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## It's equally important to develop health services: PM Narendra Modi

Team Absolute | Chandigarh

Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Wednesday that to take India forward, it is equally important to develop the health services in the country. The Prime Minister was addressing a gathering after inaugurating the 300-bed Homi Bhabha Cancer Hospital and Research Centre at Mullanpur in Punjab's Mohali district. With Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann, Governor Banwarilal Purohit, Congress MP Manish Tewari and his cabinet colleague Jitendra Singh sharing the dais, Modi, who was given a rousing reception by party workers and supporters said, "When the people of India will get modern hospitals and facilities for treatment, then they will get well sooner and their energy will be channelled in the right direction." "Our government is working on six fronts -- promotion of preventive healthcare, opening small and modern hospitals in villages, opening medical colleges and big medical research institutes in cities to increase the number of doctors and paramedical staff across the country, to provide cheap medicines, cheap medical equipment to the patients and use of technology to reduce the difficulties faced by patients." Saying that he understands the



problems of the cancer patients, Modi said earlier the patients travelled long distances for treatment in specialty hospitals. "Since the inception of Bilaspur AIIMS and Homi Bhabha Cancer Institute, this problem has been addressed and we are working towards reaching every corner of India to provide cancer treatment." He said the Homi Bhabha Cancer Hospital and Research Centre would help in providing improved healthcare services to people in Punjab, Haryana and Himachal Pradesh. Modi said his government has decided to open around 1.5 lakh health and wellness

centres. "In Punjab, 3,000 health and wellness centres are giving their services. Our government is making efforts to open one medical college in each district of the country. We have set up 40 cancer hospitals and most of them have already started functioning." "Before 2014, there were less than 400 medical colleges, while in eight years, around 200 new medical colleges have been set up." On the occasion of dedicating the hospital to the nation, Chief Minister Mann regretted the cancellation of the Prime Minister's visit to Ferozepur due to a security breach on January 5 during the Charanjit Singh Channi-led Congress government.

## NITISH GOVERNMENT WINS TRUST VOTE IN BIHAR ASSEMBLY

Patna: The Nitish Kumar-led Mahagabandhan government on Wednesday comfortably won the trust vote in the special Assembly session, with 160 votes in its favour in the 243-member house, while the BJP's 77 members walked out. As Deputy Speaker Maheshwar Hazari announced the vote of trust, BJP's former Deputy Chief Minister objected to it, saying that it is not required. Hazari turned down his point and conducted the vote. Nitish Kumar, during the discussion on the motion, accused the BJP of just creating disputes in the society, and the Central government not doing anything apart from advertisements. "The BJP is expert in advertising and those leaders who give objectionable and communal statements are getting promotion in the Centre. When I left the NDA, opposition leaders from across the country called me over the phone and congratulated me for my separation from it. Now, we are committed to work for the people of the country," he said. "They (BJP and RSS) have no contribution in the freedom struggle. Where were they during that? They will end the ideology of Bapu (Mahatma Gandhi). BJP used to create communal disputes between Hindu and Muslim community." "Bihar is a poor state where we have started 'Har Ghar Nal Ka Jal Yojana' but the Central government has not been connecting every village with roads. Connecting every village with roads was a project of Atal Bihari Vajpayee government and my party was part of it. Atal ji, (L.K) Advani ji, Muri Manohar Joshi ji were listening to me but this government at the Centre is not," he added.

## SC allows hearing of review plea by Karti Chidambaram against PMLA judgment



Team Absolute | New Delhi

A Supreme Court bench, headed by Chief Justice NV Ramana, on Wednesday allowed hearing on the review petition filed by Congress MP Karti Chidambaram against the PMLA judgment. Chidambaram's review petition will be heard on Thursday. A bench, headed by Chief Justice Ramana and comprising Justices Dinesh Maheshwari and CT Ravikumar, said: "The application for oral hearing is allowed. List the matter in the Court on 25.08.2022." Chidambaram sought review of the recent PMLA judgment, upholding the Enforcement Directorate's powers in connection with attachment of property involved in money laundering, arrest, search and seizure under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act. A bench headed by the Chief Justice considered the review petition inside the chamber.

According to Chidambaram, the judgment deserves to be reviewed on grounds of grave error and being contradictory to earlier judgments and provisions of the Constitution. On July 27, the top court had delivered its verdict on a batch of petitions challenging various provisions of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act 2002. On Tuesday, the PMLA judgment also received a critique from a three-judge bench headed by the Chief Justice. Only July 27, the top court affirmed the stringent provisions of Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) in connection with definition of proceeds of crime, power of arrest, search & seizure, attachment of properties and also the twin bail conditions. The top court affirmed the validity of Sections 5 (attachment of property), 8(4) (taking possession of attached property), 3 (definition of money laundering), 17 (search and seizure), 18 (search of persons), 19 (powers of arrest), 24 (reverse burden of proof), 45 (offences being cognizable and non-bailable and twin conditions for grant of bail by court), 50 (statements made to ED officials), and 44 (offences triable by special court). However, the top court left the question whether some of the amendments to the PMLA, 2002 could not have been enacted by the Parliament by way of a Finance Act, to be considered by a larger bench.

## Two infiltration bids foiled in J&K's Naushera sector in 48 hours: Army

Jammu | Agencies

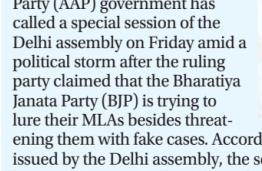
Two major infiltration bids have been foiled in the last 48 hours by alert troops deployed along the Line of Control (LoC) in the Naushera sector in Jammu and Kashmir, army officials said on Wednesday. Army officials said that early on August 21, alert soldiers deployed in Jhangar area of Naushera spotted movement of two to three terrorists. "One terrorist came close to the Indian post and tried cutting the fence, when he was challenged by alert sentries. The terrorist tried to flee, however, he was brought down by effective fire, incapacitating him." "Two terrorists, who were hiding behind, fled the area by taking cover of dense jungle and broken ground. The injured Pakistani terrorist was captured alive and provided with immediate medical aid and lifesaving surgery was carried out," an army official said. The captured terrorist has revealed his identity as Tabarak Hussain, resident of Sabzkot village, district Kotli of Pakistan occupied Kashmir. Army officials said on further interrogation, the terrorist confessed about their plan to attack the Indian army post. The army said in the second operation, on the night



of August 22/23, a group of two to three terrorists tried to infiltrate in Lam area of Naushera. "Our alert troops were able to observe the terrorists as they crossed the Line of Control and continuously monitored this movement. As they moved ahead into our mine fields, a series of mines got activated and two terrorists got eliminated on the spot. The other terrorist is possibly injured and is hiding in the area or has gone back taking advantage of the inclement weather and dense foliage," an army official said. The army officials said that the two infiltration bids, in a short span of 48 hours, is a direct attempt by the adversary to disrupt the peace in Rajouri region. "However, own troops deployed on the Line of Control remain alert to defeat any nefarious designs of the adversary," an official said.

## AAP govt calls Delhi assembly special session amid horse-trading claims by MLAs

New Delhi | Agencies



New Delhi: The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) government has called a special session of the Delhi assembly on Friday amid a political storm after the ruling party claimed that the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) is trying to lure their MLAs besides threatening them with fake cases. According to a document issued by the Delhi assembly, the session is scheduled to begin at 11am on Friday. Throughout this month the AAP and the BJP have been at loggerheads over multiple issues beginning with the lieutenant governor's (LG) move to order a Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) probe into the Delhi Excise Policy 2021-22, the issue of freebies, then over CBI raids on deputy chief minister Manish Sisodia's residence and lately on the claims that the BJP is trying to poach AAP MLAs in a bid to topple the Delhi government. These issues are likely to dominate the upcoming session of the assembly. It is likely to be a stormy session as the Opposition BJP is all geared up to corner the government on the excise policy and other issues. It is likely that the AAP will target the BJP over alleged attempts to lure its legislators into the saffron party in a bid to topple the AAP government. Four AAP lawmakers on Wednesday accused the BJP of offering them Rs 20 crore each for defecting and Rs 25 crore in case they convinced more legislators to follow suit as part of attempts to topple their government in Delhi. AAP leader Sanjay Singh said MLAs Somnath Bharti, Sanjeev Jha, Ajay Dutt, and Kuldeep Kumar refused to accept the offer and added they were threatened that fake cases will be lodged against them like in the case of deputy chief minister Manish Sisodia.

## CBI conducts raid on five RJD leaders in Bihar under protection of paramilitary forces

Patna | Agencies

With the floor test in Bihar Vidhan Sabha scheduled on Wednesday, the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) accompanied by paramilitary forces raided the premises of five legislators and parliamentarians in Bihar. The multiple raids were conducted in connection with the IRCTC land-for-job scam on the premises of the Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) leaders MLC Sunil Singh, Rajya Sabha MP Asfaq Karim, Rajya Sabha MP Fayyaz Ahmed, Ex-MLC Subodh Rai and former MLA Abu Dujana. The raid was conducted at the offices and residence of Sunil Kumar Singh, RJD MLC and chairman of Biscoman. Sunil Kumar Singh is said to be very close to Lalu Prasad family. He also works as an adviser to former CM Rabri Devi. A team of CBI reached his residence located near JD women's college at Bailey road and Biscoman tower located west of the Gandhi Maidan. Reacting to it, Singh said: "The raid was conducted only to upset us. It is happening on the direction of the Central government. The timing of the raid just before the floor test in Bihar Vidhan Sabha is



also important. They have deliberately chosen the day of the floor test." Following the raid, hundreds of RJD workers reached the house of Sunil Singh and shouted slogans against the CBI and Narendra Modi government. They were also holding the placards. A team of CBI officers also raided the official residence of Rajya Sabha MP Asfaq Karim in Katihar. The team reached there with a unit of CRPF personnel. Another CBI team accompanied by CRPF arrived at the residence in Madhubani of Fayyaz Ahmed, the Rajya Sabha MP of the RJD. Separate CBI teams also raided the

premises of Subodh Rai, the former MLC of RJD and former MLA Abu Dujana. This is the first time that the central reserve forces were being used by the CBI to conduct raids on the leaders of ruling parties. Sources said that the CBI personnel were apprehensive about the local police. Hence, the Center was using paramilitary forces to provide security to them. The CBI believes that the Bihar Police can act according to the direction of the state government. Hence, it would be wise to take help from the paramilitary forces, which come under the Central government, said the sources.

## 'Why can't Centre form committee, call for all-party meeting', Supreme Court on PIL opposing freebies

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Supreme Court on Wednesday queried the Central government, why it can't form a committee to examine the impact of freebies promised by political parties to induce voters, and also the government can call for an all-party meeting to examine the issue. A bench headed by Chief Justice NV Ramana told the Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, representing the Centre, "Why can't the Government of India constitute a committee to study the impact of freebies..." Mehta replied that the Centre will help in every way and statistics connected with the issue and other information can be placed before the top court. Mehta said a line should be drawn, where somebody should tell "please do not do this." The Chief Justice replied that who will head the committee. Justice Ramana said if he were to contest the election, he may not get even 10 votes as political parties matter more and not the individuals. Senior advocate Vikas Singh, representing the petitioner, submitted that a retired judge of the apex court, like Justice RM Lodha, should be the chairman of the committee to examine freebies issues. The Chief Justice replied, "The person who retires or is going to retire has no value in this country." Singh



said it is the personality of the person concerned which impacts. Senior advocate Arvind Datar, representing the Election Commission of India, questioned the definition of freebie and said if something is there in the manifesto, can it be called a freebie? Datar said there is enough material available to judge the economic impact of freebies. The bench, also comprising Justices Hima Kohli and CT Ravikumar, noted, freebies, etc., can destroy the economy. It has to be looked at and the court just cannot pass a mandamus. The Chief Justice said, "The Government of India can call for an all-party meeting." Pointing at political parties seeking to intervene in the matter in court, Mehta said parties claim fundamental rights, and what will the government do.

## Congress to announce poll schedule on August 28 for party president

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Congress has called a meeting of its Working Committee on August 28 to decide the poll schedule for party president's post. "A virtual meeting of the CWC will be held on the 28th August, 2022 at 3:30 PM, to approve the exact schedule of dates for the election of the Congress President. Congress President Smt. Sonia Gandhi will preside over the CWC meeting," tweeted KC Venugopal, party General Secretary Organisation. Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot has emerged as the top choice for the Congress president's post. Sources have said that Sonia Gandhi had requested him to take over during a meeting which she held before heading abroad for medical checkup and treatment.



The Gehlot camp has not confirmed the development, but sources have confirmed that the Congress is looking beyond the Gandhis for the top post. The Central Election Authority of the Congress is awaiting a nod from the party's working committee to announce the

schedule for electing the next Congress President as the grand old party is still in search of a consensus candidate for the top post after refusal by Rahul Gandhi. While sources said that the top choice is Ashok Gehlot, the Rajasthan Chief Minister had said on Monday that

Rahul Gandhi should rethink his decision as it will demoralise the party workers. Gehlot is averse to the idea of becoming party president and has stated that Rahul Gandhi was the top and unanimous choice for party president. The sources also said that

the Congress wants to complete the organisational election by September, as it does not want to be on the firing line of the G-23 grouping after the resignation of Ghulam Nabi Azad and Anand Sharma from the state committees and with Haryana strongman Bhupinder Singh Hooda battling for the cause of senior party leaders. Also, Manish Tewari had taken a contrary stand to that of the Congress on the Agnipath scheme, which made the party uncomfortable. Another idea was mooted some time ago, according to which Sonia Gandhi will continue as the party president while working presidents will be appointed for each zone. The other name doing the rounds for the top party post was Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel.



