

absolute india



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PUBLISHED SIMULTANEOUSLY FROM BHOPAL, MUMBAI AND NEW DELHI

NATION > 02
68% of defence budget allocated for procuring indigenous...



HOLLYWOOD > 06
Holly Madison won't testify in Harvey Weinstein case...



SPORTS > 07
Denmark Open: Saina bows out, Lakshya, Satwik-Chirag ...

KHARGE ELECTED NEW CONGRESS PRESIDENT

OUTGOING CONGRESS PRESIDENT SONIA GANDHI ON WEDNESDAY CONGRATULATED VETERAN LEADER MALLIKARJUN KHARGE ON WINNING THE PARTY PRESIDENTIAL POLLS WITH A HUGE MARGIN.



Team Absolute | New Delhi

Mallikarjun Kharge was on Wednesday elected as the new Congress President after he received 7,897 votes, while his rival Shashi Tharoor managed to secure only 1,072. Although the counting of votes has ended, official results are yet to be announced. A total of 416 votes were declared invalid. Kharge's supporters broke out in dance and burst crackers outside the AICC headquarters here. He is likely to take charge next week a day after Diwali (October 23). For the first in over two decades, the Congress will get a non-Gandhi President.

MISTRY REJECTS TEAM THAROOR'S 'MALPRACTICE' ALLEGATION

New Delhi: Congress central election authority chairman Madhusudan Mistry has rejected the allegation levelled by team Shashi Tharoor regarding the party presidential poll, and said there was no basis of the complaint as there was no specific allegation. He said on Wednesday that they have prepared a detailed reply on their allegations and said the letter should not have been leaked to the media. There were only two complaints about two ballot boxes during the counting, he said.



NEW CONGRESS PRESIDENT WILL DECIDE MY ROLE: RAHUL

Kurmoal: Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Wednesday said that he will report to the new Congress president who will decide his role in the party. He told reporters at Adoni during Bharat Jodo Yatra that the Congress president will be the final authority and he will decide how the party is going to move forward. "He will decide what will be my role and how I am to be deployed," the Congress MP said before the announcement of the result of the AICC presidential election. He declined to answer queries on the role of the president, saying the new president would comment on it. "As far as the Congress party is concerned, the president will be the final authority. We will have a new Congress president who will decide how the Congress party moves forward," Rahul said. "Mr Mallikarjun Kharge and Mr Shashi Tharoor are both people with experience and understanding. Whoever gets elected they do not need advice from me. They have experience and understanding and they will decide what to do," he added. To another query, Rahul said he would report to the Congress president. "Obviously, in the Congress party the president is the supreme authority and every Congress member reports to that person."

Revival of Congress has begun: Tharoor

New Delhi: Runner-up in the Congress presidential poll, Shashi Tharoor on Wednesday thanked his supporters, and said that the elections will galvanise the party and its revival has begun. "I have always expressed the view that these elections, irrespective of the outcome, must ultimately strengthen the party. It gives me immense personal satisfaction that this has clearly been the case. Our democratic contest has galvanised

vibrancy at all levels and has prompted a healthy and constructive discussion on change, which I believe will serve the party in good stead in the future," he wrote in a letter. He thanked his volunteer team of party colleagues "for their amazing efforts against impossible odds to keep our campaign going and congratulated the Chief Election Authority, Madhusudan Mistry, and his colleagues for their efforts to make this possible."

Kashmir a 'separate country' in Class Seven exam in Bihar govt school



Team Absolute | Patna

A question paper in a Bihar government school termed Kashmir as a "separate country" triggering a political war in the state. The question was asked to the students of Class 7 last week in the minority dominant Araria, Purnea and Kishanganj districts, and came to the fore after the BJP took it up. The Number 1 question of the English paper had five fill-in-the-blank sub-questions. The question asked was, "What are the people of the following countries called? One is done for you." The question had five options on China, Nepal, England, 'Kashmir' and India. Reacting to this, the BJP attacked the Nitish Kumar government. Sanjay Jaiswal slammed JD(U)-BJP combine and said that they are the supporters of Popular Front of India (PFI). "I have posted my comment on Facebook on Tuesday and removed it later on to respect the law of India government," he said. The officials of Bihar believe that Kashmir is a separate country just like China, Nepal, England and India," Jaiswal said. "Thinking and ideology of Nitish Kumar has become similar to that of Sharjeel Imam. He is desperate to become prime minister of the country and is misleading the children of Class 7 with anti-national questions. The Bihar government will soon ask questions on the PFI agenda of

Minister orders inquiry

Patna: After the question paper row in Seemanchal, Bihar education minister Chandrasheker Yadav has ordered an inquiry into the issue and has asked the district magistrate of Kishanganj to submit the inquiry report. The minister admitted that it was a mistake by the concerned official and there was no justification for it. The question was asked in three districts of Seemanchal region including Kishanganj, Araria and Purnea. "We have initiated an inquiry into the matter and asked the district magistrate to investigate and find out who set such a question," Singh said. "We will take action against that person. Kashmir is an integral part of our country," he said.

2047 and its officers will ask the people to avoid highlighting the issue," Jaiswal said. "This question was asked in Purnea, Araria and Kishanganj districts. I am leaving this question to the people of Bihar to decide where this government is heading," he said.

RUPEE TOUCHES RECORD LOW OF 83.18, CLOSED AT 82.74 AGAINST USD

New Delhi: The rupee touched a historic low of 83.18 against the dollar briefly during intra-day trading, before it closed at 82.74 on Wednesday. However, the rupee's close of 82.74 was lower than Tuesday's close of 82.45 against the dollar. Earlier in the day, rupee had opened at 82.37 but later fell to a record low of 83.18 against the dollar. Analysts have attributed rupee's fall to growing inflation concerns across the globe which has strengthened the dollar, more so due to expectations of hike in key rates by major central banks the world over. With the UK facing a 40-year high inflation, market watchers are speculating that the Bank of England may hike rates to curb rising prices. Falling rupee has been a concern and Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, when asked about the dip, said last week that she saw it more as a case of dollar strengthening rather than rupee falling.



NEW OMICRON SUB-VARIANTS

GOVERNMENT IS MONITORING KEY DATA

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Cases of coronavirus infection are dipping in India but at least five new sub-variants of the Omicron variant have been detected in different states over the past few days. So far, severe disease has not been reported due to these sub-variants, "but many times the behaviour of the virus is not known, so it is important to be careful," said top sources in the Health Ministry. The ministry is monitoring the rate of hospitalisation, ICU care need, and deaths. A meeting was held yesterday with different departments that monitor these data. The sub-variants -BF.7, BQ.1, XBB, and some combinations - have been reported from Gujarat, Maharashtra and Karnataka so far. In China, where the pandemic began, new sub-variants have led to recent increase in Covid, said a ministry source. Cases across China are triggered by BF.7. The World Health Organization had given out a warning against the highly infectious sub-variant. It forecasts this sub-variant to become a new dominant strain of the virus.



India saw a single-day rise of 1,946 coronavirus infections, while the active cases declined to 25,968, according to government data updated on Wednesday. The number of Covid-related deaths climbed to 5,28,923 with 10 fatalities, which include six from the past few days reported today by the Kerala government. Of the four new fatalities, two are from Maharashtra and one each from Haryana and West Bengal. The daily positivity rate was recorded at 0.75 per cent, while the weekly positivity rate was 1.01 per cent, the health ministry said.

HEAVY RAIN TO LASH K'TAKA FOR 5 DAYS, IMD ISSUES YELLOW ALERT

Bengaluru: The India Meteorological Department (IMD) said in a forecast on Tuesday that heavy rain will lash Karnataka for the next five days and issued a yellow alert for several districts. According to the forecast, Bengaluru will also receive heavy downpour in the coming two days. Chamarajanagara, Chikkamagaluru, Hassan, Kodagu, Bengaluru Rural, Chitradurga, Hassan, Shivamogga, Tumakuru and Mandya districts will receive heavy rain on Wednesday, the IMD said. Meanwhile, the yellow alert has been issued for the districts of Dakshina Kannada, Uttara Kannada, Udupi, Chamarajanagar, Kodagu, Shivamogga, Belagavi, Haveri, Bagalkot, Kalaburagi, Koppal and Ballary. This year, Bengaluru received a record rainfall of 1,706 mm - breaking all prior records. In 2017, the state capital had recorded 1,696 mm of rainfall.

PUTIN IMPOSES MARTIAL LAW IN FORMER UKRAINIAN REGIONS

Moscow | Agencies

Martial law has been imposed in the four regions that recently voted to become part of Russia amid the conflict with Ukraine. Russian President Vladimir Putin announced the decision on Wednesday, RT reported. The Donetsk and Lugansk People's Republics, as well as Kherson and Zaporozhye regions, already had martial law in place when they became part of Russia, Putin said. So, the decision provides the legal basis for it to remain in place under Russian sovereignty, he said during a meeting of the National Security Council. The document signed by Putin introduces martial law starting midnight on Thursday. It also orders various parts of the Russian government to submit corresponding action plans within three days, RT reported. In a separate decree signed on Wednesday, the Russian President ordered a state of mid-level response in several other parts of the country bordering Ukraine. These include the Crimean Republic, the city of Sevastopol, as well as Krasnodar, Belgorod, Bryansk, Voronezh, Kursk and Rostov regions. This is a special regime that gives officials additional authority to ensure security and rapid reaction to any emergencies, RT reported. People in the four former Ukrainian regions voted in referendums last month to ask Moscow to accept them as part of Russia.

Watch partial solar eclipse via astro night sky tourism in Jaipur

A partial solar eclipse with 41 per cent visibility will be seen on October 25, this year. While this is a solar eclipse, people in Jaipur will be lucky to witness it as the Sun sets in the west. After this date, such a phenomenon will be seen only on March 20, 2034, confirmed officials.

Archana Sharma | Jaipur

The Rajasthan government's department of science and technology is organising an event under 'Astro night sky tourism' under which sky gazers will be able to watch the partial solar eclipse on October 25 using glasses in the presence of experts. The event will be organised at the Surya Mandir from 4.30 p.m. to 5.30 p.m., officials told correspondent adding, "There shall be experts present on the occasion to demonstrate and guide the sky gazers to use technology while watching the eclipse.



"While you watch the eclipse using solar eclipse viewing glasses, experts will demonstrate and guide you to use and watch the eclipse," they added. For a continuous observation, a telescope will be used to project the eclipse on screen. The entire

process can be witnessed for one hour until the Sun sets, the officials said. Notably, Rajasthan has become the first state in India to announce the introduction of night sky astro tourism in all 33 districts of the state. Bikaner House situated in New Delhi will also become the hub of Night Sky Astro Tourism where a telescope will be installed soon, as per the officials. Mugdha Singa, outgoing secretary, dept of science and technology confirmed that permission has been granted for purchase of 38 telescopes, 33 for all districts in state, four in Jaipur and one in Delhi.

LABOUR PARTY APPOINTS ITS FIRST TURBAN-WEARING SIKH TO HOUSE OF LORDS

LONDON | Agencies

India-born Kuldip Singh Sahota has become the first turban-wearing Labour peer and the only Sikh on the Labour benches in the House of Lords. Sahota, 71, who has served as Councillor at Telford and Wrekin council since 2001 for 21 years, was nominated by Labour Party leader Sir Keir Starmer and will thus be addressed as Lord Sahota. Sahota was on former UK PM Boris Johnson's resignation honours list for his public service. In the UK, peers are appointed by the monarch on the advice of the Prime Minister to serve for their life. "Kuldip becomes the first-ever dastar-wearing Sikh on the Labour benches in the



House of Lords and will serve as a role model for Sikhs across the community," said Neena Gill, Chair of Sikhs for Labour, a group that promotes shared values of the Labour Party and the Sikh community. He has also served as chair of the West Midlands Labour Party Regional Board and has stood as Labour candidate for police and crime Commissioner. Sahota was born in Garhdiwala, in Punjab's Hoshiarpur and moved to the UK in 1966 to join his father. He is married with two grown-up sons and two grandchildren, all of whom live in Telford.



