

absolute india



VOL. 6, ISSUE 28, NEW DELHI | THURSDAY, DECEMBER 15, 2022 | ₹5 | PAGE 08

PUBLISHED SIMULTANEOUSLY FROM NEW DELHI, MUMBAI AND BHOPAL

NATION > 02

Reliance infra vs DMRC row: SC directs HC to enforce...



HOLLYWOOD > 06

Kate Hudson to release debut music album ...



SPORTS > 07

Pujara, Iyer smash fifties, carry India to 278/6...

'Chinese hackers targeted AIIMS server, OPD functioning online partially'

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The cyber attack on servers of the All India Institute of Medical Sciences was carried out from China, a top source said on Wednesday. However, all the data has been successfully retrieved.

According to the Health Ministry source, the hackers targeted five physical servers of the hospital, but the data from these five servers have been retrieved now.

Meanwhile, the hospital has also started functioning on online mode partially in some departments. The OPD appointment has been started through the online mode to some extent, a hospital source said.

The source said that some online and offline new and follow-up registrations have started being made at the new Rajkumari Amrita Kaur (RAK) OPD.

However, the online co-ordination between the ward admission and the discharge process has not been started yet. Therefore, the discharge is being done on the manual mode. The Smart Lab has also not been connected online yet in the hospital. The AIIMS servers were reported hacked for the first time on November 23. A case of extortion and cyber terrorism was registered by the Intelligence Fusion and Strategic Operations (IFSO) unit of the Delhi Police two days later.

However, police had denied any random demand from the hospital. Delhi Police in a statement had said that no such demand has been brought to the notice of AIIMS administration.



HACKERS IDENTITY TO REVEAL AFTER NIA PROBE: IT MINISTER

New Delhi: The identity of those responsible for the cyber attack on the server of Delhi's AIIMS would be known once the NIA completes its investigation in the matter; the Parliament was told on Wednesday. Responding to a question on the incident by BJP MP Sukanta Majumdar during Question Hour, IT and Communications Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw said that in the case of AIIMS, its network had grown as a flat network over a period of time, and is now getting fully updated into a hierarchical system in which the users' login password, privileges of administrator and other aspects are being redefined. About the identity of the cyber attackers, Vaishnaw



said: "That as and when the investigation by the NIA is complete, we would actually come to know who the attackers were. But definitely, we have taken all the required measures for making sure that the network is protected." On December 12, Congress MP Shashi Tharoor had sought a thorough investigation into the matter while speaking in Lok Sabha.

NUMBER OF CYBER ATTACKS STEADILY RISING, 12.67 LAKH DURING NOV 2022

New Delhi: The number of cyber attacks in India has recorded a steady growth over the past few years, and the total number as reported to and tracked by the Indian Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT-In) in the current year stands at 12,67,564 (till November), the Parliament was told on Wednesday.

The corresponding number of such incidents in 2018 was 2,08,456 which increased to 3,94,499 in 2019, to 11,58,208 in 2020 and 14,02,809 in 2021, Minister of State for Electronics and IT Rajeev Chandrasekhar told the Lok Sabha in a written reply.

He said that with the borderless cyberspace coupled with anonymity, along with rapid growth of Internet, rise in cyber attacks and cyber security incidents is a global phenomenon and the government is fully cognisant and aware of various cyber security threats. The Indian Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT-In) is mandated to track and monitor cyber security incidents in India. In the recently notified cyber security direction, CERT-In has now made it mandatory for all incidents to be mandatorily reported to it. Further, the Ministry of Home Affairs has issued National Information Security Policy and Guidelines to the Central Ministries as well as state governments and Union Territories with the aim of preventing information security breaches and cyber intrusions in the information and communication technology infrastructure.

'PLA was planning to set up observation post near Arunachal's Holy waterfalls'



Team Absolute | Kolkata

Like in Galwan, the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) was planning to set up an Observation Post (OP) on the Line of Actual Control (LAC) at Yangtse in Tawang, Arunachal Pradesh, when the Indian Army personnel intervened. This was revealed by a senior army officer posted in Arunachal Pradesh. As per laid down guidelines, no OP or similar structure can be set up close to the LAC by either side.

"It is already extremely cold there. Within the next couple of weeks, all areas close to the LAC will be under several feet of snow. On the Indian side, final preparations are being made to stock our forward positions with adequate supplies. There is a lot of troop movement as well. The PLA is certainly interested to learn more about our preparations for the winter, hence the decision to set up the OP," the army officer said.

While the PLA does have surveillance cameras, they are at a distance from the LAC. Drones are also used but a direct view is always considered the best to plan any move. In Galwan, the clash with the PLA started after the Indian Army demolished an OP that the Chinese refused to dismantle.

Locals at Tsechu, a small town closest to the point where Indian and Chinese troops

clashed on Friday are extremely unhappy with the PLA for disturbing the peace of the region.

"This happened barely a few hundred metres from Chumi Gyatse, a waterfall (a collection of 108 smaller waterfalls) that is considered holy by us Monpas from both sides of the LAC. The Indian Army respects our sentiments and never does anything to disturb the sanctity of the place. This is the second time that the PLA has created a ruckus here," one of them said.

The PLA has cause for concern. Over the last few years, the Indian Army, with help from the Arunachal Pradesh government, has created a lot of infrastructure in that region.

While this has helped locals, it has also aided in quicker and easier movement of soldiers and equipment to the border.

"In Galwan, our brave soldiers were taken by surprise. But we were prepared this time. As soon as we detected movement by the PLA towards the LAC, we knew how to react. They were trying to access higher ground to set up the OP but we stopped them and forced them to return. The Chinese kept on saying that the whole region is their territory but we were not interested. The injuries suffered by a few of our soldiers are minor ones," the army officer added.

ED attaches assets worth Rs 78.63 crore in PMLA case

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Wednesday said it has attached immovable and movable assets worth Rs 78.63 crore in connection with an investment fraud case in which one Nowhera Sheikh, and others have been named as accused.

The current attachment included properties worth Rs 37.58 crore of a Hyderabad-based firm SA Builders & Developers wherein Syed Akhtar is partner, and the bank balance of Rs 41.05 crore of a Bangalore based builder, Neelanchal Technocrats Pvt. Ltd. (Sallarpuria Group).

Prior to this, the ED had provisionally attached properties worth Rs 300 crore in the same case.

In 2018, the ED registered the money laundering case against Nowhera Sheikh and others who had collected more than Rs 5,000 crore from public as investment against false promise of unreasonably high 36 per cent annual return on investment but failed to repay even the principal amounts. Thus, they

duped thousands of innocent investors.

The ED learnt that Sheik and her Heera Group of companies had transferred Rs 148 crore to one SA Builders and Developers for purchasing properties situated at Tolichowki, Hyderabad but properties only worth Rs 70 crore were actually registered which were earlier attached in the hands of Heera Group.

The remaining funds of Rs 78 crore which were part of crime proceeds were found to be parked with the SA Builders and Developers.

The ED also learnt that SA Builders and Developers had transferred Rs 41 crore out of above Rs 78 crore to Neelanchal Technocrats Pvt. Ltd and 4 other shell entities in Kolkata and Shillong. All these funds were ultimately routed back to Sallarpuria Sattva group as loans.

The ED had in November conducted searches at the office of the Sallarpuria Sattva group in Bangalore and unearthed the above money trail and subsequently attached immovable properties and bank balances of Rs 78 crore as equivalent value of the crime proceeds.

OVER 1K FAMILIES ON STREETS AS ILLEGAL HOUSES DEMOLISHED

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Over 1,000 Muslim families living barely half a km away from the Union Carbide factory in Bhopal have been made to survive on their own under the open sky as their homes built in an illegal colony were recently demolished by the administration.

These families, who were living on the Railways' land for the last 30 years, were supposed to be rehabilitated using Bhopal Gas Tragedy Relief funds.

In February this year, the administration had issued notice for demolition of homes and, the process began on December 12.

Rachana Dhingra, an activist working for the gas leak-affected victims claimed that around 400 families were shifted to the Waqf Board's land, while approximately 1,100 families were left with no choice but to survive along the railway tracks. "They were living here for the last 30 years. The area is



located around 400 meters away from the Union Carbide factory. The area where they were living is highly contaminated due to haz-

ardous waste of the factory. The state government had received Rs 40 crore in funds from the Centre in 2010. The fund was allocated for

rehabilitation purpose of these poor families but that amount was left unutilised," Dhingra claimed. Two of the affected persons said that they have approached the district administration, local MLAs and the ministers.

"However, we were mostly left with empty hands," one of them said, adding "poor families have become victim of politics".

"Around 400 families were shifted to a land belongs to Bhopal Waqf Board, but they have to find an alternative place in the coming days," he said. Sources said that the colonies -- Annu Nagar and Sriram Nagar are illegal, and have come up on Railways' land.

The Railways has planned extension of tracks and therefore, the constructions located on its land would be demolished.

When reporter tried to contact Bhopal district collector Avinash Lavania and SDMs to get official confirmation on this issue, no response was received.

India among top three countries originating IoT malware: Microsoft

Team Absolute | New Delhi

India is among the top 3 countries originating Internet of Things (IoT) malware infection in 2022, a Microsoft report said on Wednesday.

IoT devices offer significant value to organisations in the country looking to modernise workspaces, become more data-driven and ease demands on staff through shifts like remote management and automation. "Therefore, the cyber-threat landscape is real and security is the need of the hour. Microsoft aims to help incident responders and security specialists better understand their environments and prevent potential incidents," said the tech giant.

The International Data Corporation (IDC) estimates there will be 41.6 billion connected IoT devices by 2025, a growth rate higher than traditional IT equipment.

With increasing connectivity



across converging IT, Operational Technology (OT) and IoT, organisations and individuals need to rethink cyber risk impact and consequences, said the report.

Microsoft observed a spike in threats across traditional IT equipment, OT controllers and IoT devices

like routers and cameras fueled by the interconnectivity many organisations have adopted over the past few years. It identified unpatched, high-severity vulnerabilities in 75 per cent of the most common industrial controllers in customer OT networks. "As OT systems underpinning

energy, transportation, and other infrastructures become increasingly connected to IT systems, the risk of disruption and damage grows as boundaries blur between these formerly separated worlds," said Vasu Jakkal, corporate vice president, security, compliance, identity, and management at Microsoft.

For businesses and infrastructure operators across industries, the defensive imperatives are gaining total visibility over connected systems and weighing evolving risks and dependencies, Jakkal added.

Modern threats like sophisticated malware, targeted attacks, and malicious insiders are difficult for traditional security measures to contain.

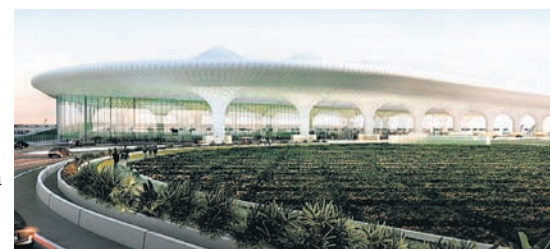
Microsoft also observed over 1 million connected devices publicly visible on the Internet running Boa, an outdated and unsupported software still widely used in IoT devices and software development kits (SDKs).

CSMIA LAUNCHES 'FASTAG CAR PARK' FOR SEAMLESS VEHICLE MOVEMENT AT TERMINAL 2

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Mumbai's Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport (CSMIA), scaled up its multi-level car parking (MLCP) with a FASTag solution.

This up gradation to its parking system is being introduced by CSMIA for all passengers, people who come to see their families off, and people coming down to the airport for meetings, and parking their vehicles at Terminal 2. FASTag is an electronic toll collection system in India. It is an addition to CSMIA's best-in-class technology that benefits passengers & enhances their travel experience. To facilitate quick movement, CSMIA has designated one lane at entry and one lane at the exit for passengers using the FASTag option. With FASTag, the movement of the vehicle at MLCP will be fast and reduce the dwell time for passengers waiting to enter or exit the terminal, thus helping in saving time and fuel. One of the main advantages of FASTag is that it eliminates the need for cash transactions, which would mean quicker parking



options for all. "Now, passengers can experience parking without manual intervention such as waiting for a parking receipt or making cash/credit payments at the entrance or exit, thus making the overall experience seamless. Travellers using MLCP with FASTag are required to ensure that their FASTag is active with sufficient balance for an exit. Additionally, passengers entering through the designated FASTag lane will be required to follow the same lane for the exit as well. Passengers are expected to pay the standard rate and no additional cost is included for the new parking facility. CSMIA regularly upgrades its technology offerings to help improve the day-to-day operations within the airport," said an airport spokesperson on Wednesday.



