ajay Singh refers to K.M. Munshi, an iconic Gujarati political and literary figure who was one of the most prominent Congress leaders to switch over to Rajagopalachari's Swatantra Party. Ajay Singh narrates the invocation of Gujarati Asmita (which means pride and self-respect) by Modi in the context of the then Chief Election Commissioner's reluctance to declare State Assembly Elections as recommended by CM Modi. I don't want to rob the reader of the joy of discovering for himself the pleasures of reading one of the most interesting books on Indian politics, full of anecdotes, incidents and personalities, colourful and not-so-colourful, yet important. Insightful observations and conclusions are deftly woven with narrations of interesting political events. Modi has consistently increased the social base of the BJP making it far more inclusive and, in the process, he has almost totally transformed it compared to

the days when it was seen as a party of the urban middle class and traders. That BJP would win majority of the SC and ST constituencies under Modi's watch as early as late 1980s and early 1990s may be news to many. Modi's approach of building alignment between the party and the government and also with other stakeholders right since his Gujarat days had laid the foundation of what is seen as a most formidable political juggernaut. Modi's approach at integrating the different stakeholder groups may be described by an analogy based on ultra-urban neighbourhoods. But it is in order for describing the organisational philosophy of someone who is equally committed to 'lab to land', 'plough to plate' as he is to smart cities and state-of-the-art digital infrastructure. Imagine a modern housing complex with several multi-storied towers, with no intermingling among the residents of the various towers. Now imagine that an innovative architect decides to build skyways linking all the towers in the complex whereby the residents on the different floors of the towers can freely move around to other towers. Not only that, the innovative architect also builds useful and fruitful meeting venues where residents of all the towers intermingle. While they remain occupants of their own flats and towers, they become one large community of the housing complex. In a much better way, Ajay Singh has described how Modi has built the new BJP as a party which has free interface and harmonious alignment with all the stakeholders including the government(s), the NGOs, the various political formations, pressure groups and above all, the different segments of Indian society. Modi is a weaver of a complex political fabric which is strong and represents different hues of our political and social spectrum. Ajay Singh writes like a knowledgeable art critic who regales the reader while educating him about the basics and the nuances. That he has remained an observer and has not become partisan, makes the book an intellectually rewarding reading.

international

DEATH TOLL IN TEXAS MIGRANT TRAGEDY RISES TO 51, DRIVER IN CUSTODY, 2 CHARGED

Houston | Agencies

Another migrant died at a local hospital, pushing the death toll in the tragedy in San Antonio, a city in Texas, close to the US-Mexico border to 51, authorities said. At least 46 undocumented migrants were found dead inside an abandoned lorry next to railroad tracks in a remote area on the city's southern outskirts on Monday, Xinhua news agency quoted the authorities as saying. Some of those found alive reportedly remained in critical condition on Tuesday. After the truck packed with nearly 100 people was discovered on Monday, at least 16, including four children, were taken to area hospitals due to heat exhaustion and dehydration, local officials said. Among the dead, five were chil-

dren. At least 27 were from Mexico, three from Guatemala and four from Honduras, local media reported, citing officials from these countries. The truck driver, who was caught in a nearby field after he fled on foot, and was described as a US citizen, is now in federal custody and expected to be charged, San Antonio Police Chief William McManus told The New York Times on Tuesday. Two other men, both Mexican citizens, were charged on Tuesday with possessing firearms while residing in the United States illegally, according to court documents and US authorities. Police arrested them at an address in San Antonio listed on the tractor-trailer's registration. The San Antonio Express-News reported that someone had "cloned" the truck with the same color and identifying numbers from the US and

Texas transportation departments as one owned by a South Texas trucking company in an apparent move to evade authorities. A vigil was held in the rain Tuesday evening at a San Antonio park. "It's unspeakable," San Antonio Mayor Ron Nirenberg said on MSNBC Tuesday. "It's a tragedy beyond explanation." Those found alive were hot to the touch and suffering from heat stroke and exhaustion. There was no sign of water in the refrigerated tractor-trailer and no visible working air conditioning unit, according to San Antonio Fire Chief Charles Hood. Temperatures in San Antonio climbed to 101 degrees Fahrenheit (38.3 degrees centigrade) on Monday, while the heat in the packed trailer was likely way higher than that, according to the U.S. National

Weather Service. US President Joe Biden said on Tuesday that initial reports showed that the tragedy was caused by smugglers or human traffickers. "Exploiting vulnerable individuals for profit is shameful, as is political grandstanding around tragedy," Biden said in a statement, one day after Texas Republican Governor Greg Abbott blamed the deaths on what he called the president's "deadly open border policies." "My administration will continue to do everything possible to stop human smugglers and traffickers from taking advantage of people who are seeking to enter the United States between ports of entry," said Biden. The US Customs and Border Protection said it encountered 239,416 people along the US-Mexico border in May, hitting a record high.

Biden says Putin is getting 'exactly what he didn't want'

Madrid | Agencies

US President Joe Biden on Wednesday said Russian President Vladimir Putin is getting 'exactly what he didn't want' - the NATO-zation of Europe, the media reported. Biden praised the diplomatic breakthrough that resulted in Turkey pulling its objections from Sweden and Finland joining the alliance, marking its biggest expansion since the 1990s, the Daily Mail reported. "Putin was looking for the Finland-ization of Europe and we're going to get the NATO-zation of Europe," Biden said when he met NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg upon his arrival at NATO headquarters on Wednesday morning. "And that's exactly what he did not want to do - it's exactly what needs to be done to guarantee security for Europe. And I think it's necessary and I'm looking forward to it happening," the US President said, the Daily Mail reported. Biden will meet Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan on the sidelines of the NATO summit. On Tuesday evening, after multiple rounds of talks, Turkey lifted its objections to the two Nordic states joining the



alliance. "I am pleased to announce we now have an agreement that paves the way for Finland and Sweden to join NATO," Stoltenberg said that evening when he announced the deal. "Turkey, Finland and Sweden have signed a memorandum that addresses Turkey's concerns, including around arms exports and the fight against terrorism," he added. The three nations agreed to protect each other's security as Europe faces its worst security crisis in decades in the wake of Russia's invasion of Ukraine. In order to affirm the new members, NATO's 30 allied parliaments must ratify the decision by leaders, a process that could take up to a year.

Yael Braun-Pivet Elected New Speaker of French National Assembly

Paris: Yael Braun-Pivet was elected on Tuesday as the new speaker of the French National Assembly, France's lower house of parliament. The French National Assembly's 577 members kicked off its first session on Tuesday by electing its first female speaker with 242 votes in her favor out of 462 voters, Xinhua news agency reported quoting French media. Braun-Pivet comes from French President Emmanuel Macron's alliance Ensemble. After Macron was re-elected in April, Braun-Pivet was promoted as minister for France's Overseas Territories, according to the French state-owned television channel France 24. For this first session, the deputies sat in alphabetical order instead of with their political party. In her speech after being elected, Braun-Pivet said that the National Assembly should be a "foundation on which we can build consensus and compromises." The post of the National Assembly speaker ranks fourth in the French government after the president, the prime minister and the speaker of the Senate. One of the key tasks of the speaker of the National Assembly is to conduct debates and ensure the rules are respected.