# RARE SHOW OF BONHOMIE AS MODI OPENS CANCER HOSPITAL IN PUNJAB

Chandigarh | Agencies

In a rare show of political bonhomie, Prime Minister Narendra Modi with AAP leader and Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann and Congress MP Manish Tewari sharing stage on Wednesday inaugurated the world-class 300-bed Homi Bhabha Cancer Hospital and Research Centre in Mullanpur in Punjab's Mohali district, adjoining the state capital.

The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) government extended a warm welcome to Modi on his maiden visit to the state under the helm of Mann.

The cancer hospital, built at a cost of over Rs 660 crore and will function as a hub of cancer care and treatment in the region, is the first of its kind cancer care in north India, whose foundation stone was laid by then Prime Minister Manmohan Singh on December 30, 2013.

Earlier, Modi visited the state on January 5, just ahead of the announcement of the Assembly elections, to lay the foundation stone of development projects of Rs 42,750 crore comprising two mega road corridors to enhance the accessibility to prominent religious centres and three health institutions in Ferozepur town, bordering Pakistan.



Political observers told IANS despite political bickering between the BJP and AAP, the AAP government in the state rolled out the red carpet for Modi's visit to inaugurate the Homi Bhabha Cancer Hospital and Research Centre, on the lines of Tata Memorial Hospital in Mumbai, at Medicity in Mullanpur in New

Chandigarh. The hospital is a tertiary care hospital of 300-bed capacity and is equipped with modern facilities to treat all types of cancers.

Punjab has seen an increase in the number of cancer cases, especially in the Malwa belt in southwestern part of the state in recent years.

Agriculture and environment experts have linked the rise in cancer cases to the excessive use of pesticides and insecticides in farming.

Punjab has given 50 acre free of cost for the hospital. The cancer care centre will be equipped with high-end diagnostic and treatment facilities such as two linear accelerators,

# NHLML, IWAI, RVNL join hands to swiftly develop modern Multi Modal Logistics Parks

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The National Highways Logistics Management Ltd (NHLML), the Inland Waterways Authority of India (IWAI) and the Rail Vikas Nigam Ltd (RVNL) have come together for swift development of modern Multi Modal Logistics Parks (MMLP) under Bharatmala Pariyojna across the country.

The move aims to centralise freight consolidation and reduce logistics cost from 14 per cent to less than 10 per cent of GDP.

In his remarks on the occasion of signing of the agreement, Road, Transport and Highway Minister Nitin Gadkari said he was elated to witness the signing of MoU as it will provide seamless modal shift, MMLPs will ensure that cargo is swapped/shifted from and to waterways, dedicated freight corridors, and road transport. He said this is building the nation through Gati Shakti.

Union Ports, Shipping, and Waterways Minister Sarbananda Sonowal said that "today is a historic occasion when we propose to put the letter and spirit of Bharatmala Pariyojana into effect for a swift, efficient, economical and environment friendly logistics movement across the country."

"This agreement is an earnest attempt towards realisation of this objective. MMLPs are designed to untie the cobweb of logistics movement and enliven the logistics sector to put the economy into the fast lane of growth," he added.

MMLP will be a freight handling facility with rail and road accessibility, comprising of container terminals, cargo terminals (bulk,



break-bulk), warehouses, cold storage, facilities for mechanised material handling and value-added services such as customs clearance with bonded storage yards, quarantine zones, testing facilities and warehousing management services etc, along with other associated facilities. Developed under a 'Hub & Spoke' model, the MMLP will integrate multiple modes of freight transport through highways, railways, and inland waterways. The agreement underlines the cooperation & collaboration model between the three bodies in order to achieve efficiency in logistics movement within the country.

The MMLP project is poised to develop state-of-the-art large scale warehousing facility for different types of commodities, to become one stop solution for all services related to cargo movement like warehousing, custom clearance, parking, maintenance of trucks etc. The MMLPs will focus on a technology driven implementation for a state-of-the-art freight management system. Many value added services like packaging, repackaging and labelling will be available in these projects.

# Deputy Speaker Maheshwar Hazari to run Bihar Assembly till Speaker is elected

Patna | Agencies

After the resignation of Vijay Kumar Sinha from the post of Speaker on Wednesday, the proceedings of Bihar Vidhan Sabha will be conducted by Deputy Speaker, Maheshwar Hazari.

Such a situation arose after Sinha deliberately announced the name of Janata Dal (United) MLA Narendra Narayan Yadav to conduct the proceedings of Bihar Vidhan Sabha soon after resigning and leaving

the House. Sinha adjourned the House till 2 p.m.

Vijay Kumar Chaudhary, the minister of parliamentary affairs immediately responded to the chair of speaker that it was illegal under the law of the House. He pointed out that handing over to any MLA is justified only in the absence of a deputy speaker. "The deputy speaker was present in the House and in presence of him, if an MLA would run the proceedings of the Assembly without his approval it would be illegal," said Chaudhary.

Following that incident, Chief Minister Nitish Kumar, deputy CM Tejashwi Yadav, parliamentary affairs minister Vijay Kumar Chaudhary and others went to the chamber of deputy speaker Maheshwar Hazari and requested him to run the House till a new speaker was elected.

After the resignation, Vijay Kumar Sinha said: "I am a dedicated worker of my party and am ready to play the role set by the top leadership of our party."

# Qutub Minar row: ASI seeks dismissal of plea by 'Agra royal family member'

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) on Wednesday opposed the intervention application filed by a man claiming to be heir of a royal family in Agra and seeking ownership of Qutub Minar, asking why he was sitting idle for the last 150 years without raising any issue before any court.

The ASI's submission came during the hearing of the matter related to the restoration of the Hindu and Jain temples and the deities at the Qutub

Minar complex before Civil Judge Dinesh Kumar of the Saket courts.

The intervention plea, moved through advocate ML Sharma by Kunwar Mahendra Dhawaj Prasad Singh claiming to be heir of the united province of Agra seeking the rights over territories from Meerut to Agra, was a twist amidst the temple restoration row. During the course of the hearing, ASI lawyer Subash C Gupta argued that the man claims rights for large and vast areas in several states and was sitting idle on it for the last 150 years without raising the issue

before any court.

"He wakes up some morning and comes to this court as an impleader without any basis," the ASI submitted.

It also pointed out a similar case of a woman, namely Sultana Begum claiming to be the wife of the great-grandson of last Mughal Emperor Bahadur Shah Zafar, arguing that she was in possession of the Red Fort. However, the court dismissed the plea solely on the ground of delay without going into merits, the ASI said.

The court will hear the matter again on September 13.

The main suit in the matter alleged that around 27 Hindu and Jain temples were desecrated and damaged in 1198 under the Slave Dynasty Emperor Qutub-ud-din-Aibak who constructed the said mosque in place of those temples. The temples were dismantled, desecrated, and damaged under the command of the Slave Dynasty Emperor, who raised some construction at the same very place and named it the Quwwat-ul-Islam Mosque, as per it.

## New cases booked against BJP MLA Raja Singh

# AIMIM seeks BJP MLA Raja Singh's expulsion from Telangana Assembly

Hyderabad | Agencies

The AIMIM on Wednesday appealed to Telangana Assembly Speaker to expel BJP MLA Raja Singh from the Assembly for violating his oath.

In a letter to Speaker Pocharam Srinivas Reddy, the All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimeen (AIMIM) sought action against the member of Assembly for making derogatory comments about Prophet Mohammad and Islam.

AIMIM General Secretary Syed Ahmed Pasha Quadri stated that Raja Singh's comments hurt the sentiments of Muslims across India. He termed it as a blatant violation of his oath as a member of the Assembly.

"The oath binds a member to bear

true faith and allegiance to the Constitution. Secularism and fraternity are part of the basic structure of the Constitution of India," he wrote.

Quadri alleged that Raja Singh repeatedly incited violence and promoted enmity, hatred, and ill-will against Muslims. "Thus, he has also violated his oath to uphold the integrity of India. This statement is the most recent example proving that he is unfit to be a member of the House," read the letter.

Quadri, who is also a member of Assembly, stated that this was not a one-off incident but a consistent pattern. He cited news reports relating to his utterances.

He pointed out that the legislative Assembly has inherent powers under Article 194 of the Constitution to pun-

ish any person for breach of privilege and contempt of the House. These powers include the power to expel a member from the House.

Meanwhile, Telangana Police on Wednesday registered three more criminal cases against suspended BJP MLA Raja Singh for his derogatory comments on Prophet Mohammad.

Amid the continuing protests, the new cases have been registered with the Nampally and Malakpet police stations in Hyderabad.

Another case was registered at Rajendra Nagar police station of Cyberabad police commissionerate.

The legislator has been booked for promoting enmity between people on the grounds of religion.

The cases were registered under Indian Penal Code (IPC) sections

153-A, 188, 295-A, 298, 505(1)(B)(C), 505(2) and 506.

Cases were also registered against Raja Singh in some other districts in Telangana.

Muslims in various parts of Hyderabad and other parts of Telangana are reaching police stations in rallies to register the complaints.

Cases were registered against Raja Singh at six police stations on Tuesday. He was arrested following massive protests.

A city court on Tuesday evening granted bail to Raja Singh in one of the cases.

Police sources said he may be arrested in other cases booked against him.

# BJP trying to make opposition-less country, claims Yechury

Agartala | Agencies

The BJP has been trying to make India "opposition-less" and by protecting the judiciary, the Election Commission, and other constitutional bodies, the party could be ousted to save the Constitution and country's secularism, CPI-M General Secretary Sitaram Yechury said here on Wednesday.

Addressing a gathering here, he accused the BJP of destroying democracy by forming governments in a few states after being defeated in the elections by the people.

"The BJP government has been selling national properties and assets while on the other hand, they have written off Rs 11 lakh crore loans of millionaires.

"The misuse of the CBI, Enforcement Directorate and other central agencies by the BJP government would continue but the leaders of the Left parties would not be cowed down to these unethical pressures," he said.

Yechury also regretted that the long-pending petitions on abrogation of Article 370 in Jammu and Kashmir, the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, and electoral bonds are not yet settled by the Supreme Court.

He also recalled that after defeating the CPI-M-led Left Front government in Tripura

in the 2018 Assembly elections, the BJP held a big rally in Delhi and in response to media queries they had said that the state might have only two Lok Sabha seats but defeating the Left parties was a biggest success for them. "Like the BJP, during the independence period, the British also considered the Left parties as their biggest enemy," he said, citing the significant role of veteran Left leaders in the independence struggle.

The CPI-M leader said that the BJP was attacking the media to prevent circulation and spreading of actual facts and the truth among the people. "While the BJP destroys the secular image of the country, demolishing the economy of India is a bid to devastate the independence of the people," Yechury claimed.

The CPI-M leader appealed to the people of the country to strengthen their united fight to protect the constitutional spirit of the country. He also urged the people of Tripura to strengthen their fight against the "fascistic" rule of the BJP and to restore democracy in the state. During the gathering, CPI-M Tripura state Secretary and Central Committee member Jitendra Chowdhury, CPI-M politburo member and former Chief Minister Manik Sarkar, and veteran leader Aghore Debbarma also spoke.

## FIRST LIST ON SEP 15, CAMPAIGN LAUNCH SOON: CONG ON GUJ ASSEMBLY POLLS

Ahmedabad: The Congress on Wednesday said that it will launch its campaign for the Gujarat Assembly elections from September 5 and its first list of candidates will be out on September 15.

Addressing a press conference here, party General Secretary KC Venugopal said, "There is a clear cut anti-incumbency against the BJP government, people want change. Congress will be fighting the elections and we will win."

Rajasthan Chief Minister and Senior Observer of Gujarat Congress Ashok Gehlot shared a few glimpses of the party's manifesto, and said, "If Congress is elected to power, it will implement old pension scheme, will give power to agriculture consumers during day time, and in the urban areas we will implement the Indira Gandhi Urban Employment Guarantee Scheme."

The Congress will set up the English medium schools in the rural areas, Rajasthan model of Chief Minister Chiranjeevi Health Insurance Scheme under which all health services, including organ transplants, major operations will be covered and free health services will be provided to citizens, said Gehlot.

# Transgenders to get composite healthcare services under Ayushman Bharat

Team Absolute | New Delhi

In a landmark decision on Wednesday, a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed between the National Health Authority (NHA) under the Union Health Ministry and the Department of Social Justice and Empowerment to provide an inclusive and composite health package for transgender persons under Ayushman Bharat-PMJAY.

