

absolute india

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IPL 2023



SOLD FOR 18.5 CR

Sam Curran becomes most expensive player so far

KOCHI | Agencies

England all-rounder Sam Curran on Friday became the most expensive player in the Indian Premier League (IPL) history after Punjab Kings bought him for a whopping Rs 18.50 crore at the 2023 mini-auction of the cash-rich tournament. Curran was Player of the Tournament at the T20 World Cup in Australia.

Centre approves Bharat Biotech's intranasal Covid vaccine for booster

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Centre on Friday approved Bharat Biotech's needle-free intranasal Covid vaccine for booster dose, said an official source. The nasal vaccine has been approved for those aged above 18 years. The vaccine will be available in the private hospitals for booster dose in the initial phase. The source said that the nasal vaccine will be used as a heterologous booster among the eligible population. Meanwhile, the intranasal Covid vaccine is also expected to be introduced in the Covid-19 vaccination program from Friday, said the source. The nasal vaccine is likely to be added to the CoWIN App from this day only. Meanwhile, India on Friday reported 163 fresh Covid-19 cases along with nine deaths have also been reported in the country. The number of active coronavirus cases declined to 3,380.



INDIA REPORTS 163 FRESH COVID CASES, 9 DEATHS



New Delhi: India reported 163 fresh Covid cases in the last 24 hours, said the Union Health Ministry on Friday. In the same period, the country recorded nine Covid-related deaths, taking the national toll to 5,30,690 as per the report. Meanwhile, the active caseload has declined to 3,380 cases, accounting for 0.01 per cent of the country's total positive cases. The recovery of 176 patients in the last 24 hours took the cumulative tally to 4,41,42,608. Consequently, India's recovery rate stands at 98.80 per cent. Also in the same period, a total of 1,25,361 tests were conducted across the country, increasing the overall tally to over 90.96 crore. With 87,723 vaccines administered in the last 24 hours, India's Covid-19 vaccination coverage exceeded 220.02 crore as of Friday morning.

Corbevax booster gives maximum protection: study

HYDERABAD | Agencies

Amidst concerns of a new Covid wave in India following massive surge in China and other countries, research at AIG Hospitals here has revealed that Corbevax booster in individuals vaccinated with Covishield gives maximum protection against Omicron variants.

The scientific study has proved the immunity benefits of indigenous heterologous vaccine booster, Corbevax in combating Omicron variants.

Announcing the findings of the study, AIG Hospitals Chairman Dr D Nageshwar Reddy told media persons that the study was done on 250 healthcare workers who had received 2 doses of Covishield as the primary vaccine regimen not more than 6 months ago. None of the participants had any adverse events following the administration of Corbevax booster dose. Corbevax is an indigenously developed peptide-based



vaccine which is different from the viral vector (Covishield) or the inactivated vaccine (Covaxin). The key difference is that Corbevax uses only a protein subunit of the virus replicated inside a yeast cell while the others are whole virus vaccines. The advantage of peptide-based vaccine is that it considerably reduces the risks of allergic and autoimmune responses making them safe for widespread usage.

LOK SABHA ADJOURNED SINE DIE, 6 DAYS AHEAD OF SCHEDULE

New Delhi: The Lok Sabha was adjourned sine die on Friday, six days ahead of schedule. Before adjourning the House, Speaker Om Birla informed the members that 97 per cent of work productivity was clocked during the winter session. During the session which got underway on December 7, a total of 13 meetings were held which lasted for 68 hours and 42 minutes, taking the productivity to 97 per cent. Birla apprised that nine Government Bills were introduced of which seven were passed. The members, he said, raised 374 matters of urgent public concerns and 298 matters under Rule 377. A total of 43 statements were made by the ministers and 1,811 papers laid on the Table.

He thanked Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Parliamentary Affairs Minister and leaders of all parties for their cooperation in the House proceedings.

Sixteen Army jawans killed as vehicle falls into gorge in North Sikkim

Gangtok | Agencies

Sixteen Army jawans were killed and four others injured when their vehicle skidded off the road and fell into a gorge at a remote location in North Sikkim near the India-China border on Friday.

According to a senior police officer, the injured have been airlifted to an Army hospital in North Bengal.

The mishap took place at around 8 a.m. at Zema 3, about 15 kms away from Lachen, located at a distance of around 130 km away from State capital Gangtok.

Chungthang Sub-Divisional Police Officer (SDPO) Arun Thatal informed that the Army vehicle was heading towards the border posts with 20 occupants. The vehicle seemed to have veered off the road while negotiating a curve in the Zema 3 area and crashed hundreds



of feet down. All the 16 bodies have been recovered from the crash site. The condition of the four critically injured Army personnel remains unknown, said Thatal, who was at the spot with a police team from Lachen. The bodies are being taken to State-run STNM Hospital in

Gangtok for post-mortem and later will be handed over to the Army. The regiment of the victims is yet to be ascertained, he added.

As per police, the Army vehicle had been picking up the Army personnel on the way as it was heading towards its destination.

Cabinet approves free ration distribution till December 2023

Team Absolute | New Delhi

In a major decision, the Union Cabinet on Friday decided to distribute free ration under the National Food Security Act (NFSA) for a period of one year till December 2023. The move will entail a burden of Rs 2 lakh crore which would be completely borne by the government, Commerce and Food Minister Piyush Goyal told media persons. More than 81.35 crore NFSA beneficiaries will benefit from the move.

Earlier, rice and wheat were provided at subsidised rates to the beneficiaries under NFSA. Foodgrains, which were being provided under Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana (PMGKAY) since April 2020, will also be subsumed under NFSA quota, Goyal informed. Thus PMGKAY won't be extended beyond December 2022. Prior to Friday's decision, under NFSA, 5 kg of foodgrains per person per month at Rs 2-3 per kg were being provided. Families covered under Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY) get 35 kg of food grains per month. Rice is given to the poor under NFSA at Rs 3 per kg and wheat at Rs 2 per kg under NFSA. Now all this would be given free of cost to the beneficiaries.

DEFENCE PERSONNEL'S PENSION REVISED

New Delhi: The Union Cabinet on Friday announced revision of pension for defence personnel under the provisions of "One Rank One Pension". The decision will entail an annual burden of Rs 8,450 crore on the government and will benefit 25,13,002 defence pensioners. An amount of Rs 23,638 crore would be paid as arrears from July 2019 to June 2022. Pension of the past pensioners would be re-fixed on the basis of average of minimum and maximum pension of defence forces retirees of calendar year 2018 in the same rank with the same length of service. Armed forces personnel who retired up to June 30, 2019 (excluding pre-mature retirees with effect from July 1, 2014) will be covered under this revision. Pension for those drawing above the average shall be protected. The benefit would also be extended to family pensioners, including war widows and disabled pensioners, an official statement said. Arrears will be paid in four half-yearly instalments.

No 10th marks to show, JEE aspirants from TN in a spot

Team Absolute | Chennai

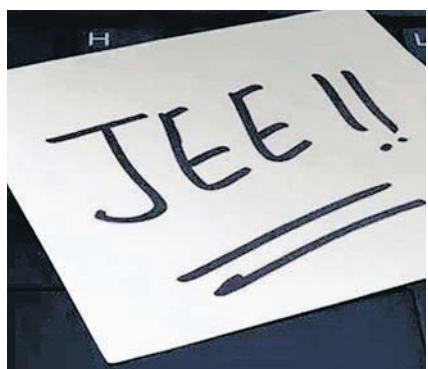
With no marks to show in their 10th-class examination, several students from Tamil Nadu are facing a tough situation while applying for Joint Entrance Examination (JEE). The students don't have 10th marks to produce as they were all passed by the Tamil Nadu Board due to Covid-19 pandemic of 2020-21.

Sujith Somanathan, a 12th standard student from a government school of Madurai, while speaking to IANS said, "I am worried as I don't have any 10th marks to show which is mandatory for applying in JEE. The state government officials have told us that the matter has been taken up with the National Testing Agency (NTA) and that it would be resolved soon. I am really worried."

He further said, "After entering the personal details, the marks of Class 10 are mandatory and we are not able to further proceed in the application and hence we are really worried." It is to be noted that around 40,000 students appear for JEE from Tamil Nadu and the students who have taken the Tamil Nadu state board exams for the 10th standard don't have any marks for the tenth exam which is a mandatory criterion for applying in JEE.

The registration for JEE commenced on December 12 and would continue till January 12.

Ramkumar. T, a Physics teacher in a Government higher secondary school at



Vadapalani, Chennai while speaking to IANS said, "We had then requested the government to award marks to students based on their performance in 9th standard but they did not award any marks. This is creating a problem now for the students applying for JEE."

Tamil Nadu School Education Minister, Anbil Mahesh Poyyamozhi told IANS that Tamil Nadu Government has already taken up the matter with the Union government and the issue would be sorted out.

School Education Commissioner of Tamil Nadu, K. Nanthakumar while speaking to media persons, said that the state government has already approached the Union Government and the National Testing Agency (NTA) - which conducts the test paper, and added that the issue would be sorted out soon.

Cold wave grips North India; dense fog engulfs several areas

MP TO FACE SEVERE COLD IN NEW YEAR

The celebration of Christmas in Madhya Pradesh will be celebrated in the bitter cold. As per meteorologists, the day and night temperature will remain high for two to three days. After that there will be a decline, that means there will be severe cold on New Year. Meteorologist Abhijit Chakravati told that there will be an increase in the night temperature for 3 days. After this the temperature will start rolling.



Team Absolute | New Delhi

Cold wave continued to grip northern parts of the country and dense fog engulfed the Indo-Gangetic plains, including Delhi, for the fifth consecutive day on Friday.

According to officials, in Delhi a minimum temperature of 7.9 degrees Celsius was recorded at Palam; Lodhi Road had 7.3, Aya Nagar- 5.6; Ridge (Civil lines)- 5.3, Najafgarh - 9.1 while Pitampura, Akshardham's Sports Complex, Mayur Vihar

recorded a minimum temperature of 10, 10, and 8.7 degrees Celsius.

"Dense to Very Dense Fog conditions are likely to continue over Punjab, Haryana, Chandigarh and Uttar Pradesh during next 48 hours and decrease in intensity & spread thereafter," tweeted the India Meteorological Department (IMD).

Around 20 trains were delayed due to the fog and low visibility.

According to an IMD official, due to moisture and light winds at lower tropo-

THE EFFECT OF COLD WILL INCREASE FROM DECEMBER 25

Meteorologist Ashfaq Hussain told that light clouds may appear once again in a day or two. This can increase the night temperature. Mild fluctuations in temperature will continue till December 25.

pheric levels over Indo-Gangetic plains, very dense fog in many/pockets is very likely over Punjab and Himachal Pradesh in night/morning hours during the next 48 hours.

"Dense fog in isolated pockets is also very likely over Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, north Rajasthan, Bihar, Sub Himalayan West Bengal, Sikkim and Tirpura for the next 2-3 days," said the offi-

WHY COLD IS INEFFECTIVE IN MP?

According to meteorologist Ajay Kumar Shukla, when the wind hits the snow-capped mountains, the mercury also reaches the unit's digit. It has been four days since the Western Disturbance ended. The cold shines as soon as the sky is clear, but this time it is not happening. The reason behind this is that the mountains themselves are dry.

A drop in temperature has been also recorded in states of North India, including Delhi, Uttar Pradesh, Punjab and Bihar.

Intense cold wave swept Ladakh and Kashmir as the 40-day long period of harsh winter cold known as 'Chhillai Kalan' entered its third day.