RELIANCE INFRA VS DMRC ROW: SC DIRECTS HC TO ENFORCE ARBITRATION AWARD IN 3 MONTHS

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Supreme Court on Wednesday told Attorney General R. Venkataramani, "we should not repeat again that on one hand, you give speeches everywhere that India should be a model arbitration hub", as it pulled up Centre for its failure to pay an arbitral award for Rs 4,500 crore following a lawsuit filed by Reliance Infra against Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC).

The apex court directed the Delhi High Court to proceed with the execution of the Rs 4,500 crore arbitration award granted in favour of Delhi Airport Metro Express Pvt Ltd (DAMEPL), a Reliance Infrastructure arm, and take it to a logical end within three months.

A bench of Justices B.R. Gavai and Vikram Nath said the award in favour of the DAMEPL has reached finality, and emphasised that law regarding the execution of the award is not different for the government or its statutory corporations.



The AG, representing the Centre, objected to the maintainability of the DAMEPL's appeal and pointed out the lack of funds. "I do not have money or gold in some bank account that I can just give it. It has to go through a process," he said. Senior advocate Harish Salve, representing the DAMEPL, said the gov-

ernment is not committing itself to giving the money and added that if they are unable to commit funds, let their properties be attached.

As the AG said: "The government will pass it in the bill to apportion funds", Salve submitted: "Do not let this circus continue."

The AG replied that it is a serious

matter and added: "do not call it a circus please". Salve contended that if DMRC were to be a private party, then the apex court would have directed payment within two weeks.

The bench said that in ordinary circumstances, the court would not have entertained the matter. "The arbitration award passed in favour of the petitioner has reached finality as the appeal filed by respondent has been dismissed," said the bench.

The top court said: "We, therefore, direct the high court to proceed expeditiously and take it to its logical end within a period of three months."

Concluding the hearing in the matter, Justice Gavai remarked: "We should not repeat again that on one hand you give speeches everywhere that India should be a model arbitration hub..."

The AG replied that has nothing to do with this case.

The apex court was hearing a plea seeking enforcement of the arbitration award in favour of the DAMEPL to be paid by the DMRC.

4 Meghalaya MLAs switch to BJP; party calls it 'significant development'

Team Absolute | New Delhi/Shillong

Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said on Wednesday that the switching of four Meghalaya legislators to the saffron party in the state where Assembly elections are scheduled to be held in February next year.

Sitting Independent MLA Samuel Sangma, Benedict Marak and Ferlin C.A. Sangma of the National People's Party (NPP) and H.M. Shangliang of Trinamool Congress joined the BJP in the national capital on Wednesday in presence of Sarma and BJP spokesperson Sambit Patra.

Samuel Sangma is an independent MLA and was an associate member of the United Democratic Party (UDP) before joining the BJP on Wednesday.

After the joining, Sarma, also the convener of BJP-led anti-Congress front North East Democratic Alliance (NEDA), made the four leaders meet BJP's national president J.P. Nadda.

Identifying the four leaders as "experienced and respected political figures", the Assam Chief Minister said that under Prime Minister Narendra Modi government, the northeastern region has undergone tremen-

dous development in every sector since the NDA government came to power at the Centre in 2014.

"With massive development and restoration of peace, three BJP governments returned to power in Assam, Arunachal Pradesh and Manipur," he told the media in Delhi expressing his optimism that the BJP would achieve "spectacular performance" in the upcoming assembly polls in Tripura, Nagaland and Meghalaya.

With two MLAs -- Pynthorunkhrakh (Alexander Laloo Hek) and South Shillong (Sanbor Shullai), BJP is a partner of the Meghalaya Democratic Alliance (MDA) government, dominated by the NPP headed by Chief Minister Conrad K. Sangma.

Shullai is now a cabinet minister of the MDA government and in-charge of five departments including Animal Husbandry and Veterinary and Labour Departments.

The BJP in Meghalaya has for the past more than two months threatened to withdraw support from the MDA. The UDP is also one of the constituents of the ruling MDA, a 6-party alliance government.

However, the NPP, BJP and the UDP had already announced that they are going to contest Assembly elections early next year as separate entities.

Teachers' scam: Judicial custody of Partha, Arpita extended to Jan 7

Kolkata | Agencies

A special Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) court on Wednesday extended judicial custody for former West Bengal Education Minister and Trinamool Congress secretary general Partha Chatterjee and his close associate Arpita Mukherjee till January 7 in connection with their alleged involvement in the multi-crore teachers' recruitment scam in West Bengal.

Meanwhile, Chatterjee has also moved a plea in the same court for exemption of his name from the supplementary charge sheet filed by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) in the teachers' recruitment scam on December 7. However, the matter could not be heard on Wednesday as the ED's counsel informed the court that they need some more time to present his line of argument in the matter. The next hearing in the matter has been scheduled on January 31 next year.



On Wednesday, neither counsel for Chatterjee nor the one for Mukherjee moved any bail pleas on behalf of their clients. Instead, Chatterjee's counsel appealed to the court to direct the ED to submit a report on its progress of investigation in the matter.

At the same time, Chatterjee's counsel also questioned how the central agency was appealing for extension of his custody without seeking any remand or submitting any progress report on the investigation.

ACCIDENTS DUE TO POTHOLES ON ROADS RISE IN LAST TWO YEARS, UP TOPS

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Authorities might be claiming smooth roads in the country, but government data said that the number of accidents due to potholes on roads has increased over the past two years.

A total of 3,564 road accidents took place across the country during 2020 and increased to 3,625 during 2021, the Parliament was told on Wednesday.

A close look at the state-wise data said that Uttar Pradesh topped the list of states with 1,254 such accidents in 2021. Madhya Pradesh and Tamil Nadu recorded 711 and 459 accidents due to potholes in the same year, Road Transport and Highways Minister Nitin Gadkari told the Rajya Sabha in a written reply.

According to the reply, the total number of accidents caused due to



potholes during the calendar years 2020 and 2021 all over the country

includes all type of roads including national highways (NH).

The Ministry of Road Transport & Highways is primarily responsible for construction and maintenance of NHs. In order to make the NH stretches pothole free, regular maintenance activities are carried out by executing agencies of the ministry such as the NHAI, the PWD, the BRO, the NHIDCL, etc. through concessionaires/contractors/O&M Agencies etc.

Concerned project officials inspect the project highways under their respective jurisdictions and take suitable short term and long term preventive/remedial measures as per the site requirements within available resources. Surface drainage aspects are also taken care of in the design of National Highways by provision of appropriate camber/cross fall of the pavement and longitudinal drains in accordance with Indian Roads Congress standards and guidelines, he said in the reply.

TN Police strengthens team to check PDS rice smuggling

Chennai | Agencies

The Tamil Nadu Police has increased the strength of police squads in the state's western part to prevent extensive smuggling out of Public Distribution System (PDS) rice, officials said on Wednesday.

Police teams have been strengthened in Krishnagiri, Dharmapuri, Namakkal, Erode, Salem, Tiruppur, The Nilgiris, and Coimbatore as maximum smuggling is taking place from these districts.

According to the state police, more than 1,750 tonnes of PDS rice were seized from smugglers in western Tamil Nadu during this year, 27 people were booked under Goonda Act, and more than 500 vehicles deployed for smuggling were seized.

The numbers of cases registered this year were also high at 2,231 against 1,798 cases



registered in 2021.

Police have deployed two special squads at Pollachi and Krishnagiri to prevent PDS rice smuggling as the volume of smuggling is highest from Krishnagiri district.

In addition to PDS rice, kerosene is also smuggled in large volumes from the western belt of Tamil Nadu to neighbouring states like

Kerala, Karnataka, and Andhra Pradesh.

Recently a truck load of PDS rice from Coimbatore was seized at Walayar checkpost in Palakkad, Kerala. On interrogation, it was revealed that the rice was meant for rice mills in Kerala and local leaders of a prominent party in Kerala were protecting the smugglers.

ODISHA GOVT ASKS OFFICIALS TO INTENSIFY RAIDS AGAINST SPURIOUS MEDICINES

Bhubaneswar:

The Odisha government has asked the officials to intensify raids on stores selling spurious medicines in the state.

Health and Family Welfare Secretary Shalini Pandit has directed all field officers and enforcement squads to stay vigilant on the medicines coming from outside the state, and intensify the raids on all suspicious points, persons, stockists and shops. The officials were also asked to take stringent action against those found guilty. Extensive raids are being conducted on a regular basis and such actions will continue, said a senior official of the health department.

Meanwhile, spurious medicines were seized from six places in Cuttack, one place in Kendrapara, two places in Jharsuguda, and one place each in Sundargarh, Bargarh and Sambalpur districts. Legal cases were filed against the concerned agency/medicine shops following seizure of the duplicate medicines from these places, the official said.



Three killed in stampede during BJP blanket distribution event at Bengal's Asansol

Kolkata | Agencies

At least three persons, including a child, were killed and eight others were severely injured in a stampede at a blanket distribution centre at the industrial township of Asansol in West Bengal's West Burdwan district on Wednesday evening.

The chief guest at the function was Leader of Opposition in Assembly, Suwendu Adhikari. Local BJP leader and Asansol Municipal Corporation's former Mayor Jitendra Tiwari was also present on the occasion. The stampede happened after Adhikari left the spot which witnessed an assembly of around 5,000 persons.

According to eyewitnesses, the programme was going on peacefully till the time Adhikari was on the spot. However, after he left, there was a rush to grab the blan-

kets meant for distribution which resulted in the accident. Meanwhile, the Police Commissioner, Asansol-Durgapur, Sudheer Kumar Neelkantam claimed that there was no police permission for the said programme. "Three persons have already been reported to be killed in the stampede. No one gave a written application for permission for the programme. The police were just verbally intimidated. The stampede took place because of overcrowding," he said.

However, Tiwari claimed that he personally sent a letter to the Commissionerate informing the authorities about the event way back on December 3. "However, the police did not give us any intimation that the programme cannot be conducted. There was enough time for the police to reply to our letter. Had the police informed us that permission had been denied, we should

have taken steps accordingly," he said.

Trinamool Congress leaders claimed that this is why the state administration is often reluctant to give permission to the BJP for conducting such mass programmes.

However, senior BJP leader and former national Secretary, Rahul Sinha said that there might be some conspiracy of the state's ruling party in the incident.

Of the three killed, two have been identified as Chandmoni Devi and Preeti Singh. The identity of the third deceased is yet to be known.

Asansol Deputy Mayor, Avijit Ghatak said that there should be an investigation on how the stampede took place. However, he denied knowledge on whether the programme was being conducted without police permission.

Woman shot dead over property dispute in Delhi's Dwarka, accused arrested

Team Absolute | New Delhi

A 42-year-old woman was killed while a man was injured after a man opened fire at them over a property dispute in Delhi's Jharoda Kalan village, police said on Wednesday.

The deceased has been identified as Mukesh, a resident of village Jharoda Kalan while on the basis of the statement give by the injured, Kaptan, police has registered a case under Sections 302 (murder), 307 (attempt to murder) of the IPC and 25/27 of the Arms Act at Baba Haridas Nagar police station.

"On December 13, at 8.54 p.m., a police control room (PCR) call was received regarding a firing incident at Jharoda Kalan village following which a police team rushed to the spot," said a senior police official.

Mukesh was found dead with gunshot injuries.



"Statement of witness was recorded wherein it was stated that a person named Monu alias Sumit fired at Mukesh and Kaptan. Thereafter Monu ran away from there," said an official privy to investigation.

"One medico-legal case (MLC) information was also received regarding admission of injured Kaptan with gunshot injury," said the offi-

cial. "Initial probe suggests that there was property dispute between Mukesh and Monu. The accused has been arrested and the weapon of offence used in commission of crime had been recovered along with three live cartridges. The investigation in this matter is in progress," Deputy Commissioner of Police, Dwarka, M. Harsha Vardhan said.

30 kg 'malana cream' valued at Rs 18 crore seized, one arrested

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Delhi Police's Special Cell has arrested a drug trafficker and seized 30 kg malana cream, also known as 'hashish', valued Rs 18 crore from his possession in Alipur in the national capital.

