

absolute india

VOL. 6, ISSUE 22, NEW DELHI | FRIDAY, DECEMBER 9, 2022 | ₹5 | PAGE 08

PUBLISHED SIMULTANEOUSLY FROM NEW DELHI, MUMBAI AND BHOPAL

NATION >02
Parliament can enact a law but power to scrutinise it lies...



HOLLYWOOD > 06
I think we would be remiss not to discuss drugs effect on me: RDJ ...



SPORTS > 07
Sudhir Saxena is all set to participate in Asian Kickboxing...



Gujarat - Himachal Pradesh assembly and bypoll results

BJP ENJOYS LANDSLIDE VICTORY IN GUJARAT

Gandhinagar | Agencies

The BJP scored a phenomenal victory in Gujarat, Prime Minister Narendra Modi's home state, smashing the Congress's record in a strong performance ahead of the 2024 national election. The Congress, pulverized in Gujarat, won in Himachal Pradesh.

The BJP has won 156 seats in Gujarat in yet another super-sized victory powered by PM Modi. The Congress, which delivered a strong performance in 2017, dropped to its worst Gujarat tally ever, 17. With a dispirited and belated campaign, the party had "conceded" long before the election.

The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) of Arvind Kejriwal celebrated the silver lining after a disappointing show in Gujarat (five) and Himachal Pradesh (zero) - its "national party" status because of the Gujarat vote share.

Despite its energetic, all-in campaign, AAP failed to dent the BJP in "Fort Modi". What it did was to eat into the



Congress's votes, effectively helping the BJP rack up an even bigger total.

The BJP has not lost in Gujarat since 1995. Remarkably, the party has not faced anti-incumbency in its 27-year rule.

Bhupendra Patel, who took over as Chief Minister a year ago, will be sworn in for a second term on December 12 (Monday). Home Minister Amit Shah

had said Patel would return as Chief Minister if the BJP won again.

The Congress, focused on its big picture Bharat Jodo Yatra, was seen as putting up a token campaign in Gujarat, where it won 77 seats in 2017, and in Himachal Pradesh, where the trend of the last few decades gives it a bonus point.

Congress gets majority in Himachal with 40 seats, BJP shrinks to 25

The newly-elected Congress MLAs of Himachal Pradesh will meet in Chandigarh on Friday in the presence of state in-charge Rajeev Shukla and special observer and Chhattisgarh CM Bhupesh Baghel. At the meeting, a decision may be taken to empower Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge to nominate the legislative party leader.

Shimla | Agencies

The Congress on Thursday got an absolute majority in the Himachal Pradesh Assembly elections, winning 40 seats - six over than the half-way mark of 34 in the 68-member House, while the outgoing BJP was reduced to 25.

Many of the outgoing ministers including Suresh Bhardwaj, Ram Lal Markanda, Sarveen Chaudhary, Rakesh Pathania, Govind Thakur, Virender Kanwar, and Rajiv Saizal lost the election. Three Independents, comprising two BJP rebels and one Congress, emerged victorious. Himachal Pradesh has not voted any incumbent government back to power since 1985.

Thakur retained his stronghold Seraj in Mandi from where he has won six consecutive elections by a margin of over 22,000 votes over Chet Ram of the Congress. Prominent victorious



Congress leaders included journalist-turned-politician and prospective Chief Minister Mukesh Agnihotri, former state party chief Sukhwinder Singh Sukhu from Nadaun, former Minister Sudhir Sharma from Dharamsala, Rajinder Singh Rana from Sujanpur, Col. Dhani Ram Shandil, from Solan, and second-time lawmaker Vikramaditya Singh, son of six-time Chief Minister late Virbhadra Singh. Six-time Congress MLA Asha Kumari

lost her stronghold Dalhousie from her nearest rival and BJP candidate D.S. Thakur by a margin of 9,918 votes. Asha Kumari was among the Chief Ministerial probables. In the 2017 assembly elections, the BJP had won 44 seats and the Congress 21, with one seat going to CPI-M, and two to Independent candidates. Pratibha Singh, who has not contested the Assembly polls, has been projected as the prospective Chief Minister too.

PEOPLE BLESSED POLITICS OF DEVELOPMENT: MODI

"Thank you Gujarat. I am overcome with a lot of emotions seeing the phenomenal election results. People blessed politics of development and at the same time expressed a desire that they want this momentum to continue at a greater pace. I bow to Gujarat's Jan Shakti."



ITS PRIYANKA EFFECT IN HIMACHAL AS RAHUL GANDHI SKIPPED CAMPAIGN

New Delhi: Congress leader Rahul Gandhi skipped the Himachal Pradesh Assembly polls and Priyanka Gandhi Vadra campaigned for the party which has yielded good results. The party is on the verge of forming the government in the state with leads in 38 seats. The Congress General Secretary failed miserably in Uttar Pradesh, but has outperformed the BJP in the hill state which changes governments after every five years. Priyanka Gandhi addressed several rallies and held roadshows in the state. Her pick, Rajeev Shukla was made the in-charge of Himachal Pradesh and along with him micromanaged the show as the party was going into election for the first time after the demise of stalwart like Virbhadra Singh.



SP WINS MAINPURI, KHATAULI GOES TO RLD, BJP TAKES RAMPUR

Lucknow | Agencies

The Samajwadi Party (SP) on Thursday scored a major victory when it retained the Mainpuri Lok Sabha seat and wrested the Khatauli Assembly seat from the BJP. The BJP won the Rampur Assembly seat.

SP candidate Dimple Yadav won the Mainpuri seat with a margin of 2.9 lakh votes, defeating Raghuraj Shakya of the BJP. The Mainpuri victory is doubly sig-

nificant for Akhilesh Yadav since it not only means retaining the family seat but also spells a patch up between him and his estranged uncle Shivpal Yadav.

In Khatauli, Madan Bhaiya of the SP-RLD alliance won the seat with a margin of 22,054 votes defeating Rajkumari Saini of the BJP.

The BJP, on the other hand, wrested the Rampur seat from the SP, and BJP's Akash Saxena won it with a margin of 31,158 defeating Asim Raza of SP.

CONGRESS RETAINS BHANUPRATAPPUR SEAT IN CHHATTISGARH

Raipur: The ruling Congress in Chhattisgarh on Thursday won the Bhanupratappur Assembly bypoll, retaining the seat by defeating the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP).

With this, the opposition BJP has suffered a fifth successive defeat at the hands of the ruling Congress in the assembly bypolls held after the 2018 Chhattisgarh elections. Congress candidate Savitri Mandavi won the bypoll by a margin of 21,171 votes against her nearest rival Brahmanand Netam of the BJP, a poll official here said.

Mandavi polled 65,479 votes, while the BJP's Netam secured

German far-right coup-plotters wanted to execute Chancellor Olaf Scholz

LONDON | Agencies

German far-right coup-plotters wanted to storm the country's capitol building and execute Chancellor Olaf Scholz, who was on an 18-person hit-list found by police, sources close to persecutors have claimed, media reports said.

Police arrested 25 people in dawn raids on Wednesday that investigators say were involved in planning a violent overthrow of the state to install a former member of a German royal family - 71-year-old Heinrich XIII, Prince of Reuss-as national leader, Daily Mail reported.

On Thursday, more details about the group's plot have emerged, with prosecutors alleging the Reichsbürger terrorists planned to sabotage the electricity network to facilitate the coup, storm the government building and execute or deport 18 lawmakers, it said.

Meanwhile, the sweeping crackdown by German authorities is not yet



over. Officials expect further arrests and raids in the coming days, with officials saying there are now 54 suspects - a number that is expected to rise.

In Wednesday's raids, German police are said to have uncovered a list containing the names of 18 "enemy" politicians, that the group allegedly wanted to execute or deport.

According to the New York Times, citing an anonymous source close to the investigation, Chancellor Scholz was on the list. The group planned to execute him.

SHIVPAL MERGES HIS PSPL INTO SP

Lucknow:

Shivpal Singh Yadav has announced the merger of his Pragatisheel Samajwadi Party (PSPL) into the Samajwadi Party (SP), fortifying the unity in the SP and Yadav family. SP president Akhilesh Yadav put the party flag on Shivpal's car in Saifai on Thursday afternoon.

Shivpal had formed the PSPL in 2018, two years after his rift with nephew his Akhilesh. As the rift widened, the SP slipped downhill in state politics, losing election after election. After the demise of Mulayam Singh Yadav in October, the family made efforts to bring the two leaders closer and finally succeeded. Sources said that the two leaders had agreed to a respectable adjustment of PSPL leaders in the SP.



IRANIAN FORCES SHOOTING AT FACES, BREASTS AND GENITALS OF FEMALE PROTESTERS

London: Iranian security forces are targeting women at anti-regime protests with shotgun fire to their faces, breasts and genitals, according to interviews with medics across the country, according to a media report.

Doctors and nurses - treating demonstrators in secret to avoid arrest - said they first observed the practice after noticing that women often arrived with different wounds to men, who more commonly had shotgun pellets in their legs, buttocks and backs, The Guardian reported. One physician from the central Isfahan province said he believed the authorities are targeting men and women in different ways "because they wanted to destroy the beauty of these women", The Guardian reported.

Cyclone Mandous: Holiday for schools, colleges in 8 TN districts

Chennai | Agencies

With Cyclone Mandous expected on Friday, the Tamil Nadu government on Thursday declared a holiday for schools and colleges in eight districts of the state that day.

Schools and colleges in Chennai, Cuddalore, Kancheepuram, Chengalpattu, Tiruvallur, Ranipet, Villupuram, and Vellore will remain closed on December 9 due to the cyclone and heavy rains.

Strong winds are expected in the north Tamil Nadu coast and in Pudukcherry and Sri Harikota around Mahabalipuram on December 9 midnight.

The winds are likely to turn into a

severe storm by December 8's evening and maintain its intensity till December 9's morning. The storm is likely to weaken into a cyclonic storm and cross North Tamil Nadu and Pudukcherry coasts with a wind speed of 85 kmph around Friday midnight.

According to Weather Department, heavy rains may begin in Delta districts on Thursday evening and the IMD said that the rain intensity may peak on Friday night as cyclone gets closer to the coast. Chennai will have heavy rains on December 9 and 10 with winds expected to be around 20cm.

The Weather Department said that rains will be extremely heavy in Kancheepuram, Chengalpattu, and Villupuram districts, and a red alert was declared in the three districts.