Ukrainian PM outlines key cooperation priorities with EU

Kiev | Agencies

Ukrainian Prime Minister Denys Shmyhal has laid out eight priorities for Ukraine's cooperation with the European Union (EU), the presidential press service said. While addressing a meeting held in the presidential administration on Ukraine's preparations for EU membership, Shmyhal said the EU candidate status obtained last week allows Ukraine to start sectoral negotiations with the bloc. In particular, Ukraine plans to finalise the accession to the Convention on the Common Transit Procedure, which envisages a "customs visa-free regime" with the EU, Xinhua news agency reported quoting Shmyhal. According to Shmyhal, Ukraine also plans to sign the Agreement on Liberalisation of



Road Transport, which would cancel the obligation for Ukrainian haulers to obtain special permits for transporting goods in the EU. Ukraine also wants to create a shared mobile roaming space with the EU and join the single

zone of payments in euros free of any fees, Shmyhal said. In addition, Ukraine aims to integrate its energy system into continental Europe's energy network and join the EU digital market and all European "green course" initiatives,

Shmyhal said. Another priority for Ukraine is to sign an industrial visa-free regime to open mutual access to industrial markets. On June 23, EU leaders accepted Ukraine as a candidate for membership in the bloc.

PALESTINIAN KILLED IN CLASHES WITH ISRAELI SOLDIERS IN NORTHERN WEST BANK

Ramallah: A Palestinian was killed on Wednesday during clashes with Israeli soldiers in the northern West Bank city of Jenin, Palestinian medics and eyewitnesses said. Wessam Abu Bakker, director of Jenin Hospital, told Xinhua news agency that Mohammad Mer'ei, 25, was killed after being shot in the chest by Israeli soldiers who had stormed the city. He said that Mer'ei later succumbed to his wounds in hospital. Meanwhile, Palestinian eyewitnesses in Jenin said that an Israeli army force stormed the city early in the morning to arrest Palestinian activists who were wanted by the Israeli security intelligence. They added that fierce clashes broke out in the city between the Israeli army and dozens of Palestinians. There was no immediate Israeli army response to Mer'ei's killing. The Palestinian Foreign Ministry condemned the young man's killing, saying in a press statement that Mer'ei's death is the result of "Israeli politicians who give instructions to the soldiers to kill." The ministry said it holds the Israeli government directly responsible. "We call on the International Criminal Court to immediately start investigating the crimes of the Israeli occupation and the Israeli settlers," the statement said, adding that Mer'ei is "a direct victim of Israel's continued impunity."





UDAIPUR MURDER IS AN ACT OF TERROR

AIMIM will contest 2023 MP Assembly elections: Asaduddin Owaisi

Team Absolute | Bhopal

MP from Hyderabad Asaduddin Owaisi has started his political journey in Madhya Pradesh with the civic elections, on Wednesday Owaisi made another big announcement while addressing a press conference here in Bhopal. He said that AIMIM will also contest the assembly elections to be held in Madhya Pradesh in 2023. Owaisi said that AIMIM will emerge as a third option in Madhya Pradesh.

He said that about power, he said that Muslims cannot change the government, but you should make your candidates successful, because our fight is not about coming to power, but of sharing.

Terming the horrific killing of tailor Kanhaiya Lal in Rajasthan's Udaipur district as an "act of terror," AIMIM chief Asaduddin Owaisi demanded on Wednesday that the Congress government in the state initiate the strictest action under IPC and CrPC provisions against the accused.

"The killing of Kanhaiya Lal by the two men, which was shot on camera, is an act of terror, just like the 2015 killing of Mohammad Akhlaq in Dadri (UP) and the 2017 killing of Pahlua Khan in Alwar (Rajasthan) too were acts of terror. Violence cannot be justified as means of dissent and protest, we condemn violence. We also reiterate our demand to arrest suspended BJP leader Nupur Sharma," Owaisi said while interacting with journalists in Bhopal on Wednesday.

He was also critical of those who killed the tai-



lor, threatening on camera to behead the PM. "We've ideological differences with PM Modi, we are like two seas which can never meet. But that doesn't mean, that we'll support anyone for uttering such threats for our country's PM."

"Udaipur incident would not have happened had Rajasthan police been alert. I read in the media that Kanhaiya Lal was receiving threats after he was arrested and released on bail," the All India Majlis-E-Ittehadul Muslimeen leader said.

He also said that "I put it on record that Muslims cannot come to power or change governments on their own anywhere in the Hindi heartland, so they should focus on increasing their numbers in power, by electing their own leaders in polls."

The AIMIM leader also reiterated his demand that Nupur Sharma be arrested, saying she should face trial in a court of law for her alleged objectionable remarks about Prophet Mohammad.

During this, AIMIM National President Asaduddin Owaisi targeted the Congress and said that the Congress party should end from the country as soon as possible, because of the Congress, Modi became the Prime Minister twice, the government was formed in Madhya Pradesh, Congress does not want that Muslims do not understand politics, Congress is unable to collect 100 people in Delhi.

On the Maharashtra crisis, Owaisi said that the party will decide its plan of action on the floor test in the Maharashtra Vidhan Sabha in time. There are two AIMIM MLAs presently in Maharashtra.

While slamming the Shiv Sena led government in Maharashtra over reports of possible renaming Aurangabad district as Sambhajinagar, the AIMIM chief said that instead of focussing on keeping their flock together, they (Shiv Sena) are working at renaming Aurangabad.

"Why isn't the Maharashtra government working at addressing the drinking water crisis and farmers' woes, which are the real problems facing Aurangabad," questioned Owaisi.

He also voiced opposition to the Modi government's Agnipath scheme and the arrest of fact-checker and Alt News co-founder journalist Mohammed Zubair by the Delhi police on charges of hurting religious sentiments.

Give priority to employment of local youth in industries: CM



Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan said that special attention should be given on top priority to the employment of local youth at the time of establishment of industries and expansion of work of old industrial units. For investment promotion, the state government is extending full assistance as per the provisions of the Industry Policy on setting up of new units in various sectors. He said that eligible children of tribals should be given employment opportunities in these units in tribal-dominated areas.

Chouhan was addressing the meeting of Cabinet Committee on Investment Promotion at his residence today. Chief Minister gave necessary instructions regarding the facilities to be provided to the new units to be set up. Industrial Policy and Investment Promotion Minister Shri Rajvardhan Singh Dattigao, Medical Education Minister Vishwas Sarang, Public Health and Family Welfare Minister Prabhuram Choudhary, Chief Secretary Iqbal Singh Bains and officers of concerned departments were present.