DELHI TRAFFIC POLICE ISSUE ADVISORY AS BHARAT JODO YATRA SET TO ENTER

■ "During the yatra, Badarpur flyover, Mitha Pur Chowk, Prahlad Pur Red Light, MB Road, Apollo flyover, Mathura Road, Okhla Mod red light, Modi Mill flyover, NFC Red Light, Ashram Chowk, Mool Chand, Andrews Ganj, AIIMS, under Lajpat Nagar flyover, Capt. Gaur Marg, Dayal Singh College, Nizamuddin flyover, Safdarjung Madarsa, Pragati Maidan tunnel exiting towards IP Flyover, Mathura Road/Bhairon Road T-Point, Subramaniam Bharti Marg/Zakir Hussain Marg crossing, Mandi House, Turkman Gate, Rajghat Chowk, etc. roads and points will be affected," as per the advisory.



Team Absolute | New Delhi

With the Congress' 'Bharat Jodo Yatra', led by Rahul Gandhi, set to enter national capital on Saturday morning, the Delhi Traffic Police has issued traffic advisory, cautioning commuters about the routes affected and diversions made. According to the advisory, the Yatra will enter the city on Saturday around 6.30 a.m. from Badarpur border in south Delhi. "Further, it will reach Jai Dev Ashram near Ashram Chowk around 10.30 a.m. and will end at Red Fort at around 4.30 p.m.," it said. A large number of pedestrians and vehicles are expected to join the yatra at vari-

ous points along the route. The advisory further stated that the traffic is expected to remain heavy from Badarpur Border to Red Fort, and commuters are requested to cooperate by avoiding/bypassing the affected roads, if possible, and make maximum use of public transport to ensure a pleasant journey. There will be graded and dynamic diversion to ensure smooth traffic management and facilitate commuters while ensuring safety of pedestrians on roads, it said. People who are going towards ISBT/railway stations/airports are advised to carefully plan their travel with sufficient time at hand, it stated.

BSP MP SHYAM SINGH YADAV TO JOIN 'BJY' IN DELHI



New Delhi: BSP MP Shyam Singh Yadav said that he will join the Bharat Jodo Yatra with Rahul Gandhi in the capital on Saturday. "I will go with Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury and Manickam Tagore to join the Yatra," he said, adding that the yatra is for harmony and development and it has nothing to do with party politics. Gandhi has written to Yadav, who is the BSP's head in the Lok Sabha, to join the cause. On Friday, DMK MP K. Kanimozhi joined the yatra in Faridabad.

Former ICICI Bank CEO Chanda Kochhar, husband arrested for loan fraud

Former ICICI Bank CEO Chanda Kochhar and her husband and businessman Deepak Kochhar were on Friday arrested by the CBI in connection with a loan fraud case involving bank officials and the Videocon Group.

Team Absolute | New Delhi

A senior Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) official told IANS that the arrests were made from Delhi whereas the fraud FIR was filed with its Mumbai branch in January 2019 against Kochhar, her husband and Venugopal Dhoot of Videocon Group. "We had filed an FIR for the offence of forgery, cheating, using fake documents as genuine, hatching a criminal conspiracy and having common intention against the bank officials and the Kochhars," the official said. Nupower Renewables, Supreme Energy, Videocon International Electronics Ltd and Videocon Industries Ltd



were also named as an accused in the FIR. Dhoot allegedly invested crores of rupees in Nupower, months after the Videocon Group got Rs 3,250 crore as loan from ICICI Bank in 2012. The CBI official said that

they will produce Kochhar and her husband before a court and will seek their custodial remand. "We have also conducted search operations at their premises and have recovered a few documents connected to the case."

TikTok star, 9 others held by Gujarat Police for threatening released on bail

Junagadh | Agencies

A TikTok star from Surat and her friends travelled almost 450 kilometres on Thursday just to threaten a youth who had a war of words with her on a social media platform. Before things went out of hand, the local police arrested the star and her associates. Bhesan Police Station Officer told reporter that they arrested Kirti Patel and nine others for unlawful assembly, unlawful assembly for common intent to commit offence, insulting and provoking, and criminal intimidation. However, Kirti Patel and all her accomplices were released on bail on Friday. The officer said that Kirti and her associates had come to threaten one Jama Bhayani. Jama Bhayani stated that Kirti had threatened him on social media that she would beat him, so that she came all the way from Surat to Bhesan for that purpose. This is not the first case against the influencer; previously, she was arrested by Ahmedabad police for threatening a woman in Vastrapur area.



FIVE ARRESTED FOR RAISING PRO-PAK SLOGANS IN BIHAR'S BHOJPUR

Patna: Bhojpur police arrested five persons on the charge of chanting 'Pakistan Zindabad' slogans after winning a local badminton tournament. Four of the five accused have been identified as Mohammad Tanvir Alam, Mohammad Arman, Kallu and Sonu. The action was taken against them after a video of the winning march was uploaded on social media where the accused were chanting the slogans. According to an official, the badminton match was held on Tuesday evening. The organizers of the event gave a trophy to the winning team and the players did a victory march in the village and chanted the slogans. When the video was uploaded on social media, district police took cognizance of the matter. "We have investigated the video and found it genuine. Based on the content, we have identified the accused and arrested them. Their questioning is currently on," said Sanjay Kumar Singh, Superintendent of Police of Bhojpur.

K.C.Venugopal gets clean chit from CBI in solar scam accused sexual abuse case

Thiruvananthapuram | Agencies

Congress General Secretary K.C. Venugopal on Friday got a clean chit from the CBI when it filed its report in the CBI court here that there is no merit in the sexual abuse allegations levelled against him by the prime accused in the solar scam case. It was in August last year that the CBI registered cases against two-time former Kerala Chief Minister Oommen Chandy, Venugopal, Congress MPs Hibi Eden and Adoor Prakash, Congress legislator A.P. Anilkumar and BJP national Vice President A.P. Abdulla Kutty. The cases were registered on a complaint filed by the solar scam accused, alleging that she was sexually exploited by these leaders.



She had raised a complaint with Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan, who handed it over to the CBI, just before the April 2021 assembly elections. She made the complaint after her displeasure with the Kerala Police probe which after several years failed to come to any conclusion.

The CBI has filed three cases at the Chief Judicial Magistrate's court here and one case at the Kochi CJM's court. It recently had cleared Eden and Prakash of all the charges levelled by her. Incidentally the CBI had taken statements from all named by her and have now cleared three of them of all charges. This 'victim' was among the reasons for the defeat of the Oommen Chandy government in the 2016 Assembly polls as scams involving her and a few members of Chandy's office got exposed and used by the Left widely in their election campaign. She and her then live-in partner had gone around selling solar schemes, collected money from several people, and cheated them. The ruling Left used this case in the April 2021 assembly polls also.

Govt should understand why Pandits don't want to go to Valley: Farooq Abdullah

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Former J&K Chief Minister and National Conference (JKNC) president Farooq Abdullah criticised Lt Governor Manoj Sinha's announcement of not providing salary to Kashmiri Pandits who failed to join duty, and said that he should understand the reason behind the Pandits not wanting to go to the valley. While addressing the media in the Parliament House complex on Friday, Abdullah said that the Pandits do not go to the valley because of the lack of security. He raised questions on the government's decision to end terrorism by the abrogation of Article 370 and said that terrorism in the valley existed even after years of revoking the territory's special status.



Abdullah took a dig at the CAA & NRC and questioned the need of a citizenship card despite the existence of the Voter ID card, Aadhaar card and PAN card. Replying to a question about tensions with China, he said that the Indian Army was prepared to repay that country in its own language. Abdullah commented on the issue of the Russia-Ukraine war, and said that the Prime Minister himself said that the era of war was over, so talks should continue. Responding to Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) leader Abdul Bari Siddiqui's statement on the country being unsafe for Muslims, the former Chief Minister hummed the song 'Jeena yahan marna yahan, iske siwa jaana kahaan..' and said that the increasing hatred would not be contained by leaving the country, but instead should be fought against together by staying.

Law on cryptocurrency only after international collaboration, risk evaluation: Govt

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The policy related to crypto assets and its ecosystem is with the Finance Ministry and any legislation on it would be effective only through international collaboration after proper risk evaluation, the Parliament was told on Friday. "Crypto assets are by definition borderless and require international collaboration to prevent regulatory arbitrage. Therefore, any legislation on the subject can be effective only with significant international collaboration on evaluation of the risks and benefits and evolution of common taxonomy and



standards," Minister of State for Finance Pankaj Chaudhary told the Lok Sabha in a written reply. He was responding to a question from BJD member Bhartruhari Mahtab on the current status of the cryptocurrency bill, which was due to be tabled during the 2021 Winter session of the

Parliament and by when would it be tabled and opened for public inputs. Mahtab had also sought to know which department would regulate cryptocurrency and crypto token and regulate other virtual digital assets other than cryptocurrency such as NFT and decentralised applications.

7 of ex-councillor's family booked for 'torturing, assaulting' woman over dowry

Gurugram | Agencies

Gurugram Police have registered an FIR against a man and his family for unnatural sex and dowry harassment on the complaint of a 28-year-old woman at the Civil Lines Police Station. The complainant told police that her husband had committed unnatural sex on their nuptial night and forced her to do the same during the honeymoon. The woman in her complaint has also alleged that besides her husband, his parents, brother and three members of his sister's family also mentally and physically tortured her continuously for dowry even after taking Rs 44 lakh cash and jewellery in marriage which took place a few months back. She also accused her father-in-law, an ex-councillor of the Municipal Corporation of Gurugram (MCG), of ditching her family and supporting his other

family members in wrongdoing. Inspector Poonam Kumari of the Civil Lines police station said that police have booked the family of Gurugram for dowry harassment, unnatural sex, and others on the complaint of the woman. The accused have been booked under Section 377 of IPC for unnatural sex and dowry harassment Act. "We have asked both sides in the case for appearing before the police. "We are carrying out our investigation in the case," she said. The complainant alleged that her husband and the in-laws had assaulted her while demanding dowry. She also alleged that the brother-in-law had also made inappropriate advances towards her but she could not disclose to anyone because of social stigma. "The allegations against me and my family are baseless. The complainant's father is a sitting MLA from Faridabad who is pressurising us.

Adani group to own 64.71% stake in NDTV after Roys decide to cash out 27.26%

Team Absolute | New Delhi/Chennai

The two original promoters of New Delhi Television Ltd (NDTV) -- Pranjoy Roy and Radhika Roy -- have decided to sell their 27.26 per cent holding in the company to Adani group's RRPR Holdings Private Ltd. In a regulatory filing, NDTV said that Roys have decided to transfer 27.26 per cent stake out of their 32.26 per cent stake in the company to RRPR Holding. The Roys said in a statement that AMG Media Network, a part of the Adani group, is the single largest shareholder in NDTV now. The Roys said in the statement: "We started NDTV in 1988 in the belief that journalism in India was world-class but needed a strong and effective broadcast platform that would allow it to grow and shine. After 34 years, we believe that NDTV is an institution that has met so many of our hopes and ideals; we are so proud and grateful that across the globe, NDTV is recognised as 'India's and Asia's Most-Trusted News Broadcaster'.



"Consequently, with mutual agreement, we have decided to divest most of our shares in NDTV to the AMG Media Network. Since the open offer was launched, our discussions with Mr Gautam Adani have been constructive; all the suggestions we made were accepted by him positively and with openness. "As per the filing, the price at which the Roys would sell their 27.26 per cent (1,75,77,676 shares) stake will not be higher by more than by 25 per cent of Rs 368.43 per share. With this acquisition, the Adani group will hold 64.71 per cent stake in NDTV. The Adani group has acquired 8.27 per cent stake in NDTV through its open offer though it had planned to mop up 26 per cent stake

in the channel company. "Mr Adani has invested in a brand that is synonymous with Trust, Credibility and Independence, and we are hopeful that he will preserve these values and expand upon them with all the responsibility required of a leader of an organisation of this nature. We look forward to watching NDTV, and its entire extraordinary team, delivering the next phase of growth, one that India can be proud of," the NDTV founders said in the statement. Meanwhile, the NDTV board at its meeting on Friday appointed Sanjay Pugalia and Senthil Sinniah Chengalvarayan as additional directors in the capacity of non-executive, non-independent directors.