India's growth to depend on fiscal management, says Uday Kotak

Team Absolute | New Delhi

India's performance in terms of absolute GDP, per capita income and current account as well as fiscal management will accentuate its growth, Uday Kotak, Managing Director of Kotak Mahindra Bank, said on Thursday.

Speaking at CII's Global Economic Policy Summit 2022, Kotak said that India is the fifth largest economy in the world and can rise further upwards.

However, it's growth would depend on economic performance in terms of absolute GDP and absolute per capita income and doing well on current account and fiscal management,



he said. Kotak added that for building Indian companies of global standards, the manufacturing scale needs to be enhanced.

This, he said, would be possible through cutting-edge innovation rather than being dependent on arbitrage alone. Speaking on interest rates, Kotak said that India's rate trajectory would depend on directions provided by the US Federal Reserve.

FIREBRAND J'KHAND POET NAMED IN FORBES 'SELF-MADE WOMEN' LIST

Ranchi:

Jacinta Kerketta, a poet, writer and freelance journalist in Jharkhand, has been named in the Forbes' list of 'Self-Made Women', among others from India. Kerketta, who belongs to the Oraon tribe, hails from a village near Khudpos in West Singhbhum district of Jharkhand. For her contributions to contemporary Hindi literature, she has already won several national as well as international awards.

Born in 1983, Kerketta's literary works, focusing mainly around water, forests, soil and Adivasi issues, have received attention all around the world. She is Jharkhand's first-ever Adivasi poetess whose poems have been published in three languages in the international arena. She has also recited poems at universities in Italy, Germany, France and Australia.





PARLIAMENT CAN ENACT A LAW BUT POWER TO SCRUTINISE IT LIES WITH COURT, SC TO CENTRE ON JUDGES' APPOINTMENT

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Supreme Court on Thursday said that the scheme of the Constitution requires it to be the final arbiter of law and while the Parliament has the right to enact a law, the power to scrutinise it lies with the court, as it heard a contempt plea against Centre for breaching the timeline for judicial appointments.

The top court also made it clear to the Centre that the existing Memorandum of Procedure (MoP) for appointment of judges to the apex court and the high courts has been settled and should be complied with.

It also observed that Centre sending back recommendations reiterated by the collegium is in breach of its judicial directions.

The top court pointed out there was an instance where the names were sent back after 2 years, and stressed that government views are taken into account when judges' names are recommended for appointment.

A bench, headed by Justice Sanjay Kishan Kaul and comprising Justices Abhay S. Oka and Vikram Nath, took objection to the Centre citing opinions of certain judges against the



collegium system, as an excuse to delay clearance to the recommendations made by the collegium.

It said that once the aspect of the MoP is settled by the judgment of a constitution bench of the top court, the Centre cannot get over the issue by referring to observations made by two judges, former Chief Justice Ranjan Gogoi and Justice J. Chelameshwar. The bench told Attorney General R. Venkataramani: "You have conveniently picked up some views of the judges and included that. How can that be done?"

"You may want some changes but in the meantime, the collegium along with existing MoP has to work. Now it looks just like a blame game."

The bench added that the MoP issue is over now and asked, is it logical to latch on to the observations made by 2 judges when there is a Constitution Bench decision?

On the aspect of MoP, Justice Kaul orally observed that the government can make suggestions but it cannot re-agitate the issue of MoP that has been settled by a constitution bench judgment. He told the AG that 2 out

of 7 judges observed that some fine tuning of procedure is required, but in the meantime, the collegium system coupled with the MoP is to be followed.

The bench also took objection to the government's stand that the new MoP is yet to be finalised. "You say Justices Ranjan Gogoi and Chelameshwar said that MoP needs a relook. But then so what... even if two judges opine something... how does it change the collegium decision," the bench queried the AG, noting that MoP was settled in 2017.

On the aspect of recommendations reiterated by the collegium, the bench told the AG: "Sending back second time reiterated names is a breach of our earlier direction."

It noted that the AG submitted that in such a scenario earlier, such sent back names were actually dropped. "We don't know why the names were dropped," said the bench. The bench said according to the apex court judgment in the second judges' case, once names were reiterated by the collegium, they have to be confirmed.

The bench told the AG, "Once the collegium takes a view you have a right to object within a reasonable period of time... you have to enforce the law as it exists today."

AAP set to join club of India's national parties

Team Absolute | New Delhi

After the vote counting for the Gujarat assembly polls started on Thursday morning, the Aam Aadmi Party got into a celebratory mode to welcome the achievement of national recognition irrespective of the poll results not going in their favour.

"Through the votes of Gujarat, the Aam Aadmi Party is becoming national party. For the first time, politics based on education and health is getting recognition in the country. Congratulations to the people of India", senior AAP leader Manish Sisodia said in a tweet on Thursday morning. Even with the early trends not favourable to the AAP in Gujarat, the party started celebrating the feat of becoming a national party.

However, the party is now all set to become the ninth national party after getting around 13 per cent vote share in the Gujarat assembly polls. A political party needs to be recognised in at least four states to become the national party. While to be recognised as a party in the state, it needs to win at least two seats and 6 per cent of votes.

With the AAP's government in Delhi and Punjab and recognition as state party in Goa, the AAP has also achieved the status of a state party in Gujarat by securing five seats and 13 per cent vote share, which is enough to be recognised as a 'national party', the ninth in the country. "Thanks to miraculous leadership of CM Arvind Kejriwal, Aam Aadmi Party has



become a national party in just 10 years. Aam Aadmi Party is no longer limited to Delhi and Punjab, but has become the national party of India. Gujarat is called the fortress of PM Modi and Amit Shah, Kejriwal has breached their fortress today", said senior AAP leader Sanjay Singh while commenting on this. He said that ten years ago the AAP was formed, till now the people of Delhi formed our government thrice in Delhi and now we have our government in Punjab also.

After getting the national party status, important advantages among others will include that its symbol broom will be reserved for party candidates across the country. The AAP's candidates will now appear on the top of EVM alphabetically and may also get office space in the heart of Delhi and the party can include as many as 40 star campaigners instead of the usual 20.

After Gujarat results, K'taka min claims many Cong leaders set to join BJP

Bengaluru | Agencies

The sweeping electoral victory of the BJP in Gujarat has buoyed the party leaders' spirits in Karnataka which is all set for assembly polls in the first half of 2023. Revenue minister R Ashok on Thursday predicted an exodus of Congress leaders and lawmakers to the BJP in the near future.

"Several Congress leaders, as many as 12, are in touch with me because they want to leave their party and join BJP," Ashok said without elaborating on the identity of the potential Congress defectors.

Stating that Congress leader Rahul Gandhi's Bharat Jodo Yatra did not help the Congress in the Gujarat assembly polls, Ashok opined that the AAP is eating into the Congress votes.

"Even if the AAP gets around a 5 percent vote share, the Congress will be decimated in Karnataka too," Ashok declared. Meanwhile, former Karnataka chief minister and senior BJP leader BS Yeddyurappa said on Thursday



that the saffron party would repeat its Gujarat feat in the state too. The BJP will win more than 140 seats in the elections to the 224 member Karnataka assembly, he claimed.

Pak releases BSF jawan who accidentally crossed the border

Team Absolute | New Delhi

A Border Security Force (BSF) jawan who accidentally crossed the International Border in Punjab's Abohar sector has been released by the Pakistan Rangers.

According to the BSF, the jawan mistakenly entered Pakistan while patrolling on Wednesday morning, due to dense fog and was taken into custody by Pakistan.

The BSF said that a team of jawans was sent to patrol the Zero Line on the International Border.

Senior officers of the BSF were apprised of the incident when the jawan was not present with the team on their return, which led to a flag meeting between the BSF and the



Pakistan Rangers.

According to sources, Pakistan initially refused to release the jawan, but reached an agreement after a second commander-level meeting.

The jawan was then released on Thursday evening around 5.10 p.m. This is the second such incident in the Abohar sector. Last week also, during Zero Line

patrolling on the India-Pakistan International Border, a BSF jawan accidentally crossed into Pakistan.

However, he was sent back the same day after a flag meeting.

KCR set to formally launch BRS

Hyderabad | Agencies

With the Election Commission of India giving its nod to the Telangana Rashtra Samithi (TRS) to change its name Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS), party president and Chief Minister K. Chandrababhan Rao will formally launch the BRS here on Friday.

At a programme to be held at Telangana Bhavan, the chief minister will launch BRS at 1.20 p.m. With this, the party will officially commence its activities.

KCR, as the TRS leader is popularly known, will sign a letter in reply to the communication received from the Election Commission.

KCR will then unveil the BRS flag and unfurl it.

This was announced on Thursday after KCR received a communication from the Election Commission (EC).



The poll panel informed TRS president that the request of TRS to change its name to BRS has been accepted. "The necessary notification in this regard will be issued in due course," reads the letter from EC.

Friday's programme at Telangana Bhavan will be attended by executive committee members, party's district presidents, ministers, MPs, MLAs, MLCs and other leaders.

'Nation First': RSS chief says while lauding India's G20 Presidency

Team Absolute | Nagpur

The Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) on Thursday lauded the G20 Presidency given to India "for playing a greater role in the world", while emphasising on the "Nation First" theory.

"We have to go too far to unite the entire world. The G20 Presidency has boosted the morale of the people in the country. The people have realised that India was not lagging in the world and was poised to become 'Vishwaguru'," RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat said here.

He said this while addressing the valedictory

function of the third year training camp at sprawling Reshimbagh ground.

Bhagwat said the entire world was looking to India to lead, adding that now there is a belief that India can only pave the way for a better world. Reiterating the theory of nation first, Bhagwat said India is a land of unity in diversity.

"Our Constitution has given us social security and therefore we have to repay what the nation has given to us. We should think about what and how we can repay the nation. India was not after conquering the world but for uniting the people. Our characteristics and

qualities will bring balance in the world," the RSS chief said.

Bhagwat further said the people have different ways of worshipping, different culture, clothing and languages but "the world is one family". "Our swayamsevaks are imparted training to repay what they owe to the nation and come on their own for training without expecting a certificate," he said.

"We are bound to take care of land, water bodies, forests and its people that in a nutshell complete the nation," he added.

Bhagwat stressed the need for harmony in the society despite its diversity.

Woman's body found stuffed inside suitcase in west Delhi

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The body of a woman, appearing in her late 20s, was found stuffed inside a suitcase thrown into a drain in west Delhi's Punjabi Bagh area, a Delhi Police official said on Thursday.

According to the senior police official, at 12.36 p.m. on Wednesday, a police control room (PCR) call was received reporting a body stuffed in a suitcase found in a drain near Mahatma Gandhi Camp, road no-77 in Punjabi Bagh area.