In the meeting, other investment proposals includ-

ing setting up of second of its kind in the country in the renewable energy sector at Bhipura in Neemuch district and expansion of cement plant unit at Manawar in Dhar district costing Rs. 7 thousand crores. It has been told that the cost of Manawar plant is Rs 975 crore. Presently one thousand persons are getting employment from the plant. On expansion of the unit, 300 additional people will get employment. Chouhan gave instructions to Principal Secretary Industrial Policy and Investment Promotion Sanjay Kumar Shukla to provide necessary facilities under the policy.

After Owaisi, Kejriwal to register presence in campaigning

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Taking place a year ahead of big clash for Madhya Pradesh assembly polls due in year 2023, local body polls in Madhya Pradesh are attracting political bigwigs.

After AIMIM chief Asaduddin Owaisi who toured Jabalpur and Bhopal for campaigning for civic polls, AAP national convener and the Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal will make his presence felt in these keenly contested polls in July first week.

The AAP senior leader will be followed in Madhya Pradesh by other senior leaders as well.

Kejriwal seems buoyed by the recent win in Punjab, will be addressing a public rally in Singrauli on July 2. However this will be only fixture for the Delhi Chief Minister in civic polls.

Atishi Marlena, the AAP

Kalkaji MLA from Delhi will be campaigning for party candidates in Bhopal on July 1 while Rajendra Pal Gautam, a Kejriwal minister will be in the state capital on July 3. Senior party leader Sanjay Singh will be in Indore, Ujjain and Burhanpur on July 3 & 4.

Pankaj Singh, the AAP state president said that senior party leaders are visiting the state amid the local body polls. More leaders are expected to come in the next phase after July 4, he added. Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann's visit is yet not final and Delhi Dy CM Manish Sisodia's tour is expected to be finalized by tonight, said Singh.

He added that the party has fielded mayoral candidates in 14 municipal corporations while over 2,000 in the fray for post of corporators in the state.

To add, most of the political parties are testing political waters in the state through

local body polls so that they could compete for meaningful performance in the 2023 assembly polls.

Both the BJP and Congress party are also fighting these local body polls with utmost somberness which is why Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan and MPCC chief Kamal Nath are taking whirlwind tours in the state.

The civic polls are taking place in two phases-July 6 and July 13. The party is planning to field most of the senior leaders ahead of these deadlines. To add, AAP candidates are campaigning for these polls aggressively.

Rani Vishwakarma, the AAP mayor candidate had withdrawn her nomination in Bhopal and the party had pointed fingers at BJP for using coercive measures.

One of the former AAP leaders, Akshay Hunka and former IFS officer Azad Singh Dabas, have joined the party state unit recently.

Second Phase Voting of Panchayat elections will be held on July 1

Team Absolute | Bhopal

In the second phase of three-tier Panchayat elections on July 1, voting will be held in 7655 village panchayats of 106 janpad panchayats in 47 districts. Voting will be held from 7 am to 3 pm. In these constituencies, there will be a local holiday on July 1. Counting of votes will be held at the polling stations itself immediately after polling. A total of 23 thousand 967 polling stations have been set up for voting. In the second phase, one crore 31 lakh 44 thousand 27 voters will be able to exercise their franchise.

Secretary State Election Commission Rakesh Singh has informed that voting will be held on July 1 in Jirapur, Khilchhipur of district Rajgarh, Udaipura, Gairatganj, Begumganj of district Raisen, Nasrullaganj, Ichchhawar of district Sehore, Sironj, Nateran of district Vidisha, Maheshwar, Barwah of district Khargone, Khalwa, Punasa of Khandwa, Gandhwani, Umarban (Bakner), Dharampuri of District Dhar, Jhabua, Meghnagar, Ranapur, Rama of District Jhabua, Khaknar of District Burhanpur,



Alirajpur, Jobat of District Alirajpur, Thikri, Rajpur, Niwali of District Barwani, Raghogarh, Chachoda of District Guna, Pichore, Narwar, Kolaras of District Shivpuri, Isagarh of District Ashoknagar, Sevdha, Bhandar of District Datia, Majhauli, Patan Shahpura of District Jabalpur, Saunsar, Pandhurna, Parasia, Bichua of Chhindwara, Lakhnadaun, Ghansor (Kahanapas), Dhanora of District Seoni, Lanji, Kimpapur, Katangi of Balaghat, Ghughari, Mohgaon, Mandla of District Mandla, Dindori,

Amarpur of District Dindori, Barwara, Katni of District Katni, Khachrod, Ghatiya of District Ujjain, Jawad of District Neemuch, Bajna, Sailana of District Ratlam, Moman Barodiya of Shajapur, Agar of District Agar-Malwa, Sitamau, Bhanapura of District Mandasaur, Dewas Tonkkhurd, Sonkachcha of District Dewas, Malthoun, Banda, Deori, Bina of District Sagar, Baramalhara, Bakswasha Barigarh (Gaurihar) of District Chhatarpur, Jabera, Hata of District Damoh, Tikamgarh, Palera of District Tikamgarh, Prithvihar of District Niwari, Gunnaur, Powai, Shahnagar of District Panna, Rewa, Raipur Karchuliyan, Gangev of District Rewa, Devsar of District Singrauli, Rampur Naikin, Majhauli of District Sidhi, Nagod, Amarpatan, Ramnagar of District Satna, Seoni Malwa, Pipariya of District Narmadapuram, Ghoradongri, Multai, Athner, Chicholi of district Betul, Beorhari, Jaisingh Nagar of district Shahdol, Manpur of district Umaria, Jaithari of District Anuppur, Ater, Bhind of district Bhind, Karahal of district Sheopur and Morena and Jaura of district Morena.

TEMPLE PRIEST HELD FOR MAKING BOMB THREAT CALL

Team Absolute | Gwalior

A 39 year old temple priest was arrested for allegedly making a bomb threat call, which prompted the police to conduct an extensive search at Gwalior railway station, an official said on Wednesday.

The accused, Laxman Das, has the habit of sharing fake information with the police and was involved in similar acts with the Uttar Pradesh police, said Shubha Shrivastava, deputy superintendent of police (DSP), General Railway Police (GRP).

A phone call was made to the emergency service num-

ber 100 around 10.30am on Monday, which claimed that a bomb had been planted at the railway station, she said.

The police traced the phone number to Das, a native of Khairgarh in Agra district of Uttar Pradesh, who is a priest at a temple in Bhind district, the official said.

The accused switched off his phone after making the hoax call and was arrested on Tuesday when the device was turned on, she said.

The bomb disposal squad and sniffer dogs had conducted an extensive search of Gwalior railway station following the call, which turned out to be hoax.

