

# absolute india

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## India's Diplomatic Triumph and China's Mysterious Absence Steal the Show

Rubal Bansal | New Delhi

The 2023 G20 Summit, hosted by India amidst the vibrant backdrop of New Delhi, unfolded as a spectacular diplomatic triumph that illuminated the global stage. Prime Minister Narendra Modi, steering the summit's helm, showcased India's burgeoning influence, skillfully navigating international waters and bolstering the nation's standing in global diplomacy.

**Diplomatic Mastery and Global South's Resonance**

In a resounding victory for India, the G20 Summit resonated with unanimous support for recognizing the Ukraine conflict, a testament to India's growing diplomatic prowess. Prime Minister Modi adroitly balanced India's economic clout with a commitment to global peace, securing consensus on this pressing international issue.

**A Resounding Call for Global Reform**

Prime Minister Modi's impassioned call for reforming global institutions, echoed by the United States, reverberated through the summit. This clarion call underscored India's steadfast determination to achieve equitable representation in international governance structures, amplifying the voice of all nations.

**Historic New Delhi Declaration**

The zenith of the summit, the New Delhi Leaders' Declaration, featured

an astonishing 83 unanimous paragraphs, a striking testament to the power of consensus. Stripped of footnotes and summaries, it stood as a remarkable display of unity among the world's foremost nations. Nestled within this declaration were groundbreaking agreements concerning the Finance Track, ranging from bolstering multilateral development banks to navigating the uncharted waters of cryptocurrency regulation.

**Global Imperative: Climate Action and Finance**

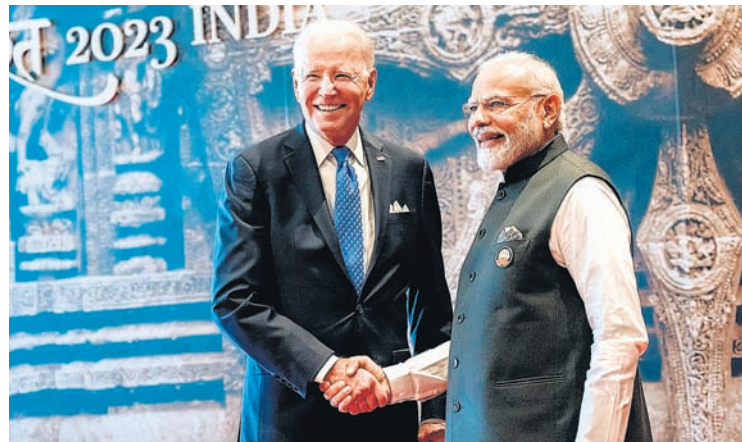
The G20 Summit articulated a compelling call to action on climate change, underscoring the urgency of mobilizing substantial financial resources for developing countries to achieve net-zero emissions by 2050. This seismic shift from billions to trillions in climate funding reaffirmed the G20's unwavering commitment to confront the global climate crisis.

**The African Union's Resonance**

One of the most significant achievements was the inclusion of the African Union as a full-fledged member of the G20. This monumental step not only expanded the G20's diversity but also propelled India's quest for a permanent seat on the UNSC, as the nation actively garnered support from the African continent.

**Global Leaders Unite**

The summit witnessed an awe-inspiring convergence of leaders, with the likes of German Chancellor Olaf Scholz, French President Emmanuel Macron, and British Prime Minister



Rishi Sunak in attendance. Notably absent were Chinese President Xi Jinping and Russian President Vladimir Putin, with China represented by Premier Li Qiang and Russia by Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov.

**The Birth of IMEC: Charting New Economic Horizons**

In a groundbreaking development, India forged a visionary partnership with the United States, Saudi Arabia, the European Union, and other nations to establish the India - Middle East - Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC). This audacious initiative seeks to propel economic development through a labyrinth of transcontinental transportation networks, poised as a formidable alternative to China's Belt and Road Initiative.

**Challenges and Controversies**

Despite the summit's numerous triumphs, it was not devoid of chal-

lenges. Key global issues, including debt relief for vulnerable nations and the phasing out of fossil fuels, remained unresolved. Criticism swirled around the unequal distribution of COVID-19 vaccines, raising questions about the depth of discussions. China's conspicuous absence cast a shadow over the proceedings, underscoring geopolitical complexities.

**Conclusion: India's Radiant Global Beacon**

India's G20 Summit 2023 has illuminated the world stage, marking a resounding crescendo in global diplomacy. While challenges persist, India's leadership in promoting consensus and inclusivity stands as a testament to its growing influence. As the world grapples with pressing global issues, the G20 remains an indispensable platform for international cooperation, and India continues to lead the way, offering a radiant beacon of hope and diplomacy on the global stage.



## Railways to roll out Vande Bharat sleeper and Vande Metro next year

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Indian Railways will introduce the sleeper version of the Vande Bharat Express train and Vande Metro next year. The sleeper variant will be for long-distance travel while Vande Metro will help commuters cover short distances.

The first sleeper coaches of the Vande Bharat Express train will be rolled out in March 2024 while Vande Metro is expected to start operating by January next year. Both new types of Vande Bharat Express trains are being developed by the Integral Coach Factory (ICF) of Indian Railways in Chennai.

The Vande Bharat sleeper has been designed for long-distance travel and can attain a speed of 220 km per hour. However, it will run at 200 km per hour on the tracks, as per officials. It will allow passengers to

cover long journeys overnight at high speed.

The sleeper Vande Bharat trains are likely to serve as an alternative to Rajdhani trains. The chair car version, on the other hand, will gradually replace Shatabdi trains.

The Railways had issued a tender for 400 Vande Bharat trains. The first lot of 200 trains will be made of steel and will have seating arrangement like Shatabdi Express. The second lot will have sleeper coaches made of aluminium.

The Delhi-Mumbai and Delhi-Kolkata tracks will be repaired before the Vande Bharat sleeper trains run on them. Work on signal system, bridges, and fencing will also be done on the routes.

Vande Metro is being developed to facilitate short-distance travel for commuters. It is a new type of Vande Bharat train consisting of 12 coaches.

## IAF to procure 100 LCA Mark 1A fighter jets

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Indian Air Force (IAF) has said that it would procure 100 indigenous LCA Mark 1A fighter jets equipped with the latest technology.

Air Chief Marshal VR Chaudhari said this while receiving the first C-295 military transport aircraft in Spain. According to Chaudhari, LCA will be replacing the aging MiG-series fleet which includes the MiG-21, MiG-23, and MiG-27 aircraft.

In a statement, Chaudhari said "it was imperative that we bolster our inventory with LCA class aircraft. IAF is advocating for the acquisition of around 100 more LCA class aircraft".

A proposal has been formally submitted to the Defence Ministry and other national security stakeholders, the IAF official added.

The decision to procure approximately 100 more LCA Tejas fighters came after several review meetings.

In next 15 years, the IAF is expected to have 40 LCA Tejas, more than 180 LCA Mark-1A, and 120 LCA Mark-2 aircraft in its inventory, the official added.

On Friday, Defence Acquisition Council (DAC) has accorded Acceptance of Necessity (AoN) for nine capital acquisition proposals of approximately Rs 45,000 crore, the



Ministry of Defence said. The AoN for procurement of 12 Sukhoi-30 MKI Aircraft with associated equipment from Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) was also accorded.

The DAC also accorded AoN for proposals of the Indian Air Force, which included avionics upgradation of Dornier aircraft to improve the accuracy and reliability for operations.

The procurement of Dhruvastra Short Range Air-to-Surface Missile as a potent Indigenous Precision Guided Weapon for indigenously built ALH Mk-IV Helicopters has been cleared by the DAC, an official said.

## No permission will be granted to chop down trees for construction of houses: Delhi HC

**New Delhi:** The Delhi High Court, hearing a contempt plea, on Thursday said that no permission shall be granted to anyone by the authorities here for felling of trees for construction of houses. A single-judge bench of Justice Jasmeet Singh was dealing with petition by Bhavreen Kandhari, who has sought action against government officers who, despite a clear directive from the court in an April 2022 order, were allegedly not adhering to the requirement of providing reasons for tree felling. The judge said that the interim order dated August 31 shall continue till October 6.

The interim order had recorded that Delhi government will not grant permission for the felling of trees in the national capital until September 14. Justice Singh granted the Delhi government two weeks to file a detailed response on the status of transplanted and replanted trees in Delhi, "... directions contained in the August 31 order shall continue. No permission shall be granted for felling of trees in respect of construction of houses," the judge said. Kandhari has expressed concern that authorities were recklessly granting permission for the felling of trees, which prompted the early hearing of the contempt plea. Advocate Dhairya Gupta, representing the Delhi government, had, on August 31, informed the court that no permission for felling of trees for any individuals will be granted until the next date of hearing, and any required permissions for important projects would be intimated to the court.

## ANYONE' CAN WIN THE WORLD CUP, INDIA NEED TO BE 'BEST AT EVERY MOMENT': ROHIT SHARMA

Team Absolute | New Delhi

With just weeks to go before the start of the ICC ODI World Cup, Indian skipper Rohit Sharma has highlighted the unpredictability surrounding the marquee event with the hint that the coveted trophy could be lifted by "anyone" as all teams are strong.

The stylish opener also said the Men In Blue need to be the "best" in the business to leave all "strong" teams behind in the quest for the World Cup trophy. The ODI World Cup has once again returned to India after a gap of 12 years and will start on October 5.

The Indian cricket team is currently playing in the Asia Cup 2023 and will lock horns



in the finals of the tournament with Sri Lanka on September 17. Considering their ongoing display of cricket, with the recent form of Virat Kohli and KL Rahul, it seems that the Men in Blue have a good team balance for the upcoming ODI World Cup. In an exclusive email interaction, organised by Booking.com - the Official Accommodation Partner for the ICC Men's Cricket World Cup, Rohit shared his journey in the sport and his future

plans. He also said if he wouldn't have been the cricketer, he would have been a "real estate tycoon".

Cricket to me has been my love from a very young age and as I grew and played more and more, I became passionate and obsessive over the game and now it is part of my life. A strong part of my life and my family's life and everything that I have today is thanks to cricket. It has given me so much, that a dream to play for India that I had when I used to watch my idols on TV has now come true. The World Cup is anyone's to win. All the teams are strong, everyone will bring their A-game, so we also need to be at our best at every moment and that's what I will aim for.

## Now play Pokemon GO game in Hindi in India

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Pokemon Company (TPC), along with game developer Niantic, on Friday launched its mobile gaming application Pokemon GO in Hindi in India.

The Pokemon Company also decided to strengthen its commitment to the India market by renaming over 800 Pokemon in Hindi to make Pokemon even more relatable for fans.

Users can now visit the official Pokedex page to access the new Hindi names and will soon be able to search for information and details related to all Pokemon in Hindi.

"The Hindi version of Pokemon GO will promote inclusivity, encourage engagement, and enable more players to embark on their Pokemon GO adventures. Since the launch of the game in 2016, we have added over five lakh Pokestops across India and the company also has been organising several on-ground activations," said Omar Tellez, VP for Emerging Markets, Niantic, here at the launch event.

Moreover, to celebrate Hindi localisation, Niantic is also hosting a month-long special



event for Indian players. This in-game event will be packed with exciting features such as Field Research, Timed Research, and Bonuses with special rewards.

To increase accessibility for the Trainers across the country, Pokemon GO has also restructured the pricing for coin bundles on the Google Play and Apple Stores, as well as introduced an exclusive coin bonus for the Pokemon GO Web Store reiterating its commitment towards the Indian market.

## 64 years ago Doordarshan, India's national broadcaster, began its journey

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Who can forget the Doordarshan TV serials like Ramanand Sagar's 'Ramayan' (1987-88) and BR Chopra's 'Mahabharat' (1988-90) get high viewership and ad revenues, 'Malgudi Days' (based on author RK Narayan's eponymous book of short stories) which aired on the channel in 1987. In the year 1994, fantasy series 'Chandrakanta' aired on DD National every Sunday morning. In the year 1997 the Hindi-language superhero series 'Shaktimaan' started on DD National, starring Mukesh Khanna, the show gets mired in controversies owing to impressionable kids imitating dangerous stunts in the series.

The TV news-readers like Pratima Puri became India's first newsreader when DD began five-minute bulletins in 1965.

On September 15, 1959, the gov-



ernment initiated Doordarshan, commonly known as DD, the nation's public service broadcaster, in Delhi. In 1959, the first President of India Dr. Rajendra Prasad launched DD as a pilot project at AIR studio in Delhi.

