

# absolute india

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LONDON SOLICITOR CLAIMS CHINA WAS READY TO SETTLE BORDER DISPUTE IN 2001

## A BORDER BOMB

British Indian solicitor in London, Sarosh Zaiwalla said the Chinese government was willing to discuss 'with an open mind' India's demands on the long-standing boundary issue between the two countries in 2001 in back-channel talks. "This meant," he wrote in his memoirs *Honour Bound*, "setting up a second-channel, confidential meeting between the political leaders of China and India to find a practical resolution at a senior level to settle the border dispute".

► MCMAHON SIGNED THE AGREEMENT WITH LONCHEN SATRA, AN OFFICIAL OF THE TIBETAN GOVERNMENT, AT SIMLA IN 1914.  
► CHINA WAS A PARTY TO WHAT WAS A TRIPARTITE CONFERENCE, BUT DIDN'T ULTIMATELY SIGN THE TREATY.  
► BEIJING ASSERTS TIBET WAS NOT A SOVEREIGN COUNTRY (IT ENJOYED SUZERAINTY) AND THUS DID NOT HAVE THE AUTHORITY TO CONCLUDE INTERNATIONAL PACTS.  
► IT IS STILL A MATTER OF DEBATE WHETHER CHINA AGREED TO THE INDO-TIBETAN CONTRACT, BUT CUNNINGLY DID NOT PUT PEN TO PAPER.



months later, he said to me airily, 'I have given your note to my department to consider'. He continued: "Had the Indian government taken this seriously, China would have had to respond, and they could have resolved the matter. For China in those days the focus was on economic development and not military might." Zaiwalla recalled that in his conversation with Ambassador Ma, the latter initially signalled: "What we want is a proper borderline to be drawn between the countries. China wants the original border of Tibet to be the border with India. The line drawn by the British Raj as the border between Tibet and India cannot be considered the proper border."  
To that, Zaiwalla is said to have replied: "For India to part with any territory would not be acceptable for the Indian people, especially after the 1962 border war."

### THE BILATERAL PROPOSAL

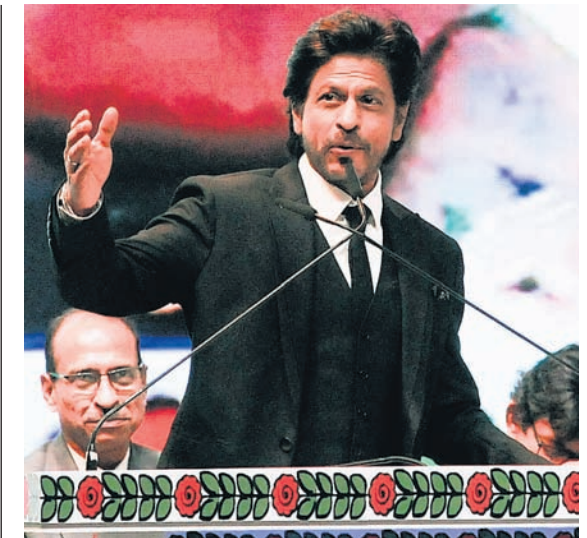
The lawyer claimed he also brought to the diplomat's attention, "the fact that at the time the border as drawn by (Henry) McMahon (then foreign secretary of British ruled India) was agreed by Tibet and India, Tibet had a government. Therefore, there had been a legal and binding acceptance by Tibet and India of the location of the border". He added: "This in turn would be binding on China." Zaiwalla was certain: "In my conversations with him, the ambassador accepted that all these points could be discussed." In course of their exchanges, Zaiwalla revealed he suggested to the Chinese ambassador that China should lease a corridor to India through its territory to enable Indian pilgrims to visit the Hindu pilgrimage sites in Mansarovar and Kailash. "The ambassador indicated that it could be discussed in exchange for India ceding some of its territory in the Himalayan mountains, where no one lived and there was no evidence of any mineral deposits," was Zaiwalla's memory.

Ashis Ray | London

Zaiwalla wished to remind people of what he regrets as being an opportunity lost in the context of recent fighting between Indian and Chinese soldiers at the front between the two countries in Tawang in Arunachal Pradesh. He further stated that the Chinese ambassador in Britain Ma Zhengang worked with him on a note on the subject, which Zaiwalla forwarded to the Indian government. But he never heard back. He maintained: "I gave the note which I had prepared, with the ambassador's input and approval, to Maneka Gandhi, who confirmed to me that she had passed it on to Jaswant Singh. (As it happens, Maneka was at that time my client and had been a minister in the Vajpayee government.)" He recorded in his book: "When I met Jaswant Singh at an event in the Washington Hotel in London a few

### 'PLA SOUGHT UNILATERAL CEASEFIRE AT YANGSTE TO FREE 63 SOLDIERS'

**Kolkata:** An untrained eye could mistake them for Chinese-made walking sticks used by trekkers in the high-altitude terrain. But Indian Army soldiers know better. Walking sticks for trekkers have firm grips and a pointy end for a better grip while going up or down slopes but they do not have lethal spikes sticking out. These are specially-designed clubs for China's People's Liberation Army (PLA) personnel, the likes of which were used during the Galwan clash in 2020. Over a hundred of them, seized from PLA soldiers between December 8 and 9. These clubs are also designed to emit bright flashes during a clash in the night to temporarily disorient the opponent. On December 8, the Indian Army stopped a PLA patrol that had crossed over the LAC. While other members of the team rushed back, three PLA soldiers were captured. The matter could have been resolved peacefully but the PLA decided to launch a counter attack to free the three Chinese soldiers. This happened on December 9. By then, the Indian Army was aware of what was to take place and were prepared. The PLA "riot squad" arrived with over 300 personnel. Indian Army soldiers not only beat them back but captured 60 PLA soldiers with their spiked clubs. The retreating PLA soldiers left behind several more such clubs in a bid to get away from the blows the charged up Indians were landing upon them," the source added. Faced with a situation of having as many as 63 of their own in Indian custody, the PLA immediately called a truce. A flag-meeting was convened and the Chinese soldiers were handed over. Their clubs and others collected from the scene of the skirmish were retained by the Indian Army and are neatly lined up in a room now. China will never reveal how many of their soldiers were injured but the nine Indian Army personnel being treated at an Army Hospital in Guwahati are doing fine. This was a strong message sent back to China that there will be no repeat of another Galwan.



### Social media toxicity affects collective narrative, makes it divisive and destructive: SRK

**Kolkata | Agencies**  
Bollywood superstar Shah Rukh Khan on Thursday said the social media is often driven by a narrowness of views that "enclose" collective narrative and makes it more divisive and destructive. In his address at the inauguration ceremony of the 28th Kolkata International Film Festival (KIFF) here, he said that the collective narratives in recent times have often been shaped by social media, which is often driven by a narrowness of views that limits human nature to its baser self. "This sense of negativity often increases the social media consumption and such pursuits often enclose collective narrative and makes it more divisive and destructive," said Shah Rukh Khan, who is also the brand ambassador of West Bengal. He said that cinema now has a more important role to play in spreading that message of collective narrative. "I hope that festivals like KIFF and the city like Kolkata can emerge as the beginning of this positivity at this point of time," the Bollywood superstar said. His comments became significant in view of the recent social media attacks by certain groups on his next release "Pathaan". Almost echoing the Bollywood superstar, West Bengal Chief Minister, Mamata Banerjee said that her state always fights for humanity and unity in diversity. "West Bengal fights with courage to protect unity. Our battle on this count will continue. We will move ahead with the lesson of the icons from the state like Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore, Ramakrishna Paramhansa, Swami Vivekananda, Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose and Kazi Nazrul Islam," she said. Banerjee also said that the people of West Bengal never bow down in front of anyone or beg. "Bengal connects with the entire nation," she added. On the occasion, the Chief Minister also raised the demand for Bharat Ratna for Bollywood megastar, Amitabh Bachchan, who was also present on the occasion. "He is India's pride and is the right man for this award," she said. Amitabh said that he often shares an emotional connection with Kolkata. "This is the city which gave me my first job. This is the city which gave my wife Jaya Bachchan her first film," he said.

### Cyber criminals withdraw cash from 147 bank accounts in Jharkhand

Dhanbad | Agencies

Cyber criminals allegedly withdrew cash ranging from Rs 7,000 to Rs 24,000 from as many as 147 accounts in different banks in Dhanbad district of Jharkhand by using the fingerprints of account holders after cloning them. Complaints regarding the matter have been made to the cyber police as well as the banks. Most of the people from whose accounts money has been withdrawn are those who had availed the banking



services at customer care centres or franchise centres instead of the branches, and had given their fingerprints on the machines there. It is suspected that there may be collusion of customer service centres employees with cyber criminals in these cases.

People complaining to the cyber police and banks say that they neither received a call from anyone, nor did they share ATM PIN and OTP with anyone, nor did they ever click on any link, but thousands of rupees were withdrawn from their account. It is being said that illegal withdrawals ranging from Rs 7,000 to Rs 24,000 have been made from the accounts of most of the people two-three times. Businessmen, doctors, women were among those whose accounts were targeted.

### AGNI 5 NUCLEAR-CAPABLE MISSILE, TEST-FIRED SUCCESSFULLY

**New Delhi:** The night trials of nuclear capable ballistic missile Agni 5 was successfully conducted on Thursday in Odisha, a Defence official said. The missile is capable of striking targets at ranges up to 5,000 km with a very high degree of accuracy. The range of the missile can be further increased based on the results of the testing, the official added. The Agni 5 ballistic missile tested on Thursday evening is lighter than before. The official said the test was conducted in an attempt to validate advanced technologies and new equipment on the missile which weighs lesser now. The launch was carried out for a predetermined range and validated all operational parameters of the system, the official added.

### World Cup fever leading to critical eye and heart problems: Doctors

Kolkata | Agencies

At a time when India is in the grip of the FIFA World Cup fever with millions of viewers being glued to television sets or other forms of digital screens, two top doctors from Kolkata have cautioned against people being affected by "Digital Eye Strain" syndrome. According to them, the common symptoms of this "Digital Eye Strain" syndrome are extreme headaches, blurred vision, irritation in the eyes, redness and gritty sensation and excessive tearing. According to them, apart from these factors, the prolonged sleep deprivation during the midnight

matches disturbs the human body's normal homeostasis which directly affects eye health along with the other systems like heart and nerves. It may cause severe dry eyes, dark circles and puffiness of eyelids, the ophthalmologists warned. According to Dr Joyeeta Das, consultant ophthalmologist with Disha Eye Hospitals, certain precautions like having the room well-lit while viewing such matches, keeping the digital screens in eye protection mode, taking short breaks in between matches and power naps during the breaks, can reduce these physical complexities to a great extent.

She said that one must avoid contact lenses while viewing matches and also avoid rubbing the eyes. "Most important is that one should not be deprived of sleep at any cost," Das said. According to Dr PS Karmakar, consultant cardiologist with Techno India Dama Hospital, this constant viewing of high-tension world cup football matches has also an immense adverse effect on the human heart. According to him, the cheering and the anxiety from the beginning to the end of the game leads to an acceleration of the normal impulse rate of a human heart, which results in secretion of adrenaline.

### LAST OF 36 RAFALE JETS LAND IN INDIA

**New Delhi:** With the landing of the 36th and the final fighter jet, the Indian Air Force (IAF) on Thursday received the delivery of all the aircraft for which it had entered into a Rs 58,000-crore deal with France's Dassault Aviation in 2016. "The pack is complete. The last of the 36 IAF Rafales landed in India after a quick enroute stop from a UAE Air Force tanker," the IAF said in an official statement. A squadron of Rafale will monitor the western border and northern border with Pakistan, while another squadron will monitor the eastern border area of India. Due to the completion of the Rafale deal, the strength of the Indian Air Force has increased especially at a time when tension and a clash has erupted at the International borders with China.