Minor girl kills self, police clueless, cause remains to be established

The mother of the victim is an employee of a dental college. Both husband and wife live separately.

Team Absolute | Bhopal

A 15-year-old girl living with her mother committed suicide by hanging herself from the ceiling fan at her house, Kolar police said on Wednesday.

Police station incharge told media that the victim Hiya Verma, daughter of Hitesh Verma, was a student of 10th standard. She lived with her mother in Sankheri area. The mother of the victim is an employee of a dental college. Both husband and wife live

separately. Hitesh lives in Nehru Nagar and he is a staffer of an insurance company.

The police added that Hiya's mother talked to her at around 8 pm on her mobile phone. When she did not pick up the phone at around 8.20 pm, she rushed home to find the girl hanging.

The matter was reported to the police and they recovered the body and sent for post-mortem. Hiya's body was handed over to the family members after that. Police have registered a case and have begun probe into the matter.

The reason of suicide is not yet established. Police

have seized the Hiya's mobile phone and have sent it for examination.

The reason for suicide is yet to be ascertained. No suicide note was found from the incident spot," said a police official. According to the deceased's mother, she was in college at the time of the incident while Hiya was alone at home. "The day of the incident was my birthday. I called her up when she said that she has planned a surprise for me as my gift. The call got abruptly disconnected and even after several attempts, I could not reach her. I ran back home and found Hiya hanging on the noose."

CM CHOUHAN PLANTS PEEPAL, NEEM AND HARSINGAR SAPPLINGS

Bhopal: Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan planted Harsingar, Neem and Peepal saplings along with the members of Shri Ram Colony Residents Association in Smart City Park at Shyamala Hills today. Along everyone also offered Shramdaan with planting saplings. Medical Education Minister Vishwas Sarang was also present. Peepal purifies the environment and also has religious and Ayurvedic significance. Rich in antibiotic elements, Neem is known for its medicinal qualities. According to medical experts, Harsingar is used to treat many diseases.



FOUR MEN ARRESTED FOR SETTING ABLAZE WOMAN

Bhopal: In Madhya Pradesh's Vidisha, four men set ablaze a woman under the influence of alcohol. The main accused has been identified as Amit Rai. The incident took place on June 28. The victim has been identified as Madhu. The main accused used to stand outside the victim's house. The mother of the victim asked the man to leave. Later, he along with his 3 friends, set the woman on fire.

The nearby people managed to douse the fire and took her to the hospital. The victim confessed to the police that he got angry when he was asked to leave the area. Rai was under the influence of alcohol. The whole incident was captured by a CCTV camera.

Non-liability of GST on storage of cotton will provide relief to MP Cotton industry: Deora

MP FINANCE MINISTER DEORA AT THE 47TH MEETING OF GST COUNCIL

PILOT PROJECT OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE WILL START IN MP TO STOP BOGUS REGISTRATION

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Finance and Commercial Tax Minister Jagdish Deora has said that in view of the high production of cotton in Malwa and Nimar South-West region of Madhya Pradesh, the clarification regarding non-liability of GST on storage and warehousing of cotton will give relief to the cotton industry.

In his address on various issues in the 47th meeting of the GST Council in Chandigarh on Tuesday, Deora supported the proposal of the Fitment Committee that there would be no liability of GST on the sale of all types of plots. He said that this proposal would be useful in clearing the confusion between the real estate sector and the persons buying the plots. It will also help in the development of the real estate sector. The meeting was presided over by the Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman. On behalf of the state, Principal Secretary Commercial Tax Deepali Rastogi and Commissioner Commercial Tax Shri Lokesh Jatav were also present. Deora said that animal husbandry activities are



conducted on a large scale in Madhya Pradesh. According to the 20th Animal Census 2019, Madhya Pradesh is ranked third in the country's animal husbandry activities. Animal husbandry is an important part of the rural economy in the state.

Deora informed that the task force constituted to increase GST revenue on the instructions of Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has recommended how the registration process should be made favourable from the point of view of Ease of Doing Business, so that it could further strengthen business. Deora said that it would be appropriate in this

regard that the information given at the time of registration of the digitized database of land records, electricity bill, lease agreement, lease deed, property ID and property details in the urban local body is verified through API. This will prevent getting bogus registrations. The use of artificial intelligence for this has also been suggested by the task force. Discussions have been held with the Ministry of Revenue, Government of India to start its pilot project in Madhya Pradesh. Deora supported the reduction in GST rate on Ostomy devices from 12 percent to 5 percent on account of it being a health utility item and being used repeatedly by critical patients for a long period of time. Deora said that IVF is a ray of hope for childless couples in the present times. He supported the clarification regarding IVF treatment being tax free services as recommended by the Fitment Committee. In order to remove the confusion arising out of having different tax rates on different articles of similar nature under the same head, the Finance Minister has supported the hike in the tax rate on all orthopaedic implants to 5 percent.

ELECTION RELATED INFORMATION WILL BE AVAILABLE IN "CHUNAV" MOBILE APP

Bhopal: "Chunav" mobile app (Android based) has been updated for the convenience of voters and candidates of urban bodies and three-tier panchayats for the general election year- 2022. Election related information can be obtained through the app. Secretary State Election Commission Rakesh Singh has informed that in the "Chunav" app, the information of voters, candidates for the posts of mayors, corporators, district panchayat members and janpad panchayat members is available as per the summary of the affidavit. The election results of mayors, corporators, district panchayat members and janpad panchayat members will also be available in the app.



DAKOTA JOHNSON HAD TO REWRITE SCENES DURING FILMING OF FIFTY SHADES

Los Angeles | Agencies

'Fifty Shades of Grey' star Dakota Johnson recently opened up on her experience of working in the erotica franchise. Talking to 'Vanity Fair', she spoke about how working on the film was challenging for her up to a certain extent. The actress spoke with and reflected on her time shooting the series and working in tandem with James who commanded full creative control on the film.

Johnson told 'Vanity Fair', "She had a lot of creative control, all day, every day,

and she just demanded that certain things happen," the actress said of the author, who was also one of the film's producers. "There were parts of the books that just wouldn't work in a movie, like the inner monologue, which was at times incredibly cheesy. It wouldn't work to say out loud. It was always a battle. Always."

Many times, the actress had to rewrite scenes for herself, "We'd do the takes of the movie that Erika wanted to make, and then we would do the takes of the movie that we wanted to make. The night before, I would rewrite

scenes with the old dialogue so I could add a line here and there. It was like mayhem all the time."

However, she doesn't harbour any regrets about the demanding working situations on the films' sets, as she told 'Vanity Fair', "I don't think it's a matter of regret. If I had known at the time that's what it was going to be like, I don't think anyone would've done it. It would've been like, 'Oh, this is psychotic.' But no, I don't regret it."