68% OF DEFENCE BUDGET ALLOCATED FOR PROCURING INDIGENOUS EQUIPMENT: PM

Gandhinagar | Agencies

PM Narendra Modi on Wednesday assured the new generation entrepreneurs in the defence equipment world that the 'Made in India' products will get priority in defence procurement. Sixty-eight per cent of the defence budget has been earmarked for indigenous products, he added.

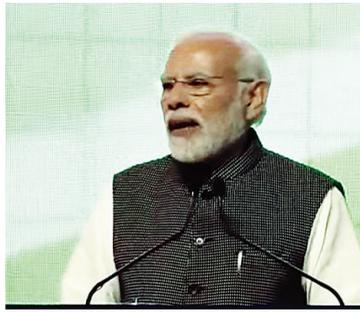
While inaugurating the defExpo-2022 here, the Prime Minister also launched the Indian Military Airworthiness Procedures (IMAP), HTT-40, Indian Defence Mart and defence Space Msn besides virtually laying the foundation stone for DEESA Air field.

He said the country was once a net importer of defence equipment, but over the last eight years, defence manufactured in India is in demand across the world, and the exports have grown eight times. It has touched USD 1.59 billion, and the country targets to achieve USD 5 billion-mark in next five years.

Citing the success of Brahmos missile, Prime Minister Modi said it is placed in one of the best technology missile categories and many countries have evinced interest in buying it.

All three defence wings and indigenous companies' innovations are putting nation on global armament nation. INS Vikrant aircraft carrier, Lightweight Helicopter 'Prachand' and tanks and indigenous combat guns are pride of India, he said.

"In the coming years, Space Diplomacy is going to take India to a new height as our satellites will be sharing real time access with 60 developing coun-



tries. Maritime Security is a global priority and India has taken initiative in maritime security in the Indian Ocean region, in which 46 friendly countries are working on it," he said.

Some 450 Memoranda of Understandings and agreements are going to be signed during these four days of DefExpo-2022.

The Prime Minister, without naming the Congress, said, "Earlier pigeons were released, now Cheetah are now released, this is the difference of the government."

He added in the past years, "our majority budget was going into importing defence equipment, now time has changed. All three defence wings have made a list of 411 equipment which will be purchased from domestic manufacturers, only select items will now be imported," he added.

PM LIKELY TO INAUGURATE AIRPORT & POWER PLANT NEXT WEEK

Itanagar | Prime Minister Narendra Modi is likely to visit Arunachal Pradesh next week and inaugurate the greenfield airport in Itanagar and a 600 MW Kameng hydro electric power project, officials said on Wednesday.

A senior official of the state government said that the Prime Minister is likely to visit Arunachal Pradesh on October 27 or 28, though his tour schedule has not been finalised yet.

"The PM would visit Tripura and Arunachal Pradesh next week to inaugurate and lay foundation stones for several projects," said the official who didn't wish to be named.

He said that Chief Minister Pema Khandu recently met the Prime Minister in New Delhi and requested him to inaugurate the Donyi Polo greenfield airport in Itanagar, and the 600 MW capacity Kameng hydro electric power project.

With a 2,300 metre runway, the greenfield airport would be the first in Arunachal Pradesh to have the capacity to land big aircraft.

The AAI undertook the Rs 650 crore project to develop the airport to boost air connectivity in the mountainous state. An Airbus A320 of IndiGo successfully completed a test landing at the Donyi Polo airport on Tuesday.

Delhi govt bans storage, sale, bursting of crackers; 6 months jail for violation

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Amid rising air pollution and ahead of Diwali, the Delhi government on Wednesday announced a ban on the storage, sale, and bursting of crackers in the capital.

The bursting of firecrackers on Diwali will attract jail term up to six months and a fine of Rs 200 in the city.

Addressing a press meet, Delhi Environment Minister Gopal Rai said: "This time also, the storage, sale and use of firecrackers have been banned." The matter was also raised during the meeting with the Centre, he added.

Noting that Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal had prepared a 15-point winter action plan to prevent the increasing pollution in winter, he said that pollution levels increase around Diwali, as firecrackers are used along with diyas.

"If the order is violated in Delhi, then action will be taken under Section 9B, a fine of Rs 5,000 and imprisonment of 3 years. Under IPC 268, there is a Rs 200 fine and six months jail if someone bursts firecrackers," the minister said.



Underlining the reported cases of bursting firecrackers last year, he informed that total 408 teams have been formed for this year - 210 teams of Delhi Police, 165 of the Forest Department, and 33 teams of the Delhi Pollution Control Committee. He said 188 cases of violations have been

detected and 2,917 kg firecrackers seized till October 16. Meanwhile, Rai also said that a public awareness campaign, "Diye Jalao Patakhe Nahi", will be launched on October 21.

The Delhi government will light 51,000 diyas at Central Park in Connaught Place on Friday.

Flood alert in Vellore, people asked to vacate low lying areas

Chennai | Agencies

A flood alert has been sounded in 20 villages of Vellore in Tamil Nadu, after 844 cusecs of water was discharged from the Mordhana dam to the river Koundinya, a tributary of Palar.

Vellore district collector Kumarvel Pandian issued the alert.

In the wake of heavy rains pounding Vellore district and catchment areas like Chittoor, Ponnai, Pallar, Goudanya mahanadhi and Malattar for the past few days, water was discharged from Mordhana dam in Gudiyatham.

The district administration has already constituted special teams, including officers from the Water Resources



Department, fire fighters, officials of the revenue, police, health and electricity departments.

According to officials in the Vellore district collectorate, these teams will monitor and inspect low lying areas, ponds, water bodies, tanks and shutters of all tanks to ensure that there is no breach. The teams will also conduct a close monitoring

of the water bodies in the district with special emphasis on rivers and tributaries that had overflowed in the past.

Notably, Katpadi, Gudiyatham and Kannamangalam in Vellore have received heavy rains for the past few days.

The officials with the local bodies, including panchayats and municipalities are also in the team of officials.

St Stephen's College case: SC refuses to stay Delhi HC order; admissions now on basis of CUET

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Supreme Court on Wednesday refused to stay the Delhi High Court order, which asked St. Stephen's College to issue a fresh prospectus giving 100 per cent weightage to Common University Entrance Test (CUET) 2022 score for non-minority candidates applying to undergraduate courses, affirming no interviews for the admissions.

A bench comprising Justices Ajay Rastogi and C.T. Ravikumar declined to stay the high court order. "We find no reason to stay the judgment", said the top court.

Therefore, St Stephen's College cannot hold interviews for general category students and it would have to give admissions for the undergraduate courses only on the basis of CUET scores.

On September 12, the Delhi High Court asked St. Stephen's College to issue a fresh prospectus giving 100 per cent weightage to CUET 2022 score for non-minority candidates applying to undergraduate courses, affirming no interviews for the admissions.



The St. Stephen's College moved the apex court challenging the high court order.

St Stephen's College moved the high court against the Delhi University order to withdraw its admission prospectus and allow admissions

through the Common University Entrance Test (CUET).

In the order, the high court had directed the college to withdraw its admission prospectus and issue a public notice declaring the amended admission procedure, saying the aided minority educational institutions that are affiliated with the university must follow its norms and procedures. It was also said, in the ruling that the DU cannot insist upon a single merit list for admission of candidates belonging to the Christian community regardless of any denomination, sub-sex, or sub-activities within the community.

The prospectus issued by St. Stephen's for admissions 2022-23 stated that students from all categories, including general/unreserved seats, will be admitted on the basis of an 85:15 ratio. While 85 per cent of weightage would be given to the CUET, 15 per cent weightage would be given to interviews.

However, this decision went against the Delhi University guidelines issued for admissions to the new academic session which led to a row between Delhi University and St Stephen's College

MBS Jewellers Director sent to judicial custody in money laundering case

Hyderabad | Agencies

A city court on Wednesday sent MBS Jewellers director Suresh Gupta to judicial custody till November 5 in a money laundering case.

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) had arrested Gupta late on Tuesday night after searches at the Musaddilal and MBS Jewellers.

The ED officials recorded his statement and he was produced before a court dealing with ED cases at Nampally Court Complex. The magistrate sent him to judicial custody for 14 days. He was later shifted to Chanchalguda Central Jail.

The ED conducted searches after almost 30 hours and found several alleged irregularities and violations in the purchase of gold from Metals Minerals Trading Corporation (MMTC) Ltd, a public sector enterprise. According to sources, diamonds and gold worth Rs 100 crore seized



from three MBS showrooms were not accounted for. Officials also reportedly seized documents of properties valued at Rs 50 crore acquired under benami names by Gupta and Anurag

Gupta, Directors of MBS Jewellers.

A case for violating the PMLA and FEMA was registered against them. They allegedly diverted loans secured from banks to other companies and

benami accounts to purchase land in Telangana and Andhra Pradesh.

MBS Jewellers allegedly committed the same offence in 2014 too. It allegedly received gold on credit from MMTC Ltd to maintain forex positions without paying an additional five per cent tax. The central agency also reportedly identified fake invoices and vouchers pertaining to jewellery sales to customers.

The ED investigated their bank transactions and reportedly found that they deposited demonetized currency in banks and exchanged them for new notes.

In August last year, the ED had attached properties worth Rs 363.51 crore of MBS Jewellers, MBS Impex and other group entities under the PMLA. The action was taken on the basis of an FIR registered by the ACB and the CBI against Suresh Gupta and his companies for defrauding MMTC. The CBI had filed the charge sheet in 2014.

Speeding car kills two cyclists in Gurugram

Gurugram | Agencies

Two men were killed after a speeding Skoda Rapid car ramed into the cycles they were riding on the Golf Course Road here, the police said.

Umesh, the son of one of the deceased persons, Dharampal (70), stated in his complaint that he along with his father were travelling on two different cycles on the Gold Course Road on Tuesday evening.

"When we reached Sector-42 Rapid Metro station, a speeding car hit my father from behind. My father skidded along with the car for about 50 metres. The car then turned 360-degree and hit another cyclist, Sahib Khan (35), who was on the link road," Umesh told the police.



Thereafter, the three occupants of the car came out and rushed the victims to a nearby hospital. The car was being driven by Naveen, a resident of Wazirabad village, the complainant said.

"At the hospital, Sahib Khan was declared brought dead while my father died during treatment. The acci-

dent took place due to the rash driving of the car driver," he added. "We have all the details of the car driver who has been identified.

Necessary action will be taken against him as per the law. A case of rash driving has been registered at the Sushant Lok police station," SHO Deepak Kumar said.

Gurugram: Body-in-suitcase mystery cracked, man held for killing wife

Gurugram | Agencies

A gruesome murder in which a woman was killed and stuffed into a suitcase has been solved with the arrest of her husband.

The accused had allegedly killed his wife, stuffed her body into a suitcase and dumped it in the bushes near IFFCO Chowk on the Delhi-Jaipur Expressway.

The incident came to light on Monday evening, when the police recovered the woman's naked body inside a suitcase with injury marks on her body.

The police throughout the investigation questioned her husband, Rahul and after sustained interrogation, he confessed to the crime.

He told the police that he along with his wife Priyanka



used to live in a rented accommodation in Sahraul village of Gurugram. The duo had a love marriage a year and a half ago.

"The accused confessed that his wife used to demand a TV and sometimes a mobile phone while his salary is Rs 12,000 only. He failed to fulfil her demands

and in a fit of rage on the intervening night of 16/17 October he strangled her and dumped the body near IFFCO Chowk and fled the spot," Preet Pal Sangwan, ACP (crime) said.

The police have registered a case of murder under relevant sections of the IPC at the Sector-17/18 police station.

Teen raped by Instagram friend in Lucknow

Lucknow | Agencies

A 15-year-old girl was raped inside the high-security Lohia Park here by a man whom she befriended on a social networking site Instagram. The girl, a student of class 7, has been admitted to Jhalkari Bai hospital after her condition deteriorated.