Union Health Minister Mansukh Mandaviya hailed the MoU as one of its kind in the country which will give impetus to ensuring a rightful and respectable place for the transgender community by accessing healthcare services under AB-PMJAY.

"This MoU has laid the foundation for a landmark transformational reform in the society. The move which provides special healthcare benefits to the transgender community goes beyond ensuring equality for the disadvantaged community,"



Mandaviya said. Noting that the transgender community suffers stigma and exclusion, he stressed that the provisioning of healthcare services under AB-PMJAY is a significant step towards an inclusive society. "It is only apt that the MoU is being signed at Dr Ambedkar International Centre today, as he championed for an inclusive society with equality across all population groups in the country", Mandaviya stated.

Mandaviya emphasized that the government is working in a decisive

way to not only recognize the rights of the transgender community but has taken various steps for their welfare. He congratulated the Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment for taking several initiatives for the transgender community, be it "The Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act, 2019", Garima Greh, PM Daksh program or other schemes/initiatives taken recently.

Urging all sections of society to join hands in the efforts of the government for an inclusive society under the vision of 'New India' of

the Prime Minister, he stated that "Disadvantaged communities can progress with dignity and self reliance with collaboration of 'Sarkar and Society'".

Union Minister of Social Justice & Empowerment Dr Virendra Kumar said that transformative change is happening in the country with a strong political will to implement this change. He enumerated several steps taken by MoSJE for implementing a package of five assurances: Education, Life with dignity, Health support, Opportunities for livelihood and Skill Enhancement.

These steps have been taken to ensure that marginalised and disadvantaged sections of the population can emerge from restrictive social constructs by providing them a dignified life and livelihood, he stated.

The MoU was signed by Dr RS Sharma, CEO, National Health Authority (NHA) and R Subramanyam, Secretary, Department of Social Justice & Empowerment.

# Indian Army calls Garuda Aerospace expert team for drone modification

Chennai: The Indian Army has asked the technical team of Chennai-based drone maker Garuda Aerospace to modify drones for security needs, said a top company official.

"Garuda Aerospace has created significant traction by deploying drones for unique applications to support the Indian Army and now will be using multiple purpose drones for strategic and tactical operations," Garuda Aerospace Founder and CEO Anishwar Jayaprakash said. The army has expressed keen interest to utilise Garuda Aerospace's expertise and technical knowledge in the field of drone technology to use drones more effectively in modern day warfare, he said. According to Garuda Aerospace, demining is an inherently dangerous operation and the army is constantly endeavoring to improve the speed, cost, and efficacy of this process.

The army also intends to further the usage of drones in integral day to day activities as well as bolster effectiveness of special missions by detecting, deterring, and disrupting transnational organised criminal networks, the company added.



## CM reviews flood situation in the state

# RESTORE SYSTEM IN FLOOD HIT VILLAGES AND CITIES WITHIN 48 HOURS: CM

- ▶ **PRIORITISE CLEANLINESS, DRINKING WATER AND ELECTRICITY SUPPLY**
- ▶ **BE GENEROUS AND SENSITIVE TO POOR FAMILIES IN LOSS ASSESSMENT**
- ▶ **RELIEF WILL BE PROVIDED TO THE AFFECTED IN RBC (6-4)**

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has said that rain has reduced at most places in the state. The situation created by excessive rains and floods is under control. As soon as the flood water recedes, system should be restored in all the affected villages and cities within 48 hours. Top priority should be given to restoration of sanitation, drinking water and electricity supply. Relief and rehabilitation work should also be started immediately. Chouhan was addressing a meeting at the residence office on Wednesday morning to prepare an action plan to restore the damage caused by the floods.

Chouhan said that we are here to provide better system to the people. Make sure that our work generates a sense of satisfaction among the people. Chief Minister appreciated the offi-



cers-staff of the district administration, police, home guards, energy and water resources department for quick rescue and relief action in the areas affected by heavy rains and floods. He said that it is the result of better coordination and devotion to duty that there was no loss of life in the state due to excessive rains and floods. It is a matter of satisfaction that the flood affected people were shifted in time to safe places.

Chouhan said that work should be started on war footing for restoration of drinking water and electricity supply, repair of damaged roads, broken culverts and cleanliness in the flood affected areas. To ensure that diseases do not spread, medical teams should be formed to arrange for drug spraying and health tests etc. to be transported to the affected areas.

Chouhan said that it should be ensured that there is no shortage of machines and necessary staff to restore the situation in the most affected areas. If needed, machines and staff should be made available from other districts. There should be no shortage of resources anywhere.

Chouhan said that the assessment of the loss of houses, household items, crops and cattle due to floods and excessive rains should be ensured in a transparent manner and with sensitivity. In assessing the loss, an attitude of generosity towards poor families should be kept. Financial help will be provided to the affected in RBC (6-4).

Chouhan said that the district administration should also make arrangements for food for the next few days for the families most affect-

ed by the floods. After this, dry ration can be provided to them. Social organizations should also be involved in providing essential materials and relief work to the needy people.

Chouhan said that this year there has been heavy rainfall. Inspection of dams is necessary from the point of view of safety. He directed to ensure that the Water Resources Department and Narmada Valley Development Authority should conduct a micro-inspection of all the big and small dams under their control.

In the meeting, information was given about the water level of major rivers of the state, condition of dams, rescue operations and relief camps.

### CM DISCUSSED STATE'S FLOOD SITUATION WITH PM

**Bhopal:** Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan discussed with the Prime Minister Narendra Modi over phone regarding the excessive rainfall in the state and the flood and water-logging situation arising out of it. Chouhan informed Modi about the flood affected areas and the possible situation in the coming days and about the ongoing rescue operations in the districts and arrangements made for relief. Chouhan expressed gratitude to Modi for immediately providing Army and NDRF units for rescue work in the affected areas of the state.

## MBBS EDUCATION WILL START IN GANDHI MEDICAL COLLEGE THROUGH HINDI MEDIUM: CM

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has said that from the session 2022-23, MBBS first year education will be imparted in Gandhi Medical College Bhopal through Hindi medium. From July 2022, arrangements have been made to start B.Tech courses in 6 engineering colleges and diploma courses in 6 polytechnic colleges of the state through our mother tongue Hindi. The National Policy on Education lays special emphasis on study and teaching in the mother tongue. Effective initiatives have been taken in this direction in the state. Chouhan gave this information by taking part in the Education Summit-2022 going on in New Delhi virtually from the residence office.

Chouhan said that Prime Minister Narendra Modi has described the 5 Cs of Critical Thinking, Creativity, Collaboration, Curiosity and Communication as important for better education. Work is being done on all these in the field of education in the state. PM Modi has taken a visionary initiative by gifting new education policy to the country. The new policy is a confluence of knowledge, skills and values in the true sense. The importance of knowledge has been included in 5 forms in the new education policy. This includes handing over Indian



knowledge and philosophy to the new generations through education, concept based education system and freeing education from number game and cut-throat competition and converting it into grading and healthy competition. At the same time, promotion of research and research and making education multidimensional is also an important part of the new education policy. Chouhan said that effective work is going on to link education with skill development and employment in the state. A Global Skill Park is being set up in Bhopal for international level skill education. Ten divisional ITIs in the state are being developed as ideal ITIs. A new startup policy has been implemented in the state.

Chouhan said that it is necessary to inculcate disci-

pline, hard work, patriotism and respect for women in the students. Biographies of great men, stories of immortal martyrs and moral education have been included in the curriculum of schools and colleges. It is our endeavour to ensure that three percent of the total students studying in the state should participate in the National Cadet Corps. For this work is being started in the state. Chouhan said we are also making efforts to ensure that no talented student should get frustrated due to paucity of money. Giving information about the 'Mukhya Mantri Medhavi Vidarthi Protsahan Scheme' and 'Mukhya Mantri Chhatra Griha Scheme,' Chouhan said that CM Rise School started in the state would usher in a revolution in the field of education.

## Forced To Get Journalists Arrested: Govt Official

Team Absolute | Bhopal

A government officer who had supposedly filed a complaint against three journalists for a news report, prompting their arrest, says he was coerced into doing so.

"How can I file the complaint on my own, when I don't know any of the journalists who are named in the complaint? The complaint was filed under pressure from senior officials," Rajiv Kaurav, the Medical Officer of Daboh, says in a video that is being circulated by the opposition Congress.

The arrest of the journalists, in the Lahar town of Madhya Pradesh's Bhand district for showing how a family had to transport an elderly man to the hospital on a handcart after failing to get an ambulance, has triggered a major outcry.

Journalists carried out a protest march in Lahar yesterday and handed over an

appeal to Sub-Divisional Magistrate RA Prajapati addressed to Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan, demanding the withdrawal of cases against the three journalists. The officer was part of a fact-finding committee formed by the district's top government official following the complaint allegedly filed by Rajiv Kaurav.

Based on the report of the panel, a case of forgery was registered against three journalists - Kunjbihari Kaurav, Anil Sharma and N.K. Bhatele - on August 18.

The fact-finding committee had reported that the story by the journalists concerned, which was reported on social, print and electronic media, was false and baseless as the family had not made any phone calls for an ambulance. The elderly man was taken to a private hospital and not to a government hospital, unlike what was reported. However, Gyaprasad Vishwakarma's

son Hari Singh and daughter Pushpa confirmed what the journalists had reported was true, as they did take their ailing father to hospital on a hand-drawn cart, after their phone calls to fetch an ambulance were unsuccessful. Govind Singh, the Leader of the Opposition, also came out in support of the three journalists and accused the local administration, particularly the SDM of Lahar, of pressuring the family into making false statements against the journalists and then getting a complaint filed with police against them.

"The local administration in Bhand is looting people and when media is exposing the truth, the administration is filing false cases against journalists. I request the Chief Minister to order withdrawal of the false cases [against the journalists] and direct filing of a case against the erring officials. I'll raise the matter in Vidhan Sabha next month," he said.

## CM PLANTS PEEPAL, KACHNAR AND SAPTAPARNI SAPLINGS



**Bhopal:** Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan planted saplings along with the representatives of Valmiki Ekta Sangh in Smart City Garden in Shyamla Hills. Chouhan planted saplings of Kachnar, Saptaparni and Peepal with Shashwat Banerjee on his first birthday along with Sanyukta Banerjee, Deepali Banerjee and Sirolia. CS Kalyani, Mohan Kalyani, PC Chouhan, Vishal Kalyani, Jeevan Lal Bhagyawan, RS Maina, Gopal and Suresh of Valmiki Ekta Sangh also participated in plantation. Valmiki Ekta is an organisation of retired companions, which makes the education arrangements for needy children and motivates citizens for cleanliness and environment protection activities. Also, it is especially active for making arrangement of food and essential medicines in homes for elderly people. Peepal planted today is a shady tree. It has religious and Ayurvedic significance. Saptaparni is an evergreen medicinal tree, which has great importance in Ayurveda. It is used in the manufacture of various medicines. Kachnar is a beautiful flowering tree. Nature has made many plants and trees that abound in medicinal properties, among them Kachnar is one. Kachnar is counted among beautiful and useful trees.

## Rare Black Panther Spotted In Pench Tiger Reserve

Team Absolute | Bhopal

You must have seen videos of people spotting rare wild animals during safari tours in national parks. The videos of these rare sightings have widely been shared on the social media. One such video is gaining traction on the internet that shows a black panther in Pench Tiger Reserve.

Shared by the official handle of Pench Tiger Reserve on Twitter three days ago, the caption reads, "Black Panther Pench Forever. All across the world usually it takes months, sometimes even years to sight a rare animal, however in Pench one can sight the wonders of natural world much more frequently."

The video shows a black panther crossing a road while people on safaris watching it from far away by stopping their vehicles. The stunned silence of those present attests to the fact that the majestic big cat's appearance was an elusive spectacle.

The viral video has gained



over 19,000 views and more than a thousand likes since being shared. Hundreds of users have re-tweeted the post so far.

One user related this to Mowgli and wrote, "Bagerra is back," in the comment section of the post. "Wow... rare sighting in broad daylight," commented a second user. "Must have been a sight to behold," a third user wrote while sharing the post.

Recently a video went viral on social media showed a Jaguar hunting a crocodile on the bank of a river. The video was shared

by a user named Figen on Twitter.

In the viral video, the Jaguar is seen approaching the crocodile using its hunt strategy. The big cat is first seen hiding amidst the branches and bushes near the river, with total focus on the crocodile. It then leaps onto the crocodile that is floating in the water and attacks it.

The video received over 2.6 million of views and more than 27,000 likes since being shared. Around 4,800 users re-shared the video on Twitter.

## CM GARLANDS PORTRAIT OF MARTYR RAJGURU



**Bhopal:** Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan paid homage to Amar Shaheed Rajguru on his birth anniversary. Chouhan paid floral tribute by garlanding his picture in the auditorium of his residence office. Amar Shaheed Rajguru was a prominent revolutionary of the Indian freedom struggle. He was born in 1908 in Kheda village of Pune district. During his studies in Varanasi, he came in contact of revolutionaries. He was deeply distressed and furious at the brutality of the Jallianwala Bagh massacre. Rajguru gave full support to Bhagat Singh and Sukhdev in killing the British police officer Saunders. On 23 March 1931, Rajguru got his name registered in the list of immortal martyrs of the country by hanging on the gallows in Lahore Central Jail along with Shaheed Bhagat Singh and Shaheed Sukhdev.