Depp's rep says Disney's reported \$300 mn offer is 'made up'

Los Angeles | Agencies

Hollywood star Johnny Depp has not been offered an apology deal worth \$300 million. One of the representatives of the 'Pirates of the Caribbean' star has denied the existence of any such deal saying, "This is made up," reports NBC News.

A media report had earlier said that after Depp won his defamation suit against Amber Heard, Disney offered the deal plus an apology letter to Depp with the request to return to the 'Pirates of the Caribbean' franchise.

The NBC News report further states that Depp, who has played Captain Jack Sparrow in all the five 'Pirates' movies, the latest being the 2017 film 'Pirates of the Caribbean: Dead Men Tell No Tales', has declined to be part of the franchise irrespec-

tive of how lucrative the offer is. The actor had made the statement in the court. At one point during the trial, Heard's attorney Ben Rottenborn asked the actor, "The fact is, Mr Depp, if Disney came to you with \$300 million and a million apacas, nothing on this earth would get you to go back and work with Disney on a 'Pirates of the Caribbean' film? Correct?"

Depp replied in affirmative, "That is true, Mr. Rottenborn."

A Virginia jury later ruled that Heard was liable for defaming Depp. The jury awarded \$10 million to Depp in compensatory damages and \$5 million in punitive damages.

South Korean crime thriller film set for Hollywood remake

Los Angeles | Agencies

South Korean crime thriller 'The Gangster, The Cop, The Devil' is getting a Hollywood remake where the original star of the film Don Lee will reprise his lead role as a gang boss looking for redemption in the studio's U.S. version, reports 'Deadline'.

Lee, whose acting credits also include Disney/Marvel's Eternals and Korean blockbusters 'Train to Busan' and 'The Roundup', is also producing under his U.S banner Gorilla 8 Productions; and alongside Chris S. Lee, CEO of B&C Content; Billy Acumen, CEO of BA Entertainment; and Sylvester Stallone and Braden Aftergood under their production banner, Balboa Productions.

As per 'Deadline', the remake bankrolled by Paramount Pictures is currently in the early stages of development. The original film, directed by Lee Won-tae, centred on fierce and feared gang boss Jang Dong-su played by Lee, who barely survives a violent attack by an elusive serial killer.

With his reputation damaged, the only way for Jang to restore his image is to find the attacker and exact revenge. He thus forms an

unlikely partnership with a local detective to catch the sadistic criminal simply known as 'K'.

With audiences hungry for Korean content in the wake of Bong Joon-ho's Oscar-winning Parasite (which also debuted at the 2019 Cannes fest), and other break-outs like 'Squid Game', it's a fine time to be in the Korea game.



Christian Bale will don batsuit again only if Chris Nolan directs the film

Los Angeles | Agencies

Christian Bale, who essayed the role of DC's caped-crusader in Christopher Nolan's Batman trilogy, and happens to be the most loved Batman till date after Adam West, would like to don the batsuit again provided Nolan takes over the reins for directing the film if ever it is made, reports Deadline.

Bale told Screenrant, "In my mind, it would be something if Chris Nolan ever said to himself, You know what, I've got another story to tell. And if he wished to tell that story with me, I'd be in."

'Deadline', however, noted that the actor also mentioned that he and Nolan spoke about the trajectory of the Batman films before filming even started. The plan had always been to create a certain amount of movies in this universe. "We said, Hey, look. Let's make three films, if we're lucky enough to get to do that. And then let's walk away. Let's not linger too long," he added. Meanwhile, Bale is set to play Gorr the God Butcher in 'Thor: Love And Thunder'. His look from the trailer has already set the Internet abuzz. The fourth instalment of the Thor franchise is being directed by Taika Waititi. Chris Hemsworth as Thor, Natalie Portman and Tessa Thompson return to their roles in the film, which is scheduled to open in theatres July 8, 2022.



Travis Barker hospitalised due to undisclosed medical condition



Los Angeles | Agencies

American musician and the drummer of rock band 'Blink-182' Travis Barker has been rushed to a hospital following undisclosed medical condition, reports 'Variety'. Barker, who has been married to Kourtney Kardashian, has been admitted to Cedar-Sinai Medical Center for further care after first checking into West Hills Hospital and Medical Center. As per 'Variety', Barker also shared a vague message on Twitter, possibly alluding to his medical condition. "God save me," the drummer wrote. However, Barker's short post has not been the only activity on his Twitter account since. His account also retweeted a post from Billboard sharing an article about his recent work with singer Jxdn, who collaborated on two singles in honor of Jxdn's late friend Cooper Noriega. The duo's singles were released earlier Tuesday. 'Variety' further states that although Barker's condition is currently unknown, his daughter, Alabama Barker, shared a concerning message through her Instagram story later Tuesday, asking fans to "Please send your prayers." Barker has been a force in the music industry for nearly three decades, most recently collaborating with artists like Machine Gun Kelly and Post Malone. He performed at the 94th Academy Awards ceremony at the Dolby Theatre in March.

ABSOLUTE PIC OF THE DAY



Heidi Klum



MALAYSIAN OPEN:

PV SINDHU, P KASHYAP MOVE INTO SECOND ROUND, SAINA CRASHES OUT

Ace Indian shuttlers, PV Sindhu and Parupalli Kashyap, moved into the second round while Saina Nehwal crashed out in the opening round at the Malaysia Open 2022 women's and men's singles events respectively at the Axiata Arena, here on Wednesday.

Kuala Lumpur | Agencies

Ace Indian shuttlers, PV Sindhu and Parupalli Kashyap, moved into the second round while Saina Nehwal crashed out in the opening round at the Malaysia Open 2022 women's and men's singles



events respectively at the Axiata Arena, here on Wednesday.

Sindhu, seventh in the badminton world rankings, beat world No 10 Pornpawee Chochuwong of Thailand 21-13, 21-17 in the first round.

On the other hand, World No 26 Saina, who was competing for the first time since the Thailand Open in May, was beaten by 30th-ranked Iris



Wang of the US 11-21, 17-21.

The London 2012 bronze medallist is yet to go past the second round this year.

Former world champion Sindhu took control of the match from the start with a four-point lead at the first break. With scores at 16-13, Sindhu, a two-time Olympic medallist, won five successive points to take the 1-0 lead.

Chochuwong fought hard to stay in the match in the second game. Sindhu, however, once again broke free late with six consecutive points after trailing 15-17.

With this win, Sindhu improved her head-to-head record over Chochuwong to 6-3. She will now face world No 20 Phittayaporn Chaiwan of Thailand in the second round.

Meanwhile, Commonwealth Games gold medallist Parupalli Kashyap, got better of South Korea's Heo Kwang Hee 21-12, 21-17 in the first round of men's singles.

In the women's doubles, Ashwini Bhat and Shikha Gautam went down to two-time world champions Mayu Matsumoto and Wakana Nagahara of Japan 11-21, 14-21.