The accused, Vidya Sagar Kushwaha, 20, was arrested from Kanpur, late on Tuesday night.

Police have registered an FIR and are waiting for the survivor to mentally stabilise to be able record her statement.

The police traced his location using electronic surveillance. He works in a textile factory in Gujarat while his family lives in Kanpur.

In the FIR lodged with the Gombi Nagar police station, the victim's father said that his daughter met the accused on a social networking site and became friends. The man called her and asked her to meet him at



Lohia Park.

"When my daughter reached the park, the accused took her to an isolated place, raped her and left her in a critical state. She somehow managed to reach home and was sitting in a corner in a state of shock, when her mother enquired about the reason. She narrated her ordeal and the mother found out that she was bleeding," he added.

The family then informed the

police and took the girl to the Civil Hospital from where she was referred to the Jhalkari Bai hospital. The family also provided the phone number to the police, from which the accused had called up the survivor.

Deputy Commissioner of Police, East Zone, Prachi Singh said an FIR under the charges of rape and the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act has been lodged.

She said, "The girl's father is a cart puller while her mother works as domestic help. The teenage girl left home to meet the accused without informing her parents about it."

Chief Medical Superintendent, Jhalkari Bai Hospital, Ranjana Khare said that the minor is under observation. "Her physical condition has stabilised, but she is still in a state of mental shock," she said.

This is the third case of rape in the state capital in the past three days.

Earlier on Saturday night, a 16-year-old school girl was raped by two persons, including an auto-rickshaw driver. On Monday, police arrested the 21-year-old auto-rickshaw driver, Aakash Tiwari. The co-accused is still at large. On Sunday, a 52-year-old woman filed a complaint alleging that three staff members of an ashram raped her on October 4 under the influence of a narcotic substance. Investigation into the case is underway.



CM CHOUHAN CONVENES EMERGENCY MEETING ON LAW AND ORDER

INDORE ADM REMOVED IN CONNECTION WITH MISBEHAVING WITH DIVYANG

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan called an emergency meeting in the morning at the CM's residence on the law and order situation. CM Chouhan virtually received information from the officers on the incidents in Indore, Bhopal, Betul and Guna.

Chief Minister Chouhan inquired about the action taken so far against the culprits in the case of suicide by Vaishali Thakkar in Indore. Chouhan called it disgusting and painful. He directed to take strict action against the culprits. It was told that a reward has been announced against the culprits. Along with this, all the airports of the country have been informed by issuing lookout notices. Teams have been dispatched to different cities of the country in search of the culprits.

Considering the misbehaviour with a Divyang by ADM in Indore as very objectionable and unfortunate, Chief Minister directed to immediately remove ADM Shri Pawan Jain and



attach him to Bhopal. CM Chouhan said that misbehaviour with anyone in public hearing is objectionable. It is necessary for the officers to com-

municate with the general public with restraint and patience. There should be a positive attitude in solving problems.

Chief Minister Chouhan received information from the Collector and the Superintendent of Police on the rising thefts in Betul. Giving instructions to increase patrolling, CM Chouhan said that it is necessary to maintain a sense of security among the general public. Let the general public feel that the police is with them in every difficulty. In connection with the incident of a girl quitting her studies in Guna due to misconduct by a harasser, CM Chouhan directed to run a campaign against the miscreants. He said that every effort should be made to provide a fear-free atmosphere to the daughters. CM Chouhan said that extra sensitivity is necessary in such incidents related to daughters. Police should communicate continuously with the girls and their parents and develop a relationship of mutual trust.

Chief Minister Chouhan took information about the incident in Bhopal's New Market and directed to take necessary steps to ensure safe transportation in city buses.

After Hindi textbooks, Dhanvantari puja at MP's Medical Colleges

Team Absolute | Bhopal

All medical colleges in Madhya Pradesh will perform the puja of God Dhanvantari (Lord of health) on Dhanteras, which is part of the Diwali festival, state Medical Education Minister Vishwas Sarang said on Tuesday. Notably, the Hindi version of MBBS coursebooks was launched in Madhya Pradesh on Sunday.

Dhanteras will be celebrated with pomp in medical colleges in the state every year on the lines of the Ganapati festival, Mr Sarang said. He said the objective behind organising Dhanvantari puja in medical colleges is to make Madhya Pradesh a healthy state.

"By worshipping Bhagwan Dhanvantari, we pray for the good health of ours and others. On Dhanteras (which falls on October 22 this year), all medical colleges in the state will worship God Dhanvantari by organising a programme. All doctors, stu-



dents and attendants of patients will participate and pray for the good health of all," Sarang told reporters.

He said God Dhanvantari is an incarnation of Lord Vishnu according to Hindu beliefs.

Sarang said the festival of Dhanteras will be celebrated every year in medical colleges with pomp on the lines of the Ganapati festival.

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Sunday released three textbooks of

the first-year MBBS course in Hindi, a first in the country. The launch was part of an ambitious project of the Madhya Pradesh government to impart medical education in the Hindi language.

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan had remarked in a lighter vein that doctors may write 'Shri Hari' on top of prescription slips in place of Rx (a symbol derived from a Latin word) and then write the list of medicines etc in Hindi.

Denied Ambulance, Couple carry Stillborn In Bike Side Box

Team Absolute | Singrauli

In a disturbing incident that has emerged from Madhya Pradesh's Singrauli district, a still born was kept in the side-box of a bike after its grieving parents were allegedly denied an ambulance by the hospital.

With the dead baby in the box, the parents drove to the District Collector's office to plead for help.

When the parents were asked to show the baby, the father, Dinesh Bharti, opened the box and took out a bag. The mother, Meena Bharti, carefully pulled out the tiny body from the folds of the bag and unwrapped it.

The father's story exposed egregious callousness at the hospital in Singrauli where he had taken his wife for the delivery of their child.

Dinesh Bharti took his wife to the district hospital on Monday for her deliv-



ery.

The couple claims they were directed to a private clinic by the doctor who was to deliver their baby. At the clinic, they were allegedly asked for Rs 5,000.

"I told them I have only Rs 3,000, but they said come back with Rs 5,000," Dinesh Bharti told reporters. When they

returned the next day, he was asked to get a fresh parchi or slip to start the procedure all over, though he had submitted one already.

When they returned for the delivery, the clinic asked for an ultrasound, which revealed that the baby was dead.

The clinic allegedly sent them back to the district hospital to deliver their still born. The couple asked for an ambulance to take the baby back to their village but the hospital refused.

Dinesh Bharti placed the still born in the bike's side box and went with his wife and older child to the office of the District Collector for help.

The administration is inquiring into the couple's allegations of neglect.

"Whatever we have heard of this incident, we will gather facts and investigate. If there has been any lapse, we will take action," assured Rajeev Ranjan Meena, the district collector.

STALKED GIRL DROPS OUT OF SCHOOL IN GUNA; FIR LODGED

Guna: A girl in Madhya Pradesh's Guna left her studies midway after she was being harassed by a neighbour in Bude Balaji locality of the Guna district.

The victim's mother Saroj Kori pleaded for her daughter's safety in the District Collector's office. Saroj Kori said that her daughter was being harassed by one Shivam Mahour, who lives in her locality.

"Fed up with the act of the accused, my daughter has left her studies. I have also lodged a complaint in the Kotwali police station but no action was taken against the accused," Saroj said. Following this, Saroj submitted a letter to the collector and sought justice.

She stated in the complaint letter that the accused used to threaten her daughter of killing her and claimed that no one can do anything to him and he also had assaulted his family members, the complaint letter stated.

Superintendent of Police (SP) Pankaj Shrivastava said that acting on the complaint, the police registered an FIR against the accused. "Strict action would be taken against the accused. Besides, efforts were being made for the girl's admission in the school," he added.

Congress will get strengthened under Mallikarjun Kharge's leadership: Kamal Nath

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Madhya Pradesh Congress chief Kamal Nath and senior party leader Digvijaya Singh today congratulated Mallikarjun Kharge on getting elected as the new Congress president.

Kharge defeated Shashi Tharoor in an electoral contest, the sixth in the party's 137-year-old history.

Congratulating Kharge, former MP chief minister Kamal Nath said, "I am sure that his vast experience will benefit the Congress organisation a lot and under his able leadership the party will not only scale new heights, it will also get strengthened further."

Rajya Sabha member Digvijaya Singh also congratulated Kharge on getting elected as the Congress president through a democratic process.

The party will benefit from Kharge's rich experience, he said.



Congressmen in the state party office also celebrated Kharge's victory by distributing sweets.

Earlier in the day, Congress' central election authority chairman Madhusudan Mistry announced after the counting of votes that of the 9,385 votes polled in the Congress president poll, Kharge got 7,897 votes and Shashi Tharoor 1,072 votes, while 416 votes were declared invalid.

In TV actress Vaishali Takkar's suicide case, lookout circular against couple

Team Absolute | Bhopal

A lookout circular has been issued against a couple accused of abetting the suicide of noted TV actor Vaishali Takkar, Madhya Pradesh Home Minister Narottam Mishra said on Wednesday.

The accused - Rahul Navlani and his wife Disha Navlani, who lived in the neighbourhood of Takkar (29) in Indore, are on the run since she took the extreme step on Sunday, police said.

A reward of Rs 5,000 each has also been announced on the accused couple, Mishra told reporters in Bhopal.

Takkar, known for her role in serials like 'Sasural Simar



Ka', was found hanging from a ceiling fan with a stole in her house in Saibag Colony of Indore on Sunday, police earlier said. A five-page suicide note was found at the spot in

which Takkar named Rahul Navlani for harassing her, they had said.

Takkar's family members had also alleged that Rahul Navlani was troubling her since he came to know about her plans to get married.

"A lookout circular has been issued against the couple accused in Vaishali Takkar suicide case to prevent them from fleeing the country," Mishra said.

The police are also trying to contact Takkar's fiancé, who is currently in the United States, he said.

A case was registered against the accused couple under Indian Penal Code Section 306 (abetment of suicide), police said.

TWO DALIT MEN PARADED, HEADS SHAVED IN BHIND OVER DISPUTE

Bhopal: Two Dalit men were allegedly paraded and their heads shaved off in Madhya Pradesh's Bhind district on Tuesday, police said.

According to the police, the incident took place in Bhind's Daboha village where the victims, Santosh and Dharmendra Shakya, had a dispute with one Dilip Sharma about a month and a half ago. The clash left Sharma with serious injuries following which he lodged a complaint against the Shakya brothers who subsequently secured bail. Sharma's elder brother proposed that the dispute be settled amicably. A 'panchayat' meeting was held during which the two brothers were ordered to pay Rs 1.5 lakh to Sharma to cover his medical costs. But according to the cops, Sharma and his associates also shaved the heads of the two and paraded them in the village.



Open Campus Drive organized in Sant Hirdaram Girls College

Team Absolute | Bhopal

On 19th October 2022, Thursday, Training & Placement Cell of Sant Hirdaram Girls College, Bhopal had organized an open campus drive of Sutherland Company.

Dr. Dalima Parwani, Principal congratulated and said that the students should maintain their self-confidence and prepare from best of their abilities to face and crack the interviews.

Divyan Singh Bhadauria, HR Executive, Sutherland introduced the recruitment process and various rounds involved in it. She explained from her own life experiences that appropriate person should be selected for the job and stressed on the employment opportunities available to them in the current scenario. She informed that three rounds would be conducted for the entire process. Round 1 - Non-Voice Test, Round 2 - Group Discussion and Round 3 - Personal Interview. 60 students were a



part of this open campus drive conducted for the post of Customer Service Executive out of which 12 were selected. While elaborating about Sutherland she highlighted on topics like Artificial Intelligence, Digital Transformation and Campus Recruitment.

The Management wished good luck to the candidates and extended best compliments for future endeavors.