The accused was identified as Rajesh Kumar, 30, a resident of Khanna Khurd near Ludhiana in Punjab.

With the arrest of the drug trafficker, the Delhi Police's Special Cell on Wednesday claimed to have unearthed an interstate syndicate involved in smuggling drugs in Delhi and its peripherals.

Himachal Pradesh's Malana is known for the production of charas or hashish.

Police said that the syndicate has sold over 45 kg of 'malana cream' worth over Rs 28 crore in Delhi-NCR and Uttar Pradesh in the last three months. According to Pramod Singh Kushwah, the Deputy Commissioner of Police (Special



Cell), in the second week of November, information was received that members of a drug cartel based in Kullu, Himachal Pradesh are supplying huge quantity of narcotic drug "Malana Cream (A-grade Hashish)" to drug traffickers in Delhi and Uttar Pradesh for rave parties.

"Acting on the information, a police team was tasked with the investigation. Intelligence revealed

that one Rajesh was trafficking drugs to the Capital and UP. To bust this racket, manual and technical surveillance was mounted and informers were deployed at various places in Kullu and Delhi," said Kushwah.

On December 9, specific inputs were received that Rajesh had received a huge quantity of malana cream from a supplier based in Kullu for further delivery in Delhi

and Uttar Pradesh in a Bolero pick-up. "We also got inputs that he will deliver hashish near Radha Krishan Mandir, GT Karnal Road near Alipur. Accordingly, a trap was laid and Rajesh was apprehended. During search, 10 Kg of high quality party drug hashish was recovered from a bag and remaining 20 Kg of this narcotic drug was found concealed in a spare wheel kept in the vehicle," said Kushwah.

On interrogation, it was revealed that about six months ago, Rajesh came in contact with a drug trafficker based in Kullu, who employed him for supplying drugs to Delhi-NCR and Uttar Pradesh.

"For each trip, Rajesh would get Rs 12,000 per kg. In the last three months, he had brought 45 kg of narcotic drugs from Kullu, and delivered the same to various receivers based in Delhi/NCR and UP," said the DCP, adding that efforts are afoot to identify and apprehend the supplier and receivers of drug.



PEACE IS THE FIRST REQUIREMENT OF DEVELOPMENT: CM SHIVRAJ

Team Absolute | Bhopal

CM Shivraj Singh Chouhan has said that the first requirement of development is peace. Madhya Pradesh is an island of peace, riots and hooliganism will not be allowed here. The elements that create disturbance will not be left out under any circumstances. In view of the peace system, special armed force will be deployed in Khargone and a new police station will be opened.

CM participated in the Mukhyamantri Jan-Seva Abhiyan divisional level acceptance letter distribution program in Khargone. He dedicated/laid the foundation stone of development works worth Rs 660 crore, of which works of Rs. 371 crore were dedicated and Bhoomi Poojan was done of works worth Rs 288 crore. The CM also distributed benefits to the beneficiaries of the schemes. He also interacted with the beneficiaries of various schemes through virtual medium. Before this, he flagged off the Sickle Cell



Volunteer bikers. He visited the exhibition of products of women self-help groups and also released a book focusing on the historical, religious and cultural heritage of Khargone.

CM Chouhan said that Khargone is the pride of Nimar. The Navagraha temple here is divine. Navagraha temple and corridor will be devel-

oped. A medical college will also be opened in Khargone. Renovation work of Mahadev temple located in Sirvail will also be done. Bistan block in Khargone will be named after Tanyta Mama Bhil, Bawdi bus stand area will be named after Maharana Pratap Nagar and post-office will be named after Guru Nanak.

Shah Rukh-Deepika starrer runs into trouble over saffron costume

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Shah Rukh Khan and Deepika Padukone's upcoming Bollywood flick 'Pathaan' may face problem in Madhya Pradesh as both the ruling and the opposition have objected to the saffron costume worn by the actor in the film.

Responding to the film promos, State Home Minister Narottam Mishra on Wednesday termed the costumes and scenes in the film "obscene and condemnable". It should be corrected, or the state government will be forced to take a decision the screening of the film.

Objection has been raised over Deepika Padukone's saffron costume in a song titled 'besharam rang'. Released on Tuesday, the song is trending on social media.

Reacting on the controversy, state home minister Narottam Mishra said, "Actress Deepika Padukone's costume is highly objectionable and the song has been shot with a dirty mindset. The scenes and costumes of the songs should be changed, or we will have to take a decision on its screening in Madhya Pradesh," Mishra said while accusing the actress of supporting the 'Tukde Tukde' gang.

Notably, leader of opposition in Madhya Pradesh Assembly Govind Singh has also expressed his anger on costumes in the song. "The scenes of the song and costumes are highly objectionable. Such things are not acceptable in Indian culture," Singh said while



talking to the reporters on Wednesday.

The right wing Sanskriti Bachao Manch also joined the bandwagon and staged a protest against the film calling "saffron a shameful colour with obscenity." The members of Sanskriti Bachao Manch protested against Deepika Padukone's dress, as she was seen wearing saffron-coloured clothes.

Chandrashekhar Tiwari said, "This is an insult to our saffron dress, which Sanskriti Bachao Manch will not tolerate. Shahrukh Khan, when Hindus started boycotting your film, you remembered Vaishno devi. You will have to apologise to all Hindus and remove the song from this film because the people of India have made you a superstar. Shahrukh Khan, why are you always degrading your image by doing such acts? You should apologise to all Sanatan Dharma believers."

'For love's sake': Muslim man converts for his Hindu wife

Team Absolute | Mandasaur

A Muslim man in Madhya Pradesh's Mandasaur district has converted to Hinduism for his wife whom he had married five years ago at a temple after falling in love with her.

Afsar Mansoori, a driver by profession and a resident of Kachnara village in Mandasaur, has changed his name to 'Krishna Sanatani'.

Mansoori, after marrying Radha, stopped living along his family. As he kept following most Hindu customs including observing fast on Tuesdays, he eventually decided to turn Hindu.



Pandit Naresh Trivedi of 'Gayatri Parivar' conducted some rituals including bathing Mansoori with cow dung, cow urine, curd, milk and honey, and chanting

mantras. After becoming 'Krishna Sanatani', he said that he had met Radha while he used to transport patients to medical camps in Rajasthan's Udaipur. Radha used to work there as a caregiver.

Gradually, they exchanged phone numbers after which conversations became more frequent between Mansoori and Radha. They eventually fell in love with each other, and decided to get married.

Meanwhile, his wife Radha said: "People usually become crazy when they fall in love... and they can go to any extent for the sake of love. And now, my husband has become Hindu."

Cong warns Pateriya of expulsion from party over remarks against PM

Team Absolute | Bhopal

The Madhya Pradesh Congress Committee (MPCC) has warned senior party leader Raja Pateriya of expulsion from the party over his alleged remarks against Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Issuing a notice to Pateriya on Tuesday, Congress sought an explanation why he should not be expelled from the party's membership.

The MPCC, while terming the alleged act as 'indiscipline', condemned the controversial remarks made against Prime Minister Modi. It has said that alleged remarks made against the Prime Minister were 'offensive' and 'condemnable'.

"You have used offensive and condemnable words against PM Modi during a meeting in Panna district on December 12. You should explain why you should not be terminated from the party's membership," reads the notice issued by MPCC.



Earlier on the day, Pateriya was arrested from his residence in Panna and was produced before a court. During the hearing, the former minister maintained that he used the word 'killing' in the sense of 'defeat' and pleaded for bail, however, his bail plea was rejected and he was sent to 14-day judicial custody.

However, Pateriya, who is also the Congress vice-president in Madhya Pradesh, maintained that he didn't use 'offensive' words and is a 'follower of Mahatma Gandhi'. "It's a fight of ideology. I haven't

said those words. I am a follower of Mahatma Gandhi," he told reporters outside the courtroom and showed a victory sign. Pateriya was minister in Digvijaya Singh-led cabinet in the state (1993-2003) and is considered close to Singh. The state Congress unit including former chief minister Kamal Nath has condemned Pateriya's alleged remarks, however, some senior leaders stood in his favour. Though the Congress leaders who favour Pateriya did not make any official statement, they unofficially claimed that he was politically targeted.

Veteran Congress leader and Leader of Opposition in Madhya Pradesh Assembly, Govind Singh has opposed Pateriya's arrest. "I oppose Raja Pateriya's arrest, BJP should not hype false incidents. Raja in his speech firstly clarified that he meant defeating Modi and he apologised later. His arrest is not justified. BJP wants to end and harass oppositions, I am standing strong with him," Singh said.

Congress to bring no-confidence motion against Shivraj govt

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Madhya Pradesh's opposition Congress has decided to table a no-confidence motion against Shivraj Singh Chouhan-led BJP government during the winter session of the Assembly set to begin from December 19.

Senior Congress MLA and former minister P.C. Sharma handed over a letter signed by the Leader of Opposition in the Assembly, Govind Singh in the Assembly in this regard.

After submitting the proposal, Sharma said: "The manner in which Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan's cabinet has functioned in the last two years, people of all sections have faced injustice. The people of the state have lost confidence in the present BJP government



and therefore the opposition has decided to table a non-confidence motion during the winter session." Sharma also expressed that Assembly Speaker Girish Gautam and Chief Minister Chouhan will agree to hold a discussion

during the session, which has been called for a short period of five days.

Govind Singh said: "The government does not want its failures to be discussed. The strategy will be finalised after meeting with the MLAs."

The step has been taken strategically in view of the Assembly elections to be held next year. For its preparations, state Congress President Kamal Nath had first entrusted the responsibility to former Leader of Opposition Ajay Singh and then to Leader of Opposition in the Assembly Govind Singh.

Singh appointed former MLA Paras Saklecha to probe and 180 points related to various departments were sorted out. Facts were also asked from the MLAs for this, but this did not work due to Rahul Gandhi's Bharat Jodo Yatra.

MAN STABBED TO DEATH NEAR ITWARA POLICE OUTPOST, INVESTIGATIONS ON

Bhopal: A 25-year-old youth was stabbed to death near the Itwara police outpost on late Tuesday evening, the Talaiyya police said. The victim was rushed to Hamidia hospital, where the doctors declared him brought dead on arrival, the police added.

The Talaiyya police have identified the victim as Waseem Khan (25), a resident of Sagar. The police stated that Khan used to work as a food caterer and was residing in the Rain Basera locality from the past four years. Continuing the statements, the police stated that on Tuesday evening, at around 8 pm, Khan was heading somewhere on foot when an unidentified man stabbed him with a knife several times, in front of the Haji hotel of the locality and fled the spot swiftly.

The locals arrived at the spot, who on witnessing Khan lying in a pool of blood, informed the police and rushed him to the Hamidia hospital, where he was declared brought dead on arrival by the doctors. Doctors stated that Khan had sustained grievous injuries on his neck, due to which he bled profusely and died due to excessive blood loss.

State to ban hookah lounges, issue new youth policy

Team Absolute | Bhopal

The Madhya Pradesh cabinet has approved a bill banning hookah lounges in the state, a minister said. "The cabinet has approved the State Amendment Bill-2022 of the Cigarettes and Other Tobacco Products (Prohibition of Advertisement and Regulation of Trade and Commerce, Production, Supply and Distribution) Act, 2003 to ban hookah lounges in Madhya Pradesh," state Home Minister and government spokesperson Narottam Mishra said after the cabinet meeting.

On October 2 this year, Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan had announced that hookah lounges will not be allowed to function in the state and will be razed, if nec-



essary. Mishra also said that the chief minister will issue a new Youth Policy on January 13 next year.

He said the recruitment process for 88,750 vacant posts in Madhya Pradesh is progressing towards comple-

tion. "By August 15, 2023, the recruitment process of one lakh posts in government services will be completed," he said, adding that this issue was also discussed in the cabinet meeting.

POLICE BUST PROSTITUTION RACKET AT AGARWAL ENTERPRISES SHOP IN JABALPUR, 3 ARRESTED



Jabalpur: Police here on late evening, busted a prostitution racket operating for a long time in an Agarwal Enterprises shop running in the Cherital area of the Jabalpur. "During the raid, one man and two girls were found there in an objectionable condition, said the Kotwali Police. The director of Agarwal Enterprises, Harish, fled from the spot.

The deal was finalized with the two girls. As soon as the deal was finalized, the police constable informed the team, after which the team laid siege and arrested 3 people from the spot, while the main accused running the brothel escaped from the spot.

