

# absolute india



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## BF.7 OMICRON SUB-VARIANT THAT HAS TRIGGERED FRESH COVID FEARS

# PLEASE BE VIGILANT

The Centre has said while there is no cause for panic. It is important to be careful in the public places since we do see that people have become a little careless as many of the norms and the rules that are put forth during Covid-19 have been lifted, say experts. So, it is now important that we at least follow the basic measures, they add. Random sample testing will be conducted at airports for international passengers arriving from China and other countries.

- ▶ **ALSO CALLED THE OMICRON SPAWN, THE BF.7 SUB-VARIANT, FIRST DETECTED IN INDIA IN OCTOBER, IS THE NEWEST FORM THAT HAS HIGH TRANSMISSIBILITY.**
- ▶ **ACCORDING TO HEALTH EXPERTS, THIS IS BECAUSE THE NEW VARIANT QUICKLY BYPASSES THE IMMUNITY THAT A PERSON HAS DEVELOPED THROUGH A NATURAL INFECTION WITH AN EARLIER VARIANT OR EVEN IF THE COMPLETE COURSE OF THE VACCINES ARE TAKEN.**
- ▶ **DUE TO THIS, THERE IS AN EXPECTATION THAT THE WORLD MIGHT SEE A FOURTH WAVE OF THE PANDEMIC.**



**COVID NOT OVER YET, PREPARED TO MANAGE ANY SITUATION: MANDAVIYA**

**New Delhi:** After reviewing the Covid situation in India in the wake of several countries reporting a resurgence of the virus, Union Health Minister Mansukh Mandaviya on Wednesday said that the pandemic is not over yet, but "we are prepared to manage any situation".

Mandaviya chaired a high-level meeting to review the Covid-19 situation in India and preparedness of public health system for its surveillance, containment and management, in view of the recent spike in cases of Covid-19 in some countries.

Mandaviya directed the strengthening of the surveillance system for whole genome sequencing of positive case samples to track the variants through Indian SARS-CoV-2 Genomics Consortium (INSACOG) network to ensure timely detection of newer variants, if any, circulating in the country. This would facilitate undertaking of appropriate public health measures. States/UTs have been requested to send samples of all Covid-19 positive cases to INSACOG Genome Sequencing Laboratories (IGSLs) on a daily basis, for sequencing, to track new variants, if any.

Underlying and reiterating that Covid is not over yet, he directed the officials to be fully geared up and strengthen surveillance. He urged people to follow Covid Appropriate Behaviour and get vaccinated against Covid.

## PM Modi is the Father of New India: Amruta Fadnavis



Team Absolute | Nagpur

Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis's wife Amruta Fadnavis termed PM Narendra Modi "Father of the Nation", but then tweaked it a bit to also cover Mahatma Gandhi, who is usually given that honorific.

During an interview on stage at an event organised by a writers' association in Nagpur this week, she was asked what Mahatma Gandhi would be as she called PM Modi "rashtra-pita".

"Mahatma Gandhi is the Father of the Nation and Modi-ji is the Father of New India. There are two Fathers of the Nation - one from this era, one from that era," she said, speaking in Marathi. This is not the first time she's used the analogy for Narendra Modi.

In a message for the PM in 2019, she had tweeted: "Wishing the Father of our Country Narendra Modi ji a very Happy Birthday - who inspires us to work relentlessly towards the betterment of the society." Often in the news for her social media posts and public statements, Amruta Fadnavis had earlier this year taken a dig at the then Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray in the middle of a Shiv Sena mutiny that led to his unseating. "Ek 'Tha' Kapati Raja... (Once there was a wicked king)." she wrote in a tweet that she later deleted. Her reference to a "king" and the quotation marks she used around 'Tha' ('was) were seen as a reference to Thackeray.

## DENSE FOG ENVELOPS DELHI, FLIGHTS AND TRAINS DELAYED

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Dense Fog engulfed the Indo-Gangetic plains, including Delhi, for the third morning on the trot on Wednesday, lowering visibility in the national capital and affecting traffic movement.

The visibility dropped to 500 metres at the Indira Gandhi International Airport (IGI) at 5.30 a.m.

"Flights are being diverted or

are returning to Delhi due to bad weather in Chandigarh, Varanasi, and Lucknow," stated the advisory issued for flyers by Delhi International Airport Limited (DIAL) on Wednesday.

Around 20 trains were delayed due to the thick fog and low visibility that blanketed the national capital this morning at the New Delhi Railway Station.

The IMD has issued a 'cold wave' alert in many North Indian states.

**SYMPTOMS**

The symptoms of the new BF.7 sub-variant are similar to common flu and include cold, cough, fever, body pain, etc. As it is highly transmissible, it spreads to a larger group of people within a short duration.

Team Absolute | New Delhi

As India gears up to fight a potential resurgence of the Covid virus in the country, the BF.7 Omicron sub-variant once again hogged the headlines as it is currently on the move in countries like China. This new Omicron variant was first detected in China and India has seen its first case of this variant in Gujarat. Initially in the pandemic, the virus mutated several times and the WHO declared the Delta variant as the most severe one. Meanwhile, 7 in 10 Indians on Wednesday said all flights from China should be stopped and the government should prohibit entry (mandatory quarantine) for anyone who has been in China in the last 14 days. Currently flights from mainland China to India are through other countries while direct flights run from Hong Kong to India.

**NEW WAVE IN CHINA TRIGGERS WIDESPREAD DRUGS SHORTAGE**

Hong Kong: An unprecedented wave of Covid infections in China has triggered widespread drug shortage, as people scramble to buy fever medicines and painkillers to alleviate flu-like symptoms, according to a media report.

The panic buying has spread outside mainland China's borders, with the generic versions of Tylenol and Advil sold out at drugstores in Hong Kong, Macao, Taiwan and as far as Australia, prompting some local pharmacies to limit sales, CNN reported.

The situation mirrors shortages seen in the United States and Canada over children's painkillers, which are in high demand because of the proliferation of respiratory viruses.

**SEVERE COVID COMMUNITY TRANSMISSION IN US**

Washington: US Covid-19 cases, hospitalisations and deaths continue to rise in the midst of the holiday season, stressing the healthcare system and resulting in staffing shortages. More than 44 per cent of counties are experiencing medium to high Covid-19 Community Levels, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The country is now averaging about 65,000 new cases, 5,000 hospitalisations and 390 deaths each day, a significant rise compared with the last few months; Xinhua news agency quoted the CDC as saying. The country continues to see a surge in respiratory illnesses among young children, including Covid-19, flu and respiratory syncytial virus (RSV). It prompted large pharmacies to limit the purchases of children's medications.

## FOUR CASES OF BF.7 VARIANT FOUND IN INDIA SO FAR

**New Delhi:** Total four cases of Omicron subvariant BF.7, that has led the massive surge in China, have been found in India so far, a source said on Wednesday. Four cases of the Omicron subvariant BF.7, which is driving China's reportedly deadly surge, have been detected in India. Two cases have been reported from Gujarat and two from Odisha.

## 97-YR-OLD NAZI TYPIST CONVICTED FOR INVOLVEMENT IN 10,505 MURDERS

**Berlin:** A 97-year-old former Nazi typist and stenographer, who worked at a concentration camp in Poland, has been convicted for her involvement in the murders of 10,505 people during the Holocaust, media reports said.

Irmgard Furchner, the first woman to be tried for Nazi crimes in decades, was sentenced on Tuesday by a court in Itzehoe, Germany, to a two-year suspended jail term, reports the BBC.

Furchner, as a teenager, had worked at the Stutthof camp near Gdansk in Nazi-occupied Poland, from 1943 until the end of the Nazi regime in 1945.

As she was an adolescent at the time of the crimes, Furchner's trial took place before a juvenile court and her sentence will see her placed into juvenile probation, the court confirmed to CNN.

Some 65,000 people are thought to have died in horrendous conditions at Stutthof, including Jewish prisoners, non-Jewish Poles and captured Soviet soldiers.

Furchner was found guilty of aiding and abetting the murder of 10,505 people and complicity in the attempted murder of five others, the BBC reported.

In her address to the court, Furchner said: "I'm sorry about everything that happened. I regret that I was in Stutthof at the time... That's all I can say."

## Nepal's SC orders release of Charles Sobhraj after 19 years in jail

Kathmandu | Agencies

Nepal's Supreme Court on Wednesday

ordered to release serial killer Charles Sobhraj, who is also known as the 'bikini killer' or 'serpent killer'.

Hearing a habeas corpus petition filed by Sobhraj, a joint bench of Justices Sapana Pradhan Malla and Til Prasad Shrestha ordered his release if he need not be jailed for another case, adding that arrangements be made to return the French citizen back to his country within 15 days.

Sobhraj, infamous for his cunning escapes from the law, was wanted in Nepal for the 1975 murders of Canadian



Laddie DuParr and an American woman named Annabella Tremont, both of whom he had befriended in Kathmandu.

The police arrested Sobhraj in September 2003 from a five-star hotel. In 1996, he had escaped from a prison in New Delhi after it looked likely that he would be extradited to Thailand to face charges of murdering six women, all wearing bikinis, on a beach at Pattaya. Sobhraj was later rearrested in Goa. He was known to have been living quietly in France since his release from prison in India. Sobhraj argued in his petition that he has already served 19 years in jail and that he is 78 years old now.

## SRK - Greatest Indian actor 'Of All Time'

Team Absolute | Mumbai

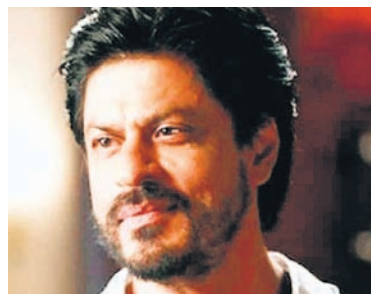
Bollywood superstar Shah Rukh Khan has become the only Indian to be named in the list of '50 Greatest Actors of All Time', released by Empire magazine.

Others who are named in the list include Hollywood stalwarts Tom Hanks, Robert De Niro, Denzel Washington, Natalie Portman and Bette Davis among many others.

Pooja Dadlani, Shah Rukh's manager, took to Instagram to share the news.

She shared a clip of the article and wrote: "@iamsrk on the Empire list of 50 greatest actors of all time... the only Indian doing us proud always!"

Shah Rukh in a career spanning over three decades has worked in iconic films such as 'Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge', 'Swades', 'Kuch Kuch Hota Hai', 'Kabhi Khushi Kabhie Gham', 'Mohabbatein',



'Veer-Zaara', 'Devdas' and 'Om Shanti Om', among many others.

His next film 'Pathaan' has been surrounded in controversy ever since filmmakers released its first song 'Besharam Rang' a few days ago. Objecting to the lead actors' costumes, many political outfits have threatened to stall the film's release. The film is slated to release in January. He will also be seen in 'Jawan', directed by Atlee.

## 'WILL BURN SHAH RUKH KHAN ALIVE': AYODHYA SEER

**Lucknow:** Seers from Ayodhya have now waded into the controversy over Shah Rukh Khan-starrer 'Pathaan'.

Mahant Paramhans Acharya of Tapasvi Chhawni, has said that he would even go to the extent of burning Shah Rukh Khan alive if he ever met him. Paramhans Acharya added that the saffron colour has been insulted in the 'Besharam Rang' song. "People of our Sanatan Dharma are protesting continuously regarding this. Today we have burnt the poster of Shahrukh Khan. If I get to meet the film Jihadi Shah Rukh Khan, I will burn him alive," the seer said. Acharya did not stop at that. He went on to say that if 'Pathaan' film was released in theatres, he would set them on fire.

# Assembly poll tickets survey scam crops up in Madhya Pradesh

Praveen Dwivedi | Bhopal

With elections for the Madhya Pradesh Assembly scheduled at the end of 2023, and internal surveys for candidate selection being conducted by various political parties, an election ticket survey scam now has been reported from the state.

The perpetrator claims they have been authorised by a particular political party and the ticket will be given only on the basis of their survey reports. They collect detailed information about potential aspirants and then contact them, saying they can help them to get a ticket, and seek to arrange a meeting for detailed discussions.