CM CHOUHAN PLANTS SAPLINGS WITH PADMA DR. ANIL PRAKASH JOSHI



Bhopal: Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has said that balance between growth and nature is necessary to leave a balanced life and a safe earth. As per the resolve of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, along with infrastructure development in the state, activities are being conducted on a large scale to protect the environment. Ankur Abhiyan, started for plantation, is the best example of public-participatory initiative in the field of environmental protection. Village level activities are being carried out in the state for cleanliness, water conservation, campaign against drug abuse, empowerment of daughters along with tree plantation. Chief Minister Chouhan was discussing with the media after planting saplings along with Padma Dr. Anil Prakash Joshi, who went on a cycle journey from the beach (Mumbai) to the Himalayas.

Cong reaching out to people with 'Gandhi Choupal' in MP

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Gandhi Choupal - the initiative of Madhya Pradesh Congress to revive the cadre is generating a massive response, especially in rural areas in the state.

To make it more popular, the party leaders, who are monitoring the initiative, have asked the top leadership whether former Congress president Rahul Gandhi can address at least one such 'choupal' during the Madhya Pradesh leg of his 'Bharat Jodo Yatra'.

Interestingly, the party has started an initiative to mobilise its ground level of cadre ahead of Assembly elections in November-December 2023, now party senior leaders have also started using the same platform to reach out to the people in their respective areas. Each party leader, including MLAs, has been tasked to organise at least 100 'Gandhi choupals' in their respective constituencies.

Madhya Pradesh Congress president Kamal Nath would also participate in one such 'choupal' in his



home district Chhindwara. A song on Gandhi choupal - composed and sung by a group of Betul based Adivasi artistes, is getting enormous response in social media.

Bhopendra Gupta, a senior Congress spokesperson, who is heading the initiative, told reporter that the party has appointed as many as 2,700 coordinators across the state to monitor the move.

Gupta said over 4,000 choupals have been organised so far and most of these have been held in the Vindhya region. Districts where the

highest number of choupals were organised so far, Satna tops the list, followed by Rewa and Singrauli. Districts, which are also big cities of Madhya Pradesh like Bhopal, Indore, Jabalpur and Ujjain have also gained speed up.

The party has set a target to organise at least 25,000 Gandhi Choupals till January 31 in across the state. Gupta, further claimed the initiative is getting more response from rural part of the state in compared to urban areas.

Women dancing to Bollywood songs at Mahakal temple sparks row

Team Absolute | Bhopal

A video in which two women can be seen dancing to Bollywood songs at Mahakaleshwar temple in Madhya Pradesh's Ujjain has stirred a row, prompting the state's home minister to order a probe into the matter.

The women had gone to offer prayers at Mahakaleshwar temple two days ago. They shot videos while dancing to Bollywood songs, and uploaded them on social media.

The temple management has demanded action against the women.

According to sources, the temple priests were "quite miffed" as videos were shot inside the sanctum sanctorum and other places of the temple.

Videos were shot on the tune of both Bollywood and Bhakti songs. One woman shot the video while performing 'jal abhishhek' in the sanctum sanctorum of the



Mahakal temple while another shot it while roaming around the temple premises.

Taking cognizance of the matter, Madhya Pradesh Home Minister Narottam Mishra has ordered an inquiry.

"I have instructed the Collector and the

Superintendent of Police to investigate the matter. Messing with religious beliefs in any way would not be tolerated," said Mishra.

The minister also said such activities hurt the sanctity of the temple, and people should refrain from doing them.



EDITOR'S SPECS

Bhupesh Baghel tops list of best CMs

Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel has been ranked as the CM facing least public anger in the quarterly tracker mapping anti-incumbency index across all layers of governance in the country. He is closely followed by Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal. Incidentally, among the states going to the polls over the next 12 months or so, most CMs have been ranked rather low on this scale, including the CMs of Himachal Pradesh, Karnataka, Telangana and Rajasthan. As per the survey, only 6 per cent of the respondents in Chhattisgarh are angry with Baghel, making it the lowest number across the country. Conversely, Baghel enjoys the highest pro-incumbency sentiment among all the Chief Ministers, as per the tracker. In the tracker conducted in the same period last year also, Baghel was among the best performing Chief Ministers, facing the least anger of the electorate. Kejriwal is second in the list with 8.3 per cent respondents angry with him, followed by Punjab CM Bhagwant Mann (9.7 per cent), Assam CM Himanta Biswa Sarma (12.2 per cent), and M.K. Stalin of Tamil Nadu (12.6 per cent). On the bottom of the list is Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot with as many as 35.4 per cent respondents in the state angry with him. Gehlot is preceded by Karnataka CM Basavaraj Bommai (33.1 per cent), Bihar CM Nitish Kumar (32 per cent), Haryana CM Manohar Lal Khattar (30.7 per cent) and Jharkhand CM Hemant Soren (29.8 per cent). While much has been talked about the Delhi model of governance under Kejriwal, not much has been said about how Chhattisgarh CM Baghel has been keeping the anti-incumbency sentiments at such low levels, even while maintaining a low profile, which political pundits call "under the radar". Baghel briefly made headlines recently when Chhattisgarh surprised all with the lowest unemployment rate in recent months.

CASTE HIERARCHY, RELIGIOUS DIVIDE ARE BJP'S OBJECTIVES: RAHUL GANDHI

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Wednesday alleged that the BJP has the objectives of maintaining caste hierarchy, ensuring that women remain subservient to men and dividing India along regional lines. The Congress MP was interacting with mediapersons at Adoni in Kurnool district during his Bharat Jodo Yatra. He alleged that Congress has got two-three objectives. "It's first objective is to maintain caste hierarchy and eventually kill the Constitution, second make sure women are always subservient to Indian men and third is to divide India along regional lines," he said. Rahul claimed that the views of Congress are diametrically opposed to BJP's objectives. "We want to protect the Constitution. We want to protect the rights of women and we bring communities and religions together. That is what Bharat Jodo Yatra is aimed at and it is doing this

successfully," he said. The Congress leader said people had started asking what is the need for violence hatred, why should we hate each other and why should we kill each other. These questions are being asked as a result of Yatra, he said. Alleging that the hatred and violence being spread in India and the country is being divided, he said that the Yatra's aim is to unite the country again and to stand up to the violence. "We are getting an opportunity to connect with people through Yatra. We are learning a lot," he said while evading a direct reply on why Congress was losing elections. Rahul Gandhi claimed that the Congress party represents every single Indian person. "It does not discriminate between caste, community, religion and state. It is everybody's party. We defend the rights of poor people, rights of farmers, labourers, medium businesses and we want to bring harmony to the nation. Unlike most parties,



Congress listens to people and has free and fair elections inside it. It has a culture of listening and carrying people along. Have ever heard of anybody publicly dissenting in BJP. Can you dissent in the YSR Congress or TDP. Dissent is not tolerated. These are dictatorships. Congress party is the only democratic and open minded party in the country," he said. Replying to another query, he alleged that BJP's policies complete-

ly destroyed the strengths of the Indian economy. "Job creation in our economy has always happened on the back of small and medium business and a strong agriculture sector. Demonetisation and GST have destroyed both the systems. For the first time in their lives, farmers are paying GST on farming inputs. Ask any small business, they will tell you about devastation. Lakhs of small businesses have gone out of business and this has crippled job creation," he said. The Congress MP also alleged that during the BJP rule there has been massive transfer of wealth from poor and middle class to a handful of rich people. "Third richest person in the world is an Indian. He is a close associate of the Prime Minister, a friend of the Prime Minister. Everybody knows how he became third richest. These people have access to the entire banking system while farmers can't access it. These people can have unlimited

debt. The entire economy is crippled. Lot of work has to be done to bring the economy back to life," he said. "The idea whether a strong or weak rupee is good or bad has many nuances. There are advantages of a strong rupee and there are disadvantages. Both those have to be taken into account," he said when asked about the falling value of Indian rupee against the dollar. Rahul said the Congress party's idea of GST was one unifying tax. He claimed that their vision of GST was a tax that would develop out of a conversation with the states. "The BJP imposed GST without a conversation with states. They have forced the GST. They have five different levels of GST. It is not there anywhere in the world. We are against the basic design of GST. We will bring GST, one simple tax after conversation with stakeholders. We are confident we can give a GST that will actually simplify people's lives," he said.

INDIANS MOST UNHAPPY WITH STATE GOVTS, NOT SO MUCH WITH CENTRE

Anti-incumbency sentiments are higher against state governments compared to the Centre, according to the Anger Index, a survey conducted by CVoter opinion poll on behalf of IANS. India's federal structure and the continuously deteriorating relations between several state governments and the BJP-led Centre have been a point of debate since 2014. While the Prime Minister has himself said that the federal structure has emerged as a "model for the world" post the Covid-19 debacle, the political chasms between the two sides continue to grow. And the electorate clearly understands this. According to the Anger Index, 46.6 per cent respondents are unhappy with their state governance, while 34.8 per cent are angry with the Central government. Meanwhile, 24.6 per cent of the surveyed are most miffed with their

Chief Ministers, while only 17.9 per cent are unhappy with Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Interestingly, more Indians are unhappy with Central government machinations (11.7 per cent) than the state (10.7 per cent). Indians clearly trust the Cabinet of Ministers more than the state leadership. A lack of bonhomie between the state and Central governments came into the fore during the first wave of the pandemic. The Centre blamed the state machinery for not being robust enough, the state governments, in turn, called out the Centre on not being given enough notice before imposing the lockdown. Similar discord was witnessed when the migrant exodus happened in the middle of the pandemic. The state governments were not equipped to handle the load that was returning home which resulted in several being stranded

midway and many dying due to Covid. Nevertheless, in the past few years (since 2014, to be precise), Centre-state relations have been politicised, for various reasons. Since 2014, non-NDA parties have been less than willing to play along with Centre reforms. Some of the more vocal ones like West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee and former Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray have historically not gotten along with Centre. But it's clear from these numbers that partisan divides between the NDA and non-NDA ruled states are starting to overshadow the vision of cooperative federalism promoted in the first half of Modi's term in office. At least, 35.4 per cent respondents were unhappy with Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot followed by Karnataka's Basavaraj Bommai (33.1 per cent) and Bihar'

Nitish Kumar (32.0 per cent). Delhiites are the happiest lot with their local governance as respondents have said they were the least angry with the Arvind Kejriwal-led AAP government (28.0 per cent). Uttar Pradesh, however, recorded 41.8 per cent saying that they are unhappy with the Yogi Adityanath government. Respondents seem angrier with the Chief Ministers compared to their local MLAs or those in grassroots governance. Interestingly the best performing Chief Ministers are grappling with the non-performance of their sitting MLAs. Almost all the top rated Chief Ministers have their sitting MLAs rated in really poor numbers by the electorate. Similarly, the states where

also the states where the ratings of sitting BJP MPs are rock bottom. Comparatively, Himachal Pradesh and Chhattisgarh are least angry with the central government and the Prime Minister. Himachal, which will go to the polls next month, recorded 63 per cent who are unhappy with the state governance, while Chhattisgarh at 6 per cent is least angry with their Chief Minister. Punjab, Tamil Nadu and Kerala are most unhappy with Central government at 48.4 per cent, 47.7 per cent and 46.6 per cent, respectively. The anti-BJP and anti-Modi sentiments in the southern states could be the reason behind these states' unhappiness with the Centre.

international

IN A SNUB TO INDIA, US CONGRESS CLEARS PAK'S F-16 PACKAGE

Islamabad | Agencies

Ignoring India's objections to Pakistan's F-16 package, the US Congress cleared a proposed foreign military sale valued at \$450 million for maintenance and sustenance services of the fighter jet, a media report said Wednesday. According to the Geo News report, Congress didn't raise any objection to the proposed sale thus clearing the way for the package for Pakistan which was approved last month by President Joe Biden's administration. As per the rules, clearance was required from the US House of Representatives for the programme to proceed. The F-16 package made headlines after Indian criticism of the deal, triggering a strong response from Islamabad which urged New Delhi to refrain from commenting on Pakistan-US ties, Geo News reported. US Secretary of State Antony Blinken also defended the military sale, saying the package was for the



maintenance of Pakistan's existing fleet. "These are not new planes, new systems, new weapons. It's sustaining what they have," he said in a joint press conference with India's External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar. "Pakistan's programme bolsters its capability to deal with terrorist threats emanating from Pakistan or from the region. It's in no one's interests that those threats be able to go forward with impunity, and so this capability that Pakistan has had can benefit all of us in dealing with terrorism," Blinken had said. He added that the US had "responsibility and an obligation to whomever we provide military

equipment to make sure that it's maintained and sustained. That's our obligation." When asked to elaborate on the terrorism threats and the need for F-16s to counter them, Blinken said: "There are clear terrorism threats that continue to emanate from Pakistan itself as well as from neighbouring countries. "And whether it is TTP (Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan) that may be targeting Pakistan, whether it's IS, whether it's Al Qaeda, I think the threats are clear, well-known, and we all have an interest in making sure that we have the means to deal with them. And that's what this is about."