At present, the police are interrogating all the accused involved in prostitution.

Bailable warrant issued against Sahara chief Subrata Roy

Madhya Pradesh High Court issued a bailable warrant against Sahara chief Subrata Roy and directed SP Lucknow to execute the warrant.

Team Absolute | Jabalpur

Lawyer Ankit Mishra of Madhya Pradesh High Court said, "There are 20 petitions registered against Sahara Chief Subrata Roy. Madhya Pradesh High Court issued bailable warrant of Rs 5 lakh against him." Subrata Roy had been in troubled waters after the group failed to return Rs 85,000 crore to its investors by August 31, 2012, as directed by the court.

Roy, who is out on interim bail, has already spent two years in jail regarding the matter and the Sahara group is yet to return Rs 9,000 crore to the investors.

Earlier the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) also made a complaint to the apex court and sought contempt proceedings against the Sahara group for obstructing the auctioning process, initiated



under the court's direction.

Ankit Mishra has said, "Vishnu Prasad Sahu and his family from Sagar had invested Rs 2300000 in Sahara. After maturity, Sahara did not return the money. After a lot of trouble, they took the matter to the High Court and today the High Court has issued a bailable warrant."

THREE WOMEN LABOURERS, TWO CHILDREN DEAD AS TRACTOR FALLS INTO CANAL

Madhya Pradesh: Three women sugarcane workers and two children were killed after the tractor-trolley in which they were traveling fell into a canal in southern Maharashtra's Solapur district, police said on Wednesday. The deceased hailed from Madhya Pradesh's Barwani district.

The incident took place on Tuesday night near Karkamb village when a group of migrant workers engaged by local farmers for sugarcane harvesting were returning to their camp after the day's work, said a police official. "Due to the driver's error, the tractor-trolley veered off the road and fell into the dry canal. While four persons died on the spot as the trolley fell on them, one person died in hospital," said Shirish Sardeshpande, Superintendent of Police, Solapur.

The bodies of the deceased were sent to their hometown in Madhya Pradesh after the post-mortem, he said. MP Congress chief Kamal Nath tweeted about the incident and requested the Maharashtra government to provide all possible help to the victims immediately.

CM Chouhan plants Ashoka, Gulmohar and Khirni saplings



Team Absolute | Bhopal

Along with CM Chouhan, Sarvashri Shanu Dhurve, Atul Vadiva and Sandeep Kulaste, who walked on foot 200 kilometers from Gadarwara to Bhopal to thank the CM for imple-

menting the PESA Act in the state, planted Ashoka sapling with him in the Smart City Garden.

Sarvshri Kuldeep Khare, Kausalendra Pandey, Aditya Khare, Sushri Shalu Srivastava and Sushri Bulbul Khare of Pure Welfare Society

planted a sapling of Khirni along with Chief Minister Chouhan. The society conducts activities to provide information and guidance related to self-employment, computer education and finance management to women.



EDITOR'S SPECS

UN recognises India's Namami Gange initiative

The United recognised 10 ground-breaking efforts, including the cleaning of the Ganga from around the globe for their role in restoring the natural world. The initiatives were declared World Restoration Flagships and are eligible to receive UN-backed promotion, advice, or funding. In revealing the World Restoration Flagships, the UN Decade seeks to honour the best examples of large-scale and long-term ecosystem restoration, embodying the 10 Restoration Principles of the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration. The UN Decade acknowledges the time needed for restoration efforts to deliver results. Until 2030, regular calls for World Restoration Flagships will be launched. In expectation of increased funding to the UN Decade's Multi-Partner Trust Fund (MPTF), additional submissions are being considered, including restoration drives from Pakistan, Peru, and an initiative focusing on Somalia and other drought-affected countries. India's ground-breaking initiative is restoring the health of the Ganga, India's holy river. The focus of a major push to cut pollution, rebuild forest cover and bring a wide range of benefits to the 520 million people living around its vast basin. Climate change, population growth, industrialisation and irrigation have degraded the Ganges along its arcing 2,525-kilometre course from the Himalayas to the Bay of Bengal. Launched in 2014, the government-led Namami Gange initiative is rejuvenating, protecting and conserving the Ganga and its tributaries, reforesting parts of the Ganga basin and promoting sustainable farming. It also aims to revive key wildlife species, including river dolphins, softshell turtles, otters, and the hilsa shad fish. Investment by the Indian government is up to \$4.25 billion so far. The initiative has the involvement of 230 organisations, with 1,500km of river restored to date. Additionally, there has been 30,000 hectares of afforestation so far, with a 2030 goal of 134,000 hectares.

IS NITISH KUMAR LOSING POLITICAL RELEVANCE IN BIHAR?

In Bihar, there are three political forces -- RJD, BJP and JD(U) -- and whenever two have come together, they have formed the government in the state. It was proven in 2010, 2015 and 2020. Now, such a situation is changing in Bihar as Nitish Kumar-led JD(U) and Tejashwi Yadav-led RJD are jointly running the government in Bihar, but they are failing to convince the voters. Is the myth of the two-party-making government breaking now? Are Nitish Kumar and Tejashwi Yadav losing relevance in Bihar -- these are the big questions in Bihar these days. After the formation of the Mahagathbandhan in Bihar in August this year, three by-elections took place and the BJP, which is the lone opposition party in the state, has managed to win two seats of Gopalganj and Kurhani. Even the Mokama seat was not won due to RJD or Tejashwi Yadav. It was the impact of Bahubali leader Anant Singh, who helped his wife Neelam Devi to win the bypoll. Prashant Kishor, who is currently in East Champaran for his Jan Suraj Padyatra, said: "You are talking about uncle (Nitish Kumar) and nephew Tejashwi Yadav but they are only cheating the people of Bihar. What is the capacity of the uncle-nephew government in Bihar, they lost two out of three bypolls. The seat of Mokama was won due to Bahubali leader Anant Singh. They are unable to win bypolls and teach me." "Tejashwi Yadav had promised to give 10 lakh jobs from the first signature when he came to power. Is the ink of his pen dried up or the pen is broken? Why is the cabinet meeting not taking place on jobs?" Kishor asks. "Tejashwi Yadav is nothing without Lalu Prasad Yadav. What is the knowledge and understanding Tejashwi has? He became MLAs for



the first time in 2015. Who knows him before? I helped Nitish Kumar and Lalu Prasad Yadav in 2015 and then Mahagathbandhan came in power," Kishor said. The result of the Kurhani bypoll has given a clear message that the anti-incumbency factor is creeping against Nitish Kumar and it is rising. He is the longest serving chief minister of Bihar, still the development works are not taking place as it was expected. "The voting patterns in Bihar are changing now. The Mahagathbandhan government promised 20 lakh jobs and youths of Bihar are expecting jobs from Nitish and Tejashwi. Unfortunately, they are not giving jobs in accordance with the promises they have made in the past. Caste factor is relevant in Bihar, but if the political parties

would only depend on it and make a plan accordingly to win the election, it is the biggest mistake in the current situation. You cannot fool the people, you have to deliver. I personally believe that the anti-incumbency against Nitish Kumar is affecting Tejashwi Yadav," said Rajan Sharma, a retired government employee of the education department. "Nitish Kumar and Tejashwi Yadav were claiming in the past that they are giving joining letters in various departments is also a big fraud. The people are not fools, they knew the game of joining letters. The joining letters they are giving to the people are old employees and the jobs were given during the tenure of the NDA government," said another person Kamal Kant Sahani, a resident of Boring road Patna.

"The Mahagathbandhan government is failing on several issues like liquor ban, inflation, crime, corruption, issues of farmers, industries, food processing units and others. When Tejashwi Yadav was the leader of opposition in the Bihar Assembly, he used to raise the issue of unemployment, lack of industries and food processing units. We have not seen any industry or food processing unit installed in the last three months. The last major industrial development was the Pepsi bottling plant installed in Begusarai. We have not seen a fresh food processing unit, sugar mill, rice mill or other industrial development take place in Bihar," Rajesh Kumar, a resident of Danapur said. "The political parties of

Bihar are only thinking about how their own goals would be achieved through permutation and combination of caste and community factor and through vote 'Katwas'. This is actually a negative politics the RJD, JD(U) or the BJP are doing. No one thinks about the actual development of Bihar. They just use blame game politics to pass the poll examinations. The Mahagathbandhan leaders blame the BJP for running communal agendas to polarise the voters and while the saffron leaders blame them for the return of Jungle Raj, corruption, scams, etc. None of the political parties have public oriented blueprints to improve their lives," said Sanjay Kumar Pandey, a resident of RK Puram Patna. "Nitish Kumar and Tejashwi Yadav campaigned jointly in Kurhani but the result did not come according to their expectation. The poor people of Bihar are not pleased with the ill policies of Nitish Kumar. Liquor ban has penalised the poor people more than the middle class and high-earning people of Bihar. In every liquor tragedy, 95 per cent of the people are poor who consume the country-made liquor. Various leaders like Jitan Ram Manjhi pointed out that over four lakh people have been serving jail term and majority of them are below poverty line people, Dalit people who are against Nitish Kumar," Pandey said. "We have learnt from childhood that the crime or criminals have no caste and religion. Similarly, a person served jail term in liquor violation, how could their families give votes on the basis of caste and communities. This is a simple logic and explanation Nitish Kumar has to understand for his survival in the politics of Bihar," Pandey said.

international

US 'CLOSELY MONITORING' LAC SITUATION AFTER TAWANG CLASHES

Washington | Agencies

The US said that it "strongly opposes" any unilateral attempt to advance territorial claims, adding that it is "closely" monitoring the situation along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in the aftermath of clashes between militaries of India and China in the Arunachal Pradesh sector. US State Department spokesperson Ned Price told reporters at the daily briefing that the US is in "close contact" with its Indian "partners". Price declined to detail conversations with India. "We are glad to hear that both sides appear to have quickly disengaged from the clashes," Price said and went on to appeal to the two countries to discuss their boundary disputes utilising the existing bilateral channels. White House press secretary Karine Jean-Pierre also expressed similar sentiments. "We are glad to hear that both sides appear to have quickly dis-



engaged from the clashes," she said, adding, "We are closely monitoring the situation. We encourage India and China to utilise existing bilateral channels to discuss disputed boundaries." Price was responding to questions about clashes between contingents of the Indian Army and the People's Liberation Army (PLA - as the Chinese military calls itself) in the Tawang sector last week. The Chinese, numbering about 300, came armed with tasers, knuckle dusters and other weapons - but not guns. The Indian military

personnel responded, with swiftly deployed reinforcements, to the transgression and "compelled" the intruders to return to their posts. The largely unmarked LAC has seen several such clashes, triggered by Chinese intrusion. The most egregious of them took place in Galwan in Ladakh region in 2020. About 20 Indian soldiers were injured at the time and many Chinese soldiers, though Beijing never said how many. Raja Krishnamoorthi, an Indian American member of the House of Representatives, expressed concern over the clashes. "I'm disturbed to learn of the latest show of aggression by the Chinese Communist Party through its violation of Indian territory with its armed forces," he said in a statement. "While I'm grateful that this clash led to no serious casualties to Indian forces, it serves as another reminder of the growing belligerence of the Chinese Communist Party and the need

for the United States to continue to work with India and all our security partners in the region to counter Beijing's aggression," he added. These border clashes are more than mere clashes over intrusions. They are seen as "low-level" coercion to unsettle India in view of its growing ties with the US. "China tracks India's relations with the United States very carefully and is concerned at the synergy between them. Chinese scholarly writings and official statements make the point that the United States is pursuing an anti-China strategy and that India should keep a distance from it," Vijay Gokhale, former Indian foreign secretary and ambassador to China, writes in a paper published on Tuesday. "China uses coercion on the LAC to warn India while keeping the possibility of geopolitical backlash low," he writes, citing a recent study by a Chinese scholar based on interviews with Chinese officials and scholars.

United Airlines places largest 787 Dreamliner order in Boeing history



Washington: Boeing announced that United Airlines has ordered 100 787 Dreamliner aircraft, with the option to purchase 100 more. The deal is the largest 787 Dreamliner order in Boeing's history, reports Xinhua news agency. United Airlines is also purchasing 100 737 MAX jets, exercising 44 existing options and placing 56 new orders. The airline's current orders for Boeing jets have surpassed 530, including more than 430 737 MAX airplanes. "With this investment in its future fleet, the 737 MAX and 787 will help United accelerate its fleet modernization and global growth strategy," said Stan Deal, president and CEO of Boeing Commercial Airplanes.