## Scindia's meeting with Vijayvargiya fuels speculation of leadership change

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Union Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia's meeting with BJP general secretary Kailash Vijayvargiya at the latter's residence in Indore last Monday has led to speculation about leadership change in the Madhya Pradesh unit of the party.

Scindia's meeting with Vijayvargiya came just a week after Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan, who had been the member of the all-powerful party's parliamentary board since August 2014, was removed from the post on August 18, fifteen months before the scheduled elections.

While some political observers see the meeting as less political and more personal, others are perceiving it as the beginning of a new political era in the state, if not now may be six months down the line after the 2023 Assembly polls.

Political observers found some changes in gestures of Scindia during the meeting with Vijayvargiya as he was accompanied by his 26-year-old son Mahanaryaman Scindia. In a short video of the meeting that went viral on social media, senior Scindia was heard saying: "Aapke liye ek surprise laya hun (I have a surprise for you)."

Upon meeting Vijayvargiya, as a gesture of respect junior Scindia



touched his feet and both embraced each other. This made people in political circles speculate more saying that, "Scindia family had never shown such a gesture before," said a Bhopal-based senior journalist.

Senior political observer NK Singh was of the view that there is no doubt Shivraj Singh Chouhan is the only popular face of the BJP in Madhya Pradesh, who won three consecutive Assembly elections on his own, but he lost the 2018 elections. "If the BJP is ruling Madhya

Pradesh today, it could happen only because of Scindia. It appears that Shivraj Singh will face the same situation like Congress leader Digvijaya Singh had faced in 2003."

Singh further said that both veterans of the Congress -- Rajya Sabha MP Digvijaya Singh and Madhya Pradesh Congress Committee (MPCC) head Kamal Nath -- are seasoned politicians, and the BJP knows very well who can take on these two leaders.

"The indication was very clear when Scindia joined the BJP, the sit-

uation was different. Scindia's meeting with Vijayvargiya and some other senior BJP leaders of Madhya Pradesh, it may be that Centre's top leadership wants to create an amicable scenario for him among Madhya Pradesh based senior politicians. Some senior BJP leaders, who are anti-Shivraj, have already shifted to Scindia's favour," he said.

After being dropped from the top decision-making body of the 11-member parliamentary board last week, Shivraj had said: "I don't care at all whether I am qualified. If the party gives me the task of laying carpets, I will do it in the interest of the nation. If asked to stay in Jait (home village of Shivraj) then I will do so and if it asks me to be in Bhopal, I will follow the directions. There should be no personal ambition in politics."

Political observers are also speculating that Shivraj Singh Chouhan, who is a seasoned politician and many others who were not in his support were shown the door, have started lobbying against him and Vijayvargiya was one of them.

"Meeting with Vijayvargiya should not be taken as a big signal of change because he too has a limited role in the party now. But, yes, he has a strong hold in Indore division," said a BJP spokesperson on condition of anonymity.

## ARCHDIOCESE CELEBRATES PLATINUM JUBILEE OF INDEPENDENCE DAY IN THE VILLAGE

**Bhopal:** As India completes seventy-five years of freedom, a Platinum Jubilee, the Archdiocese of Bhopal in collaboration with of St Joseph's International School for Excellence celebrated Jubilee among villagers and school going students at Tarasevaniya, Parvalia, Bhopal.

Archbishop AAS Durairaj SVD quoting Prime Minister Narendra Modi, said in his address that the meaning of Amrit Mahotsav as the nectar of new ideas, new resolutions and self-reliance.

The purpose of Amrit Mahotsav celebration is to promote unity, brotherhood and respect for all religions and all peoples in our country, he said.

The former and present village sarpanch of Tarasevaniya Hridesh Meena and representative Patiram Mehra appreciated the efforts of St. Joseph International School for Excellence to promote unity, knowledge and patriotism among the villagers of Tarasevaniya. The Director of the school, Fr. Joseph PP in his address spoke about the importance of freedom followed by the school explaining the history of the country's flag in a creative way. Children presented patriotic songs and dances.

At the beginning of the program a March Past was taken by the students of St. Joseph International School in Tarasevaniya village, with patriotic and catchy tunes by the pipes and drums band of the school, to commemorate the Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav. The program started with the lighting of the lamp.

The climax of the program came to an end with the school band captivating the villagers through patriotic tunes with pipes and drums making different formations brought applause from the crowd. The program ended with the National Anthem.



EDITOR'S SPECS

Reviewing remission: Law needed for release of convicts on remission

**P**ublic-spirited activists have done well to challenge in the Supreme Court the premature release of 11 convicts who were serving life terms for the gang-rape of a woman and the murder of at least seven people during the 2002 anti-Muslim pogrom in Gujarat. Bilkis Bano, the survivor, has not moved the courts so far, but it is clear that the controversial order of the Gujarat government, granting remission to the convicts, should be subject to judicial review. That those found guilty of multiple murders, including that of a three-year-old child, and a gang-rape, were found suitable candidates for premature release is unacceptable. Even otherwise there are specific legal grounds to question the government's decision. The remission was based on a direction from a two-judge Bench of the Supreme Court on a petition by one of the convicts. The question to be decided was whether the Gujarat government or the Maharashtra government was the appropriate government for considering their plea for remission. The Court ruled that the State government of Gujarat, where the crime occurred, should consider the matter, and not Maharashtra, the State to which the trial was transferred by the Supreme Court to ensure an impartial trial. There are at least two grounds on which the remission order appears illegal. First, the State government made a decision on its own without consulting with the Centre. Under Section 435 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, such consultation with the Centre is mandatory in cases probed by the CBI. Further, the composition of the committee that recommended remission for the convicts consisted of two BJP legislators. Further, it appears that the objection of the district judge concerned was disregarded, casting a shadow on the legitimacy of the remission.

# THE FILM INDUSTRY'S CAPTAINS OF DOOM

The film industry in Mumbai is in doldrums and guess who all have delivered it to its near doom? The industry's own people. The very people who are here to do business, make a living out of it.

To live and let live has always been the adage followed in the trade, like in all other trades. Folks in the industry were always more considerate to those who incurred losses in some venture and did not disown them.

Everything in the film industry was hunky-dory. People made films. They staked everything they had. Hit or flop, they survived to make another film and the industry people stood by them. The financiers, the toughest guys to deal with, also extended their support, for without them, a producer could never make another film.

If a producer lost money in one film, the star concerned considered him in his next film and his regular distributor did not forsake him. If an exhibitor incurred loss on one film, the distributor made concessions in the next film.

So far all was well and the film industry was thriving on its own. No support from any outside agencies, including the central and state governments, no industry status and no institutional finance. Yet, they were the first ones on call when the nation needed them.

Things started changing as the prospect hunters entered the arena so as to give the industry a corporate work culture. What did they know about filmmaking? Nothing, nothing at all. They installed management graduates on top. Did they know filmmaking? They did not. Marketing consumer products is not the same as marketing films and creativity is not a part of any education.

Amitabh Bachchan was the first to learn this the hard way. He launched the Amitabh Bachchan Corporation Limited (ABCL), later renamed AB Corp, to professionally produce films, promote new talent as well as to organise other events related to entertainment. He did not have any experienced film industry person at the helm.

The move led Bachchan almost to bankruptcy. Some more big-time corporate houses followed. The house of Tata, Birla, Singhania and Biyani left as soon as they entered after their initial experience.

The ones who came in later included some foreign-funded companies, too. We had Sony, Fox Star, Columbia, Viacom, Warner, Walt Disney UTV and Reliance Big, for instance. Some have folded up; a couple of others deal with a select few filmmakers. The problem with these corporate houses is that they know nothing about filmmaking and their involvement was limited to mainly financing films, the ones which had big stars.

They cared for delivery and that could be done only by the ones who were close to the stars. So, a star's secretary would be sanctioned, say, Rs 100 crore to go and make three movies! It was just about who could rope in a certain star so that a film would attract crowds from the day it opened. They did not consider content. They backed projects, not content. There were many films supported by such corporate houses and, soon, their projects started showing up on their bottom-line. Somewhere along the line, the intentions started showing. They were here to exploit. The greedy side surfaced. They started eating into the roots of the tree that bore fruits. Killing the golden goose, as the saying goes. You don't make money if you do not let others earn, too.



A lot of these companies, even while exiting, had spoiled the stars so much that with every successful film, they went on adding a few more crores in multiples of ten to their price tag till their films became unviable. Take for example the instance of Akshay Kumar. His last three films together could not cross the Rs 100-crore mark.

Now, his fourth release, 'Raksha Bandhan', will help him with the dubious achievement of finally crossing the Rs 100-crore mark. Is that good news for those who back such actors blindly?

Okay, they don't have a department to check content and vet it, but don't they have a costs and accounts department? (While on the subject of Akshay Kumar, a producer signed him for three films with a one-time lump sum payment. Following the latest disaster, the producer hurriedly offloaded one of the three films to an OTT platform this week!)

Next, we got the multiplex culture. They took the cinema-going experience from a mass medium of entertainment to the elite level. Their admission rates were restrictive and exorbitant, which kept the very audience that contributed towards the kind of success films enjoyed over the years. The days of silver and golden jubilees were gone.

Phrases such as 'mass film', 'mass appeal', 'film for the masses', 'loved by the masses' were forgotten because the masses could not afford to watch films anymore. Not because the masses did not crave for cinema, but because they were kept out of this one form of entertainment that used to be available and affordable to them. The reason was unreasonable pricing. What happened to single-screen cinemas? Thanks to the short-sighted policies of various state governments, they stood no chance in hell to survive. Maybe the policymakers thought that multiplexes were going to be some kind of mint for the state governments! They were granted all sorts of concessions on land acquisition and entertainment tax exemptions, though the single screens never got any. What was the logic and where was the economic sense here?

Besides, the multiplex being a novelty and a place to boast about, the audience preference moved to the new way of watching films. Sadly, it was a case of never returning for some and no cinema to watch a movie at for most. The single screens had no alternative but to close down. Some single-screen properties were gobbled up by the multiplex chains, while most others lie in ruins now, in such a state that nobody can imagine these were once throbbing hubs frequented by thousands each day.

During the Covid-19 lockdown, cinematographer Hemant Chaturvedi travelled across areas in the Hindi belt and recorded in pictures the state of these single screens. The book with tell-tale pictures should be out soon. Marketing is a word banded about in the film industry ever since the so-called corporate culture tried to force its way in. What exactly does it mean? What does a marketing guy do? Is he the one to decide how many screens to be granted to what film? Films have been released in cinemas from the day they were made. So, what is new?

The new thing is that these marketing guys, even while knowing nothing about the film in question, decide on whether it should get 3,000 or 4000 screens, or far fewer than that number. On what basis? Well, the actors starring in the film and the maker behind it.

Is selling a small carton of popcorn at Rs 450 a stroke of marketing genius? (Corn, by the way, is regarded as the poor man's food.) You expect only the affluent to come to your property to watch cinema, but that does not deter you from levying parking charges.

'The Kashmir Files' started off with just about 500-odd screens. It went on adding screens with success to reach 3,500 within the first nine days.

Guess who is the greediest of them all? The actors. For a lot of undeserved money, they sell themselves. Which stars and even wannabe stars seriously think they are worth what they are demanding? A new actor who comes up with one decent box-office performer, starts talking in multiples of crores. Corporate finances worked well if a film was successful, so some actors decided to turn to film production. Why let someone else make money if my films are working? All stars, none excluded, took to film production. Make a film for brother, sister, brother-in-law, but why let an outsider earn. So what if he made films with you when you were not such a hit? Then, of course, there are brand endorsements. I don't know how the brands profit by paying crores to stars for promoting their

underwear, cooking oil and colas, but I have seen a star endorsing a product in a very competitive market even though tickets for his films don't sell for Rs 100! Unlike in cricket, a film star never knows when to call it quits.

If last week, two major star films, 'Laal Singh Chaddha' and 'Raksha Bandhan', have flopped or rather emerged as unmitigated disasters at the box office, it is not because of any boycott or social media, or that they were bad. Even if a film is bad, one with such stars as Aamir and Akshay should at least open well! Both were met with a very, very poor response.

If 'Laal Singh Chaddha' was the Indian version of 'Forrest Gump', unnecessarily stretched, Akshay Kumar's 'Raksha Bandhan' borrowed the plot from producer Shabnam Kapoor's 1991 Mithun Chakraborty film, 'Pyar Ka Devta', where the hero promises his dying mother that he won't enter into wedlock till he sees his three sisters married off.

Don't take your audience for granted, don't blame OTT. Blame yourself. If the fate of 'Laal Singh Chaddha' and 'Raksha Bandhan' don't open your eyes and minds, it is really a point of no return.

## international

## XI TAKING CHINA BACK TO PERSONALISTIC DICTATORSHIP

Washington | Agencies

Chinese President Xi Jinping is expected to be appointed to an unprecedented third term as leader of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), the media reported.