"A team from Punjabi Bagh police station reached the spot and recovered the body. The woman seems to be about 25-30 years-old. The body has been shifted to the mortuary at Sanjay Gandhi Memorial Hospital," said the official.



The identity of the deceased is yet to be ascertained. Meanwhile, police teams are also scanning

CCTV cameras in the area to know the crime sequence and ascertain identity of the deceased.

2 ACCUSED IN TRS MLAS POACHING CASE RE-ARRESTED

Hyderabad | Agencies

Shortly after their release, the two accused in the TRS MLAs poaching case were re-arrested on Thursday in connection with other cases registered against them.

Ramachandra Bharathi and K. Nanda Kumar were arrested by the Banjara Hills police soon after they were released on bail from Chanchalguda Central Prison.

They are likely to be produced before a court later in the day. While Ramachandra Bharathi was booked for holding multiple passports, Aadhaar cards and other documents, five cases were registered against Nanda Kumar for cheating and other offences.

The Telangana High Court had granted bail to all the three accused in the MLAs poaching case on December 1. However, they remained in jail for a week as they could not arrange two sureties and a personal bond for Rs 3 lakhs as directed by the court.

Simhayaji was released on Wednesday.



Ramachandra Bharathi was booked by Banjara Hills police after the probe by the Special Investigation Team (SIT) found that he holds two passports. The police booked him under

Indian Penal Code sections 467 (forgery of valuable security, will, etc), 468 (forgery for purpose of cheating) and 471 (using as genuine a forged document) and sections 12 of the

Passports Act, 1967.

The accused holds one passport in the name of Shree Ramachandra Swami Ji and another in the name of Bharat Kumar Sharma.

The police had earlier booked him for forgery. On a complaint by one of the TRS MLAs Pilot Rohit Reddy, Banjara Hills police had registered a case for possessing fake Aadhaar, PAN cards and driving licenses.

Ramachandra Bharathi, a priest from Faridabad in Haryana, is alleged to have close links with some top leaders of BJP.

Ramachandra Bharathi along with Simhayaji, a pontiff from Tirupati and Nanda Kumar, a businessman in Hyderabad were arrested by Cyberabad police during a raid on a farm house at Moinabad near Hyderabad on October 26.

The police made the arrests on a tip-off by Pilot Rohit Reddy, who alleged that the accused offered Rs 100 crore to him and Rs 50 crore each to three others.

The accused were booked under various sections of the IPC and Prevention of Corruption Act.



20 THOUSAND CRORES WILL BE SPENT ON DEVELOPMENT OF CITIES: CM

The rules and procedures are for the convenience of the public, not to stop the work, more centers should be made for the distribution of fertilizers, a grand complex like Mahakal Lok will be built near the Pashupatinath temple, Communicated by distributing benefits to the beneficiaries of various schemes, Chief Minister Chouhan participated in Mandsaur Gaurav Divas celebrations



Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Chouhan has said that like villages in the state, a complete framework is being prepared for the development of cities. Like the conference of panchayat representatives held recently, a state-level conference of representatives of urban bodies will be held. About 20 thousand crore rupees will be spent on the development of the cities of the state. Old illegal colonies in all 413 cities will be made legal by taking a nominal amount. Pattas should be given to eligible persons under the Mukhyamantri Bhu-Awasiya

Adhikar Yojana. Chouhan has said that the rules and procedures are for the convenience of the public, not to stop the work. Public works should be done without any hindrance. More centers should be made for distribution of fertilizers to the farmers. Farmers who are defaulters should also be given fertilizer from the society office on payment of cash. Chief Minister participated in Mandsaur Gaurav Divas celebrations. He performed bhoomi-pujan and inaugurated development works worth more than Rs 1500 crore at the venue itself. Also distributed benefits to the

beneficiaries of various schemes. Chief Minister Chouhan awarded "Dashpur Ratna" to the personalities who made invaluable contribution in the development of Mandsaur. Earlier, he also unveiled the life-size statue of Gaurav Samrat Yashovardhan of Mandsaur near Telia Talab. Chouhan interacted with the beneficiaries of Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana of Mohna Nagar Parishad, Meena Bai, through virtual medium. Chief Minister Chouhan said that like Shri Mahakal Lok Ujjain, a grand complex will also be developed near Pashupatinath Temple.



MP universities will adopt five villages every year

Government and private universities of Madhya Pradesh should adopt five villages each and conduct health, sanitation and community service works every year. Governor Mangubhai Patel gave these instructions while addressing the 100th meeting of the Coordination Committee at Sandipani Auditorium of Raj Bhavan.

Team Absolute | Bhopal

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Contribute to the works of the service of humanity, in coordination with the Red Cross Society, similar to the work of the National Service Scheme and community service. He said that through the new National Education Policy, Prime Minister Narendra Modi has given the youth an opportunity to become competent for international competition while remaining attached to the land. For effective and integrated implementation of the policy, the work of amendment in University Acts as per the National Education Policy 2020 should be completed within the time-limit. Arrangements should be made for nomination of officers in the Chancellor, Vice-Chancellor and Governing Council of private universities within the time limit. Procedure and rules may be amended if necessary.

Admission, examination and results are declared as per the prescribed calendar.

Higher Education Minister Dr. Mohan Yadav said that universities should be recognized on the basis of work. Universities should conduct courses related to regional resources and possibilities such as forests in Vananchal, tourism in scenic areas and industries in industrial areas.

In the meeting, it was decided to make provision for the appointment of the Vice-Chancellor as per the instructions of the University Grants Commission and if necessary, amendments would be made in the Acts of the University. It was also decided that the matter of conducting self-financing courses in the university should be discussed in the committee constituted under the chairmanship of the Chief Secretary. It was informed that the syllabus of 84 subjects at the graduate level has been displayed on the departmental website after constituting the Integrated Central Board of Studies.

Governor Patel has said that all private and government universities should conduct maximum employment-oriented courses. High quality standards of courses should be strictly followed. He said that representatives of private companies and industries should be invited to the convocation ceremony. Instructions have been given to take necessary action regarding the name of Vice Chancellor being changed to Vice Chancellor.

Governor Patel said that government and private universities should adopt five villages each and conduct health, sanitation and community service works every

Experts will teach tricks to wildlife rescue squad in MP

Team Absolute | Bhopal

In Madhya Pradesh, training is going to be imparted to the wild animal rescue squad engaged in the work of rescue of wild animals. In this training programme, all the experts will teach tricks to the teams engaged in this work. Officially given information has been told that a two-day review-cum-training workshop of the Wildlife Rescue Squad will be held on 15 and 16 December at Van Vihar National Park in Bhopal.

The Forest Department has constituted 29 rescue squads for the rescue of endangered wildlife in the state, in which six tiger reserves, two national parks, seven forest circles and 14 forest division level rescue squads are employed. Annual review-cum-training workshop of these rescue squads is conducted from time to time.

It has been told that in the workshop, information related to review and innovation of works is made available to the participants. Retired Professor Dr. A.B. Srivastava Center for Wildlife Forensic and Health,



Nanaji Deshmukh Veterinary University, Jabalpur and Dr. Mohan, Deputy Conservator of Forests, Giri National Park, Gujarat will provide training to these rescue squads and also suggest ways to diagnose the problems faced during the rescue.

DIVYANG STUDENTS CAN APPLY FOR POST MATRIC AND TOP CLASS SCHOLARSHIP TILL 31 DECEMBER

Bhopal : Students can apply till December 31 for post matriculation and top class scholarship conducted for disabled students. The verification will be done online at the institution level by January 15, 2023. Eligible students studying in graduation and post graduation in the state will be able to apply for scholarship on the National Scholarship Portal. For scholarships, a certificate of more than 40 percent disability issued by the competent medical authority is mandatory. For more information about scholarship schemes, visit the Central Government website www.disabilityaffairs.gov.in, National Scholarship Portal www.scholarships.gov.in and departmental website <https://www.socialjustice.mp.gov.in/can.go>.

Jabalpur bride gets beautician arrested for messing her make-up

Team Absolute | Jabalpur.

A beautician has been booked after her assistant allegedly spoilt the make-up of a bride and also for issuing threats when her family members protested in Madhya Pradesh's Jabalpur, police said on Wednesday.

The bride, a resident of city's Ghamapur area, had booked an appointment with the beautician, who runs a beauty parlour in Kotwali Bazar, for her marriage on December 3, said City Superintendent of Police (CSP) Prabhat Shukla.

The beautician had taken advance payment from the bride's family and assured to reach the venue on time on marriage day to complete the make-up work, he said, citing a complaint.

After the beauty parlour owner didn't reach the venue, the family of the bride contacted her, but she told the latter to come to the outlet for make-up, Shukla said. The CSP said when the soon to be married woman reached the parlour, the



beautician, instead of doing her make-up, assigned the task to her assistant who messed up the work.

Angry over the beautician's behaviour, the bride's mother registered a complaint at the Kotwali Police Station on Tuesday.

The complainant also accused the

beauty parlour owner of misbehaving and threatening them when the bride's mother contacted her for messing up the make-up work, he said.

A case was registered against the beautician under Indian Penal Code (IPC) sections 294 (obscene act) and 506 (criminal intimidation), Shukla said.

Banks should ensure compliance of RBI standards to increase the withdrawal limit of self-help groups



Team Absolute | Bhopal

There are 4 lakh 9 thousand self-help groups in Madhya Pradesh, with which about 45 lakh 90 thousand poor rural families are connected. Continuous work is being done for their social and economic upliftment by providing regular training to these groups, providing loans from banks and connecting them with livelihood activities. Banks should ensure compliance of RBI norms for increasing the withdrawal limit of these groups.

Additional Chief Secretary Panchayat and Rural Development Malay Srivastava gave these instructions at the review meeting of bank credit linkage

centers in coordination with the Livelihood Mission. Chief Executive Officer, MP State Rural Livelihood Mission L.M. Belwal, Chief General Manager NABARD Nirupam Mehrotra, General Manager Reserve Bank of India Hemant Soni, Convener State Level Bankers Committee Tarsem Singh Zira attended. State Bank of India, Central Bank of India, Bank of India, M.P. State level officers of Gramin Bank, Madhyanchal Gramin Bank, Union Bank of India, Punjab National Bank, Bank of Baroda, Indian Bank, UCO Bank, Bank of Maharashtra, Canara Bank, HDFC Bank, ICICI Bank were present.