### No Proposal To Grant Constitutional Status To Minorities Commission: Centre

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The government on Thursday told the Lok Sabha that there is no proposal at present to grant constitutional status to the National Commission for Minorities. In a written response to a question in the lower house by Congress leader Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury, Minority Affairs Minister Smriti Irani said the National Commission for Minorities (NCM) was established as a statutory body with the enactment of the National Commission for Minorities Act, 1992 by Parliament. This Act came into force with



effect from May 17, 1992, she said. "Under section 2 (c) of the said Act, the central government has notified five religious communities namely, Buddhists, Christians, Muslims, Sikhs, and Zoroastrians (Parsis) as minority communities, there is no proposal, at present, to

grant constitutional status to the National Commission for Minorities," she said. Subsequently, the central government further notified the Jain community as a minority community vide notification on January 27, 2014, the minister said. In response to another question as to whether it is true that the number of beneficiaries has decreased under the Pre-Matric and Post-Matric scholarship schemes in 2020-21 in comparison to 2019-20, Irani said there is state-wise/community-wise quota for fresh scholarships under pre-matric and post-matric scholarship schemes.

### Delhi AIIMS declared 'tobacco-free zone'

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) in the national capital has been declared 'tobacco-free zone' and violation of this has been made punishable offence with fine up to Rs 200. The hospital has said that action will be taken against the doctors, permanent or contractual employees and security staff found smoking or chewing tobacco on the hospital premises. As such, smoking and spitting of tobacco in the premises of AIIMS, Delhi are prohibited and is a punishable offence with a fine of Rs 200, said the order further. The hospital has requested all HODs to bring it to the knowledge of the staff working under them to strictly follow the above-mentioned guidelines. The security personnel have also been instructed to not to allow the patients, attendants, visitors, and staff members to use tobacco in any form in the premises of AIIMS.





# INTRODUCED 'HEALTHY SUBSTITUTE' FOR ILLEGALLY-BREWED HOMEMADE LIQUOR, PUNJAB GOVT TO SC

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Punjab government has told the Supreme Court that to wean away consumers of illicit homemade liquor from its use, the government has introduced, in the current excise policy, a cheap variant of country liquor having 40-degree strength, which is a "healthy substitute".

The state government, in a counter-affidavit, said the Excise Department has been regularly carrying out massive enforcement drives against manufacture and use of illicit homemade liquor/spurious liquor.

The state government's response came after the Supreme Court expressed concern at increasing illicit liquor trade in the state.

In the affidavit, the state's Department of Excise and Taxation gave details on the steps to eradicate the menace of spurious liquor. It said to wean away illicit homemade liquor consuming sections of the society from its use, the state government has introduced a cheap variant of country liquor having 40 degree strength. "This liquor is going to be a healthy substitute for illegally brewed homemade liquor. The field officers of the department have been entrusted with the task of giving their requirement of 40 degree country liquor based on ground inputs so that the same can be made available in illicit liquor prone areas in near future," it said.

The affidavit said awareness through local print and electronic media including cable TV will be started on war footing level and wherever necessary, social media will also be used for the purpose.

The state government said the campaign against illicit distillation of liquor will be started by spreading awareness regarding ill-effects of homemade illicit liquor by using means, including popularising the department's already existing reward scheme so that more and more informers come to share the



information regarding such manufacturing and sale. The state government, in a separate affidavit, said an Inspector General rank police officer has been nominated at the state level to monitor investigation of cases registered under the Punjab Excise Act, 1914. A circular has been issued to all the field units to ensure action against manufacture, smuggling and sale of illicit liquor, which shall invariably lead to registration of a criminal case under the relevant provisions of 1914 Act or the Indian Penal Code, it added. The state government said any default would entail departmental action against the delinquent officer/official.

On Thursday, the matter came up for hearing before a bench of Justices M.R. Shah and C.T. Ravikumar. Senior advocate Ajit Kumar Sinha, representing the state government, along with advocate Ajay Pal, referred to the steps taken by the

authorities in the matter and said the state has implemented all directions issued by the top court. Counsel further added that a circular has been issued holding local police accountable if illegal liquor manufacturing units are found. The bench cited the Bihar hooch tragedy, where 39 people lost their lives.

After hearing the arguments, the bench said, "Let us see how it progresses. We will monitor it" and scheduled the matter for further hearing after winter vacations.

The affidavit filed by the department said: "There will be complete coordination with Police Department at district level and the resources available with Police Department like trained man power, drones and boats for river side searches etc shall be pressed into service during cordon and search operations carried out in illicit liquor prone areas."

"All the vacant posts in the Punjab state excise force shall be filled immediately to increase the availability of manpower to fight this menace of illicit distillation of liquor effectively. Similarly, the department will ensure that all the posts of excise inspectors as per sanctioned strength are filled."

On December 5, the Supreme Court pulled up the Punjab government over the issue of sale of spurious liquor in the state, saying Punjab is a border state and this is a very serious matter. The top court asked the state government to come up with specific steps to curb the menace of spurious liquor, while adding that the youth will be finished.

The apex court was hearing a plea arising out of a September 2020 order of the Punjab and Haryana High Court, which disposed of a petition seeking transfer of some FIRs registered in Punjab in relation to distillation of spurious liquor, its sale, and inter-state smuggling to the CBI.

# Situation temporary, to normalise by Dec-end, IGI airport authorities tell Parl panel

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Amid rising incidents of congestion at Delhi's Indra Gandhi International (IGI) airport which has led to passengers waiting for hours to board the aircraft and even miss flights, the airport authorities on Thursday informed a Parliamentary panel that measures are being taken to streamline the operations and the situation would normalise by end of this month, adding that it was a "temporary phase".

According to sources aware of the developments, the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Transport, Tourism, and Culture questioned officials of Delhi International Airport Ltd (DIAL), which runs the IGI airport, and sought to know what measures are being taken to address the crisis.

DIAL Deputy Managing Director K Narayan Rao and other officials were present in the meeting, sources said.

However, the committee, which is headed by YSR Congress Rajya Sabha member V Vijaysai Reddy, is learnt to have expressed its displeasure over the absence of DIAL CEO Vihed Jaipuria in the meeting. Though Rao



and other officials were present in the meeting and are learnt to have briefed the committee about the measures being taken by DIAL to normalise the situation at the airport, the panel expressed its unhappiness at Jaipuria's absence, who had been summoned for the meeting, sources said.

Rao later said after the meeting that DIAL was working with the government to deal with the issue of congestion at IGI airport. He informed that the

number of screening machines are being increased at the airport and the issue would be resolved by the end of this month.

The officials are learnt to have told the panel that the situation is temporary which had arisen due to sudden spike in footfalls post-Covid and would be soon normalised.

The committee had taken suo moto cognizance of passengers' complaints at the Delhi airport before issuing summons to the DIAL CEO.

# Bihar govt 'committing massacre' through liquor ban: BJP leader

Patna | Agencies

With the toll in the Saran liquor tragedy at 39, Leader of Opposition in Bihar Assembly Vijay Kumar Sinha targeted Chief Minister Nitish Kumar, accusing his government of "committing a massacre".

"Nitish Kumar should take responsibility on moral grounds and resign from his post. If the government recommends the case in such a massacre, the names of a number of officials and leaders will come in it," Sinha said. "Over three dozen people have lost their lives in a liquor tragedy and if they are unable to prevent such incidents, they have no right to stay in power. After so many deaths, the Chief Minister of Bihar, instead of giving a statement on it, had blamed us. The behaviour of the Assembly Speaker is also not appropriate. The state government is trying to suppress the voice but they would not make us silent," he said.

"More than 1,000 people have lost their lives due to spurious liquor in Bihar. The state government should take responsibility for it and give adequate compensation to them.



Preventing such liquor tragedies are the responsibility of the state government. It cannot run away from it," Sinha said. "The RJD and the JD-U had respectively given tickets to liquor mafia in Gopalganj and Kurhani by-poll. They have strong relationships with liquor and sand mafia. When we raise these issues inside the house, they are trying to suppress us..." Sinha said.

# Mehrauli murder: DNA of Shraddha's bones matches with her father

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The brutality involved in Shraddha Walkar's murder by her live-in partner, Aaftab Amin Poonawalla, was officially confirmed after the DNA extracted from bone pieces recovered in the Mehrauli forest area matched with her father's samples, sources said on Thursday.

Special Commissioner of Police (Law & Order), Sagar Preet Hooda, said that police have received the DNA test report from the CFSL and the polygraph test from the FSL, Rohini.

The third narco test report is still awaited. The post-narco test of Poonawalla had also concluded on December 2. His test was conducted inside the Tihar prison by the FSL officials.

Poonawalla, who was arrested on November 12, a polygraph test report was submitted to the police by the Forensic Sciences Lab (FSL) on



Wednesday. The Delhi Police teams investigating the case had recovered 13 bone pieces after Aaftab told the investigators that he chopped her body into

several pieces and dumped them into the forest area. The blood samples were also recovered, from bathroom and kitchen, by forensic officials in the Chattarpur house, where both

Poonawalla and Walkar had shifted on May 15, three days before her murder. The bone samples were sent for DNA analysis to the Central Forensic Science Laboratory.

"It is a positive development and a push to ongoing investigation. We will be able to present a powerful case now in the court," said an official. "The autopsy of the bones will be conducted at the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS). The investigators will prepare a questionnaire and send it to the medics who will prepare the autopsy report which will help gain all relevant information regarding the case," said sources.

As all the recovered body parts are decomposed, it is very difficult to get any significant result from the autopsy, said an official, adding that a portion of jaw or a fragment of skull recovered may help investigators in determining the time of death by the carbon dating process.

# MAN HELD IN CHANDIGARH FOR SPYING FOR ISI, 'SIKHS FOR JUSTICE'

Team Absolute | New Delhi

A well-trained spy, who had been working for the 'Sikhs for Justice' and Pakistan's ISI for a long time, was arrested by the Punjab Police in Chandigarh following intelligence inputs, sources said on Thursday.

A team of Operation Cell led by Deputy Superintendent of Police (DSP) Gurcharan Singh and Inspector Manpreet Singh arrested the spy.

The spy was identified as Tripender Singh, 40 who had been living in Sector 40 of Chandigarh for a long time.

The accused had been sending information to Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) and Sikhs for Justice for last many years. He sent information regarding the important places of Punjab and other parts of India. He also sent photos and maps of the important places, including the government buildings.

"He also sent videos of Punjab Police building and the offices of senior officials to the ISI handlers. Pakistan's ISI used to give him good



price in lieu of this," said a source. The spy was produced before a court which has remanded him to four days' police custody. As per information, two mobile phones have been recovered from him. The mobile

phone contains Pakistani phone numbers. "He was in touch with one Major of the ISI and a member of the Sikhs for Justice, Paramjeet Pamma. They used to talk on Signal and WhatsApp," said

the source. The sources also said that in last one year two rocket launcher attacks took place in Punjab. The probe agency will now try to ascertain whether he helped the accused in those attacks.

# Man held for duping several youngsters on pretext of job in Merchant Navy

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Delhi Police's Economic Offences Wing (EOW) has arrested a man for allegedly cheating youngsters on the pretext of providing them jobs in Merchant Navy, an official said on Thursday.

The accused has been identified as Akash Thakur alias Avadh Bihari, a native of Jehanabad district in Bihar. Last year, on May 21, the EOW had registered a case under relevant sections of IPC after receiving a joint complaint from one Sanjay Yadav and others.

"The complainants had alleged an Ocean Galaxy Marine Private Limited through its director namely Akash took money from them



a police team apprehended him," said the DCP.

Akash, in 2019, opened a consultancy company Crown Marine Management Private Ltd at Dwarka Sec-11, Delhi.