One such scam was found in Rewa dis-

trict, where many local party workers say that they have been cheated in this regard. To verify the allegations, this correspondent, presenting himself as a ticket aspirant from one of the constituencies in Rewa, called one person conducting the "survey". During the telephonic conversation, the person, who identified himself as Bhaskar Rao Rokde, claimed that he had been appointed by the state Congress committee to conduct an internal survey of Vindhya region.

As the correspondent expressed his desire to contest election from the Mauganj constituency, and said that he had that he (Rokde) was conducting a survey for that, Rokde said: "I have not heard your name and we have already selected a candidate from Mauganj, but



there still are chances in other constituencies. We can talk about this issue face to face, not on the phone."

Rokde, however, asked about the details and money resources. "Let's meet once then, I would see what I can do for you," he said, adding that he lives in Bhopal. Asked whether the state Congress has appointed this person in this role, party leader K.K. Mishra denied it, saying the party has already issued a press note regarding the same earlier in November this year.

A couple of Congress workers in Rewa district told correspondent that Rao has made a large team to gather information about the people aspiring to become politicians and then he would call them for a meeting.





# PILOTS' BODY ISSUES NOTICE TO AIR INDIA OVER CHANGE IN SERVICE CONDITIONS

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Indian Commercial Pilot Association (ICPA) on Wednesday issued a demand notice regarding Industrial Disputes Act in respect of change in conditions of service of pilots of Air India engaged in scheduled air transport operations.

The pilots' associations have written multiple letters to the Air India management in the last couple of weeks and sources said that they are planning to go on strike if the demands are not met.

"In the event, we do not receive a suitable response from the management in respect of the subject-matter of this demand notice, within a period of three days, the ICPA will be constrained to seek appropriate remedies in accordance with applicable law," said the ICPA in its letter.

The Indian Commercial Pilots' Association is a registered trade union of the pilots of Air India. The letter written on Wednesday has been addressed to S.D. Tripathi, chief human resource officer, Air India. ICPA has demanded the Air India management to comply with the statutory mandate of the Industrial Disputes (ID) Act, including Section 9A, in letter and in spirit;



and not undertake any change in the conditions of service of pilots without following the applicable provisions of the ID Act, including Section 9A, and without consulting the pilots and giving adequate notice thereof.

The demands also include, "Until such time, the mandate of section 9A, Industrial Disputes Act is followed, maintain status quo in respect of inter alia Passages, Career Progression Policy and other such conditions of service of pilots; and follow the above-mentioned roster practices (entered into between the

management and the ICPA), in letter and spirit and without creating an artificial distinction between permanent/regular pilots and FTC (fixed term contract) pilots, while no such distinction was contemplated at the time of signing of and within the said practices therein."

ICPA had previously issued the demand letter/notice on October 24, 2022 to the management of Air India, in respect of change in conditions of service of its member pilots.

ICPA said that it is important for the morale of the pilots and for

maintenance of trust between the pilots and the management of Air India, especially given the transition to the new management, that pilots be consulted and taken into confidence before any condition of their service is changed, especially when such change may ultimately prove to be to their detriment.

ICPA also referred to rules and ACT saying that 'Pilots' are classified as 'workmen' for the purposes of various labour laws in India, including the Industrial Disputes Act 1947 (ID Act).

# Disallowing debate on China disrespect to democracy: Sonia Gandhi

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Addressing a meeting of party MPs, Congress Parliamentary Party (CPP) Chairperson Sonia Gandhi on Wednesday accused the Centre for disrespecting democracy by not allowing a debate in Parliament on the recent China transgressions.

"This refusal to allow a parliamentary debate on such a matter of grave national concern shows disrespect for our democracy, and reflects poorly on the government's intentions. It demonstrates its inability to bring the nation together," she said.

"On the contrary, by following divisive policies, by spreading hatred and targeting some sections of our society, the government makes it harder for the country to stand up as one against foreign threats.

"Such divisions weaken us and make us more vulnerable. At times like this it must be the government's endeavour and responsibility to unite our people, not divide them as it has been doing



these past several years," the senior leader added. Sonia Gandhi said the country continues to face significant internal and external

challenges like inflation, unemployment, social polarisation, weakening of democratic institutions and repeated border incursions.

# SET OUT TO OPEN A KIOSK OF LOVE IN THE MARKET OF HATRED: RAHUL GANDHI

New Delhi: Congress leader Rahul Gandhi has said that his party had set out to open a shop of love in the market of hatred.

While addressing a large group of party leaders and workers in Rajasthan, Gandhi said: "People who subscribe to our ideology spread love whenever someone spreads hate and violence in the country."

He recalled the word tapaswi (ascetic) used for him once, and said that real tapaswis were the people who woke up at 4 a.m. every day to start their daily routine.

He added that he had not done something extraordinary by going all the way from Kashmir to Kanyakumari and said that the poor citizens, farmers, labourers and small shopkeepers did harder work.

# Telangana farmer's son gambles away Rs 92 lakh

Hyderabad | Agencies

A farmer lost Rs 92 lakh that he had received as compensation for the land acquired by the government as his son gambled away the money in an online casino. The shocking incident has come to light in Telangana's Rangareddy district near Hyderabad.

Srinivas Reddy's 10 acres of land in Sitarampur of Shahbad mandal was recently acquired by the government for Telangana State Industrial Infrastructure Corporation (TSIIC). He received a compensation of Rs 1.05 crore at the rate of Rs 10.5 lakh per acre.

With this money, he wanted to buy half acre land at Hyderabad. He had entered into an agreement for Rs 70 lakh and paid Rs 20 lakh as advance. Out of the remaining Rs 85 lakh, Srinivas Reddy deposited Rs 42.5 lakh in his bank account and the remaining in the account of his wife Vijayalaxmi.

The couple's younger son Harshvardhan Reddy, a first year degree student at



Hyderabad's Nizam College, transferred the money from his father's account to his account and told him that he would pay it to the land owner. The 19-year-old told the same to her mother and made her withdraw the money from her account.

The youngster, who had become addicted to playing online games, started putting in the money in installments on online casinos. In a few weeks, he lost the entire money.

# HEADMASTER WHO FORCED STUDENTS TO REMOVE 'DUPATTA' ARRESTED UNDER POCSO ACT

Ranchi: The headmaster of a government school has been arrested under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act for forcing girl students to remove their 'dupatta'.

A committee constituted by the administration found the allegations levelled against the accused, identified as Vishwanath Ram, to be true, following which he was sent to jail in judicial custody on Wednesday. According to sources, several female students of Classes 7-8 of the Government Upgraded Middle school, located in Pandu block of Daltonganj, had alleged that the accused would beat them with sticks if they failed to remove their dupattas before sitting in the class. The locals had created a furore over the issue in the past.

# Restaurants in parts of Delhi allowed to stay open till 1 am

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Delhi Lt Governor V K Saxena has allowed cafes and restaurants in Siri Fort Sports Complex, Qutub Golf Club and Bhalswa Golf Club here to remain open till 1 am from Wednesday, a move aimed at bolstering the city's nightlife ahead of new year festivities, officials said.

These DDA joints, run by private licensees and offering food and beverages only between 9 pm and 11 pm, officials said on Tuesday.

"This comes as a gift to the people of the city during the festive season and the forthcoming New Year. Starting today, residents will be able to avail and enjoy a richer night life at these premier locations.



"The same would also result in increased economic activities resulting in more revenue generation," said an official. The official added that a vibrant nightlife and robust

night time economy are also being envisaged proactively and strongly in the Master Plan Delhi 2041. "In a decision that will boost much demanded, hitherto lacking night life in the national capital and provide impetus to night economy, Lt Governor VK Saxena has approved the opening of restaurants and cafeteria in the Delhi Development Authority (DDA) owned Siri Fort Sports Complex, Qutub Golf Club and Bhalswa Golf Club till 1 am," said the official.

In an order, the DDA has directed authorities at the above mentioned three complexes to ensure adequate security, lighting and parking.

# 7-YR-OLD KILLED, BURIED IN FIELD BY UNCLE, COUSIN

Baghat (UP): The body of a 7-year-old boy, who was missing for the last five days, was recovered from a sugarcane field here.

The deceased minor, identified as Shaurya a.k.a Suryansh, had gone missing on December 15 while on his way back from tuition class. The police said on Wednesday that the boy was allegedly killed by his uncle and cousin. Three people, including the uncle and cousin, have been detained by the police.

According to the police, the boy's uncle, cousin, and another man had abducted the boy to extort money because the victim's grandfather had recently retired from government service and received a lot of cash with which he had bought some land too. Superintendent of Police Neeraj Kumar Jadaun said that during investigation, the police suspected the roles of Shaurya's uncle Vineet, his cousin Akshit, and a third person named Danny. During interrogation, the trio confessed to have abducted and killed Shaurya, the SP said. At their instance, the police recovered Shaurya's body which was buried in a sugarcane field, about 1.5 km away from his village.

# Three held for raping minor for seven months in Junagadh

Junagadh (Saurashtra) | Agencies

The Junagadh police have detained three youths for questioning following allegations that they raped a minor girl for seven months and threatened to kill her father and brother.

The victim's father came to know about the horrifying experience of his daughter on Tuesday morning when she refused to go to school. When the father insisted on knowing why she was hesitating in attending classes, the class 8 student replied, "If you want to kill me, kill me, but I will not go to school." On probing fur-



ther he learnt about his daughter's ordeal. She revealed that since the

last six to seven months three youths were raping her. Around seven months ago, one night when she had gone to the backyard of the house to throw garbage, two youths grabbed her and raped her at knife point. Then they had threatened that if she told anyone about it they would kill her father and brother.

The scared victim did not inform her family members. Seeing this, it became routine for the accused to summon her and rape her. Once they even called their friend, who too raped her. The girl told her father on Tuesday that she could no longer bear it.

# SCHEME ON COMPRESSED BIOGAS PLANTS LACKS CLARITY, FAILED TO ENTHUSE INVESTORS: PARL PANEL

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Expressing displeasure over the slow pace of the government's scheme on compressed biogas "SATAT", the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Petroleum and Natural Gas has noted that it is "burdened by lack of clarity, procedural hurdles and has not enthused the investors and entrepreneurs to come forward to set up CBG plants".

Having started with an ambitious target of setting up 5,000 CBG plants by 2023-24, as of now, only about 40 CBG plants have been set up, which indicates

that lots of ground need to be covered under SATAT scheme, the panel has said in a report on the scheme, tabled in the Lok Sabha on Wednesday.

SATAT scheme encourages entrepreneurs to set up CBG plants, as well as produce and supply CBG to oil marketing companies (OMCs) for sale as automotive and industrial fuels.

The Parliamentary panel's report has recommended that the government should ensure successful implementation of the scheme by reviewing the progress at regular intervals and address various impediments that pulls back achieving of tar-

gets set under this initiative. Identifying procedural issues with the scheme, the panel noted that the same entrepreneur or investor has been issued a large number of Letters of Intent (LoIs) and the banks are not extending loans for more than one project to the entrepreneur who is holding multiple LoIs.

The committee has also recommended that the Petroleum Ministry should set up a panel to review the LoIs issued so far and also issue guidelines for fresh LoIs alongwith promotion of SATAT scheme in a more sustained and methodical manner.

# iPhone 16 to be made in India, Apple and 3 allied companies apply for land

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Apple plans to manufacture the new iPhone 16 in India, the tech giant along with three associated companies has applied for land to Yamuna Authority.

The companies have proposed to set up a unit on about 23 acres of land with an investment of Rs 2,800 crore.

In a meeting held in Korea, Apple along with the associated companies proposed the investment.

Seiko Advance Limited, an ink manufacturing company expressed its desire to make its product on 5 acres of land in Sector 29 of Yamuna Expressway Industrial Development Authority (YEIDA).

The company will invest Rs 850 crore and provide employment to thousands of people. YEIDA CEO Dr. Arun Vir



Singh said that Apple and associated companies would be provided land in Sector 29, which is quite developed with many available facilities.

He added that the companies would be able to start production after the construction and have deposited 10 per cent of the amount.