Additional Chief Secretary Srivastava instructed bankers to set up posts on priority basis for trained women of self-help groups to work as BCs. Banks should make loans available on time in the self-help schemes run by the state government. Regular review of this work should be done. Srivastava said that self-help groups should be able to get maximum loans from banks for various economic activities, for this it is necessary that they have financial literacy. For this, training programs should be organized by RSETI

CLASS 11 STUDENT SHOOTS SELF WITH FATHER'S RIFLE, DIES

Gwalior: A 17-year-old boy in Madhya Pradesh's Gwalior district has allegedly died by suicide by apparently shooting himself with his father's licensed rifle, the police said. No suicide note was recovered. The incident took place in Adarsh colony under Gola ka Mandir Police Station on Wednesday.

The dead was identified as Raj Gurjar, who was a student of Class 11. According to the family members, Raj was studious and there was apparently no problem at home. He was preparing for his IIT entrance exam.

When the family members heard the bullet fired from Raj's room, they rushed towards his room. As soon as they opened the door, they found Raj dead on the floor. They informed the police about the incident.

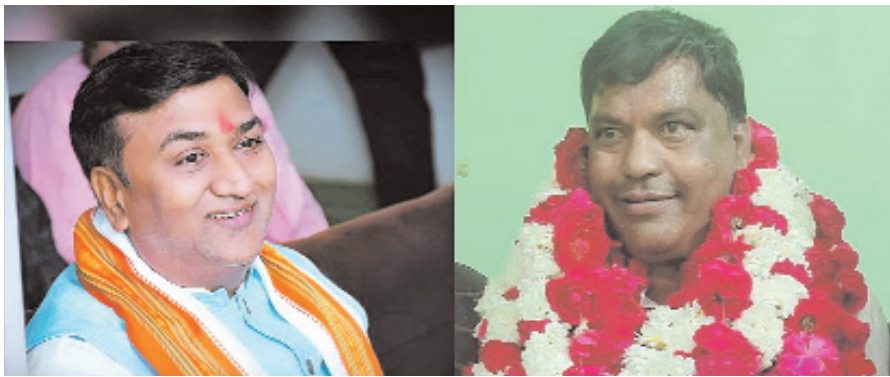
Additional Superintendent of Police (ASP) Rajesh Dandotiya said as per the preliminary investigation, he was under stress due to online classes. Nonetheless, the actual reason would be known only after the investigation into the mobile and tab used by the youth.

"Further action will be taken on the basis of the investigation and statement of the family members. No suicide note was recovered from the spot," Dandotiya added.

Bad days of many MLAs of Madhya Pradesh

Team Absolute | Bhopal

The slogan of 'Achhe Din' has been heard in the country's politics for many years, but bad days have come for two MLAs of Madhya Pradesh. One is Congress MLA Ajab Singh Kushwaha, who has been convicted by the court in a fraud case and has been sentenced to two years imprisonment, while the same is BJP MLA Rahul Lodhi, whose election has been declared void by the Jabalpur High Court. Assembly elections are going to be held in the state after about a year and all the claimants from the current MLA are also busy in the preparations for the elections. There is no good news coming for the two MLAs. Ajab Singh Kushwaha, Congress MLA from Sumavali assembly constituency in Morena district, is accused of selling government land claiming it as his own for about Rs 75 lakh. In this case, a person named Purushottam Shukya had filed a complaint in Maharajpura, Gwalior and said that MLA Ajab Singh had sold this land to him. But did not get possession. The police had also registered a case on



this. It has been told that while hearing the matter, the court of Gwalior has sentenced MLA Ajab Singh and others to two years imprisonment and also imposed a fine of Rs 10,000 each.

After this decision, the membership of the Congress MLA is under threat. According to the rules, if an MLA is punished for two years or more, then he will lose his membership of the Legislative Assembly and at the same time he will be ineligible to contest elections for six years.

Another case is of BJP MLA Rahul Lodhi from Khargapur in Tikamgarh district. The decision of the High Court Jabalpur has come against Lodhi, nephew of former Chief Minister Uma Bharti, in which the election has been declared void. It is alleged that he did not enter the correct information about himself in the nomination for the election. He hid his stake in a company, against which Congress candidate Chanda Singh Gaur went to court.

It has been told that the way for both the MLAs to go to the High Court is open, but



CHIEF MINISTER CHOUHAN PLANTED SAPPLINGS

Bhopal : Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan planted saplings of Ashoka, Kachnar and Harsingar in the Smart City Garden. Girl students of Government Kamla Nehru Girls College, Balaghat, who came to Bhopal on an educational tour, also participated in plantation. Sangeeta Nellore, Abhilasha Yadav, Vandana Telang and Uma Soni of Nellore Education Committee also planted saplings along with Chief Minister Chouhan. The committee operates the Yashoda Old Age Home in Bhopal. Aid to needy children in education and other activities, cleanliness and environment-protection activities are also conducted. Yoga teacher Bhavisha Solanki also planted a sapling along with the Chief Minister Bhavisha has played an important role in conducting yoga to cure programs during the Corona period and conducting yoga exercises to the corona affected people from the Command and Control Center Bhopal.



EDITOR'S SPECS

Paris moment 'impossible' if world leaders fail to unite behind nature

With the onset of two-week negotiations of the COP15 biodiversity summit, the Cambridge Institute for Sustainability Leadership (CISL) is urging heads of government, including the UK, to show strong leadership on nature and commit to attending future summits to drive ambition and progress.

This week's UN Convention for Biological Diversity (CBD) conference aims to agree on a post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) outlining what countries need to do in the next decade and beyond to regenerate and live in balance with the natural world. World leaders are not expected to turn up to the negotiations in Montreal, Canada and CISL is calling on heads of governments to commit to attend future biodiversity summits to underline the vital nature of this agenda to support all life on earth and help combat climate change.

Humans are causing an unprecedented decline in nature and the ecological services it provides for free. One million species of plants and animals are threatened with extinction and WWF's recent Living Planet Report reveals global wildlife population has seen average decline of nearly 70 per cent in just 50 years.

The survival and traditions of entire communities are threatened by deforestation and over-exploitation, while environmental degradation increases the risk of emergence of zoonotic diseases, including Ebola and Covid-19.

Science confirms nature is key to the fight against climate change. A recent UN report outlines how the protection and restoration of nature is one of the greatest strategies for tackling climate change, not just because it absorbs carbon from the air, but because forests, wetlands and other ecosystems act as buffers against extreme weather, protecting houses, crops, water supplies and vital infrastructure.

IS THE GOVT CROSSING THE RUBICON IN THE APPOINTMENT OF JUDGES?

Nitin Saluja

The tussle between the Government and the Supreme Court for the appointment of judges is not new. The Judges of the Supreme Court and the High Courts are appointed under Articles 124 and 217 of the Constitution of India, 1950 respectively. In the first eight years of the Constitution, from 1950 to 1958, over 200 judges were appointed to the High Courts, and there were only seven instances where there was some disagreement on the names of judges to be appointed.

The attempt to undermine the independence of the judiciary first originated in 1973, after the Kesavananda Bharti judgement, which struck down some constitutional amendments by holding that the basic structure of the Constitution could not be amended. The Government of the day decided that only those judges who were committed to its ideology should be appointed. This set into motion the process of supersession of judges.

One such example was when A.N Ray was appointed as the Chief Justice of India superseding Justices Shelat, Hegde, and Grover, who, by convention of seniority were next in line for the position. The subversion of independence of the judiciary became a major issue, and the manner of appointment of judges was first raised in S.P Gupta's case (1981).

In the said case, the majority of judges held that primacy in judicial appointments was with the Government and it could disregard the opinion of the Chief Justice in the matter of appointment and transfer of judges and the Chief Justices. The rationale behind the judgement was that the Constitution has devised an effective mechanism for the appointment of judges which strikes a just balance between the judicial and executive.

It is the executive which is a purely elected body made accountable to the people. The judgement was in consonance with the practice followed in the US, wherein the power vests with the executive in making judicial appointments with the advice and consent of the Senate.

However, the judgment soon led to partisan appointments and the issue was referred to a larger bench for reconsideration.

In 1993, the view in S.P. Gupta's case was reversed by the bench of nine judges in the Supreme Court Advocate-on-Record Association case, which wrested control in the



matter of judicial appointments from the executive and vested it with the judiciary.

The primary reason behind the decision being that the judiciary is best suited and has the best opportunity to assess the true worth of candidates to be appointed as superior judges to high constitutional functionaries.

It is from the Supreme Court's Advocate-on-Record Association judgement in 1993 that the idea of the Collegium stems. A Collegium meant the Chief Justice plus three senior-most judges of the court, whose consent was necessary for appointment of judges. In 1998, in the Presidential Reference case, the Collegium was widened to five judges. As per the said judgement, the Chief Justice must consult two senior judges (later increased) of the Supreme Court and collectively form an opinion in making judicial appointments.

This case restricted the role of the Government only in returning a name recommended by the Collegium for reconsideration on matters such as antecedents and personal character, which, at times, the Government through their various agencies such as the Intelligence Bureau may be in a better position to know. However, after considering the recommendation of the Government, the Chief Justice of India reiterates its initial recommendation, then that appointments ought to be made by the Government.

In 2014, to overturn the Collegium system,

the Government introduced the National Judicial Commission Appointment Act, 2014 (NJAC) which proposed a method of appointment of judges to the Supreme Court and High Courts in the country through the participation of the judiciary, executive and eminent persons.

The NJAC, however, had a short life span. In 2015, the Supreme Court struck down the Act in its entirety for having inadequate representation of the judicial component in the NJAC, and failing to preserve the independence of the judiciary in the matter of judicial appointments.

The judgement once again confirmed the primacy of the judiciary in judicial appointments, with the Government having the limited role of returning recommendations to the Collegium, for reconsideration. Later judgements of the Supreme Court further laid down a four months' timeline for the Government to act upon the Collegium's recommendations and make appointments.

In 2021, the Supreme Court in the judgement of M/s Project Pvt. Ltd observed that the High Courts were functioning with only 50 per cent of their sanctioned strength, with only 664 judges appointed against the sanctioned strength of 1080 judges. Further, there were about 220 recommenda-

tions by the Collegium of the Supreme Court and the Government is simply sitting over these recommendations without getting the approval of the President for months.

The court in another case recently observed that names for the appointment of judges have been pending for over a year and a half. Such an inordinate delay in processing the names recommended by the Supreme Court Collegium directly affects access to justice.

On November 29, 2022, the names of 10 judges recommended for elevation by the Collegium were returned by the Central Government. As per the news reports, some names that had been reiterated by the Collegium have also been returned.