Boxers Simranjit, Ananta off to winning starts in Elorda Cup

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Indian boxers Simranjit Kaur and Ananta Chopade kickstarted their campaigns with contrasting victories in the opening round at the inaugural edition of Elorda Cup in Nur-Sultan, Kazakhstan on Wednesday.

According to information received here, the 2018 World Championships bronze medallist Simranjit lived up to favourite's tag with a dominating start in the tournament. She pulled off a comprehensive win against the local boxer Ischanova Nazym by unanimous decision in the women's 60kg encounter.

Whereas, in the country's first bout of the day, Ananta dealt with a stiff challenge from the Mongolian pugilist Dorjnyambu Ganbold. However, the Indian kept his cool during an intensely fought men's 54kg thriller and eventually managed to tilt the result in his favour by a narrow 3-2 verdict.

Simranjit and Ananta will now square off against China's Xu Zichun and Kazakhstan's Aitynbek Nursultan respectively in their quarter-finals matches.

Meanwhile, three other Indian pugilists suffered opening-round defeats. Muhammed Etash Khan (60kg), Kaisham Johnson Singh (63.5kg) and Manjeet Singh (+92kg) lost to their respective Kazakh opponents-Samchuk Vassily, Bazarbai Uulu Mukhamedsabyr and Saparbay Nurlan, by a similar 0-5 margin in the men's category.



A 33-member Indian contingent, including 12 men, has been participating at the on-going event with two teams featuring in the women's section. Apart from India, the tournament has also been witnessing the presence of pugilists from other top boxing nations such as Uzbekistan, hosts Kazakhstan, Cuba, China and Mongolia.

World Championship medallists Simranjit, Sonia Lather and Jamuna Boro are leading the Indian challenge in the women's section alongside 2021 Youth World champions Gitika and Alfiya Pathan. While in the men's category, the reigning national champion Lakshya Chahar and Youth World champion Sachin are among the Indians.

Later on Day 1, another Indian boxer Kirti, representing the second Indian women team, will fight against Japan's Rinka Tanaka in the 60kg. Finals will be played on July 4.

SWIATEK, SVITOLINA, RADWANSKA TO PLAY CHARITY MATCH FOR UKRAINE RELIEF

World No 1 Iga Swiatek will welcome Elina Svitolina, Agnieszka Radwanska and other players to Krakow (Poland) on July 23 for a charity exhibition in support of humanitarian relief efforts in Ukraine.

London | Agencies

World No 1 Iga Swiatek will welcome Elina Svitolina, Agnieszka Radwanska and other players to Krakow (Poland) on July 23 for a charity exhibition in support of humanitarian relief efforts in Ukraine.

Swiatek will be joined by Ukraine's long-time top player, former World No.2 Radwanska, Polish junior player Martyn Pawelski and former ATP World No.31 Sergiy Stakhovsky at the event. The quartet will play a mixed doubles match, and Swiatek and Radwanska will play a one-set singles exhibition.

"For months, I have been working with my team on a charity initiative for Ukraine to support those who suffer because of the war," Swiatek wrote on Wednesday in announcing the event on social media.

"I hope we can see each other in large numbers ... to show the strength of sport when it unites us in helping and gives us at least a little joy."

Famed former soccer player Andriy Shevchenko will also be on hand as a special guest. Svitolina, who announced in May that she's expecting her first child with husband and ATP pro Gael Monfils, will serve as chair umpire.

In a social media post, Svitolina expressed her gratitude to all involved.

All proceeds from the event will be donated in support of children and teenagers affected by the war in Ukraine. Svitolina's charity foundation, UNICEF Poland and



United 24, the official charity initiative of Ukraine in response to the war, are also involved.

Poland's top player has been vocal in her support of Ukraine since the country was invaded by Russia in February, including after winning both the Qatar Total Open that month and Roland Garros in June.

Many Ukrainians have fled to neighboring Poland in recent months to seek refuge from the war.

"I felt like I want people to be more aware of what's going on," Swiatek had said after winning in Paris.

"I think if it's really important for us, we should maybe use our voice, because we are public figures and we have some impact. For sure, when I became World No.1, I felt like I have some kind of obligation to speak, but I really want to keep doing that in a smart way and maybe not too much so it's not too overwhelming."

Chess Olympiad torch relay covers over 20 cities across India

The ongoing first-ever Chess Olympiad Torch Relay has covered over 20 cities across India since the launch ceremony on June 19, done in the presence of Prime Minister Narendra Modi at the IG Stadium, here.

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The ongoing first-ever Chess Olympiad Torch Relay has covered over 20 cities across India since the launch ceremony on June 19, done in the presence of Prime Minister Narendra Modi at the IG Stadium, here.

The relay will cover a total of 75 cities, commemorating the occasion of Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav - 75 years of India's independence.

FIDE president Arkady Dvorkovich handed over the torch to PM Modi, who handed it over to Indian Chess legend Viswanathan Anand. Following the historic launch, the torch travelled to iconic locations



including Red Fort in the national capital, the HPCA in Dharamshala, the Attari Border in Amritsar, the Taj Mahal in Agra and the Vidhan Sabha in Lucknow, among others.

From June 30, the torch relay enters Gujarat and then travels to the Western part of India, the Eastern part of India, North-east India and ultimately culminating at South India. The North India leg covered Delhi, Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal, Punjab, Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan in the last 10 days. The torch relay events across the cities saw major participa-

tion. While the Attari Border torch relay ceremony saw an audience of 8000 people, the number of people present at the Vidhan Sabha event in Lucknow was 3000. Besides some of the prominent Chess Grandmasters like Viswanathan Anand, Dibyendu Barua, Deep Sengupta, Tejas Bakre and Vantika Agarwal, among others, the events saw the presence of prominent dignitaries.

Governor of Jammu and Kashmir Manoj Sinha, Governor of Punjab Banwarilal Purohit, Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh Yogi Adityanath, Sports minister Anurag Singh Thakur, Law

minister Kiren Rijju remained some of the prominent dignitaries at the various Chess Olympiad torch relay events. The torch relay events start with games of chess, where Grandmasters and dignitaries play the game with local athletes. Following the events, the torch travels to the various locations. Besides, various cultural events take place including an interactive bus tour travelling from one city to another, a cultural parade varying from region to region which features young chess players' community.

For the first time in the history of the prestigious competition, India not only hosts the 44th FIDE Chess Olympiad but is also the first country that starts off a torch relay that has been instituted by FIDE for the first time in the history of the competition which started in 1927. From now on, every two years when the Chess Olympiad happens, the torch will go out from India to the host country.

Being the host, India is set to field 20 players -- their biggest ever contingent -- at the 44th FIDE Chess Olympiad. India is entitled to field 2 teams each in the Open and Women's category. Over 2000 participants will be representing at the event from 188 countries, highest in the history of the Chess Olympiad. The 44th FIDE Chess Olympiad will be held in Chennai from July 28 to August 10.