N.Korea fires artillery shots as 'serious warning' to Seoul

Seoul | Agencies

North Korea's military on Wednesday said that it fired artillery shots overnight into maritime buffer zones near the inter-Korean border as a "serious warning" over Seoul's ongoing military drills. In a statement, a spokesman for the General Staff of the Korean People's Army (KPA) said the North's military launched a "threatening and warning" fire as its "powerful military countermeasure" against South Korea's military exercises, reports Yonhap News Agency. The spokesperson also called on the South to immediately stop "reckless and inciting provocations" that have raised military tensions on the peninsula, according to the carried by Pyongyang's official Korean Central News Agency. The shots came hours after the North launched more than 250 artillery shells into waters off its east and west coast. The KPA official said the move came in response to a series of "military provocative acts by ene-



mies", citing the Hoguk military drills under way in the South. South Korea kicked off its annual Hoguk field training on Monday to hone defence capabilities to counter North Korea's nuclear and missile threats. The drills are to run until October 28. Last week, North Korea fired hundreds of artillery shots into the maritime buffer zones in the East and Yellow seas that were set under a 2018 inter-Korean agreement on reducing military tensions. South Korea called the North's provocations a clear violation of the 2018 inter-Korean military accord.

UK HOME SECY, MPS RAISE PITCH FOR FTA AT DIWALI EVENT

London: Led by Home Secretary Suella Braverman, British MPs have raised their pitch for the India-UK Free Trade agreement at a Diwali event organised by the India Global Forum (IGF) in London. "Building closer India-UK trade and security partnerships is of huge value to both our nations," Braverman tweeted on Tuesday.



"There is an economic imperative for our countries to work together, which is why we are so eager to secure a trade deal," the Indian-origin minister, who was in the eye of the storm over her controversial remarks about Indians forming the largest group of visa over-stayers, said. Braverman's outburst prompted India to say both the nations should "honour" the "understanding" with regards to migration mobility. Media reports also said that the deal, targeted to be signed before Diwali, was on the verge of collapse following India's fury over comments on immigrants made by Braverman, whose Indian-origin parents emigrated to the UK in the 1960s. "Our trade deal with India will bring our two nations even closer, building on the over 24 billion pounds of goods and services we exchanged last year," junior Trade Minister Greg Hands said in a tweet after attending the event, which saw participation by senior parliamentarians, business leaders and diplomats. According to official government data, India-UK bilateral trade currently stands at around 24.3 billion pounds a year and the aim is for that to be at least doubled by 2030. "We in the @UKLabour long & hope we will get a trade deal with India & we hope the visa obstacles will be overcome," David Lammy, Labour MP for Tottenham, wrote in a tweet. "The Indian government is seeking additional work and study visas for its residents, as well as a new visa modelled after an agreement with Australia and New Zealand that permits people under the age of 35 to live in the UK for up to three years. "I want to see our trading partnership with India go from strength to strength; @UKLabour is determined to make progress on the trade deal with India as a pro-business and pro-trade party," Labour MP Nick Thomas-Symonds said. Former Prime Minister Boris Johnson had set the Diwali deadline for the trade deal with India, but new Trade Secretary Kemi Badenoch recently said that her country was no longer working to that deadline.

Record low water levels in US reduce hydropower output

Washington: For the first time since 1967, water levels in the Colorado River system are at a record low and the megadrought in the US southwest have reduced hydropower output significantly, according to experts. Low water levels at reservoirs across the states of Colorado, New Mexico, Wyoming and Utah mean a reduction in hydro-electric production, which dropped 20 per cent for water year 2022, Xinhua news agency reported citing the Bureau of Reclamation (BOR) as saying. Although hydropower production is down about 30 per cent overall since 2000, it has plummeted a full 20 per cent since 2021 for the 2022 year ending September 30, a BOR official recently said. "The outlook is likely for a pretty low generation years," Nick Williams, BOR upper Colorado River Basin power manager, told The Colorado Sun on Tuesday. According to the report, Lake Powell's Glen Canyon Dam, which produces most of the Colorado River systems hydropower, is down about 78 per cent. Compared to a pre-drought average from 1988 to 1999, the most recent water year hydroelectric generation is down about 43 per cent, Williams said.

Russian commander admits 'tense' situation in Ukraine's Kherson region

Moscow/Kiev | Agencies

Sergei Surovkin, the new unified Russian battlefield commander in Ukraine, has admitted that the situation in the southern Ukrainian city of Kherson is "tense". Kherson was the first big city captured by the Russians just days into the war in February and it is also the only regional capital to fall to Moscow. Addressing the media on Tuesday, the commander said the Ukrainian side does not abandon attempts to attack the positions of Russian troops, reports Xinhua news agency. He further claimed that the Ukrainian troops using HIMARS rockets were hitting the city's infrastructure and housing. "As a whole the situation in the special military operation zone can be described as tense... The Russian army will above all ensure the safe evacuation of the population (of Kherson)," Surovkin added.



The commander's concerns were echoed by Kirill Stremousov, a Russia-appointed official in Kherson, the BBC reported. In a social media post, he warned Kherson residents that "in the very near

future" Ukrainian troops would launch an assault on the city. "Please take my words seriously, I'm talking about evacuating as quickly as possible," he said, adding that people on the Dnieper river's west bank were most at risk. Last month, Russian President Vladimir Putin formally declared the annexation of Luhansk, Donetsk, Zaporizhzhia and Kherson at a major event at the Red Square in Moscow following sham referendums held in the Ukrainian regions. Russia's declaration has been rejected internationally. In Kherson, Ukrainian forces have been steadily retaking nearby territory for the past few weeks, said the BBC report. They have pushed as far as 30 kmsouth along the Dnieper, threatening to trap Russian troops. Kherson's pre-war population was nearly 300,000, but Ukrainian officials estimate that about half that number have already fled the city.



FOLLOW GANDHIJI'S VALUES FOR ALL -INCLUSIVITY, RIGHTS, EQUALITY: UN CHIEF

Team Absolute | Mumbai

UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres on Wednesday called for practising the values of Mahatma Gandhi - the Father of the Nation - to achieve all-inclusivity, protecting the rights of all sections in the richly diverse country to make it stronger.

He said that the country's voice can gain credibility on the world stage from a strong commitment to inclusivity, respect for human rights and dignity of all people, especially the most vulnerable, the freedom of journalists, activists, academics and students, by condemning hate-speech and ensuring the continued independence of India's judiciary.

Addressing students at the IIT-Bombay, Guterres pointed out that as an elected Human Rights Council member, India had a responsibility to shape up global human rights, protect and promote the rights of all individuals, including the minorities, and nurture and strengthen it in its diverse and pluralistic society.

Here, Gandhiji's principles would help by recognising the enormous values and contributions of the multi-cultural, multi-religious and multi-ethnic societies, and unequivocal condemnation of hate-speech, he said.

Guterres urged Indians to be vigilant and step up investments in inclusive, pluralistic, diverse communities and societies besides doing much more to uphold women's rights and gender equality, in this country and all over the world.



Termining the issue of women's rights and gender equality as a "moral imperative", he said that it will also serve as a multiplier for prosperity and sustainability, as no society can achieve full potential without equal rights for all women, men, girls, and boys.

Guterres highlighted how India is among the biggest contributors of military and police personnel to various UN Missions, including the first all-women peace-keeping mission, and over 200,000 Indian security personnel have served in 49 similar missions in the past 75 years.

Dwelling on how the UN is also working to

achieve gender parity, but could not succeed to have a woman Secretary General, though half the women at the top management levels in the world-body are women, heading the department of political affairs, and mission heads in Iraq and Afghanistan.

However, he frowned at violence against women as "a big cancer" which must be tackled in every nation with an emergency plan, besides how women activists and politicians are targets on social media with a "terrible campaign" run there.

Guterres confessed that we live in "a male-dominated world and a male-dominated cul-

ture", and hence gender parity is all the more necessary at the top levels so that decisions are taken in such a manner "which makes gender equality a downstream phenomenon".

Earlier on Wednesday, Guterres arrived to a warm reception in Mumbai and later attended a commemoration event for the victims of the 26/11 terror strikes at the Hotel Taj Mahal Palace, as part of his 3-day visit to India.

GUTERRES PAYS HOMAGE TO VICTIMS OF 26/11 TERROR STRIKES

Mumbai: UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres visited the Hotel Taj Mahal Palace in south Mumbai and paid homage to the victims killed in the dastardly terror strikes of November 26, 2008, here on Wednesday.

Guterres said he was deeply moved to visit Mumbai where "one of the most barbaric terrorist acts in history" took place, claiming 166 lives. "Terrorism is absolute evil... No reasons, pretexts, causes, grievances can justify terror. It has no room in today's world," said Guterres. In his tributes to the victims, Guterres said they are the 'heroes of our world', and expressed his heartfelt condolences to the families, friends, survivors, the people of India and other countries who lost their lives in the 26/11 terror strikes.

SC panel orders probe into Sameer Wankhede's charges against NCB boss



Team Absolute | Mumbai

The National Commission of Scheduled Castes (NCSC) has ordered a probe into the allegations of harassment levelled against Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) Deputy Director-General Gyaneshwar Singh, by former Mumbai NCB chief Sameer D. Wankhede. Wankhede met the NCSC Chairman to discuss his case in detail, and the panel has found that "there appears to be discrimination and harassment" in the matter. It has also directed that "no further action in the matter be taken till the pendency of the case" with the NCSC.

The developments came shortly after a NCB internal inquiry found lapses in the investigations into the high-

profile cruiser party drugs case of October 2021 in which among the celebrities arrested was Aryan Khan, son of Bollywood mega-star Shah Rukh Khan.

The NCB probe has pointed out the need of suspicion at around 7-8 of its own officers involved in the raids led by Wankhede - the then NCB Mumbai Zonal Director - conducted on the cruise ship Cordelia.

While Aryan Khan and some others got a clean chit, Wankhede moved the NCSC on Monday (October 17) with his complaint alleging harassment and atrocities perpetrated by Singh.

The NCSC has directed Singh to submit full facts, documents, the report of the internal inquiry within 15 days failing which it could launch legal proceedings in the civil courts.

Huge hike in airfare from Delhi, Mumbai to Patna

Patna | Agencies

Ahead of the festive season, the airfare from Delhi, Mumbai and Kolkata to Patna has registered a more than three-fold rise over the off-peak season rates.

The price of the Delhi to Patna flight on October 22 was Rs 14,000 while the airfare from Mumbai to Patna reached Rs 20,000. The current fare from these two places to Patna is more than the rate from Delhi to Sharjah, which is Rs 11,000. Delhi to Bangkok current ticket costs Rs 10,500, and Delhi to Singapore is priced at Rs 13,000. The air ticket from Kolkata to Patna was hiked to Rs 10,500.

The airline companies during the peak season were taking advantage of the flexible fare. The experts believe that the spike may continue.

The air tickets of other cities like Hyderabad, Chennai, Bengaluru, Chandigarh, Jaipur, Ahmedabad, Surat and others have also increased. One of the biggest reasons for



the spikes in airfare is the unavailability of train tickets. The waiting lists in trains are very high and even Tatkal tickets are not available.