This is not permissible in view of the nine-judge bench judgement. The Central Government cannot return the names recommended once they have been reiterated and confirmed. Since the NJAC has been struck down and the Collegium system has been upheld, the Government is bound to comply with the judgement of the Supreme Court.

The conduct of the government in not taking any action over the files for the appointment of judges for a very long time, and rejecting the names that were reiterated by the Collegium contrary to the settled law may lead to serious legal consequences.

The first three words in our Constitution are "We the People".

The Constitution is for the common man. The delay in judicial appointments leads to delay in justice. Criminal appeals are pending in the courts for more than 10 years. A trial takes an average of at least five to seven years to conclude. The position is no different in civil cases. One cause of delay could be attributed to the courts not functioning with their full sanctioned strength.

Therefore, the standoff between the Government and the Supreme Court must be resolved at the earliest. Till then the Government is bound to follow the law for complete access of justice to the common man.

(The author is an Advocate-on-Record in the Supreme Court of India, and the founding partner of S&LL Law Chambers.)

international

Threat of nuke war rising, says Putin

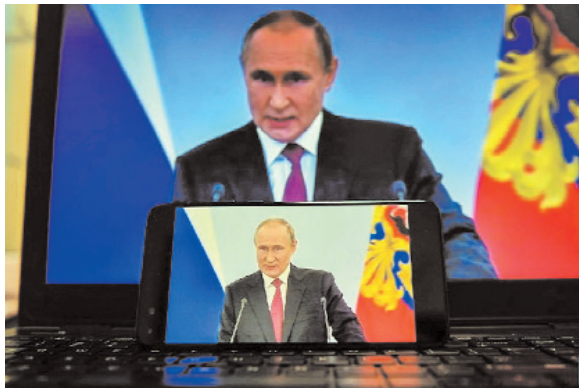
Moscow | Agencies

Russian President Vladimir Putin has said the threat of a nuclear war was rising, but insisted Moscow had not "gone mad" and would not use its nuclear weapons first.

Speaking at Russia's annual human rights council meeting, he also said the war in Ukraine could be a "lengthy process", the BBC reported.

"Such a threat is growing, it would be wrong to hide it," Putin warned while talking about the prospect of nuclear war via video link from Moscow.

But he asserted that Russia would "under no circumstances" use the weapons first, and would not threaten anyone with its nuclear arsenal. "We have not gone mad, we are aware of what nuclear weapons are," he said,



adding: "We aren't about to run around the world brandishing this weapon like a razor." The President also boasted that Russia had the most modern and advanced nuclear weapons in the world, and contrasted its nuclear strategy to the US, who he said had gone further than Russia by locating its nuclear weapons on other

territories, the BBC reported. "We do not have nuclear weapons, including tactical ones, on the territory of other countries, but the Americans do, in Turkey, and in a number of other European countries," he said. Putin has previously insisted that Russia's nuclear doctrine only allowed for the defensive use of nuclear arms.

5.8-MAGNITUDE QUAKE HITS INDONESIA

Jakarta: A 5.8 magnitude earthquake struck Indonesia's West Java province on Thursday, according to authorities.

Initially, the meteorology, climatology and geophysics agency said the quake measured 6.1 on the Richter scale before revising it down to 5.8.

The quake was strongly felt in the country's capital Jakarta, reports Xinhua news agency.

The earthquake hit at 7.50 a.m. with its epicentre located at 22 km southeast of the district of Sukabumi in West Java province, with a depth of 122 km under-earth, an agency official told Xinhua.

The tremors did not have the potential to trigger a tsunami, the official added.

Thursday's quake comes amid reconstruction efforts in West Java after a devastating 5.6 magnitude quake last month killed over 300 people.

UK univs luring Indian students with 'bring your family' offers: Report

London | Agencies

Universities in the UK are paying education agents that recruit Indian students to lure them with an offer, which allows them to bring along their families to the country, a media report said.

According to the Telegraph, commissions are paid to agents who market "graduate visas" and help potential Indian students get visas for their spouses and children.

A graduate visa, previously known as the post-study visa, gives one permission to stay in the UK for at least two years after successfully completing a course in the country.

Indians received 41 per cent of the total number of Graduate Route visas after it was introduced in 2021, according to recent UK immigration statistics. While some agents come up with offers assuring a "full-time job" for a spouse as well as a two-year "stay" in the country, others tell



prospective students to hurry as the UK could soon put restrictions on dependents. The report comes as immigration situation in the country is becoming a migraine for the Conservative party-led government with net migration numbers rising to an estimated record of 504,000 in the year to June. While ministers are considering curbs on the number of dependents allowed into the UK and

restricting foreign students attending "low-quality" courses, experts warn that the restrictions will bankrupt UK universities, which depend on foreign students for money.

The British High Commission revealed recently that it granted 1.27 lakh student visas to Indians in the year ending September 2022, an increase of 273 per cent over the same period in 2019. According to

reports, India surpassed China to become the largest source of students for the UK with 161,000 students, including 33,240 dependents, coming to the UK last year. New Way Consultancy (NWC) says it works for more than 70 universities and is paid on commission for each student it recruits, the Telegraph reported. NWC said that foreign students and their dependents contributed to the UK economy not just through fees of 10,000 pounds to 26,000 pounds but also via an NHS surcharge of 400 pounds a year for the student and 600 pounds for a dependent.

"International students are not migrants, they never stay here," Moe Sobahan, NWC's recruitment head told Telegraph. He warned that curbs on graduate work visas will force Indian students to shift to countries like Australia and Canada, ultimately leading to the end of the student market in the UK.

Peru gets 1st female President after dramatic impeachment

Lima | Agencies

Peru's Vice President Dina Boluarte has become the country's first female President after she was sworn in following the impeachment of former President Pedro Castillo for alleged "permanent moral incapacity".

Boluarte was sworn in on Wednesday shortly after Congress dismissed Castillo with 101 votes in favour, six against and 10 abstentions, reports Xinhua news agency.

This was the third impeachment proceedings against him since he came to office in July 2021.

The former President has been detained after he had said earlier in the day that he was replacing Congress with an "exceptional emergency government", Peru's National Police (PNP) confirmed.

"Fulfilling our powers and



attributes, the PNP detains President Pedro Castillo," it said on Twitter.

It also published a photograph where Castillo can be seen sitting in an armchair at the headquarters of Lima's

Second Police Region. According to local media, after announcing the dissolution of Congress, Castillo left the Government Palace accompanied by family members, including his wife,

and former Prime Minister Anibal Torres.

Boluarte, a 60-year-old lawyer, said she would govern until July 2026, which is when Castillo's presidency would have ended.

Speaking after taking the oath of office, she called for a political truce to overcome the crisis which has gripped the country.

"What I ask for is a space, a time to rescue the country," she said.

Wednesday's dramatic chain of events began with Castillo giving an address on national television in which he declared a state of emergency, the BBC reported.

He announced that he would dissolve the opposition-controlled Congress, a move which was met with shock both in Peru, several ministers resigned in protest, and abroad.

PUNJAB-ORIGIN RACHNA SINGH BECOMES FIRST SOUTH ASIAN MINISTER IN CANADA

Ottawa | Agencies

Punjab-origin Rachna Singh, a post-graduate in psychology from Panjab University here, has created a history of sorts after she was sworn in as Minister of Education and Child Care of British Columbia, Canada.

She is the second Punjabi after Moe Sihota to handle the portfolio, but the first South Asian woman to be appointed to such an important position. "I am proud to be a part of the government that listens and care for the people. We are committed to free and accessible education to everyone," Rachna Singh told reporter in a phone interview on Thursday.

"Our government has invested a lot of resources on education since 2017 and will continue to do the same in the coming years. Since I come from the family of educators and have worked on anti-racism in the past, I have a lens to see the problems of the children of working people and those belonging to visible minority communities," she added. Both her parents -- father Raghbir Singh and mother Sulekha, besides sister Sirjana are teachers by profession. Her becoming an education minister overseas is therefore significant for the family. She had previously served the British Columbia government as Parliamentary Secretary for anti-racism initiatives. She hit the headlines after making a brief address in the provincial legislature on November 1 in her native Punjabi language.





SHIV SENA FACTIONS' MPS COME TOGETHER IN LS TO PROTEST MAHA GOV'S REMARKS ON SHIVAJI

Team Absolute | New Delhi/Mumbai

The members from Uddhav Thackeray and Eknath Shinde factions of Shiv Sena came together along with those from the NCP in the Lok Sabha on Thursday to protest against Maharashtra Governor Bhagat Singh Koshiyari's recent comments that Chhatrapati Shivaji was an icon of olden times.

As soon as Zero Hour began in the Lower House, MPs from Shiv Sena's Uddhav Thackeray faction stood up and started raising slogans hailing Chhatrapati Shivaji.

They could be seen gesturing to the NCP MPs to join the protest, who also joined them. Gradually even the MPs from Shiv Sena's Eknath Shinde faction stood up and were seen raising slogans "Jai Bhavani" and "Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Ki Jai".

AIMIM MP from Aurangabad Imtiaz Jaleel could also be seen standing in protest, while Independent MP from Amravati Navneet Rana supported the protest while sitting in her seat.

Some Karnataka BJP MPs from places neighbouring Maharashtra,



could also be seen standing near their seats speaking in Marathi.

In the din, leader of the Congress in the House, Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury, who was raising the issue of Chinese intrusions, couldn't be heard. Later Shiv Sena (Uddhav Thackeray faction) MPs led by Arvind Sawant also entered the well of the

House, raising slogans hailing Shivaji.

When Shiv Sena's Thackeray faction MP from Ratnagiri-Sindhudurg, Vinayak Raut objected to Koshiyari's (without naming him) comments on Shivaji, whom he described as a national icon, his views were echoed by NCP's Shirur MP Amol Kolhe, who said that Shivaji was like God to the

people of Maharashtra.

As the din continued, Rajendra Agrawal, who was on the Chair, adjourned the House.

There have been protests going on in Maharashtra for the past several weeks over Koshiyari's recent statement that Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj was an icon of olden times.

BJP govts in K'taka, Maha deliberately raking up border row: Siddaramaiah

Bengaluru | Agencies

Even as Belagavi is seemingly limping back to normalcy, former chief minister and Leader of Opposition in Karnataka assembly Siddaramaiah wondered if the controversy has been raked up by the ruling parties in Karnataka and Maharashtra.