Li Ling, a lecturer of Chinese politics at the University of Vienna, said at an online panel hosted by the Asia Society that she expects the 69-year-old Xi to be an exception to the age limit, which she anticipates he will enforce for others. "The age limit is the only exit mechanism to end a Politburo Standing Committee member's tenure. It is very objective and easy to enforce fairly," she said. Bonnie Glaser, director of the Asia Program at the German Marshall Fund, told Axios that Xi's goal this fall is to "put his own



people on the Politburo Standing Committee and the Politburo". The mandatory retirement age is not in any CCP official regulation or document. The party resolution eliminating term limits puts Xi in the unlimited-term category of former CCP Chairman Mao Zedong. He served as party leader from 1935 until his death on September 9, 1976. In 2017, Xi broke precedent by not pro-

moting a successor-in-training at the 19th Party Congress. The following year, he maneuvered the abolition of a two-term limit for party presidents, reported. "Xi Jinping is taking China back to a personalistic dictatorship after decades of institutionalized collective leadership," said Susan Shirk, an expert on Chinese politics and professor at the University of California, San Diego.

## CANADIAN PM ANNOUNCES NEW SANCTIONS AGAINST RUSSIA

Ottawa: Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau announced new sanctions against Russia. In a press release on the Prime Minister's website, Trudeau said on Tuesday that Canada is imposing new measures on 62 close associates of the Russian government and a defence sector entity, news agency reported. Among the individuals sanctioned are high-ranking Russian government officials, including Russian federal governors and regional heads, their family members, and senior officials of currently sanctioned defence sector entities, according to the press release.

## Minor girl kidnapped, raped & burnt to death in Islamabad

Islamabad | Agencies

A minor girl was kidnapped, raped, and burnt to death in Islamabad's Kohsar town. Her body was recovered from a water tank from one of the houses in the town, at Old Kirpa Road falling under the jurisdiction of Kirpa Police Station, The News reported.

The father of the victim, hailing from Mardan, lodged a complaint with the Kirpa Police Station, in which he claimed that his seven-year-old daughter went to a neighbour's house along with her family including her grandmother, mother, and sister to attend Quran Khwani. The family noticed her missing after a while and started looking out for her with the help of locals.

However, after some time, the family noticed a foul smell coming from the rooftop of their neighbour's house where they attended the Quran Khwani, where they found a burnt cot. The complainant told the police that his wife also saw the daughter of her neighbour run-



ning out of a next-door under-construction house with a stranger. The family rushed to the under-construction house and found the burnt body of their daughter lying in a water tank, The News reported. The police shifted the

body to the hospital for post-mortem to confirm the offence of rape. The police have rounded up four suspects including a girl, claiming that the killers would be arrested within hours.

## US REPORTS OVER 15,000 MONKEYPOX CASES

Los Angeles: The US has confirmed over 15,000 monkeypox cases, according to the latest data from the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

A total of 15,433 known monkeypox cases had been reported nationwide as of Monday, news agency reported, citing data. New York had the most cases, with 2,910, followed by California with 2,663 and Florida with 1,588, according to data. The Biden administration has been facing criticism in its response to the monkeypox outbreak, including failure to order enough vaccines, speed treatments and make tests available to head off the outbreak. So far, the US has the world's highest tally of monkeypox cases. Over the last week, the US also saw the largest increase in monkeypox infections of any country, according to data from the World Health



## Support for Ukraine must continue until Putin withdraws: Johnson

London | Agencies

Russian President Vladimir Putin must not be allowed to repeat the annexation of Crimea in other parts of Ukraine, UK's outgoing Prime Minister Boris Johnson told world leaders. Johnson said allies should continue to support Ukraine until Russian forces withdrew from the "entirety" of its territory, reports news agency.

Crimea was annexed by Russia in 2014 and Johnson warned that Putin would seek to repeat the process in other parts of Ukraine following the invasion by Moscow's forces six months ago. In a remote address to the international Crimea Platform conference hosted by Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelensky on Tuesday, Johnson said the peninsula had been turned into an "armed camp" by Russia since 2014 and was used as one of the



launch pads for the invasion in February. "Putin is planning to do to other parts of Ukraine, indeed all of Ukraine, what he has done to Crimea," Johnson warned. "He is preparing more annexations and

more sham referendums." Johnson said Russia's annexation of Crimea "or any other Ukrainian territory" must never be recognised. "In the face of Putin's assault we must continue to give our Ukrainian friends

all the military, humanitarian, economic and diplomatic support that they need until Russia ends this hideous war and withdraws its forces from the entirety of Ukraine," he said.

## US EXTENDS TRAVEL BAN ON N.KOREA

Washington/Seoul:

The US has extended its travel ban on North Korea for one more year, a government notice showed on Wednesday.

The State Department announced the extension of the ban through August 31, 2023, in the Federal Register notice published on Tuesday, reports News Agency.

The restriction -- initially imposed in 2017 and since renewed every year -- was set to expire at the end of this month. "The Department of State has determined there continues to be serious risk to US citizens and nationals of arrest and long-term detention constituting imminent danger to their physical safety," the notice read. "Accordingly, all US passports shall remain invalid for travel to, in, or through the DPRK unless specially validated for such travel under the authority of the Secretary of State."





MAHA 'KHOKE CAMPAIGN': SHINDE GROUP, OPPN MLAS IN JOSTLING, FISTICUFFS OUTSIDE LEGISLATURE

Team Absolute | Mumbai

In an unprecedented ruckus, rebel Shiv Sena MLAs supporting Chief Minister Eknath Shinde and the Opposition Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) legislators were seen jostling, abusing, pushing around each other and indulging in a bout of fisticuffs, outside the Maharashtra Legislature building here on Wednesday.

Seething at the ongoing tirade by MVA labelling the Shinde Group as 'gaddars' (traitors) and '50 khoke' (Rs 50 crore), Shinde Group legislators retaliated in full force, sparking outrage in political circles.

A few MLAs of Shinde Group accosted the MVA legislators who were raising slogans against the government for the fourth day since the Legislature started its monsoon session last week, resulting in shoving among the two sides.

At one point, a Shinde Group MLA Dilip Lande and Nationalist Congress Party's Amol Mitkari engaged in mild blows and lunged at each other even as their respective groups pulled and separated them.

The Shinde Group MLAs also hit back by shouting their own slogans and waving posters to counter the Shiv Sena-NCP-Congress' rants, creating a brouhaha outside the legisla-



ture. '(Sachin) Vaze-BMC Khoke, Matoshri, Shiv Sena Ok', 'Lavasa Khoke, Baramati Ok', screamed the Shinde Group MLAs, trying to overshadow the MVA legislators.

The development, a new low in politics, came a day after Shinde 'warned' the Opposition that "he could expose records of those targeting him and his group" of rebel Shiv Sena MLAs.

The Leader of Opposition Ajit Pawar reacted sharply saying that the CM's statements amounted to a 'threat' to the Opposition.

The Opposition has been needling

the Bharatiya Janata Party-propped Shinde government with embarrassing slogans like 'gaddar', 'Rs 50 crore, very ok', 'Tav Vati, Chao Guwahati' (Plates and bowl, Go to Guwahati), and 'ED jiski mummy, Wo sarkar nikammi' (the government whose mummy is ED is useless).

Both MLA Mahesh Shinde and Mitkari have lodged separate complaints against each other with CM Shinde and Speaker Rahul Narvekar, demanding a probe into the incident by examining the CCTV footage, even as a female journalist was also pushed around in the melee.

Maharashtra Assembly reverses previous govt's decision of increasing BMC wards

Mumbai | Agencies

The political drama in Maharashtra is not yet taking a pause since the Maharashtra Assembly on Wednesday reversed a decision of the previous Uddhav Thackeray-led Maha Vikas Aghadi government. The new government led by Eknath Shinde has passed a bill to reverse the increase in the number of wards in Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) from 227 to 236.

Congress and Samajwadi Party supported the amendment to reverse the previous government's decision on wards in the cash-rich Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation where the elections are due.

The NCP and the Uddhav Thackeray-led Shiv Sena spoke against the amendment by highlighting a Supreme Court decision directing for a status quo.

Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis defended the decision clarifying that the apex court directive was in another case pertaining to quota for the Other Backward Classes (OBCs). He said, "Our ordinance is for reversing the number of wards from 236 to 227. There is no legal impediment."

Shiv Sena MLA Aaditya Thackeray retaliated calling the bill "unconstitutional, just like the government", to which Chief Minister Eknath Shinde responded by saying, "In a democracy, numbers are important. We have the majority. We have not acted unconstitutionally." Shinde also accepted MLA Sada Sarvankar's demand for an inquiry by the Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB) into the previous government's decision to increase the number of wards. He further said, even though he was the urban development minis-



ter in the previous Uddhav Thackeray-led government, policy making is always a collective decision.

Congress MLA Amin Patel and Samajwadi Party MLA Raees Sheikh called upon past government's decision stating that ward delimitation was done to "benefit a particular party" and was not in the interest of the citizens of Mumbai.

Sheikh claimed that the changes were done to target corporators from other parties who worked for several years by breaking the wards they represented. Both Patel and Sheikh did not name any party. Sheikh claimed that the changes were done to target corporators from other parties who worked for several years by breaking the wards they represented. Both Patel and Sheikh did not name any party.

Chief Minister Shinde informed that his government received 892 complaints against the delimitation of wards by the previous government.

Assistance for kin of those killed in attacks by wild animals increased

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Forest minister Sudhir Mungantiwar on Wednesday said that the Maharashtra government has hiked the financial assistance for loss of human life in attacks by wild animals from Rs 15 lakh to Rs 20 lakh.

Making the announcement in the Legislative Council, he said the incidence of human-animal conflict was rising in the state, reported PTI.

Sudhir Mungantiwar said that in 2019-20, 47 people lost their lives in attacks by wild animals, 80 people died in such incidents in 2020-21 and 86 died in 2021-22. "The financial assistance

(in such cases) has been hiked from Rs 15 lakh to Rs 20 lakh," he said. The forest minister said that the assistance is provided in the case of death due to an attack by tiger, leopard, bear, gaur, wild boar, wolf, hyena, crocodile, wild dog and elephant. The compensation for the death of cattle in such attacks has been hiked from Rs 60,000 to Rs 70,000. If a sheep or goat is killed, the amount has been hiked from Rs 10,000 to 15,000. In case of cattle suffering permanent disability, the compensation has been hiked from Rs 12,000 to Rs 15,000, and for sheep and goat it has been increased from Rs 4,000 to Rs 5,000.

Maharashtra will make anti-conversion law more stringent: Fadnavis on Rane's allegations

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Responding to the demand for anti-conversion law in the state made by Maharashtra BJP legislator Nitesh Rane citing alleged religious conversion of Hindu women, Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister and Home Minister Devendra Fadnavis announced in the state Assembly on Wednesday that there is already an anti-conversion law in Maharashtra.

"No one can carry out conversion with coercion. If there are flaws in the provisions of the law, the government will make efforts

to make the provisions further stringent," he said in his reply to the calling attention motion moved by BJP legislator Nitesh Rane on the alleged conversion of a seventh standard minor girl from Shirirampur in Ahmednagar district.

Rane at the outset said that this is not the first incident, the conversion was happening across Maharashtra and urged Fadnavis to step up actions against this menace. "There is a big racket involved in carrying out conversions in the state, and the rate cards are decided according to religion and caste. Minor girls are being cheated in

the name of conversion," he alleged. Referring to the Shirirampur case, Rane alleged that the accused and the police were in collusion. "It is a serious incident that happened at Shirirampur in Ahmednagar. A minor girl is being cheated in the name of religious conversion and is being tortured. The action against the accused was taken a long time after the case was registered," he said, adding, "At that time, there was pressure from the neighbourhood community not to take action. There is talk in the area that the police officer, in this case, has financial dealings with the accused and there

was police help provided to the accused."

Rane claimed that harassment was done in the name of conversion and demanded that the police officer Sanap, the officer in charge of the Shirirampur case, should be terminated immediately. "Will the state government bring in anti-conversion law on the lines of Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Gujarat?" he asked.

Responding to Rane, Fadnavis said that an inquiry will be conducted in the matter, and if needed, the provision with regard to termination of the said officer will be invoked.

OPPOSITION COUNTERS MAHARASHTRA MINISTER'S "NO MALNUTRITION DEATH" CLAIM

Mumbai: Maharashtra Tribal Development Minister Vijaykumar Gavit today said in the state Assembly that there has been no child death reported due to malnutrition in the state in the last five years.

However, members of Sharad Pawar's party NCP and Congress objected to the minister's claim. Gavit said, "As per information shared by the state health department with my office, there is no child death reported due to malnutrition in the state."

"There are 16 districts in the state where tribal population is identified. No district has reported death due to malnutrition in the last five years," the minister said.

However, Leader of Opposition Ajit Pawar objected to Mr Gavit's response saying, "It is a well-known fact that there have been cases of malnutrition in the state and many children die due to it every year."

MVA HOLDS PARLEYS, PUTS UP A UNITED FACE

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Two months after being ousted from power, the Maha Vikas Aghadi leaders met in the Vidhan Bhavan complex in Mumbai during which they decided to fight it out from the Opposition benches and prepare for the polls ahead including the local bodies elections in Maharashtra.