"He did not have the licence from the Director General of Shipping, Ministry of Shipping, which is necessary to run this type of recruitment company. Later, he purchased another company Ocean Galaxy Marine Private Ltd which has a licence of DG Shipping and started to work from District Centre in Janakpuri. Through his company, he took money from the complainants on false promises to get them a job in the Merchant Navy and absconded," the official added.

# 45 adopt Buddhism in Gujarat, VHP says not averse to this conversion

Vadodara | Agencies

The Vishva Hindu Parishad (VHP) here said on Thursday that it was not averse to the group of 45 people adopting Buddhism in Balasinor Taluka of Gujarat's Mahisagar district.

The group had converted even before their applications were approved by the district collector. The conversion took place on Tuesday. Reacting to this, Vishva Hindu Parishad (VHP) state spokesman Hitendrasinh Rajput said, "Buddhism is a wing of Hinduism, it is mentioned in the Darshan Shastra, but we are against abusing Hindu deities. People are being lured to convert on some promises. It is like bribing them."

The VHP reaction came after the news was reported in regional dailies. According to reports, 45 persons from three districts converted to Buddhism without prior permission of the district magistrate as per the rule of the Gujarat Freedom



Religion Act, 2003. Under this Act, any person who wants to quit the religion in which one is born and adopt another religion, will have to take prior permission from the district magistrate or collector. "There is no violation of the law," defended by Kamlesh Mayavanshi, who too has adopted Buddhism along with 44 others. His defense was, "All those, who wanted to quit Hindu religion, had applied to the district collector a month ago, according to norms."

The district collector has to approve the application within 30 days from the filing of the application, if not approved, it is deemed to be approved, and so we believe we are granted permission to adopt Buddhism." Mahisagar District Collector Bhavin Pandya told reporter that he has received applications seeking permission for the conversion, "which are under process, as those who wished to quit from three districts, from respective taluka Deputy Collectors opinions were sought and so it took time".



### CHIEF MINISTERS PUBLIC SERVICE CAMPAIGN IS A PROGRAM FOR EVERYONE WELFARE: CM CHOUHAN

Team Absolute | Bhopal

CM Shivraj Singh Chouhan has said that Chief Minister's public service campaign is a program for everyone's welfare. Preparations for doing it systematically and enthusiastically should be completed on time. More than 7 lakh people will join the program. The distribution of acceptance letters to all the beneficiaries should be organized. CM Chouhan gave these instructions from the residence office to the officials concerned in a virtual review meeting of the preparations for the divisional level Chief Minister's public service campaign to be held in Shivpuri. Minister in-charge of Shivpuri district Mahendra Singh



Sisodia along with other ministers, public representatives, commissioners and collectors of Gwalior division were present.

Chouhan said that there should be better programs in all panchayats of Gwalior division and full preparations should be made for their live telecast. He said that more

and more beneficiaries should be present in the program. Beneficiaries should be brought to the program respectfully. There should be no inconvenience in any way.

He said that no beneficiary should be left behind in receiving the acceptance letter. He gave necessary instructions to the commis-

sioner and collectors of Gwalior division regarding the arrangements for the program and inquired about the preparations. He also discussed with the minister in charge of Shivpuri district, ministers and public representatives regarding improving the programme. Chouhan said that at the beginning of the program, necessary preparations should be made for Kanya Pujan on the stage itself. There should not be any shortcoming in making the program a success.

Commissioner Gwalior Division said that good preparations have been made at all places for the programme. Arrangements have also been made for live telecast in all panchayats and urban areas.

### THREE HELD WITH SIX PISTOLS WORTH RS 1.60 LAKH IN BURHANPUR

Burhanpur: Three persons were arrested on Thursday allegedly with six country-made pistols worth Rs 1.60 lakh in Daryapur in Madhya Pradesh's Burhanpur district, a police official said. They were held from near a bus stop, Superintendent of Police Rahul Kumar Lodha said, adding five pistols were found in a bag and the sixth with one of the accused.

One of the accused is from the district, while two are from Mainpuri in neighbouring Uttar Pradesh, he said. They have been charged under Indian Penal Code and Arms Act provisions and a probe was underway to unravel their weapon smuggling network, he said.

### PEOPLE REPRESENTATIVES HAVE THE MORAL RESPONSIBILITY TO TAKE THE BENEFITS OF GOVERNMENT SCHEMES TO THE PUBLIC

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Minister of State for AYUSH (Independent Charge) Ramkishore Kawre has said that it is the moral responsibility of public representatives to take the benefits of government schemes to the public. He also talked about completing the development works of rural areas within the stipulated time. The Minister of State was addressing the program of Mukhya Mantri Jan Sewa Abhiyan at Nakshi village of Kirmapur development block in Balaghat district. He also performed bhoomi-pujan for the construction of road and culvert to be built with Rs. 60 lakh.

Minister of State Kawre said that people eligible for government schemes in the state should not remain deprived. For this, the state government conducted Mukhya Mantri Jan Sewa Abhiyan from 17 September to 31 October 2022. In the campaign, a survey of eligible people was done to provide benefits of 38 schemes. In the campaign, 18 thousand 64 people are being given the benefits of the schemes in



Kirmapur development block on being eligible. Minister of State Kawre also gave instructions to deduct one day's salary of the concerned officials for not having information about the government schemes.

Minister of State Kawre dedicated the Wellness Center and Herbal Garden in Rajegaon. He also performed bhoomi-pujan of CC Road in Rajegaon. The Minister of State also made a surprise visit to the Naib Tehsildar's office of village Hatta during his visit. He expressed displeasure over the absence of officers in the office during the inspection. In this regard, he spoke to the SDM of the concerned area and instructed to take necessary action.

### Kamal Nath accuses CM Chouhan of 'suspension drama'

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Congress' Madhya Pradesh President Kamal Nath on Thursday accused Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan of making excuses to hide failure of his government.

In wake of Chouhan announcing suspension of two government officials from the stage at an event on Wednesday, he alleged that a game of gimmicks by suspending government employees are being played by Chouhan for footage.

"These days, a drama of suspension is going in Madhya Pradesh. He (Chouhan) does a gimmick by suspending government employees from stage, whereas nothing like this happens on paper... He has nothing left to tell the people of the state now," he said.

Kamal Nath also alleged that everyday Chouhan would find a new excuse to



remain in the news one way or the other. "... He knows how to misuse police, power and money," he claimed.

On Wednesday, Chouhan suspended two government officials from the dais. Addressing the CM Janseva Abhiyan's divisional-level programme, he announced suspension of district education officer (DEO) KK Dangore and Bhikangaon chief municipal officer (CMO) Mohanlal Alawa with immediate effect, saying that he had received several complaints regarding irregularities in work against both the officials. "What should be done, should I suspend... let me suspend them," Chouhan has said.



Pari Bazaar A Heritage Festival concluded with great zeal and enthusiasm at Kamla Park, Bhopal. Center for Research and Industrial Staff Performance also participated in the fest and displayed its terracotta art and dresses made by fashion design students. Students also participated in various competitions like Mehndi, Paining, Draping, Best out of Waste, etc. CRISP's student, Rehbar Khan received second prize in both Saree Draping and Best out of Waste competitions, and Aynul Khan bagged third prize in Best out of Waste competitions.

### Narottam Mishra suggests police verification by marriage registrars to stop 'love jihad' cases

Team Absolute | Bhopal

We are planning to ask the marriage registrars and other institutions which are involved in conducting marriages, to conduct police verification to check love jihad cases", said home minister Narottam Mishra to the media here on Thursday. The minister added that in these institutions the application for the marriage is submitted a month prior to the marriage. So, the Marriage Registrar Bureau and other institutions involved in the registration process like the notary can be asked to perform police verification of the applicants before conducting the marriage. Recently, various cases have been reported in which the man hides his identity to marry Hindu girl.

After some time the girl comes to know that she was cheated and later the man and his family put pressure



on the girl to adopt their religion. This causes problems for the girl and her family.

In Madhya Pradesh the Freedom of Religion Act 2021 was passed to curb religious conversions carried out solely for the purpose of marriage. Section 5 of the act prohibits unlawful conversion from one religion to another by use of misrepresentation, force, undue influence, coercion and any other fraudulent means like allurement, or promise of marriage. Offenders of the act can face an imprisonment of one to five years.

### Ujjain's Mahakal Lok gets 5G internet services

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Now, people visiting Mahakaleshwar temple in Ujjain will have access to 5G internet services.

While high speed 5G network service was launched on the premises of holi shrine of the recently-renovated Mahakal Lok on Wednesday, the same will be introduced in major cities of the state by next four-five months. Expressing his pleasure on the development, Chief Minister Shivraj



Singh Chouhan on Thursday said that it will lead to rapid growth in several sectors of the state. 5G services of JIO was launched in Ujjain in the presence of the chief minister, during which, the service provider demonstrated its multiple benefits in the field of education, health and

many other sectors. These benefits will bring transformational changes in the lives of people in Madhya Pradesh, JIO said in an official statement. Chief Minister Chouhan said 5G JIO internet services is the need of the hour and it will bring revolutionary changes in various sectors. "5G internet services will also enable the people to remain connected on real-time basis and improve implementation and efficiency of government schemes for the last mile users," he added.

### SEMINAR ORGANIZED AT CRISP ON CAREER IN COMPUTER APPLICATIONS

Bhopal: A seminar cum visit was organised for Sarojini Naidu Govt Girls' Post Graduate College BCA students. The seminar focused on "Career in Computer Applications."



Students were informed about the different avenues of working as a coder and app developers. AI-ML subject expert, Ritu Shukla narrated the basics and types of Artificial Intelligence & Machine Learning and how students can accelerate their careers in the same field. More than 40 students were present during the seminar along with their faculty members and HOD, Computer Department.

### Scorpio rams into bike in Jabalpur, 1 dead, accused arrested

Team Absolute | Jabalpur

A man died in a horrific road accident in which a Scorpio car hit a bike in Deendayal chowk on Thursday. The intensity of the accident was such that the bike rider flung in the air and collided with the divider while his bike swung under the wheels of the Scorpio. According to information, the victim, named Sandeep Patel, lives in Karmeta which falls under Madhotal police station area and drives a private school bus. He was returning home on his motorcycle after parking the bus and stopped



by a roadside vegetable shop when a Scorpio driver drove his car into the shop.

Due to the collision, Sandeep suffered injuries on his head and several parts of his body. The people present on the spot immediately took the injured to a nearby pri-

ivate hospital. The doctors then referred him to the medical hospital after seeing his critical condition.

However, Sandeep died before reaching the hospital. Madhol Police inspector Reena Pandey Sharma said, "Both Vijay Nagar and Madhotal police reached the spot as soon as the information about the accident was received. We have sent the body for postmortem. Along with this, the Scorpio driver who hit Sandeep Patel, has been taken into custody and a case has been registered against him."

### GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS IN INDORE'S MHOW TO BE NAMED AFTER MARTYRS AND FREEDOM FIGHTERS



Indore: The Madhya Pradesh government has decided that all 234 government schools in Ambedkar Nagar (Mhow) block area of Indore district will be named after martyrs or great personalities associated with the country's freedom struggle.

Officials said that this proposal was approved in a meeting chaired on Wednesday by state Home Minister Narottam Mishra, who is in-charge of Indore district.

Mishra said that under the programmes of Amrit Mahotsav of the country's Independence, state Culture Minister and Mhow MLA Usha Thakur had proposed the idea.

The life stories of freedom fighters would also be depicted through pictures in the schools so children get to know the struggle and hardships they faced for the country's independence.

Dr BR Ambedkar, the architect of the Constitution, was born on April 14, 1891, in Kali Paltan area of Mhow military cantonment. A large population of tribals lives in Mhow block.