After viral video, Gujarat Police search for 7 men who beat Dalit youth

Vadodara | Agencies

Twelve days after a Dalit youth was ruthlessly beaten on road in broad daylight in the Bhayli village of Gujarat's Vadodara, the police registered a case following a public outcry. The incident caught public attention after Congress MLA Jignesh Mevani tweeted the video link questioning the state police on Thursday. The youth dared to register the complaint only after getting assurance from the police and his friends and relatives. Vadodara Rural Deputy Superintendent of Police (SC/ST cell) C.N. Chaudhary told the mediapersons on Thursday evening, that the said video was in circulation in the rural area for the last few days. The moment police learned about the video, it started the search for the victim and approached him and after police persuasion, victim Alpesh Parmar gathered courage and lodged a com-

plaint against seven unidentified accused with the Vadodara Taluka Police station, Chaudhary said. The complaint was lodged on Wednesday evening, a day before Congress MLA tweeted about the incident, said the officer. Now the police are searching for the accused, tracking their social media ID and doing a technical survey, as the victim is not knowing them, said Chaudhary. Victim Parmar in his complaint stated that on December 11 afternoon, he was with his friend Surbhi Patel near Broadway building when seven youths approached him, started abusing, made casteist remarks, then beat him with a belt and kicked him several times. He further alleged, "While beating me they were talking about my comment on social media. Before fleeing, they threatened to kill him and my family members if I lodged a police complaint. So I did not file a complaint against them.



OPPOSITION PROTESTS IN ASSEMBLY FOR "NOT LETTING" THEM SPEAK

Team Absolute | Nagpur

Leaders of the opposition Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) on Friday boycotted the proceedings of both Houses of the Maharashtra legislature, and protested against the state government at the Vidhan Bhavan complex here, accusing it of not letting them speak in the Assembly and the Council.

The leaders of the MVA, comprising the Nationalist Congress Party (NCP), Shiv Sena's Uddhav Thackeray-led faction and Congress, also condemned the suspension of senior NCP leader Jayant Patil for alleged derogatory remark against the Assembly Speaker on Thursday.

Leader of Opposition in the Assembly Ajit Pawar, Sena (UBT) leaders Aaditya Thackeray and Bhaskar Jadhav, Congress's Balasaheb Thorat, NCP leaders Rajesh Tope, Dhananjay Munde, Dilip Walse Patil and others were seen sporting black ribbons to protest against the Eknath Shinde (BJP) government. They held the protest by sitting on the steps of the legislature complex.



the legislature complex.

A senior Congress leader said, "We are boycotting the proceedings of both the Houses to protest against the government which is not letting the members of the opposition speak in

the legislature." Aaditya Thackeray said, "Unless and until the speaker gives us assurance that the opposition members will get an opportunity to speak, we will stay out. We want to raise the issues of Governor B S

Koshiyari's remarks against iconic personalities, CM Shinde's involvement in land allotment scam and the Maharashtra-Karnataka border issue." The opposition legislators raised slogans against the Shinde-Fadnavis government on these issues.

When asked about his name being linked to the death case of Disha Saliyan, a former manager of late actor Sushant Singh Rajput, Thackeray said it was a "conspiracy" to malign him.

Talking to reporters, Thackeray said, "My (maternal) grandfather died on the same day. All I can say is that the government is scared of a 32-year-old youth. We will continue to raise the issue of Nagpur Improvement Trust (NIT) land allotment case and demand the resignation of the chief minister. I am ashamed that these people were once with us." Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis, who also holds the Home portfolio, had announced in the Assembly on Thursday that a Special Investigation Team (SIT) will be formed to conduct a probe into the death of Saliyan.

Umesh Kolhe killing

Ex-CM Thackeray's alleged phone-call to be probed

Team Absolute | Nagpur

In a major jolt, the Maharashtra government on Friday ordered a probe into whether former Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray had pressurised the Amravati Police to probe the killing of local chemist Umesh Kolhe from the robbery angle.

Minister Shambhuraj Desai said that the State Intelligence Department (SID) will investigate whether Thackeray had asked the Amravati Commissioner of Police Arti Singh to examine the robbery angle in Kolhe's killing, now being handled by the National Investigation Agency (NIA).

Desai's stunning announcement came after Amravati independent MLA Ravi Rana raised the issue in the Assembly through a calling attention motion on Friday.

Rana said that Kolhe was murdered on June 21, when Thackeray was the CM of the Maha Vikas Aghadi government, but the police allegedly probed the case through the robbery angle.

"It was Uddhav Thackeray who called up the Police Commissioner Arti Singh to investigate the robbery angle in the case at the behest of a local Congress leader. We want that his phone call must be probed through a



special investigation team," demanded Rana.

Replying on behalf of Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis, Desai assured the SID probe on who called whom, whether attempts were made to suppress the matter and the report would be submitted to (Fadnavis) for suitable action.

This is second big rattler for the Thackeray father-son duo, coming a day after the state government announced a Mumbai Police SIT to probe the killing of former celeb-entrepreneur Disha Saliyan case.

After the MVA government collapsed, the new government handed over the Kolhe case to the NIA which filed its charge-sheet this week.

Court refuses to stop release of web series on stamp paper scam

Team Absolute | Mumbai

A civil court here on Friday rejected a plea seeking temporary relief against the release of a web series based on fake stamp paper scam convict late Abdul Karim Telgi.

Telgi's daughter Sana Irfan Talikoti had approached the city civil court against the makers of a web series 'Scam 2003 -The curious case of Abdul Karim Lala Telgi'.

She had sought an injunction on its release, claiming the producers had not obtained the family's consent before the project was green lighted.

Her plea seeking ad-interim relief was rejected by the court, though a detailed order has not been made available as yet, her lawyer said. In her suit filed through



advocate Madhav Thorat, Ms Talikoti has alleged the series is based on a book that had factual discrepancies.

The web series was in violation of the family's right to privacy, dignity, and self-respect, the suit claimed.

Telgi, who was convicted in several cases in connection with the 2004 multi-crore fake stamp paper scam and sentenced to imprisonment of 30 years in total, died in Bengaluru in October 2017 while serving his jail term.

Resolution on border row next week, says Shambhuraj Desai

Team Absolute | Nagpur

Maharashtra minister Shambhuraj Desai on Friday said the state government will next week bring a resolution on the border dispute with Karnataka, which will be "10 times more effective" than the one passed by the neighbouring state.

The Excise Minister said the resolution will be passed by the state legislature on Monday.

Karnataka Legislative Assembly on Thursday unanimously passed a resolution on the border row with Maharashtra, resolving to protect the state's interests and not to cede an inch of land to its neighbour. The resolution which also condemned the border dispute "created" by Maharashtra and moved by Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai, was adopted by a voice vote. Talking to reporters at the legislature complex in Nagpur, Desai said, "The state government will bring a detailed resolution on the Maharashtra-Karnataka border issue, which will be 10 times more effective than the one passed



by Karnataka. It will be passed in the legislature on Monday." "I only want to say that even after the meeting of both (Maharashtra and Karnataka) chief ministers with Union Home Minister (Amit Shah), the Karnataka CM (Basavaraj Bommai) did not respect what was decided. Maharashtra CM (Eknath Shinde) and Deputy CM (Devendra Fadnavis) both want the issue to get solved through

talks," the minister said. Desai, who is a member of the Maharashtra-Karnataka Border Coordination Committee appointed by the state, added that the resolution to be passed on Monday will present Maharashtra's side more effectively and will be in the interest of Marathi people.

"After the resolution is passed, we will also convey to union home minister our strong displeasure over the leaders from Maharashtra being stopped from entering Karnataka," he said.

The border row had intensified in the last couple of weeks, with vehicles from either side being targeted, leaders from both the states weighing in, and pro-Kannada and Marathi activists being detained by police amid a tense atmosphere in Belagavi in Karnataka. The border issue dates back to 1957 after the reorganisation of States on linguistic lines. Maharashtra laid claim to Belagavi, which was part of the erstwhile Bombay Presidency, as it has a sizeable Marathi-speaking population. It also laid claim to over 800 Marathi-speaking villages which are currently part of Karnataka.

Dismissed cop gets bail in Antilia bomb scare case

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The Bombay High Court today granted bail to dismissed policeman Sachin Waze, who was arrested by the National Investigation Agency (NIA) for his alleged role in the Antilia bomb scare and Mansukh Hiran murder case.

Kazi, who had closely worked with accused policeman Sachin Waze, was posted with the Crime Intelligence Unit (CIU) of the Mumbai Crime Branch when a gelatin sticks-laden Sports Utility Vehicle (SUV) was found parked near 'Antilia', industrialist Mukesh Ambani's official residence in south Mumbai.

In his bail plea filed through advocate Hasnain Kazi, the former policeman said he was not charged under the stringent Unlawful Activities



(Prevention) Act (UAPA) and the charges against him were bailable. Additional Solicitor General Anil Singh, appearing for the NIA, had submitted that there was no evidence of Kazi's involvement in the planting of gelatin sticks in the SUV near 'Antilia' or of him being involved in Hiran's murder. The evidence against him was of collecting crucial evidence, that of DVR of CCTV,

without making official records like sealing and 'panchanama', and of destroying them, Singh had said.

After hearing both sides, the court granted bail to the accused. A detailed order about this decision is not available yet. Kazi's role came to light after Waze was arrested on March 13 last year. He is accused of destroying evidence pertaining to the case.

Apart from Kazi and Waze, other accused in the case include former 'encounter specialist' police officer Pradeep Sharma and former policemen Vinayak Shinde and Sunil Mane.

An explosives-laden SUV was found near Ambani's house in south Mumbai on February 25 last year, and Hiran, who had claimed that he was in possession of the SUV before it was stolen, was found dead in a creek in Thane some days later on March 5.

'Riyaz planned Urvashi's murder, took her brother to cops, too'

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Riyaz Khan, accused of killing Urvashi Vaishnav, planned the murder after attending a wedding at her hometown in Rajasthan, said cops. Police officers said that after returning from the wedding on December 11, Vaishnav kept pressuring Khan to marry her; hence Khan roped in his friend Imran Sheikh and murdered her on December 13. To avoid raising suspicion, he kept in touch with her family and even accompanied her brother when he went to file a missing complaint with Nerul police on December 14. The case came to light



after Panvel cops recovered the body of a woman from the Gadhi River in Panvel. Police officers identified the woman as Vaishnav, with the help of her sandal. Thereafter, cops arrested Khan and Sheikh for the murder. A police officer privy to the investigation said, "Riyaz, the prime accused,

knew Urvashi's family and were in touch. He used to pick up Urvashi from the Koparkhairane home and drop her to Sana bar, where she worked. He had picked her up in her own car on December 13 too." "The Nerul police registered a missing complaint and started a probe. Khan told the

investigators that he had dropped Vaishnav to the bar. When cops inquired with some auto drivers in the area, one of them said he had dropped her to Ulwe on the night of December 13. The auto driver's statement led cops to focus on it instead of suspecting Khan," said another cop, adding, "Her family knew they were together and frequently visited her, so nobody suspected him." Khan remained in constant touch with Vaishnav's family and expressed concerns over her disappearance. "He would take regular updates from the family about the police's progress. However, the cops nabbed him directly," said the officer.

Phone tapping case CBI charge sheets on ex-Mumbai police commissioner, NSE ex-CEO

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The CBI has filed a charge sheet against former Mumbai police commissioner Sanjay Pandey and former NSE CEO Chitra Ramkrishna and other top executives of the bourse in connection with alleged tapping of phones of executives of the stock market, officials said Friday.

The agency, in its charge sheet filed before a special court here, has alleged that National Stock Exchange (NSE) had paid Rs 4.54 crore (approx) in 8 years to ISEC Services Pvt Ltd, where Pandey was a director, for carrying out illegal interception of phones at the bourse employees in the name of cyber vulnerability study, they said.