# 7 students killed as school bus overturns in Manipur

Imphal | Agencies

At least seven students were killed and over 18 injured, many of them critically, after a school bus overturned in Manipur's Noney district on Wednesday, the police said. The bus carrying the students suddenly overturned when the driver was negotiating a turn on Old Cachar Road near the Longsai area of the mountainous district killing at least five students on the spot and injuring 20 others. The injured were admitted to different hospitals, where two students succumbed to their injuries.

The death toll is likely to increase as the condition of many of the students was stated to be critical. The accident site is around 55 km from state capital Imphal.

The police said that the students of Thambalnu Higher Secondary School went on an annual school study tour to Khoupum in Noney district in two buses. The bus in which girl students



were travelling met with the accident. Manipur Chief Minister N Biren Singh, expressing shock over the accident, tweeted: "Deeply saddened to hear about the accident of a bus carry-

ing school children at the Old Cachar Road today. SDRF, Medical team and MLAs have rushed to the site to coordinate the rescue operation. Praying for the safety of everyone on the bus."

# PFI HAS LINKS WITH AL QAEDA: NIA REPORT

New Delhi: In a report filed before a Kerala court, the National Investigation Agency (NIA) claimed that the outlawed Popular Front of India (PFI) has links with the Al Qaeda.

The probe agency alleged in the report that PFI leaders were in touch with the terror group via different modes.

The NIA further claimed that the banned group was running a secret wing which they wanted to reveal at a different time.

"During recent raids, the NIA recovered a few devices. During the scanning of those devices, the agency learnt that PFI leaders had been in touch with the Al Qaeda. They were also had a secret wing," said a source.

The entire network of the PFI was busted by the NIA during nationwide raids which were recently conducted.

The PFI was then banned and all its leaders arrested.





# HOME MINISTER SLAMS CONG FOR MOVING NO-CONFIDENCE MOTION AGAINST GOVERNMENT

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Madhya Pradesh Home Minister Narottam Mishra has slammed the Congress for bringing a no-confidence motion against Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan-led government during a discussion on the second day of the winter session of state Assembly. He took a jibe at the Congress, saying the opposition MLAs should have instead brought the no-confidence motion against their own leader and state party Chief Kamal Nath.

The Minister slammed former Chief Minister Kamal Nath reminding him that 38 Congress MLAs have left the party and cross-voting took place since the day he (Nath) took over charge as the state Congress President. During a heated war of words with the Opposition Leader in the Assembly on the second day of the Winter session, Mishra asked: "Do Congress MLAs have confidence in



their state party Head?" The BJP leader also recalled the promises made by the Congress ahead of 2018 state Assembly elec-

tions and what happened after forming the government, which collapsed after 15 months due to 20 Congress MLAs joining the BJP in March 2020.

## BJP MLA Rameshwar Sharma slams Kharge, says "he has become used to counting dogs"

Team Absolute | Bhopal

A Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) MLA Rameshwar Sharma has slammed Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge on his controversial 'dog' remark. Sharma on Wednesday said, "He (Mallikarjun Kharge) has become used to counting dogs. He has not developed the habit of counting humans. He has not developed the habit of respecting patriots. This is the Congress that roams around like Sonia Gandhi's court dogs and they see from the same point of view." "The one who is a dog himself sees others like a dog, so Kharge should understand that if he himself has become the dog of Sonia



Gandhi's 10 Janpath, then calling a dog is a crime," MLA Sharma added. Kharge on Monday in Rajasthan said, "We gave freedom to the country and India Gandhi and Rajiv Gandhi sacrificed their lives for the unity of the country. Our party leaders gave their lives, what did you (BJP) do? Has even any dog in your house died for the country?"

Has (someone) made any sacrifice? No." Reacting on BJP MLA's remark, Congress MLA Kamleshwar Patel said, "We strongly condemn such incident talks. Rameshwar Sharma has held a constitutional post, it does not suit him to do such indecent things. He should apologise, otherwise, the Congress party will protest against him." "He will understand after the behaviour that will happen to them. That's why one should always talk in a dignified manner. Kharge had not said anything wrong, there is nothing to feel bad about it. If you have contributed to the freedom of the nation, then tell it," Patel added.

## MINOR'S INSTAGRAM ACCOUNT HACKED, OBSCENE PICTURES POSTED; POLICE QUESTIONS NEIGHBOUR

Gwalior: A minor boy and his father lodged a complaint with the cyber cell here over objectionable pictures being uploaded through the former's hacked Instagram account. The father has expressed suspicion on one of his neighbors. The boy, resident of Gola Ka Mandir locality, alleged that apart from uploading obscene photographs, changing the name of his account, the hacker has also been posting objectionable messages in the name of his father. Upon learning about the complaint against him, the suspect Sunil Bhaduria alias Bablu, reached the victim student's house and threatened the boy and his father and demanded them to withdraw the case. The father-son duo then reached the SSP office and submitted a written complaint application to Crime Branch ASP Rajesh Dandautia. The police had called neighbor Sunil Bhadoria for questioning. "The student has complained that someone has uploaded obscene photos on his social media account by hacking his Instagram ID. The matter is being investigated. The victim student has raised suspicion on the neighbor, he is also being interrogated, soon the accused will be identified," said Rajesh Dandautia, ASP, Crime Branch.

## Kamal Nath urges PM, Soren to rethink move to develop Jain pilgrimage site for tourism

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Congress' Madhya Pradesh unit chief Kamal Nath on Tuesday wrote to Jharkhand Chief Minister Hemant Soren urging him to reconsider the Centre's proposal of developing 'Tirthkar Sammed Shikhar', a Jain pilgrimage site, as a tourist destination. In his letter to Soren, he sought to remind him that the holy place is centre of faith of the people of the Jain community as at least 20 out of 24 Tirthankaras had attained salvation there and therefore, the place should be protected from any step that can dent its purity. Nath noted that people of Jain community in Madhya Pradesh have unanimously opposed the Centre's decision and have demanded the proposal be cancelled. "I would urge you to protect the purity of this holy place and recon-



sider the proposal to develop it on the lines of a tourist place. The decision would harm the purity of this holy place," he wrote. Nath has also written to the Prime Minister, opposing the proposal, stressing that this decision would be against the faith of Jain community. "Through this letter, I would like to seek your attention on an important issue.

Centre has declared the holy place - 'Tirthkar Sammed Shikhar', a holy place, which is centre of faith of the Jain community, a tourist place. I would appeal you to reconsider on this decision to protect the purity of the place. Your this step will be a milestone to protect the religious harmony of the country," Nath urged in his letter sent on December 17.

## Two hunters, involved in killing of leopard in Shivpuri, arrested

Team Absolute | Shivpuri

Two hunters involved in the killing of a leopard were arrested and sent to jail on Tuesday night by Khaniyadhana police. On Monday night, dead body of a leopard was spotted by locals at Khaniyadhana police station area of Hindora khedi village. Villagers informed the forest department, after which forest department team took possession of dead body and sent it for postmortem in Madhav National Park. The leopard's cremation took place in presence of senior officers. "We wanted to catch wild boar, not leopard" According



to DFO Meena Mishra including SDO M.K Singh, Ranger Anurag Tiwari found that the leopard was nabbed by using a net. The investigation team arrested the two accused, who said the leopard got entangled in net laid to catch wild boar

and died. They threw the dead body of the leopard in a dense forest to avoid suspicion. The Forest Department team took both accused into custody and produced them in court on Wednesday and sent them to jail.

## Bajrang Dal Members Beat Up Youth Alleging "Love Jihad"

Team Absolute | Indore

Rightwing activists allegedly beat up a youth, claiming love jihad, in the Indore district of Madhya Pradesh on Tuesday. The activists allegedly caught the youth with a girl at Treasure Island Mall in the city. According to sources, they asked the name of the youth to which he told them that his name was Monu Verma. When they asked him to produce an ID card, he allegedly said that his real name was Moin Khan. It was alleged that the activists then beat up the youth, accusing him of love jihad, and later handed him over to the Tukoganj police. A purported video of the youth being beaten up also surfaced on the social media. Tukoganj police station in-charge Kamlesh Sharma said, "A girl approached the police station along with some Bajrang Dal activists. She had gone to watch a movie at TI mall in the city with a youth belonging to another community. Initially, the youth told the activists that his name was Monu but later when they interrogated him, he gave his real name as Moin, a resident of Manikbagh in the city."



"We are further questioning the girl and action will be taken accordingly," Sharma added.

## EVERY DAY 80 THOUSAND CALLS COME TO THE CM HELPLINE

Bhopal| CM helpline service is being operated in Madhya Pradesh for quick redressal of common people's problems. It is a service whose benefits are accessible through a phone call. This is the reason that every day more than 80 thousand calls are received from different parts of the state. Principal Secretary, Public Service Management, Manish Rastogi said that 691 services of 48 departments have been notified so far in the Guarantee Act 2010 by the department. Services are being provided to the citizens from 430 Public Service Centers in all the districts. The services of Lok Seva Kendra include one day solution services, Aadhaar card making and correction, Ayushman card making, revenue service's etc. in addition to the Public Service Guarantee Act. In the meeting of the Departmental Consultative Committee of the Public Service Management Department, it was decided that apart from providing services to the common citizens on phone calls from the CM helpline, special publicity should be given to the maximum number of common citizens to give information about redressal of the complaints filed by them. It should be spread, so that more and more citizens can take advantage of this service. False complaints have also come to the fore due to mutual quarrels in the CM helpline. It has been decided to keep an eye on the persons misusing the facility of CM Helpline and prevent them from doing so.

## Boy falls into well, friend's screams help save him

Team Absolute | Bhopal

A boy in Madhya Pradesh's Damoh district had a narrow escape after he fell into 40-foot well while playing in the courtyard of his house. The incident, which was captured by a CCTV camera, did not turn into a major tragedy as the owner of the house acted swiftly and rescued the boy within 3 minutes. CCTV footage shows two boys playing in the courtyard of Pawan Jain's house on Monday evening. One of the boys is seen walking along the narrow edge of the elevated platform in the middle of the courtyard when he trips and falls through a small grate covering the well. The child screams for help as his friend who is riding his bicycle



quickly gets off it and rushes to help him. Hearing the cries of the children, the family members rushed out of the house. "We threw a rope into the well for the child to hang on to till I could jump inside and get him out," Jain said. The video then shows the

family members helping lower Jain go down the well as they hold on to the rope. Within minutes, the child emerges from the well and is pulled out by the family members. "The boy is safe now and did not sustain any injuries," Jain added.

## Political uproar over minister getting land as a donation



Team Absolute | Bhopal

Madhya Pradesh Revenue Minister Govind Singh Rajput has created a political ruckus after getting 50 acres of land as donation from his in-laws. Attacks are being made on behalf of the Congress regarding this land several crores. His brothers-in-law Himachal Singh Rajput and Kartar Singh have donated 50 acres of land to Revenue Minister Govind Singh Rajput. This land is in the name of Minister Rajput, his

wife Savita Singh and son Aditya Rajput. It has been told that this land is situated in Bhopal village, about 12 kilometers from Sagar on the Bhopal-Sagar road. This land was bought by Himachal and Kartar a year ago. The attacks from the Congress have intensified after the minister got the land as a donation. Rajput is counted among the supporters of Union Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia, Rajput left the Congress and joined the BJP with Scindia.

Former minister and MLA Jeetu Patwari has said that this can be possible only in Shivraj Singh's cabinet, this is the minister who while leaving Congress had said that he is toppling the Congress government for public service and joining BJP for public service. Similarly, former minister and MLA PC Sharma has also alleged and said that it is a scam, it is a case like illegal dowry. At the time of registration, the land was shown as unirrigated and after that it was declared as irrigated.

## 13-year-old named 'Swachhhta' ambassador of Katni



Team Absolute | Katni

A 13-year-old boy in Madhya Pradesh has been named 'Swachhhta' ambassador for the Katni district after the Collector was impressed by his letter. Ashutosh Manke, a student of ninth standard at CM Rise Model School, sent a postcard on cleanliness, giving his suggestions for the maintenance of garbage carts and general cleanliness. After reading it, Collector Avi Prasad was very impressed and called Ashutosh to his office. He made him the brand ambassador for

the 'Swachh Bharat Mission' in Katni. Manke said he was very happy after the announcement while his sister, Ayushi Manke, said they didn't expect the Collector will respond to her brother's postcard so soon. Prasad said that he found his letter on his table, and after reading it, he called Manke to his office. "After I read the suggestions, I wanted to meet the child who wrote it. On meeting him, I found him to be very talented and confident. So, I decided to make him the brand ambassador for the Swachh Bharat Mission in Katni," he said.