Meanwhile, Northern railway has decided to run 32 additional mail and express trains bound to Patna, Muzaffarpur, Darbhanga, Jay Nagar, Kishanganj, Katihar, Barauni (Begusarai) to provide some relief to the passengers. The officials are claiming to run a total of 211 trains till Chhatti Puja. The trains will start from Jammu, Amritsar, Ferozepur, Delhi, Bhiwani and Pathankot.

Andheri Assembly Bypoll BJP'S WITHDRAWAL A STRATEGIC MOVE WITH EYE ON MUMBAI CIVIC POLLS

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The BJP's last-minute decision to pull out of the high-decibel Andheri (east) Assembly bypoll is seen as a strategic step factoring in the "sympathy factor" potentially in favour of the Uddhav Thackeray-led faction's nominee Rutuja Latke, say political observers.

The BJP leadership must have weighed the odds and concluded that the risk to pit Murji Patel against the wife of late MLA Ramesh Latke is not worth taking for a single bypoll as the main battle is shaping up for the BMC polls, they said.

"If Rutuja Latke wins, it will come as a morale booster for Uddhav Thackeray. Her victory will mean that voters' sympathy is with Thackeray after the split in the party. The BJP seems wanted to deny Thackeray any chance to claim a high moral ground," they said.

Moreover, the Eknath Shinde faction doesn't have much presence in Andheri whereas the Uddhav Thackeray-led faction has loyal Marathi voters.

The withdrawal of Patel's nomination handed a virtual walkover to Rutuja Latke though voting will be held on November 3 as six other candidates have not withdrawn their nominations.

The bypoll is the first electoral contest after the vertical split in Shiv Sena whose election symbol - bow and arrow - was frozen by the Election Commission. In its interim order, the EC had allotted separate symbols and nomenclatures to the factions led by Thackeray and Maharashtra Chief Minister Eknath Shinde.

Ahead of the bypoll, Rutuja Latke had to move the Bombay High Court to make Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) accept her resignation to enable her to file her nomi-

nation. Interestingly, MNS leader Raj Thackeray had appealed to Deputy chief minister and BJP leader Devendra Fadnis to not field the party candidate. Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) chief Sharad Pawar had also advised the BJP to ensure that the bypoll is unopposed as per the "political tradition" in Maharashtra.

"Raj Thackeray's letter to Fadnis was a strategic move and is as per the wishes of BJP. Raj Thackeray will not do anything which will embarrass him later. This indicates that BJP and MNS are working closely together for the upcoming BMC elections," the observers feel.

In Maharashtra, electoral contests are generally avoided if bypolls necessitated by the death of sitting MLAs or MPs are contested by their kin. "The BJP had previously also not contested some of the bypolls," state BJP chief Chandrashekar Bawankule had said while announcing Patel's

withdrawal from the fray. The NCP and Shiv Sena MP Sanjay Raut had said the BJP might have decided to withdraw as they have sensed a defeat in the bypoll.

"The BJP had conducted a survey which predicted that their candidate (Murji Patel) would lose the bypoll by at least 45,000 votes. This is the reason they decided to withdraw," Raut had said and added that events like Raj Thackeray writing to Fadnis were all "scripted".

Andheri East assembly constituency is one of the 26 constituencies located in the Mumbai Suburban district. It is a part of the Mumbai North West Lok Sabha constituency.

Late Ramesh Latke snatched this seat from Congress in 2014. In the 2019 elections, LMr atke got 62,680 votes. BJP's Murji Patel, who contested as an independent, got 45,680 votes. Congress's Amin Kutty came third with 27,925 votes.

Actor-businessman Sachin Joshi gets clean chit in money laundering case

Team Absolute | Mumbai

A special court here on Tuesday discharged actor-businessman Sachin Joshi from a money laundering case registered against him by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) in connection with city-based firm Omkar Realtors and Developers.

Special judge M G Deshpande, designated to hear cases under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), discharged Joshi from the case.

Joshi was arrested in February 2021 and was later granted interim bail by the Supreme Court on medical grounds. In March 2022, the special court granted Joshi bail on merits noting that prima facie no money laundering case was made out against him. Joshi's counsel Aabad Ponda and advocate Subhash Jadhav of Parinam Law Associates had argued that



there was no evidence of alleged money laundering as claimed by the ED.

Also read: No money-laundering case made out against actor-producer Sachin Joshi, says PMLA court The probe agency had alleged that a loan of Rs 410 crore was fraudulently acquired by Surana Developers Wadala, LLP, a sister concern of Omkar

Realtors and Developers Private Limited (ORDPL), by falsely increasing the number of slum dwellers and FSI (floor space index) for a redevelopment project. Out of Rs 410 crore, an amount of Rs 330 crore was laundered into the sale building of Omkar Group and an amount of around Rs 80 crore was laundered through

Joshi and his Viiking Group of companies under the guise of services and investment, the agency had alleged. Joshi is the son of JMJ group promoter and businessman J M Joshi, who is into gutka and pan masala manufacturing and hospitality business. Joshi has acted in

"Jackpot" and a few other films and produced some movies as well. The special court also discharged two other accused in the case the chairman of Omkar Realtors and Developers, Kamal Kishore Gupta (62), its managing director Babulal Varma (51). The duo is currently in judicial custody.

Rs 5,000 as Diwali 'gift' to MSRTC's 87,000 employees

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The state-owned Maharashtra State Road Transport Corporation (MSRTC) on Wednesday announced a Rs 5,000 Diwali "bhet" or bonus to its employees after the government gave it a Rs 45 crore financial aid.

The MSRTC has around 87,000 employees, including officers, and all of them will get a "Diwali bhet" or gift of Rs 5,000.

"The state government has given Rs 45 crore financial aid," the MSRTC stated in a release. "Since the last two years, the ST has been facing a financial crisis due to a decrease in the number of passengers due to the coronavirus epidemic. Even in such a situation, this year, the corporation will give Rs 5,000 Diwali gift to the officers and employees," the release quoted MSRTC vice chairman and



Managing Director, Shekhar Channe, as saying.

The amount will be credited to the bank accounts of employees soon.

MSRTC is one of the biggest state-owned public transport undertakings in the country with a fleet of over 16,000 buses. The loss-making corporation was ferrying over 65 lakh passengers daily before the outbreak of the pandemic.

Weed worth Rs 39.5 crore seized at cargo terminal

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The Directorate Revenue of Intelligence (DRI) on Tuesday seized high quality hydroponic weed worth Rs 39.5 crore at courier terminal Air Cargo complex in Mumbai which arrived from USA.

According to DRI, the officers of DRI, Mumbai Zonal Unit, intercepted two USA-origin courier consignments imported at Courier Terminal in Air Cargo Complex, Mumbai. The examination resulted in the seizure of 86.5 kg of high-quality hydroponic weed concealed in the consignments. The consignments were mis-declared as 'Outdoor Concrete Firepit' and were destined for



Bhiwandi, Maharashtra," said DRI in a statement.

Officials said that, the seizure was a result of multi-agency coordination with stakeholders. Further investigation and follow-up searches were carried out at the related addresses of a warehouse and office premises

linked to the importer.

These searches resulted in the crackdown on the drug cartel resulting in the arrest of two Indian nationals from Mumbai. The high-quality hydroponic weed (ganja) is valued at Rs 39.5 crores in the illicit market. Further investigation is in progress.

Lumpy skin disease widespread among cattle: Bombay HC, asks Maharashtra govt response on plea

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The Bombay High Court on Wednesday noted that lumpy skin disease is widespread among the cattle and sought the Maharashtra government's response to a plea for framing a policy or standard operating procedure.

A division bench of Justices S V Gangapurwala and R N Laddha asked the government to file its affidavit and posted the matter for hearing on November 17.

"It (lumpy skin disease) is a widespread disease spreading across the state. You (the government) will have to come up with a policy. We know it will take some time," the bench said.

The bench was hearing a petition filed by Raju Shetti, founder of Swabhiman Shetkari Sanghatana, stating that the lumpy skin disease was on the rise but the state government was doing nothing except issu-



ing circulars on the issue.

The plea said the government

ought to take steps as provided under the provisions of the Prevention and

Control of Infectious and Contagious Diseases in Animals Act.

As per the PIL, farmers are already facing hardships due to heavy rainfall and now with their livestock facing the threat of lumpy skin disease, they would require economic support from the government.

"The government has to carry out mass vaccination of cattle to control the spread of the lumpy skin disease," the petition said. It sought a compensation of Rs 1.5 lakh for every cow or buffalo that dies of the lumpy skin disease.

Maharashtra Animal Husbandry Minister Radhakrishna Vikhe Patil had earlier this month said the immediate action by the government and rapid vaccination kept the number of cattle that died of the lumpy skin disease to just 2,100.

Officials had said that a massive vaccination drive was underway against the viral infection.



HOLLY MADISON WON'T TESTIFY IN HARVEY WEINSTEIN CASE

Los Angeles | Agencies

Former reality star Holly Madison, who earlier dated and lived with 'Playboy' founder Hugh Hefner, won't be called to testify during Harvey Weinstein's Los Angeles rape trial, a judge has ruled. The defence wanted Madison to take the stand in order to undermine testimony from actress Ashley Matthau, one of the uncharged supporting witnesses. Matthau, who's accusing Weinstein of sexual battery, claims the former mogul masturbated on her at his hotel in 2003 in Puerto Rico, where they were shooting Miramax's 'Dirty Dancing' sequel, 'Havana Nights'. According to a website, Madison is close friends with Matthau. The defence intended to question her about the two partying together at the Playboy Mansion to prove that Matthau wasn't a "young, sexually inexperienced naif" who was unfamiliar with "the ways of Hollywood". "They want to portray her as this innocent girl but they don't want me to ask about all the fun times she spent frolicking in the grotto at Hugh Hefner's mansion with Playboy bunnies," Weinstein's lawyer Mark Werksman said about Matthau. "Holly Madison had been down on her luck financially and used Hugh Hefner as a meal ticket," he said, noting their age difference. The website adds that when Werksman insisted he should be "entitled" to ask about Matthau's relationship with Madison, deputy district attorney Marlene Martinez said "who she partied with has nothing to do with her being assaulted... whatever friendship she has with Holly Madison has nothing to do with her being assaulted." Judge Lisa B. Lench agreed with the prosecution, ruling against Madison's testimony.

Los Angeles | Agencies

Rapper Kanye West continues to attract controversies as the daughter of George Floyd, whose death in police custody triggered global protests against racism, is now planning to file a \$250 million lawsuit against the rapper over controversial remarks he made about the manner of Floyd's death. Attorneys for Floyd's family have issued a cease-and-desist letter to the rapper also known as Ye and have claimed that his daughter has been "retraumatized" over his comments. They have also suggested that Kanye is "creating an unsafe and unhealthy environment for her". Roxie Washington, who is acting on behalf of her child and the sole beneficiary of Floyd's estate, is suing Kanye, his business partners and associates for "harassment, misappropriation, defamation, and the infliction of emotional distress". They are seeking \$250 million in damages. "Kanye West knowingly made blatantly false statements about George Floyd's death to promote his brands, and increase marketing value and revenue for himself, his business partners, and associates," Floyd's legal representation claimed.

"During the podcast interview, Kanye West stated malicious falsehoods about George Floyd to profit from Floyd's horrendous death and his family's trauma," the statement added. The website further states that the full interview has since been removed from YouTube and RevoltTV, but clips of the rapper's rant continue to be viewed and shared on social media platforms by millions across the world.

"The interests of the child are a priority. George Floyd's daughter is being retraumatized by Kanye West's comments and he's creating an unsafe and unhealthy environment for her," the lawyers' statement said. Floyd died after being arrested by Derek Chauvin and three other officers on May 25, 2020. He had been handcuffed and was lying face down on the street as officer Chauvin knelt on his neck for nine minutes.