The DD signature tune was composed by Pandit Ravi Shankar and Ustad Ali Ahmed Hussain Khan in 1976. Doordarshan had a humble

beginning on September 15, 1959 in Delhi, with a test telecast, using a temporary studio and a small transmitter. In 1965, regular daily transmissions were started by Doordarshan as a part of the All India Radio.

By 1972, TV services were extended to Mumbai and Amritsar up to 1975 only seven cities across India had TV service and Doordarshan was the

only service provider of TV in India.

On April 1, 1976, TV services were separated from radio and the office of the All India Radio and Doordarshan were managed by separate Director Generals in Delhi.

In 1982 Doordarshan came into existence as a national broadcaster and reached all parts of the country.

The first programme to be telecast on Doordarshan was Krishi Darshan, which began on January 26, 1967 and is remembered as the longest running TV programme.

Then came Prasar Bharati, a statutory autonomous body set up by an Act of Parliament and comprises the Doordarshan Television Network and All India Radio, which were earlier media units of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting.

In May 2019, Prasar Bharati - the TV wing of India's public service broadcasting - shortlisted five submissions for DD's new logo.



# Alliance between Lalu and Nitish like oil and water which can't be mixed: Shah

**Team Absolute | Patna**  
Union Home Minister Amit Shah claimed on Saturday that the alliance between RJD and JD-U is like oil and water, which cannot be mixed. He also said that water is always on the receiving end, as oil makes it dirty. Addressing a BJP rally at Jhanjharpur in Madhubani district on Saturday, Shah said: "Nitish Kumar made the alliance to become the Prime Minister, but I want to say that the alliance will drown him."



"The alliance between Nitish Kumar and Lalu Ji is an alliance of self-interest. One wants to become the Prime Minister, while another wants to make his son the Chief Minister of Bihar. I want to tell them that neither Nitish Ji, nor Lalu Ji will realise their goal as the Prime Minister's post is not empty. In 2024, the people of the country will make Narendra Modi the Prime Minister again. The Home Minister also claimed that as Lalu Prasad

has become active in Bihar, Nitish Kumar has become inactive. "They have unleashed Jungle Raj in Bihar. The UPA during its tenure from 2004 to 2014 had done scams worth more than Rs 12 lakh crore and Lalu Ji was part of it. He was involved in the IRCTC scam and earned millions of

rupees. The court case is underway but Nitish Ji is turning a blind eye to his corruption. Due to the scams during the UPA's tenure, they have even changed the name of its alliance. "Nitish Ji is well aware that the UPA government did nothing for Bihar. So they have changed the name from

UPA to INDIA to hide the scams. I want to tell the people of Jhanjharpur to understand that Lalu Ji is the same leader who pushed the state far behind," Shah said. Shah also claimed that recently the Lalu-Nitish government had issued a 'fatwa' to cancel leaves on Janmashami and Raksha Bandhan, a decision which was rolled back after the people of Bihar protested against it.

"I am thankful to the people of Bihar who protested against such a decision," Shah said. "During the 2014 Lok Sabha elections, the people of Bihar gave 40 per cent votes and 31 seats to the NDA and made Narendra Modi the Prime Minister. In 2019, the people of Bihar gave 53 per cent votes and 39 seats to the NDA to re-elect Narendra Modi as the Prime Minister. "Only the BJP can end Jungle Raj in Bihar. It is the only party which can give security to each and every person in the state," the Home Minister said.

# Modi govt a 'complete failure' on all important fronts: Kharge at CWCx

**Team Absolute | Hyderabad**  
Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge on Saturday said that the Modi government has been a "complete failure on all important fronts". The Congress chief made the remarks during the first meeting of the newly-constituted Congress Working Committee (CWC) in Hyderabad.



He said that Congress party has been playing a pivotal role as the principle opposition party. Kharge also said that following the success of the third meeting of Indian National Developmental Inclusive Alliance (INDIA) in Mumbai, the government has been targeting the opposition parties with the central agencies. In his opening remarks at the CWC, party's highest decision making body, Kharge said: "Congress has been playing a pivotal role as the principal opposition party at the Centre for the past nine-and-half years with committed determination in redressing concerns and grievance of the common people."

He emphasised that the country is at "crossroads" today facing many internal challenges. Targeting the BJP-led central government, the Congress leader said: "Modi government has been a complete failure on all important fronts, in controlling inflation, unemployment, raging violence in Manipur, widening inequality and declining condition of farmers and labourers." "The entire nation is witnessing the tragic events still unfolding in Manipur. The Modi government allowed the fire of Manipur to reach

Nuh in Haryana," he said referring to the violence in Manipur which erupted on May 3. Kharge asserted that these incidents tarnish the image of modern, progressive, and secular India. "Our economy is in grave danger today. Inflation and rise in prices of all essential commodities has adversely affected the lives of the poor and common people. To add to the sorrows, a young country like ours is facing the grave challenge of record unemployment. The inequality gap is continuously deepening," he added. Taking a pot shot at the government, Kharge, who is also the Leader of Opposition in Rajya Sabha said: "On top of this, the Modi government is handing over the prized PSUs of the country built since independence to a few crony-capitalist friends." Referring to the natural calamities in states like Himachal Pradesh due to floods and landslides, and many other states facing the drought like situation, Kharge said: "There is also an urgent need to provide relief to the people affected by natural calamities like floods and droughts." On

national security, the Congress chief said: "The government's alleged negligence regarding China's encroachments poses a critical danger to the country's security. However, ignoring all these fundamental issues, Modi government has this tendency to repeatedly deflect and divert attention from real issues with empty slogans." "The government brings slogans like 'Atma-nirbhar Bharat', '5 Trillion Economy', 'New India 2022', 'Amritkaal' and now, '3rd largest economy'. These are merely hollow words meant to distract the nation from the government's failures," Kharge added. He also asserted that the Congress re-emphasises its commitment to protect the Constitution of India, the country's democracy, and the rights of the marginalised communities. "Being the main opposition party of India, it is our responsibility to be the voice of the people." "Today 27 INDIA parties stand together on fundamental issues of importance. After three successful meetings, the INDIA Alliance is forging ahead to combat the anti-people and anti-democratic BJP government. Perturbed at this development, the BJP government is resorting to vindictive action against Opposition parties," Kharge said. "We also strongly condemn the government's attempts to stifle opposition in Parliament and curtail public scrutiny in the Parliament.. The forthcoming Special Session of Parliament raises concerns about the ruling party's intentions," he said.

# Chandrababu Naidu is not above law: Andhra CM



**Team Absolute | Nidadavolu (Andhra Pradesh)**  
Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Y. S Jagan Mohan Reddy alleged on Saturday that TDP President and former Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu was the kingpin in the Rs 371 crore skill development 'scam' as he affirmed that no one is above the law. Reddy said that Naidu, "who led all his political life exploiting the

people", can't escape the long arm of law as he was caught red-handed in the scam. The Chief Minister was addressing a public meeting in this town at Nidadavolu in East Godavari district. This was the first reaction by Reddy since Naidu's arrest by the CID on September 9 in the alleged skill development scam. He also found fault with "pro-TDP media blindly supporting him" and warned that no one is above the law.

# Ex-minister Tummala quits BRS, joins Congress

**Team Absolute | Hyderabad**  
Former minister Tummala Nageswara Rao on Saturday resigned from Bharat Rashtira Samithi (BRS) and joined the Congress party.



He formally joined the Congress party just before the Congress Working Committee (CWC) began its meeting in Hyderabad. Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge welcomed him into the party. State Congress chief A. Revanth Reddy, AICC in-charge for Telangana, Manikrao Thakrey and other leaders were present. The former minister was miffed with BRS after he was denied ticket from Palair constituency for the coming Assembly elections. The BRS has given ticket to Kandla Upender Reddy, who was elected on Congress ticket in 2018 but later defected to the BRS. Nageswara Rao, who has

been with the Telugu Desam Party (TDP) since its inception in early 1980s, had served as a minister in the undivided Andhra Pradesh in the cabinets of N.T. Rama Rao and Chandrababu Naidu and later became the minister in Telangana's first government. A five-time MLA and senior leader from Khammam district, he joined Telangana Rashtira Samithi (now BRS) in 2014 after the formation of Telangana state. He was minister for roads

# Man beaten to death in Assam, four arrested

**Team Absolute | Guwahati**  
A man was beaten to death in Assam's Nalbari district by a group of people following an altercation, officials said on Saturday. Police have arrested four accused persons for allegedly killing the man.



According to police, the incident happened in Jugurkuchi village of Nalbari district on Friday night and the deceased has been identified as Rahul Das. "There was an altercation between the deceased and a group of persons at the village. They hit the man, identified as Rahul Das, badly and he died. The police team reached the village after we received the information and immediately launched a probe to nab the persons behind the incident," Sudhakar Singh, Superintendent of Police at Nalbari told reporter. "On Saturday, we arrested four persons

and some others might get arrested soon," he added. The three of the arrested persons have been identified as Simanta Das, Sanjay Das and Pankaj Das. The identity of the fourth arrested person is yet to be ascertained. Meanwhile, police claimed that there were few other people present at the time of incident and who were also

involved in beating the deceased. "The arrested persons are being interrogated by the police. We are hopeful that we can arrest other people who were also involved in the incident," Singh said. All arrested persons are natives of the same village. The body of the deceased was handed over to the family after postmortem.

# Delhi receives heavy rains for 2nd consecutive day

**Team Absolute | New Delhi**  
For the second consecutive day on Saturday, the national capital received heavy rains following widespread rainfall and thunder showers the previous day, the Met Office said. The downpour, however, also led to traffic snarls in several parts of the city. The maximum temperature was recorded at 33.8 degrees Celsius -- the seasonal average. Meanwhile, weather experts have pointed to a convergence of meteorologi-



cal factors behind the rainfall. "The monsoon trough extended to the south of Delhi, accompanied by a cyclonic circulation in southern Haryana and northeastern Rajasthan. Additionally, an active western distur-

bance further contributed to the city's high-intensity rainfall," said a senior India Meteorological Department official. "Light to moderate intensity rain and gusty winds with speeds of 30-40 kmph would occur over and

adjoining areas of entire Delhi, NCR (Loni Dehat, Bahadurgarh, Ghaziabad, Indrapuram, Chhapraula, Noida, Dadri, Greater Noida, Gurugram)," the weather forecast agency wrote on X (formerly Twitter). For Sunday, the Met Office has forecast a generally cloudy sky with light rain. The maximum temperature is expected to hover around 35 degrees Celsius while the minimum temperature is likely to be 25 degrees Celsius.

# Prostitution racket busted at Delhi Hotel, 6 arrested

**Team Absolute | New Delhi**  
With the arrest of six persons, including three women, the Delhi Police on Saturday claimed to have busted a prostitution racket running at a East Delhi hotel. Sharing the details, the police said that on Friday, acting on specific information, a raid was conducted at R.K. Residency (an Oyo Hotel) in South Ganesha Nagar, Delhi, by a team from the Mandawali police station. During the operation, six



individuals were discovered engaged in prostitution. The accused have been identified as Pradeep Kumar (46), who is an agent and a resident of Laxmi Nagar, Diwan (29), the

hotel manager, and Krunal (27), a customer from Geeta Colony. "A case under the relevant sections of the ITP Act was registered, and during the course of the investiga-

tion, it was revealed that the same premises, i.e., RK Residency, had previously been involved in prostitution. As a result, the hotel was sealed by the MCD," said the Deputy Commissioner of Police (east) Amrutha Guguloth. "Recently, it was de-sealed, and they resumed the same illegal activities. The Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) has been informed, and the investigation of the case is ongoing," the DCP added.