### CM Chouhan welcomes Sanatan Dharma Chetna Vahan Yatra on the incarnation day of Brahmalin Balgovind Shandilya Maharaj

Team Absolute | Bhopal

CM Chouhan today welcomed the yatra that came out from the main roads of the city on the occasion of the incarnation day of Brahmalin Balgovind Shandilya Maharaj on reaching the 74 Bungalow area. This Sanatan Dharma Chetna Vahan Yatra started from Sant Hirdaram Nagar and reached Karunadham Ashram via main roads of the city. On reaching Swami Dayanand Nagar, CM welcomed the yatra at his residence B-8.

CM showered flowers on the statue of Brahmalin Shandilya Maharaj, decked up in a travel vehicle. On the occasion of the 94th birth anniversary of Brahmalin Maharaj, CM recalled the contribution of Maharaj, describing the pur-



pose of this yatra as pious. CM Chouhan honoured Gurudev Sudesh Shandilya Maharaj, the son of Brahmalin Maharaj and Peethadhiswar of Karunadham Ashram, with a shawl-shrifal. Gurudev Sudesh

Shandilya Maharaj presented a Tulsi plant to Chief Minister Chouhan. Sadhna Singh Chouhan, wife of CM, welcomed Gurudev Sudesh Shandilya Maharaj's wife and Gurumata Mamta Shandilya

with flowers. Public representatives and citizens including MLA Krishna Gaur were present. A large number of devotees and citizens participated in the Sanatan Dharma Chetna Vahan Yatra.

### Six school kids injured after bus overturns in Khargone

Bhopal: At least six school children were injured after a bus carrying them overturned in Khargone district on Thursday. The incident occurred between 9.30 a.m. when the bus carrying around 30 children overturned near a petrol pump in the Barvah area of the district.

Hearing the screams of the children, people nearby rushed to the spot and rescued them. The local police were also informed about the accident. Children were going to Green Valley School located in the Kanapur locality. The driver and attendant of the bus fled from the spot soon after the incident occurred. Later, scores of parents reached the school and staged a protest against negligence in the security of their children. Local police reached the school and controlled the situation, an official said over the phone.

"As many as six children received minor injuries and they all have been taken to a nearby hospital. No child has received grievous injuries and no casualty was reported so far. We are investigating the matter," said a police official.

### BJP WON GUJARAT POLLS AS IT IS HOME STATE OF MODI AND SHAH, SAYS KAMAL NATH

Chhindwara: Madhya Pradesh Congress chief Kamal Nath on Thursday said the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) won the recently-held Gujarat Assembly polls as it is the home state of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Home Minister Amit Shah, which "influenced" the voters.

The BJP registered a landslide victory in Gujarat, where elections were held on December 1 and 5. The party won 156 out of the total 182 Assembly seats, while the Congress could bag only 17 seats.

"The main reason behind the success of BJP in Gujarat is that it is the home state of both Modiji and Amit Shah, due to which the voters got influenced," Nath told reporters.

The former chief minister and his son Nakul Nath, who is a Congress Lok Sabha member from Chhindwara, were here for taking part in various programmes.

When asked about Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan announcing the suspension of officials from stage during his visits in various parts of the state, Nath dubbed it as "drama".

"It is all drama and nothing else. He announces from the dais, but has he suspended them on paper?" Nath asked.

These are tactics to grab media attention, he alleged. "He (Chouhan) has nothing to tell people and therefore keeps searching for new excuses to remain in the limelight. It clearly reflects his frustration and he only knows how to misuse police, administration..." he claimed.

Earlier this month, Chouhan suspended four officials for alleged dereliction of duty while addressing a programme in the tribal-dominated Betul district.



## EDITOR'S SPECS

## MISCHIEVOUS DRAGON

The US Pentagon has said that China continues to amass forces and build military infrastructure across the Line of Actual Control (LAC) with India. Addressing a briefing, Brigadier General Pat Ryder, Press Secretary of the Department of Defense (DoD), said the DoD continues to closely watch developments along the line of actual control at the India-China border. "We have seen the PRC continue to amass forces and build military infrastructure along the so-called LAC. But I would defer you to India in terms of their views. It does reflect though, and it's important to point out, the growing trend by the PRC to assert itself and to be provocative in areas directed towards US allies and our partners in the Indo Pacific. And we will continue to remain steadfast in our commitment to ensuring the security of our partners. And we fully support India's ongoing efforts to deescalate this situation," he added. Ryder's remarks came as a response to a series of queries on the recent clashes between Indian and Chinese soldiers along the LAC in Arunachal Pradesh. The clashes were the first in nearly two years. The queries posed to the spokesperson was: "How much is the Pentagon concerned that this clash could lead to a bigger military confrontation? Is the Pentagon willing to provide more military support to India to help them handle China's military threats at the border?" On December 9, troops from China's People's Liberation Army the LAC in Arunachal Pradesh, but Indian soldiers firmly contested their way, leading to a clash between the two. Sources said that although no loss of life or major injuries were reported but both some Indian and Chinese troops received some minor injuries.

## POJK RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REBEL

Dr Amjad Ayub Mirza

The International Human Rights Day was observed globally on December 10. It was a day when civil society organisations and several political parties held seminars and corner meetings in Pakistan occupied Jammu Kashmir and Gilgit Baltistan (PoJK/GB) as well as among the exiled diaspora. Human rights have three aspects: Social rights, political rights and economic rights. The people of PoJK/GB have been deprived of these three categories of rights since October 22, 1947, when Pakistan attacked and illegally occupied our lands.

Social rights include workers' rights at their work place, social security, cultural rights, housing, access to clean drinking water and food, uninterrupted flow of electricity, access to health care and education.

In PoJK/GB even the line men working to fix electric cables hanging from high power wires on tall poles are not provided with proper safety gear. At most workplaces there are no medical facilities or even toilets.

There is no social security cover for the general population of four million. Our vibrant Kashmiri and Dogra culture has been strangled by imposing the hegemony of an Islamic (read Arab) religious narrative.

Hundreds of thousands live in houses made of tin metal or are forced to live on rent due to lack of a national housing program for the homeless.

Curable diseases such as hepatitis and cholera keep recurring due to lack of clean drinking water. Lack of proper affordable diet has left millions which has stunted growth.

Hospital buildings are faced with shortage of doctors and medicine, and hundreds of thousands of our children are unable to attend school due to abject poverty and are forced to enter the child labour



market. Schools face a severe shortage of teachers, toilets and dispensaries or a playground.

Hence, we have been denied our first and basic human right which is our social right.

Political rights that were usurped by the occupation force of Pakistan remain denied to this day. Only those political parties are allowed to operate in PoJK/GB which openly claim their affiliation with the ideology of two-nation theory of Muhammad Ali Jinnah and sign an oath of allegiance to Pakistan.

Candidates, who aspire to participate in elections for legislative assembly or the local bodies, are only permitted to do so if they sign an oath that they support the accession of PoJK/GB to the Islamic republic of Pakistan.

All forms of political dissent are

brutally crushed and political activists who dare to challenge Pakistani occupation are often assassinated.

The third component of human rights deals with economic rights. In PoJK/GB there has never been any attempt by Pakistan to develop an industrial infrastructure.

Millions are unemployed and are forced into economic exile in Europe, the US and the Middle East to perform no-to-low skill jobs so that they can send remittances to their families back home.

All natural resources such as rivers and forest land remain under the tight control of the Government of Pakistan. Our natural resources are plundered day and night and precious stones, gold, and rubies worth billions of rupees are stolen each year. Our forest trees are cut

down and sold in the timber markets of Pakistani Punjab. Not a single penny from this plunder comes our way.

Due to lack of funds the PoJK/GB government is unable to purchase wheat and other food essentials or pay wages to thousands of employees of several government and semi-government institutions such as forest department, health workers, and others. Lack of power and electricity has left hundreds of businesses go burst which has increased the number of unemployed and those in destitute.

The list of human rights violations and abuse we face in the PoJK/GB due to being under the occupation of Pakistan

goes on and on. However, we have one right that we have the liberty to exercise. This is the right to fight the social, political and economic oppression of Pakistan by rebelling against the above mentioned injustices we face.

This right we are exercising now as thousands of our oppressed people not only refuse to accept the occupation of our territories by Pakistan but are now giving the rebellion a direction to get liberation from Pakistan.

(Dr Amjad Ayub Mirza is an author and a human rights activist from Mirpur in PoJK. He currently lives in exile in the UK.)

## international

## THREE DEAD, DOZENS INJURED AFTER TORNADOES RIP THROUGH LOUISIANA

Washington | Agencies

At least three people were killed and dozens others injured after a massive winter storm spawned intense tornadoes across the US state of Louisiana, authorities confirmed on Thursday.

One person was killed, and eight others were injured on Wednesday when a tornado ripped through Killona, a small neighbourhood in St. Charles Parish, Xinhua news agency reported. St. Charles Parish sheriff's office tweeted that multiple residences were heavily damaged in Killona as police were checking residences for injured or trapped people.

Earlier on Wednesday, rescuers found the body of a 30-year-old woman under the debris one street away from her home destroyed by an EF-2 tornado hitting Keithville on Tuesday night, according to the Caddo Parish sheriff's office.

The body of her eight-year-old son was also found in the forest about a half mile away from their home. More than 30,000 homes and busi-



nesses in the area were left without power Wednesday afternoon after another tornado battered the New Orleans metro area including Gretna and Arabi, which were hit by an EF-3 tornado in March.

At least five people were injured in New Iberia on Wednesday when a tornado touched down. A hospital and several homes were damaged with people trapped.

In Farmerville, Louisiana, rescuers searched overnight for victims of a tornado that struck a neighbourhood on Tuesday evening, which injured nearly 25 people, some critically, local media outlet KNOE reported.

Farmerville Mayor John Crow said on Wednesday the tornado badly damaged an apartment complex where 50 families lived and wiped out a neighboring mobile home park with

about 10 homes. Louisiana Governor John Bel Edwards has declared a state of emergency. "Unfortunately, this severe weather event is not yet out of our state as it now moves into Central and South Louisiana. Please stay weather aware and follow the directions of local officials," the governor said. At least 48 tornadoes have been reported since Tuesday from Oklahoma and Texas eastward to Louisiana and Mississippi, the National Weather Service tallied on Wednesday. Nearly two dozen tornadoes have been confirmed as of Wednesday evening, including six rated EF-2 on the Enhanced Fujita Scale and at least one EF-3. "A powerful system continues to produce heavy snow, blizzard conditions, and areas with a wintry mix across the north and central Plains," the National Weather Service said. "Severe storms with all hazards, including intense tornadoes, and heavy to excessive rain that could cause flash flooding can be expected across the Deep and Middle South," it added.

## Peru declares state of emergency in wake of violent protests

Washington | Agencies

Peru declared a 30-day nationwide state of emergency in the wake of the violent protests against the impeachment and subsequent arrest of former President Pedro Castillo.

"We have agreed to declare a state of emergency for the entire country, due to the vandalism and violence, and the seizure of highways and roads," acts that are being controlled by the National Police and the Armed Forces, Defence Minister Alberto Otárola said late Wednesday following a meeting of the Council of Ministers.

The violent protests, which have left seven people dead in the south of the country, "require a forceful and authoritative response from the government", he said.



The state of emergency temporarily suspends the right to assembly and to freedom of movement, among other constitutional guarantees. Political unrest was sparked by the ouster of Castillo on December 7, and has been spreading from the south of the country to northern cities, such as La Libertad.

Among the protesters' demands are early elections and Castillo's release from custody.

On Monday, protesters had blocked roads and set fire to vehicles, and an estimated 2,000 stormed the airport in Arequipa, blocking the runway and forcing flights to be suspended for several hours. Police finally dispersed them with tear gas.