George Floyd's daughter to file \$250 million lawsuit against Kanye West



Brad Pitt, Margot Robbie-starrer to release on Christmas

Los Angeles | Agencies

Cinephiles in the US are going to have a gala time at the movie during Christmas time. Filmmaker Damien Chazelle's Hollywood epic 'Babylon', which stars Brad Pitt and Margot Robbie as leads, has set its US release date on December 23.

Paramount initially planned to debut the movie in select theatres on December 25 before expanding it nationwide on January 6. Sources close to 'Babylon' suggest the earlier release date points to the studio's confidence in the film, which carries a \$78 million production budget.

On its new nationwide release date, 'Babylon' is playing on the big screen alongside 'Puss in Boots: The Last Wish' and Whitney Houston biopic 'I Wanna Dance With Somebody'. James Cameron's highly-anticipated 'Avatar' sequel, which opens on December 16, is also expected to loom large at multiplexes during the holidays.

Set in the late 1920s, 'Babylon' puts the spotlight on Brad Pitt, who plays a bona fide leading man, and Margot Robbie, who portrays an up-and-coming starlet, against the backdrop of an entertainment business in flux.

Chazelle previously revealed that 'Babylon' is inspired by films like Federico Fellini's 'La Dolce Vita', Robert Altman's 'Nashville' that managed, through a handful of characters, to convey a society changing."

Along with Robbie and Pitt, the cast includes Diego Calva, Tobey Maguire, Max Minghella, Spike Jonze, Jean Smart, Flea, Samara Weaving, Olivia Wilde, Jovan Adepo and Li Jun Li.



Susan Sarandon, Leah Remini among potential witnesses in Paul Haggis trial

Los Angeles | Agencies

A jury has been selected in the rape trial against the Oscar-winning director Paul Haggis. The trial is set to begin with opening remarks in New York City. Haggis, the director of 'Crash' and screenwriter of 'Million Dollar Baby', has been accused of raping a publicist named Haleigh Brest after a movie premiere nearly a decade ago. Brest's lawsuit was filed in 2017 in the wake of the #MeToo movement, which led to an influx of sexual assault allegations against prominent men. Haggis has claimed the encounter, which took place in 2013, was consensual and maintains the rape charge came in retaliation for his decision to leave and then criticise the Church of Scientology. Prior to the trial, Brest's attorneys sought to block Haggis from arguing that Scientology was orchestrating the allegations in retaliation, saying that Brest and other witnesses have no connection to the church. According to a website, they also argued that pursuing that line of defence will distract the jury from the particulars of Brest's allegations. But in September, Judge Sabrina Kraus ruled that Haggis will be able to use that argument. The focus on the controversial religion, however, wasn't nearly as pronounced as it was at the jury selection for the rape trial for 'That '70s Show' actor Danny Masterson, which is currently underway in Los Angeles. They further states that attorneys revealed that Leah Remini, the 'King of Queens' star



who left Scientology and became an outspoken critic, and Oscar-winner Susan Sarandon are among the defendant's potential witnesses who could be called to testify. Remini has previously suggested that Scientology was behind the sexual assault claims against Haggis. After the jurors were selected, the attorneys and the judge deliberated a few key points regarding the line of questioning toward the potential jurors, as well as Scientology's place in the trial.

'CREED 3' TRAILER PITS MICHAEL JORDAN AGAINST JONATHAN MAJORS IN THE RING

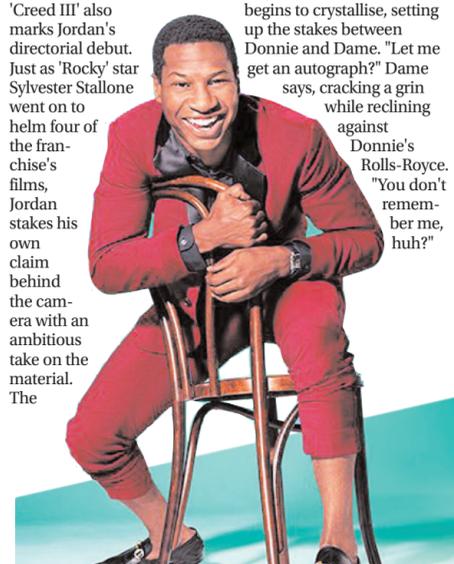
Los Angeles | Agencies

This time it is going to be Michael B. Jordan versus Jonathan Majors in 'Creed III', as the first trailer for the movie suggests. MGM and United Artists Releasing debuted footage from the upcoming boxing sequel. Jordan returns as Adonis 'Donnie' Creed, son of Rocky Balboa's fiercest opponent, Apollo Creed. But the actor is not just throwing punches at Majors' antagonist Damian 'Dame' Anderson in the film, 'Creed III' also marks Jordan's directorial debut. Just as 'Rocky' star Sylvester Stallone went on to helm four of the franchise's films, Jordan stakes his own claim behind the camera with an ambitious take on the material. The

footage begins with Donnie Creed on top of the world -- a champion boxer on the cover of 'Forbes' magazine, with his wife Bianca (Tessa Thompson), a success in her own right as singer, and their daughter Amara (newcomer Mila Davis-Kent) beside them. "I spent the last seven years of my life living out my wildest dreams," Donnie says. "Bianca. Rocky. My dad. I stood on their shoulders."

According to a website, it's then that the mystery of Majors' role in all of this begins to crystallise, setting up the stakes between Donnie and Dame. "Let me get an autograph?" Dame says, cracking a grin while reclining against

Donnie's Rolls-Royce. "You don't remember me, huh?"



ABSOLUTE PIC OF THE DAY



Maddie Ziegler



Denmark Open: Saina bows out, Lakshya, Satwik-Chirag steps ahead to round of 16

Los Angeles | Agencies

Odense (Denmark) Commonwealth Games 2022 gold medallists Lakshya Sen, Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty advanced to the mens singles and mens doubles round of 16, respectively, at the Denmark Open 2022 but their compatriot Saina Nehwal crashed out of the tournament.

Lakshya Sen, who climbed to a career-best world No 8 in the BWF world rankings last week, beat Tokyo Olympics bronze-medallist Anthony Sinisuka Ginting of Indonesia 21-16, 21-12 in his men's singles campaign opener.

The 21-year old Lakshya set the tone early on and took full advantage as

Ginting, the world No 6, struggled to find his range on the day. Despite a late hiccup, the Indian badminton player took the opening game.

He was more ruthless in the second game and it reflected on the scoreline as he extended his head-to-head record against Ginting to 3-0.

Lakshya will either face compatriot HS Prannoy or China's Zhao Jun Peng in the next round.

On the other hand, World championships bronze-medallists Chirag Shetty and Satwiksairaj Rankireddy played some attacking badminton to beat South Korea's Kang Min Hyuk and Seo Seung Jae 21-15, 21-19.

The Indian pair, seeded seventh, will now face a

tough encounter against reigning All England Open champions Muhammad Fikri and Bagas Maulana of Indonesia in the next round.

Meanwhile, former world No 1 Saina Nehwal bowed out after a hard-fought 17-21, 21-19, 11-21 loss to Zhang Yi Man of China.

After losing the first game, Saina fought back in the second and had as many as four game points before finally forcing a decider. However, the London 2012 Olympic medallist ran out of steam as Zhang Yi Man took back control in the third game and completed a fine victory. This is the third straight tournament where Saina has been knocked out in the opening round.

ISL 2022-23: East Bengal and NorthEast United FC compete for the first point

Guwahati | Agencies

Matchweek 3 of the Hero Indian Super League (ISL) 2022-23 will kick off with NorthEast United FC taking on East Bengal FC on Thursday at the Indira Gandhi Athletic Stadium in Guwahati.

Both sides have played two games but are yet to win a point. They currently find themselves at the bottom of the table.

NorthEast United FC sit in last place because of an inferior goal difference to East Bengal FC, but will take inspiration from the fact that the visitors have never beaten them in the Hero ISL.

Their loss to Hyderabad FC in Matchweek 2, however, was a fairly one-sided tie, with the defending Hero ISL champions displaying their authority in a 3-0 win. NorthEast United FC are still searching for their first goal of the campaign.

East Bengal FC have also collapsed towards the end of games, and Head Coach Stephen Constantine suggested in his pre-match conference that the team needs to start putting two halves together. East Bengal FC were beaten 3-1 by Kerala Blasters in their first game of the season. Their second game against FC



Goa was a bit closer, where they lost 2-1 after Edu Bedia scored a stoppage-time free-kick. East Bengal FC are yet to score a goal from open play.

East Bengal FC have also collapsed towards the end of games, and Head Coach Stephen Constantine suggested in his pre-match conference that the team needs to start putting two halves together.

England's Topley ruled out of T20 World Cup

Perth | Agencies

Reece Topley, England left-arm fast bowler has been ruled out of the ICC Men's T20 World Cup on Wednesday with ligament damage to his left ankle. Tymal Mills has been promoted from a travelling reserve to the main squad as a like-to-like replacement of Topley, which has been approved by the Event Technical Committee.

A statement from the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) further said Topley sustained the injury before England's tournament warm-up fixture on Monday against Pakistan in Brisbane whilst taking part in a fielding drill before the match.

His run in the tournament was ended by a thigh injury and Topley was named as his replacement in the 15-man



England squad. Mills has huge experience of playing in Australian conditions, having represented Brisbane Heat, Hobart Hurricanes and Perth

Scorchers in the Big Bash League (BBL) though he hasn't played any competitive cricket match after August 10 due to toe injury.

FAZEL ATRACHALI: IT'S IMPORTANT FOR ME TO GUIDE THE YOUNGSTERS IN OUR TEAM

Bengaluru | Purni

Paltan pulled off a dramatic 26-25 victory against Telugu Titans in the vivo Pro Kabaddi League Season 9 at the Shree Kanteerava Indoor Stadium in Bengaluru on Tuesday.

Speaking about the match, Purni Paltan Captain Fazel Atrachali said, "We have a young team so it's my responsibility to guide the players on the mat. The last five minutes of the match was very tricky for us and I wanted to control every move we were making during that time. Therefore, I kept giving tips to each of my players. If we made one mistake, we could've been on the wrong end of the result." Atrachali also expressed, "It was a very tough game for us. We made a lot of mistakes, but we won in the end, which is the most important thing. And we are happy to clinch the win and take 5 points. It doesn't matter who is the star performer in our team as long as Purni Paltan is winning."



West Indies defeated Zimbabwe by 31 runs

Hobart | Agencies

Fast bowling duo of Alzarri Joseph and Jason Holder shared seven wickets between themselves as two-time champions West Indies defeated Zimbabwe by 31 runs in a must-win Group B match in the first round of ICC Men's T20 World Cup at Bellerive Oval on Wednesday to stay alive in the pursuit of making the Super 12 stage.

After making 153/7 in their 20 overs, West Indies didn't have a good start to their defence as Zimbabwe's stand-in captain Regis Chakabva hit three fours in an 18-run opening over off Kyle Mayers. Joseph, who took career-best figures of 4/14, struck with his second ball as Chakabva chopped on to his stumps. Wesley Madhevere hit two fours and a six in his 19-ball 27. Holder, who took 3/12, got



Madhevere out when he sliced to backward point timing his catch to perfection. Despite some resistance from Ryan Burl (17) and Luke Jongwe (29), Zimbabwe crashed to 122

all out in 18.2 overs, giving the West Indies a much-needed victory in the tournament, as seen from the jubilant celebrations after the win was confirmed in their favour.

Brief scores

West Indies 153/7 in 20 overs (Johnson Charles 45, Rovman Powell 28; Sikandar Raza 3/19, Blessing Muzarabani 2/38) beat Zimbabwe 122 all out in 18.2 overs (Luke Jongwe 29, Wesley Madhevere 27; Alzarri Joseph 4/16, Jason Holder 3/12) by 31 runs

Asia Cup venue may impact Pakistan's visit to India for 2023 ODI World Cup: PCB

Lahore | Agencies

PCB indicated that the possibility of moving the venue for next year's Asia Cup could "impact" Pakistan's visit to India for the 2023 Men's ODI World Cup, as well as future ICC events in India in the 2024-31 cycle.