# Two held for robbing man of Rs 1 crore at gunpoint in Delhi

**Team Absolute | New Delhi**  
Delhi Police have arrested two men in connection with the Rs 1 crore robbery at gunpoint by bike-borne assailants in the national capital, the police said on Saturday. The accused have been identified as Vikki and Monty a.k.a Pritam Kumar. The police have also recovered Rs 15 lakh, one country-made pistol along with three bullets, and one motorcycle used in the commission of the crime from the possession of the duo. The complainant, Suresh, a resident of Moti Nagar, had told the police that on Wednesday, a person named Kamlesh Shah gave him two bags containing Rs 1 crore to



be delivered in Chandni Chowk. At about 3.30 p.m., Suresh, along with Rakesh, was going to Chandni Chowk in an auto rickshaw. "When they reached near Metro Pillar No. 147 on Veer Banda Bairagi Marg, four persons intercepted them on two motorcycles, and robbed them of their two bags con-

taining the money at gunpoint before fleeing towards the Pratap Nagar Metro station," Deputy Commissioner of Police, North, Sagar Singh Kalsi, said. During investigation, the police teams scanned footage from around 200 CCTV cameras to track the potential routes taken by the miscreants. "We believe in equal

# Cong refuses to get drawn into controversy over 'Sanatan Dharma' remarks

**Team Absolute | Hyderabad**  
The Congress on Saturday made it clear that it is not getting drawn into any controversy over Sanatan Dharma remarks. The party made its stand clear during the Congress Working Committee (CWC) meeting which began here on Saturday. CWC member and former Union Minister P. Chidambaram told media persons that there was no discussion on Sanatan Dharma at the meeting and Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge made it absolutely clear that the Congress is not willing to be drawn into any controversy on it. "We believe in equal

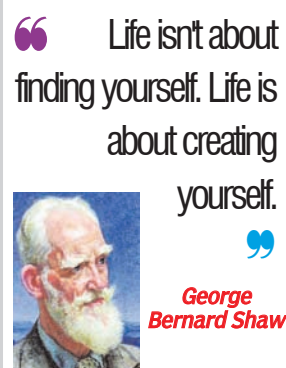


respect for all religions and we stand by that position. That has been the consistent position of the Congress for many decades. We are not getting drawn into any controversy on that,"

Chidambaram said. He was asked about the controversy created by the remarks of DMK leader and Tamil Nadu minister Udhayanidhi Stalin. "I am not speaking for

DMK but I can tell you what DMK has said. The DMK has said that they are not opposed to any religion. They are opposed to caste oppression and caste hierarchy and all that goes with caste hierarchy; suppression of women, oppression of Dalits and as you all know the impediments placed on the so-called lower castes by the caste hierarchy. The DMK has explained that it is in that context they mentioned Sanatan Dharma," he said. He termed 'one nation one election' an assault on the Constitution and said the Congress rejects the idea. "It's an attack on federalism. It will require at least 5 Constitutional amendments. The BJP knows it does not

have the numbers to pass these Constitutional amendments. Yet, it puts forward a mirage of one nation one election. It is only to divert attention from pressing issues and to create a false narrative," he said. On the upcoming special session of Parliament, he said the chairperson of Congress Parliamentary Party Sonia Gandhi has written a letter to the Prime Minister listing nine items which should be discussed in the special session. "We have not got a reply so far. If any of those issues are included, we will be happy and we will certainly participate in the debate," he said. Chidambaram wondered what is the agenda without these nine items.



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## Nipah can spread by droplets, has a fatality rate of 40 to 70%: ICMR

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Nipah virus can spread by respiratory droplets and has a fatality rate of 40 to 70 per cent, Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) Director General, Dr Rajiv Bahl, said on Friday. In comparison, Covid has only "2-3 per cent fatality rate", he said at a press conference here.

"Nipah is a zoonotic virus (transmission of virus from animal to humans)," said Bahl noting that "fruit bats are the reservoirs" of the virus.

"It can be spread via droplets, besides blood and bodily fluids," he said.

Despite the high death rate, Bahl said that the virus is not as transmissible as Covid and has small episodes, with maximum cases going up to 100.

Nipah was first recognised in 1999, since then it has made its mark in four or five countries: Malaysia, Singapore, Bangladesh, the Philippines, and India.

Since 2018, Kerala is currently seeing its fourth outbreak of Nipah. The present cases have been reported about 15 km from where the initial Nipah virus outbreak in southern Indian state was first identified in Kozhikode in May 2018 and then again in 2021.

In June 2019, a sporadic case of Nipah resurfaced from a geographically different location, at Kochi. In the latest outbreak, 6 people have been infected with 2 deaths reported.

Bahl said containment is the only strategy, in the absence of any vaccine or medications. He also noted that India is procuring 20 more doses of monoclonal antibody from Australia. He said that



the M102.4 antibody, tested on 14 people globally and found safe, that is no one died, by the University of Queensland in Australia. It will be administered on "compassionate ground", as there has been no knowledge of its side effects, and will be decided by the Kerala government and doctors there.

"Currently India has doses for 10 people, we have requested for 10 more people," Bahl said.

Each person requires 2 doses, and so far it has not been administered to anyone in India, he added.

The vaccine was developed by Queensland researchers in 3 batches and stored in minus 80 temperature and is stable for 5 years. India first received the vaccine in 2018, but couldn't use it as the Nipah virus cases died down by then. In addition, the ICMR has also deployed its first mobile BSIII (Biosafety level-3) laboratory in Kozhikode for on ground testing of the cases.

### India capable to develop vax for any new Covid strain: ICMR

New Delhi: India is well able to develop a vaccine for any new Covid strain, the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) Director General Rajeev Bahl said on Friday.

"Currently we are not seeing any strain more virulent than the previous Omicron," Bahl said, at a press conference, noting that the virus is not gone.

"We are continuously monitoring the new strains for more transmissibility, severity (that is whether the virus is capable of increasing mortality rate and hospitalisation), and how it's escaping immunity.

"If the need arises, we have capability to make vaccine according to the strain," he added.

He said that there were only 29 per cent takers for the Covid booster vaccine in India. We can find more takers based on the threat perception, he said.

Further he noted that along with global countries India aims to develop a vaccine for any kind of pandemic causing diseases, within 100 days.

## NIA CRACKS DOWN ON ISIS RECRUITMENT CAMPAIGN, RAIDS 31 LOCATIONS IN TAMIL NADU, TELANGANA

Team Absolute | New Delhi

In a major crackdown on the radicalisation and recruitment campaign of the ISIS, the NIA on Saturday carried out searches at 31 locations in the two southern States -- Tamil Nadu and Telangana, and seized several digital devices and documents, along with Indian currency worth Rs 60 lakh and \$18,200.

An anti-terror probe agency spokesperson said that the NIA was in the process of examining the data contained in the mobile phones, laptops and hard discs seized during the searches.

The official said, "Several incriminating books in Arabic and vernacular languages were also seized during the searches, in addition to Rs 60 lakh and \$18,200."

Meanwhile, an NIA source said that the team raided the residences of a few suspects in Chennai, Coimbatore and Tenkasi and questioned them for five hours. It also seized digital devices during the raid.

The NIA has summoned some of the suspects for questioning in the radicalisation and recruitment case on September 20 at its office in Chennai, the source added.

The official said the NIA team carried out the raids early in the morning at 22 locations in Coimbatore, three in Chennai and one in Kadayannallur, Tenkasi district in Tamil Nadu. It also searched five locations in Hyderabad and Cyberabad in Telangana.

The NIA registered a case under several sections of the IPC and of the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967, pertaining to clandestine operations by a group of individuals to radicalise gullible youth.

"The radicalisation was being carried out



in the garb of conducting Arabic language classes at their regional study centres. Radicalisation material and activities were being promoted online through social media platforms and mobile applications like WhatsApp and Telegram," the official said.

The official said that the NIA probe found that ISIS-inspired agent provocateurs were engaged in propagation of the 'Khilafat' ideology, which is "inimical" to India's constitutionally-established principles of secularism and democracy.

"The people involved in the case had entered into a conspiracy to radicalise and recruit youth who were later found involved in terrorist as well as unlawful acts and activities. One such terrorist attack was related to the Coimbatore car bomb blast case of October 23 last year," the official said.

The official added that the NIA's probe is part of the agency's concerted efforts to thwart the ISIS' attempts to recruit vulnerable youth into the terrorist network that is working actively to spread terror in the country with the overarching aim of disturbing and disrupting peace and communal harmony.

## Pak Army interefered during anti-infiltration ops in J&K: Indian Army

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The army today said Pakistan forces fired at them and targeted a quadcopter when Indian troops foiled an infiltration attempt and shot dead three terrorists along the Line of Control (LoC) in Jammu and Kashmir.

A senior army officer said after three-four terrorists tried to infiltrate in Uri sector, a gun-fight broke out and went on for two hours. He said the army used rocket launchers and other heavy weapons to neutralise infiltrating terrorists.

"While two terrorists were killed, a third who was injured fled back with help of covering fire from the Pakistan Army," said Brigadier PMS Dhillon.

"It's noteworthy that Pakistan Army gave fire support to the injured terrorist and fired at us as well. The Pakistan Army also fired at our quadcopters," said Brigadier Dhillon.

The bodies of the two terrorists have been recovered, the Indian Army's Chinara Corps said in a post on X, formerly Twitter.

Firing by Pakistani forces "interfered" in the attempt to retrieve the third body, the Chinara Corps said. This is a clear violation of the LoC ceasefire agreed in 2021. The army said the operation in the Uri sector is going on.



"In a joint operation launched by Indian Army, Jammu and Kashmir Police and intelligence agencies, an infiltration bid was foiled today in the morning hours along LoC in Uri sector, Baramulla. Three terrorists who tried to infiltrate were engaged by alert troops," the Chinara Corps said in the post on X.

"Two terrorists have been eliminated and bodies recovered; third terrorist killed but retrieval of body being interfered by firing by Pakistan post in vicinity, on LoC. Operation in progress," the army said.

Another encounter in Anantnag district has entered its fourth day with terrorists holed up in a cave on the top of a hill.

## INDIA Bloc's Bhopal rally cancelled

Team Absolute | Bhopal

The proposed rally of the opposition INDIA alliance in Madhya Pradesh capital Bhopal in the first week of October has been cancelled, top Congress leader and former Chief Minister Kamal Nath said today. Discussions regarding the rally are going on with the Congress President and other partners of the INDIA alliance, Congress General Secretary Randeep Surjewala said, adding that no final decision has been taken on when and where it will now be held.

The first meeting of the Coordination Committee of INDIA was held at NCP chief Sharad Pawar's residence in the national capital.

Kamal Nath and Surjewala were addressing the media in Bhopal regarding their party's state-wide 'Jan Akrosh Yatra', which translates to public anger march, ahead of assembly elections in the state.

Seven Jan Akrosh Yatras of the



Congress will start on Ganesh Chaturthi, which is on September 19, the party said. They will cover 11,400 kilometres in all 230 assembly segments of Madhya Pradesh in 15 days. The yatras will be led by senior leaders, including veteran Congress leader and leader of opposition (LoP) in the Madhya

Pradesh assembly Dr Govind Singh.

Other leaders who will lead the yatras include ex-union ministers Arun Yadav, Kantilal Bhuria, Suresh Pachouri, Congress Working Committee member Kamleshwar Patel, ex-MP minister Jeetu Patwari, and former LoP Ajay Singh 'Rahul'.

## "No Ban, It's A Non-Cooperation Movement": Congress on list of TV Anchors

New Delhi: Congress leader Pawan Khera on Saturday said that the INDIA alliance has "not boycotted or blacklisted anyone" but it is a movement of non-cooperation, and that leaders of the Opposition bloc will start attending shows hosted by the 14 journalists named by it if they realise their mistakes.

"We have not banned, boycotted or blacklisted anyone. This is a non-cooperation movement, we will not cooperate with anyone spreading hatred in the society...They are not our enemies," Khera said.

Addressing a press conference ahead of the start of the two-day meeting of the Congress Working Committee, Khera said, "Nothing is permanent, if tomorrow they realise that what they were doing is not good for India, we will again start attending their shows."

The decision to "boycott" 14 TV anchors was taken by the INDIA bloc's media committee on Thursday. A list shared by leaders of the INDIA bloc contains the names of 14 news anchors.

Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) national spokesperson Sambit Patra on Friday launched a scathing attack against the Opposition bloc for its announcement, which he termed as "contempt against media" and "hatred against free journalism."

## Nearly 100 girl students fall sick after consuming mid-day meal in Bihar school



Patna: Around 100 students fall sick after consuming mid-day meal at a girls' school in Bihar's Samastipur district on Saturday. The incident was reported from Mathurapur girls middle school.

The students, after consuming the mid-day meal, complained of vomiting and stomach ache. They were immediately admitted to a government hospital, from where some of them were referred to the Samastipur Sadar Hospital for further treatment. The parents of the students are suspecting that the mid-day meal contained salphas. Health Department is currently monitoring the conditions of students while the district Education Officer of Samastipur initiated an inquiry into the matter. "Around 100 girl students were brought to the hospital after complaining of vomiting and stomach ache. They have consumed mid-day meals in school. Their conditions are stable and improving at the moment. They fell sick after consuming poisonous food," said P.D. Sharma, a doctor of Samastipur Sadar Hospital.