## 'Artificial Intelligence' study in schools

Team Absolute | Bhopal

The subject 'Artificial Intelligence' has been started in a total of 53 schools in the state run by the State Open School Education Board of Madhya Pradesh. At present it has been started for the students of classes VIII and IX. State Open School Education Board has also set up 40 internet-enabled laboratories in these schools. State's Minister for School Education (Independent Charge) Inder Singh Parmar said that MP's Education Department is determined to provide quality education, for this emphasis is being laid on the inclusion and application of modern technical subjects. Madhya Pradesh is the first state, where in EFA (Education for All) schools; education is being imparted through a total of 240 hours of artificial intelligence classes in classes VIII and IX. With the availability of well-equipped computer lab, students are getting ease in studying this subject. To make India stand before the world with the latest technol-



ogy like Artificial Intelligence, students are being taught its creative use and use towards human welfare, in which this course will prove to be very useful. School children of the state are learning to 'test emotions' by reading this. Minister of State Parmar released the books of Class VIII and Class IX on the subject of Artificial Intelligence started in EFA (Education for All) schools run by the Madhya Pradesh State Open School Education Board.

## A YOUNG MAN WAS ARRESTED FOR POSTING PICTURES OF SUPPORTERS OF KHALISTAN IN JABALPUR



Jabalpur| In Jabalpur, a young man has been arrested on the charge of putting up photos of pro-Khalistani Bhandarwale. He had put Bhandarwale's picture on a tractor in a moving ceremony held on Guru Gobind Singh's birth anniversary. According to the information received, Prabhjot Singh, who lives in Ravana Park area of Ranjhi area, has been arrested by the crime branch. He is accused of playing the songs of General Singh Bhandarwale during the procession and also putting Bhandarwale's photo on the back of his tractor. Police confirmed Prabhjot's arrest, adding that he had arrived at a Sikh Samaj event carrying a photo of pro-Khalistan Bhandarwale on a tractor. Along with this, pro-Khalistan songs were also played on the music system. The police is investigating the entire case.





EDITOR'S SPECS

Researchers identify triggers for long Covid syndrome

As millions suffer from fatigue and other other symptoms of long Covid, researchers have presented new evidence of triggers for fatigue following the SARS-COV-2 infection. The team from University of Vienna and the Medical University of Vienna, led by chemist Christopher Gerner, showed that an exaggerated anti-inflammatory response is likely to be responsible for long Covid syndrome. Although auto-immunity was previously suspected as the main cause of long Covid, there is no evidence of accompanying inflammatory processes in the long Covid syndrome patients. According to the new study published in iScience, not the excessive inflammatory reaction but anti-inflammatory substances as the triggers for the long Covid syndrome. Contrary to previous expectations, the researchers were able to find several anti-inflammatory proteins, lipids and metabolites in long Covid patients, which on the one hand could contribute to the most important long Covid syndrome symptoms, and, on the other hand, point to the formation of alternatively polarised macrophages as the cause. In the course of a viral infection, there is normally a very strong activation of the immune system. But in virtually all of the long Covid patients studied, corresponding markers such as cytokines, acute phase proteins and eicosanoids, which indicate inflammation, were in fact hardly detectable. Surprisingly, the differences were more pronounced in long Covid patients compared to asymptomatic patients recovering from Covid disease than to healthy controls. The researchers are confident that in the near future, they will be able to offer significantly improved diagnostic options for long Covid syndrome and, above all, monitoring methods to evaluate the effects of therapy.

CHINA'S ARUNACHAL POLICY IS ONE THAT EXPOSES ITS VULNERABILITIES

China's Arunachal policy has been one that has significantly strained the two countries bilateral relations over the past decades. Arunachal Pradesh, India's north-eastern most state, has unilaterally been made to be contentious due to China's unprovoked aggressive behaviour. The state shares a critical border with Tibet, another region in which China maintains its hawkish approach. The contention between both the countries has persisted even after Arunachal Pradesh legal recognition as a part of India's sovereign territory through the Shimla agreement of 1914 signed by Great Britain, China and Tibet. Although, China in the past has on various occasions accepted the McMahon Line in its desire to settle border disputes with both Myanmar and Nepal, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), has more often than not intended to use aggressive means while resolving its prevailing disputes with India. More so it has laid claim over whole of Arunachal Pradesh, which until the 1980's was limited to solely the Tawang region. The recent skirmish in Yangtse located 25 km away from the Tawang region, was evidence of a similar tactics deployed by the People's Liberation Army (PLA) of further destabilizing the bilateral relations. The Yangtse region in particular holds significant strategic value and is located at a height of 15,000 feet and thus offers a clear view of Chinese post across the LAC. The inability of the PLA in securing the vital position has provoked the Chinese side into instigating detrimental confrontations with the Indian side throughout the years and the recent clash is also in consonance with one of China's long-standing strategies in Arunachal Pradesh of unprovoked instigation. Although the PLA's transgression attempts are not a novel affair, the Chinese ruling elites' intent of changing the status quo has only intensified in the recent years. As per the Indian government, more than 1,000 transgressions from the Chinese side were thwarted by the Indian Army between 2016- 2018 all along the disputed border; most of these transgressions came during the stand-off in Doklam in 2017. The pattern to such attempts is revealing in the sense



that the Chinese side has always stroked unprovoked tensions at the border when it has felt that the Indian has been gaining an upper hand in the neighbouring regions. Either it be the visit of the Dalai Lama to Arunachal Pradesh or internal conflicts within China, transgressions into Indian territory have been China's go to strategy to divert attentions of domestic populations as well as to contain the growing superiority of its rising neighbour. Prominent scholars and officials have interpreted these attempts as China's growing concern with India's rapid advancement in developing regions adjoining the border areas. In the past years, India has focused on building and improving infrastructure in areas that could provide better connectivity for locals and defence forces alike in the sensitive regions. However, a far more concerning incentive for such actions is the CCP's attempt to gain a stronger hold over the Tibetan region by declaring a successor to the 14th Dalai Lama. The Tawang district inculcate great cultural value for Buddhism and is home to the oldest and second biggest monastery in Asia where the Sixth Dalai Lama, Tsangyang Gyatso, was born in 1683. These cultural

roots have led many Lamas to believe that the next Dalai Lama would very well emerge out of the Tawang region, a situation the CCP has been trying to avoid. The CCP has been attempting to declare a successor to the Dalai Lama for years but has been unsuccessful in doing so as well. The succession plans of the 14th Dalai Lama are an integral aspect of China's approach of integrating the Tibetan region into China and is a proposition that has been prevented by India's rights over the region. However, due to the its hawkish approach as well as its lack of understanding on India's sovereign rights over the whole of Arunachal Pradesh, China is expected to only exemplify its aggressive behaviour in its quest to contain its neighbour's development as well as fulfil its Sinicization process. More so as an advancement to such tactics, China has unilaterally been renaming parts of Arunachal Pradesh both in 2017 and 2021 as part of its 'standardising' procedure. These 'standardisations' are not only in clear violation of international norms, but are also indicative of China's strategy of propping up points of contention with New Delhi. Astonishingly, according to

recent reports, Beijing has also been focusing on building 'Xiaokang' village models in sensitive regions near the border. Recently, China's President Xi Jinping had called upon herdsmen from the Tibetan region to expand their settlements on to its borders with Arunachal Pradesh in order to instigate a confrontation with the India side as well as lay its claim over the disputed region. The statement also publicly endorsed the need for a sharp change in the demography of the area. Although bilateral agreements regarding the maintaining of peace in the border areas exist, it has largely been ignored by China to restrict development in strategically vital regions. For instance, the Border Peace and Tranquillity Agreement (BPTA) signed in 1993 which stated that both countries would strictly respect and observe the Line of Actual Control (LAC) has mostly been breached as part of China's constant policy to deter India's growth. Furthermore, agreements to diffuse tensions and avoid stand-offs had also been signed in 2013 after the Daulat Beg Oldi Standoff in 2013. However, even after such agreements, the tensions between both countries have remained high due to multiple skirmishes and border clashes including the Chumar Standoff in 2014, Burtse in 2015, Dokham in 2017 the Galwan skirmish in 2020 as well as the recent Yangtse clash. It is clear from China's constant attempt of toppling the prevailing status quo that it does not intend to embark on a peaceful resolution and thus it is important any provocation and action by the Chinese side be seen in the same light. Beijing's vulnerabilities lie in its limited access to the Indian ocean and in order to prevent diversion of resources to such sectors as well as to achieve its nefarious decades long Sinicization objective of the Tibetan region, China is only expected to provoke its neighbour into a prolonged confrontation. Therefore, India's decision-making processes must diversify its endeavours to not only develop vital strategic locations surrounding the border regions but should also enhance its capabilities in sectors where China finds itself exposed.

international

NEW OMICRON SUBVARIANTS ACCOUNT FOR NEARLY 70% NEW COVID CASES IN US

Washington | Agencies  
New Omicron subvariants BQ.1 and BQ.1.1 have accounted for about 70 per cent of new Covid-19 cases in the US as the country's overall caseload has surpassed 100 million, according to the latest estimates by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). BQ.1.1 was estimated to make up about 38.4 per cent of circulating variants in the week ending December 17, and BQ.1 was estimated to make up 30.7 per cent, according to CDC data. The two variants are descendants of Omicron's BA.5 subvariant and they have been growing especially fast since October, reports Xinhua news agency citing the data. At the beginning of October, each of the two new variants accounted for about



1 per cent of new infections. They replaced BA.5 to be dominant strains in mid-November. BA.5 only accounted for 10 per cent of new infections in the latest week. Another Omicron subvariant XBB is also on the rise, accounting for 7.2 per cent of new infections.

Researchers found that the BQ and XBB subvariants are "barely susceptible to neutralization" by the vaccines, including the new Omicron boosters, according to a study published recently in the journal Cell. This could result in a surge of breakthrough infections and reinfections, though the

vaccines have been shown to hold up against severe disease, according to the study. In its latest update on Wednesday, according to data from the Johns Hopkins University. As of Wednesday, the Johns Hopkins University said that country's overall caseload now stood at 100,003,814, while the death toll increased to 1,088,236. With the highest number of cases and deaths, the US remains the worst-hit country in the world. It accounts for more than 15 per cent of the global caseload and over 16 per cent of the overall fatalities. The country's Covid caseload reached 50 million on December 13, 2021, crossed 60 million on January 9, 2022, exceeded 70 million on January 21, topped 80 million on March 29, and surpassed 90 million on July 21.

6.4-MAGNITUDE EARTHQUAKE IN CALIFORNIA KILLS 2, INJURES 11

Los Angeles: At least two people were killed and 11 others injured after a massive 6.4-magnitude earthquake struck Northern California's Eureka area, the US Geological Survey (USGS) said, adding that there were reports of damage to houses and buildings while tens of thousands were left without electricity. According to the USGS, the epicentre of the quake that struck at 2.34 a.m. on Tuesday, was in the Pacific about 15 miles from Fortuna, a city of about 12,000 people in Humboldt County, reports CNN. The Humboldt County Sheriff's Office said the two deaths occurred "as a result of medical emergencies" during and after the tremor. The USGS said more than a dozen aftershocks, some measuring 4.2 on the Richter scale, were recorded after the initial massive quake. As of later Tuesday, over 70,000 electricity outages were reported in Humboldt County, out of a total 99,000 customers, according to utility tracker PowerOutage.us. Tuesday's tremor came a year after a 6.2-magnitude quake struck just off Humboldt County's Cape Mendocino on December 20, 2021, and caused minor damage to buildings in the area.