"In both these states, BJP is in power. It is possible that both these governments might have mutually discussed and be creating the tense situation, Siddaramaiah said on Thursday. Opining that while the border issue between the two states has already been resolved by the Mahajan Commission report, Siddaramaiah said that Maharashtra has been keeping the matter alive for political gains.

Taking a serious view on incidents of stone pelting and damage to Karnataka buses in Maharashtra, Siddaramaiah said Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai should approach the Prime Minister. "Allowing controversy to grow and using for political gain is BJP's modus operandi. Instead of resolving the matter through discussions, they have sat back and allowed it to flare up. Transport between the two states has stopped and people are suffering. The state government should help defuse the situation," he declared. Siddaramaiah urged Bommai to provide protection to Maharashtra's



Kannadigas who were allegedly being troubled by the authorities there.

There can be no compromise on water and border interests of the state, he maintained. "The present dispensation in Maharashtra has approached the Supreme Court demanding Belagavi. Even when I was chief minister, then Maharashtra had also made a similar appeal. But we had argued that the case does not stand. The present Karnataka government should also strongly fight the case, Siddaramaiah said.

Gujarat Assembly Elections

Uddhav's veiled jab in congratulatory message to Prime Minister Modi

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Shiv Sena (UBT) president Uddhav Thackeray today congratulated Prime Minister Narendra Modi for the Bharatiya Janata Party's (BJP) victory in Gujarat elections while saying that projects "taken away" from Maharashtra contributed to the result.

The result in Gujarat was on expected lines and the election was once again fought under Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership which was the reason why people voted in large numbers, Mr Thackeray, a former BJP ally, said in a statement here.

"I congratulate the BJP and PM Modi for the victory in Gujarat which is record-breaking and historic," he



said. He also took a jibe at the BJP government at the Centre by saying that "the projects which were taken away to Gujarat from Maharashtra also helped in the victory."

The opposition parties in Maharashtra have been targeting the BJP over the state recently losing some big-ticket industrial projects to

Gujarat. The Aam Aadmi Party divided votes in Gujarat and it clearly benefited the BJP, the Sena leader further remarked. Modi was visiting Maharashtra on December 11 and he was expected to make major announcements with an eye on the Mumbai civic polls, the Sena chief further said.

Ex-Mumbai police chief gets bail in money laundering case

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The Delhi High Court on Thursday granted bail to former Mumbai Police Chief Sanjay Pandey in the money laundering case registered by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) in relation to the alleged phone tapping at the National Stock Exchange.

The bail was granted with conditions by Justice Jasmeet Singh.

The detailed order was awaited.

The ED in September this year had filed a charge sheet in Delhi's Rouse Avenue court in connection with a Prevention of Money Laundering case pertaining to phone tapping of NSE employees between 2009 and 2017.

The charge sheet was filed against NSE's former chiefs, Chitra Ramakrishna and Ravi Narain, and former Mumbai Police Commissioner Sanjay Pandey.

"Money was laundered in phone tapping. The payments made in the phone tapping are alleged



proceeds of crime. There were shell companies through which money was laundered," it said in the charge sheet.

The ED has claimed that Pandey received Rs 4.54 crore to tap the MTNL lines to help Ramakrishna, and these were the proceeds of crime.

"Pandey ran iSec Securities Pvt. Ltd. It has been alleged that Ramakrishna used this firm to tap the phones of NSE employees. The phone calls made by NSE employees between 9 a.m. and 10 a.m. were tapped and recorded by iSec Securities Pvt. Ltd. It has been alleged that Pandey helped in tapping the phone calls illegally, an agency source had said.

Ramakrishna and Pandey were placed under arrest in July by the federal anti-money laundering agency. Pandey had said that he tapped the phone lines, but didn't do anything illegal. He said that all the equipment for tapping were made available by the NSE.

The ED's case is on the basis of the CBI's FIR, lodged on the directions of the Union Ministry of Home Affairs.

Reliance General Insurance urgently seeks Rs 600cr capital infusion from RCAP

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Reliance General Insurance Company Ltd. (RGICL) has sought Rs 600 crore capital infusion from Reliance Capital on an urgent basis.

In a letter to the Reliance Capital Administrator, RGIC has sought Rs 600 crore capital support from the RCAP by December 31, 2022.

The Committee of Creditors (COC) is expected to consider and discuss RGIC's request for capital infusion in December 9 meeting.

The company has said that the fund infusion is essential to preserve the business, enhance the value and take the company's solvency from 155 per cent to about 175 per cent.

The company says that borderline solvency is creating business hesitation in corporate clients, Government business tenders, and key retail and bank



partnerships.

The borderline solvency of RGIC is also being capitalized on by its competitors.

Reliance General Insurance believes that the capital infusion from the existing stakeholders of the company will send a strong message of support to the market, and will allow it to outperform the market growth rate. It will also augment value creation and negate the risk of underperforming the broader markets.

The company believes that fresh fund infusion will not only increase regulatory comfort at IRDAI but will also reflect continued support by the promoter company.

The company has told the RCAP Administrator that RGIC, as a large format insurer, can gain significantly in the current ecosystem if it can pursue growth like most of its peer competitors, but that would require adequate capital support from the RCAP.

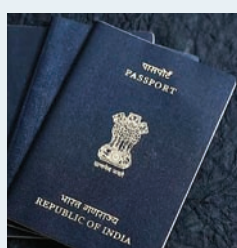
ALL REGIONAL PASSPORT OFFICES IN MUMBAI TO REMAIN OPEN ON DEC 10, 17 AND 24

Mumbai: The Regional Passport Office, Mumbai, has decided to keep all offices open for processing passport applications on the next three Saturdays i.e. December 10, 17 and 24.

According to a press release issued by Regional Passport Office, Mumbai, all offices under RPO Mumbai will remain open on the next three Saturdays from 9 am to 5.30 pm.

"The appointments for December 10 are available online. Appointments for December 17 and December 22 shall be available on December 14 and December 21, respectively," the release said.

As per the press release issued by Regional Passport Office, Mumbai, new appointments can be booked by filling the form online at <https://www.passportindia.gov.in> and making the payment online. The applicant should thereafter log in again to the <https://www.passportindia.gov.in> website to verify the payment and schedule the appointment. Applicants with passport appointments at a later date, or those who have missed their earlier appointments can also reschedule their appointments for above mentioned Saturdays. Such applicants will be allowed to reschedule their appointment only once, said the Regional Passport Office, Mumbai.



2 bikers charred to death after Maha state bus hits 7 vehicles

Team Absolute | Nashik

Two people were charred to death after a Maharashtra State Road Transport Corporation (MSRTC) bus hit seven vehicles in Maharashtra's Nashik district on Thursday, police said.

The accident took place near Palse village on Nashik-Pune highway around 11.45 am, said an official.

An MSRTC bus on its way from Rajgurunagar in Pune to Nashik apparently suffered a brake failure and hit four motorcycles and two SUVs before ramming into another MSRTC bus coming from Sinnar, he said.

"Two motorcyclists were trapped between the two buses and were charred to death as their bikes caught fire. One person received serious injuries. The bus coming from Rajgurunagar also caught fire," the official



said. Locals broke the windows of the burning bus and rescued all 43 passengers, he added. Two fire tenders from Nashik Road fire station and one rescue van from Shingada Talao fire station were rushed to the spot and the blaze was doused, the police official said.

Some passengers in the bus which caught fire received minor injuries and were being treated at Nashik Municipal Corporation's Bytco Hospital, he said.

The names of the two dead

were yet to be ascertained.

"It seems that the bus coming from Rajgurunagar suffered a brake failure, but more details are awaited. Traffic on the highway was disrupted for some time due to the accident and the crowd which gathered," the official said.

On October 8, as many as 13 people were killed and 35 injured when a private bus caught fire after colliding with a truck on Nashik-Aurangabad highway in the Nashik district.

Mumbai man kills mother over property dispute, dumps body in river

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Mumbai Police have arrested a man along with his servant for killing his 74-year-old mother by hitting her head with a baseball bat multiple times over a property dispute before dumping her body into the river in neighbouring Raigad district, an official said.

The 43-year-old man and his servant, 25, were arrested by the Juhu police for the murder of Veena Kapoor. "On Tuesday night, the security supervisor of

Kalpataru Society approached the Juhu police, saying that the woman had gone missing. Based on the complaint, the police launched a probe. The location of her mobile was found near her building while that of her son was in Panvel," he said. The next day, her son and his servant were brought to the police station.

"During the interrogation, he revealed that he killed his mother in a fit of rage after hitting a baseball bat multiple times on her head. He told them that there was a

property dispute was going on among them due to which he committed the crime and dumped her body into a river near Matheran in Raigad district," the official said.

The elder son of the woman resided in the US, police said. "A case has been registered against the duo under relevant sections of Indian Penal Code (IPC) including 302 (Murder) and 201 (causing disappearance of evidence of offence), and further investigation is underway," the official added.

COURT RESERVES ORDER ON PLEA SEEKING PROBE AGAINST UDDHAV THACKERAY

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The Mumbai Police today told the Bombay High Court that they have initiated a preliminary enquiry against former Maharashtra chief minister Uddhav Thackeray and his kin on a complaint about alleged disproportionate assets. Public Prosecutor Aruna Kamat Pai informed this to the HC after a division bench of Justices Dheeraj Thakur and Valmiki Menezes reserved its order on a public interest litigation seeking probe by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) and the Enforcement Directorate (ED) against the Thackerays for allegedly amassing wealth disproportionate to known sources of income.

The Thackerays sought dismissal of the PIL on the ground that it was filed on assumptions and without any factual foundation.

The petition, filed by behaviour and soft skill consultant and city resi-



dent Gauri Bhide, sought a direction to the CBI and the ED to conduct a "thorough and impartial" investigation against Thackeray and his family.

The bench heard the matter briefly in the morning session and closed it for orders. However, in the afternoon session, Pai mentioned the matter once again to inform the court of the

state government's stand. "The Mumbai Police's Economic Offences Wing (EOW) has initiated a preliminary enquiry into the allegations," Pai told the court.

Uddhav Thackeray's counsel Aspi Chinoy objected to this and said it was an "abuse of the process of law." Bhide, before filing the petition, had

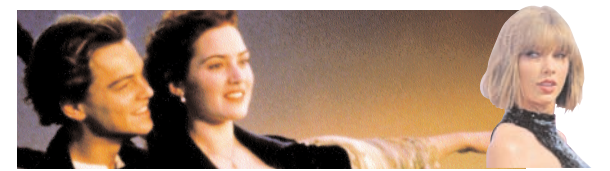
sent a letter to the Mumbai police commissioner on her allegations.