## First meeting of 'one nation, one election' to be held on Sep 23

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Former President Ram Nath Kovind, who chairs the 'one nation, one election' committee, on Saturday said that its first meeting will take place on September 23.

The former President confirmed the development to the media.

The meeting will take place a day after the conclusion of the five-day special session of Parliament.

Earlier this month, the Centre had announced that an eight-member committee has been constituted to examine 'one nation, one election' concept.

Besides Kovind and Union Home Minister Amit Shah, the government had named Congress MP Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury, former Rajya Sabha LoP Ghulam Nabi Azad, former chairman of the 15th Finance Commission N.K Singh, former Secretary General of Lok Sabha Subhash Kashyap as its members.

Senior advocate Harish Salve and former Chief vigilance Commissioner Sanjay Kothari are also on the panel.



However, Chowdhury declined an invitation to be a part.

The committee will look into the feasibility of holding not only the Lok Sabha and Assembly elections simultaneously, but also polls to municipalities and

panchayats, according to the gazette notification.

The committee will analyse and recommend possible solutions linked to simultaneous elections if there is a hung house, no-confidence motion, defection,

or any such other event.

A single electoral roll and identity card for voters valid for the national, state, civic body and panchayat elections will be explored, the government said in the notification.

## 'EX-WFI CHIEF NOT EXONERATED BY OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE', DELHI POLICE TELL COURT

Team Absolute | New Delhi

In the alleged sexual harassment case lodged against former Wrestling Federation of India (WFI) chief and BJP MP Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh, Delhi police told a



court here on Saturday that he was not exonerated by the oversight committee constituted by the government to investigate the allegations levelled against him.

On Saturday, both Singh and former WFI Assistant Secretary Vinod Tomar were present at the court.

The police made the submission before Additional Chief Metropolitan Magistrate (ACMM) Harjeet Singh Jaspal of Rouse Avenue Court. "Singh was not exonerated by the oversight committee. The committee had given recommendations, and not a decision. Nowhere has it been stated that these allegations are not substantiated or are false," special public prosecutor Atul Srivastava told the court.

He also urged the court to frame the charges against Singh, stating that even a mere gesture can constitute a crime under Section 354 of the Indian Penal Code (IPC). During the last hearing also, the complainant women wrestlers had said that the allegations they have levelled against him warrant framing of charges. The has posted the matter for next hearing on September 23. On September 1, the counsel for the wrestlers had argued that Singh and Tomar were never exonerated by the oversight committee, adding that the panel -- headed by ace boxer M.C. Mary Kom -- was an "eyewash to assuage sentiments".



# FIRST LOOK OF MUMBAI'S LALBAUGCHA RAJA UNVEILED

**Team Absolute | Mumbai**  
**A**head of the 10-day Ganesh Chaturthi festival, the first look of famous Lalbaugcha Raja was unveiled in Mumbai on Friday. The Lalbaugcha Raja, which is one of the oldest and popular Ganesh mandals in Mumbai, is said to be 12-feet tall this year. Every year, thousands of devotees gather at Lalbaugcha Raja to catch a glimpse of Lord Ganesh. The Ganesh Chaturthi festival falls in the

Bhadrapada month of the Hindu calendar and marks the birthday of Lord Ganesha, son of Shiva and Parvati. The much-awaited festival is also known as Vinayak Chaturthi and Ganeshotsav. It is marked with the installation of Ganesha's clay idols in homes and public places, and concludes when the idol is carried in a public procession and immersed (visarjan) in a river or sea on the day of Anant Chaturdashi.

This year, the Ganesh Chaturthi festivities will commence on September 19. Earlier on Friday, Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis flagged off the Ganpati Special train, named "Namo Express", to Konkan from Mumbai's Dadar station. Speaking on the occasion, Fadnavis said that the Maharashtra Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has arranged six special trains and 338 buses for devotees going to the Konkan region for the upcoming festival.



# Surya water scheme project's Tungreshwar Tunnel achieves breakthrough

**Team Absolute | Thane/Palghara**

**N**otching a significant milestone, the Mumbai Metropolitan Region Development Authority (MMRDA) achieved a breakthrough on the Surya Regional Water Supply Project by completing the work on the crucial underground tunnel running through the Tungreshwar Wildlife Sanctuary, a top official said here on Saturday. The MMRDA is constructing the 4.6-km long subterranean tunnel which has an internal diameter of 2.85 metres in this wildlife sanctuary. The water will be channelled through this tunnel to the Chene Master Balancing Reservoir and then distributed to the Mira Bhayander Municipal Corporation (Thane) and Vasai Virar City Municipal Corporation (Palghar) regions, said MMRDA Metropolitan Commissioner Dr. Sanjay Mukherjee. The excavation was done using a mod-



ern Tunnel Boring Machine (TBM) at a depth of 55 metres for the mega water supply project that comprises total 4 tunnels, the first one at Mendhankhind is completed and the remaining three are coming up in the second phase, including the Tungreshwar Tunnel. On completion, the Tungreshwar Tunnel will provide an additional 218 million litres daily water

to MBMC's population of over 1.60 million, enhancing the supply to over 403 mld, said Dr. Mukherjee. After full commissioning even the VVCMC will receive an additional 170 mld, and around 44 villages en route will get 15 mld, besides 218 mld to MBMC. This is the MMRDA's first water supply project in the Mumbai Metropolitan Region to cater to the fast-growing urban agglomerations of Mira-Bhayander and Vasai-Virar towns which have a growth rate of more than 50 per cent. The project involved lifting water from Kawadas pick weir on the downstream of Surya Dam in Vikramgad (Palghar), through vertical turbine pumps, then undergoing treatment and then transferred to a Break Pressure Tank for distribution to the Kashid-kopar Reservoir in Vasai-Virar and the Chene Reservoir in Mira-Bhayander town through underground water pipelines.

# 179 Child deaths in 3 months in Maharashtra Hospital : Official

**Team Absolute | Nandurbar**

**1**79 children have died in civil hospital in the last three months at Nandurbar in Maharashtra. According to Nandurbar's Chief Medical Officer, M Sawan Kumar, several factors have contributed to the tragic deaths of these children. Low birth weight, birth asphyxia, sepsis and respiratory diseases have emerged as the primary culprits. "Looking at the data 75 deaths in July, 86 deaths in August and 18 deaths in September till now happened in Nandurbar district. Major reasons for the deaths are low birth weight, birth asphyxia, Sepsis and respiratory diseases. 70 per cent of



deaths are of 0-28 days age babies...Many women have a sickle cell here which results in complications during delivery. To resolve all these issues we have launched mission 'Lakshya 84 days,' said Kumar. Recognizing the pressing need to address these challenges and save young lives, authorities in Nandurbar have launched a crucial initiative known as 'Mission

Lakshya 84 Days.' CMO M Sawan Kumar said that in the mission 'Lakshya 84 days', 42 days will be allotted to Antenatal Care (ANC) and 42 days to Postnatal Care (PNC). This mission aims to tackle the root causes of child mortality, improve healthcare services and provide timely interventions to ensure that infants have a better chance at survival. He further said, "We will visit ANC and PNC units regularly and carry out check-ups and try to reduce the number of death cases. We are working on mission mode and the results will be visible in two to three months."

# Accidents occur because of sleepiness or tiredness of the driver: Ajit Pawar

**Team Absolute | Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar**

**M**aharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar on Saturday said that the frequent accidents on the Samruddhi-Mahamarg Expressway occur because of sleepiness or tiredness of the driver. Talking to the reporters after attending the inauguration ceremony of various development programs in Chhatrapati Sambhaji Nagar district, Ajit Pawar said, "The roads of Samruddhi-Mahamarg Expressway are very straight and that's why drivers feel sleepy and accidents happen. However, whatever the reason may be, it needs to be improved." Further, hitting out at the Opposition over the issue of the Maratha reservation, the Deputy Chief Minister said that the Opposition is doing politics on this matter. "Mahayuti government is in favour of giving the reservation to Marathas but not by touch-



ing the reservation of other communities. The reservation must stand in the court too, however, it's very unfortunate that the opposition is doing politics in it," he said. Earlier on Monday, an all-party meeting on the Maratha reservation was chaired by Chief Minister Shinde at Sahyadri Guest House in Mumbai. Along with Chief Minister Shinde, Deputy Chief Ministers Devendra Fadnavis and Ajit Pawar were also present in the meeting. "In the meeting, we have decided to give reservation to Marathas. The government is of the view to give reservations to Maratha without touching the other (castes) reservations," Shinde said. He further said, "The decision to give reservations to Marathas must be valid legally and it must stand in law, so we are working on it...the government has accepted many of the protester's demands too."

# Maha CM unveils plaques of renamed districts, 'Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar', 'Dharashiv'

**Team Absolute | Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar**

**M**aharashtra Chief Minister Eknath Shinde and Deputy CMs Devendra Fadnavis and Ajit Pawar unveiled the plaques with the new names of 'Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar' (Aurangabad) and 'Dharashiv' (Osmanabad), here on Saturday. The ceremony was performed amid raising of slogans 'Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj ki Jai...' and 'Chhatrapati Sambhajaraj Zindabad', the region marks the 75 anniversary of Marathwada's liberation from the rule of the Nizam of Hyderabad. The unveiling of the plaques

came after Shinde and ministers offered floral tributes to Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj and then addressed a gathering. However, the All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimeen (AIMIM) MP Imtiaz Jaleel strongly criticised the plaques inaugural saying the government has flouted the laws as the matter (of renaming) is still pending before the court. "The cabinet meeting here is an election gimmick... If the government will break the rules, we shall also follow suit..." warned Jaleel, leading a huge procession of depositors who were cheated of hundreds of crores of rupees in a scam.



# Maharashtra announces Rs 45,000 crore package for development of Marathwada region

**Team Absolute | Mumbai**

**M**aharashtra Chief Minister Eknath Shinde on Saturday announced a package of Rs 45,000 crore for the development of the Marathwada region in the state. Apart from this, he also announced revised administrative sanctions for irrigation projects worth 14,000 crore. He made the announcements at a press conference in Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar after a special meeting of the state cabinet. The state government held the cabinet meeting in the city on the occasion of the 75th anniversary of the Marathwada Liberation Day, also known as Marathwada Mukti Sangram Din, celebrated on September 17 annually. Marathwada was once a part of the Nizam-ruled Hyderabad kingdom. It was after a gap of seven years that a meeting of the state cabinet was held in Marathwada. The last such meeting was



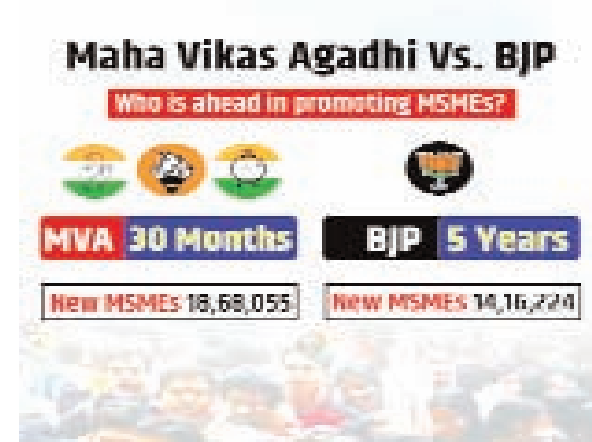
organised in the region in 2016. The Marathwada region comprises eight districts - Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar (previously known as Aurangabad), Dharashiv (previously known as Osmanabad), Jalna, Beed, Latur, Nanded, Hingoli and Parbhani. "A package of Rs 45,000 crore will be given for the development of Marathwada. Apart from this, revised administrative sanctions will be given to irrigation projects worth 14 thousand crore rupees for the region. This paves the way for bringing eight lakh hectares of land under irrigation," Shinde said. Deputy Chief

Ministers Devendra Fadnavis and Ajit Pawar were also present at the press conference along with some state ministers. Shinde rubbished the allegations levelled by some opposition leaders that the Chief Minister, his deputies and ministers were put up in five-star hotels in the city for the cabinet meeting. "All of us are staying in the government guest house," he clarified. Maharashtra Congress president Nana Patole on Friday accused the state government of spending several crore rupees on the cabinet meeting and rubbing salt on the wounds of people affected by drought-like conditions in Marathwada. Leader of opposition in the assembly Vijay Wadetiwar also said that while Marathwada was reeling under drought-like conditions, five-star hotels were booked for the chief minister, the two deputy chief ministers, ministers and bureaucrats.