Taliban suspends university education for Afghan women

Kabul | Agencies

The Taliban-led government in Afghanistan has announced the suspension of university education for female students all across the war-torn nation, the latest in a series of restrictions against women rights. A letter issued by the regime's Education Ministry on Tuesday said the decision, which will further restrict women's access to formal education, was taken at a cabinet meeting and the order will go into effect immediately, reports CNN. Meanwhile, the Minister for Higher Education said that the suspension will remain until further notice. The latest development comes after thousands of girls and women appeared for university entrance



exams across Afghanistan three months ago, reports the BBC. But sweeping restrictions were imposed on the subjects they could study, with veterinary science, engineering, economics and agriculture off limits and journalism severely restricted. After the country fell to the Taliban in August 2021, universities introduced gender segregated classrooms and entrances. Female students could only be taught by women professors or old men.

IRAN SAYS READY TO CONCLUDE VIENNA NUKE DEAL ON BASIS OF FINAL DRAFT

Tehran | Agencies

The Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian has said that Iran was ready to conclude the Vienna talks on the revival of a 2015 nuclear deal on the basis of the final draft produced after months of negotiations. Amir-Abdollahian made the remarks in a two-hour meeting with the EU's Foreign Policy Chief Josep Borrell on the sidelines of a regional conference in Amman, capital of Jordan, according to a statement published on the Iranian Foreign Ministry's website on Tuesday. He urged other parties to the nuclear deal to adopt "constructive and realistic approaches" and refrain from politicising the issue, Xinhua news agency reported. For his part, Borrell agreed that the revival of the nuclear deal and negotiations to this end are separate from other issues on the agenda. The meeting was also attended by Iran's Chief Nuclear Negotiator, Ali Bagheri Kani and EU Coordinator for the Nuclear Talks, Enrique Mora. Iran signed the nuclear deal, formally known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of



Action (JCPOA), with world powers in July 2015, agreeing to put curbs on its nuclear programme in return for the removal of the sanctions on the country. The US, however, pulled out of the deal in May 2018 and reimposed its unilateral sanctions on Iran, prompting the latter to drop some of its nuclear commitments under the deal. The talks on the JCPOA's revival began in April 2021 in Vienna. No breakthrough was achieved after the latest round of talks in early August.

Militants storm police station in Pak's South Waziristan

Islamabad | Agencies

Dozens of armed militants stormed a police station in Pakistan's South Waziristan and escaped after looting arms and ammunition, police have confirmed. Militants armed with rocket launchers and heavy weapons forced their way into the police station in Wana, Dawn news quoted Rehman Wazir, an official who was inside at the time of the attack, as saying. He said that around 50 militants entered the station after blowing up the front gate, Dawn reported. Heavily outnumbered in front of militants, around 20 policemen, including the station house officer, resisted for some time but were later taken hostage, another police official said. Videos shared on social media showed a heavy bombardment of rockets and grenades at the station in the dark of night, Dawn reported. The attackers fled with weapons



in a police van after the attack. Local police said the militants only took away eight AK-47 rifles from the station, Dawn reported. One police constable was injured, while an alleged militant was killed in the attack, sources said. According to sources, the alleged

militant was gunned down in an exchange of fire with Frontier Corps (FC) personnel. His body was later recovered from the Baghicha area. The police station was briefly taken over by FC after the attack, but was later handed back to the cops by Tuesday afternoon.

Police said more force was deployed to Wana from nearby areas and currently there were 100 cops inside the station. The attack created panic in the area and locals expressed their dismay over it. Shakir Khan, a local elder, said "good and bad Taliban" were the government's creation and locals want nothing to do with them. "The public neither wants neither good nor bad Taliban. It wants the rule of law in their area," he said. The police stations in North Waziristan and South Waziristan -- two districts bordering Afghanistan -- have been consistently targeted by militants over the past few months, Dawn reported. After a spate of attacks, police personnel vacated Raghza and Khan Kot police stations close to the border. The withdrawal provided the militants with an open space to roam around the area and easily access areas such as Wana, according to sources.





OLD PENSION SCHEME WILL PUT BURDEN ON EXCHEQUER, GOVT WON'T REVERT TO IT: DEVENDRA FADNAVIS



Team Absolute | Mumbai

Devendra Fadnavis on Wednesday said the government will not revert to the old pension scheme as it would put a burden of Rs 1.10 lakh crore on the exchequer and lead to bankruptcy of the state.

Under the old pension scheme, employees get a defined pension. Under this, an employee is entitled for a 50 per cent amount of the last salary drawn as pension.

However, the pension amount is contributory under the National Pension System, which is in effect from 2004. "The government will not give pensions as per the old scheme. If the old pension scheme is to be implemented, then it will add a burden of Rs 1,10,000 crore and this will lead to bankruptcy of the state. The old pension scheme will not be implemented," said Fadnavis, who is also the finance minister of Maharashtra.

MAHA TO SET UP TASK FORCE TO MONITOR COVID SITUATION: FADNAVIS

Nagpur: The Maharashtra government will soon set up a Task Force to monitor the Covid situation; Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis informed the state Assembly on Wednesday. He said the state government will coordinate with the Central government and its agencies on this.

Replying to a question in the state Assembly, Fadnavis said the old pension scheme was stopped in 2005.

He also lauded the then Congress-Nationalist Congress Party government for taking the decision of stopping the old pension scheme in the interest of the

MAN GETS ONE-YEAR RIGOROUS IMPRISONMENT FOR MOLESTING MINOR GIRL

Thane: A court in Maharashtra's Thane district has sentenced a man to one-year rigorous imprisonment for molesting a seven-year-old girl in 2016. Special Judge V V Virkar, hearing cases pertaining to the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, also imposed a fine of Rs 1,000 on the 28-year-old accused in the order passed on Tuesday.

The police had registered offences against the accused under various sections of the Indian Penal Code and the POCSO Act. Hiwrale said seven prosecution witnesses were examined to prove the case.

26 women from specially-built cavity rescued; 4 held

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Officials of the Mumbai Police rescued as many as 26 women kept in a specially-built cavity in a south Mumbai house, where an alleged flesh trade racket was being operated. The police arrested four persons, including three women, after conducting a raid, an official said on Wednesday.

to escape, the official said. After a thorough search of the premises, the police found a specially-built cavity in the establishment where 26 women were kept, he said. On being rescued, the women, hailing from different states, told the police they were forcefully pushed into flesh trade, the official said. The SSB later handed over the arrested people and the rescued women to the DB Marg police station for further probe. The accused were booked under relevant sections of the Indian Penal Code (IPC), including 308 (attempt to commit culpable homicide), and offences related to obscenity, he said.

The IPC section 308 was invoked due to the way the women had been kept hidden in the cavity, said the official.

20 PEOPLE STUCK IN LIFT AT BANDRA RAILWAY STATION FOR 30 MINUTES

Mumbai: At least 20 passengers were stuck in a lift at Bandra railway station for about half an hour on Wednesday.

Police Constable Shaheen Pathan from Bandra Railway Police Station reached on time to help the passengers come out of the lift with the help of an electrician and the Station Manager.

"20 passengers were stuck in the lift at Bandra railway station for about half an hour. Working at Bandra Railway Police Station P.S. Shaheen Pathan saved the stranded passengers in time with the help of an electrician and station manager," tweeted Government Railway Police (GRP) Mumbai. Further details are awaited.

MAN ATTACKED WITH SWORD ALLEGEDLY OVER TRADE DISPUTE

Team Absolute | Mumbai

A sword attack that left a man seriously injured has sparked tension at Vasai near Mumbai and prompted the police to launch a massive search for suspects. According to local residents, the attack could be fallout of a dispute between two groups involved in pork trade.

The attack was captured by CCTV cameras in the neighbourhood, located in Maharashtra's Palghar district. The shocking footage shows one pick-up van hitting another, bringing it to a stop. A man is then dragged out of the vehicle and hit repeatedly with a sword. The attackers are seen scaring away bystanders by waving the sword and wielding a gun. Eyewitnesses have said the

attackers fired shots to ensure no one intervened. The man who was attacked has been identified as Harjeet Singh. The attackers kidnapped him after the assault, according to eyewitnesses. Police have registered a case and formed several teams to track down Singh and the suspects. The others people travelling with Singh were not attacked, the visuals showed. Police have seized Singh's vehicle and a sword from the spot. Visuals from the spot show top police officers examining the spot for clues. Local resident Jayendra Patil said the attackers warned bystanders against any attempt to rescue Singh. "One of them pulled out a gun, so no one dared to intervene." He added that the dispute could be linked to pork trade. "They are pork meat traders.

3RD EDITION OF MI JUNIOR TO ORGANIZE U-14, U-16 BOYS AND U-15 GIRL'S TOURNAMENTS

The tournament included women umpires for the first time of its history



Mumbai | Agencies

The third edition of the Inter-School Cricket Tournament, under MI Junior, kick-started on Wednesday in Mumbai, and will be followed by matches in Pune and Nagpur.

The Mumbai leg commenced at Cross Maidan where former India fast bowler and Mumbai Indians Scout R Vinay Kumar interacted with the kids giving them valuable insights about cricket. MI Junior is being held in association with Mumbai Cricket Association, Vidarbha Cricket Association and Maharashtra Cricket Association and will comprise of U-14 boys, U-16 boys and U-15 girls' categories.

More than 2500 children from over 200 schools have signed up for the tournament

across the three cities. For the first time, the tournament will include women umpires and scorers who are accredited with the cricket associations, officiating across the three cities.

The tournament, an initiative from the owners of Mumbai Indians, is back again after a gap of two years due to Covid-19. It is aimed at providing young kids with a competitive platform to showcase their talent.

The Mumbai Indians owners/ leadership/ management are focused on developing players and with MI being a grooming ground for young talent, MI Junior is one such instance towards creating and providing further opportunities for kids. I wish everyone the best of luck for the season and hope each child enjoys and makes the most of this

opportunity," said Vinay Kumar.

"We are extremely happy to host the third season of MI Junior, an initiative very close to Mumbai Indians and its ethos of grooming talent to become the best versions of themselves."

We would like to thank the Mumbai Cricket Association, Vidarbha Cricket Association and Maharashtra Cricket Association for their constant support since the first season of the tournament. With MI Junior we aim to give young cricketers the deserved exposure and experience of playing cricket in a competitive environment. We are committed towards providing opportunities aimed at the development of local cricket talent equally for both boys and girls," said a spokesperson from Mumbai Indians.

HC extends stay on bail order of ex-minister Anil Deshmukh

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The Bombay High Court on Wednesday extended the stay on the bail order of former home minister Anil Deshmukh till December 27. While granting bail to the NCP leader on December 12 in a corruption case filed by CBI, the court had made order effective after 19 days. The CBI had sought extension of time to make order effective. The case is based on former Mumbai Police chief Param Bir Singh's statement accusing Deshmukh of extorting money from bars, restaurants and hookah parlours in Mumbai.

On December 16, the CBI moved the Supreme Court claiming that the High Court "committed grave error" while granting bail to Deshmukh despite its objection. Its petition will be heard in January after the winter vacations.

On Tuesday, the CBI, through Additional Solicitor General Anil Singh, urged Justice Karnik of the Bombay High Court to extend the stay on its order till January 3. Advocate Aniket Nikam, appearing for Deshmukh, contended that the central agency's application for the extension of the stay was an abuse of the legal process. He said that the agency can approach



the vacation registrar of the Supreme Court instead.

"The order for bail was passed on December 12 and made available the same day," Nikam argued. "They filed the petition on December 16, the last [working] date of the Supreme Court [before the vacation]. CBI has earlier challenged orders overnight...They want this court to exercise powers." On being asked by Justice MS Karnik why the CBI has not approached the registrar, Singh said the registrar was contacted but it was difficult to get the matter listed.

"I will grant till Tuesday," Justice Karnik then said.

Border Row

"Will enter Karnataka like china entered our country": Sanjay Raut

Amid simmering tension between Karnataka and Maharashtra over the border issue, Shiv Sena (Uddhav Balasaheb Thackeray) leader Sanjay Raut on Wednesday sparked a fresh controversy by saying, "We will enter Karnataka like China has entered the country." The senior leader of the party said that he did not need anyone's "permission" regarding the issue.



Team Absolute | Mumbai

Like China has entered, we will enter (Karnataka). We don't need anyone's permission. We want to solve it through a discussion but Karnataka CM is igniting a fire. There is a weak government in Maharashtra and is not taking any stand on it," Sanjay Raut said.