PANEL PROBING US CAPITOL RIOT TO RELEASE FINAL REPORT NEXT WEEK

Washington | Agencies

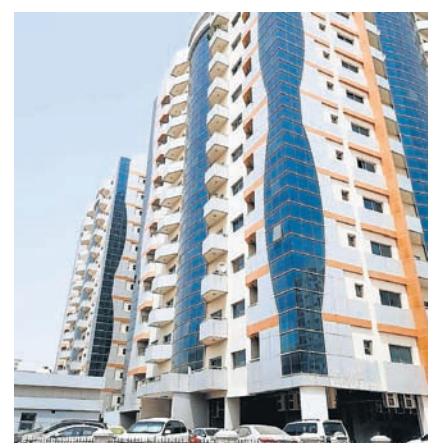
two Republicans. On January 6, 2021, Trump's

The US House select committee investigating the January 2021 Capitol riot will release its final report next week, the panel's chair Bennie Thompson announced. In a statement late Tuesday, the Democrat Congressman said the panel will approve the report on December 19 and release it to the public two days later, reports Xinhua news agency. He had previously said that they would make "criminal referrals" to the Department of Justice (DOJ). It would be up to the DOJ to determine whether it would pursue any prosecution based on the committee's recommendations. Former President Donald Trump has repeatedly lashed out at the panel and its members made up of seven Democrats and



supporters stormed the Capitol in Washington, D.C., and disrupted a joint session of Congress to affirm the 2020 presidential election results. Approximately 140 police officers were assaulted. Authorities have linked at least five deaths to the mayhem. Over 900 individuals have been arrested in nearly all 50 states for crimes related to the breach of the Capitol, including more than 275 individuals charged with assaulting or impeding law enforcement.

5 year-old Indian kid falls to death from Dubai high-rise



Dubai | Agencies

A five-year-old child of Indian descent died after falling from a high-rise building in Al Qusais, east of Dubai, police

said. The girl fell through a tiny window that opened from the ninth floor of the family's apartment near Al Bustan centre at around 9.30 p.m. on December 10, the Khaleej Times reported. "It is a very small window and almost physically impossible for a child to get through," a neighbour said. "I am not sure how it happened, but it is heartbreaking," he said, adding that the child "was an active and sweet girl who always smiled". After finishing official documentation in the UAE, the family is expected to fly the child's body back to India for last rites, the paper reported. The five-year-old's death is a third such mishap to occur this year in UAE. Last month, a three-year-old child of Asian descent died in Sharjah after falling from the 14th floor of a building in the Al Taawun area. In February, a 10-year-old Asian child died after falling from the 32nd floor of a residential tower located on King Faisal Street, Sharjah.

Biden signs bill on same-sex marriage

Washington | Agencies

US President Joe Biden has signed a new landmark bill which establishes statutory authority for same-sex and interracial marriages. Biden signed the Respect for Marriage Act on Tuesday before thousands of guests on the South Lawn in the White House. "Marriage is a simple proposition. Who do you love? And will you be loyal to that person you love? It's not more complicated than that," CNN quoted the President as saying. He said the law recognises that "everyone should have the right to answer those questions for themselves without the government interference", and secures the federal "protec-



tions that come with marriage". "For most of our nation's history, we denied interracial couples and same

sex couples from these protections... "It failed to treat them with equal dignity and respect." And now, this law

requires an interracial marriage and same-sex marriage must be recognized as legal in every state in the nation,"

Biden was quoted as saying. The House of representatives had passed the legislation in a 258-169-1 vote on December 8, with 39 Republicans joining the Democrats in support, after getting through the Senate a week before with 12 Republican senators. The new law officially voids the 1996 Defense of Marriage Act, which defined marriage as between a man and a woman. It mandates that states honour the validity of out-of-state marriage licenses, including same-sex and interracial unions. The legislation was introduced this summer after a conservative Supreme Court justice signaled that rulings on marriage equality and contraception should be reconsidered.



AMIT SHAH TURNS MEDIATOR, MEETS CM SHINDE AND BOMMAI, SAYS WILL RESOLVE DISPUTE IN CONSTITUTIONAL WAY

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The Chief Ministers of Karnataka and Maharashtra have agreed not to press their claims in the decades-long state border dispute till the Supreme Court takes a call on the matter, Union Home Minister Amit Shah said after a meeting with the two leaders. His meeting with Karnataka Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai and Maharashtra Chief Minister Eknath Shinde was held amid a flare-up of the dispute that dates back to 1957.

Over the last weeks, trucks from Maharashtra have been attacked in Karnataka and buses of the southern state have been defaced by workers of the Uddhav Thackeray faction of the Shiv Sena.

"There has been an agreement that till the Supreme Court delivers its verdict, the state governments will not make any claim. The dispute should be resolved through talks. A committee will be formed with three ministers from each state," Shah told reporter after the meeting.

A senior police officer will be deputed to look into the law-and-order issue so travelers and traders from neither state face any problems. Police cases will be filed against those who fan discontent on social media, Shah said.

He has also appealed to opposition parties in both states not to politicise issue and wait for the top court's verdict.



one of which will have its assembly elections next year -- is expected to take deft handling. In Karnataka, the ruling BJP has come under opposition pressure in the run-up to the election. Senior Congress leader Siddaramaiah has accused the BJP of reaping "political benefits" out of the controversy. "Belagavi border issue, which could have been resolved through negotiations, is now allowed to grow so that BJP can take benefits," the Congress leader said. Karnataka has built a second assembly building in Belgavi to

assert its claims. A legislature session is held once a year at the 'Suvarna Vidhana Soudha', modelled on the Vidhana Soudha, the seat of legislature in Bengaluru. In Maharashtra, Opposition Maha Vikas Aghadi has been vocal, with Nationalist Congress chief Sharad Pawar declaring that it is time to take a stand. Eknath Shinde -- who became chief minister with the BJP's backing -- has also pointed out that party founder Bal Thackeray supported "the demand to make Belgaum (Belagavi) a part of Maharashtra"

To avoid Shraddha Walkar-type tragedies, state sets up panel on inter-faith marriages

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The state government has set up a 10-member panel to keep an eye on 'inter-caste marriages', ostensibly to prevent Shraddha Walkar-type incidents in future, even as the Opposition cried foul, here on Wednesday.

Women & Child Welfare Minister Mangal Prabhat Lodha said that the panel was formed after much deliberation to avoid tragedies involving children of inter-caste marriages, particularly if the girls go against their family wishes or are estranged.

The ruling Balasahebchandra Shiv Sena-Bharatiya Janata Party have welcomed the move while the Opposition Nationalist Congress Party slammed the decision terming it as "rubbish, retrograde, nauseating step to spy" on who marries whom.

The panel will serve as a forum for such women and their families where they can get counselling and communicate to resolve issues, and it will study various other policies and laws pertaining to the issue and recommend improvements or solutions.

The move comes barely days after Deputy Chief



Minister Devendra Fadnavis indicated that the state would consider enacting a law on 'love-jihad' after studying similar legislation in other states. Lodha clarified that the panel was not against such (intercaste/interfaith) marriages, but specifically intended to help those women who have been cut-off from their families and attempt to bring them together. The panel will collect all information on registered/unregistered inter-caste/interfaith marriages, those that were solemnised only in religious places, weddings after the couple eloped, check on the wellbeing of the newly-married women and help contact their families if they have severed relations,

and arrange counsellors for such parents not ready to resume relations.

The BSS Spokesperson Krishna Hegde and BJP's Ram Kadam welcomed the initiative terming it as a step in the 'right direction'. NCP former Minister Dr. Jitendra Awhad pounced on the government with a strong reaction against the decision.

"What's this rubbish of a committee to check inter-caste/inter-religion marriages? Who is the government to spy on who marries whom? In a liberal Maharashtra, this is retrograde, nauseating step. Which way is the progressive state heading to...? Stay away from peoples' private lives," said Dr. Awhad.

'Mentally sick' man nabbed for death threats to Sharad Pawar

Team Absolute | Mumbai

A person named Narayankumar Soni - who called up the home of Nationalist Congress Party President Sharad Pawar and issued repeated threats to kill him for not helping resolve his domestic brawls - has been arrested from Bihar, police officials said here on Wednesday.

Soni is reportedly said to be 'mentally disturbed' after his wife deserted him a few years ago and got married to another man. "The accused has been booked under IPC Sections 294, 506(2). He will be produced before a court later in the day," said an official of Gamdevi Police Station which is probing the case. As per preliminary



investigations, Soni was living in Pune for over a decade with his wife.

However, the couple quarrelled frequently and finally she dumped him to get married to another man.

Shocked by her decision, Soni apparently nursed a grudge against Pawar for not helping resolve his domestic

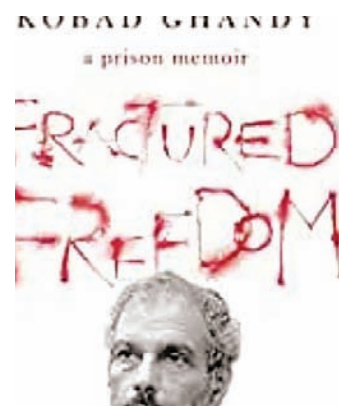
problems and used to call up frequently with threats to 'eliminate' the NCP supremo.

Last week and again this week, Soni rang up the Pawars' home at Silver Oaks in Mumbai several times and threatened in Hindi that he would come to Mumbai and shoot him with a country-made pistol. As a precaution, the NCP leader's security detail registered a complaint with Gamdevi Police Station which has started investigations, and managed to nab Soni late Tuesday night. The developments took place just a day after Pawar celebrated his 82nd birthday on Monday with a grand function attended by top leaders of the NCP Congress and Shiv Sena (UBT) and other well-wishers.

Three members of award selection panel resign from Maharashtra literature board

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Amid a row over the Maharashtra government's decision to withdraw an award for the Marathi translation of alleged Maoist ideologue Kobad Ghandy's memoir, three members of the award selection committee have resigned from the state Literature and Culture Board citing "insult of democratic procedures". The three authors - Dr Pradnya Daya Pawar, Neeraja and Heramb Kulkarni - were also members of the committee that selected the Marathi translation of Ghandy's book "Fractured Freedom: A Prison Memoir" for the Late Yashwantrao Chavan Literature Award 2021. However, the government not only withdrew the award, but also scrapped the award selection com-



mittee. On December 6, the government's Marathi Language department had announced the award to Anagha Lele for her translation of Ghandy's book. But the decision came in for criticism on social



media because of Ghandy's alleged Maoist links. In her statement, Dr Pawar said, "The Maharashtra government's one-sided decision to scrap the selection committee insults the

democratic procedures. I have decided to resign as a member of the Maharashtra State Literature and Culture Board." Kulkarni said, "Ghandy's book is not even banned, still the Maharashtra government back-tracked its own decision to award the translated version of it. This kind of treatment by the government will discourage people in future to be part of such processes. If the board is not going to support us, then I better quit. Please accept my resignation."

A Government Resolution (order) issued on Monday stated that the decision of the selection committee had been reversed for "administrative reasons", and the award, which included cash prize of Rs one lakh, has been withdrawn. The committee too has been scrapped, the GR added.

Ex-Mumbai CoP Param Bir Singh withdraws libel case against Arnab Goswami, fined Rs 1,500

Team Absolute | Mumbai

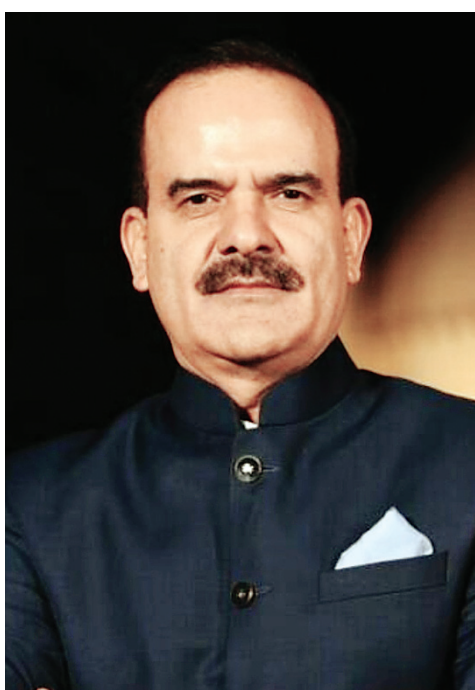
Mumbai's former Commissioner of Police Param Bir Singh - who was suspended just a fortnight prior to his retirement - on Wednesday unconditionally, withdrew his libel suit of Rs 90 lakh against Republic TV Chief Editor Arnab Goswami and his company ARG Outlier.