"It was alleged that unauthorised recording and monitoring of personal call lines in



NSE started in 1997 when then MD (Ravi Narain) and then DMD/MD (Ramkrishna) of NSE connected call lines of NSE employees to a digital voice recorder provided by a private company," CBI spokesperson said here.

Sobhraj Dangerous For Society, Shouldn't Come Out Of Jail: Ex-Mumbai Cop

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Charles Sobhraj was sharper than any ordinary criminal and always used to carry a weapon, recalled retired police officer Madhukar Zende. The 84-year-old assistant commissioner of police had arrested the serial killer twice while serving in the Mumbai Crime Branch. Sobhraj, also known as the 'Bikini Killer', was released from prison in Kathmandu, Nepal, on Friday, after serving over 19 years of his sentence. Zende first arrested Charles in 1971, during his posting at Gamdevi police station. "I got information from one of my informants that a foreign national was planning to rob the Air India building, which was then located in Fort. I managed to arrest him after which the Delhi cops came to Mumbai and took his custody in a robbery case filed there," he said. Soon after, Charles escaped from the clutches of the Delhi police and remained absconding until 1976. In 1975, Zende again received information that Charles was at the Taj Hotel with his girlfriend and had robbed a French couple. "A hotel employee called me about



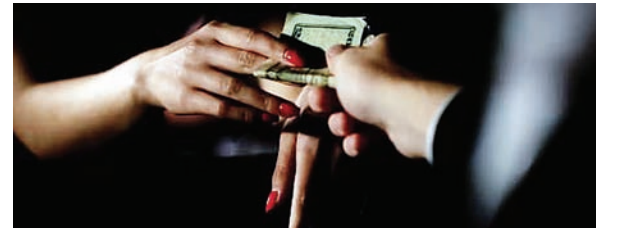
him. But Sobhraj was spooked and when the police team reached the Taj Hotel, he was loading his luggage in a taxi to flee. The moment he noticed the cops, he ran into a crowd, leaving his girlfriend behind. She was arrested, while he disappeared," Zende recalled. In 1976, the Delhi police arrested him again, but he managed to escape Tihar jail in 1986. Zende started the search and soon received information that Charles was in Goa. With a team of cops, he left for the neighbouring state, but couldn't find him. "Since he liked cafes that attract foreign nationals, I decided to check out O'Coqueiro restaurant in Porvorim. "I still remember that day, April 6,

1986. We saw him getting out of a car and entering O'Coqueiro. I waited patiently before making our first move because I knew that he would be carrying a gun," he added. "After some time, I walked up to him and said, 'Hello, Charles, how are you?' Then we grabbed him, took his revolver, tied his hands with a rope and got him inside a car. I asked a constable to sit on him to ensure that he doesn't escape again," Zende said.

According to Zende, Sobhraj has killed dozens of women in Asia. "After his arrest, he confessed to at least 25 murders". On the news of his release, Zende said, "I cannot comment on this because this is the order of Nepal's Supreme Court. But, every country needs to rethink about the law before releasing such hardcore criminals."

The Nepal police had arrested Sobhraj in 2003 for killing a North American tourist. He was convicted for life, which means 20 years in Nepal. "As per the court's order, he will be deported back to France," Deputy Inspector General of Police (DIG) Tek Prasad Rai, Nepal, said. He will be handed over to the immigration on Friday, he added.

Cops bust sex racket running from Spa in Mira Road



Team Absolute | Mumbai

A special team of the crime branch unit (Zone 1) attached to the Mira Bhayandar-Vasai Virar (MBVV) police busted yet another high-profile prostitution racket which was operating under the guise of a luxury spa in Mira Road. Acting on a tip-off about the flesh trade activities, the team deputed a decoy customer to establish contact and strike a deal with the spa operator. After confirming the authenticity of the information, the police team swooped down on Elite Beauty and Body Spa located in the Poonam Garden area of Mira Road on Wednesday evening. According to the police, the spa manager was

taken into custody for accepting Rs. 5,000 from the decoy to facilitate the immoral rendezvous. While three women who were allegedly pushed into the flesh trade were rescued from the premises, the operator and owner of the premises were still at large.

A case under section 370 of the IPC and the relevant sections of the Prevention of Immoral Trafficking Act (PITA) has been registered against the accused who has been remanded to custody. Notably, several dubious unisex spas have mushroomed in the twin-city which allegedly float online advertisements on prominent web portals to lure potential clientele by offering massage services.



EDITOR'S SPECS

Political fireworks likely in Kerala

Given the ongoing tussle between Governor Arif Mohamad Khan and Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan, Kerala is likely to ring in the New Year with a plenty of political fireworks with many crucial decisions, including the Bill removing the former as Chancellor. Interestingly, the decisions have to be taken at a time when the relations between the two leaders have hit the rock bottom. Khan, who is travelling, is expected to be back in the New Year and the first file that he will be looking into is the Bill that has been passed by the Kerala Assembly removing him as the chancellor of 14 universities in the state. The Bill became a necessity for the Vijayan government after Khan started throwing spanners in the functioning of the government, which was running the higher education system in the state as a department of the CPI-M, as per Khan. Vice-Chancellors, teaching and administrative jobs was being given to the party cadres, in violation of all norms. With the Bill now before Khan, he may look into it but not sit in judgement as it is an issue concerning him. The Governor has been reiterating that he will stay away from judging matters if he is the subject. Hence in all likelihood, if the Governor does not sign the Bill, he will lay it before the President. Many are seeing it as a climb down as the Congress-led Opposition in Kerala has always been wary of the standoff between the two as they see it as nothing but a "match fixing". Hence all eyes are fixed now on how Khan deals with the Bill as he has to make the first move. If he reads out the customary Governor's address, then the Congress's assumption that the entire standoff being "stage-managed" will turn out to be true.

HISTORIC UN BIODIVERSITY PACT TEXT WITH 2030 VISION RELEASED

Vishal Gulati

After two days of agreeing the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework by 196 parties at the 15th meeting of the Conference of Parties (COP15) to the UN Convention on Biological Diversity, which contains a mission to halt and reverse nature loss, the final text of the historic framework has been released. The framework, released on Thursday in this second-most populous city in Canada, includes four goals and 23 targets to be achieved by 2030. Responding to final Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, WWF International Director General Marco Lambertini, told IANS: "Agreeing a shared global goal that will guide collective and immediate action to halt and reverse nature loss by 2030 is an exceptional feat for those that have been negotiating the Global Biodiversity Framework, and a win for people and planet." "It sends a clear signal and must be the launchpad for action from governments, business and society to transition towards a nature-positive world, in support of climate action and the Sustainable Development Goals." Saying it was taken time to get here but governments have signed a once-in-a-decade agreement to halt the destruction of earth's ecosystems and to protect people and species, Jennifer Morris, The Nature Conservancy, CEO, said, "We were looking for a global agreement that would transform our relationship with nature." "Agreeing to halt and reverse nature loss by 2030 puts the issue squarely on the table with a clear deadline for all of society. If implementation moves at pace, and funding flows where its needed then we can look back on this snowy historic day in Montreal and say yes, I

remember the moment when humanity decided to put nature first." The framework has four long-term goals for 2050 related to the 2050 Vision for Biodiversity. **Goal A** The integrity, connectivity and resilience of all ecosystems are maintained, enhanced, or restored, substantially increasing the area of natural ecosystems by 2050; Human induced extinction of known threatened species is halted, and, by 2050, extinction rate and risk of all species are reduced ten-fold and the abundance of native wild species is increased to healthy and resilient levels; The genetic diversity within population of wild and domesticated species is maintained, safeguarding their adaptive potential. **Goal B** Biodiversity is sustainably used and managed and nature's contribution to people, including ecosystem functions and services, are valued, maintained and enhanced, with those currently in decline being restored, supporting the achievement of sustainable development for the benefit of present and future generations by 2050. **Goal C** The monetary and non-monetary benefits from the utilisation of genetic resources, and digital sequence information on genetic resources, and of traditional knowledge associated with genetic resources, as applicable, are shared fairly and equitably, including, as appropriate with indigenous peoples and local communities, and substantially increased by 2050, while ensuring traditional knowledge associated with genetic resources is appropriately protect-



ed, thereby contributing to the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, in accordance with internationally agreed access and benefit-sharing instruments. **Goal D** Adequate means of implementation, including financial resources, capacity-building, technical and scientific cooperation, and access to and transfer of technology to fully implement the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework are secured and equitably accessible to all parties, especially developing countries, in particular the least developed countries and small island developing states, as well as countries with economies in transition, progressively closing the biodiversity finance gap of \$700 billion per year, and aligning financial flows with the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework and the 2050 Vision for Biodiversity. The framework has 23 action-oriented global targets for urgent action over the decade to 2030. The actions set out in each target need to be initiated immediately and completed by 2030. Together, the results will enable

achievement towards the outcome-oriented goals for 2050. Actions to reach these targets should be implemented consistently and in harmony with the Convention on Biological Diversity and its protocols and other relevant international obligations, taking into account national circumstances, priorities and socio-economic conditions. Responding to the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, campaign group Avaaz said a new chapter has begun. "The result of COP15 opens a new chapter of hope in the fight to keep our world a liveable place for all, Avaaz Acting CEO, Bert Wander, told correspondent. "Implementing this deal will require increased and sustained mobilisation. We won't have much time to breathe: the work has to start right away. These outcomes open a new chapter where there will be much to do on implementation, and to further strengthen the implementation mechanisms at the Convention on Biological Diversity." Avaaz sees the global biodiversity framework as a blueprint to

guide collective effort, but also vigilance, to stop biodiversity loss. Countries will now have to update their national biodiversity strategies and action plans to reflect the global biodiversity framework and how they will contribute to achieving it. This must happen as soon as possible and before COP16 (Antalya in Turkey in 2024), when a first assessment of the level of global ambition will take place. The development and implementation of these plans opens up formidable opportunities for people to mobilise in all countries. There is a funding need of nearly \$1 trillion a year to implement the global biodiversity framework. As per Avaaz, the final text used a smaller number, but still estimated the funding gap to fill at \$700 billion per year. With 196 nations, the UN Convention on Biological Diversity has near universal participation among countries. The convention seeks to address all threats to biodiversity and ecosystem services.

international

MULTIPLE FACTORS CAUSE RISE OF SEVERE COVID CASES IN BEIJING: HEALTH EXPERTS

Health experts noted that multiple reasons have led to a rise of severe Covid cases in Beijing, as north China generally sees a greater occurrence of respiratory infectious diseases in winter times. Some senior patients developed severe conditions after contracting the Omicron variant, but will recover from the infection after treatment, said Li Yanming, head of the department of respiratory and critical care medicine at the Beijing Hospital, whose patients admitted are mostly seniors, Xinhua News Agency reported. Tong Zhaohui, vice president of Beijing Chao-Yang Hospital, said the hospital has been receiving an average of 350 to 400 fever patients and around 500 patients with emergencies daily in recent days. China has prepared medical facilities for treating severe cases as the country is witnessing a rise in the



number of these patients. Third-grade hospitals should take in Covid patients with severe conditions as well as those with multiple critical underlying conditions, said Jiao Yahui, an official with the National Health Commission. Senior patients with underlying conditions and children should be directly transferred to third-grade hospitals as soon as their conditions change, Jiao added.

S.KOREA LOGS 68,168 NEW COVID CASES Seoul: South Korea reported fresh 68,168 Covid infections on Friday, including 95 from overseas, bringing the total caseload to 28,534,558. Friday's count is up by about 1,200 from a week ago. The daily infection numbers have been on a steady rebound for the past several weeks amid a winter wave, Yonhap News Agency reported quoting the Korea Disease Control and Prevention Agency (KDCA). Despite the virus spread, the government announced plans to scrap the indoor mask mandate in phases and a set of criteria that need to be met to implement the mask-free policy. Third-grade hospitals rank at the top of China's three-tier hospital grading system. They have the most hospital beds and provide comprehensive medical services.