PCB further said that the comments made by Asian Cricket Council (ACC) president and BCCI secretary Jay Shah on Tuesday over shifting next year's Asia Cup to a neutral venue as India would not travel to Pakistan were noted with "surprise and disappointment".

"After having presided over the ACC meeting during which Pakistan was awarded the ACC Asia Cup with an overwhelming support and response from the ACC Board Members, Mr Shah's statement of shifting of the ACC Asia Cup has clearly been made unilaterally,"



said the PCB in an official statement.

The 2023 edition of the Asia Cup, to be held in the 50-over format, had been allotted to Pakistan as per the ICC's Future Tours Programme (FTP).

"The overall impact of such statements have the potential to split the Asian and international cricketing communities, and can impact Pakistan's visit to India for the ICC Cricket World Cup 2023 and future ICC Events in India in the 2024-2031 cycle," added the PCB.

"Neutral venue for the Asia Cup is not unprecedented and we have decided that we will not travel to Pakistan," Shah, who is also the president of the Asian Cricket Council (ACC) was quoted as saying by Cricbuzz. "I have decided that we will play at a neutral venue," he added.

KL Rahul will score tons of runs in T20 World Cup says Pietersen

London | Agencies

India opening batter KL Rahul figures on top in Kevin Pietersen's list of players who will excel in the ICC T20 World Cup in Australia, predicting the 30-year-old will score tons of runs, though he doesn't think India will win the global event.

Pietersen expressed confidence Rahul will be a class apart with the bat. "I love him. I think he is the No. 1 batter in the world at the moment. He is absolutely fantastic. With the ball bouncing, swinging and seaming, I think he plays in a very authentic way and is correct enough to rack up the runs," opined Pietersen.

Pietersen though predicted England will win the title



after their title run in the 2021 edition was cut short in the semifinal by New Zealand. "This England white-ball team is absolutely spectacular. They really are. They're fabulous to watch, they've got all bases covered,

and I think they go in as favourites. It was a great victory in Pakistan (seven-match T20i series), a huge victory. And they've been very confident in the way they've played the warm-up games in Australia. It's been the perfect build-up," said Pietersen.

Pietersen added that the "Stokes factor" would be huge in England's title bid.

"It's irrelevant when Ben Stokes last played this form of the game. He brings experience, aura, and a fear factor to this England side. When the opposition are doing all their matchday preparation, the man that will get talked about most is Stokes, because of what he can do, and what he has done in his career. He just brings that fear factor and that aura to the team.

India's second warm-up match deserted due to rain

Brisbane | Agencies

India's second warm-up match against New Zealand in the ICC Men's T20 World Cup at The Gabba on Wednesday has been deserted due to persistent rain.

Earlier, the start of the warm-up match had been delayed due to rain. "It's raining here at The Gabba currently. Cut off time for a 5-over-a-side game is 8.46 PM (4.16 PM IST)," tweeted the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI). Earlier in the day, rain had washed out the practice match between Pakistan and Afghanistan at the same venue. With heavy rain still hampering the start of play between India and New Zealand, the officials, including umpire Paul



Reiffel, reckoned that the weather wouldn't clear up quickly, thus paving the way for the match to be abandoned. After facing off against arch-rivals Pakistan at the MCG on October 23, India will play their Super 12 matches on October 27

(against first qualifier side from Round One at SCG), October 30 (against South Africa at Perth Stadium), November 2 (against Bangladesh at Adelaide Oval) and November 6 (against second qualifier side from Round One at MCG).

India captain Harmanpreet Kaur pulled out from WBBL due to back injury

India captain Harmanpreet Kaur on Wednesday pulled out from participating in the ongoing Women's Big Bash League (WBBL) for the Melbourne Renegades due to back injury.

Melbourne | Agencies

Harmanpreet, 33, had earlier missed the Renegades' opening two matches against Adelaide Strikers and Brisbane Heat due to leading India to their seventh Women's Asia Cup victory in Sylhet,



Bangladesh. England batter Eve Jones, who was signed as an initial replacement for Harmanpreet, will now be signed on as an overseas replacement player by the Renegades. "Harmanpreet was fantastic for us last season and we were looking forward to having her as part of our squad again this year, but unfortunately she has been ruled out through injury. Eve will stay on with our squad for at least the next couple of matches, as we work through the best strategy for our squad for the remainder of the tournament," said James Rosengarten, Melbourne Renegades general manager.

In the 2021 season of the WBBL, Harmanpreet was a crucial cog in the wheel for the Renegades, scoring 406 runs at an average of 58 and strike-rate of 130.96 in 12 innings, including three fifties, to earn the 'Player of the Tournament' honours.



My Hindi is never going to be as fluent as yours, says Katrina Kaif on her accent

Aakruti Bagla | Mumbai

Katrina Kaif is one of the most gorgeous actresses in Bollywood and there is no denying this fact. She has successfully carved a niche for herself in the industry and proved her mettle time and again on the big screen.

The diva is gearing up for her upcoming release Phone Bhoot alongside Ishaan Khatter and Siddhant Chaturvedi. The actress interacted with the media ahead of release.

On women taking the baton

During the interaction, Absolute India News asked Katrina her opinion on females taking the baton and doing better roles than before. Sharing her thoughts on the same, Katrina stated, "I believe women have been taking up the baton since the days of Sridevi, Madhuri, and Rekha. That, I believe, is consistent. We've seen incredible performances as well. Women have that power and place in cinema, and it has remained that way for me."

On working on OTT

About OTT, the actress said, "OTT or any other method of distribution for a film is never an issue for me. I believe there are many things in my heart that I would like to do, such as being a superhero or doing an action film with an emotional connection. If that is offered to me and I am given an opportunity like that on a certain platform, I see no barriers."

On Jee Le Zaraa shoot

Talking about when the shoot of Jee Le Zaraa might begin, the actress revealed, "At different times the film has been moved for various reasons but we will make this film. It's just a matter of getting everyone's time together. So as of right now, I will believe this film is scheduled for the end of next year."

On being ridiculed for her accent

On a parting note, the actress spoke about being ridiculed for her accent and said, "I think my Hindi is never going to be as fluent as yours. I have accepted that fact. More than it, it's about having fun and not taking yourself too seriously."



Boycott trend was started by the trollers: Aditya Seal

Shachi Chaturvedi | Mumbai

Aditya Seal is an Indian actor best known for his role as the male lead in the film Tum Bin II and now preparing for the release of his next film, Rocket Gang.

The actor speaks exclusively to Absolute India News about his character, boycott culture, and much more.

Talking about his character the actor said, "My character in the film is a typical boy who is chill and doesn't take life too seriously. His father owns a store, and he has three or four friends with whom he spends his time. He aspires to be an actor, but he is not concerned about anything."

The actor goes on to explain why he said yes to the character; I said yes to the script. Bosco's vision appealed to me and his experience is impressive. I have no reason to say no because the film has Bosco and is being made under a good banner."

He also described how covid had been a stumbling block throughout. "Our set

was ready in film city and we were just about to begin the shoot when the government announced the lockdown, so we had to destroy everything," he explained. "We were fortunate to find a beautiful large Haveli in Rajkot to shoot in. After that, Bosco and I both got covid, so we had to stop shooting once more. Hence, we faced a lot of challenges, but somehow we managed," Aditya shared.

On asking Aditya if he believes in spirits, he said, "I believe I have, but I'm not certain. I was in South Korea, and my friend and I were lying on the bed, talking, when a white cloud entered the room, made two rounds, and then left. My friend and I exchanged glances but didn't pay much attention to it. Later that morning, we saw the same cloud in the alley, and I tried to follow it, but it vanished."

The actor also commented on the boycott trend, saying, "I don't understand this trend and why is this happening. I hope Brahmastra has broken the trend because when it came out, everyone was tweeting about boycotting it, but it did great business. I believe those were just trolls who started the trend."



Kangana is all set for Pradeep Sarkar's next film



TINA DATTA SAYS SHE CAME ON REALITY SHOW ONLY FOR 'SALMAN SIR'

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Tina Datta, a television actress who presently appears on 'Bigg Boss 16,' has never been a fan of reality television and has always preferred acting in fictional dramas. She also discussed her "differences" with Rashami Desai in detail.

"I never entered 'Bigg Boss' as a contestant so this time it is altogether a different experience where I have to show my real side and it is fun," Datta said, adding, "But I must say TV shows are my first love as I started my career with them and I look forward to doing it more."

The 30-year-old actress also made it clear that she joined 'Bigg Boss' because of Salman Khan: "If Salman sir would not have been the host, I don't think I would have joined the show."

Tina, who has been part of shows such as 'Shani', and also acted in films like 'Chokher Bali' and 'Parineeta', among others, also nixed rumours about her rift with her 'Uttaran' co-star Rashami Desai.

She said: "There are no controversies around my personal relationship and I am always very vocal about them. Of course I have been in a relationship and sometimes it worked out and sometimes not. I never had any bitter terms with Rashami Desai and I don't know how people can think of that."

"We have shared social media posts together and given interviews also. It is a general habit of people to comment on two women from the same show like they don't get along well. But it is not the truth and we have no bitter terms with each other."

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Kangana Ranaut who is also known as the Bollywood queen will be seen playing the role of the legendary Bengali theatre actress Binodini Dasi, professionally known as 'Notee Binodini', in an upcoming film to be directed by Pradeep Sarkar.

Notee Binodini was a key player in the evolution of the theatre culture in India. During a career that spanned 12 years, she enacted over 80 roles, including those of Sita, Draupadi, Radha, Ayesha, Kaikeyi, Motibibi and Kapalkundala under the mentorship of Girish Chandra Ghosh. She was one of the first South Asian theatre actresses to write her own autobiography.

When contacted, Kangana said, "I'm a very big fan of Pradeep Sarkar ji and very happy for this opportunity. Also this will be my first collaboration with Prakash Kapadia ji and I am completely thrilled to be part of this remarkable journey with some of the greatest artistes of this country."

This yet-to-be-titled mega-budget film has been written by Prakash Kapadia, who has movies such as 'Tanhaji: The Unsung Warrior', 'Padmavat', 'Devdas' and 'Black' to his credit.

Kangana is likely to start shooting for the Pradeep Sarkar film early next year post her directorial 'Emergency', where she plays the lead role of the late former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi. Kangana will also be seen next in 'Tejas' essaying the role of an Air Force pilot.

INSTAGRAM PIC OF THE DAY



Sayani Gupta

Iswarya Menon shares her thoughts about body shaming

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Chennai | The Tamil cinema's rising star Iswarya Menon, expressed how she was body-shamed as a child for being fat and how she shut up her critics by emerging being an actress who's admired as much for her thespian skills as she is for her fitness.

Taking to Instagram, Iswarya wrote, "I wanna put out my personal story here, rather than putting some random caption or quotes..."

"My journey with fitness has been very personal. I used to be really fat as a kid. Back in school, I was con-

stantly ridiculed and identified as the 'girl who is fat and looks round like a maida ball' and many horribly mean things'.

"People used to always make fun of me, laugh at me. It always annoyed me, because I didn't want to be identified, recognised like that."

"In modern terms right now, we call it bullying. But back then, I used to be super naive and innocent and I have never reacted to it. I used to always smile and go away."

"But in my head, I told myself no! I am not going to be identified as 'fat'. That's when things changed and that's how my fitness journey started. I started working out from the age of 16. "I took every ridicule as con-

structive criticism and worked out so hard ever since. Tried every stupid diet on the planet to become thin! "There was a phase of my life where I shocked my genes and had become skinny in fact. Later I realised, no, I don't wanna impress others, and I don't wanna be thin. I wanna be healthy and I wanna be fit on my own terms. "Hence, I started working out, not to become skinny, but to become fit. Now fitness has become my lifestyle. I am so thankful to those who ridiculed me. If they hadn't put me down and insulted me like that, I would have never been this fit or taken fitness this seriously. My sincere gratitude to them."