## Iran expelled from UN panel on women; India abstains on vote

United Nations | Agencies

In an unprecedented move, Iran has been expelled from the UN's Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) in a vote on which India abstained.

The US proposal at the UN Economic and Social Council to remove Iran from the panel received 29 votes, while there were eight votes against and 16 abstentions in the 54-member elected body.

The vote came after intense lobbying by the US following widespread protests in Iran sparked by outrage against the edict compelling women to wear hijabs.

US Permanent Representative Linda Thomas-Greenfield told the Council that CSW, which is "the premier UN body for promoting gender equality and empowering women" cannot function if it is "undermined from within" by Iran. "Iran's membership at this moment is an ugly stain on the

Commission's credibility," she said. Thomas-Greenfield spoke of Mahsa Amin who died after being held by "morality police" in September and called her a "martyr".

Her death sparked the protests during which, Thomas-Greenfield said, "government security forces have reportedly detained and tortured thousands of people, killed hundreds of peaceful protesters, and badly injured many more. Men supporting women in the streets are now being targeted with the death penalty".

The Commission is made up of 45 countries which are elected by the Council to four-year terms.

Iran's term, which began this year, was to have run through 2026.

Iran's delegate countered that the US and its allies practice racial discrimination against minorities "including women and girls" and "support rioters in other independent countries under the pretext of promoting human rights".

## US REPORTS 50% INCREASE OF WEEKLY CHILD COVID CASES

Washington: About 41,000 child Covid-19 cases were reported in the US in the week ending December 8, an increase of about 50 per cent over the weekly average in the previous eight weeks, according to the latest report by the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) and the Children's Hospital Association.

Almost 15.1 million children in the country have tested positive for Covid-19 since the onset of the pandemic in early 2020, reports Xinhua news agency.

About 127,000 of these cases have been added in the past four weeks, according to the report. Reported cases are likely a "substantial undercount" of Covid-19 cases among children, said the report.

There is a need to collect more age-specific data to assess the severity of illness related to new variants as well as potential longer-term effects, said the report.

It is important to recognize there are immediate effects of the pandemic on children's health, but importantly there is the need to identify and address the long-lasting impacts on the physical, mental, and social well-being of this generation of children and youth, said the AAP.

## Covid global health emergency hopefully ends next year: WHO chief

Geneva | Agencies

The chief of the World Health Organization (WHO) has said that he hopes that Covid-19 will no longer be a global health emergency sometime next year.

Addressing a press briefing in Geneva, WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said that the WHO Covid-19 Emergency Committee will discuss next month the criteria for declaring an end to the Covid-19 emergency, Xinhua news agency reported.

"We're hopeful that at some point next year, we will be able to say that Covid-19 is no longer a global health emergency," he said.

He added, however, that the SARS-CoV-2 virus, the culprit behind the Covid-19 pandemic, will not go away.

"It's here to stay, and all countries will need to learn to manage it alongside other respiratory illnesses including influenza and RSV (Respiratory

Syncytial Virus), both of which are now circulating intensely in many countries," he said.

The WHO chief said one of the most important lessons from the pandemic is that all countries need to strengthen their public health systems to prepare for, prevent, detect and respond rapidly to outbreaks, epidemics and pandemics.

Another key lesson is the need for much stronger cooperation in collaboration, rather than competition and confusion that marked the global response to Covid-19.

Meanwhile, Maria Van Kerkhove, technical lead of the WHO's Health Emergencies Program, warned waves of infection and re-infection would continue around the world, as the number of weekly new deaths reported by countries still hovers between 8,000 to 10,000.

Mike Ryan, executive director of the WHO Health Emergencies Program,



warned that the world still does not know how the SARS-CoV-2 virus will evolve in the future, and such uncertainties add to risks.

Before the WHO chief ends the Covid-19 emergency, a balance needs to be stricken between the virus -- including its impact and unpredictability -- and "whether or not we have dealt with the vulnerabilities and the resilience issues in our health systems," Ryan said.



States boundary row

MAHA TO FORM MINISTERIAL PANEL SOON, SAYS CM

Team Absolute | Mumbai

As directed by Union Home Minister Amit Shah, Maharashtra will soon set up a committee of ministers to study and take measures to resolve the long-pending boundary row with Karnataka, Chief Minister Eknath Shinde said here on Thursday.

Assuring that the state government is standing behind the Marathi people in the disputed border areas, he assured that steps will be taken to solve their grievances and problems. Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnis said that till the border issue is pending in the Supreme Court, the government will adhere to the instructions of Shah and make all efforts to ensure that peace is maintained in the region.

The duo's comments came after their meeting with Shah, Karnataka CM Basavraj Bommai and home minister Araga Gyanendra in New Delhi late on Wednesday.

At the meeting, Shah said he



has advised both the states to maintain a status quo till the outcome of the case in the apex court. He also directed both states to form a committee of three ministers from each side to coordinate, visit the disputed areas, study and resolve problems of the people there.

Shah also advised the two states that till the SC verdict, no state will make allegations or counter-allegations against each other, neither state will make claims/demands on each other and ensure that the situation doesn't deteriorate.

Welcoming Shah's initiative,

Nationalist Congress Party National Spokesperson Clyde Crasto said it remains to be seen whether the Karnataka CM will abide by the instructions or not.

On his part, Fadnis claimed that a few organisations were trying to create disturbances and said the Centre has warned of stringent action against them. He declared that Maharashtra has not violated any laws in the border regions though there are occasional flare-ups when the Marathi language issue comes to the fore or when attempts are made to shut down Marathi schools there.

BJP GOVTS CREATING DISTURBANCE ON BORDER ISSUE: K'TAKA CONGRESS

Maharashtra: Karnataka Congress president D.K. Shivakumar stated on Thursday that the Karnataka and Maharashtra BJP governments are trying to create a disturbance with the border row.

Shivakumar said that what the ruling BJP in Karnataka is doing is not right. What they (Maharashtra BJP-Shiv Sena government) are doing is also not right. There is absolutely no advantage to the intervention of Union Home Minister Amit Shah on the border dispute between the two states, he said. The Congress had attacked the ruling BJP earlier also for creating the border rift between Karnataka and Maharashtra to divert attention from its failures in Karnataka. Shivakumar earlier stated that there were attempts to disrupt the peace in the state during the assembly elections to be held in three months. "Bommai is making it a big issue to hide slurs on the ruling BJP in the state. There is a conspiracy behind this," Shivakumar had charged.

The border dispute has been resolved already. "The region within our borders is ours, the area lying in their territory is theirs. Whoever is on our side are our people," he had stated.



Ajit Pawar: Field Harish Salve to fight Maha-K'taka border case in SC

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Leader of Opposition Ajit Pawar on Thursday urged the state government to appoint legal luminary Harish Salve to represent its stand in the Supreme Court on the simmering Maharashtra-Karnataka boundary dispute case.

Pawar, who is a senior Nationalist Congress Party leader, also accused Karnataka Chief Minister Basavraj Bommai of being responsible for creating the current crisis because of his indiscriminate statements which have created a political furore since the past few weeks.

"The matter is already before the apex court... The judiciary will decide the outcome of the case. But Bommai unnecessarily raked up the latest controversies. If he had not uttered those statements, the atmosphere on both sides would not have deteriorated," Pawar said.

In order to put forth Maharashtra's viewpoint on the border issue forcefully, he suggested the state government to name Salve to direct the legal battle in the apex court.

Pawar's statement came a day after the Chief Ministers



and home ministers of the two squabbling states met Union Home Minister Amit Shah in New Delhi late on Wednesday night to hammer out a solution to the border crisis.

Adopting a path of reconciliation, Shah has advised them to set up a panel of three ministers from both states to study and resolve the issues affecting the local populace, maintain a status quo and refrain from making statements/claims till the Supreme Court delivers verdict.

At the much-anticipated meeting were Maharashtra Chief Minister Eknath Shinde and Deputy Chief Minister

Devendra Fadnis, and from Karnataka Chief Minister Bommai and Home Minister Araga Gyanendra.

Referring to Shah's issue of 'fake Twitter' accounts that are spreading misinformation on the states' border, Pawar and Shiv Sena (UBT) Chief Spokesperson Sanjay Raut have also expressed concern.

"It took a week to realise that those tweets are fake..! We have a claim over Belagavi (Belgaum), then how did you (Karnataka) make it the state's second capital and conduct the legislature session there when the matter is subjudice," demanded Raut.

Delhi HC reserves order on Uddhav Thackeray's plea challenging freeze on party's name, symbol

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The Delhi High Court on Thursday reserved its order on former Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray's plea against a single-judge order dismissing his plea against Election Commission of India (ECI)'s decision to freeze Shiv Sena's 'bow and arrow' party symbol.

Thackeray had approached the High Court on December 13 against its single-judge bench order rejecting his plea against Election Commission's decision to freeze Shiv Sena's name and symbol. On November 15, Justice Sanjeev Narula had dismissed Thackeray's petition holding that there was no interdiction by the Supreme Court regarding the proceedings to be conducted by the EC. The EC had directed both Thackeray and Eknath Shinde to restrain from



using the same name or symbol till the official recognition is finally decided on October 8.

They were allotted different symbols for the recent Andheri East bypoll. Thackeray had appealed that EC had assumed that there are two factions of Shiv Sena party while passing the freezing order. Moreover, he had claimed that it cannot be said that there are two factions in the party as he remains "rightfully elected President", which was admitted even by Shinde. "The observation of the Id. Single Judge that both the Appellant and the Respondent No. 2 claim to be the President

of the original Shiv Sena party is factually incorrect, as the Respondent No. 2 in para 3 of his para 15 petition filed before Respondent No. 1 himself states that the Appellant herein is, and continues to be the Shiv Sena Pramuks (President/Pramuks) of the Shiv Sena Political Party," the appeal stated. He had stated that the EC has exercised its jurisdiction without taking note of the disqualification proceedings pending before the top court against Shinde.

"Single-judge failed to appreciate that the question of disqualification of Respondent No. 2 (Shinde) is still pending adjudication before the Hon'ble Supreme Court and the action of Respondent No 1 (ECI) is premised on an underlying assumption that the Hon'ble Supreme Court will decide in favour of Respondent No. 2," he had said.

CYRUS MISTRY CAR CRASH: CHARGE SHEET TO BE FILED THIS WEEK

Team Absolute | Palghar (Maharashtra)

The Palghar Police will file its chargesheet into the accidental death case of industrialist Cyrus P. Mistry and his friend in a grisly car crash in September, before a local court this week, a top official said.

"The chargesheet is ready and we shall file it this week before a Palghar Court. Certain formalities like the arrest and recording the statement of the prime accused Dr. Anahita Pundole are left to be completed, which we hope to do soon," Palghar Superintendent of Police Balasaheb Patil said.

He said that Anahita Pundole -- who is one of the two survivors of the September 4 accident which killed Mistry and his friend Jehangir Pundole -- is still undergoing treatment in a Mumbai hospital



and hence her statement could not be recorded by the investigating team.

The hospital authorities have reportedly set her discharge date by next week after which the Palghar Police's Kasa Police Station will complete the remaining investigation formalities, he added.

Anahita Pundole, a Mumbai resident, has been charged under Indian Penal Code Section 304(A),

279, 337 and sections of the Motor Vehicles Act by the Kasa Police Station. If proved guilty and convicted, she can face at least two years in jail.

It may be recalled that Shapoorji Pallonji Group scion Mistry, 54 -- a former Tata Sons Chairman -- and his childhood friend Jehangir Pundole were killed instantly when the Mercedes Benz car ramed into a railing of the bridge on the Surya River, stunning the corporate world.