# MVA says 'vindicated' as Thackeray govt trumped on jobs, industry

**Quaid Najmi | Mumbai**

**M**aha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) allies Shiv Sena (UBT)-Congress-Nationalist Congress Party have said they have been 'vindicated' on their assertions over the remarkable performance of the 30-month regime of ex-Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray, as now revealed under a RTI reply. Top leaders of the Sena (UBT), Congress and others have reacted to a report published by IANS (September 15) highlighting the RTI reply to Pune businessman Prafull Sarda that triggered a major political debate here on Saturday.



on the RTI revelations on Sunday. Top Congress leaders, including state President Nana Patole, Working President M. Arif Naseem Khan, Chief Spokesperson Atul Londhe, General Secretary Sachin Sawant and other leaders also reacted and posted/forwarded the report. Patole pointed out that though it enjoyed a tenure of just 30 months (two-and-a-half years) before being unceremoniously ejected, the MVA government's performance exceeded that of the previous BJP CM Devendra Fadnavis' full five-year tenure. "It was a challenging period which the MVA faced... It was also during that period when BJP unleashed central investigating agencies to topple the Thackeray government with the help of the (then) Governor. No efforts were spared to harass and

defame the MVA, both by the state and the Centre," Patole said. However, now the RTI replies have made it clear that despite all the obstacles created by the Opposition, the MVA government tackled all the crises well and emerged with flying colours on all fronts, "even better than this unethical and unconstitutional regime currently ruling the state", Patole added. To make it easier for people to grasp, Sawant posted a graphic on his X (formerly Twitter) handle with a laudatory comment that "the MVA government was a successful performer". In Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar (Aurangabad), Chief Minister Eknath Shinde reiterated that in the five years of the Fadnavis rule, the state had progressed immensely on investments, but everything was at a standstill for 30 months (of Thackeray rule),

and claimed that now things are coming back on track. In the MVA's 30-month reign of ex-CM Thackeray (November 2019-June 2022), the state got 18,68,053 new micro-small-medium industries, 35 per cent higher compared to Fadnavis' five-year (till October 2019) tenure when the state got 14,16,224 MSMEs, with the difference being 451,831 MSMEs. Under Thackeray's government, 88,47,905 jobs were created, 42 per cent more compared to 62,36,878 jobs during Fadnavis' regime -- a difference of 26,11,027. Sarda said that as per the RTI data, at the height of the pandemic, the state recorded 621,296 new enterprises registered with a total employment of 44,60,149 (2020-2021). The following year, the number of new businesses shot up from 621,296 to 894,674 though new jobs fell marginally, from 44,60,149 to 42,36,436 (2021-2022), said the RTI reply. After the Thackeray government collapsed, the number of new enterprises fell sharply from 894,674 to 734,956, and fresh employment opportunities also plummeted from 42,36,436 to 24,94,691 (2022-2023). The RTI response to Sarda stated that between July 2020 and March 2023, 22.50 lakh new MSMEs were registered in Maharashtra, and nearly 1.12 crore new jobs were created promising all-round economic prosperity in the state.

# Devendra Fadnavis attacks opposition over Maratha quota row

**Team Absolute | Mumbai**

**M**aharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis on Saturday hit out at the opposition parties, and asked what they did for the Marathwada region in the state when they were in power for two-and-a-half years. The senior Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leader was speaking to reporters following his arrival at the airport here to attend a meeting of the state cabinet. The opposition parties have been alleging that the Eknath Shinde government failed to implement the decisions taken for the development of Marathwada, which comprises Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar (previously known as Aurangabad), Osmanabad, Jalna, Beed, Latur, Nanded, Hingoli and Parbhani districts. Earlier this week, Shiv Sena (UBT) leader Ambadas Danve asked why the state government did not



implement the decisions taken during a cabinet meeting held in 2016 when Devendra Fadnavis was chief minister. All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimeen abbreviation (AIMIM) MP Imtiaz Jaleel also questioned the Eknath Shinde dispensation over the pending projects and decisions not implemented in the region till now. "Those who are saying that decisions taken during a cabinet meeting here in 2016 have remained unimplemented should tell us what they did during the

two-and-a-half years they were in power. If the decisions were not implemented, it was the duty of the previous government to take them forward. What were they doing when they were in power?" Fadnavis asked. "The Marathwada water grid scheme was killed by the previous (Maha Vikas Aghadi) government. They are levelling allegations only because they are trying to stall the cabinet meeting aimed at the development of Marathwada region," he added. The Uddhav Thackeray-led MVA government came to power in November 2019, but collapsed in June 2022 after a rebellion by Eknath Shinde, which led to a split in the Shiv Sena. The meeting of the state cabinet is being held here on the occasion of the Marathwada Liberation Day, also known as Marathwada Mukti Sangram Din, celebrated on 17 September annually.



## INDIA BLOC CANCELLED ITS 1ST RALLY AS PEOPLE ARE ANGRY THEY INSULTED 'SANATANA': SHIVRAJ SINGH CHOUHAN

Team Absolute | Bhopal

The proposed rally of the opposition INDIA alliance in Madhya Pradesh capital Bhopal in the first week of October has been cancelled, top Congress leader and former Chief Minister Kamal Nath said today. Discussions regarding the rally are going on with the Congress President and other partners of the INDIA alliance, Congress General Secretary Randeep Surjewala said, adding that no final decision has been taken on when and where it will now be held.



Singh Chouhan claimed the INDIA alliance cancelled its first rally as people are angry that they "insulted" Sanatana Dharma.

"This is the anger of the public. Sanatana Dharma

was insulted and was called dengue and Malaria. The people of Madhya Pradesh will not tolerate this insult of Sanatana Dharma. INDI alliance must understand that they have hurt our faith

and this won't be tolerated at any cost. People of MP are angry and they (INDIA alliance) were scared therefore they cancelled their rally. The public's anger is against the INDI bloc and Congress. The public will not leave them," he said, adding that there is no strength in the alliance's leadership.

Taking a swipe at the Congress, Chouhan said there's a lot of chaos within the grand old party, and people are fighting over whose photo is included in posters.

"In BJP, everyone is involved in working during elections," he added.

## KAMAL NATH DEMANDS SURVEY OF CROP DAMAGED DUE TO DEFICIT RAIN

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Madhya Pradesh Congress president Kamal Nath has demanded that a survey be conducted on the damaged crops, besides compensation to farmers in the wake of deficit rain and infestation by tobacco caterpillars affecting the soybean produce in the state.

In a letter to Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan, the Congress leader has cited information from many districts, including Khargone, Sehore (CM's home district), Vidisha, Dhar, Neemuch, Harda and Narmadapuram, about extensive damage to soybean crop due to low/delayed rains as well as tobacco caterpillars, despite use of insecticide and pesticide by farmers.

"Farmers are protesting in many districts, demanding immediate survey of damaged crops and subsequent compensation. But no survey has till date been started by the insensitive state government on the ground,



which will prompt the farmers to go for statewide protest," the letter read.

While addressing a press conference and later a public meeting along

with another former CM and present Congress MP Digvijaya Singh in Ashok Nagar district, Kamal Nath claimed that 30 per cent of crop in the Gwalior-Chambal region district too has been damaged by deficient rain.

Soybean, importantly, is among the main Kharif crops of the agrarian state.

MP reportedly is the main contributor to the country's soybean production.

According to the latest Met Department report, despite the revival of monsoon over the last one week, at least of the 53 districts of the state, are still rain deficient.

The rain-deficient districts are spread across the state, including central MP (among them CM's home district Sehore and national capital Bhopal), districts of western and southwestern parts, Bundelkhand, Vindhya and Gwalior-Chambal regions, including Ashok Nagar district, where Nath and Singh were present on Friday.

## Amid drought worries, IMD predicts rainfall in Madhya Pradesh

Team Absolute | Bhopal

In a much-needed relief to the farmers after a drought-like situation in several parts of Madhya Pradesh due to scant rainfall, many areas of the state, including the capital city of Bhopal, received showers on Friday.

The India Meteorological Department has predicted rainfall in several parts of the state including regions experiencing drought-like situations.

The Met Office has predicted moderate to heavy rainfall in the next three days in the districts of Raissen, Narmadapuram, Betul, Harda, Burhanpur, Khargone and Seoni.

Besides, districts such as Sehore, Khandwa, Ratlam, Ujjain Chhindwara are likely to witness heavy rainfall in the next three days.

The weather department



has issued a red alert for districts -- Burhanpur, Khargone, Barwani, Alirajpur, Jhabua, Dhar, Indore and Dewas districts. It said that the region is likely to witness heavy rainfall along with thunderstorms on Saturday.

Notably, poor rainfall in August has raised worries of a possible drought-like situation across Madhya Pradesh as 26 of the state's 52 districts

had (until August 31) received around 20 per cent deficient rain, and nine, including capital Bhopal, around 30 per cent.

The situation had prompted Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan to call an emergency meeting and issue directions to chalk out a plan to combat the possible drought threat looming in the state.

## WOMAN TEACHER OPENS BOTTLE TO DRINK WATER, FINDS IT FILLED WITH URINE!

Team Absolute | Bhopal

A woman teacher of a government school in Madhya Pradesh has lodged a complaint after she allegedly went through a sordid instance of finding a bottle of water mixed with urine after she uncapped it to drink water. As per the reports, the incident reported nearly a month ago at a government high school in Neemuch district, the bordering district with neighbouring state Rajasthan.

The 35-year-old woman teacher in her complaint said the water smelt like that of urine. Suspecting something was wrong with the unusual taste of water, she informed her colleagues who then checked and were reportedly convinced that the filthy smell was of urine. The matter was then reported to the district education department. District Education Officer, CK Sharma said that the police have been informed about the incident. The police have received the water bottle, and claimed to have initiated an investigation into the matter.



## Ex-MP minister's son among 3 rescued after SUV washed away in river in Indore

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Three youths, including son of a former state minister, were rescued after the vehicle they were travelling in got washed away in a swollen river in Madhya Pradesh's Indore district.

As per the information, the trio travelling in a Sports Utility Vehicle (SUV) tried to cross a submerged culvert, but the driver lost control due to heavy flow of water and the vehicles washed away. The incident occurred on Friday night following which a search operation was carried out by local police and SDRF team. Deputy Superintendent of Police (DSP) Umakant Choudhary told the



press that the incident took place around 45 km away from the district headquarters. Former state minister Ranjana Baghel's son Yash (19) along with his friends Tejas (24) and Mallya (25) was travelling in the SUV at the time of incident. Although the culvert on the swollen Choral river was under water, an attempt was

made by them to cross it. "A team of police personnel reached the spot and all three of them were rescued with the help of villagers," Choudhary said. He further said that Yash had got trapped in the strong current of the river, however, he somehow managed to catch hold of a tree branch.

## 3 KILLED, 8 INJURED AS PRIVATE BUS OVERTURNS IN UJJAIN

Team Absolute | Ujjain : Three persons were killed and eight injured after a private bus carrying nearly 40 passengers overturned in Madhya Pradesh's Ujjain district in the early hours of Saturday, the police said. The incident occurred near Farnakhedi village, about 80 km from the district headquarters when the bus going from Indore to Jodhpur flipped at a turn due to heavy rains at around 12.30 am, said Khachrod police station in-charge Narendra Singh Tomar. Two persons, including the conductor, were crushed under the bus, while another passenger died during treatment, the official said. Eight passengers suffered injuries in the accident and are in hospital, he said.

## Chhindwara's traditional 'Gotmar' fair sees fewer participants this time due to rain

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Gotmar, a traditional fair of stones pelting in Madhya Pradesh's district Chhindwara, saw fewer participants this time due to continuous rain on Friday.

This time, the number of people who got injured in traditional stone pelting was around a dozen only, while in previous years the number of those injured used to be between 200-400.

The traditional war of stone pelting saw fewer participants this time because the bridge on Jam river where the people from both sides gather, was swollen due to heavy rain in Chhindwara.

'Gotmar' fair, a centuries old tradition of stone pelting between the people of two villages Pandhurna and Sawargaon of Chhindwara district is held every year on Bhadrpad Amavasya (the 15th day of the darker fortnight of Hindi month Bhadrpad).

According to a senior police officer camping in the area, even the magnitude of injuries were slight and not



serious enough to be hospitalised in Pandhurna or be rushed to Nagpur (Maharashtra).

"Just a few people, including a man aged between 60-70 years had to be rendered treatment at the local hospital for injury caused by stone hits," Chhindwara district police superintendent

Vinayak Verma said.