The leader's statement has come at a time of heightened tension between Maharashtra and Karnataka over a decades-old border conflict. The issue has also reached the Supreme Court.

Eknath Shinde's government is facing criticism over the issue. The Opposition has also raised the issue in the ongoing winter session of the Maharashtra Assembly. Leader of Opposition Ajit Pawar raised the issue of the border dispute earlier in the Assembly and said, "A Lok Sabha member from Maharashtra has been stopped from entering Belgaum. In a meeting with Home Minister Amit Shah, it was decided that no one would be stopped from going there, then how can the collector there take such a decision?"

Responding to the issue raised by Pawar, Chief Minister Shinde said, "For the first time, the Home Minister of the country mediated the border dispute, he has taken this issue seriously, we have presented the side of the border residents to him, Amit Shah has had put forth his point in front of the border dispute, now there should be no politics on the border dispute, we should stand together with the border residents."

Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis echoed with Chief Minister Shinde's remarks and said that the government will look into the matter.

CONGRESS SLAMS BJP GOVERNMENT OVER K'TAKA-MAHA BORDER DISPUTE



Belagavi: Congress Karnataka unit on Wednesday charged that the BJP governments at the Centre and in Maharashtra and Karnataka have failed to address the border dispute.

Opposition leader from Congress party Siddaramaiah stated that BJP is ruling at the Centre and they are in power in Karnataka and Maharashtra. But, they have "failed" to address the border dispute, he said.

He was reacting to the statement of NCP leader Jayant Patil that Maharashtra should raise the height of dams on rivers flowing into Karnataka to rein in the situation.

He maintained that despite Union Home Minister Amit Shah asking both the state leaders not to rake up the issue, Maharashtra leaders have continued to issue statements regarding the border dispute. "If leaders of Maharashtra talk according to their whims and fancies, we can also talk very well on those lines," Siddaramaiah stated.

"Earlier the Maharashtra government demanded implementation of the Mahajan Commission report. As per the report of Mahajan Commission, the border issue between two states had been solved. In spite of that, Maharashtra state is raking up the issue," he said. Siddaramaiah further charged that "leaders of Maharashtra have no respect for law".

All three governments, at the Centre and state level in both the states have failed to manage the situation, he reiterated. Meanwhile, both the Houses of Karnataka legislature have decided to pass a resolution unanimously against

Maha Minister's Water Supply Warning To Karnataka

Nagpur: Amid the simmering border dispute, Maharashtra Minister Shambhuraj Desai on Wednesday said if Karnataka Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai does not stop making irresponsible statements, Maharashtra will have to rethink about water supply from its dams to the neighbouring state. The Maharashtra government last month appointed cabinet members Chandrakant Patil and Shambhuraj Desai as nodal ministers to coordinate with the legal team regarding a court case on the state's border dispute with Karnataka. Addressing reporters in the Vidhan Bhavan complex in Nagpur, Desai slammed Bommai over the Karnataka government's stand that not an inch of land will be given to Maharashtra. The Karnataka legislature has reiterated the state's stand that the border issue is a settled one, and not an inch of land will be given to the neighbouring state. During a debate on the border dispute in the Karnataka Legislative Assembly on Tuesday, Chief Minister Bommai himself suggested passing a unanimous resolution in both Houses of the state legislature reiterating and asserting the stand. Desai said he condemns such comments, which do not suit Bommai as he holds a constitutional post. When the case is sub-judice, a chief minister using such "threatening language" is not good and he should stop it, he said. "Even Maharashtra can reply in the same language and he should not provoke us," Desai said.



Medical student wins Sarpanch election on return from Georgia

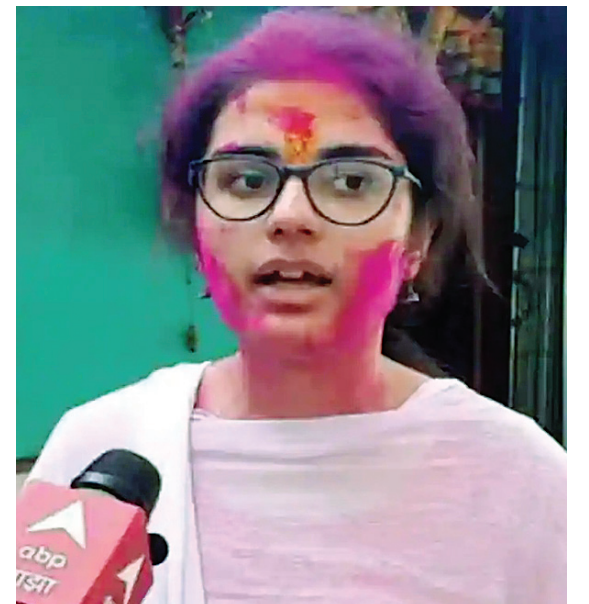
Yashodhara Shinde, 21, aspired to become a doctor and was pursuing the medical course in Georgia, but fate had something else in store for her as she returned to her village in Maharashtra, contested the sarpanch election and won it too.

Pune | Agencies

She now plans to work for the betterment of her village Vaddi in Miraj tehsil of Sangli district and also complete her education online.

Talking to reporter, Shinde said she wants to make women self-reliant, introduce e-learning and other education tools for students, help children adopt good health habits, contribute towards the betterment of youth's aspirations and welfare of the farmers' community in the village.

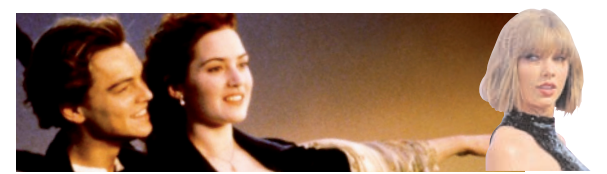
"I have been pursuing the MBBS course at the New Vision University in Georgia. Currently, I am in the 4th year and one-and-a-half years of the course is still left to be completed," she said. "When elections were announced in my village, locals wanted someone from our family to contest for the sarpanch's (village head) post. A decision was taken to field me for the position. I got a call from my family and I returned, contested the election and



won," said Shinde. Voting for 7,682 gram panchayats in parts of Maharashtra was held on December 18. The results were declared on Tuesday. Asked about her plans as sarpanch for the development of the village, Shinde said her main focus will be to address the issues of women and make them

stand on their feet. "I am of the opinion that women must get an equal chance to show what they are capable of and I would like to make them educated and independent and not rely on their male counterparts," she said. Her priority list also includes the welfare of children and their education.





## 'NO AGENDA' BEHIND CASTING ARIEL IN THE MOVIE: DIRECTOR ROB MARSHALL

Los Angeles | Agencies

Disney's live-action 'The Little Mermaid' had "no agenda" when it came to the casting of Ariel, said the director Rob Marshall.

The director said that his team auditioned "every ethnicity" for the role before landing on singer Halle Bailey.

While Bailey's casting has been widely championed and celebrated, a small portion of racist fans have expressed outrage against Disney for casting a Black actor as Ariel.

"We just were looking for the best actor for the role, period. The end," Marshall said. "We saw everybody and every ethnicity. (The goal was to find someone who can be) incredibly strong, passionate, beautiful, smart, clever (and with) a great deal of fire and joy."

Bailey had all of those qualities, plus the kind of voice the role of Ariel demands. As Marshall explained, "That voice is something that is so signature and so ethereal and so beautiful that it captures the heart of Eric and he looks for her for the entire film."

"I wasn't anticipating that because, in a way, I felt like we've moved so far past that kind of thing," Marshall said. "But then you realize, in a way we haven't. It was very moving to me to see how important this kind of casting is for the world."



## BLACK ADAM "WILL NOT BE IN THEIR FIRST CHAPTER OF STORYTELLING": DWAYNE JOHNSON

Los Angeles | Agencies

Hollywood star Dwayne Johnson says that after talking with DC Studios co-chief James Gunn, his anti-hero Black Adam "will not be in their first chapter of storytelling".

But Johnson added a statement posted to social media that DC and his production company, Seven Bucks, "have agreed to continue exploring the most valuable ways Black Adam can be utilised in future DC multiverse chapters".

In response, Gunn tweeted "Love the Rock, and I'm always excited to see what he and Seven Bucks do next. Can't wait to collaborate soon." Johnson's statement includes effusive praise for Gunn, noting they've known each other "for years" and "have always rooted for each other to succeed".

That comes a day after Gunn addressed "disrespectful outcry" by some DC fans for his creative decisions regarding Cavill and Gadot. "We were aware there would be a period of turbulence when we took this gig, and we knew we would sometimes have to make difficult and not-so-obvious choices, especially in the wake of the fractious nature of what came before us," Gunn posted.

"Our choice for the DCU are based upon what we believe is best for the story and best for the DC characters who have been around for nearly 85 years. Perhaps these choices are great, perhaps not, but they are made with sincere hearts and integrity, and always with the story in mind."



## GWEN STEFANI

decorates her bathroom with tabloid newspaper

Los Angeles | Agencies

Singer Gwen Stefani's bathroom is decorated with tabloid newspapers. Splitting her time between LA and a newly-built ranch in Oklahoma since tying the knot with country singer Blake Shelton in 2021, the pop star revealed that the pair decided to cover one of the bathrooms "wall to wall" with front pages.

"Blake and I will lay in bed and watch the tutorials of people that would take a palette and see what they would create with it. You know what we do have? When we built our house last year in Oklahoma, one of the bathrooms going out to the pool is every single tabloid cover, made into wallpaper. You go in there and you're like, 'Oh my God.' It's pretty funny," she said.

Meanwhile, the 'Hollaback Girl' hitmaker started her career as the lead singer of rock band 'No Doubt' and enjoyed massive success in the 1990s with songs such as 'Don't Speak' but admitted that she has "no idea" if a reunion will ever come about but teased that "anything can happen."

She said, "What are the odds of anything? I was just on 'The Drew Barrymore Show'. She was one of my favourite celebrities when I was a little girl, and now I was just on the show with her. Anything can happen." "I have no idea what's going to happen with No Doubt. We haven't really talked about doing anything, but it feels like everyone is, right?"

All the '90s people - Blink-182 did an eight-month tour that sold out in like five minutes."



## I CERTAINLY REALISED HOW VULNERABLE I WAS: HUGH JACKMAN

Los Angeles | Agencies

Hollywood star Hugh Jackman called himself 'a hot mess' while filming 'The Son'. The actor joins Laura Dern, Vanessa Kirby, and Sir Anthony Hopkins in the new drama film, and Hugh has admitted to struggling throughout the shoot. "I certainly realised how vulnerable I was," explained the Hollywood star - who plays a successful lawyer with a teenage son who is suffering from depression.

The actor said that the movie's subject matter and the return to work following Covid-19 lockdowns caused him to experience "anxiety". The actor's troubles were compounded by the death of his dad Christopher, who died in September 2021.

Explaining why he didn't take any time off to grieve his dad's death, Hugh said, "My father actually never missed a day of work in his life. I did imagine what my father would say and he would say, 'Go to work'." Jackman actually suffered sleepless nights throughout the shoot and he continues to see a therapist.

The actor is now encouraging other people to seek help if they're experiencing similar issues. He said, "There's a little part of the old school part of my brain (that thinks), 'Well, that's up to you to work out'. If you need to go to a doctor, for whatever reason, your foot, your mental health, you know, you work that out." "But I think it certainly would be a sign from an employer that we understand taking care of the whole person, not just paying them, but taking care of their well-being in all forms is really, really important." Jackman actually believes that mental health issues need to be spoken about more openly. He said, "There is a real lack of knowledge and ignorance and shame around the subject and I think it's something we need to confront, really, really quickly."

## Glass Onion: A Knives Out Mystery: A layered mystery of twists and turns



SHACHI CHATURVEDI

**Director:** Rian Johnson  
**Cast:** Daniel Craig, Edward Norton, Janelle Monáe, and Kate Hudson, among others  
**Runtime:** 2hr 19 mins  
**Ratings:** 3/5 (three stars)

### Synopsis

The Glass Onion: A Knives Out Mystery is a standalone movie that serves as a sequel to the 2019 movie Knives Out. This time, the tale concerns IT sector millionaire Miles Bron, who invites his friends to a getaway on a private Greek island. Detective Benoit Blanc is assigned to the investigation when death is uncovered.