Severe winter weather sweeps across US, disrupts holiday travels

Washington | Agencies Severe winter weather is sweeping across the US and has disrupted holiday travels ahead of Christmas. The National Weather Service Weather Prediction Center tweeted on Thursday that "a strong cold front continues to rapidly move through the middle of the country this morning with remarkable temperature drops, strong winds creating dangerous wind chills, and bursts of snow." The winter storm, likely to intensify into a bomb cyclone, is expected to create record-low temperatures for Christmas weekend in many parts of the US, Xinhua News Agency reported. US President Joe Biden told reporters Thursday that the White House has "tried to contact 26 governors so far in



affected regions." "Please take this storm extremely seriously," Biden said. "This is not like a snow day, you know, when you were a kid. This is serious stuff." Kentucky Governor Andy Beshear is urging people to stay off the roads as the state is bracing for the severe cold weather. "We are urging Kentuckians to stay off the roads starting Thursday afternoon," Beshear tweeted. "If you are an essential worker and must travel, please follow these safety tips and have a vehicle kit in your car." Airlines have cancelled more than 2,000 flights within, into, or out of the US as of early Thursday afternoon, according to the flight-tracking site FlightAware.

TTP claims Islamabad suicide blast that leaves policeman dead

Islamabad: A policeman was killed and at least six people - including four police officers and two civilians - were injured in a suicide blast in Islamabad on Friday, media reports said citing police officials. Television footage showed the fiery wreckage of a vehicle with a large number of police personnel combing the scene. Shortly afterwards, the Islamabad Police declared a "red alert" in the city, Dawn reported. According to Deputy Inspector General of Police Sohail Zafar Chattha, the police spotted a "suspicious vehicle" with a man and a woman aboard at 10.15 a.m. in the area. "When the police stopped the vehicle, the couple came out of the car. The long-haired man, while being checked by the officers, went inside the vehicle on some pretext and then detonated himself," he said in a media briefing, Dawn reported. Separately, in an interview with Geo News, Interior Minister Rana Sanaullah confirmed that "two terrorists" were killed in the blast.

GENEVA TO HAVE 24-HR DRIVERLESS BUS SERVICE FROM 2025: REPORT

Geneva | Agencies (Germany) and Oslo (Norway). A total of 45 vehicles will be deployed, with 15 in Geneva, Xinhua news agency reported. "ULTIMO will focus on issues such as how to ensure the safety of passengers and react, for example, in the event of accidents or incivilities in the driverless, unmanned shuttles. It will also look at pricing questions, minimum and maximum distances for the bus destinations and the legal framework," the Swissinfo.com report said. "By offering door-to-door, on-demand, 24-hour transport, the service would be of higher quality. It would also avoid empty trips during off-peak hours and thus reduce some costs. Finally, by responding to demand in real time, queuing and congestion around stations could be avoided," it added.

N.Korea denounces US-led UNSC discussions against its missile launches

Seoul | Agencies North Korea's foreign ministry on Friday slammed the US push for a presidential statement of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) condemning the regime's recent missile provocations. The US has reportedly produced a draft of the document and circulated it among the other members of the UNSC. It features a strong condemnation of North Korea for its saber-rattling, including the launch last month of a Hwasong-17 intercontinental ballistic missile, Yonhap News Agency reported quoting Korean Central News Agency (KCNA). An unnamed spokesperson for the ministry said the US is now trying to "cook up" a UNSC presidential statement condemning its "exercise of the right to self-defence," according to the KCNA. "The DPRK has already and clearly warned that such foolish attempt of the US may entail a very undesirable consequence," the spokesperson said. DPRK is the acronym for North Korea's official name, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. The spokesperson added Pyongyang is closely watching what it described as "reckless moves of the US".

BIKINI KILLER CHARLES SOBHRAJ FREED FROM NEPAL PRISON

Kathmandu: Charles Sobhraj, 77, who is popularly known as "serpent killer" and "bikini killer" was freed from the jail on Friday afternoon as per the order from the Supreme Court of Nepal. On Wednesday, Nepal's Supreme Court had ordered the release of Sobhraj for different reasons. He should have been released much ago but due to political maneuvering, it got delayed, Nihita Biswas, who is known as his fiancée, told reporters in Kathmandu ahead of his release from the central jail. He should have been released some five years ago but it could not happen, said Biswas, adding that political party only released their people from the jail, and did not give preferences to his early release. He has spent 19 years and two months in central jail in Kathmandu.





BJP MLAs to file complaint against Jitu Patwari for presenting wrong facts: Narottam Mishra

Team Absolute | Bhopal

MLAs of Bhartiya Janta Party filed complaint against the Congress MLA Jitu Patwari for presenting wrong facts in state assembly and will seek for action against the MLA, said minister Narottam Mishra to media here on Friday.



"You are misleading the House. I can say with full responsibility that not a single paisa of the government was spent on serving food to BJP workers." CM Chouhan

Patwari had deliberately misled the Assembly by showing just part of a document and hiding the fact that the ruling party had paid these bills. VD Sharma (MP BJP chief)

KK Mishra (State Congress media department chairman) said, "Patwari is a serious politician and has levelled charges against the government by waving documents. He is fully aware of the consequences of showing false papers. BJP should answer the charges instead of making a hue and cry." Efforts to contact Patwari to get his comments on the BJP's counter attack were in vain.

those events held at the Chief Minister's residence. The home minister said, "It was the Congress government when the question was raised, the leaders put pressure on the officials and prepared a report to taint the BJP government and also the Party". Minister also claimed that no money was spent on the party's program organised at the BJP office. He said, "One of the hotels of MP tourism department is engaged with the government also with the party, the government paid the amount on the programs which the government had organised and the party had also paid the money of their program".

Patwari alleged that the government spent a sum of Rs 40 crore on food and high tea at the events held in the BJP office. Patwari's allegation was related to Congress legislator Kunal Chaudhary's question which was raised against the BJP during the Congress rule in 2019. According to reports, the Tourism Department gave the information meetings that were held in the BJP office from 2014 to 2018, still

CM Chouhan expresses grief over martyrdom of soldiers in accident in Sikkim



Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has expressed grief over the untimely death of army personnel in an accident in Sikkim. Chief Minister Chouhan has said in a tweet that- My mind is extremely distressed by the news of the martyrdom of the brave soldiers of the army in a road accident in Sikkim. Chief Minister Chouhan has prayed to

God for the well being of the jawans injured in the accident and for the peace of the souls of the deceased jawans. The Chief Minister said that in such a painful moment, everyone is involved in the grief of the Indian Army and the bereaved family members. An army truck fell into a gorge in Sikkim this afternoon, resulting in an untimely death of the jawans.

Be Fully prepared for prevention of Corona: CM Chouhan

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has said that there is nothing to worry like the spread of Corona like before, but all arrangements must be ready in the hospitals. Those who have not got their booster dose should get it administered. Chief Minister Chouhan is taking a meeting for preventive measures to be taken from Covid-19, at his residence. Chief Secretary Iqbal Singh Bains, Additional Chief Secretary

Health Mohammad Suleman and senior officers were present. Chief Minister Chouhan said that people should be careful from Corona. Adequate arrangement of necessary medicines should be kept ready in the hospitals for the treatment of Corona. Mock drill of oxygen plant should be done in medical colleges and hospitals. It should be ensured that the plant remains in running condition. The persons, who have not got the third dose (booster) of the vaccine, should get the dose.

All arrangements of GIS-23 should be according international standards: Minister Dattigaon

Team Absolute | Bhopal

All arrangements of GIS-2023 should be of international standards. All the arrangements should be completed within the time limit. This instruction was given by Industrial Policy and Investment Promotion Minister Rajvrdhan Singh Dattigaon in the review meeting of the preparation of GIS-2023 AT the Mantralaya. Minister Dattigaon said that all the heads of states and heads of industrial organisations should be welcomed appropriately according to Indian culture. There should be proper arrangements from receiving everyone at the airport to taking them to the place of stay and venue. In the two-day event, there should be an effective demonstration of capabilities in the field of investment in MP. According to the invitation of Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan, make



arrangement for appropriate branding and providing information about ODOP (one district-one product). Principal Secretary Manish Singh said that in GIS-2023, more than 4 thousand people including heads of states, ambassadors and their delegations and representatives of industrial organisations will participate. All the arrangements for everyone's accommodation, food and reaching the venue etc. have been made. MD MPIDC

JCB DEPLOYED FOR ILLEGAL SAND MINING SEIZED IN KHARGONE

Khargone: Officials have confiscated a JCB deployed for illegally sand mining from Sahastra Dhara area of Maheshwar. Mining officer Sawan Chauhan said they had received information about illegal mining of sand at banks of the Narmada River in Jalkoti of Sahastra Dhara around 10 am on Friday. Acting on the tip off, a team immediately rushed to Maheshwar. Two employees were sent on motorcycles to the site, however, by the time they reached, the people had fled from the site and only a JCB was parked there. The team confiscated the JCB, which was used for illegal sand mining, and brought it to Maheshwar police station. A case has been registered under MP Minerals (Prevention of Illegal Mining, Transportation and Storage) Rules, 2022.

3 of 'Band Baaja Baarat' gang held for stealing from wedding venues

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Two men have been arrested while a juvenile has been apprehended by Delhi Police's Crime Branch from a Madhya Pradesh-based 'Band Baaja Baarat' gang for allegedly stealing bags containing jewellery and cash from wedding venues, said an official on Friday. The accused have been identified as Sonu and Kishan, residents of Rajgarh district in MP. Police claimed that with the busting of the gang, around six cases of theft from wedding venues of Delhi, Faridabad and Ghaziabad have been solved. Police have also recovered one gold chain, Rs 63,500 cash, one bag and a car from their possession. According to Ravindra Singh Yadav, Special Commissioner of Police (Crime), several cases were being reported that some gang was active in Delhi and its peripherals and stealing bags containing jewellery or cash at wedding venues. "During the investigation, police teams analysed the CCTV footages of



the wedding venues and three suspects, including one juvenile, were identified," said Yadav. "The video footages showed that the accused before committing the crime used to spend considerable time at the venues, making themselves comfortable and familiar with the guests. They have their dinner in the party and patiently waited for the time to strike," said the official. A tip-off was received by police and a raid was conducted. Trio, including the juvenile, were apprehended when they were leaving Delhi and moving for their village in Madhya Pradesh," said the official. On interrogation, the accused told police that they hailed from Rajgarh district of MP and used to visit Delhi-NCR and other metro cities in north India during the wedding seasons to commit thefts.

PDS rice worth Rs 55K seized in Chanchoda, 1 arrested

Team Absolute | Guna

Case of black marketing of grains to be distributed under public distribution system's (PDS) in Chanchoda has come to fore. Chanchoda police have arrested a man with 37 quintal rice worth Rs 55, 500 which was meant to be distributed under PDS. Hidden in a truck, the stolen rice was sent to neighbouring Rajasthan. As per reports, the truck transporting PDS rice to Rajasthan for selling in open market. Acting on a tip off, a



police team intercepted a truck at Bageshwar Tiraha. Police detained truck driver Ghanshyam Singh Balmiki, 40, a resident of Chanchoda village. Police seized 37 quintals of PDS rice, packed in 74 plastic bags from the truck. On being questioned, Balmiki, failed to produce the documents pertaining to sale and transportation of rice.