The sunrise-sunset war of stones between the residents of the two river-side villages was toned down due to heavy rains, consequent rise in Jam river and additional measures by local administration, including ban on use of gofan (slings used to shoot stones), clo-

sure of liquor shops since Thursday night and deployment of an SDRF team to prevent any mishaps in the swollen river.

Previously in 2022, while around 200 people were injured in the annual stone war (unconfirmed reports put the figure at 400-plus), around 4-5 had to be rushed in serious condition to hospital in Nagpur for life-saving treatment. At least one of those persons whose life was saved by doctors in Nagpur, had suffered serious eye injury.

'Gotmar' fair, which causes injuries to hundreds every year has also reportedly claimed around 15 lives since 1955, owes its genesis to a mythological tale two young lovers (girl from Sawargaon and boy from Pandhurna) having been killed in the mid of the Jam river, after getting caught in stone-pelting by residents of the two villages. Even during the Covid-19 pandemic, residents of the two villages had indulged in the war of stones, injuring 110 people and 250 people respectively.

## INDIAN SCIENTISTS HAVE ALWAYS GIVEN NEW DIMENSIONS TO HUMANITY: PROF DR. AJAI SINGH

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Prof Dr Ajai Singh, Executive Director AIIMS Bhopal, delivered the keynote address in the international workshop titled "The Art of Writing Publishable Scientific Manuscript" organized by Bhopal Memorial Hospital & Research Centre, Bhopal. The workshop was attended by around 80 delegates. Speaking on the subject of "Clinical Perspectives of Biomedical Research: Bench to Bedside",



Prof Singh stressed on the need of advancing translational research through extensive collaboration, in order to bring the discoveries of basic science into clinical use for diagnosis, treatment and prophylaxis of diseases. Citing the example of COVID-19 vaccines, he stressed on the potential of Indian scientists to deliver clinical solutions that have benefited not only the country, but a vast section of mankind in meeting the challenge of the pandemic.

## ENGINE, POWER COACH OF EXPRESS TRAIN DERAIL, NO CASUALTY

Bhopal: The engine and power coach of an express train going from Hazrat Nizamuddin railway station in Delhi to Miraj Junction in Maharashtra derailed between Ratlam-Dahod rail section in Madhya Pradesh on Saturday morning, an official said. No casualty was reported in the incident, said Khemraj Meena, Public Relations Officer of the Western Railway's Ratlam division. "The engine and power coach of the train number 12494 (Darshan Express running between Hazrat Nizamuddin and Miraj Junction) derailed," he said, adding that medical and accident relief teams of the Ratlam division have reached the spot. The work to restore the train operation on this route is underway, he said. Another official said that the incident occurred near Amargarh railway station in Jhabua district of Madhya Pradesh, located around 320 km from Bhopal.



## CM Chouhan plants Gulmohar, Neem and Gular saplings

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan today planted saplings of Gulmohar, Neem and Gular in the Smart Garden at Shyamla Hills along with social workers and environment lovers.

Along with CM Chouhan, social worker Shivraj Dabi planted saplings on the occasion of his birthday with family members Arpana Dabi and Atharva

Dabi. Indore's media representatives Kapish Dubey and Ujjal Shukla, social workers Shivam Chouhan, Seema Chouhan, international Divyang swimmer Satendra Singh., Meenakshi, Baby Sneha and Nitya also planted saplings. Among the environment lovers who planted saplings included Vivek Tunde, Ameesha Sharma, Yogita Chouhan, Kalpana Bhadauria as well as Pawan Patidar, Mahendra, Mohit and others.

## CM CHOUHAN WILL INAUGURATE "MUKHYAMANTRI LADLI BAHNA AWAS YOJANA" TODAY

More than 4 lakh 75 thousand beneficiaries will get the benefit. Applications will be filled from 17th September to 5th October

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan will inaugurate the Mukhyamantri Ladli Bahna Awas Yojana from Kushabhau Thakre Convention Centre in Bhopal on, September 17 at 10 am. The state-level programme will be broadcasted at all district, Janpad and village panchayat headquarters.

Under the scheme, the families who were left out of getting the benefit of housing facility in various housing schemes will get their houses under the Mukhyamantri Ladli Bahna Awas Yojana. More than 4 lakh 75 thousand



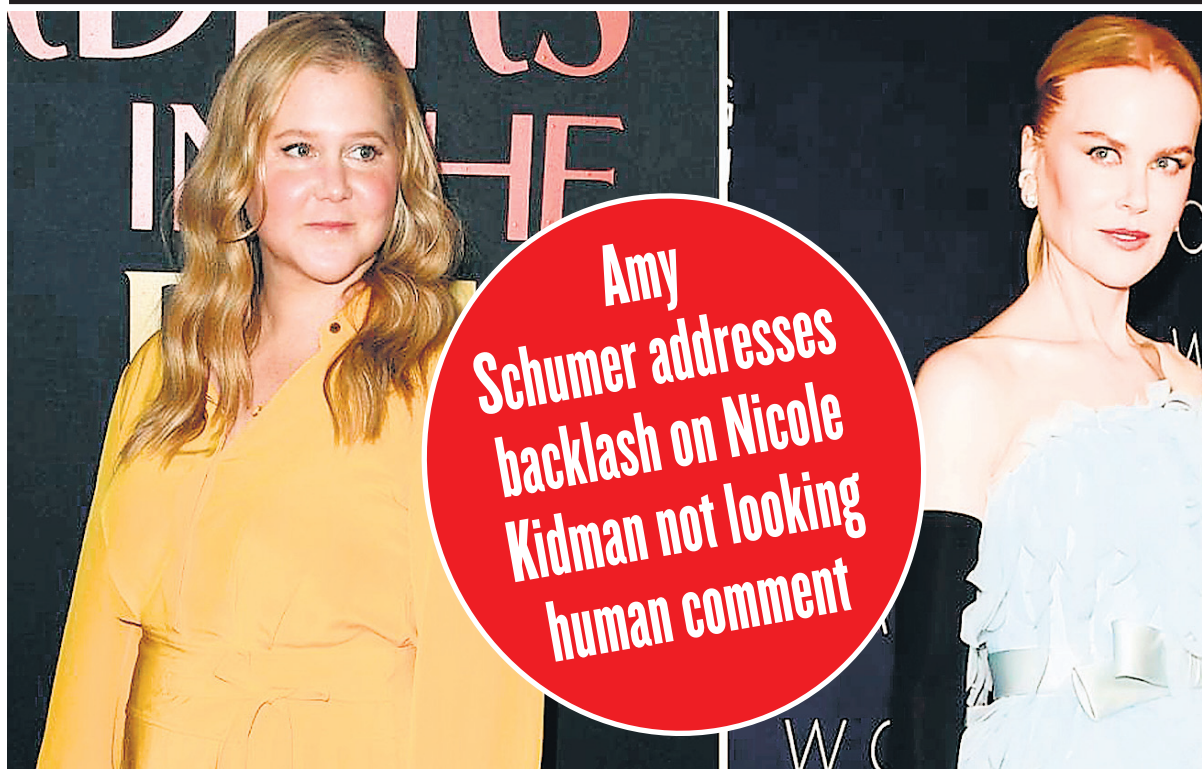
beneficiaries will benefit from the scheme. The state government has issued instructions regarding selection of beneficiaries of the scheme. Application forms will be received from beneficiaries from 17 September to 5 October 2023.

Under the Mukhyamantri Ladli Bahna Awas Yojana, 3 lakh 78 thousand

662 families who are registered under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana-Rural on the Awas Plus app portal and whose applications have been automatically rejected on the MIS portal of the Government of India, will get the benefit. The benefit of the scheme will also be provided to 97 thousand families who were left out of registration on MIS

portal and were identified. Benefit of Ladli Bahna Awas Yojana will also be given to those families who are not included in the list of Social, Economic and Caste Census 2011 and Awas Plus and who have not received the benefit of any housing scheme of the Center or the State.

Mukhyamantri Ladli Bahna Awas Yojana will include those families who do not have houses with pucca roof or live in kutcha houses with less than two rooms, do not own a motorized four-wheeler or whose family members do not have any member in government service, monthly income should be Rs 12 thousand or less. Also, no member of the family should be an income tax payer and have 2.5 acres or less of irrigated land or less than 5 acres of non-irrigated agricultural land.



**Amy Schumer addresses backlash on Nicole Kidman not looking human comment**

Los Angeles | Agencies

Actress-comedian Amy Schumer, has responded to the backlash she has received for her post, where she had jokingly written that Nicole Kidman was not looking human in one picture. Addressing the backlash, she said, "Breathe y'all".

Earlier this week, the 'I Feel Pretty' star had made a joke about a photo of Kidman attending the US Open in New York, where the Oscar-winner appeared to be super zoned-in on watching the match.

Joking in a since-deleted post that Kidman didn't look human in the photo, Schumer quickly got heat from fans who thought she was being mean, and even 'cyberbullying' the American-Australian actress.

The 'Trainwreck' actress, 42, has now issued a statement regarding her com-

ment about the 'Bombshell' star, 56.

The actress, after deleting her Instagram post, later returned to the platform to explain that she meant no harm in her initial post.

"Okay so the joke I was making was the way she was posed didn't seem like how a human sits. I was not making fun of how she looks. Nicole Kidman is beautiful and one of the most incredible actors of all time."

Detailing the topic in her caption, she wrote: "I hope everyone is okay and takes a deep breath including all of the think pieces written on this," Schumer wrote before asking if her critics were okay.

"To all of the people who commented on me. I'm so sorry I'm not prettier. Please forgive me. I apologise," she jokingly added.

She then proceeded to sarcastically add: "It wasn't even a slow news day. North Korea and Russia are getting too

close for comfort. There are deadly storms sweeping our world and a man was convicted of rape."

"But what got your goat was me saying that Nicole Kidman's pose was not human like. Breathe y'all. To the people who write hateful things below I forgive you as a mother, a woman and most importantly as someone who also likes hot goss. Have a good weekend."

Amy Schumer was last seen in the film 'Bros' and will next be seen voicing the character of Velvet in the animated film 'Trolls Band Together' along with another film 'Unfrosted: The Pop-Tart Story'.



**Justin Bieber reveals Diddy rejected one of his songs when he was 14**

Los Angeles | Agencies

Singer-songwriter Justin Bieber took a trip down memory lane to celebrate the release of Sean 'Diddy' Combs' new project, 'The Love Album: Off The Grid'. The 'Confident' artist recalled a time before the fame when he tried to offer his talents to Diddy but was shut down, reports People magazine. "I remember going to my brother Diddy's office to pitch him a song I wrote for him when I was like 14, sadly the song was trash haha," Bieber said on his Instagram Story.

Unfortunately, "it would be a hard no from him," as Bieber put it. However, the Canadian superstar is proof that a dream deferred is not always a dream denied. "Fast forward to a few years ago Puff asked if I would freestyle something for his upcoming love album. Wild full circle moment, love you @diddy," the 29-year-old concluded.

As per People, Diddy's new album was released on Friday and features a long list of top-tier talent, including Bieber. The two collaborated on the song 'Moments', Bieber included a screenshot of the ballad playing on his phone for the Instagram Story post.

The 'Hello Good Morning' hitmaker's last LP came in 2006 with Press Play. For The Love Album, in addition to Bieber, Diddy recruited Fabolous, Jazmine Sullivan, 21 Savage, H.E.R., The Weeknd, Kehlani, Mary J. Blige and many more for the 23-track body of work. Ahead of the album's release, the Bad Boy founder received the Global Icon Award at the 2023 VMAs.



**Adele makes huge change to Vegas shows, won't get too close to fans**

Los Angeles | Agencies

Singer-songwriter Adele has made a huge change to her Las Vegas residency shows after she admitted to "hanging on for dear f\*\*\*\*g life". The singer, 35, became worried when her friends and crew started "dropping like flies". She has now decided to ditch mingling with her fans over her fears of catching coronavirus, reports Mirror.co.uk.

Adele gained a reputation for getting up close and personal with the crowd during her shows at Caesars Palace. The 'Someone Like You' hitmaker would stop during her performance to pose with

fans for selfies and chat to them.

Yet all has changed now the star is fearful of becoming ill. She has stopped her famous walk throughs during 'When We Were Young', where she would greet and hug the audience.

As per Mirror.co.uk, Adele has vowed to not let Covid stop her shows after she was forced to postpone the start of her Sin City residency last year. Breaking the news to her adoring fans, Adele said: "Normally I would absolutely stop and chat and all of that and hear all about your life and be the nosy person that I am. However, I am hanging on by thread trying not to get Covid-19."