Dr. Anahita who was allegedly driving the vehicle at a high speed and her husband Darius Pundole sitting beside her, suffered grave injuries in the road crash and after initial treatment at nearby hospital, were shifted to Mumbai. While Darius was discharged in late October after around 54 days' treatment, Dr. Anahita continues in hospital but is likely to be sent home next week, though there is no offi-

Multiple challans were issued against Anahita Pandole for over-speeding since 2020

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Gynaecologist Dr Anahita Pandole, who was booked on the charge of rash driving that resulted into the death of industrialist Cyrus Mistry, has a history of traffic rules violation and was issued challans for over-speeding on several occasions since 2020, a police official said on Thursday. The police in Palghar district of

Maharashtra, who are investigating the Mistry car accident case, have found this during their investigation. The police official said that during the probe, it was found that the car was involved in violation of various traffic-related norms in the past. "There were at least seven instances in which Dr Anahita was found behind the wheel and over-speeding, which was captured on speed cameras," Palghar Superintendent of Police Balasaheb Patil

said. These instances were from 2020 till the day of the accident in September 2022, he said, adding the e-challans against her will now be made part of the charge-sheet, he said. "Those challans were issued for over-speeding involving the same car that was involved in the Palghar accident," he said. The car was registered in the name of J M Financials and was used by Anahita Pandole, the official said.

Police's EOW closes INS Vikrant fund case against Kirit Somaiya, his son

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The Mumbai Police's Economic Offences Wing (EOW) has closed a case of cheating and criminal breach of trust registered against BJP leader Kirit Somaiya and his son Neil for alleged diversion of funds collected under their 'Save INS Vikrant' campaign, an official said on Thursday. The EOW officials, who probed the case, submitted a closure report before a local court on Wednesday, he said. There were allegations that Somaiya and some others had collected more than Rs 57 crore for the restoration of the decommissioned naval aircraft carrier Vikrant.

However, instead of depositing the amount to the Maharashtra governor's



secretary office, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leader allegedly misappropriated the funds. "In the investigation, the police did not find any criminality in the case against Somaiya and his son, following which the C-Summary (closure) report was filed," he said. The first information report (FIR)

against the Somaiyas was registered at the Trombay police station here in April this year based on the complaint lodged by former Army personnel, who claimed that he had donated Rs 2,000 in 2013 for the campaign. The complainant had alleged misappropriation of funds collected under the campaign for saving INS Vikrant.

Commissioned in 1961, INS Vikrant, a Majestic-class aircraft carrier of the Indian Navy, had played a key role in enforcing the naval blockade of East Pakistan during the Indo-Pakistan War of 1971. It was decommissioned in 1997. There was a demand to convert the warship into a museum. But in January 2014, the ship was sold through an online auction and scrapped in November that year.

WILL ENSURE FARMERS GET NOT LESS THAN RS 1,000, SAYS MINISTER

Mumbai: Farmers eligible for crop insurance will get at least Rs 1,000 against their claims, Maharashtra agriculture minister Abdul Sattar said on Thursday. He told reporters 50 lakh applications have been received for crop insurance and these are being scrutinised. "We will ensure each eligible farmer gets at least Rs 1,000 against his claim. The crop damage assessment has been completed and a sum of Rs 1,902 crore has been disbursed. The total amount to be disbursed is Rs 2,313 crore," Sattar said.

Queried on crop loss due to post-monsoon showers, he said the problem did not exist much earlier but was getting frequent in recent years.

"The state government has proposed that a committee be set to address this issue. Earlier, such showers that damaged Rabi production were not frequent. We have disbursed Rs 760 crore to farmers so far for crop loss due to this reason," he said. The committee's scope and structure will be finalised after he meets Chief Minister Eknath Shinde, Sattar said.

Local Train Services Disrupted By Technical Glitch

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Suburban train services on Mumbai's Harbour and Trans-Harbour lines operated by the Central Railway (CR) were disrupted during the morning peak hours on Thursday due to a technical snag in the signalling system at a Navi Mumbai railway station, officials said.

The glitch occurred at the Juinagar railway station leading to a delay of about an hour on the Harbour (Panvel to Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Terminus) and the Trans-Harbour (Panvel to Thane) routes, they said.

"Due to the glitch in the signal, a track-changing point at Juinagar railway station got out of order from 6 am. Because of the problem, the suburban services were running only between CSMT to Vashi on the Harbour line and Thane to Nerul on the Trans-Harbour route till the problem was rectified at 7 pm," an official said.



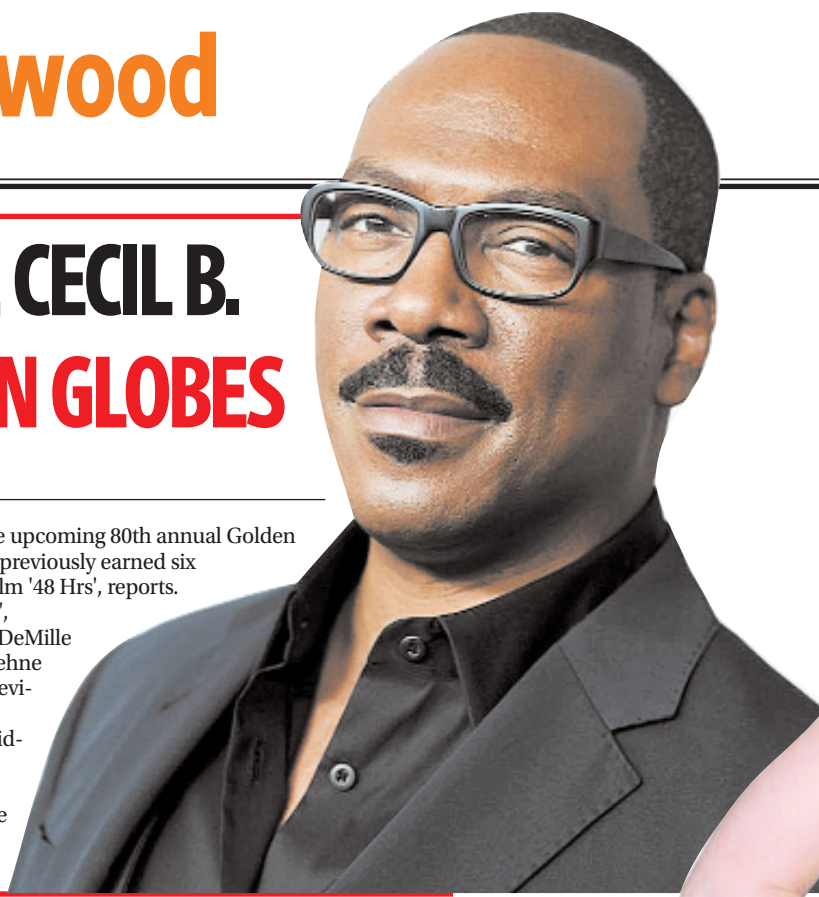
Shivaji Sutar, chief public relations officer of the CR, said that although the issue got resolved and the services resumed later, it caused a delay on both the routes due to bunching of trains. Passengers said that even after the resumption of services, the locals got delayed by at least 20 minutes on the Harbour line during the morning rush hour, although the delay was slightly less on the Trans-Harbour line. Trains on the Harbour line ferry around 10 lakh commuters daily.

Haffkine Bio Pharmaceutical Corporation Limited Tender Notice. Includes details of procurement cell, contact information, and a table of tender items with descriptions, dates, and opening times.

# EDDIE MURPHY TO RECEIVE CECIL B. DEMILLE AWARD AT GOLDEN GLOBES

Los Angeles | Agencies

Beverly Hills Cop' star Eddie Murphy will receive the Cecil B. DeMille Award at the upcoming 80th annual Golden Globes, the Hollywood Foreign Press Association (HFPA) announced. The actor previously earned six Golden Globe nominations, including new star of the year back in 1983 for the film '48 Hrs', reports. His other acting nominations came for the movies 'Trading Places', 'The Nutty Professor', 'Dreamgirls' and 'Dolemite Is My Name'. "We're honoured to present this year's Cecil B. DeMille Award to the iconic and highly esteemed Mr. Eddie Murphy," HFPA President Helen Hoehne said in a press release. "We're thrilled to be celebrating the lasting impact on film and television that his career - in front of and behind the camera - has had through the decades." According to the reports, previous recipients of the Cecil B. DeMille Award, which is decided on by the HFPA Board of Directors, include George Clooney, Jane Fonda, Morgan Freeman, Oprah Winfrey, Harrison Ford, Jodie Foster, Steven Spielberg, Denzel Washington, Robin Williams, and Tom Hanks. Comedian Jerrod Carmichael will host the upcoming awards show. The 2023 Golden Globe Awards will air live on Tuesday, January 10, from 5-8 p.m. PST/8-11 p.m. EST on NBC and Peacock.



# Sarah Michelle Gellar opens up about 'toxic' Buffy The Vampire Slayer set

Los Angeles | Agencies

Sarah Michelle Gellar has broken her silence on the Buffy The Vampire Slayer set, calling it 'extremely toxic'. The actress, landed the title role in the hit 1990s sci-fi series early on in her career, claimed women were 'pitted against each other' in those days and female friendships were discouraged because they were too 'powerful'. It comes more than a year after her co-star Charisma Carpenter accused show creator Joss Whedon of 'hostile and toxic behaviour' on the set.

Sarah said: 'For so long, I was on a set that I think was known for being an extremely toxic male set. And so that was ingrained in my head that that was what all sets were like, and that women were pitted against each other - that if women became friends, then we became too powerful, so you had to keep that down.' The Cruel Intentions star went on to explain she has had the chance to work with other women as her career has progressed and has had an 'easier' time but claimed the world is still in a place where it needs women in jobs instead of men so that they can develop their own voice.



# James Gunn is writing a new feature film about "Superman"

Los Angeles | Agencies

DC Studios co-head James Gunn has announced that he is writing a new feature film about Superman. In step with the new project, Gunn has also revealed that actor Henry Cavill will not return as the hero. "Peter & I have a DC slate ready to go, which we couldn't be more over-the-moon about; we'll be able to share some exciting information about our first projects at the beginning of the new year," the director-turned-label-chief tweeted Wednesday evening, reports. "Among those on the slate is Superman. In the initial stages, our story will be focusing on an earlier part of Superman's life, so the character will not be played by Henry Cavill. But we just had a great meeting with Henry and we're big fans and we talked about a number of exciting possibilities to work together in the future." Cavill confirmed the he would not be reprising the role of Superman in a statement shared on Instagram. "It's sad news, everyone. I will, after all, not be returning as Superman. After being told by the studio to announce my return back in October, prior to their hire, this news isn't the easiest, but that's life," Cavill wrote. "I respect that James and Peter have a universe to build. I wish them and all involved with the new universe the best of luck, and the happiest of fortunes."

The Superman news comes after a week of headlines following Warner Bros. decision to not move forward with a new 'Wonder Woman' movie with director Patty Jenkins.



Henry Cavill will not return



# TYLER PERRY TO WRITE AND DIRECT WWII EPIC ABOUT BLACK FEMALE BATTALION

Los Angeles | Agencies

Tyler Perry will write and direct Netflix's 'Six Triple Eight', a World War II epic about the efforts of the only all-Black, all-female battalion.

In addition to directing, Perry is also adapting the screenplay from Kevin M. Hymel's article about the 6888th battalion.

'Six Triple Eight' tells the true story of the 855 women who joined the war effort with little knowledge of their Herculean task at hand, which was to sort through and fix the three-year backlog of undelivered mail, reports.

Facing discrimination, unfamiliar land and a war-torn country, they persevered and succeeded - in record time - in sorting over 17 million pieces of mail. Their efforts allowed American soldiers to reconnect with their families and loved ones back home.

According to Netflix's press release, "The motto that kept them going each day was one they created themselves: 'No Mail, Low Morale.'"