BABAR AZAM OVERTAKES KOHLI FOR MOST NUMBER OF DAYS AS NO. 1 IN ICC T20I RANKINGS

Pakistan skipper Babar Azam is now officially the top-ranked T20 batter in the world for the longest period of time, surpassing Virat Kohli's tenure, after he maintained his spot at the head of proceedings in the latest ICC T20 batting rankings released on Wednesday.

Dubai | Agencies

Pakistan skipper Babar Azam is now officially the top-ranked T20 batter in the world for the longest period of time, surpassing Virat Kohli's tenure, after he maintained his spot at the head of proceedings in the latest ICC T20 batting rankings released on Wednesday.

India cricketer Kohli was the No.1 ranked T20 batter for a total of 1,013 days during his reign last decade, but Azam has now surpassed this number following his long-standing stay at the top.

The Pakistan skipper is currently rated as the No.1 batter in T20Is and ODIs and recently suggested he was keen to try and claim top billing in all three formats of the game.

There was little change within the latest T20I rankings released on Wednesday, with India left-hander Ishan Kishan dropping one place inside the top-10 to seventh on the list for batters.

Ireland's moving batter Harry Tector moved up a 55 places to 66th following his impressive series with the bat



against India, while Deepak Hooda jumped 414 spots to equal 104th overall.

While former England Test skipper Joe Root hangs on to his narrow lead as the top-ranked Test batter, there is big movement behind him following the completion of England's three-Test home series against New Zealand.

Player of the Series Daryl Mitchell of New Zealand rose four places to 12th on the latest batter rankings, while fellow Kiwi Tom Blundell jumped 11 spots to 20th.

Root's England team-mate Jonny Bairstow also caught the eye with a 20-place

improvement seeing the 32-year-old move to 21st on the Test batter list.

New Zealand's Neil Wagner dropped a spot to 10th on the latest rankings for bowlers, with England duo Stuart Broad (up one spot to 13th) and Jack Leach (up 13 places to 25th) among the notable movers.

Bangladesh captain Shakib Al Hasan dropped a spot to third on the all-rounder rankings following a disappointing second Test against West Indies, with India veteran Ravichandran Ashwin taking his place in second.

West Indies' left-hander

Kyle Mayers jumped three places to eighth on the all-rounder rankings following his 'Player of the Match' performance against Bangladesh. The recent rise of Australia's Josh Hazlewood as a dominant white-ball bowler continued as the in-form seamer moved up two places to equal fifth on the latest ODI rankings.

Hazlewood is already No.1 on the T20 rankings and his move up the ODI list comes on the back of a strong spell of 2/22 in the final 50-over match of the series against Sri Lanka.

Chris Woakes' absence during England's recent ODI series against the Netherlands saw the tall seamer drop two spots to fourth on the latest rankings, with New Zealand quick Matt Henry (second) and Pakistan speedster Shaheen Afridi (third) both rising a place behind the top-ranked Trent Boult.

There is also a small reshuffle inside the top 10 on the ODI batter rankings, with Australia skipper Aaron Finch dropping two spots to 12th as Root and Shai Hope move up to equal 10th.

Emotional moment, says hockey stalwart Sushila Chanu as she gears up for maiden World Cup match

Hockey stalwart Sushila Chanu is happy that she will finally make her maiden World Cup appearance on July 3 when India take on England in their first Pool B match here.

Amstelveen (Netherlands) | Agencies

Hockey stalwart Sushila Chanu is happy that she will finally make her maiden World Cup appearance on July 3 when India take on England in their first Pool B match here.

Despite having played 208 matches for the country, and represented India in back-to-back Olympics Games besides having won a bronze medal at the 2014 Asian Games at Incheon, South Korea, the Manipur-born midfielder missed the opportunity to play in the 2018 World Cup due to injury.

"In 2018, I missed playing



the World Cup in London due to an injury.

Subsequently, I struggled with form which resulted in me missing out on the Asian Games in Jakarta that year. It was perhaps one of the biggest lows of my career. It was a difficult phase but I was determined to overcome it and earn my place in the squad again," said Sushila on Wednesday. After missing out on the 2018 Asian Games, where India won silver, and the World Cup the same year, where India made the

quarterfinals, Sushila returned with a bang and has become a strong force in the team's growth over the past four years.

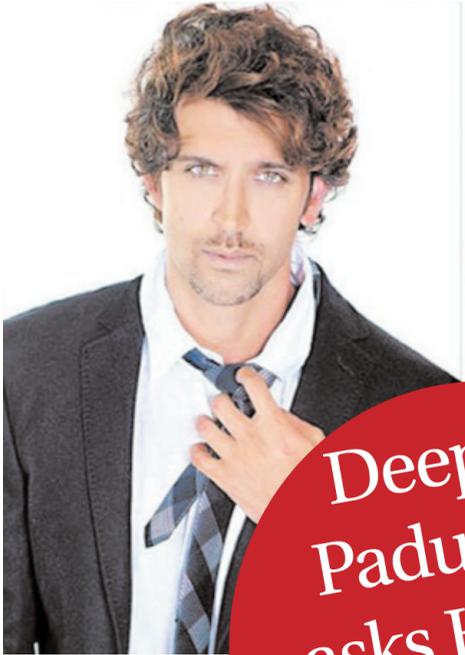
She was part of India's victory at the FIH Series Finals as well as the FIH Olympic Qualifiers in Bhubaneswar. She also played a key role at the Tokyo Olympics, and then featured in India's line-up at the Women's Asia Cup in 2021. Sushila achieved her 200th international cap while representing India at the FIH Women's Pro League

2021/22 where India finished third.

"I am very happy and excited to have this opportunity to represent India at the World Cup. For many of my teammates, it's their second outing at the World Cup but for me, it's a first. It is an emotional moment for me and I surely believe it will be a memorable one for us," she said on the sidelines of the team's practice match against Chile in Amstelveen.

Speaking about the mood in the camp ahead of the clash against England, Sushila said, "We arrived in Amstelveen soon after our Pro League matches ended in Rotterdam last week. We have had enough time to settle into the team hotel and also have been training at the World Cup venue."

"Definitely everyone is pumped up and looking forward to give their 100 per cent. Netherlands is a fantastic venue for hockey and the hosts have created a great atmosphere for the participating teams. We are all looking forward to our first match and a good start against England is what we need," added Chanu.



Team Absolute | Mumbai



Deepika Padukone asks Hrithik Roshan to wait for her

Deepika Padukone and Hrithik Roshan enjoy a massive fan following. The two have their social media game on point and there is no denying that.

Hrithik and Deepika's fans are excited to witness their crackling chemistry in their upcoming film *Fighter*. The two will be seen together for the first time. Well, apart from being avid social media users, another thing common between the two is that both of them are big-time foodies.