Los Angeles | Agencies

Actor Hugh Jackman has announced separation from his wife, fellow actress Deborra-Lee Furness after 27 years of marriage. The Australian couple is separating on amicable terms, however, saying that they feel blessed to have had a strong marriage which lasted for nearly 30 years.

Speaking to People magazine, the Aussie couple said: "We have been blessed to share almost 3 decades together as husband and wife in a wonderful, loving marriage. Our journey now is



respecting our privacy as our family navigates this transition in all of our lives."

The statement, signed

shifting and we have decided to separate to pursue our individual growth."

They continued: "Our family has been and always will be our highest priority. We undertake this next chapter with gratitude, love, and kindness. We greatly appreciate your understanding in

and Ava, 18.

The two actors first met in 1995 on the set of the Australian TV series 'Corelli', where they had an instant attraction to one another. Lee, who was already an established actress, and Jackman, who was back then an upstart actor fresh out of drama school, married less than a year later.

**Sylvester Stallone talks about 'Rocky' at TIFF**

Los Angeles | Agencies

Actor Sylvester Stallone, during the screening of his classic 1976 film 'Rocky' at TIFF (Toronto International Film Festival), said that while writing and making the film, he just wrote what he knew and acted it out. The actor, who was a very small actor back till date.

Stallone, was an usher during his early days, and recounting the incident said: "My gig as an usher, you could say, was my film class

"I just wrote about what I knew. I was writing about this little kind of mentally challenged guy who happened to have a lot of heart," Stallone said of his early Rocky Balboa character as it came into shape in his mind and on the page, according to The Hollywood Reporter.

TIFF had scheduled a screening of the original 'Rocky' movie, the iconic boxing classic which sees an underdog boxer in Philadelphia suddenly getting the opportunity to get into the big leagues and fight the world champion of heavyweight boxing, Apollo Creed for the position, on late night of September 15.

The movie was screened outdoors, near to Roy Thomson Hall on King Street. "I wanted to write a movie about a guy who says 'I'm not great at all, never will be. I fight great fighters. But I just want the opportunity to go the distance'," Stallone said of his original Rocky character.

He added Rocky and the Rocky Balboa character represented the apex of his career, because no one at first in Hollywood wanted to make the movie. "Nobody wanted to make it. It was my best writing too," he said.

The iconic Hollywood star, best known for his tough guy Rocky and Rambo movie franchises, also opened up about his early days as an actor.

**ABSOLUTE PIC OF THE DAY**



Arabella Chi



## Asia Cup 2023

# Gill's class, his timing, his form, is very important at the top of the order: Hayden

Colombo | Agencies

Ahead of the Asia Cup final between India and Sri Lanka on Sunday, former Australia opener Matthew Hayden said young Shubman Gill's class, timing and form are going to be a very decisive factor for the Rohit Sharma-led side. On a tough pitch at the R. Premadasa Stadium where very few of his teammates clicked with the bat, Gill stood tall against Bangladesh's four-man spin attack to hit a sparkling 121 off 133 balls. He used his feet and crease well and was reliant on strike rotation too while hitting eight fours and five sixes, though it went in vain as India lost by six runs.

"Shubman's batting during the match in circumstances where India were in a spot of bother in that first powerplay, similar to Bangladesh as well. And the fact that on 43 occasions, 265 plus runs chased down has only been achieved in five matches."

"You know that's little over 10% of the time where you have an opportunity to win these games. So having a mainstay with Shubman Gill at the crease, was the key. With the bat, I think it's a very obvious choice, Shubman Gill's class, his timing, his form, it's very important at the top of the order with a



healthy strike rate, I think that partnership with the Hitman is very key. So both these characters with bat and ball are needed at the World Cup," said Hayden to Star Sports. Hayden also felt that with India resting the likes of Jasprit Bumrah, Mohammed Siraj, Hardik Pandya and Kuldeep Yadav meant that their bowling lacked crucial intensity against Bangladesh, who made 265/8 in

50 overs, thanks to captain Shakib Al Hasan and Towhid Hridoy hitting fifties before the lower-order batters stepped up by making 87 runs collectively. "Yeah, I think the bowling performance was compromised by the fact that key players were missing. But I also think it was a typical dead rubber game in a tournament where you have already qualified." "There has to be that extra motivation there, and when it is not there, that extra stimulus, even the crowd, that sense of occasion, coming off a fantastic tournament thus far, it's just hard to replicate that intensity, and I felt that India's performance with the ball lacked that intensity."

"Look, India's bowling in particular, and we have seen it in the back 20 overs of the game with 4 wickets remaining, you know they just seemed to bleed runs. So Jasprit Bumrah's comeback with the ball is such a key part of the World Cup campaign for Team India as they head into that." Talking about the same, Gill said, "The reason we gave rest to our bowlers is that we played continuously for three days, against Pakistan and Sri Lanka, and the bowlers needed a bit of rest so that they can come in fresh for the finals. I don't think there has been a momentum break for us."

## Davis Cup

# Sasikumar Mukund retires with cramps as India lose first singles to Morocco

**Team Absolute** | Lucknow  
Hosts India started its campaign in the Davis Cup World Group II First Round match against Morocco on a disappointing note when the country's second highest-ranked singles player, Sasikumar Mukund, conceded the opening singles match due to severe cramps here on Saturday.



from the high temperatures, the Indians suffered a big setback because of the hot and dry conditions.

Sasikumar did well to fight back after being broken in the ninth game and immediately broke back to level the scores 5-5 in the first set. The 26-year-old Indian went on to win the tie-breaker 7-4 to give India a good start.

Sasikumar started the second set with a break but Yassine Dlimi fought back superbly to break back in the eighth game and made it 4-4. Dlimi broke Sasikumar's serve again in the 12th game to win the second set 7-5.

Sasikumar started the third set with a break in the hard-fought first game but the Moroccan broke back immediately in the next game and the Indian unable to move a lot due to cramps, was leading 4-1 when Sasikumar threw in the towel.

The Chennai-born Sasikumar, hampered by severe cramps, retired from the match against Yassine Dlimi, with the score reading 7-6(4), 5-7, 1-4 in his opponent's favour.

The result now doubles the pressure on Sumit Nagal as he will not only have to pull India level by winning against Adam Moundir but also try to seal victory in the third singles on Sunday.

India had picked Lucknow to exploit the weather conditions against Morocco but

## LEVERKUSEN TIES BAYERN TO STAY ATOP IN BUNDESLIGA

Berlin | Agencies

Exequiel Palacios' late equaliser helped Bayer Leverkusen snatch one point at Bayern following a fast-paced four-goal thriller at the curtain raiser of the fourth round.

The Bavarians caught a perfect start on home soil as new arrival Harry Kane opened the scoring after heading home Leroy Sane's deflected cross at the far post with only seven minutes gone, reports Xinhua.

Leverkusen responded well and restored parity in the 24th minute when Alejandro Grimaldo drilled a free kick from 16 meters over the wall into the top right corner to stun the hosts.

The "Werkself" gained momentum and kept Bayern's defense busy as Victor Boniface forced goalkeeper Sven Ulreich into action at the half-hour mark before pulling wide from a



promising position a moment later.

Boniface remained in the thick of things and thought he had made it 2-1 but his goal was ruled offside in the 33rd minute.

Bayern nearly took the lead again, but Leverkusen goalkeeper Lukas Hradecky was on guard, denying Thomas Muller and Serge Gnabry in quick succession.

Hradecky had his hands full of work but neither Sane, Leon Goretzka nor Gnabry was able to beat Leverkusen's goalkeeper despite promising opportunities in the closing period of the first half.

After the restart, Bayern should have grabbed the lead, but Kane couldn't beat

Hradecky in a one-on-one.

The front runners still posed a threat as Florian Wirtz exchanged passes with Boniface and rattled the right post from inside the box in the 78th minute.

Leverkusen increased the pressure two minutes later after Boniface tested Ulreich with a close-range attempt.

Bayern then flabbergasted the visitors against the run of the play in the 86th minute when Goretzka latched onto Mathys Tel's cutback pass to make it 2-1.

Leverkusen had the last laugh though and secured a share of the spoils after Alphonso Davies felled Jonas Hofmann inside the box. Palacios stepped up and converted the subsequent penalty to stun the German giants in the dying seconds of the game.

With the result, Bayer Leverkusen defended its top spot while Bayern stayed in second position.

# Mithali Raj, Harleen Deol, Gujarat Giants make a splash in Ahmedabad

**Team Absolute** | Ahmedabad

The Gujarat Giants, which is mentored by the legendary Mithali Raj, is currently in Ahmedabad, and the team, who are part of the Women's Premier League, met team owners Adani Sportsline and Pranav Adani.

Among the players present were Harleen Deol, Sushma Verma, Shabnam Shakil, Hurley Gala, Sneha Rana, Parunika Sisodia, Mansi Joshi, Meghna Sabbineni, Tanuja Kanwar, Ashwani Kumari, and Monica Patel. Along with them, the Gujarat Giants' Mentor and Advisor Mithali Raj and Assistant Coach Nooshin Al Khadeer were also present. "A memorable day meeting Mr. @PranavAdani Sir alongside the talented @GujaratGiants and team Adani Sportsline.



His support and vision for women's cricket are truly inspiring. Looking forward to a season filled with dedication and triumph. #GarjeGujarat, Mithali Raj tweeted. "Witnessed the incredible power of cricket today with our diverse and talented @GujaratGiants team! Proud to see players

from all over India unite, gearing up for the next season. Women's cricket is destined for great heights! ??? #CricketUnites, Pranav Adani tweeted.

The Adani Sportsline owned Gujarat Giants have begun their preparations for the second season of the Women's Premier League

and will hope to put in a fantastic performance in the upcoming season of the tournament. Currently, the WPL has five teams involved with the champions Mumbai Indians, Gujarat Giants, Royal Challengers Bangalore, UP Warriorz and Delhi Capitals. The inaugural edition of the Women's

Premier League was played in totality in Mumbai, with the games distributed between the DY Patil Stadium and the Brabourne Stadium at the Cricket Club of India. The dates and the venues for the second season of the WPL though is yet to be finalised on by the BCCI.

# Babar, Shaheen get into a verbal spat after Pakistan's Asia Cup exit: Report

Colombo | Agencies

A heated verbal argument erupted between Pakistan skipper Babar Azam and pace spearhead Shaheen Shah Afridi after their last-ball defeat to Sri Lanka in a low-scoring thriller in the Asia Cup. According to reports, both players indulged in a heated exchange of words after Babar's comment 'Players are not playing responsibly' during the post-match presentation after the shocking last-over defeat on Thursday, knocked Pakistan out of the tournament. In response to



Babar's statement, Shaheen replied 'at least appreciate who bowled and batted well,'



to which Babar replied 'I know who's performing well'. Reports also suggested that

wicket-keeper batter, Mohammad Rizwan lined himself up to end the dispute between the two superstars.

In the Super Four round of the Asia Cup, the designated hosts had a difficult time as they lost to India in the Super 4 stage match of the Asia Cup by a big margin of 228 runs.

In the next match, Babar's team suffered a loss to Sri Lanka that put an end to their hopes in the tournament as they were defeated by 2 wickets. Before that, their victories over Bangladesh and Nepal were only marginally comforting for Pakistan.

Colombo | Agencies

Sri Lanka off-spinner Maheesh Theekshana has been ruled out of the Asia Cup final clash against India on Sunday due to hamstring injury, while the visitors have called up off-spin all-rounder Washington Sundar as a cover for left-arm spin all-rounder Axar Patel.

Theekshana had strained his right hamstring during the Super Four game against Pakistan and hobbled off the field after completing his quota of overs. Sri Lankan selectors have brought in Sahar Arachchige into the squad as Theekshana's replacement.

"A scan was done and confirmed the muscle injury. Theekshana will return to the High Performance Center to com-



mence rehabilitation work," said a statement from the tournament. On the other hand, a report in

Cricbuzz says Washington will link up with the Indian team ahead of the Asia Cup title clash due to Axar being down with niggles post the Super Four match against Bangladesh on Friday.

Axar took blows on his left wrist, elbow and had to be attended for a thigh issue while making 42 runs with the bat, though his efforts didn't translate into an Indian win at the R Premadasa Stadium.

Sundar is part of India's squad for the Asian Games and is currently in Bengaluru. After the Asia Cup final, he is expected to re-join the camp for the Asian Games running till September 23 before the competition is held in Hangzhou, China. He last played an ODI against New Zealand at home in January this year, but missed out on a spot in the 15-man World Cup squad.