However, on Thursday, Bhide told the court that she has not been informed about any such enquiry initiated by the police.

"My request is that the central agencies should be directed to conduct a probe," Bhide told the court.

Senior counsels Chinoy and Ashok Mundargi, appearing for Uddhav Thackeray, his wife Rashmi Thackeray and son Aaditya Thackeray, had argued the PIL was filed on assumptions and without any factual foundation.

"The petition is absolutely bereft of any material and is filed purely on assumptions. The petitioner has an alternate remedy of filing private complaint before a magistrate's court seeking police probe," Chinoy argued. He said Uddhav Thackeray is not in power anymore and, hence, it cannot be alleged he or his family would influence any probe.



Jennifer Lawrence claimed there's no female action film lead before her

Los Angeles | Agencies

Hollywood star Jennifer Lawrence has been widely criticised after claiming that there's no female action movie lead before her. Speaking with actress Viola Davis about female action heroes, she said: "I remember when I was doing 'Hunger Games', nobody had ever put a woman in the lead of an action movie because it wouldn't work - because we were told girls and boys can both identify with a male lead, but boys cannot identify with a female lead." She added: "And it just makes me so happy every single time I see a movie come out that just blows through every one of those beliefs, and proves that it is just a lie to keep certain people out of the movies. To keep certain people in the same positions that they've always been in." Many quickly disagreed with Lawrence as Franklin Leonard, founder of The Black List, said on Twitter in response to the interview: "It is untrue that no one had ever put a woman in an action movie before Jennifer Lawrence in 'Hunger Games'."



'MONARCH' CANCELLED AFTER ONE SEASON

Los Angeles | Agencies

'Monarch', which starred Anna Friel, Trace Adkins, Susan Sarandon, Joshua Sasse and Beth Ditto, will not return for a second season. The Season 1 finale aired on December 6. The show follows the 'first family of country music,' led by Dottie Roman (Sarandon), who shockingly dies in the series premiere, despite being the face on every billboard for the show. Over the course of the season, her husband Albie (Adkins) attempts to keep the Monarch business afloat with the help of their two daughters and son, who all are hiding secrets of their own. Music was a giant component of the series, with covers of both new and old hits, including Lizzo's 'Juice,' Faith Hill's 'Breathe,' LeAnn Rimes' 'How Do I Live,' Ed Sheeran's 'Photograph,' Harry Styles' 'Watermelon Sugar' and, on the final episode, Kelly Clarkson's 'Stronger.' Following the debut music supervisor Amanda Krieg Thomas said: "It's a great mix of songs - there are classics to rediscover, current hits, and artists that you may have never heard of, but will add to your playlist after the show. We're set in Texas. We never exclude a great song because the artist isn't from Texas, but we really tried to find opportunities for emerging artists from Texas wherever we could." 'Monarch' marks the first fully produced in-house scripted series for the network.

ETHAN SLATER TO STAR OPPOSITE ARIANA GRANDE, CYNTHIA ERIVO IN A FILM



Los Angeles | Agencies

Broadway veteran Ethan Slater, who scored a Tony nomination for 'SpongeBob SquarePants: The Musical', has been cast as Boq in Universal's big-screen adaptation of 'Wicked'. In the film, directed by Jon M. Chu, Slater is joining the previously announced cast of Ariana Grande as Glinda, Cynthia Erivo as Elphaba and Jonathan Bailey as Fiyero. Jeff Goldblum is in talks to play the Wizard, as per the reports. Marc Platt ('La La Land,' 'Dear Evan Hansen') will produce the movie for his Universal-based Marc Platt Productions, with David Stone also producing. (On Broadway, 'Wicked' is produced by Universal Stage Productions, Platt, the Araca Group, Jon B. Platt and Stone.) Universal senior EVP of production Erik Baiers and VP of production development Lexi Barta oversee the project on behalf of the studio. He created and is currently in development with Oscar-winner Jean Doumanian on his Buster Keaton series and has a supporting role in the upcoming feature 'Lost on a Mountain in Maine,' produced by Sylvester Stallone's Balboa Productions.

I THINK WE WOULD BE REMISS NOT TO DISCUSS DRUGS EFFECT ON ME: RDJ

Los Angeles | Agencies

Hollywood star Robert Downey Jr. had a close relationship with his father, Robert Downey Sr. however he was unfortunately a bad influence on his son from his childhood. In a new documentary titled 'Sr.', the Golden Globe-winning actor puts the spotlight on his filmmaker father and his father's role in his dismal upbringing, reports. According to the reports, Downey Jr. says: "I think we would be remiss not to discuss its effect on me," as he refers to his father's unorthodox approach to childcare. Embarrassed, his father mumbles back, "Boy, I would sure love to miss that discussion." The film includes a clip from an old interview, thought to have taken place in the 1990s, in which Downey Sr. realized he made "a terrible, stupid mistake" by introducing his son to drugs at age six.



The filmmaker, who himself was a drug addict, admits in the chat, "A lot of us thought it would be hypocritical not to have our kids participate in marijuana and stuff like that. It was an idiot move on our part to share that with our children. I'm just happy he's here." When asked if he was ever worried his son, who sat next to him, might not survive, he replies, "Many times." When he wasn't handing his son narcotics, Downey Sr. was taking little Robert off to watch X-rated films and even casting him, from the age of five, in his own disturbing and far from child-friendly movies. Downey Jr. remembers "growing up in a family where everyone was doing drugs." The 'Iron Man' star says in a 1988 interview that doing drugs became something he and his dad bonded over. He said at the time, "When my dad and I would do drugs together, it was like him trying to express his love for me in the only way he knew." In the new documentary, which he produces with his wife Susan, Downey Jr. compares his addiction to cocaine and heroin to "like (having) a shotgun in my mouth, and I've got my finger on the trigger, and I like the taste of the gun metal."

Been pushing for a Harley Quinn-Poison Ivy romance for years: Margot Robbie

Los Angeles | Agencies

Actress Margot Robbie's next appearance as Harley Quinn in the DC Universe is undetermined at this point, but the Oscar nominee already knows what she wants for whenever her anti-hero does return: A Harley Quinn-Poison Ivy romance. Robbie told during her 'Babylon' press tour that she's been trying to get the queer romance off the ground for years, reports. "I have been pushing for that for years," Robbie said. "I cannot tell you how hard I've been pushing for that. I want it too." Asked if she has an actor in mind to play Poison Ivy, Robbie responded: "Honestly... I always picture like Poison Ivy in the comics. I don't really actually picture an actress doing it." The next time Harley Quinn returns to the big screen, she won't be played by Robbie. Lady Gaga is stepping into the role opposite Joaquin Phoenix for the highly anticipated 'Joker' sequel, officially titled 'Joker: Folie à Deux.' "It makes me so happy because I said from the very beginning that all I want is for Harley Quinn to be one of those characters the way... like Macbeth or Batman always gets passed from great actor to great actor," Robbie told in October about Gaga taking over the role. "Someone gets to do their Batman, or someone gets to do their Macbeth." Robbie continued: "I feel like, in not so many cases, are there female characters - Queen Elizabeth I...which I got to have a crack at as well, which I was honoured to do. I was like, 'Wow! Cate Blanchett did Queen Elizabeth I. Now I get to.' It's such an honour to have built a foundation strong enough that Harley can now be one of those characters that other actors get to have a go at playing. And I think (Lady Gaga) will do something incredible with it."



Shawn, Serena Levy, Hasan and Beena Minhaj Honored by Health Organization

During the 2022 Jhpiego's Laughter Is the Best Medicine gala, the global health nonprofit event not only delivered many laughs but also celebrated its 50th Anniversary at the Beverly Wilshire by highlighting the philanthropic and humanitarian contributions of its honorees. 'Deadpool 3' Director Shawn Levy and his wife, Serena, received the Jhpiego's Elyse Bila Ouedraogo Award, named after a Burkina Faso nurse who screened hundreds of women for cervical cancer, a disease that actually ended up taking the nurse's own life. Comedian and actor Hasan Minhaj, best known for his work on 'The Daily Show,' and his wife, Dr. Beena Patel Minhaj, took home The Visionary Award, which recognizes activism for women's empowerment, education and access to health care.



ABSOLUTE PIC OF THE DAY



Francine Lewis



I HAVE REACHED HERE THROUGH MY HARD WORK AND DETERMINATION: BHUMI

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Bollywood actress Bhumi Pednekar, who is awaiting the release of 'Govinda Naam Mera', has shared that her upcoming cinematic choices - the films and the characters - are a reflection of her belief system.

Elaborating further, the actress said: "My upcoming film choices and the characters I play in them are a reflection of my belief system and goal as an artiste to portray women well on screen. I enjoy choosing scripts that let me disrupt the content landscape. I will continue to do the same in the near future."

Sharing her excitement, the actress said: "It feels amazing to be one of the most prolific actors in the Hindi film industry today and I'm proud that I have been able to reach here through my hard work and determination. Being a complete outsider to Bollywood, the journey to be where I'm today, has taken a bit of time for sure but honestly, I have no regrets."

She further mentioned that her journey makes her the artiste that she is today and she couldn't be happier that today top filmmakers trust her to deliver on their vision.

The actress seems to be enjoying the pressure of back to back releases as she said: "Ever since I made my debut with 'Dum Laga Ke Haisha', I have relished the challenge of playing women characters that have ambitions, desires and strength. I feel blessed and fortunate that I have seven films in the next one year in which I play various shades of women."

These films will allow her to showcase fascinatingly strong women in cinema: "This conscious choice, to be an actor who showcases different sides of fiercely independent women, has also given me a chance to work with my favourite filmmakers and co-stars. I have had a lot of fun shooting for these films."