Permitting Singh to withdraw his suit, the Mumbai city civil court also imposed a cost of Rs 1,500 payable to Goswami, who had to engage a lawyer to defend himself.

Singh, who retired in June 2022, had filed the defamation suit in 2021 seeking Rs 90 lakh plus annual interest of 12 per cent from Goswami for allegedly defaming him and portraying him in a bad light.

Challenging it, Goswami's legal team questioned the maintainability of the suit as Singh - who shot into limelight after exposing the sensational TRP scam in 2020 - was no longer the Mumbai police chief, and raised other points.

On Wednesday, Singh filed an application to withdraw the suit without any conditions, which was allowed and a token cost imposed.



Goswami's lawyers informed that the court that there was no out-of-court settlement and it was (Singh's) decision to withdraw it and they had no objections, and even demanded costs for the "immense torture" Goswami had undergone.

Noting that the plaintiff didn't want to pursue the matter and sought to unconditionally withdraw the suit, the court allowed the same and asked Singh to pay up Rs 1,500 to Goswami.

Singh - who has family connections with a senior BJP leader from Nagpur - came under a cloud after a SUV laded with 20 gelatin sticks and a threat note to industrial tycoon Mukesh Ambani and his family was recovered near their iconic home Antilia on February 25, 2020, sparking off a national-international furore.

However, later he fell from grace with the erstwhile Maha Vikas Aghadi government after he hurled "hearsay" allegations of corruption and misuse of office against the then Home Minister Anil Deshmukh, who is currently in jail since past 13 months in cases lodged by the Enforcement Directorate and the Central Bureau of Investigation.

Fake call centre that 'sold' viagra to Americans busted

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The Borivli police have busted a fake call centre that cheated US citizens on the pretext of selling them aphrodisiacs banned in their country, at a 50 per cent discount. The products would not be delivered after the payment was made, said the police.

According to the police, the bungalow at Gorai in which the call center was run, was earlier used to run coaching classes. The accused had taken the bungalow on rent and ran the call center under the pretext of "Lifestyle Fitness Centre" since March. An informer alerted Senior Inspector Ninad Sawant of the Borivli police station about it. "Under the supervision of DCP Ajay Kumar Bansal, a special team was formed and many officers from the Anti-Terrorism Cell, Cyber Cell, and Detection were sent for a raid. In the presence of Inspector Vijay Madye, personnel detained 16 people including two women, and seized 11 hard disks and computers from the spot," a police officer said. Eleven of the employees were let off.

During interrogation, it was found that the accused would call people in the USA on the pretext of selling them sex performance



enhancers like Viagra, Cialis, Levitra, and jellies, and would pretend to book their order and take money for it. After the payment through credit and debit card, the person who ordered the products was left waiting for a delivery that was never made. Five people were arrested including the call center owner, while the mastermind is still at large.

"The mastermind, Shadab Shaikh, is at large. He had been arrested in a similar case in the past in Mumbai and also in another state. We are searching for him," said another police officer. The accused have been arrested under sections 276, 417, 419, 420, and 34 of IPC and sections 65, 66(K), 66(D), 72(a), and 75 of the IT Act. "They were produced before the court on Wednesday and remanded in police custody till December 17," said Senior Inspector Ninad Sawant of Borivli police station.

Man knocked down, 'run over' by bus, walks up to a miraculous escape!

Team Absolute | Mumbai

An unidentified middle-aged Mumbai man was knocked down by a bus in Powai, and it ran over him even as other horrified pedestrians watched on.

The incident happened at 2.40 p.m. on Tuesday, just outside the Everest Heights Buildings near LakeSide complex in the fashionable Powai area and was captured in a CCTV that was shared late on Tuesday, and immediately went viral on social media networks.

The stunning 45-seconds video has captured vehicles moving slowly on a narrow but crowded road without a divider and several pedestri-



ans walking around or crossing the road carefully.

Suddenly, a man attired in full white kurta-pyjama suit starts crossing the road when an oncoming bus loaded with students knocks him down from behind, he stumbles and tries to get up, but is again thrown flat and the bus 'runs over' him completely.

As some shocked pedestrians and even a local building security guard noticed the "accident", they waved and

shouted at the bus driver, who halted the vehicle and opened his door to peer at the commotion.

Moments later, the "run-over" man himself got up, apparently shaken but unscathed, and hurriedly walked up to the bus driver to register his protest, as the video cuts off.

A local marketing consultant Pradeep S. Menon said that traffic has assumed crazy proportions in the residential-cum-commercial Powai-Chandivali areas, and the Mumbai Traffic Police and BMC must pay urgent attention to avoid such incidents "which may not always result in a miracle".

Over 90 former corporators write to CM Shinde alleging corruption, lack of transparency in BMC

Team Absolute | Mumbai

A group of 94 former BMC corporators has written to CM Eknath Shinde, alleging a "lack of transparency" and "corruption" in the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation ever since the term of the city's 227 corporators ended this March. The elections to the wealthiest civic body were scheduled for this October but have been postponed on account of the issues of OBC reservations and delimitation of wards pending in the courts. State-appointed administrator and Municipal Commissioner Iqbal Singh Chahal is now the lone administrator of the BMC and his writ runs unchallenged.

The lead signatories of the letter included floor leaders of Shiv Sena Mayor Kishori Pednekar, Samajwadi Party leader Raees Sheikh, Congress LoP Ravi Raja, and NCP's leader Rakhi Jadhav.

The letter stated that a "lack of transparency and accountability, ad hoc and arbitrary transfer, finan-

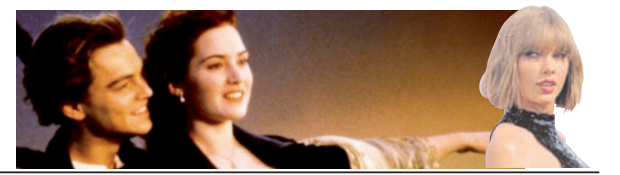


cial mismanagement" has led to the collapse of civic administration and governance of Mumbai.

"Ninety-Four former BMC corporators from different political parties, including Shiv Sena, NCP, Samajwadi Party and MNS, have written a letter to Maharashtra CM Eknath Shinde, alleging lack of transparency and financial mismanagement in BMC under the rule of state-appointed administrator and municipal commissioner, Iqbal Singh Chahal," said Opposition leader in BMC and Congress leader Ravi Raja.

Refuting the allegations, BMC commissioner Chahal said, "There is no lack of transparency as 100 per cent of resolutions pertaining to decisions taken by BMC are transparently available on the BMC website for anybody's scrutiny, without exception (since the tenure of Administrator started w.e.f March 8, 22)."

"The financial position of BMC is excellent. The financial reserves of BMC have increased from Rs 77,000 crores in 2020 to Rs 87,000 crore as of today. So, there is no question of financial mismanagement or collapse," Chahal added.



KATE HUDSON TO RELEASE DEBUT MUSIC ALBUM

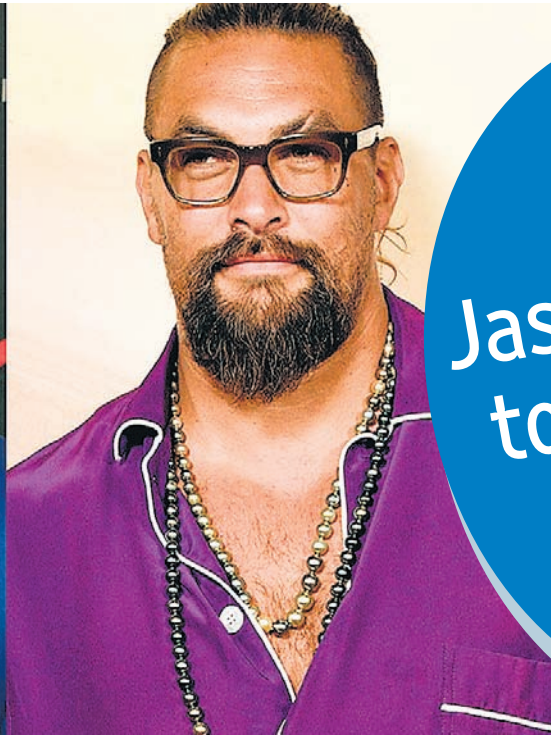
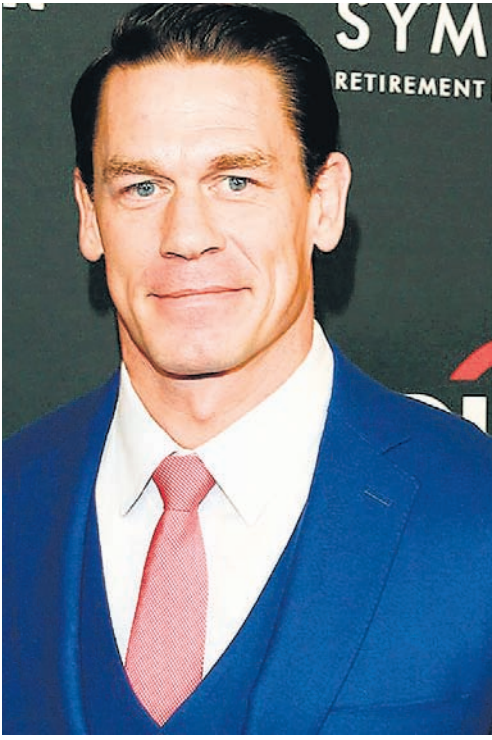
Los Angeles | Agencies

Bride Wars' actress Kate Hudson is venturing into music and dropping her debut album next year. During an appearance on 'The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon', Hudson said that during the onset of the coronavirus pandemic, she was determined to live her life with no regrets, reports. "You know, I had this thing (during) COVID ... Every time you're doing interviews, people are like, 'Do you have any regrets?' I go, 'I'm early 40s... not yet.' But during COVID, I was like, 'You know, what am I doing?'"

According to the reports, she explained that she's been a songwriter since she was 19, but "never shared" her work. "I just thought that would be one of my great regrets. I have no expectations," said the star of her forthcoming project. "I just want to put a record out, and so I'm doing it. And I'm really proud of it. I can't wait."

Asked when her music will be available, Hudson confirmed that it will be released "next year."

Hudson first revealed that she was taking her talents to the recording studio in April. At the time, the Golden Globe winner shared an Instagram photo of her singing in a rehearsal space and announced plans to record her first album.



John Cena & Jason Momoa together for an action comedy

Los Angeles | Agencies

Hollywood stars John Cena and Jason Momoa will be starring in the rowdy new action comedy 'Killer Vacation'. Warner Bros. has recruited the muscle bound actors for the feature project, plot details for which are currently under wraps. The pair met on the set of the upcoming conclusions to the 'Fast and the Furious' franchise and were looking to take their natural chemistry to another film, reports. Those familiar with

the project compared it to fun, splashy adventures like 'True Lies'.

Momoa, of course, is a major ingredient in all things DC, having appeared as Aquaman in several films. He is set to reprise his role as the King of Atlantis in 'Aquaman and the Lost Kingdom.' Momoa also recently starred in another Warner Bros. release, 'Dune.'

Cena appeared in 'The Suicide Squad' and its HBO Max spinoff, 'Peacemaker' (his dance sequence in tighty whities

was a highlight of this or any TV season). Safran and Gunn were intimately involved in all things Peacemaker with Gunn creating the character for Cena and then conceiving of the spinoff.

Cena next stars in 'Freelance', an upcoming American action-comedy film directed by 'Taken's' Pierre Morel.

I was certain I was from another planet: Nicolas Cage

Los Angeles | Agencies

Hollywood actor Nicolas Cage thought he was an alien when he was a child, only to be surprised when doctors revealed he was in fact human. The Hollywood star said he was shocked to find he had "normal organs and a normal skeleton" during a check-up. Prior to his visit, he said he believed he was from another planet. The star said he had trouble relating to people and was socially awkward, reports. He revealed: "My father told me he felt like he had to introduce himself to me because I was such an alien. I was shocked the day I went to the doctor's office as a child and found out that I had normal organs and a normal skeleton because I was certain I was from another planet."