# Amandeep, Diksha start with 69 and 70 at Swiss Ladies Open

Holzhausen, Switzerland | Agencies

Diksha Dagar played a steady round with just two birdies against one bogey as she opened the VP Bank Swiss Ladies Open with a card of 1-under 70.

She was lying T-27 after the first round but the top Indian of the day was Amandeep Drall, who opened at the 10th with a birdie and closed the day with a birdie on ninth. In between two other birdies and two bogeys for a 2-under 69 that put her in T-14th place.

The third Indian in the field, Vani Kapoor carded 1-over 72 and was T-53. There are 126 players in the 54-hole stroke play event, where the cut will be applied after two rounds with top 60 professionals and ties moving into the final day.

France's Anne-Charlotte Mora fired a bogey 9-under 62 to take a two-shot lead at the VP Bank Swiss Ladies Open at Golfpark Holzhausen. It was a day of low scoring in Switzerland, as Mora went



bogey-free in the afternoon and posted nine birdies to storm to the top of the leaderboard.

Her compatriot Nastasia Nadaud set the clubhouse lead earlier with a

round of seven-under par. But Mora overtook her later.

Diksha, getting ready for home Open, the Women's Indian Open, where Amandeep Drall was the run-

ner-up in 2022, started from the back nine like the other two Indians. While Diksha dropped just one bogey, she missed a lot of birdie chances and made two through the day.

Diksha is currently lying third on Race to Costa Del Sol, the Order of Merit for the Ladies European Tour.

Amandeep Drall and Vani Kapoor have had mixed seasons as they get ready for their home open and also go on to save their playing rights for 2024.

Two more red numbers on the 13th and 15th quickly moved the 26-year-old into the outright lead, with a wonderful birdie on the 18th extending her advantage late into the day.

In a tie for second on seven-under par sit Nadaud and Norway's Madelene Stavnar. Both went bogey-free like the outright leader.

Three players sit in a tie for fourth on five-under par, a trio which includes Wales' Chloe Williams, Germany's Alexandra Forsterling, and Sweden's Moa Folke.



# US BACK TO TOP IN FIBA RANKINGS

Mies | Agencies

The United States claimed back to the top position of the latest FIBA men's world rankings, as the basketball world governing body announced.

The fourth place at the FIBA 2023 Basketball World Cup was enough for the US to push down former No. 1

Spain to second place. Spain failed to qualify for the quarterfinals and finished only ninth in the tournament, reports Xinhua.

New world champion Germany made a big vault from 11th to third place, the first time for the Germans to step into the top three on the rankings. Another big winner was Canada, who moved up

nine spots to the sixth position after winning their maiden bronze medal in the World Cup.

Latvia had a stunning rise of 22 places to eighth after they finished fifth at the World Cup. Australia dropped one spot to the fourth place while world runner-up Serbia moved one step up to the fifth.



# Dancing in socks is Vicky Kaushal's biggest fear

Team Absolute | Mumbai

**B**ollywood actor Vicky Kaushal, who is awaiting the release of his next film 'The Great Indian Family', has revealed his biggest fear with regard to dancing.

Vicky is set to grace the television show 'India's Best Dancer 3' along with his 'The Great Indian Family' co-star Manushi Chhillar. The episode sees the contestants presenting praiseworthy performances to secure a spot in the Top 6.

Contestant Aniket Chauhan's solo act leaves Vicky and Manushi in awe, as the contestant weaves the magic of love to the melodious tune of 'Saawariya'.

Stunned by Aniket's fabulous act, Vicky Kaushal comments: "From the first beat to the last beat, you were a hero on this stage. The charm, the grace, the fun, the masti - it was all there in every beat. Dancing in socks is my biggest fear; I know I wouldn't be able to do it for even for 5 minutes.

And when you incorporated it into your act, I genuinely wondered if you might fall - I couldn't tell if it was part of the act or if you were genuinely slipping."

He added: "Your smile, Aniket, is simply enchanting. I didn't want your act to end, and I thoroughly enjoyed every moment. It felt like I was watching a young man deeply in love, in the best of spirits - just amazing."

Manushi Chhillar, who was equally impressed, asked Aniket for an autograph, stating: "Aniket, I enjoyed watching the fluidity in your movements. It's not easy to make it all look so effortless, but you did it effortlessly. Moreover, the fact that you've reached so far in the competition is a testament to your talent."

## Randeep Hooda: 'It's great to see Punjabi music trailblazing globally'

Team Absolute | Mumbai

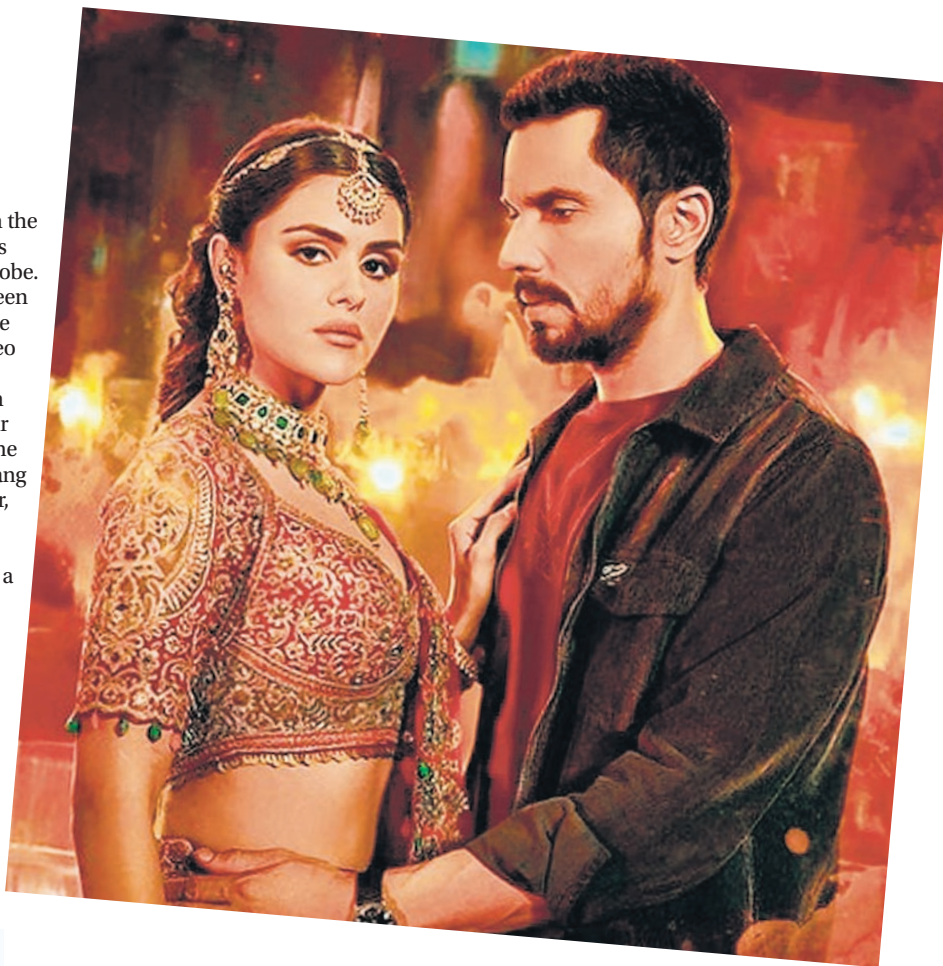
**A**ctor Randeep Hooda, who recently made his foray in the space of music videos with the track 'Zohrajabeen', is chuffed with Punjabi music trailblazing across the globe.

The actor shared that for him the last 12 months have been exhilarating for him as he got to venture into the OTT space essaying a broad range of characters to now the music video which he described as a great experience.

Randeep Hooda, who has received praise for his work in 'CAT', 'Inspector Avinash' and 'Sergeant', shared: "This year has been a year of a lot of firsts for me. From venturing into the OTT space to Playing a Sikh for the first time to a real Dabang UP cop. Also From being just an actor to becoming a writer, director and producer on Mr Savarkar's biopic. Doing a music video was a similar step."

He further mentioned: "To step out of my comfort zone, a music video seemed like the right thing to do and I'm very glad I did it. B Praak is one of the best and biggest singers out there. Also it's not just the song that's great but his sound is so unusual. There is a lot of angst and pain in his songs written by the great Jaani, especially 'Zohrajabeen'. To do its title track was a pleasure. The fact that Punjabi music is trail blazing globally is great to see."

Furthermore, his fans are eagerly awaiting Randeep Hooda's upcoming movie, 'Swatantra Veer Savarkar' where he is set to essay the titular role.



## Sanya Malhotra zoned out 5 minutes into 'Jawan' narration

Team Absolute | Mumbai

**A**ctress Sanya Malhotra, who essays the character of Doctor Eeram in her recently released Shah Rukh Khan-starrer 'Jawan', shared that she zoned out during the narration of the film by director Atlee. The actress was speaking to media while celebrating the success of the film.

The actress shared: "I want to share that I didn't even listen to the film's narration."

She then told the film's director Atlee: "I'm so sorry Atlee sir but I got overwhelmed thinking about working with SRK sir in a film directed by a director of your stature."

In the film, Sanya essays the role of a vigilante and falsely convicted doctor who while performing her duty, is made a scapegoat in order to save the top-brass in the medical system after the death of children due to Encephalitis.

She further mentioned: "I decided within 5 minutes into the narration that I'm doing the film. I zoned out during the narration thinking that I'm getting to a film with SRK sir." Meanwhile, Sanya has the biopic 'Sam Bahadur' and the Hindi remake of the Malayalam film 'The Great Indian Kitchen' in the pipeline.



## APARSHAKTI KHURANA MAKES INROADS INTO MUSIC; UNVEILS TEASER OF NEW SINGLE

Team Absolute | Mumbai

**A**ctor Aparshakti Khurana, known for his comedic roles in films like 'Stree' and 'Lukka Chuppi' along with his work in the acclaimed web series 'Jubilee', is making inroads into the music world, sharing a teaser of his new single.

Taking to Instagram, he shared a snippet of his new single 'Aparshakti's Hoor' and captioned: "Just Warming up before I release my next music single"

The teaser features a Punjabi pop sound with a strong romantic tinge, with the actor also wearing a black shirt and glasses, doing the stylistic takes of Punjabi pop artists with full swag, groove and attitude.

The teaser, being what it is, doesn't show the whole thing obviously, but has enough content in it to show what it really is. As mentioned, a Punjabi romantic pop song, for fans of the genre, this will be a treat.

The song clearly has very high-fi production, featuring some of the biggest and most clear, polished and open sound design you can find, and is all groovy and attitude based.

Aparshakti's upcoming music project is poised for success, showcasing his charisma and musical prowess in a captivating teaser. Now following in his brother, and fellow actor Ayushmann Khurrana's footsteps, who is also a singer, Aparshakti's new teaser is an early indication of a very catchy track.

## SRK, Atlee 'conned' Deepika into believing her 'Jawan' role was a cameo



Team Absolute | Mumbai

**B**ollywood superstar Shah Rukh Khan, whose latest release 'Jawan', has set the cash registers ringing, said that he and his director Atlee fooled actress Deepika Padukone into thinking that her role was a cameo in 'Jawan'.

Speaking to the media on Friday, SRK said: "I would like to mention that I and Atlee sir fooled Deepika into believing that her role was of a special appearance in the film aur humne uske saath poori picture shoot kar li."

The actor also narrated an incident when he decided that Deepika should be a part of the film. He shared with the media that he thought of adding Deepika to 'Jawan' cast while the song 'Besharam Rang' from 'Pathaan' was being filmed.

He told the media: "I looked at her, she was looking all dazzling and while looking at her, I thought, 'Ye maa ka

role karegi kya?' I then asked Pooja, my manager to ask Deepika if she would do the part and within 5 minutes she said yes."

Deepika essays the role of Vikram Rathore's (SRK senior) wife and Azaad (SRK Junior) in the film. She gives birth to Azaad's character during her jail time in the film. Azaad goes onto become the jailer of the same penitentiary which once held Deepika captive during her trial.

Learning that she was tricked into doing the whole film, Deepika said: "Whatever it is, I will always work in anything that SRK asks me to because we share a special bond since I started my career opposite him in 'Om Shanti Om'. And as for the switch from the sultry look in 'Pathaan' to the role of a mother in 'Jawan', I don't think any actor would think like how they would look in a certain role after doing a certain kind of role."

## INSTAGRAM PIC OF THE DAY



Megha Bajaj