THIS IS TRULY UNVEILED A NEWER VERSION OF ME: SIDHARTH MALHOTRA

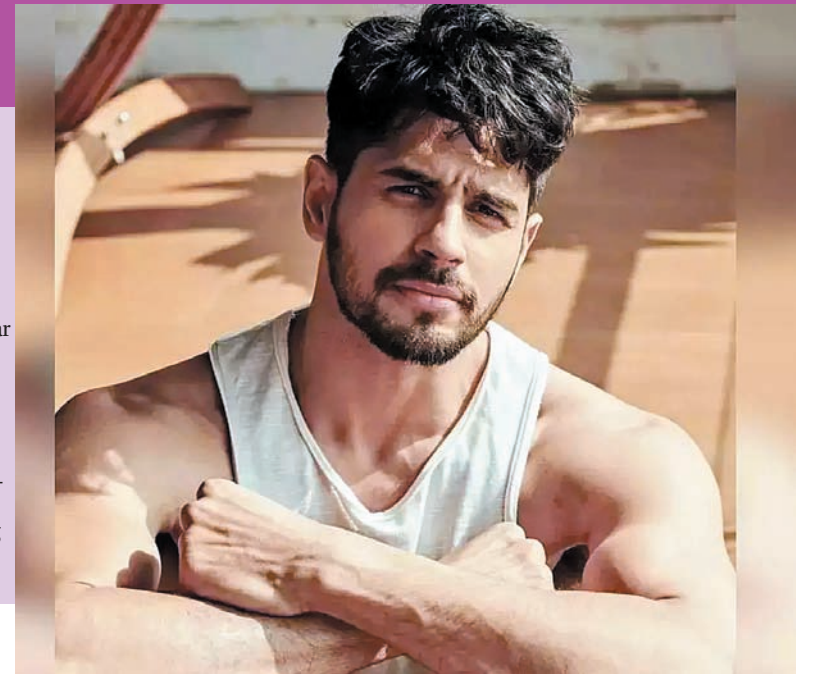
Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actor Sidharth Malhotra said that the upcoming film has unveiled a newer version of him. The thriller 'Yodha', directed by Pushkar Ojha and Sagar Ambre, is based on a hijacking. The film features Sidharth in an action-packed role and an all-new avatar. Co-stars Disha Patani and Raashi Khanna will be seen alongside Sidharth Malhotra.

He took to his Instagram with the film's poster: "Packed with action, thrills, and big screen entertainment; our #Yodha is landing in cinemas near you, so fasten your seat belts! JULY 7, 2023, YODHA IN CINEMAS."

Sidharth said: "As an artist, you would want to work on scripts that bring out the best in you. This truly unveiled a newer version of me, which I am very thankful for. The amount of love I have received from audiences and fans is magical. I can't wait to showcase what Yodha has for them."

The actor is loaded with different characters and power-packed performances in his upcoming line-up with Rohit Shetty's directorial venture into the web space, titled 'The Indian Police Force' and 'Mission Majnu' starring Rashmika Mandanna.



Deepika Padukone is all set to be the first "lady singham"

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Rohit Shetty and Ranveer Singh are recently on a spree to promote their upcoming film Cirkus. The film also has a cameo appearance by Deepika Padukone. The film's first electrifying song was launched amidst the presence of media at an event today. At the event, filmmaker Rohit Shetty made a surprising announcement. Rohit and Deepika earlier collaborated in 2013 for Chennai Express. When asked about the two reuniting, Rohit Shetty said, "The next film from our production is Singham. While people are curious to know about the entry of lady police in the cop universe, here I introduce

Deepika Padukone as the First Lady cop!"

At the event, while Ranveer opted for an all-black outfit, Deepika Padukone was seen in pink attire. Talking about cirkus, the film features Ranveer Singh in a double role and the story of Cirkus takes place in the 1960s. It also stars Jacqueline Fernandez and Pooja Hegde in a pivotal roles.

I'VE NEVER HAD PAY PARITY IN BOLLYWOOD: PRIYANKA

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actress Priyanka Chopra Jonas revealed in an interview that her upcoming Amazon Prime Video series 'Citadel' is the first time she's ever received equal pay as her male co-stars. She has been acting for 20 years.

"I've never had pay parity in Bollywood," Priyanka said in an interview.

"I would get paid about 10 per cent of the salary of my male co-actor. (The pay gap) is large, substantially large. And so many women still deal with that. I'm sure I will too if I worked with a male co-actor now in Bollywood."

"My generation of female actors have definitely asked [for equal pay]," she added. "We've asked, but we've not got it."

Priyanka detailed other ways in which she contended against sexism while working on Bollywood productions. "I thought it was absolutely ok to sit for hours and hours on set, while my male co-actor just took his own time, and decided whenever he wanted to show up on set is when we would shoot," she said.

"I was called 'black cat' and 'dusky.' I mean, what does 'dusky' even mean in a country where we are literally all brown?" Chopra Jonas continued. "I thought I was not pretty enough, I believed that I would have to work a lot harder, even though I thought I was probably a little bit more talented than my fellow actors who were lighter skinned."



JAGGA JASOOS, THE ONLY FILM IN MY CAREER THAT HURT ME: RANBIR



Team Absolute | Mumbai

Bollywood star Ranbir Kapoor discussed his life and career during one of the final 'In Conversation' sessions at the Red Sea Film Festival on Wednesday.

"It's part of Indian culture," Kapoor said later that evening. "The songs, the dances. They love the movies, especially the Asian subcontinent. So it's always great to get that love."

Talking at length, he discussed the projects in his filmography that he believes are failures, either due to poor box office numbers or conflicting artistic results.

Discussing his 2022 action film 'Shamshera', he said it was "by far the hardest film I've worked on. It was a big box office disaster, but the biggest mistake I made on Shamshera was that I stuck on a beard."

He was referencing the prosthetic beard he wears during the film. Over rapturous laughter from the crowd, he continued: "When you're shooting in the heat, and you stick on a beard, it's like your face is melting."

Ranbir continued to discuss his 2017 family drama 'Jagga Jasoos', which he described as "another disaster."

"It's a film that I produced. It was a passion project. It was directed by Anurag Basu. It was a very heartwarming and sweet idea, but it didn't do well, which really hurt," he said.

"That's the only film in my career that hurt me."

"It's been pretty bad these last few years," he told of the situation at the Indian box office. "The entire culture of going to a theatre for a community viewing of a movie seems like it's dying, and it's only there for the big ticket films, but I hope with strong storytelling, and renewed vigour, Indian cinema comes back."

BLURR : TAAPSEE PANNU STARRER IS A MODERATELY GRIPPING THRILLER



FILM REVIEW

BY AAKRUTI BAGLA

Directed by: - Ajay Bahl

Cast: Taapsee Pannu, Gulshan Devaiah, Abhilash Thapliyal

Runtime: 126 minutes

Ratings: 2.5/5

SYNOPSIS

Gayatri visits a beautiful hill station to probe the mystery behind her twin sister Gautami's suicide. In pursuit of doing so, she starts losing her eyesight gradually. Being hell-bent to find the killer and discover the reason behind her suicide, the encounters some dreadful situations. How will she succeed in her mission while battling her own ordeals? The answer lies in the film.

REVIEW

The film is a remake of the popular Spanish film Julia's Eyes.

It begins on a mysterious note of Gautami attempting suicide and later her sister Gayatri setting out to unravel the mystery behind the same. As the film progresses, you also witness Taapsee's husband Neil telling her not to stress, but you also see her being hell-bent on joining the dots.

A suspense thriller that relies on situations and dialogues, and is primarily shot in one location, must engage you enough to sit with rapt attention.

Director Ajay Bahl's outing leaves much to be desired on this front.



The movie becomes monotonous and repetitive quickly; though it picks up pace in the second half when things turn perplexing. The first half is too slow, but the film picks pace in second half albeit with bewildering developments. The climax twist may seem mind-bending only to viewers unfamiliar with the genre, but it does not excite them enough.

Talking about other technical aspects, even the cinematography, lighting, camera work, visual effects, and technical aspects are perfect for the genre, and play a role in spiking the interest. But it's the banal dialogues that blow off the steam. Even editing could have been a bit crisp.

When it comes to music, the film has

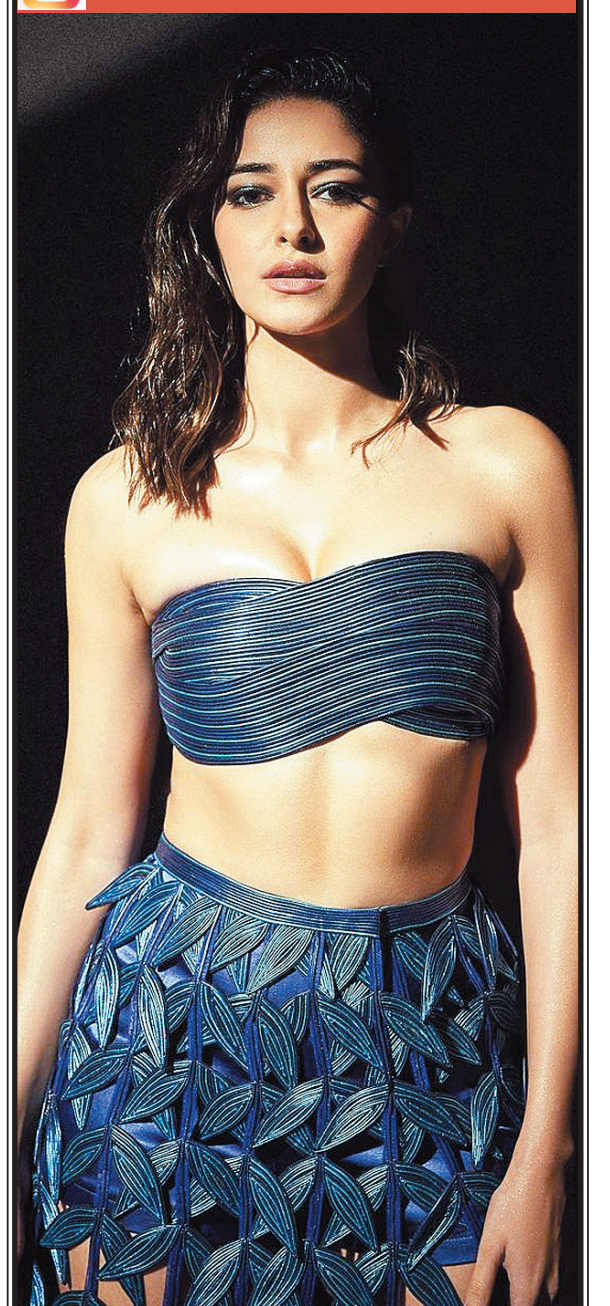
no songs; however, the background score is overall in sync with the mood of the film.

Speaking of performances, without a question, Taapsee Pannu is Blurr's star. She has often shown that she can bravely carry a film and that's what she does. She embodies her role to the fullest. Gulshan Devaiah as Gayatri's husband Neil leaves a mark despite his limited presence. Whereas, Abhilash Thapliyal comes as a surprising element, but underplays his part.

CONCLUSION

If thrillers are your favorite genre, you might feel a bit deceived by this Taapsee Pannu film.

INSTAGRAM PIC OF THE DAY



Ananya Panday