However, so far, no clarity has emerged whether the NCP, Congress and Shiv Sena would contest the elections together or not.

In fact, Shiv Sena president Uddhav Thackeray, the former Maharashtra chief minister, presided over the meeting -- an indication that he still holds the position of leadership in the MVA. Thackeray, in the days to come, is also expected to

meet NCP president Sharad Pawar. Post the 'Ganeshutsav', the leaders of all the parties are expected to tour Maharashtra separately.

The first challenge that the MVA faces is the bye-election in Andheri East seat in Mumbai which has been necessitated because of the death of Shiv Sena legislator, Ramesh Latke, in May.

The Election Commission of India is expected to announce the dates soon.

While the MVA partners have decided to give the seat to Shiv Sena, the Thackeray-led party faces a challenge in the likelihood of the rebel Shiv Sena faction led by Maharashtra Chief Minister Eknath Shinde putting up a candidate.

Among those who were present at the meeting include Leader of Opposition in Assembly Ajit

Pawar of NCP and his counterpart in Council Ambadas Danve of Shiv Sena. From the NCP side, state NCP president Jayant Patil was present while Congress was represented by state president Nana Patole, former chief ministers Prithviraj Chavan and Ashok Chavan and Congress legislature party leader Balasaheb Thorat. "The MVA government has successfully tackled a crisis like Covid-19. The current crisis is nothing compared to the Coronavirus crisis. We will fight this crisis, also as an MVA. We have to struggle and I believe in the judiciary," Thackeray reportedly told the meeting, adding that he will not buckle under pressure from the BJP. "There is no rift amongst the constituents of the MVA. We are united. The next course of action

Opposition accuses Maha Chief Minister Eknath Shinde of giving 'threats'

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Apparently fed up by the constant tirade of 'gaddars' (traitors) and '50 khoke' (Rs 50 crore) by the opposition Maha Vikas Aghadi legislators, Maharashtra Chief Minister Eknath Shinde on Tuesday warned that he could expose records of those targeting him and his faction of rebel Shiv Sena MLAs.

Quickly reacting, Leader of Opposition Ajit Pawar said that the CM's statements were a "threat" to the Opposition.

Shinde said that there is a limit on tolerance on certain remarks being made by the Opposition legislators and hinted that even he could bring out the deeds of those attacking his group - which broke off from the Shiv Sena in June.

"Even I have the track records of you (opposition) all... After all, even I had worked with you. I don't want to go into all this. There is a limit to tolerate such comments," he said.

Later, Shinde sought to clarify that it was not intended to be a threat and urged that all are here



to help the people and develop the state, while discussing issues of agriculture, the recent floods, relief to the farmers, etc. Countering this, Pawar said if the CM tells the Opposition that he has all records is not a threat, then what else is. Incidentally, even on Monday, the CM had taken a

swipe at Nationalist Congress Party leader and ex-Minister Dhananjay Munde on the allegations levelled by a woman, Karuna Sharma, purportedly claiming to be his (Munde's) second wife.

However, on Tuesday, (today) Munde was not visible at the MVA agitation on the footpaths in the Vidhan Bhavan where the Opposition continued its agitation for the fourth day of the Monsoon Session.

The opposition has been needling the Bharatiya Janata Party-propped Shinde government with embarrassing slogans like 'gaddar', 'Rs 50 crore, very ok', 'Tav Vati, Chao Guwahati' (Plates and bowl, Go to Guwahati)', and a new one, 'ED jiski mummy, Wo sarkar nikammi' (the government whose mother is the ED is a useless one).

The daily protests and sloganeering since the start of the legislature session on August 17 - which are getting wide media coverage - have apparently enraged the rebel group and culminated in the CM unexpectedly losing his composure in the legislature on Tuesday.

SC: DON'T CARRY OUT ANY DEVELOPMENTAL WORK IN AAREY FOREST

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Supreme Court on Wednesday said it would take a stern view, if Mumbai Metro Rail Corporation Ltd (MMRCL) violates its undertaking of not cutting trees in Aarey forest.

A bench headed by Justice UU Lalit said MMRCL should not go ahead with any developmental work in the forest area. Senior advocate Anitha Shenoy, appearing for the petitioners, refuted the contents of the affidavit filed by the MMRCL during the previous hearing. She said levelling and other work is going on and there should not be any work in the area.

The top court noted that in October 2019 an assurance was given that no tree will be cut in any manner. The bench, also comprising Justices S. Ravindra Bhat and Sudhanshu Dhulia, noted "advocate Rukmini Bobde, appearing for MMRCL said her clients have already filed an affidavit that no trees have been cut since the 7.10.2019 order and would not be cut in any manner". After hearing arguments, the top court has placed the matter for further hearing on



Tuesday. On August 5, MMRCL told the Supreme Court that no tree cutting has been carried out in Aarey forest in Mumbai, rather some weeds and branches were removed. Senior advocate Chandur Uday Singh, representing the petitioners, had then contended that tree cutting had been resumed in the Aarey forest region for the metro car shed project, despite the status quo orders. The top court noted that the matter needs to

be heard in detail. Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, representing MMRCL, submitted that no tree cutting was going on in the area, and after the status quo order was passed by the top court in 2019, no tree was cut. He added that there were bushes, weeds, and shrubs, which have grown in the area, and they were being removed by the concerned authority. Mehta emphasized that only trim-

ming of certain branches were carried out citing the affidavit filed by MMRCL in the matter. The apex court had taken suo motu cognisance of the protests against the cutting of trees in the Aarey car shed plot in 2019. It had ordered status quo on October 7, 2019, after Mehta gave an undertaking that no fresh felling of trees would be done till the next date of hearing. The status quo order had been extended from time to time.

Leopard strays into Thane house; caught

Forest officials managed to catch the feline after more than 10 hours on Tuesday, he said.

Thane | Agencies

A leopard strayed into a house in Maharashtra's Thane district, triggering panic in the residential locality, a forest official said on Wednesday.

Forest officials managed to catch the feline after more than 10 hours on Tuesday, he said.

The leopard entered the house located at Umbarkhand village in Sahapur taluka around 4 am on Tuesday. A woman family member was shocked to find the big cat resting in a room of their house. She immediately locked the room and the family alerted local police and forest personnel.

Residents of the village, having a population of around 250, panicked after getting to know about the carnivore venturing into the house. Forest officials and a team from the Sanjay Gandhi National Park later reached the house. They tranquilised the leopard and took it away for release into a forest, the official said. It was found to be a two-year-old female



leopard, he said. No one was injured by the feline, the official said, adding that it entered the residential area possibly in search of a prey.



## 'She-Hulk' co-director recalls her childhood fascination for the character

Mumbai | Agencies

**K**at Coiro, the co-director of the recently released limited series 'She-Hulk: Attorney at Law', has shared her experience of how she got acquainted with the titular character and how she explored the character in her childhood.

Talking about how she has long been drawn to the emerald-hued hero, Kat, who helmed six episodes of the series, said, "I was a huge fan of She-Hulk as a child, and she was a really badass female superhero who had her own book."

Coiro also recently discovered her husband had an entire collection of the comics, "We went to his mom's basement, and I got to go back through the comics and remember what was so exciting about She-Hulk. She's irreverent, big, strong and bold."

For the Indian-American director, Anu Valia, who helmed three episodes, it was the depth of the character's personality that piqued her interest.

"I've never seen a show about a superhero that shows so many shades. Jen/She-Hulk is able to share her vulnerabilities, her disappointments and her fears," Valia said.

She added: "When I read the scripts and saw that they were making a modern legal comedy that's really about a professional woman in her 30s navigating her professional career and personal life, I could completely connect and relate to it."

"I think it's so special to show the intricacies of what she's dealing with emotionally."

'She-Hulk: Attorney at Law', which stars Tatiana Maslany, Ginger Gonzaga, Jameela Jamil and Tim Roth, also features special appearances by Mark Ruffalo and Benedict Wong.

Written by Jessica Gao, the series has been produced by Kevin Feige, Louis D'Esposito, Victoria Alonso, Brad Winderbaum, Kat Coiro and Jessica Gao.



## The story of the rise and fall of 'BlackBerry' through a movie

## Paul Rudd joins 'Only Murders in the Building' Season 3

Los Angeles | Agencies

**A**nt-Man star Paul Rudd has joined the cast of 'Only Murders in the Building'. The actor will star in the show's third season after making a cameo as Broadway star Ben Glenroy in Season 2 finale 'I Know Who Did It', reports website.

It is not known whether Rudd will appear in a series regular, recurring or guest capacity. "Paul Rudd, after making an auspicious entrance into the world of our show at the end of Season 2 as Ben Glenroy, is someone we clearly want to know more about

and see in our upcoming Season 3 -- as he is a clear source of many upcoming questions and, as ever with our show, many twists yet to come!" series co-creator John Hoffman said in a statement to media.

'Only Murders in the Building' follows Charles (played by Steve Martin), Oliver (played by Martin Short) and Mabel (played by Selena Gomez), three unlikely friends who live in the same building in New York City and bond over their love of true crime, when they find themselves in the middle of a real-life murder mystery and begin a podcast of their

own.

According to website, Season 2 sees them race to unmask the killer of Arconia Board President Bunny Folger (played by Jayne Houdyshell).

However, three (unfortunate) complications ensue -- the trio is publicly implicated in Bunny's homicide, they are now the subjects of a competing podcast and they have to deal with a bunch of New York neighbours who all think they committed murder. Season 3 was greenlit in July.

They adds that Martin co-created the series with Hoffman. Martin, Hoffman, Short and Gomez execu-



utive produce alongside Dan Fogelman, Jess Rosenthal and Jamie Babbit. Rudd's new role in 'Only Murders in the Building' reunites him with Selena Gomez, as the two starred together in Netflix's 2016 film 'The Fundamentals of Caring'.

Los Angeles | Agencies

**A** movie from 'The Dirties' and 'Operation Avalanche' director Matt Johnson titled 'BlackBerry', is set to detail the rise and fall of the BlackBerry device, which was the world's first smartphone and ruled the market before the iPhone and Androids came into the picture, reports website.

The film has wrapped up its production. The brand witnessed a meteoric rise in the early 2000s only to meet a catastrophic demise.

The Canadian parent company of BlackBerry - Research In Motion floundered in legal disputes and eventually lost its market advantage to competitors such as Apple and Samsung.

According to website, at the heart of the story is the business relationship between co-founders Mike Lazaridis and Jim Balsillie.

The film's cast is led by Jay Baruchel and Glenn Howerton. Though it's not yet confirmed, it's likely they will play the firm's founders.

Other cast members include Cary Elwes, Saul Rubinek, Rich Sommer, Martin Donovan, Michael Ironside and Johnson.

Website further states that Johnson and Miller adapted the screenplay from the best-selling 2015 book 'Losing the Signal: The Untold Story Behind the Extraordinary Rise and Spectacular Fall of BlackBerry' by Jacquie McNish and Sean Silcoff, who were earlier the reporters at Canadian newspaper 'The Globe and Mail'.

## 'I have a dad bod!': Jason Momoa

Los Angeles | Agencies

**J**ason Momoa has claimed he has a 'dad bod' as he discussed his recent hernia surgery on Tuesday's episode of The Late Show with James Corden on CBS.

The actor had surgery the day before the Oscars in March and although that didn't stop him from attending the ceremony, it's slowed down his fitness regime. Asked by James, if he had fully recovered yet, he quipped: 'All good. Not really doing sit-ups. Trying to keep that dad bod going for a little bit longer. As James quipped: 'You can't say you've got a dad bod you can't. It's not a dad bod,' Jason retorted: 'Well, I don't want to do any more sit-ups!' A hernia occurs when an internal part of the body pushes through a weakness in the muscle or surrounding tissue wall, if surgery is required to treat the problem; most people make a full recovery within a few weeks. Discussing the procedure on the red carpet at the latest Academy Awards, Jason revealed: 'I had surgery yesterday... [it's because of] throwing bodies around. I'm getting old, bro. It ain't that CinemaCon from 2016, you know

what I'm saying?' Back in October, Jason revealed his age had made him more prone to getting injured as he discussed his battle scars from filming Aquaman and the Lost Kingdom.

"I messed up my eyes," the Dune star said. "I just got something in it that kinda cut it up, and then I've gotta get surgery. I have a hernia, I've got ribs out. I'm just getting beat up." When asked why



► Reveals he's embracing a fuller physique after hernia surgery stopped him working out

he keeps getting injured during filming, the See actor pointed to his enthusiasm for the work as a main cause.

"I just kinda give it," he said. "I love my job and I get a little too excited. The age thing. I'm an aging superhero now." Jason previously revealed how he maintains his incredible physique, telling Men's Health in 2013: 'You need to eat big and lift big. But I prefer to eat as much lean meat and green veg as possible and save the calories for Guinness. It keeps you sane. I love carbs but denial is good train-

ing for the mind. After finishing a one-month cleanse, I had a giant bowl of pasta and I swear to Christ it was like I was on heroin.'