Recently, they even indulged in a fun banter on social media which is grabbing everyone's attention for all the right reasons.

Hrithik took to his social media handle and shared a new video featuring his team members and his travel memories.

As soon as he shared the video, it received a lot of likes and comments from fans, friends,

and celebs from the entertainment industry. Among others, Deepika Padukone also had a cute response. She wrote in the comments section, "Hey! Wait for me! (raising hands emoji)". On the work front, Hrithik recently wrapped up with Vikram Vedha's shoot which also stars Saif Ali Khan and Radhika Apte and is slated to release on September 30. While Deepika recently completed shooting for a schedule of Project K.

2022 has been a fulfilling year for Yami Gautam so far

Team Absolute | Mumbai

As the first half of 2022 comes to a close, Bollywood actress Yami Gautam Dhar, who has had two releases so far -- 'A Thursday' and 'Dasvi' -- both OTT films, shared her experience for the year so far. In her words, the first half has surprised her, courtesy the positive response from all quarters to both her releases. Elaborating on the same, the actress said, "The first half of 2022 has been even better than how I had envisioned. Creatively, it has been very enriching and fulfilling so far. A Thursday' was a role I was craving to do because it was something I had never attempted before. When one's effort is acknowledged and appreciated in such a big way, it only encourages you to take bigger challenges and risks." "I am still receiving messages for my performance in A Thursday' and it makes me happier beyond words every single time. Even Dasvi' added so much to me as an actor. Learning a new dialect, playing a cop were experiences that will always remain significant in my journey when I look back," she added.



Kajol, Suriya among 397 invited to join Oscar panel

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actors Kajol and Suriya, director-writer Reema Kagti, documentary filmmakers Sushmit Ghosh-Rintu Thomas are among some of the prominent Indian names that have been invited to be a part of the Academy of Motion Pictures and Sciences this year.

To note, Suriya is the first South Indian actor to have received the prestigious invite. However, they are yet to react to the invites received. And if they accept it, they will have voting privileges at the 95th Academy Awards.

The Academy of Motion Pictures Arts and Sciences organises the Oscar awards annually. The Membership selection is based on professional qualifications, with an ongoing commitment to representation, inclusion and equity. This year's class of invitees includes 71 Oscar nominees, including 15 winners.

Besides Kajol and Suriya, the list includes Billie Eilish and Finneas O'Connell, Ariana DeBose, Troy Kotsur, Paramount chief Brian Robbins and Disney general entertainment chief Dana Walden. Kajol and Suriya are yet to react to the invitation.

For the unversed, The 95th Academy Awards will be held in Los Angeles on March 12, 2023.

Shivaleeka Oberoi: I prefer staying away from limelight because I can't be fake

Aakruti Bagla | Mumbai

The very talented, Shivaleeka Oberoi has proved her acting prowess ever since her debut with Yeh Saali Aashiqui. She went on to win our hearts with her performance in Khuda Haafiz, whose sequel is all set to release on 8 July.

Despite release on OTT platform, Khuda Haafiz received a rave response. Talking about the same Shivaleeka said, "Khuda Haafiz 1 was meant to be released in theatres as it was made on that scale. We wanted families to come back to the theatres. But due to covid things were on a standstill. We had confidence about Khuda Jaafiz doing wonders at box office, but we were surprised to see that people enjoyed it sitting back at home as well."

When asked about how she prepared for her character for Part 2 and getting the emotions right, Shivaleeka quipped, "It's a big challenge. You have to do a lot of research and prepare yourself. This is a very realistic film and a lot of people may or may not relate to it. I feel if I didn't felt the emotions while messaging this character, audience won't enjoy watching it. People can gauge what is real and what is fake. So one has to make sure to do it with conviction."

Before venturing into acting, the actress has worked as an assistant director on kick and housefull 3. Talking



about how that experience and behind-the-camera knowledge helped her, she averred, "Having an experience of what goes behind the camera, has helped me a lot.

I came to know how even one person wasting time on set can wreak havoc. It was like an institution while working on Kick and Housefull 3."

Opening up about her experience of working with Vidhut, she said, "Vidhut is an action star but he is a witty person as well. There is a different sort of comfort with him and we have become great friends over time. He is super humble. He never made me feel that I am working with senior. He also complimented me telling that I look pretty in real. But initially I was anxious to work with him."

Recalling her journey in the industry the actress revealed how hard it was as she was an outsider. She said, "It's been difficult to a point that I thought of quitting this profession. My mother was clear when I ventured into this industry that there are days when you can't breathe because you have so much work. On the contrary, there are days you can't breathe because you don't have work. I dealt with this phase after I went to search work post assistant directing. It's not a cakewalk. For newcomers it's more tough because you don't have contacts in the industry. Also, if my grandfather was alive and doing well, it would have been a bit easy. But also I could have been under more scrutiny. People would have been more critical about my work."

On a parting note, the actress revealed why she prefers staying away from limelight. She said, "I prefer staying away from limelight because I can't be fake. I want my work to talk."



Richa Chadha start preparations for Bhansali's digital debut

Team Absolute | Mumbai

It appears that actress Richa Chadha is getting ready for her upcoming movie, for which she is attending kathak diction and dance training. Richa was a trained Kathak dancer when she was a child. Richa Chadha has been sighted in front of Sanjay Leela Bhansali's office a lot lately, which is noteworthy because we had previously heard that the director is now very busy preparing for his upcoming digital debut, "Heeramandi."

According to a source close to the movie's production, this is one of the most ambitious projects till date for Sanjay sir. It being his digital debut which makes it even more special and challenging at the same time as one have to put their best foot forward.

Richa has already been doing the look tests for the show and she is all set to play a crucial role. As part of it, she's learning kathak now and the classes have already begun ahead of the series shoot next month in Mumbai. Richa aha been training for the last 2 weeks already and will continue training for another few days".

Ali Fazal begins shooting for season 3

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actor Ali Fazal will next be seen reprising his role of Guddu Bhaiya in the third season of 'Mirzapur'. The show features Pankaj Tripathi, Rasika Duggal, Shweta Tripathi, Vijay Verma and Isha Talwar among others.

Actor says: "We have a string of some of the most talented and popular actors for series. It's truly an adventure to work alongside such a brilliant bunch of actors as I get to learn so much on the sets of this show."

"However, since the last one year, we haven't had much of an opportunity to spend time with each other and it's a happy problem to have. Because everyone's been doing some impeccable work and it's great to see all of us being busy. That's what makes this re-union more fun, of course all this keeping in mind the new twisty screenplay I am excited to shoot for 'Mirzapur'."

This series backed by the Farhan Akhtar - Ritesh Sidhwani production house, Excel Entertainment will be streaming on Amazon Prime Video.

INSTAGRAM PIC OF THE DAY



Sonakshi Sinha