The women of the 6888 weren't just delivering mail, they were delivering hope. Perry teased the project in August, saying his next movie was going to feature "some incredible people that were overlooked for years." 'Six Triple Eight' marks Perry's fourth film at Netflix, following 'A Fall From Grace', 'A Madea Homecoming' and 'A Jazzman's Blues.' He also appeared in Adam McKay's satire 'Don't Look Up,' which debuted on the streamer last year. Before Perry moved 'A Madea Homecoming' to Netflix, the 11-film franchise that centres on a tough-talking, gun-toting grandmother had grossed more than \$550 million at the box office.



# GETTING BACK INTO HEELS WAS TOUGH AFTER PREGNANCY: RIHANNA

Los Angeles | Agencies

Singer Rihanna is not used to wearing heels since becoming a mother. After welcoming her son in May this year with her boyfriend rapper ASAP Rocky, whose name they have not yet released to the public, the 'Umbrella' hitmaker found it hard to get back into stilettos despite turning looks "throughout" her entire pregnancy, reports.

"It's crazy. Getting back into heels was tough, even though I wore heels throughout my entire pregnancy. But after you give birth it's like, 'Oh, this is different,'" the pop star said. Rihanna, who helms the Savage x Fenty fashion empire, believes athleisure is going to be "huge" for her clothing line. She said: "Everything is a sport nowadays. Going to the coffee shop, going to the grocery store, walking the dog, running errands, everything is a sport."

"When I was pregnant that was a sport, and what saved my life? Leggings! So at Savage, we just applied our sexy details to the technical fabric and the sporty silhouettes. I think sport is going to be huge for us."

The 'Love on the Brain' hitmaker enthused about how 'important' feeling 'sexy' is to her style and the ethos of her apparel designing. Rihanna said: "Very important, because I want to feel sexy and I want to feel represented. I want to feel included."

"I don't want to feel intimidated by what's on the rack, in the store, or online. I want to know that there's something for me, something for my body, something that is going to work for me. I think everyone has that perspective. I don't want to deny anyone the experience to feel sexy or empowered. That's the Savage branding forever."



# Samantha Womack urges nurses to 'fight back' during strike

Los Angeles | Agencies

Samantha Womack detailed her breast cancer diagnosis story on Thursday morning as she spoke out for the first time since revealing she is cancer-free. The EastEnders actress, shared earlier this month that she is now clear of the disease and is undergoing preventative treatment to stop it from returning. Samantha continued that despite her hospital appointments not suffering any impact from the current nursing strikes, she urges the profession to 'fight back' even if it is at the expense of her own appointments. She shared the story of her breast cancer diagnosis, which she received while appearing on stage for theatre production The Lion, the Witch & the Wardrobe. "I was just having a random check, I was just doing a well-woman check and in between two shows I popped in to have an ultrasound, just a scan," said Samantha. The actress touched on the importance of self checking as she added: "I never check myself, I've just been so strong all of my life so I was really fortunate that I just happened to do that when I did. Luckily I've got it gone for now but with cancer, you have to be careful that you're keeping on top of everything and keep checking yourself."

And as nurses are set to strike today, December 15, for five days until December 20, presenter Ranvir questioned whether any of Samantha's treatment has been disrupted due to this. While the actress explained that it hasn't affected her personally, she would not mind if it did as she urges nurses to 'fight back'. At the moment, I haven't had any appointments disrupted but I have to say, I am a huge advocate of the work that nurses do. "They've looked after me so fantastically, and I really do feel that they should be paid appropriately. 'Even at the cost of my own treatment being disrupted, I feel like they have to fight back. They're doing such an incredible job and not being treated fairly,' she explained.



# ABSOLUTE PIC OF THE DAY



Kendall Jenner





## IND vs BAN Test Series

# INDIA SURGE AHEAD, LEAVE BANGLADESH REELING AT 133/8

Chattogram | Agencies

India's left-arm wrist-spinner Kuldeep Yadav ran through the Bangladesh batting order with four wickets in his first six overs while pacer Mohammed Siraj scalped three wickets to leave the hosts reeling at 133/8 at stumps on day two of the first Test at Chattogram on Thursday.

Kuldeep found proper turn and bounce with the ball to spin a web around Bangladesh batters and pick 4/33 after Siraj burst through with his 3/14 as India still lead by 271 runs. Kuldeep had earlier frustrated the hosts' with a 92-run stand with Ravichandran Ashwin for the eighth wicket to take India to 404 in first innings, and Ashwin scored 58 while Kuldeep made a career-best 40 as India managed to go past 400.

Siraj rocked Bangladesh by dismissing Najmul Hossain Shanto on the first ball of the innings, as keeper Rishabh Pant took a diving catch to his left. Umesh Yadav uprooted Yasir Ali's leg stump when the batter's feet didn't move and inside-edged to his stumps. Siraj and Das exchanged a few words. On the very next ball, Siraj got one to jag in slightly and took the bottom edge of Das's bat to hit the stumps.

Zakir poked at an outside-off stump delivery and edged behind to keeper off Siraj. Captain Shakib Al Hasan did not inspire much confidence in his 25-ball stay at the crease and was caught at first slip off Kuldeep's second delivery of the match.

Kuldeep struck when Nurul tried to flick off a leg-break, but Shubman Gill moved



swiftly to his right to take a sharp catch at short-leg. In his next over, Kuldeep had two more scalps - trapping Rahim plumb lbw and cramping Tajjul Islam for room with a googly, forcing him to chop on to stumps.

Earlier, India's last four wickets added 126 runs despite Iyer falling early on day two. Ashwin and Kuldeep were solid in running between the wickets, while taking a boundary off pacer Khaled Ahmed through the leg-side.

Post lunch, Ashwin danced down the pitch to loft Tajjul over mid-on for six and took a single on the very next ball to reach his 13th Test fifty.

It was finally broken when Ashwin danced down the pitch for a maximum

against Mehidy, but missed the delivery and was stumped. In the next over, Kuldeep was trapped plumb lbw by Tajjul. A brace of sixes through powerful slog-sweeps from Umesh and an uppish drive from Siraj over extra cover took India past 400-mark. Mehidy ended India's innings by having Siraj hole out to long-on.

### Brief scores

India 404 in 133.5 overs (Cheteshwar Pujara 90, Shreyas Iyer 86; Tajjul Islam 4/133, Mehidy Hasan Miraz 4/112) lead Bangladesh 133/8 in 44 overs (Mushfiqur Rahim 28, Litton Das 24; Kuldeep Yadav 4/33, Mohammed Siraj 3/14) by 271 runs.

## TRYING TO BE A BIT BETTER WITH RHYTHM, WHICH HELPS IN PACE: KULDEEP

Chattogram |

On his return to Test cricket after 22 months, left-arm wrist-spinner Kuldeep Yadav had an eventful time against Bangladesh on day two of first Test at Chattogram.

Kuldeep feels that a pursuit to be better in rhythm has helped him in getting his quick pace and finding turn. "I haven't done nothing much with my action. It has been a year now, just trying to be a bit better with my rhythm, which has helped me with my pace and turn. After I got injured, I started working on my rhythm, trying to be a bit quicker - that's helping me a lot," he said to broadcasters after the end of day's play.

"I was a bit nervous at the start. I was a bit lucky to the first wicket in the first over. Got the momentum back. After a couple of overs I started feeling good, I was mixing my deliveries and was getting good turn as well. Tried both the angles - over the wicket and round the wicket, and I was actually loving it," added Kuldeep.



## FIFA World Cup

# France end fairytale run of Morocco, reach final



Doha | Agencies

Reigning world champions France scored once in each half to overcome a spirited challenge of Morocco on Wednesday night at Al Bayt Stadium to set up a FIFA World Cup final showdown with Argentina on Sunday.

The Les Bleus took the lead through Theo Hernandez's scrambled fifth minute goal. Randal Kolo Muani wrapped up matters in the 79th, less than a minute after coming on, after a fine solo from Kylian Mbappe. Morocco and Croatia will play for third place on Saturday.

On Wednesday night Morocco, backed by their legion of supporters, who outnumbered France, were pushed all the way by World Cup wildcards. The scoreline belies their performance and how close the game was. Mbappe's shot from near the penalty box was blocked

but the deflection fell to Hernandez at the far post, who acrobatically lashed the ball home to net in a scrappy goal, 1-0.

It was left to the brilliance of Mbappe to break open the Morocco defense for the second time in the match. Mbappe remarkably weaved his way past a clutter of legs in the box and past, who acrobatically lashed the ball home to net in a scrappy goal, 1-0.

France has rarely stepped out of second gear in this World Cup. Barring certain periods like in Wednesday's match and in the quarterfinal against England - they've rarely had to dig deep in games. Despite being wrecked by injuries, they've continued to march on.

The final thus will be showdown between Mbappe and Messi, a match within a match.

## FIH Women's Nations Cup 2022

# India look to continue winning run, face Ireland in semis

Valencia (Spain) | Agencies

The Indian women's hockey team will look to continue their winning run in the FIH Women's Nations Cup 2022 when they face Ireland in the semi final, here on Friday.

The Savita-led Indian team began their campaign with a dominant 3-1 win over Chile, then defeated Japan 2-1 before defeating South Africa 2-0 in their third Pool B match to top the group with nine points and secure their place in the semi final.

The FIH Women's Nations Cup 2022 is an important fixture in the international calendar as it brings in a system of promotion-relegation, with the Champions being promoted to the 2023-24 FIH Hockey Women's Pro League. "We have performed admirably in the FIH Women's Nations Cup 2022 so far. The game against Chile was excellent, as we dominated from the start. We performed well against Japan, a strong defensive team that always presents us with a challenge," said captain Savita on her team's performance.



"Our players brought their A-game to the field against South Africa in the most recent match, giving us a lot of confidence heading into the semi Final," she added.

The skipper further mentioned that her team definitely wants to win the tournament. "Of course, we want to win the tournament as it will also allow us to play in the next season of the FIH Hockey Women's Pro League 2023-2024. We participated in the previous edition of the tournament, and it was a wonderful experience for us. Playing in the Pro League will serve as a good preparation for Asian Games and the 2024 Paris Olympics," she said.

# SOUTHEE TO TAKE CHARGE AS WILLIAMSON STEPS DOWN CAPTAINCY

Auckland | Agencies

Tim Southee on Thursday joined Australia's Pat Cummins as the second top pacer to become the captain of a Test side when Kane Williamson stepped down as captain of the New Zealand team.

"Kane Williamson will step down as captain of the Black Caps Test side, with Tim Southee to take up the leadership mantle," the New Zealand Cricket announced on Thursday.

Williamson said the time was right to step back.

"Captaining the Black Caps in Test cricket has been an incredibly special honour," he was quoted by NZC as saying in a release on Thursday.

He will continue to be the country's ODI and T20I captain and will play all three formats and extend his full support to Southee.

"I'm excited to support Tim as captain and Tom (Latham) as vice-captain. Having played with both of them for most of my career, I'm confident they'll do a great job. "Playing for the Black Caps and contributing in all three formats is my number one priority and I'm looking forward to the cricket we have ahead." Southee, who played 346 internationals and already captained the T20 side on 22 occasions, will become New Zealand's 31st Test captain when he leads the team on this month's Test tour to Pakistan.



Southee said he is really excited to lead the Test in Tests as they are the ultimate challenge for a cricketer. "It's been a surreal few days and it's just a massive honour to be appointed as Test captain. "I love Test cricket, it's the ultimate

challenge and I'm really excited by the opportunity to lead the team in this format. "Kane's been an outstanding Test captain and I'm looking forward to working with Gary on how we can build on that."

## Tennis

# BHAMBRI, YMER TO HEADLINE QUALIFIERS AT TATA OPEN MAHARASHTRA

Pune | Agencies

Indian star Yuki Bhambri and the last edition's semifinalist Elias Ymer will be the top contenders in a highly-competitive field for the singles qualifiers of the fifth edition of the Tata Open Maharashtra tennis tournament.