G-20 delegation visit Tourism MP, collector review preparations at Mandu

Team Absolute | Dhar

Tourism corporation's managing director S Viswanathan and Dhar district collector Priyank Mishra on Friday reviewed the preparations and arrangements at historic town Mandu ahead of the visit of delegations during the G20 Summit. During the visit to tourist sites, the officials directed to ensure that all amenities were in place. While visiting Jahaz Mahal, the authorities directed the local officials to look into road repair, renovation of street lights, cleaning of the pond, installation of focus lights on Kurasani tamarind trees around the monuments. Direction for cleanliness, street lighting on the approach road of Jahaz



Mahal complex (Nagar Palika Naka to Jahaz Mahal) and cleaning of Munj Talab near Jahaz Mahal, when the water in the talab is less, lighting arrangements around the talab and, outside were given by the senior officials. Instructions were also given to make a vertical garden on the vacant space. Senior officials said that signboards

should be put up warning against littering in the pond and mentioning about the time for the same. A bamboo wall in front of the houses near the pal of the pond would be installed. The employees have been told to keep the parking lot clean. The collector instructed that arrangements should be made for guides for the guests. Group-wise guides should be arranged for a bigger tourist group. A route chart would also be prepared so that the guests do not face any inconvenience in reaching Mandu. The collector inspected the rest house of the Public Works Department (PWD). The rest house is to be renamed Khorasani Villa and the name plate is to be put up on the building.

CM CHOUHAN PLANTS SAPLINGS WITH 86 YEAR OLD NIRANJAN PAL



Bhopal: Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan planted saplings of Kadamba, Blue Gulmohar and Jungle Jalebi in the Smart City Garden. Former Mayor of Bhopal Alok Sharma was with him. Niranjan Pal, 86, who came on a wheelchair, planted saplings on his birthday. Chief Minister Chouhan greeted Niranjan Pal on his birthday and wished him a healthy and long life.

"MY NUMBER REMAINS SAME," SAYS SONU SOOD, HELPING PEOPLE IN CRISES DURING COVID-19

Team Absolute | Indore

Where the nation is scared of increasing cases of covid-19, actor Sonu Sood claims to help all those in need while saying, "My number remains the same." Sonu Sood visited Indore on Friday morning on his way to visit the Mahakal Lok in Ujjain. Sonu said, "Indore is my home, I have been visiting the city every year since childhood. And I am amazed to see how beautifully the city developed." As similar to his contact number, his memory of Indore remains constant as well. "I am well aware of all the popular places of the city, namely Chappan, Sarafa, Rajwada, Palasia, and even the janjeerwala square," said, Sood. Fascinated about the developments made within the city, he said that undoubtedly, the city has received the award for cleanest city in the nation as 'you all' (the residents) have kept it the way it is. In afternoon, Sonu Sood traveled to Ujjain to visit the Mahakal Lok. Discussing about his after plan he said, "I will visit the Mahakal Lok and later meet children there, as I had planned previously.

WOMAN JUMPS OUT OF RUNNING TRAIN ON PLATFORM, INJURED

Mandsaur/Indore:

A 65-year-old woman was injured after she jumped out of a running express train that she had boarded by mistake at Ratlam railway station in Madhya Pradesh, a Western Railway official said on Friday. The incident was captured on a CCTV camera. The woman, Sagar Bai, was supposed to board a train for Nagda station on Thursday afternoon but she boarded the Emakulam-Hazrat Nizamuddin superfast train by mistake, the official said. When passengers informed her, she panicked and jumped out on the platform of Ratlam railway station when the train was gaining speed. According to officials, the woman fell unconscious after falling on the platform. A Railway Protection Force (RPF) jawan and a few passengers rushed her to the medical-aid room at the station where she was given preliminary treatment. The official informed the woman suffered a minor injury on her leg.

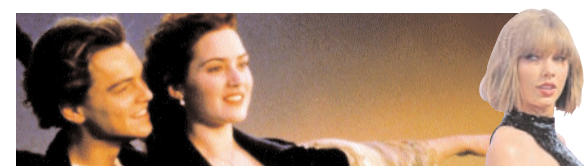


Owner of cat attacks neighbour's family with axe, 3 injured

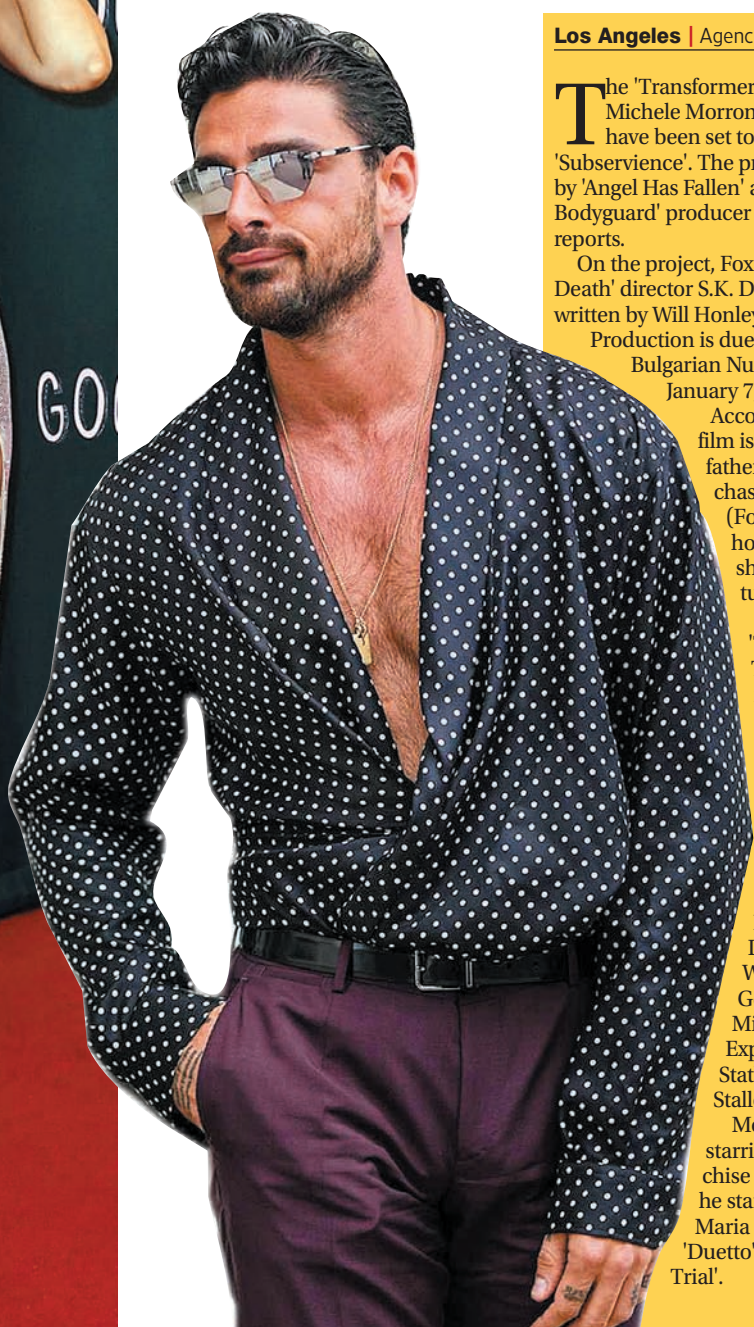
Team Absolute | Bhind

The actions of a cat led to an argument between two parties in Machhand area of Ambedkar colony in Madhya Pradesh's Bhind. The owner of the cat attacked the family which opposed to it drinking milk kept outside their house. Three members of the family were injured in the clash and admitted to Bhind district hospital for treatment today. According to reports, Shamin's cat often used to drink milk in houses of people living in the neighborhood. The entire neighborhood claimed they were troubled by the cat. When the cat was trying

ADITYA BIRLA HOUSING FINANCE LIMITED advertisement containing details of a demand notice, including borrower names, amounts, and dates.



Megan Fox, Michele Morrone set to star in 'sci-fi thriller movie'



Los Angeles | Agencies

The 'Transformers' star Megan Fox and Michele Morrone of '365 Days' fame have been set to star in sci-fi thriller 'Subservience'. The project will be bankrolled by 'Angel Has Fallen' and 'The Hitman's Bodyguard' producer Millennium Media, reports.

On the project, Fox will rejoin with her 'Till Death' director S.K. Dale, with a screenplay written by Will Honley and April Maguire. Production is due to start filming at the Bulgarian Nu Boyana Studio on January 7, 2023.

According to the reports, the film is about a struggling father (Morrone) who purchases a domestic SIM (Fox) to help care for his house and family until she gains awareness and turns deadly.

'Transformers' and 'Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles' actress Fox recently starred in 'Big Gold Brick' with Andy Garcia, Lucy Hale, and Oscar Isaac, and 'Good Mourning' starring Colson Baker and Dove Cameron.

Her upcoming projects include 'Naya Legend of the Golden Dolphin' with Kate Winslet, Elliot Page and Gerard Butler, and Millennium Media's 'The Expendables 4' with Jason Statham and Sylvester Stallone.

Morrone is known for his starring role in Netflix's franchise hit '365 Days' in which he starred opposite Anna-Maria Sieklucka, MGM's 'Duetto', and Netflix's 'The Trial'.

I think 'The best fashion is confidence': Shania Twain

Los Angeles | Agencies

Singer Shania Twain, who stripped off on the cover of her latest single 'Waking Up Dreaming' back in September, talked about how she's "comfortable in her own skin" and found the whole experience "really liberating."

"This is me expressing my truth. I'm comfortable in my own skin, and this is the way I am sharing that confidence. I think the best fashion is confidence, and whatever you wear - if you're wearing it with that, it's fashionable," she said.

"I am a woman in my late 50s, and I don't need to hide behind the clothes. I can't even tell you how good it felt to do nude shooting. I was just so unashamed of my new body, you know, as a woman that is well into my menopause. I'm not even emotional about it; I just feel okay about it. It's really liberating."

The 'Man! I Feel Like a Woman' hitmaker also broke down boundaries with her debut music video 'What Made You Say That' in 1993, in which she appeared braless with her midriff on show, but she started to get more self-conscious as she "grew older."

She added, "From the very beginning - the very first video - I was ditching the bra. But, I was a lot firmer then, so as I grew older, I started feeling a different pressure of, 'Well, your breasts are not as plump as they used to be. Your skin is not as tight as it used to be. Maybe you should start covering it up a little bit more.'"

However, the moment she felt her confidence "regressing," she decided "frig that" and wanted to embrace her figure. She explained, "I am embracing my body as it changes, as I should have from my childhood to my teens, as I should be from my taut, 20s and 30-year-old self, to my menopausal body."

"I'm not going to be shy about it. I want to be courageous about it, and I want to share that courage in the artwork that I am directing."



"Idris Elba to return as Luther"

Los Angeles | Agencies

British actor Idris Elba's character of John Luther from the thriller series 'Luther' has been away for quite some time. In the 2019 finale of 'Luther', the dark series about the complicated detective, he is arrested and cuffed by Schenk (played by Dermot Crowley) and sent to prison.

Now he's returning for a movie continuation of his story, reuniting with director Jamie

Payne and series creator-writer Neil Cross.

"He's done so much to bend the law in order to catch the bad guys that he's ended up in jail," Elba said. "So that's where we start the story. He's contemplating what he's going to do with his life." According to the reports, though Elba said the show's ardent fans had a lot to do with getting the movie version going ("They really wanted it. And I wanted it"), viewers needn't watch all five seasons of the thriller series in order to get up to speed.

"Luther is just so haunted -- that's his whole thing," Elba said.

"Even when he's a free man, he can't help but chase it, chase the ghosts that get into his head. And I think that's what drives him in this film."

"He's just very haunted by things he's done, things he could have done, people that have died."

"Still, prison has changed him, and we, as viewers, have changed since Luther's last out-

ing too," Payne said.

"The film really digs into, again, our primal fears," says the director.

"We've all gone for a period of time where we were literally locked in our house."

He added, "And in a very contemporary society, we're all so visible now. It's almost like I can look through the vast walls of our hearts into each other's life in a way that we've never looked before. And I think that makes us all very vulnerable."