He continued: "I had difficulties connecting with other people. When I saw David Bowie in 'The Man Who Fell to Earth', I realised I needed to do something. So I became an actor."

In September, Cage had a child with new wife Riko Shibata, who is 30 years, his junior. It's the pair's first child together and the actor's third - he also has two sons from previous relationships. Daughter August was born on September 7.



Patty Jenkins on 'Wonder Woman 3'

Los Angeles | Agencies

Filmmaker Patty Jenkins has broken her silence over the news that she parted ways with Warner Bros. on a sequel to 2020's 'Wonder Woman 1984'. "I never walked away," Jenkins shared in a post on Twitter, reports. "I was open to considering anything asked of me. It was my understanding there was nothing I could do to move anything forward at this time. DC is obviously buried in changes they are having to make, so I understand these decisions are difficult right now."

Jenkins' statement comes almost a week after news first broke that Warner Bros. leadership had passed on her treatment for a third "Wonder Woman" movie, which set off a torrent of speculation about what the news might indicate about the future of DC. In her statement, Jenkins said that story is "simply not true": "I'm not one to talk about private career matters, but I will not allow inaccuracies to continue."

Roughly an hour after Jenkins posted her statement, Gunn supported her on Twitter, replying, "I can attest that all of Peter and my interactions with you were only pleasant and professional."

"When I did, Lucasfilm asked me to consider coming back to ('Rogue Squadron') after ('Wonder Woman 3'), which I was honored to do, so I agreed," Jenkins wrote. "They made a new deal with me. In fact, I am still on it and that project has been in active development ever since. I don't know if it will happen or not. We never do until the development process is complete, but I look forward to its potential ahead."

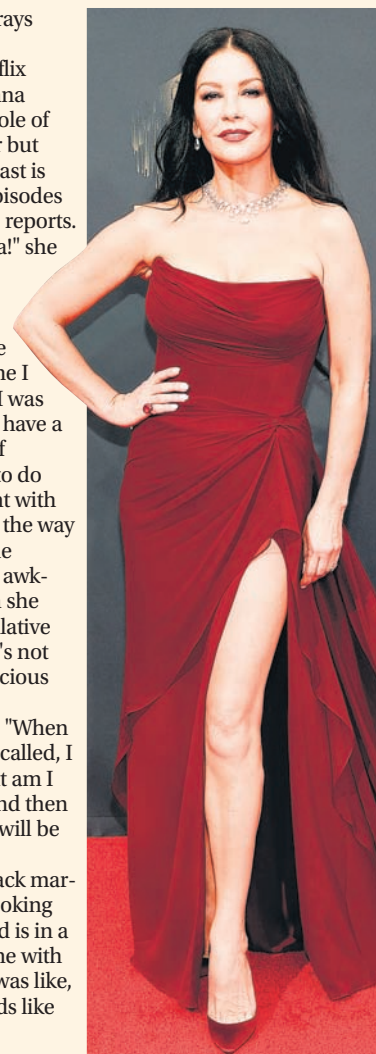


Catherine Zeta-Jones unsure if 'Wednesday' will get Season 2

Los Angeles | Agencies

Actress Catherine Zeta-Jones doesn't know whether 'Wednesday' will be renewed for a second season on Netflix. The actress portrays matriarch Morticia Addams in the Netflix series that stars Jenna Ortega in the title role of the gothic teenager but admitted that the cast is unaware if more episodes are on the horizon, reports. "We have no idea!" she said when asked if there will be a season two. She said, "People have been telling me I look like her since I was six years old. And I have a pretty dark sense of humour but I had to do things a bit different with my physicality and the way I carried myself. She almost has a social awkwardness. So when she does toxic, manipulative things, you know it's not coming out of malicious intent."

The actress said: "When Jerry Bruckheimer called, I was thinking, 'What am I gonna play in it? And then they told me that I will be playing this badass antiques dealer, black market trader who is looking for this treasure and is in a cat and mouse game with the leading lady. I was like, 'Yo, stop, this sounds like fun.'"



ABSOLUTE PIC OF THE DAY



Salma Hayek

AVATAR: THE WAY OF WATER: IS A DELIGHT WITH SOME DENTS

FILM REVIEW
BY SHACHI CHATURVEDI
Director:- James Cameron
Cast:- Sam worthington (Jake) & Zoe Saldana (Neytiri)
Duration:- 3hr 12 mins
Rating:- 3/5

Synopsis

Neytiri and Jake Sully have started a family and are working hard to stay together. However, they must go from their house, travel throughout Pandora. When a long-forgotten menace reappears, Jake is forced to engage in a challenging fight with humans.

Review

A film that the entire globe has been awaiting, Avatar: The Way of Water, the film that has been on our wish list ever since the release of its first instalment, is finally here. But is this chapter of Avatar as compelling as the first? No, sadly.

The film leads us to Jack Sully's universe after opening in a very beautiful place, a jungle. Jack Sully now lives happily with his family and other members of his tribe following the defeat of the Sky People.

The clan is presently headed by Jack. How will the residents of Pandora survive? What is Jack's strategy for taking down the sky people? These are all questions that the film will answer.

Perhaps up to a point. The same story, in my opinion, could have been



completed in two hours with far better editing.

To be clear the film is not entirely bad. There is much more to this movie than just what makes us sad. From the new-borns to the long gone-s this movie has it all. When it comes to the "way of water", Oh good god the way is so beautiful and charismatic that for once you will wish to be a mermaid and play in it.

Speaking of water, the Sully family had to flee their own house and took refuge in the Na'vi's village. The Na'vi are aquatic creatures that depend on it for their own existence.

The theme of "Sullys remain together" permeates the entire film; there is even a dialogue that reads, "No matter where we go, this family is our fortress."

Although there are flaws in the story, you will laugh, cry, fall in love, and occasionally experience all of these emotions at once while watching the film. Regarding the film's technical aspects. Without a doubt, the VFX are mind-blowingly stunning. You want to be one of the avatars and live in their world because they are so captivating. The background music for the movie is fairly good and fits the scene. The songs are touching and well put.

Conclusion

It is acknowledged that this film has flaws, yet nothing prevents one from finding it entertaining. It has been a movie that all Avatar fans have been awaiting, therefore it is only the justice to go and watch the film on big screen.



IND v BAN 1st Test

PUJARA, IYER SMASH FIFTIES, CARRY INDIA TO 278/6

Chattogram | Agencies

Cheteshwar Pujara and Shreyas Iyer smashed half-centuries to lead India's recovery from 48/3 to 278/6 at stumps on day one of first Test against Bangladesh at the Zahur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium.

In the first session, Bangladesh had taken out Shubman Gill, KL Rahul, and Virat Kohli to reduce India to 48/3 in 19.3 overs. Pujara and Rishabh Pant (46) led the initial recovery for India through a counter-attacking 64-run stand.

Pujara would fall ten runs short of his century as left-arm spinner Taijul Islam took him out to complete his three-wicket haul after beating him several times in the day, Iyer remained unbeaten on 82 off 169 balls on an absorbing day of Test cricket. Bangladesh, despite getting six wickets and Taijul being their standout bowler, would be wondering how the day would have been if they hadn't dropped Pujara and Iyer on 12 and 67 respectively.

Pant's arrival brought a flurry of runs for India, through his trademark pull and sweep off the spinners.

Pujara began the final session with a handsome cut through cover on width offered by Hossain. Taijul troubled Iyer, but he brought out an authoritative drive off the front-foot against Ebadot. Pujara cashed on Taijul's short balls to hit successive fours, first of which got him his fifty.



Three overs later, Iyer pulled Shabib through mid-wicket to notch up his fifty. After Taijul beat him on the outer edge, Iyer danced down the pitch on the very next ball to lift over wide mid-on for four, before whipping Mehidy with disdain over mid-wicket. Bangladesh had success in the next over as Taijul turned it just enough from middle-and-off stump line to beat the outside edge of Pujara and knock off the off-stump, sending him back for 90 off 203 balls.

Rahul opened the face of the bat to steer a length ball from Khaled

Ahmed but chopped on. In the next over, Kohli tried to flick through leg-side on backfoot, but was trapped right in front of middle stump by a sharp turning in delivery from Taijul.

Brief scores

India 278/6 in 90 overs (Cheteshwar Pujara 90, Shreyas Iyer 82 not out; Taijul Islam 3/84, Mehidy Hasan Miraz 2/71) against Bangladesh.

FINA World Swimming Championships

Chahat Arora sets national record in 100m breaststroke

Los Angeles | Agencies

Indian swimmer Chahat Arora set a national record in the women's 100m breaststroke at the FINA World Swimming Championships (25m) 2022 on Wednesday after she finished the race in 1:13.13s at the Melbourne Sports and Aquatic Centre pool.

Prior to Chahat, it was Annie Jain's 1:13:50 time that was the best performance by an Indian woman in the 100m breaststroke.

Arora came third in heat 1 but she was far off from qualifying for the semi-finals, finishing 42nd among 55 competing across eight heats. Notably, only the top 16 progressed to the semi-finals.



Chahat will participate in the women's 50m breaststroke event on Saturday. She

created India's national record in the 50m breaststroke at the National Aquatic Championships in September with a timing of 32.94s.

Meanwhile, Siva Sridhar will compete in the 100m individual medley on Thursday. He bettered his national record in the men's 200m individual medley on Tuesday but failed to qualify for the final.

The FINA World Swimming Championships (25m) 2022, the 16th edition of the competition, will conclude on Sunday.

ICC launches maiden U-19 Women's T20 World Cup

Benoni (South Africa) | The International Cricket Council (ICC) launched the inaugural ICC U-19 Women's T20 World Cup here on Wednesday, with one month to go until the first ball is bowled in the tournament.

The event which is a first of its kind in world cricket will take place from January 14 to 29, 2023 and will see the future stars of the women's game compete in 41 matches played across four venues in Benoni and Potchefstroom in 16 days of



competitive cricket. The 16 teams in the fray include Indonesia and Rwanda, who will feature in an ICC World Cup for the first time ever. Eleven full member nations gained automatic entry in this historic edition: Australia,

Bangladesh, England, India, Ireland, New Zealand, Pakistan, South Africa, Sri Lanka, the West Indies and Zimbabwe.

The semi-finals and final will take place at JB Marks Oval in Potchefstroom on January 29, followed by the ICC Women's T20 World Cup in Cape Town, Paarl and Gqeberha which begins on February 10, 2022. The two events will play an important role in leaving a lasting legacy to grow girls and women participation in South Africa.

Blind T20 World Cup

India beat Sri Lanka by 7 wickets to qualify for semifinal

Team Absolute | New Delhi

India eased past Sri Lanka by 7 wickets to confirm their place in the semifinals of the 3rd T20 World Cup for the Blind, which was played at the Panjim Gymkhana Sports Club in Goa on Wednesday.

India qualified for the semifinals after finishing on top of the table following the completion of the round robin matches. Hosts will face South Africa in the first semifinals while the second semifinals will be played between Sri Lanka and Bangladesh.

Sri Lanka won the toss and elected to bat. The Indian bowlers were disciplined from the start and gave the Lankan openers a tough time in the middle. Both openers were dismissed by Sunil Ramesh in the 5th over of the innings.

Ruwan Wasantha and Damith Sadruwan tried to rebuild the innings but the Indian bowlers bowled tight spells giving the batters very few chances to score. They



lost wickets at regular intervals which restricted their scoring and eventually finished their innings on 137 for the loss of 8 wickets.

Chasing the target, Indian opener Prakash Jayaramaiah found his touch and was scoring runs at will. He continued to score freely even after the early dismissal of vice-captain D. Venkateswara Rao. Such was the dominance of Prakash that he stitched together a 71 run partnership for the second

wicket with Lalit Meena in which the latter scored just 4 runs.

Brief scores

Sri Lanka - 137/8 in 20 overs (Ruwan Wasantha 40, Damith Sadruwan 18; Ajay Kumar Reddy 2/18, Sunil Ramesh 2/15) lost to India - 139/3 in 11.5 overs (Prakash Jayaramaiah 81, Ajay Kumar Reddy 20 not out) by 7 wickets.

National Athletics Championship for the Blind commences in Delhi



Team Absolute | New Delhi

The 22nd edition of Usha National Athletics Championship for the Blind -- the largest sports event -- for the visually challenged in the country, commenced at the Thyagraj Stadium, here on Wednesday.