### Review

Miles Bron, a rich tech dude, is not nearly as smart as he believes. He gathers his close-knit gang, a diverse mix of individuals who shamelessly call themselves "The Disruptors" - once a year for a luxurious weekend getaway. The movie begins with Miles sending his close pals an invitation in a puzzle box. The invitation is to stay on his own island for the weekend. A journey that was initially intended to be a joyful weekend filled with games and puzzles to solve, ends up being a deadly weekend. Miles, who has



prepared a game about his fictitious murder, now fears for his life. Is it his delusion or do others genuinely wish to murder him?

All of Mile's close friends have a reason to murder him, but they are powerless to do it because of the mysteries he is hiding. Talking about the Glass Onion, its giant domed building.

Every single one of the star performances is outstanding in its own way. The irony of seeing Edward Norton as Mile is delightful. It's entertaining to even consider him portraying a stupid role. The humour he adds in the performance is a clear delight.

The two characters with the most nuances are Daniel Craig and Janelle Monáe. You can sense the anguish in the chats they have due

to their profundity. Their character is the real backbone of the films.

Although the other characters in the movie are all significant and well-played, Kate Hudson deserves special recognition. Oh my God, that woman is incredible. Her character provides the bulk of the movie's humour, and Kate's performance is phenomenal.

Talking about the technicalities, the film is a good watch, somewhere a visual treat but lacks editing. The plot has a complex build-up, yet the conclusion seems rather predestined. It seems like this movie might truly be mind-blowing with tighter screenplay editing and a crisper ending.

Getting to the soundtrack and songs in

movies, despite the fact that there aren't many songs in the film because it's a mystery, it has a strong soundtrack that helps to heighten the tension.

Johnson's mystery doubles back on itself to disclose more information about these folks we thought we'd gotten to know, which results in a sloppy middle. The result seems boring. But in the end, Miles' mansion's enormous glass onion serves as an all-too apt metaphor for the entire film: Beautiful but shallow

### Conclusion

Despite being predictable, the film manages to keep your attention till the very end.

## ABSOLUTE PIC OF THE DAY



Molly Smith





## IND vs BAN Test Series

# CONFIDENT INDIA AIM FOR CLEAN SWEEP OVER BANGLADESH

Dhaka | Agencies

Confident India side will be aiming for a clean sweep in their Test series against Bangladesh when the two teams meet for the second and final match, starting on Thursday at the Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium, here.

After a comprehensive victory of 188 runs over Bangladesh in the first Test at Chattogram, where many players helped them seize the key moments, India were also helped by South Africa's two-day loss to Australia to now be at second place in the ICC World Test Championship (WTC) standings.

Another victory in Dhaka will cement their second-place standing in the Championship points table, behind hosts Australia and India have a lot of reasons to be optimistic about the same.

Cheteshwar Pujara made 90 and 102 not out in both innings, while Shubman Gill registered his maiden Test century and Rishabh Pant set



the base for a counter-attack with a quick 46. Shreyas Iyer and Ravichandran Ashwin also did a crucial job with the bat and India would want captain KL Rahul to be among the runs too.

Left-arm wrist-spinner Kuldeep Yadav had a great all-round outing on his return to Tests after 22 months, taking a five-fer in the first innings and chipping in with a career-best 40 with the bat.

Bangladesh, on the other hand, will be pleased with batting performances of debutant opener Zakir Hasan, who made an attractive 100 in the second innings and skipper Shakib Al Hasan making an attacking 84.

But the hosts were left badly hurt after being rolled over for just 150 in the first innings and let of the advantage of reducing India to 48/3 in the first day of the match. Litton Das, Mushfiqur Rahim and Najmul Hossain Shanto, who made 67 in the second innings, will have to step up more with the bat if Bangladesh are to put a collective effort in Dhaka.

With the ball, Shakib should be fit enough to bowl after not rolling his arm over in India's second innings. With Ebadot Hossain out due to injury, Taskin Ahmed should take his place in the eleven after the right-arm pacer himself missed the first Test due to back injury.

Overall, it should be an interesting contest between a team high on confidence and a side who have been inconsistent at home.

## ICC Test Rankings

# Babar reaches career-best second spot; Kuldeep, Axar make massive jumps

Dhaka | Agencies

Pakistan captain Babar Azam attained a career-best second position in the latest ICC Mens Test Rankings for batters released on Wednesday while Indian spinners Kuldeep Yadav and Axar Patel also made jumps in their respective rankings in the bowlers' category.

Babar scored two half-centuries (78 and 54) in the final Test of the ICC World Test Championship (WTC) series against England in Karachi, which Pakistan lost to concede the series 3-0 at home. His knocks helped him overtake Steve Smith, who managed 36 and six in a low-scoring game between Australia and South Africa in Brisbane.

Pakistan captain, who is ranked first in ODIs and fourth in T20Is, trails Marnus Labuschagne by 61 points in the Test rankings. India spinners Kuldeep Yadav and Axar Patel have made rapid progress after helping win the Chattogram Test. Yadav's Player of the Match effort of eight for 113



has lifted him 19 places to 49th while Patel's five scalps in the match see him jump 10 places to a career-best 18th position. Other bowlers to move up the list include Marcon Jansen, Jack Leach, Mark Wood, Mehidy Hasan

Miraz, Scott Boland and Mohammad Siraj. Results over the past week see Australia consolidate their position at the top of the WTC table with India in second position.

# KL Rahul suffers hand injury ahead of match

Dhaka | Agencies

India's stand-in skipper KL Rahul on Wednesday suffered a blow to his hand while batting in the practice session on the eve of second and final Test against Bangladesh but batting coach Vikram Rathour is optimistic that the right-handed opener will be fine to play the match starting from Thursday at the Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium.

"It doesn't (look serious). He seems to be fine. Hopefully he'll be okay. The doctors are looking at it, but hopefully he'll be okay," said Rathour in the pre-match press conference.

If Rahul misses the second Test match, then vice-captain and top-order batter Cheteshwar Pujara will lead



the side. Rahul's hand injury could also mean a Test debut for uncapped Bengal opener Abhimanyu Easwaran, who was added to the squad post Rohit's injury.

Rahul's injury is the latest addition to India's long list of injuries in 2022. Fast-bowling

duo of Jasprit Bumrah and Mohammed Shami along with left-arm spin all-rounder Ravindra Jadeja are among the several frontline players, including Rohit and pacer Navdeep Saini, to be ruled out of the series due to injuries.

## INDW VS AUSW

# Planned lot of things, but were not able to execute them: Harmanpreet

Team Absolute | Mumbai

As T20 World Cup holders Australia secured a 4-1 series win over India at Brabourne Stadium, captain Harmanpreet Kaur was left to rue the struggles of her bowling unit in the second half of the innings during the five-match series. Harmanpreet insisted that her team had planned a lot of things to never let Australia off the hook, but admitted that those plans were never executed on the field throughout a thrilling series.

"We are doing really well in the first ten overs and are not giving them any easy runs. But after the tenth over, suddenly things were changing. We were also thinking about those things, like how we can stop (them). We had planned a lot of things, but we were



not able to execute them on the field. Going forward, we will definitely work on those areas," said Harmanpreet in the post-match press conference. "Earlier, the first six overs were the

area we wanted to improve as a team. But we are now getting the results and later on, in the next four overs. We will analyse now who can bowl after ten overs and who can be the death overs bowlers. We have dis-

cussed and now we have a month off, we can now plan about the areas where we can stop the runs," she added.

The player also praised her team for showing positive attitude and incredible self-belief throughout the series against a strong team like Australia. "As a team, the self-belief was always there, and we knew the strength of the Australian side and the type of cricket they were going to play. Everybody was really very positive and looked forward to performing well whenever they got an opportunity. With champion sides like Australia, you always see that they were able to get runs despite losing early wickets. They were able to create pressure and still, we wanted to play positive cricket," said Harmanpreet.

## LPL

# Defending champions Jaffna Kings beat Kandy Falcons

Colombo | Agencies

In a rain interrupted match, defending champions Jaffna Kings defeated Kandy Falcons by 24 runs using D/L method in Qualifier 1 at the R Premadasa Stadium, here on Wednesday in the ongoing Lanka Premier League 2022.

Batting first, Kandy Falcons posted a competitive total of 143 for the loss of 8 wickets. Chasing down the target, for Jaffna Kings, Rahmanullah Gurbaz and Avishka Fernando opened the innings. The duo got off to flying start before Gurbaz was dismissed by Brathwaite for 10 runs. The team was at 2/54 in 3.5 overs.

Sadeera Samarawickrama and Dunith Wellalage remained not out on 15 and 19 runs respectively before rain played spoilsport. For Kandy Falcons, Carlos Brathwaite was the pick of the bowlers as he took 2/32 from 3 overs, while Chamika Karunaratne took 1 wicket. Earlier, after winning the toss, Kandy Falcons elected to bat first. For Kandy Falcons, Pathum Nissanka and Andre Fletcher opened the innings. The duo didn't get



to a perfect start as Fletcher was dismissed for 2 by Thisara Perera. Pathum was team's highest scorer with 35 runs from 31 deliveries. His innings was laced with 5 boundaries. Kamindu Mendis and Najibullah Zadran contributed with 26 and 22 runs respectively.

For Jaffna Kings, Vijayakanth Vijayakanth was the pick of the bowlers as he scalped 3/30 from his allotted 4 overs. Maheesh Theekshana took 2/24 from his 4 overs, while Thisara Perera, Binura Fernando and Zaman Khan picked one wicket each.

## Women's National Boxing

# Punjab's Bhagat, Madhya Pradesh's Patidar among winners on Day 2

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Punjab's Suvidha Bhagat and Madhya Pradesh's Radha Patidar put up vibrant performances to progress into the pre-quarterfinals on the second day of the 6th Elite Women's National Boxing Championships here on Wednesday.

While Suvidha thrashed Jharkhand's Chandu by 5-0 in the 48kg contest, local boxer Patidar also looked dominant during her comfortable victory by an identical margin against Himachal Pradesh's Ritu in the 52kg bout.

Komal (50kg) was the another boxer from Punjab to move into the next round as she beat



Chhattisgarh's P Tanuja by the Referee Stopped the Contest (RSC) verdict.

Monika Malik (48kg) of Bengal, Rajni Singh (48kg) of Uttar Pradesh, Isha Thakur (50kg) of Himachal Pradesh, Kampi Boro of Assam (50kg), Hetal Dama of Gujarat (52kg) and Gayatri Kasnyal (54kg) of Uttarakhand were the other boxers to emerge victorious. The on-going tournament has been witnessing participation of 302 boxers competing across 12 different weight categories.

# JOURNEY ONLY GETS HARDER FROM HERE: SATWIK

Team Absolute | New Delhi

After attaining his a career-best ranking along with his partner Chirag Shetty in the BWF World Rankings, Satwik Sairaj Rankireddy on Wednesday said that the only gets harder from here but he is humbled and overjoyed to have come this far.

Indian men's doubles badminton pair of Satwik Sairaj and Chirag jumped two spots to achieve a career-best world No. 5 ranking in the BWF World Rankings on Tuesday. "Into the top 5 of the world! But the journey only gets harder from here to reach the summit," Satwiksairaj wrote on Twitter.

"Humbled and overjoyed to have come this far! Committed and resolved to keep improving as always! Thank you for your love and



support!," he added. Chirag and Satwiksairaj started the 2022 season on a winning note by claiming the Indian Open Super 500 event and they haven't dropped out of the top 10 rankings since then.

Showing their consistency throughout the season, the Indian duo won the bronze medal at the World Championships in Tokyo and

lifted their maiden Super 750 title at the French Open. At the 2022 Commonwealth Games in Birmingham, Chirag and Satwiksairaj won India's first-ever gold medal in men's doubles in the 2022 Commonwealth Games.

They also helped India become badminton world champions for the first time with impressive performances at the Thomas Cup.