Revealing his guilty pleasures, Jason added: 'I love cigars and booze. If you're going to pound the beers you've got to suck it up. It [the treadmill] gets you going, man. Then you can have that beer.' Elsewhere on his appearance on The Late Late Show, Jason also shared that he spent almost the entire summer in Europe and took his children to see concerts by The Rolling Stones, Guns N' Roses to Billie Eilish.

James asked Jason if his daughter Lola and son Nakoia-Wolf, appreciated seeing the older artists as much as seeing pop star Billie.

"I think everyone kind of loves Billie Eilish," Jason said. "I love her." Jason said he also really appreciated being able to share with his daughter the music of The Rolling



## Paige Thorne with fashion brand Forever Unique - first ever Love Islander partnership

Los Angeles | Agencies

**P**aige Thorne has signed a six-figure-deal with global fashion brand Forever Unique exclusively revealed by a website. It marks the Love Island star's first collaboration since coming out of the villa with her boyfriend Adam Collard, just three weeks ago. The highly anticipated collec-

tion with Paige is due to launch for party season and will be the brand's inaugural Love Islander partnership. The Welsh paramedic said: 'This is a real pinch me moment, I can't believe I have my very own collection with a brand I've loved for years!' Seema Malhotra, owner of Forever Unique and star of the Real Housewives of Cheshire, has loved Paige from the

very first episode of the ITV2 reality show and described her as the 'absolute perfect fit' for the brand.

Forever Unique prides itself as a high-quality and style-led fashion label which has said to have attracted Paige to the deal. Paige said of the move, 'I love that Forever Unique offers wardrobe staples that last a lifetime. I wanted my collection to be a consid-

ered purchase, using high quality materials and taking me out of my comfort zone. 'This is a real pinch me moment, I can't believe I have my very own collection with a brand I've loved for years!'

The new party collection is inspired by Paige's premium and girly aesthetic and will showcase high-fashion, feminine shapes designed to elevate your look, with attention to detail being at the core. Seema said of the partnership 'We are beyond excited to announce Paige as our latest celebrity signing! We were drawn to Paige immediately in the villa and love what she stands for as a strong, independent and driven female.



Regina Hall



## AFTER SC ORDER, RETURNING OFFICER ISSUES FRESH DATES FOR AIFF ELECTIONS

Team Absolute | New Delhi

After the termination of the Committee of Administrators (CoA), as demanded by the international football federation (FIFA), the returning officer issued fresh dates for the elections to the All India Football Federation (AIFF) Executive Committee.

The Supreme Court had on Monday said that the Executive Council (EC) of the AIFF shall consist of 23 persons -- 17 members (including the president, treasurer and vice-president) to be elected by the electoral college consisting of 35 associations representing states/union territories, and six members shall be drawn from eminent players -- comprising four men and two women. After the SC order, the returning officer Umesh Sharma stated that the election will be held on September 2 at the AIFF head-quarter in Delhi and the results



could be announced either on September 2 or 3. The nominations for the posts can be filed between August 25 to 27 while the scrutiny will be done on August 28, the returning officer said. The candi-

dates will have a chance to withdraw the nomination on August 29 while the returning officer shall prepare the final list of contesting candidates and put it on the AIFF website on August 30. The Supreme Court on

Monday terminated the mandate of the CoA to manage the affairs of the AIFF and also postponed the election, earlier scheduled on August 28, by one week. The top court had said it is modifying its previous orders to facilitate the revocation of the suspension which has been imposed on the AIFF by FIFA and the holding of the Under-17 Women's World Cup 2022 in India.

A bench of Justices D.Y. Chandrachud and A.S. Bopanna said: "The day-to-day management of the AIFF shall be exclusively looked after by the AIFF administration led by the Acting Secretary General. The mandate of the Committee of Administrators appointed by the order of this court stands terminated." The top court, in its order, said: "Time for the completion of the elections which were scheduled to take place on August 28, 2022 shall stand extended by a period of one week."

## Shubman Gill rises 93 places to 38th in latest ICC ODI rankings for batters

Dubai | Agencies

Young India opener Shubman Gill has risen a whopping 93 places to 38th place in the latest ICC Men's ODI Rankings for batters following his superb performance in the recently concluded three-match series against Zimbabwe in Harare. The team, led by KL Rahul, made a clean sweep of the ODI series with the 22-year-old Gill finishing as the leading run-scorer with 245 runs, which also included a century. Pakistan skipper Babar Azam continues to lead the ODI batting charts with 890 points, with India's Virat Kohli and all-format skipper Rohit Sharma occupying the fifth and sixth spots respectively. Meanwhile, the match-winning exploits of South Africa pacer Kagiso Rabada against England in the opening Test at Lord's have been rewarded as he has made giant strides on the latest Men's Player Rankings. Rabada was at his brilliant best during the Proteas' innings victory with the right-arm adding his name to the Honours Board at Lord's for the first time and collecting seven wickets for the match.

Not only did his efforts help South Africa maintain their lead at the top of the World



Test Championship standings, it also saw the 27-year-old jump two places to third overall on the latest Test bowler rankings. Fellow pacer Anrich Nortje tormented the England batters with six wickets for the match and he rose 14 places to 25th overall on the latest rankings for bowlers. Australia skipper Pat Cummins (891 rating points) and India veteran Ravi Ashwin (842) still lead the way on the list for bowlers, but Rabada (836) is making his move courtesy of his 12th five-wicket haul in Test cricket, according to ICC. South Africa captain Dean Elgar jumped one place to 13th overall on the Test batter rankings, while compatriot Marco Jansen rose 17 spots to 17th on the all-rounder list.

## NCAA champion Ben Shelton turns pro ahead of US Open

Georgia (USA) | Agencies

Ben Shelton, the reigning NCAA Division I men's singles champion, who reached the third round of last week's Western & Southern Open, on Tuesday announced that he is turning professional.

The 19-year-old American won the NCAA Singles Championship last year while competing for the University of Florida. "After sitting down with my parents this weekend, I have decided to forgo my last two years of eligibility and turn pro. While this wasn't an easy decision, I'm excited for the next chapter in my career," Shelton wrote in a statement, posted on Twitter.

"I want to thank the University of Florida for two incredible years. It has been a once-in-a-lifetime experience to become part of the Florida Family, and to compete in National Championships. These are memories I'll cherish forever. I have made brothers for life, I'm grateful for my teammates, coaches, and support staff at UF who have been there for me my whole collegiate career, and helped shape me into the person I am today. I would also like to thank my family, who have always taught me to BELIEVE in God,



and myself, while pushing me to stay balanced in everything I do. God is good," he added. The teenager also mentioned that he will continue his finance degree online while travelling on tour. "With that, I am going to continue my finance degree online while travelling on tour. I can't wait to get out there, expand my horizons, and see what this next chapter has in store. Gator Nation, I will be repping all over the world! I'm pumped to see everyone at the US Open. CHOMP CHOMP," he said. Shelton began the year at No. 573 in the ATP Rankings. He climbed to a career-high No. 171 after his run in Cincinnati, where he stunned Casper Ruud in the second round.

## Ultimate Kho Kho: Prajwal, Sachin help Telugu Yoddhas beat Mumbai Khiladis

Pune | Agencies

Skipper Prajwal K.H and Sachin Bhargo put up solid performances as Telugu Yoddhas defeated Mumbai Khiladis by 12 points in the inaugural edition of Ultimate Kho Kho at the Shree Shiv Chhatrapati Sports Complex, here on Tuesday.

Leading from the front, Prajwal defended for three minutes and one second while Bhargo recorded an all-round show with 10 points in attack and three minutes and 47 seconds in the defence to hand Mumbai Khiladis their third successive defeat with a 55-43 score. Rohan Shingade and Adarsh Mohite were the other two best performers for the winning side as they contributed with 11 and eight points respectively. The season's best defender Durvesh Salunke, proved his mettle once again for Mumbai Khiladis with a sensational defence time of five minutes and 11 seconds, including two



minutes of the first innings. Salunke also scored six points in attack while Avik Singh was the other top performer for Mumbai Khiladis with his eight points. With this win, Telugu Yoddhas went past Gujarat Giants to take top position on the points table with 12 points. The Gujarat Giants,

however, have 10 points to their name from four games with a chance to regain the No. 1 position when they take on Chennai Quick Guns later. Telugu Yoddhas, who came into the match after a massive win over Rajasthan Warriors in their last game, started off aggressively and dismissed

10 opposition defenders within the first seven minutes of the match to take a 26-0 lead. Bhargo led the charge for Telugu Yoddhas by scoring 10 which included four dismissals.

Switching positions, Avdhut Patel won two bonus points for Telugu Yoddhas in the defence by spending two minutes 46 seconds and later Arun Gunji ensured their team finish the first innings at 28-20 with his two-minute unbeaten stay. The in-form Salunke put his best to help Mumbai Khiladis fightback by not only securing four bonus points with a defence of three minutes and 11 seconds but also restricted Telugu Yoddhas to just 23 points. Six franchises, Chennai Quick Guns, Gujarat Giants, Mumbai Khiladis, Odisha Juggernauts, Rajasthan Warriors and Telugu Yoddhas, are competing in Season 1. The final of India's first-ever franchise-based Kho-Kho league will be played on September 4.

## Durand Cup:

## BENGALURU FC DEFEAT INDIAN AIR FORCE 4-0

Kolkata | Agencies

Bengaluru FC (BFC) became the third team of the Durand Cup to pick up a second consecutive win in as many games in this season, after they beat the Indian Air Force 4-0 in a Group B encounter at the Kishore Bharati Krirangan (KBK) here on Tuesday. Roy Krishna opened the scoring in the ninth minute of the match while Sunil Chhetri got the second in the 23rd. The third was scored by Faisal Ali in the 71st minute, while young striker Siva Sakthi got the fourth in the third minute of stoppage time.

As a result, BFC now join Mohammedan on six points in the group and both also have the same goal difference. The Blues gaffer Simon Grayson made as many as six changes in his starting eleven with defender Hira Mondal being the only forced change due to a red-card picked up in their first game. Priya Darshan the Air Force coach made two, rewarding Prabhjot Singh for his



spirited play in the last game when he came on as substitute and dropped Guizam in defence in place of Amal Das. Both surprisingly began with five defenders in the starting line-up.

The goal came early for BFC as Roy Krishna damaged a cross from the left and drove in to finish with his right, for his second of the tournament. Soon after captain Sunil Chhetri got at the end of a cross from Prabir Das, who was tireless with his runs from the right on the day, to sneak one past Shibinraj in the Air Force goal. It was his second of the tournament as well in as many games. There was no further damage done for the Airmen in the first half.

BFC got their third goal in the 71st through their new recruit from Kolkata itself, Faisal Ali. Two substitutes, Udanta and Faisal combined for it but credit should go to Suresh Wangjam who chased a ball inside the box with Air Force defender Arashpreet on his shoulder trying to see it to touch.

## BWF World Championships:

## China's Shi sails into last 16 at badminton worlds

Tokyo | Agencies

China's Shi Yuqi beat the 11th seed Rasmus Gemke of Denmark to reach the last 16 at the World Badminton Championships here on Tuesday. Shi, who returned to action at the tournament after a 10-month suspension, took 46 minutes to down the Dane 21-13, and 21-16 in the second round. The 2018 worlds finalist has slipped to 25th in the world rankings after a long absence, but he proved much stronger than what the ranking place has suggested. He rated his performance "7 out of 10", one point more than his first-round show.

"I played much better than in the first match, although there is still a long way from my best badminton," he said. The Chinese national champion struggled in his victory over lowly-ranked Ade Resky Dwicahyo of Azerbaijan on Monday, the first match after his suspension was lifted in early July. He was forced to fight back from 14-9 behind in the first game to win, reports Shi was banned from all competitions last October for making "inappropriate remarks" about the withdrawal from the Thomas Cup semifinal against Japan's Kento



Momota. Shi will next take on the sixth seed Anthony Sinisuka Ginting of Indonesia, who crushed Georges Julien Paul of Mauritius 21-10, 21-16. Shi has kept a perfect record in their six previous meetings.

"He is a tough player and always makes you suffer," Shi said. "That will definitely be a difficult match." Lu Guangzu crashed out of the tournament after losing to Wang Tzu Wei of Chinese Taipei 21-18, 21-16. Wang Yiyu and Huang Dongping, who had upset teammates Zheng Siwei/Huang Yaqiong to win the Olympic mixed doubles gold last year, opened their campaign with a difficult win, beating Malaysian duo Chen Tang Jie/Peck Yen Wei 21-14, 12-21, 21-11.

## England Women midfielder Jill Scott retires from football

London | Agencies

Jill Scott, England Women's second-highest capped player, on Tuesday announced her retirement from football at the age of 35.

The decision comes after the midfielder was part of the England squad that won Euro 2022 last month. She made four substitute appearances during the triumphant campaign, including the final against Germany. Scott won 161 caps for the Lionesses and scored 27 goals, while also winning the Women's Super League title and four women's FA Cups.