Los Angeles | Agencies

Aubrey Plaza has a strange wish. She wishes Drew Barrymore was her mom. While joining Barrymore on her podcast 'Drew's News' to talk about 'The White Lotus', Plaza praised Barrymore's parenting skills. She said: "You're a dream mom. I wish you were my mom," before then adopting a baby voice and declaring, "Be my mommy." Barrymore ran with the request, replying: "I'll say the same thing I say to my girls. Get back in my belly." Barrymore has two daughters, Olive and Frankie. According to the reports, things got weirder from there. "Feed me, put me to bed," requested Plaza. Barrymore responded: "I'm good at it too. I put them in the nook of my arm and I hold them and I pet them." And she added: "Oh God, what I wouldn't do to put you to bed." When Barrymore tried to steer the conversation back on track, noting that her dreams were coming true by being with Plaza in the moment, Plaza replied: "Mine too, Mommy." "Get in my belly!" Barrymore responded, with Plaza creepily saying: "Oh God, it's so warm." Barrymore then described her womb as not too hot, not too cold and with food available 24/7.

Aubrey Plaza wishes Drew Barrymore was her mom

Zoe & Sam spoke about the pressure & risk they faced for the movie

New Delhi | Agencies

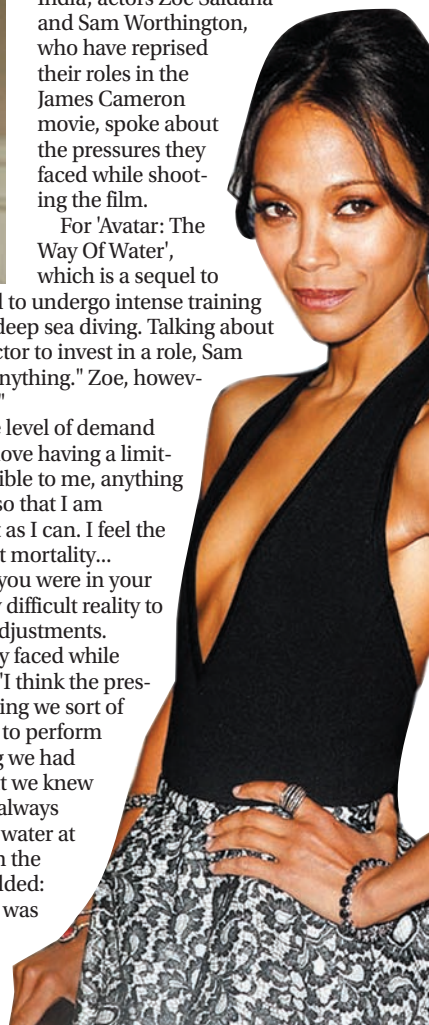


Their latest release 'Avatar: The Way of Water' has made a whopping Rs 235 crore in its one week of release in India; actors Zoe Saldana and Sam Worthington, who have reprised their roles in the James Cameron movie, spoke about the pressures they faced while shooting the film.

For 'Avatar: The Way of Water', which is a sequel to 2002 film 'Avatar', the actors had to undergo intense training for swimming underwater and deep sea diving. Talking about how much is too much for an actor to invest in a role, Sam said with a laugh: "I am up for anything." Zoe, however, feels it "depends on an actor."

"I think it depends on just the level of demand that a role or project requires. I love having a limitless amount of resources accessible to me, anything I may need to just help me just so that I am immersed and character as best as I can. I feel the only challenge I am facing is just mortality... You're not as fast in your 40s as you were in your late 20s. So, that becomes a very difficult reality to face and then you make those adjustments."

What about the pressures they faced while shooting for the film? Zoe said: "I think the pressure that I felt was the new training we sort of required for the sequel which is to perform under water that was something we had never done in the first movie but we knew that James Cameron was always going to meddle with capturing water at some point and incorporating in the whole journey of Avatar." She added: "So, training for that, free diving was definitely nerve-wracking but once we went through the process it became a really exhilarating journey."



ABSOLUTE PIC OF THE DAY

Kelly Gale



IPL 2023 MINI-AUCTION

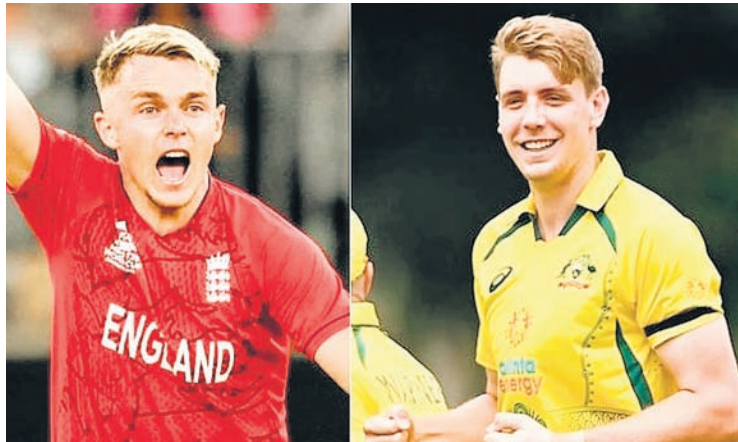
SAM CURRAN GETS HIGHEST-EVER BID; MI GET GREEN FOR 17.5 CRORE

Kochi | Agencies

England all-rounder Sam Curran on Friday became the most expensive player in the Indian Premier League (IPL) history after Punjab Kings bought him for a whopping Rs 18.50 crore at the 2023 mini-auction of the cash-rich tournament. There was intense bidding between MI, CSK, RR, LSG, and PBKS for Curran, who was Player of the Tournament at the T20 World Cup in Australia. However, PBKS eventually got the England all-rounder.

After Curran, Australia all-rounder Cameron Green also attracted big bids from franchises and became the second-most expensive player in the IPL history after Mumbai Indians picked him for a whopping Rs 17.5 crore. Before this auction, South African all-rounder Chris Morris was the most expensive buy in the IPL. He was signed by Rajasthan Royals for Rs. 16.25 crore in the 2021 auction.

Meanwhile, the England Test captain Ben Stokes was sold to Chennai Super Kings for Rs 16.25 crore after fierce bids with LSG and SRH.



Players sold at IPL 2023 Auction

Kane Williamson to Gujarat Titans for ₹2 crore.
Harry Brook to Sunrisers Hyderabad for ₹3.25 crore.
Mayank Agarwal to Sunrisers Hyderabad for ₹8.25 crore.
Ajinkya Rahane to Chennai Super Kings for ₹50 lakh.
Odean Smith to Gujarat Titans for ₹50 lakh.
Sikandar Raza to Punjab Kings for ₹50 lakh.

Nicholas Pooran to Lucknow Super Giants for ₹16 crore.
Heinrich Klaasen to Sunrisers Hyderabad for ₹5.25 crore.
Phil Salt to Delhi Capitals for ₹2 crore.
Reece Topley to Royal Challengers Bangalore for ₹1.9 crore.
Jaydev Unadkat to Lucknow Super Giants for ₹50 lakh.
Jhye Richardson to Mumbai Indians for ₹1.5 crore.
Adil Rashid to Sunrisers

Hyderabad for ₹2 crore.
Mayank Markande to Sunrisers Hyderabad for ₹50 lakh.
Shivam Mavi to Gujarat Titans for ₹6 crore.
Mukesh Kumar to Delhi Capitals for ₹5.5 crore.
Manish Pandey to Delhi Capitals for ₹2.4 crore.
Will Jacks to Royal Challengers Bangalore for ₹3.2 crore.
Daniel Sams to Lucknow Super Giants for ₹75 lakh.
Kyle Jamieson to Royal Challengers Bangalore for ₹1 crore.
Piyush Chawla to Mumbai Indians for ₹50 lakh.
Amit Mishra to Lucknow Super Giants for ₹50 lakh.
Mayank Dagar to Sunrisers Hyderabad for ₹1.80 crore.
Joshua Little to Gujarat Titans for ₹2.4 crore.
Mohit Sharma to Gujarat Titans for ₹50 lakh.
Adam Zampa to Rajasthan Royals for ₹1.5 crore.
Litton Das to Kolkata Knight Riders for ₹50 lakh.
Mandeep Singh to Kolkata Knight Riders for ₹50 lakh.

IND VS BAN TEST SERIES :2 TEST DAY 2

India in advantageous position against Bangladesh

Dhaka | Agencies

Rishabh Pant and Shreyas Iyer slammed counter-attacking fifties to put India in an advantageous position on day two of second Test against Bangladesh at the Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium.

It was a day where Bangladesh took out India's top three in the first session and then took out Virat Kohli quickly in the second session to leave them at 94/4. That's when Pant and Iyer joined forces for an important 159-run stand for the fifth wicket, which made the difference for India in taking a sizable 87-run lead.

Though the duo fell short of their respective centuries, as Pant made 93 off 104 balls and Iyer scored 87 off 105 balls, the efforts from the left-right batting duo on a tough, deteriorating pitch, including making 140 runs in the second session at a run rate of 5.6.

Bangladesh openers Zakir Hasan and Najmul Hossain Shanto did well to negotiate six tricky overs before stumps. But they have a tough job in front of them on day three.

In the middle session, Pant got a thick edge rolling past backward point for a four off Mehidy Hasan Miraz, while Iyer countered short balls from Taskin Ahmed flat-batting over mid-on, followed by pull to bisect fine leg and deep backward square leg for successive boundaries.

Pant fell seven runs short of his century when tried to cut a ball from Mehidy which was close to the body and got a nick behind to Nurul. It also meant Pant was dismissed in the 90s for the sixth time in Tests.



Axar Patel looked to up the scoring rate, but holed out to long-on off Shakib. Shreyas was next to depart for 87.

Earlier, Taijul, the experienced left-arm spinner, was in great control of line and length while taking out India's top three in the morning session. He had taken out openers KL Rahul and Shubman Gill lbw in quick succession.

Taijul had his third wicket when Mominul Haque at forward short leg took a sharp catch of Cheteshwar Pujara, sending him back for 24. Post lunch, Bangladesh took out Kohli quickly, who nicked behind sans any foot-work off Taskin. But Pant and Iyer revived the Indian innings with a stunning counter-attack to give India a healthy lead, putting Bangladesh on backfoot.

Brief Scores: Bangladesh 227 in 73.5 overs and 7/0 in six overs trail India 314 in 86.3 overs (Rishabh Pant 93, Shreyas Iyer 87, Taijul Islam 4/74, Shakib Al Hasan 4/79) by 80 runs.

ELITE WOMEN'S NATIONAL BOXING CHAMPIONSHIPS

Olympics bronze medalist Lovlina reaches quarterfinals

Bhopal | Agencies

Tokyo Olympics bronze medalist Lovlina Borgohain put up a dominating display to enter the quarterfinals of the 6th Elite Women's National Boxing Championships, registering a resounding victory in Bhopal on Friday. Living up to the expectations, the Assam pugilist made light work of Puja Nayak from Odisha in the 75kg last-16 stage match. Lovlina's relentless attack and powerful punches proved too strong for her opponent as the reigning Asian champion was declared the winner by Referee Stops the Contest (RSC) verdict after just a few minutes into the first round of the bout.

Tamil Nadu's S Kalavani was the other pugilist to secure the last-eight berth as she outperformed Swati Arya of Rajasthan by a 5-0 margin in a 48kg pre-quarterfinal contest.

Rajasthan's Arshi Khanam and Jhalak Tomar also produced dominating performances to make progress into the quarterfinals with identical 5-0 wins in their respective matches. While Khanam beat Uttar Pradesh's Ice Prajapati in the 54kg bout, Tomar (50kg)



thrashed Assam's Kampi Boro comfortably.

For Haryana, Kalpana emerged victorious in the 50kg category by 5-0 against Maharashtra's Janhavi Waghmare.

Rajni Singh (48kg) and Rinky Kishore (50kg) were the boxers from Uttar Pradesh to progress into the quarter-finals. Rajni beat Punjab's Suvirdha Bhagat 5-0 without breaking a sweat whereas Kishore claimed an RSC win against Kavitha Paravada of Andhra Pradesh.