The championship, organised by Indian Blind Sports Association (IBSA) bi-annually, will be celebrating the true spirit of athletes in the country with over 336 prizes to be won across disciplines over the next three days.

Being held from December 14 to 16, the event was inau-

gurated by Meenakshi Lekhi, Minister of State for External Affairs and Culture of India, who also launched the coffee-table book, 'The Play of Dots' -- that highlights the accomplishments of unsung heroes, whose struggles often go unnoticed.

Usha, who is the sponsor of the National Championship, has been an avid supporter and promoter of a wide array of inclusive sporting initiatives across the country, including its association with the Mumbai Indians team for IPL, Ultimate Flying Disc, Golf, cricket for the specially abled, as well as football.

Men's Test batting rankings

Labuschagne equals Kohli with a career-high rating

Dubai | Agencies

Australia's in-form batter Marnus Labuschagne added another feather to his crown by drawing level with India great Virat Kohli on the all-time list and bringing up a new career-high rating on the latest ICC Men's Test Batting Rankings.

The newly-crowned No.1 Test batter in the world, Labuschagne, who claimed the top ranking from England's Joe Root earlier this month, moved further ahead at the top of the list for Test batters following an outstanding series against the West Indies.

The right-hander amassed a whopping 502 runs for the two-match series, with his magnificent knock of 163 during the first innings of the second Test in



Adelaide helping Labuschagne join Kohli on a career-high rating of 937 points. That brilliant performance sees Labuschagne now hold the equal 11th-best Test rating of all time and just three Australian players -- Donald Bradman

(961), Steve Smith (947) and Ricky Ponting (942) -- have held better ratings, the ICC said in a report on its official website.

Rishabh Pant is the highest-ranked Indian, static at fifth with 801 points while Rohit Sharma retained his

10th position in the rankings with 746 points. Kohli is currently ranked 12th with 714 points. On Wednesday, he lost a chance of improving his position when could manage only 1 runs against Bangladesh in the first Test in Chattogram.

FIFA World Cup

ALVAREZ'S BRACE, MESSI'S GOAL GUIDES ARGENTINA INTO FINAL

Doha | Agencies

Lionel Messi kept his World Cup dream on track as he scored one and set up another as Argentina romped home into the final of the FIFA World Cup with an emphatic 3-0 win over 2018 finalists Croatia at Lusail Stadium on Tuesday night.

At the end of half time La Albeceste led 2-0 as Messi converted a spot kick in the 34th minute to give them the lead and Julian Alvarez struck with a sublime solo effort to give the South American side a comfortable 2-0 lead going into the half time break.

Argentina kept the scoring tempo to add a third one in the 69th minute with Alvarez netting his second of the match. Croatia were fully in control in the opening 25 minutes or so with Argentina not being able to make any telling breakthroughs, but once Argentina were awarded their penalty they did not look back as the momentum shifted quickly.

Croatia dominated the ball, controlling more than 60 percent of possession. Still, they managed to do precious little with it, failing to register a single shot on target. Argentina was ready to sit back and battle as Croatia advanced up the field.

Messi scored the opening goal of the game against Croatia 11 minutes



before half-time, blasting into the top-right corner from the penalty spot after Alvarez was fouled by Dominik Livakovic.

The young striker scores a goal of some quality as a failed Croatia corner leads to an Argentinian break. The break soon finds Alvarez, who

picks up the ball just past the halfway line and sets off on a run with a couple of Croatian defenders on him. As he gets closer to the box, he is almost dispossessed not once, but twice, before he pokes the ball past Livakovic to send the Argentina fans into delirium, 2-0.

For Argentina's third goal Messi put in a masterclass as he rushed down near the right touchline, with Josko Gvardiol hot on his heels and after making his way to the penalty box, and as he neared the near post on the right side, he saw Alvarez slightly open. The number 10 slips in a quick pass and Alvarez was able to slot it past the right of the keeper to put Argentina one step closer to the final, 3-0.

Messi praises Argentina coaching staff after reaching final

Lusail | Lionel Messi hailed Argentina's coaching staff for masterminding his team's 3-0 victory over Croatia in their FIFA World Cup semifinal here on Wednesday.

"This group is very intelligent and knows how to suffer both with and without the ball," Messi told reporters. "Our coaching staff is great, they pay attention to every little thing."

"They let us know about every detail and that helps us to know what to do in all situations," Messi said. "We know the game would be played that way. We knew they would have a lot of possession. But we also knew that it would play to our advantage because they were a little untidy and left us with lots of space."

"I'm feeling well and strong in every match," Messi said. "Personally, I've felt happy at this World Cup and thankfully, I've been able to help the team." Messi said Argentina's 2-1 loss to Saudi Arabia in the opening match served as a wake-up call to the team. "It was a big blow," the Paris Saint-Germain forward said. "We had a 36-game unbeaten run and nobody thought we'd lose that match. It was an acid test and since then we've played five finals. Thankfully we've been able to win all five. Losing that first game actually helped us to grow."

Ranji Trophy

Like father, like son: Arjun Tendulkar slams ton on debut

Porvorim (Goa) | Agencies

Arjun Tendulkar emulated his legendary father Sachin Tendulkar by slamming a century on his Ranji Trophy debut when he scored a hundred for Goa against Rajasthan in a Group C encounter here on Wednesday.

He emulated his illustrious father, Sachin Tendulkar scored 100 not out on his Ranji Trophy debut for Bombay, now renamed Mumbai, against Gujarat at Wankhede on December 11, 1988. He became the youngest Indian to score a century on debut in first-class cricket aged 15 years and 232 days.

Arjun Tendulkar, who was batting on four at stumps on the first day of the match on Tuesday, reached the three-figure mark with a well-controlled knock and was eventually out for 120, caught by



Kamlesh Nagarkoti off his own bowling. He faced 207 deliveries during his knock and struck 16 fours and two sixes.

He shared a partnership of 221 runs for the sixth wicket with Suyash Prabhudesai (batting on 187) at the time of reporting. In the 221-run partnership off 374 balls, Tendulkar contributed 120 runs while Prabhudesai contributed 99. Goa were 422/6 in 144th over when Arjun Tendulkar was out.

Arjun Tendulkar had earlier this year switched affiliation to Goa after representing Mumbai in age-group cricket.



I badly wanted to work with Ajay Bahl: Taapsee Pannu

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actress Taapsee Pannu, who is receiving a lot of positive response to her recently released streaming movie 'Blurr', "badly" wanted to work with the film's director Ajay Bahl, who is known for films like 'B.A. Pass' and 'Section 375'.

Taapsee, as once mentioned by director Anurag Kashyap, is known for chasing projects with potential and putting them together - 'Badla', 'Dobaaraa' and 'Blurr' are some of the examples. For 'Blurr', the actress approached Ajay through her co-producer Vishal Rana and asked him to work on 'Blurr' as a director with herself serving as the co-producer.

Talking about the same, she said, "Ajay sir is one of those directors I badly wanted to work with! I remember messaging him after watching 'Section 375' about how much I

admired his work and craft. After becoming a co-producer on 'Blurr', I recommended Vishal (co-producer) to reach-out to Ajay Bahl and crossed my fingers that he agrees to direct it."

She further mentioned, "So many times I have reached out to directors whose work I am fond of but not every time it materialises into a film. This was the first time I managed to do it because now I am in the capacity of a producer. I am so glad he gave it a nod because he was my top choice for this kind of a film." She shared, "I think the rest of the cast including Gulshan Devaiah are the people who actually made it lighter for me. There was so much intensity in front of the camera, I really needed some happy moments off screen and Gulshan and my supporting cast did help me bring about that off the camera", she added.

SHEEN DAS OPENS UP ON JOINING THE CAST OF TURKISH DRAMA

Team Absolute | Mumbai

'Piyaa Albela' actress Sheen Das, who is currently seen playing parallel lead in the show 'Kathaa Ankahee', shares why she decided to take up the project and how she feels about playing part of a remake of Turkish drama.

Sheen says: "Although I had never worked in a remake, there was no turning back once I was offered this role. I was moved by the core concept of the show that revolves around a repentant love story."

As Katha, played by Aditi Dev, is facing a number of challenges and difficulties because of her son's illness and has no money for the treatment, Rewa is doing everything to support her.

"My character Rewa is a very endearing character and you can easily relate to her because of her friendly and considerate nature. Like, I can relate to Rewa, and the bond she has with Katha is one of those relationships that goes beyond blood ties and is beyond what the audience is yet to see. Being Katha's closest friend, Rewa understands the pain she is going through

seeing Aarav's critical condition; therefore she is always there for Katha as a shoulder to lean on," she adds.

The actress continues to share about her on-screen personality and how she does everything for Katha and considers her problem as her own.

"She treats Katha's struggle as her own struggles; hence she always advises and motivates Katha with ideas so that she doesn't give up. She truly is an example of a perfect friend who is always there by your side whether it's in your good or bad times. I am really happy to be working along with such a talented team and it's been a great experience so far," concludes Sheen Das. 'Kathaa Ankahee' is a remake of the Turkish drama 'Binbir Gece' (1001 Nights in English) featuring Aditi Sharma and Adnan Khan.



WILL POWER IS THE MOST IMPORTANT ELEMENT IN ANY WEIGHT-LOSS: PIA BAJPIEE

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Pia Bajpiee, who is better known for her work for South Indian cinema, talks about her eating habits and workout schedule that help her maintain a proper figure and stay fit.

Talking about her diet, Pia said: "I am a hardcore vegetarian and I am blessed with a great dietitian who helps me regulate my intake according to my feasibility and keeps me hooked on a simple yet practical diet. I have two options for each meal, one to follow if I'm at home and the other if I'm ever out. This makes it really easy to keep steady. I eat only healthy, home cooked meals and avoid junk food altogether." Sharing a little bit about her workout patterns, she said: "Different workouts work for different people and it took me a little time to understand that for me heavy weight training has always made me look muscular which is not the look I'm going for. So what suits me is crossfit training with cardio and

functional training." Pia wraps up with a piece of advice for her fans: "Will power is the most important element in any weight-loss and if that is missing, no diet or workout will work because being steady and determined on a task requires a lot of effort and control over your eating habits."



Rohit Shetty, Ranveer Singh recalls their "circus" experiences

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Filmmaker Rohit Shetty and Bollywood actor Ranveer Singh shared their childhood memories associated with circus on 'The Kapil Sharma Show'. If Rohit enjoyed watching lions, Ranveer was scared to see hippopotamus in the circus as a kid.

Rohit revealed: "I have been to many circuses during childhood. There used to be lions which are now banned, lots of jokers and my favourite 'maut ka kuan' used to be there in which there were bike and car stunts as well." Ranveer also added: "I have seen a hippopotamus in a circus! I am not even kidding, in the Rambo circus and Reclamation circus there used to be hippos. It used to be scary as they are aggressive creatures because if something goes wrong, they can be very dangerous." Furthermore, the filmmaker also talked about his movie and expressed his happiness on looking at Kapil's mother on the show. Rohit said: "I am sure along with Kapil's mother and her friends, they are surely going to enjoy the film. We have tried our best to recreate the 60s era because we as filmmakers usually make films meant for the mass audience or the youngsters but this film is for all, especially for people at our home like our mothers, grandparents, uncles and aunts. We have tried experimenting with this and I have a strong feeling that everybody will love the film."

Shehnaaz Gill says she ran away from her home to fulfill her dreams

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Shehnaaz Gill revealed that she ran away from home to fulfill her dreams during the "Senior Citizen Special" episode of singing reality show "Indian Idol 13". She also talked about taking her mom, Parminder Kaur Gill for her first international trip to Dubai. When contestant, Debosmita Roy told Shehnaaz about her family and how her parents supported her in her singing career, the former "Bigg Boss 13" contestant said that she is lucky to have supportive parents. She shared: "There are very few families in our country who support working women. 'Main apne sapnon ko poora karne ke liye ghar se bhaag gayi thi (I ran away from my house to fulfill my dreams). Debosmita, you are very lucky to have such supportive parents. Always stand by them and make them proud."

Shehnaaz, who recently featured in the music video "Ghani Syaani" with the popular rapper MC Square, also said: "I recently took my mother for her first international trip to Dubai and the feeling was surreal. It always feels great to do something for your parents."



INSTAGRAM PIC OF THE DAY



Rashi Khanna