"I may be saying my goodbyes to football, but we're going to make this a celebration. No sad faces!! We've had too much fun for any tears," Scott said in a video for The Players' Tribune. "Imagine, if you would have told me that I'd go on to play for England for 16 years? If you would have told me that I'd live to see 90,000 people packed into Wembley Stadium for a women's European final? And that I'd be playing in it? Impossible," she added. She began her career in her hometown, Sunderland, before spending seven years at Everton and then joining City in 2013. She later



had loan spells back at Everton and Aston Villa. She won every domestic honour during her time in the game, including the Women's Super League title with City in 2017.

Scott's other career highlights include scoring England's winner in extra-time against Holland in the Euro 2009 semifinals and also netting in City's 2017 Women's FA Cup final victory over Birmingham. She also represented Great Britain at the 2012 and delayed 2020 Olympics. England head coach Sarina Wiegman said the Lionesses will miss Scott's presence but insists the former midfielder still has plenty to offer the game in her days after professional football.

## Five men's players in contention for world No.1 spot at US Open

New York | Agencies

Five players, including Rafael Nadal and young Spanish compatriot Carlos Alcaraz, are in with a chance to emerge as the new world No. 1 at the conclusion of the season-ending Grand Slam, the US Open at Flushing Meadows.

While Russia's Daniil Medvedev will enter the US Open as the No. 1 player in the ATP Rankings but there could be a huge reshuffle in the order in New York, with five players -- Nadal, Medvedev, Alcaraz, Greece's Stefanos Tsitsipas and Norway's Casper Ruud -- in contention for the top spot. When players next Monday (August 29) drop their 2021 US Open points, Nadal will be in pole position to recapture world No. 1 for the first time since February 2, 2020. Medvedev, Tsitsipas, Alcaraz and

Norway's Casper Ruud need deep runs in the last major of the year to challenge the Spaniard, according to atptour.com.

Since Nadal did not compete last year in New York, he is not defending any points. When reigning champion Medvedev drops the 2,000 points he is defending, Nadal will be No. 1 in the ATP Live Rankings with 5,630 points. The 36-year-old Nadal will have a 590-point lead over Germany's Alexander Zverev, who does not have a chance to claim No. 1 because he is not competing at the US Open due to an ankle injury. Medvedev, who has held world No. 1 since the week of June 13, will be 745 points behind.

Medvedev, Tsitsipas, Alcaraz and Ruud will all need to at least reach the US Open final to have an opportunity to leave New York as world No. 1. Tsitsipas will be confident after

reaching the Western & Southern Open final in Cincinnati. However, the Greek has not moved past the third round at Flushing Meadows in four previous appearances.

Alcaraz, who defeated Tsitsipas at last year's US Open en route to the quarterfinals, has a chance to make history. If the 19-year-old Spaniard climbs to world No. 1 on September 12, he will become the youngest No. 1 in ATP Rankings history, breaking the record Australia's Lleyton Hewitt set in November 2001 as a 20-year-old.

Ruud, who has climbed as high as world No. 5, can also become the first Norwegian in ATP Rankings history to reach world No. 1.

9. Asia Cup: Laxman named as India's interim head coach in Dravid's absence New Delhi: Former batsman and present National Cricket Academy (NCA) head VVS Laxman

on Wednesday was named as the interim head coach of the Indian cricket team for the upcoming Asia Cup 2022, to be played in the UAE, in Rahul Dravid's absence. Laxman who served as the coach in India's just-concluded three-match ODI series in Zimbabwe, will oversee the team's preparation in the absence of Dravid, who tested positive for Covid-19 before the team's departure to the UAE. The 49-year-old Dravid will join the team once he tests negative and is cleared by the BCCI Medical Team. Apart from Laxman, vice-captain KL Rahul, Deepak Hooda and Avesh Khan, who travelled from Harare, have also linked up with the squad in Dubai, a BCCI release said. The rest of the Zimbabwe series squad members, who are not part of the Asia Cup contingent, have returned to India.



# I refused notable work, as I felt I am not there yet: **Sadia Khateeb**

Aakruti Bagla | Mumbai

**S**adia Khateeb, who marked her big screen debut with Vidhu Vinod Chopra's *Shikara* (2020), currently delivered a phenomenal performance in *Raksha Bandhan*. Helmed by Aanand L Rai, the film is based on the beautiful relationship between brother-sister and the dowry issue that still exists. Undoubtedly, the actress is receiving positive responses for her role in the film.

In an exclusive tete-a-tete with Absolute India News, the actress spoke about working with Akshay Kumar, the malpractice of dowry and the Boycott Raksha Bandhan trend. Excerpts:

On working with critically acclaimed directors

The actress made her debut with Vidhu Vinod Chopra's *Shikara* and her second film was Aanand L Rai's *Raksha Bandhan*. When asked about how she reflects on working with

critically acclaimed directors, Sadia averred, "I didn't deliberately plan it, this just happened to me. I can only express my gratitude to God for providing me with this chance to collaborate with such well-known directors. I also want to thank the filmmakers who trusted me enough to let me appear in their movies."

## On her journey in the industry

The actress recalled how her journey has been in the industry. She revealed declining two big projects because they didn't have much scope for her.

"There have been days when I stayed home and did not work. However, even in those days, if a notable project came my way and I felt that I am not there enough, I refused to take it on. It is because I was thriving to satisfy my inner creative person", shared Sadia.

On *Raksha Bandhan* being called Akshay Kumar's film

The actress shared her experience of working with Akshay Kumar and said, "He and I had a relationship that was more beautiful off-screen than it was on-screen. I can attest to the fact that he is a wonderful person in addition to being an amazing celebrity. He treats everyone around him with respect and

is incredibly humble. I firmly believe that he deserves everything that he has accomplished in life."

She further reveals why *Raksha Bandhan* being called Akshay Kumar's film does not bother her. She says, "Absolutely not! He is a fantastic performer, and he did one of the finest jobs in the movie. He has a lot of talent. It's a treat to watch him on screen, whether you're the audience or a performer. I want to see him more."

## On dowry being a malpractice

Since the movie revolves around the evil practice of dowry, the actress shared a harrowing incident her teacher came across. She shared, "While promoting the film, I was listening to the song *Bidaai* on loop and suddenly recalled an instance. When I was studying in school, there was a beautiful teacher of mine who got married. She would come to school with *solah shringar* and look so stunning. I remember getting fascinated and admiring her. Cut to a week later, we got to know that her in-laws had poured kerosene and burnt her alive for dowry."

She further added, "It was after this incident I realised to what extent people can go for dowry."

## On the #BoycottRakshaBandhan trend

Ahead of the release, the film was under scrutiny for clashing with Laal Singh Chaudhary. Talking about the clash, Sadia shared, "It's natural that it was a stressful situation. However, we were busy enjoying promoting our film that we didn't have time to think much about it. But we were of course scared and nervous about the result."

Talking about the wrath of the #Boycott trend that the film faced, the actress said, "I don't wish to talk about it. Let's just boycott the talk on that topic itself."

## On consciously taking up projects

On a parting note, the actress shared that she has not signed anything yet and is looking for good roles. Elaborating on the same, she shared, "All I want is to make my parents proud. I won't like it if they see me doing something and don't feel proud of me. Regardless of how *Shikara* and *Raksha Bandhan* performed, I can guarantee that my family was satisfied to see it."

# The biggest stars are most humble and grounded: Zayn Ibad Khan

Team Absolute | Mumbai

**E**ven as for many years there has been a discussion on the difference between an actor and a star, 'Aashiqana' actor Zayn Ibad Khan does not believe that there is a difference between the two and shares his perspective about nepotism in the industry.

"I don't believe in this phenomenon. I think the one who does his work truthfully and gives his heart and soul and everything to his work is a star. And the biggest stars are always the most humble and grounded because they have been through a journey that makes them like that. I believe the one who is down-to-earth even after huge success, is the real star," he says.

While the opportunities are plenty, so is the competition in the industry right now. This is probably the reason why the actor and star difference is not that prominent. Also, OTT has changed the game for many.

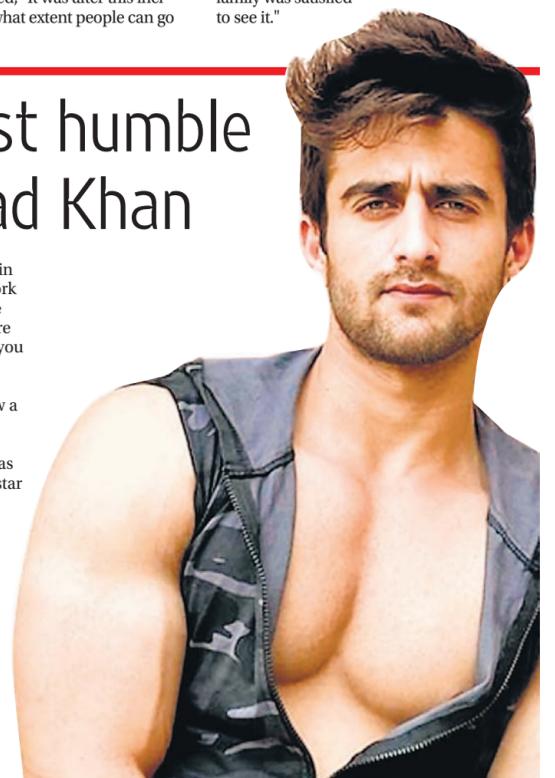
The whole discussion around how knowing someone in showbiz helps one get through good projects is a never-ending debate, the actor said.

"In fact there are some really bad viruses in the industry and they never let outsiders work in the industry. If they think you are the one who has the potential, they will try to capture you and your forthcoming work by making you fall for their exclusive contracts," shares the 'Ishq Mein Marjawan 2' fame.

"I have not fallen into this trap, but I know a lot of people who got entangled leading to their talent wastage," he claimed.

"I think that it is okay for someone who has links and sources in the industry or maybe star kids might be considered first for any part. But the one who has that talent will stay because this industry is not owned by anyone. If you do good, things will eventually fall into place no matter who you are, a star kid or a nobody like me," he adds.

"Ab raja ka beta raja nahi banega, ab raja wahi banega jo haqdaar hoga' (Today, a king's son no longer has the birthright to become a king; it's only the deserving who become the king). This 'Super 30' dialogue explains the new reality the best," he concludes.



# Rithvik Dhanjani wishes EX-girlfriend Asha Negi on her birthday

Team Absolute | Mumbai

**A**sha Negi, who rose to prominence with the show *Pavitra Rishta*, celebrated her birthday on August 23. For a long time, the actress was dating her co-star from the show, Rithvik Dhanjani, but the couple split up. There appears to be no ill will between the two actors, as Rithvik shared a sweet post on social media wishing her a happy birthday.

Famed for *Pyaar Kii Ye Ek Kahaani* Rithvik Dhanjani wrote a touching letter to his ex-girlfriend Asha Negi. The small-screen heartthrob took to social media to wish the birthday girl a happy birthday. He shared two stunning photos of Asha, where she can be seen flashing her million-dollar smile and striking a pose for the camera.

In the caption, the actor sent wishes to Asha and called her 'Gods child'.

"Happiest birthday gods child!!! Bappa Teri har khwahish har din puri kare...you have the magic of spreading love where ever you go negi...may you keep shining and may you keep making this world a better place just by being in it...Lots of love negi!!"

Fans have flooded the comments section with messages, expressing their delight at seeing Rithvik share a post for Asha. One user stated

"Aww!! Finally the Most Awaited one!! You are a Sweetheart Rithvik. A True Gem" while another commented, "Wishing for you both to reunite." While working on the sets of *Pavitra Rishta*, Rithvik and Asha fell in love. After dating each other for seven years, they called it quits in 2020. The news of their breakup surprised fans because they were one of the most popular couples on television.



Working with Pankaj Tripathi is like being in acting school: **Khushboo**

Team Absolute | Mumbai

**A**ctress Khushboo Atre, who plays the wife of Pankaj Tripathi's character Madhav Mishra in the web series *Criminal Justice: Adhura Sach*, reveals what it was like to work with her co-star in the third season and her role in it.

She shares: "In the last season, they were newlyweds and now people will get to see what happens after some time of marriage. Pankaj ji is a very simple man. He is very easy and accommodating to work with. Also, the chemistry we have built together on screen comes very naturally. Hence, it looks very effortless on screen as well. He is an academy in himself."

The actress who worked in *Raazi*, *Illegal - Justice*, *Out of Order* and others, reveals how her character Ratna will evolve in the third season.

"I think honesty is the biggest value while preparing for any character. Ratna is very real and honest so I try to achieve that."

Giving insight about the show, she states, "It is going to be Madhav Mishra's toughest cast ever. This season, the show gets bigger and better as the witty lawyer tackles one of the toughest cases of his career as he has a face off with a steel-gritted Assistant Public Prosecutor Lekha, played by Shweta Basu Prasad. It was a very fruitful experience. All the co-actors are so amazing at what they do and the vibe on set was very homely."

While talking about on her upcoming projects, she shares: "I shot for a feature film in UK this month, which will come next year. Then, there are few short films in the pipeline and one other project is set to go on floors. Apart from that I'm doing theatres and plays regularly."



Aishwarya Sharma