## Khelo India Youth Games 2022

# Women's U18 Qualifiers Hockey: Madhya Pradesh beat Karnataka 9-1

Bhubaneswar | Agencies

Hockey Madhya Pradesh, Hockey Jharkhand, and Uttar Pradesh Hockey each earned three points on the second day of the Khelo India Youth Games 2022 (Women's Under 18) here, while Hockey Haryana, Hockey Association of Odisha, Hockey Mizoram, and Hockey Maharashtra all recorded a draw and gained one point each.

The first match in Pool A saw Hockey Madhya Pradesh beat Hockey Karnataka by a 9-1 scoreline. Bhumiksha Sahu (34', 41', 51') was the top scorer for Hockey Madhya Pradesh with a hat-trick, followed by Priyanka Yadav (13', 55'), who netted a brace. Sanskriti Sarwan (4'), Soniya Kumre (15'), Jyoti Singh (16') and Swati (59') also contributed to Hockey Madhya Pradesh's win. Kavyashree MD (24') managed to score a consolation goal for Hockey Karnataka.

## MEN'S U18 QUALIFIERS HOCKEY: HARYANA BEAT MANIPUR HOCKEY 9-1

[Bhubaneswar] The day two of the qualifiers - Khelo India Youth Games 2022 (Men's Under 18) here witnessed some captivating performances by Hockey Haryana and Hockey Madhya Pradesh as they won their respective matches to strengthen their positions in their specific groups.

The first match of the day saw Hockey Haryana beat Manipur Hockey by a 9-1 scoreline in Pool A. Hockey Haryana dominated the match from the start as Agyapal (5', 44'), Lovepreet Singh (21', 29'), Amandeep (30', 46') and Amit Khosa (31', 34') struck a brace each. Captain Toshant (59') also contributed to Hockey Haryana's victory. The lone goal for Manipur Hockey was scored by Chalamba Meetei (45').

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Paralympic gold medalist and multiple-time record-breaker in javelin throw F64 category, Sumit Antil has set himself a new target for the year 2023 -- he aims to cross the 70-metre mark and set a new benchmark for all para-athletes.

Antil, who won a gold medal in the F64 category in the Tokyo 2020 Paralympic Games last year, breaking the world record three times in the final, holds the latest record of 68.62 metres, which he set in the Indian Open National Para Athletics Championships in Bengaluru in August this year.

Having inched closer to the 70 metres, Antil said he is working hard towards crossing the mark. Achieving the feat would make him the first athlete across all para-javelin throw disci-



plines to cross the 70m mark.

"No one has managed to cross 70m so far so that is my next target. I am working hard towards and with support from my team, I am confident that I would manage to cross 70m

distance very soon," said Antil on the sidelines of the GoSports Athletes Conclave.

Antil has set his eyes on the para-athletics World Cup Championships next year besides the Asian Para Games and wants to win gold in both of the events. Of course, the Paris Paralympic Games in 2024 remains the ultimate target as he wants to retain the gold he won in Tokyo in 2021.

The athlete believes if he manages to breach the 70m mark, he will set a new benchmark for javelin throw for all para-athletes and thus achieving his targets will not be much difficult.

The javelin thrower said his ultimate aim was to cross the 80m mark. Antil said he was misquoted about his dream to compete against the able-bodied in the Olympics and said he will take a call on it only after crossing the 80m consistently. "





## Mom & mother-in-law spoil me with my favourite dishes: Ayushmann

"BEING A TRUE-BLUE PUNJABI, AYUSHMANN IS A BIG FOODIE"

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Bollywood star Ayushmann Khurrana, who was recently seen in 'An Action Hero' is a true blue Punjabi munda as he loves to indulge in food at all times. The talented actor-singer enjoys homemade food and Indian sweets made by his mother of which rajma-chawal, sarson ka saag, makki ki roti and gaajar ka halwa are his absolute favourites.

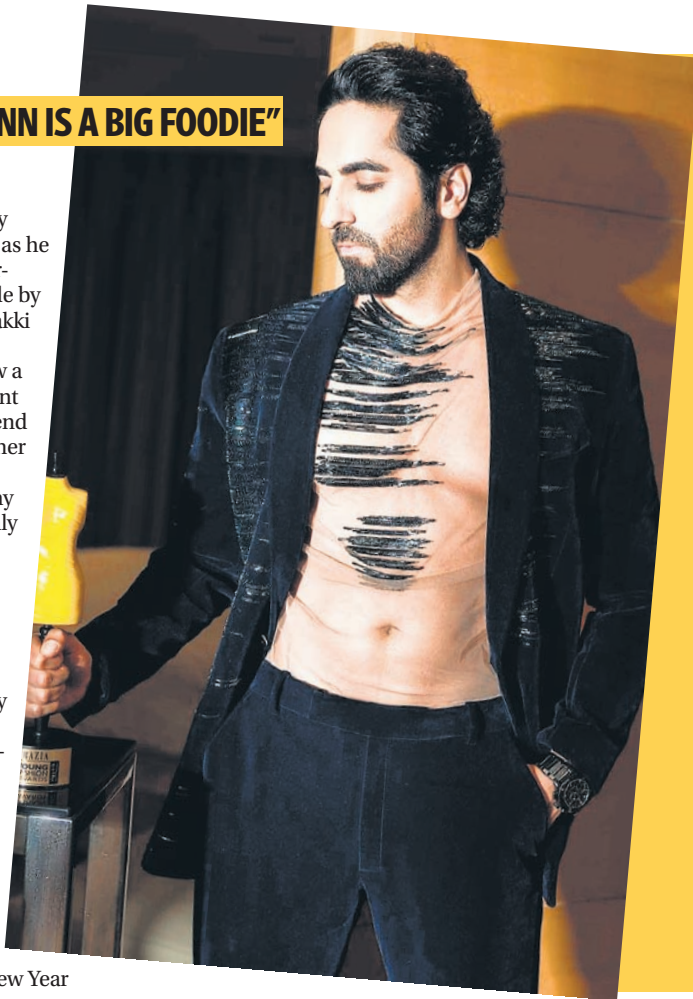
Given his shooting schedule, the actor has to constantly follow a regimented diet plan. However, the talented actor makes it a point to go back to his hometown Chandigarh every Diwali and year-end holiday, and during this time, he indulges in everything his mother makes for him.

Talking about the same, Ayushmann shared: "My mom and my mother-in-law spoil me with my favourite dishes and I thoroughly enjoy it. It is tough for me to decide what I want to eat each day. Right from rajma-chawal, sarson ka saag, makki ki roti, pinni to gaajar ka halwa - I like to eat all the delicacies that they make because they are simply divine. This holiday season I'm looking to get pampered in Chandigarh."

He further spoke about the importance of spending quality time with family as he said: "I feel it is important to spend quality time with your family. One must always remember where one's roots are and for me it's Chandigarh. My parents and this beautiful city have shaped me into the person that I have become today. Despite being in Mumbai, I always feel a massive gravitational pull for my home."

"I usually have erratic schedules because of shoots, promotions, brand deliverables etc and so, I make it a point to go back to my family in Chandigarh whenever possible, especially during the holidays. It is nostalgic and rejuvenating," he added.

Ayushmann will be leaving for Chandigarh after finishing his brand and film commitments this year and will ring in the New Year with his family.



## Working with 'Rohit Shetty' is on every actor's wish list: Jacqueline

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Bollywood actress Jacqueline Fernandez, who is currently gearing up for the release of her next film 'Cirkus', has expressed her delight working with superstar director Rohit Shetty for the first time.

Shetty has helmed film which also stars an ensemble cast of Ranveer Singh, Pooja Hegde, Johnny Lever, Sanjay Mishra, Mukesh Tiwari, Siddhartha Jadhav and Varun Sharma.

Talking about the same, Jacqueline said: "I think all of us who have worked with (Rohit) sir for the first time, it has definitely been a dream in the making. I think it's on every single actor's wishlist to work with Rohit Shetty."

She added: "And it's true, it's not just his films that look larger than life, he also shoots larger than life. Everyone becomes a big family and he brings everyone so beautifully together, we had so much fun."

Jacqueline has kept her fans hooked with her different retro looks from the film. 'Cirkus' is all set to release on December 23, 2022.

Jacqueline will also be seen in her recently announced film 'Crack' and her Hollywood project 'Tell It Like A Woman'.



## Aditya Rawal always analyses his work with his father

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Aditya Rawal, son of veteran actor Paresh Rawal, who is set to be seen in the streaming series 'Aar Ya Paar', has shared that whenever his father watches his work they both sit together and analyse it bit by bit. Aditya had earlier co-written the 2019 movie 'Panipat' and played the lead in the romantic action film 'Bamfaad'. He is essaying the role of tribesman in the streaming series.

Talking about his bond with his father, Aditya said: "I often seek his advice on both acting and how to be an actor, which are two different things. I am incredibly lucky to have access to someone with his knowledge and experience. The one thing I admire about him is his humility, and the fact that he is not driven by fame or power."

He further mentioned: "He has, after all, been around for 40 years. It's a long journey and I imagine it brings with it a sense of calmness. Whenever he watches my work we sit down and analyse it together. However, when it comes to the preparation for a specific character that I am playing, then I turn to the concerned director because it is with them that I will be creating the character."



## I find Urdu very fascinating and classy: Aditi Sharma

SHE LEARNED 'URDU' FOR THE SHOW

Team Absolute | Mumbai

'Kaleerein' actress Aditi Sharma revealed how challenging it was for her to get the Urdu diction right for playing the role of Dua in the TV show 'Rabb Se Hai Dua'. She said: "I am really fond of the Urdu language since it is very respectful and soft. Moreover, I find Urdu very fascinating and classy but because I am from Delhi, the way

I speak Hindi is very different. So honestly, it was a lot of homework for me to get Urdu right to play my character of Dua."

The actress is playing a lead role in the show 'Rabb Se Hai Dua' which is an emotional love story of Dua and Haider, essayed by Karanvir. It focuses on Dua, whose life goes upside down after her husband Haider expresses a desire to marry another woman.

Aditi added that it is very important to understand the emotions of a character and portray it in a way the audience finds a connection with it. And for doing so, language is an important factor and so Aditi focused on learning it properly with the help of her team and friends.

"I must say that my team members and a few of my friends have helped me learn new words and their correct pronunciation. I feel it is really important for an actor to connect the audience and present an authentic character they portray on screen. This whole learning process has been really fun for me, and I just hope I am doing justice to my role," she added.



## MC STAN ASKS TINA IF THEIR 'FRIENDSHIP' IS JUST FOR THE GAME

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In the upcoming episode of 'Big Boss 16', Tina Datta will be seen expressing her sadness over her nomination by friend MC Stan.

In a promo shared by the channel Colors on Instagram, Tina and Stan are seen talking in the bathroom area of the house. Tina told Stan that she thought he was her friend.

Stan replied to this by asking how the friendship could break because of a nomination and also if their friendship was just for the game.

He said that he feels that she is the rapper's friend because of the fan support he has in the outside world.

Tina then broke into tears after hearing this comment and said: "I didn't become your friend thinking this."

The upcoming episode will also witness a life changing decision for Priyanka, where she will have to choose



between the lost prize money of Rs 25 lakh or Ankit Gupta's eviction.

## PERFORMING A NEGATIVE ROLE IS NOT EASY: RANDEEP RAI

'I always wanted to do something out of my comfort zone'

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actor Randeep Rai talks about his entry in the show 'Meet' and how it was to play a negative character for the first time. He said: "This is the first time in my career, I will be playing a negative character and that too of a lawyer, so it is challenging for me but I always wanted to do something out of my comfort zone. So, I hope that this opportunity will give me a chance to explore my boundaries as an artist."

"Having said that, performing a negative role is not easy for an actor. I just



hope that I am able to do justice to my character and the fans of the show love me." He is sharing screen space with Ashi Singh for the second time. They both worked together in the show 'Yeh Un Dinon Ki Baat Hai' that went off air in 2019. Talking about getting an opportunity to work again with Ashi, he said: "I am very excited to play the character of Anurag, he is going to bring in a lot of twists and turns in the lives of the Ahlawats. In fact, Ashi and I have worked before, and we are reuniting on-screen after more than almost three years now."

INSTAGRAM PIC OF THE DAY



Tripti Dimri