The Tata Open Maharashtra will be conducted by the Maharashtra State Lawn Tennis Association (MSLTA) for the fifth year in Pune, scheduled at the Balewadi Stadium from December 31 to January 7.

The qualifiers will be held from December 31 and will involve some strong players with the cut-off standing at a stiff ranking of 243.

With South Asia's only ATP 250 event returning to the opening week of the calendar, Bhambri made



the cut into the qualifiers based on his protected rankings of 127, the organisers informed in a release on Thursday. The former junior world number one, Bhambri staged an impressive comeback last year

in the Tata Open Maharashtra from an injury that kept him away from the action for two years. His challenge was halted in the pre-quarterfinals. Ymer was also on a roll in the last edition where he put up solid performances which included a victory against the top-seed and then World No. 15 Aslan Karatsev in straight sets in the Round of 16. Besides Ymer, American Christopher Eubanks and the former World No. 39 Peter Gajdos are the key attractions among international stars. The former Grand Slam champion Marin Cilic and the last edition's runner-up Emil Ruusuvuori are among the 17 Top-100 players to feature in the singles main draw, which will be played from January 2-7. The qualifiers event will witness 16 players, including two wild card entrants, fighting for four main draw spots.

# Played too many dot balls: Harmanpreet on India's loss to Australia

Team Absolute | Mumbai

India skipper Harmanpreet Kaur feels that playing out too many dot balls in a chase of 173 against Australia in the third T20I at Brabourne Stadium cost her team a victory.

On Wednesday, despite Harmanpreet adding 73 runs in 50 balls with Shafali Verma (52 off 41) for the third wicket, India were unable to avoid a 21-run loss, playing 55 dot balls, giving Australia a 2-1



lead in the five-match series. "It's not all about power-hitting. Even if we were to consider and analyse the last match, we were aiming to get 10-11 runs in the over. During the match also we were getting boundaries but

we played too many dot balls. That is the reason why we were not able to win this game." "Otherwise, you have to analyse your strengths and if you play in a calculative way, you can even win matches for your teams. In this match, we got boundaries, but could not make it into big overs. There were seven runs where we got less than seven runs and that's why we could not chase down that total," she said in the post-match press conference.

# Tata Steel comes on as official partner of FIH Men's World Cup 2023

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Tata Steel Limited signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Hockey India to become an official partner of the FIH Odisha Hockey Men's World Cup 2023 Bhubaneswar-Rourkela.

The FIH Men's World Cup is the 15th edition of the prestigious event, the top tournament for men along with the Olympics, and will take place in Bhubaneswar and Rourkela from January 13 to January 29, 2023.

"We are delighted to welcome Tata Steel into our family as an official partner for the FIH Odisha Hockey Men's World Cup 2023 Bhubaneswar-Rourkela. Tata Steel has made a tremendous contribution to promoting Indian hockey, elevating the sport to new heights, and making this World Cup even greater. We look forward to a fruitful association," said Hockey India President Dilip Tirkey on the collaboration. The FIH Odisha Hockey Men's



World Cup will be the fourth time that India will be hosting the prestigious tournament after organising it in 1982 in Bombay, 2010 in New Delhi, and 2018 in Bhubaneswar. A total of 16 nations will take part in the upcoming tournament.

## I-League

# TRAU FC beat Rajasthan United FC by 3-1

Imphal | Agencies

TRAU FC won a fourth straight home game as they beat Rajasthan United FC 3-1 in their I-League 2022-23 matches at the Khuman Lampak Stadium, here on Thursday.

A first-half brace by Komron Tursunov and a second-half goal from Baoringdao Bodo helped the hosts earn a comfortable win over Rajasthan United.

Rajasthan United had a strong start to the game. On the other hand, Bektur Amangeldiev looked lively for the hosts but he failed to avail the opportunities that came his way in front of the goal.

Just before half-time, Rajasthan



goalkeeper Joon conceded a free-kick inside the box for handling a back pass. From the indirect free kick, Godfred Yeboah rolled the ball for Tursunov and the Tajik beat the goal-

keeper with a powerful shot. In the 64th minute, Mambetaliev won a corner for the visitors. Chaves played a one-two with Horam sending the ball into the six-yard area

and substitute Amritpal Singh managed to get a head on the ball. The ball hit the post before going in as the Desert Warriors got one back.

Even after conceding the third goal, the visitors kept their spirits and energy high in order to produce a comeback. Chaves hit the post in the 73rd minute while Mambetaliev and substitute Shaiborlang Kharpan went close in the add-on time. But it wasn't enough for the visitors as the hosts went home with three points.

Following a third win in a row, TRAU FC go fourth on the table with 13 points in eight games. On the other hand, Rajasthan United, winless in their previous two outings moved to sixth place with 11 points from as many games.



## I love playing women who are equal to men: Bhumi

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actress Bhumi Pednekar through her choice of roles, picked to play heroines who do not shy away from proclaiming that they are equal to a man.

"I have always believed that cinema can be a powerful tool to showcase strong, independent and fiercely progressive women on screen. My journey in cinema is a living example of this because I have consciously chosen films that present the woman of today, a woman who other women can connect with and relate to," says Bhumi.

She adds, "Dum Laga Ke Haisha, Badhaai Do, Toilet: Ek Prem Katha, Lust Stories, Sonchiriya, Saand Ki Aankh, Bala, Shubh Mangal Saavdhaan, Dolly Kitty Aur Woh Chamakte Sitare and now Govinda Naam Mera, I have always been inclined to play women who have not compromised on their dreams and wishes and stood up against patriarchy."

Bhumi adds, "I love playing women who challenge the status quo in society and change the lens on gender. I love playing women who are equal to men. I would like this to be my small contribution to Indian cinema and my calling card. I want that, through my body of work, I loudly speak about the need for equality."

About what appealed to her instantly about her character in 'Govinda Naam Mera', Bhumi says "I love Gauri Waghmare who is an unstoppable force of nature and can stand up to a man and also be vocal about what she wants in life. She is an amazing character to play and I thank Shashank for giving me the freedom to run riot with it. I had a blast playing her. I think it's evident in the trailer of the film and I'm sure it will come out more strongly when people watch the film on December 16."

## I like the work of King & absolutely love synthwave: Badshah

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Rapper Badshah, who is set to embark on his first tour, 'Paagal', has revealed that the one Indian artiste whose work he likes is King who is known for his song 'Tu Aake Dekhle'.

The rapper said, "Bahut saare aise artists hain jinka kaam mujhe pasand hai, India mein kahun toh King ho gaya, wo banda bhi bahut sahi hai aur artist bhi bahut accha hai (there are a lot of artistes who I like. In India, I like the work of King, he is not just a good person but also an amazing artiste). Baaki bahar k logon mein, I like Drake, his music is something that I really like and look forward to".

He mentioned that synthwave is one genre that he absolutely loves; something that is evident in his last year's release 'Jugnu', the song has a very 'Daft Punk' feel to it.

"I absolutely love synthwave, I'm a 1980s born person so my memories with that genre are of Bappi da and what was going around at that time. 'Jugnu' is one song that saw a happy Badshah, a different side of me, you can say that it's a song about Badshah in love. I was in a very happy mindset during the making of that song and that has trickled into the song as well", he added.

Badshah's 'Paagal' tour is set to start from December 24, 2022 in Mumbai and will cover eight major Indian cities in its entirety before it culminates in Gurugram on February 18, 2023.



## I TRY MY BEST TO MANAGE MY SHOOT AND RESPONSIBILITIES: SHWETA TIWARI

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Popular face of the TV industry Shweta Tiwari, who is currently seen in 'Main Hoon Aparajita', playing the role of a mother of three daughters, reveals how she is maintaining a balance between her personal and professional lives.

The actress has a son, Reyansh and a daughter, Palak. As she is always on the sets and busy shooting, she has decided to bring her son to her work place so that she can give him time as well.

She shared: "As I am shooting for 'Main Hoon Aparajita' for most of the day, I have ensured that there is room for Reyansh on set. He goes to school and then returns to my set in the evening, where we spend time and travel back home together. I try my best to manage both, my shoot, and my responsibilities towards Reyansh."

She added that she took a break from work for her son and even now she makes sure to give him proper time.

"When my daughter was born and whenever I was shooting, it was my mother who would look after her. Once Reyansh came into my life, I decided to take a 3-year break until I realised that he doesn't need me around all the time. Though juggling between my personal and professional life was not all that difficult, it was a personal choice to take that break," she said.



## Kolkata reminds me of my love for cinema: Rani Mukerji

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actress Rani Mukerji, who is set to inaugurate 28th Kolkata International Film Festival, said that a visit to Kolkata is always special to her as it brings back childhood memories. Rani Mukerji will make a trip to Kolkata to inaugurate the Kolkata International Film Festival with the Chief Minister of West Bengal, Mamata Banerjee. In its 28th edition, the festival has invited Rani as a Distinguished Guest for her illustrious career over the last 25 years and her immeasurable contribution to the Indian film industry.

She will be felicitated at its inaugural ceremony where dignitaries from world cinema, Indian cinema and West Bengal will be present.

Rani said: "A visit to Kolkata is always special to me as it brings back child-

hood memories and reminds me of my love for cinema that grew in my heart from an early age."

"Kolkata International Film Festival has celebrated the legacy of filmmakers like Satyajit Ray, Ritwik Ghatak, Mrinal Sen and many Bengalis artists and technicians who have contributed to creating this vibrant Indian

film industry and I'm honoured that this time they have decided to celebrate my career and felicitate me along with other achievers."

She concluded: "It is a moment of great pride for me, and I'm really humbled to be receiving this honour in the presence of luminaries of West Bengal, India, and world cinema."



Ananya Panday

## RANVEER BRINGS A SMILE, TAKES SELFIES WITH EVERYONE IN REALITY SHOW

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Ditching his erratic schedule, Bollywood star Ranveer Singh brought a smile to many faces as he took out time to click photographs with contestants, their family members and even audiences during his promotion of his film 'Cirkus' on a reality show. As part of the promotions, Ranveer has been visiting the sets of popular television shows like Chala Hawa Yeu Dya, Maharashtrachi Hasyajatra, The Kapil Sharma Show and Sa Re Ga Ma Pa L'il Champs. Since everyone on these sets want pictures with Ranveer, he prefers taking individual photos instead of a group picture to make everyone feel special. He was recently seen smiling and posing for selfies with all the young participants on 'Sa Re Ga Ma Pa L'il Champs'. The parents clapped for Ranveer seeing him click pictures with each and every kid. That's not all. As a mark of respect, Ranveer also went up to the

parents and interacted with them heartily.

The parents later said they've never seen an actor be so genuine and nice with them on the sets.



Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actor Ranveer Raii will soon be seen in a special appearance in the TV show 'Meet: Badlegi Duniya Ki Reet'. He talked about his role and revealed that he became an actor because of Salman Khan. "Salman Khan Sir is my inspiration. I dreamed of becoming an actor after seeing him. So I think he is my inspiration because of whom I'm an actor today," he said. Talking about his special appearance in 'Meet', he said: "I'm happy and excited about the character, I'll be playing a lawyer who will be fighting a case against Meet."

Randeep was last seen in 'Balika Vadhu 2' and shared that after the show ended, he started working on himself. "I did a few music videos and focussed more on myself. I actively started going to dance classes. I am also learning martial arts. I feel that as an artist, it is important to take care of yourself because once you're busy, you don't get time to do such things," he said.

He feels that in the entertainment industry, an actor's looks and his performance both play an equal role. "My main focus is giving my hundred per cent to whatever role I get. Looks are god-gifted. Once I'm in front of the camera I certainly feel confident because of my looks. But I believe looking good is just the half part of it, it's your good performance which makes you complete as an actor," Randeep concluded.