The ongoing prestigious event has been witnessing the participation of 302 boxers, competing across 12 weight categories. The quarterfinals will be played on Saturday.

TATA STEEL TOUR CHAMPIONSHIP 2022: CHIKKARANGAPPA STORMS INTO THIRD-ROUND LEAD WITH A SUBLIME 62

Jamshedpur | Agencies

Chikkarangappa S. of Bengaluru stormed into the third-round lead after firing a sublime 10-under 62, the week's lowest score so far. Chikka's total moved to 17-under 199 giving him a one-shot advantage at the Rs. 3 crore TATA Steel Tour Championship 2022, the PGTI's season-ending event being played at the Beldih and Golumuri Golf Courses here.

The 14-time PGTI winner Chikka (66-71-62), who has been a runner-up on two previous occasions in Jamshedpur, once at the 17th TATA Open 2018 and then again at the TATA Steel Tour Championship 2020, zoomed 12 spots from his overnight tied 13th following his extraordinary third round effort that featured two early eagles.

Bengaluru's Khalin Joshi (69-67-65) struck a 65 to move up six spots to third position at 15-under 201. The PGTI Rankings leader Manu



Gandas of Gurugram was in a good position to stake his claim for the PGTI Order of Merit title as his round of 68 saw him continue in tied fourth place at 14-under 202.

Chikkarangappa was off to an unbelievable start on day three as he made eagles on the second and fourth holes with 15-foot conversions on both occasions. He also narrowly missed an eagle from 20 feet on the third where he settled

for a birdie. The bogey on the fifth didn't upset Chikka's momentum as he continued to fire in his irons and wedges within close range picking up birdies on the sixth, seventh and ninth.

Chikka, a two-time winner on the Asian Development Tour (ADT) then made further in-roads on the back-nine claiming four birdies including two from 12 feet in exchange for a bogey.

MY HEART IS STILL BLEEDING: BRAZIL'S THIAGO SILVA ON WC QUARTERFINAL DEFEAT

Rio de Janeiro:

Veteran Brazil defender Thiago Silva has said that he is still hurting after the team's 2022 World Cup quarterfinal loss to Croatia on penalties. Brazil entered the tournament in Qatar as favourites but were eliminated for the fifth consecutive time by a European opponent at football's showpiece event.

"From the interviews after the match against Croatia to this day, my heart is still bleeding," the 38-year-old Chelsea centre-back said in a social media post on Thursday. "But... I'm convinced that we did a decent and committed job -- all of us, including the coaching committee and the backroom staff." "I have no idea how many times I've wondered what I should write about this World Cup. I must confess that our elimination and the way it happened is very difficult to accept and understand."

Silva said he felt proud to have represented Brazil at four consecutive World Cups, adding that the feat had surpassed his "wildest childhood dreams".



ENG vs NZ Test Series: Stuart Broad, Matthew Potts, Dan Lawrence returns to squad

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Fast bowlers Stuart Broad, Matthew Potts and right-handed batter Dan Lawrence on Friday made a return to England's 15-member Test squad for the tour of New Zealand comprising two Tests in February next year.

Broad had missed England's victorious 3-0 tour to Pakistan due to the birth of his first child, while Potts was not considered. Lawrence returns after last featuring in the Test team on the tour of West Indies in March this year.

The right-arm quick Olly Stone, who last played for England in June 2021 against New Zealand, will be looking to add to his three Test caps.



Tearaway quick Mark Wood, who was impressive in the recent 3-0 victory over Pakistan, will take a break from all international and franchise cricket in January to fully recover after a busy winter in all formats.

England batter Joe Root will play a handful of matches for Dubai Capitals in the UAE T20 League ahead of the Test tour to New Zealand. ECB added that Root will have a short break before joining up with the Test team.

Stone, Harry Brook, Ben Duckett, and Will Jacks, who will be playing in the South Africa T20 League followed by the ODI series against the Proteas, will fly directly to join the squad in New Zealand following the conclusion of that series.

Hockey: Harmanpreet to lead team for World Cup

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Drag-flicker Harmanpreet Singh has been named as captain and Amit Rohidas as vice-captain of the Indian men's hockey team for next month's FIH Odisha Hockey Men's World Cup 2023 Bhubaneswar-Rourkela.

India is in Group D with England, Spain and Wales in the 16-team competition that will be held from January 13 to 29, 2023.

The team, strategically selected after two-day trials in SAI Centre, Bengaluru where 33 players were put to test, features a good mix of experienced and young players who will vie to end India's wait to stand on the podium in the prestigious event, Hockey India informed in a release on Friday.



Seasoned goalkeeper P.R. Sreejesh, who will be playing his fourth World Cup and his third on home soil, along with Krishan B. Pathak have been picked as the two goalkeepers in the squad.

Captain Harmanpreet Singh and his deputy Amit Rohidas will spearhead the defence along with Surrender Kumar, Varun Kumar, Jarmarpreet Singh and Nilam Sanjeep Xess.

India will begin their World Cup campaign against Spain on January 13 in Rourkela followed by their second Group D match against England. They will play their next preliminary league match against Wales at Bhubaneswar, which will also host the Crossover and quarterfinal matches between January 22-25.

Mayank has leadership qualities, but so do have other players: Brian Lara

Kochi | Agencies

Sunrisers Hyderabad head coach Brian Lara on Friday was non-committal on opener Mayank Agarwal being appointed as captain of the side after the 2016 IPL champions roped in the former Punjab Kings skipper during IPL 2023 mini player auction.

"I think that's unfair to say. We have got a couple of senior players around the squad already. Personally, I think he has leadership qualities, but so do have other players in the squad. That is a decision we haven't taken as yet and with the auction not being over, we are not sure yet of the remain-



ing players we will have," said Lara in a press conference.

"First of all, he is in a very confident unit playing Test cricket and T20 World Cup for England. He's growing as a player and has experience of playing in the Asian conditions, the PSL and he's excelled there. I know it's his first IPL, but I believe he's got the goods," added Lara.

Lara also indicated Hyderabad will make specialist picks in the auction due to impact player rule. "Also, with the impact player rule, it allows us to look at specialists instead of an all-rounder as due to that, we can replace batter with bowler and bowler with batter. That gives us flexibility in picking specialists for each spot," he said.

KIYG 2022 MEN'S U18 QUALIFIERS

UP Hockey, Hockey Chandigarh, Hockey MP registers win

Bhubaneswar | Agencies

Uttar Pradesh Hockey, Hockey Chandigarh and Hockey Madhya Pradesh won their respective matches on Day 3 of the qualifiers of the Khelo India Youth Games 2022 (Mens Under 18), here on Friday.

The first match of the day saw Uttar Pradesh Hockey register a 6-1 win against Manipur Hockey in Pool A. Manoj Yadav (6', 26', 45', 47') was on top of his game, scoring four goals in the match. Ajeet Yadav (53', 59') also struck a brace to contribute to



Uttar Pradesh Hockey's victory. Silheiba Lisham (56') scored the only goal for Manipur Hockey.

Hockey Chandigarh defeated Hockey Andhra Pradesh 6-0 in the second match of the day in Pool A. Paramvir Singh

(13', 23') scored a two, while Gurpreet Singh (6'), Rishav (16'), Kawal Singh (49') and Surinder Singh (51') netted a goal each to complete a comfortable victory for Hockey Chandigarh.

In the last match of the day, Hockey Madhya Pradesh defeated Hockey Bihar by a big margin of 8-0 in Pool B. Ali Ahmad (4', 10', 30', 54') led the charge for Hockey Madhya Pradesh with four goals of his own, while Mohammed Dad (12', 18') and Shreyas Dhube (48', 55') also contributed to the handsome victory.



IULIA VANTUR DREW INSPIRATION FROM URMILA FOR HER LATEST TRACK

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Singer and actress Iulia Vantur revealed how she was inspired by Bollywood actress Urmila Matondkar for her latest song 'Yai Re'. She has collaborated with Honey Singh for the track which was originally sung by Asha Bhosle for the movie 'Rangeela' starring Urmila.

She spoke about how she drew inspiration from Urmila's dance steps for the music video of this track.

The singer said: "The thought of matching the steps and vibes from the original song picturised on Urmila Ji made me slightly nervous at first. But as I watched the original song I was able to draw inspiration from her and create a new vibe for the song in my own style." She is known for her songs such as 'Mai Chala', 'Designer Lehenga', and 'Tera Tha Tera Hoon', among others. Now, she has all the hopes from her latest track and she talked about getting support from the team to bring perfection in the picturisation of the song.

"With the constant support and guidance of the team, we achieved what we were aiming for. And by the audience's reaction, we can tell that we are on the right track," she added.

'Yai Re' is sung by Yo Yo Honey Singh and Iulia Vantur.



Shrenu Parikh to play titular role in the new show

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actress Shrenu Parikh, who is known for her roles in 'Iss Pyaar Ko Kya Naam Doon?' and 'Ishqbaaz', is all set to play the titular role in the new show 'Maitree'.

Shrenu said: "I am really happy to be a part of a show like Maitree as it not only offers viewers high-octane drama, but I feel that my character is also unique and exciting. Maitree is a simple and sensible girl who likes to celebrate every small moment of her life. An ambitious girl by nature, Maitree and I are very similar, and her journey is sure to keep everyone on the edge of their seats."

The show is a reflection of true friendship and childhood bonds between two friends living in the city of Prayagraj. Their mothers feel that their friendship will continue after marriage but the two are sure to be best friends even if they settle down. However, there is a twist in the story.

She said: "The show revolves around two best friends and their volatile journey in life, which has brought them to a point they never imagined in their wildest dreams. With several intriguing plot twists in store for the audience, I hope they shower us with their love and support."



Bhumi takes a break from her erratic shoot schedule

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Taking a break from her erratic shoot schedule, actress Bhumi Pednekar will be seen ringing in the New Year in style in Mexico with her friends. Bhumi will be taking a break after shooting almost seven films this year. Having had to work non-stop since the pandemic related lockdowns lifted Bhumi will travel to Mexico with her friends.

The actress' slate of seven films, including 'Govinda Naam Mera', released earlier this month. Her upcoming line-up includes Anubhav Sinha's 'Bheed', Ajay Bahl's 'The Ladykiller', Sudhir Mishra's 'Afwaa', Gauri Khan-produced 'Bhakhak', Mudassar Aziz's 'Mere Husband Ki Biwi' and a couple of more unannounced projects.

Bhumi's latest release 'Govinda Naam Mera' is a comedy thriller written and directed by Shashank Khaitan and produced by Karan Johar.

The film also stars Vicky Kaushal, and Kiara Advani. It was premiered on 16 December 2022 on Disney+ Hotstar.

CIRKUS : SANJAY MISHRA SHINES WHILE RANVEER COMES OUT AS A CLOWN



FILM REVIEW

BY SHACHI CHATURVEDI

Director: Rohit Shetty
Cast: Ranveer Singh, Pooja Hegde, Jacqueline Fernandez, Johnny Lever, Sanjay Mishra, Varun Sharma, among others
Runtime: 2hr 18 mins
Ratings: 2/5

SYNOPSIS

Dr Roy Jamnadas rearranges and places two sets of identical twins up for adoption with two separate families in two different cities. Years later, when one pair of twins chooses to travel to the city where the other set of twins runs a circus, a comedy of errors unfolds.

REVIEW

Jamana das Orphanage is an Ashram that is maintained by two brothers, Joy and Roy. One of the brothers holds the opinion that a child's future is determined by upbringing more than just their blood relationship. He splits apart two sets of identical twins in order to prove this hypothesis, which sparks confusion.

Surprisingly, the new parents of the rearranged pair of infants choose to name their children Roy and Joy. Roy One is the Electric Man. Roy Two always gets shocked when Roy One touches the wire.

Talking about the movie, with the Golmaal series, Rohit Shetty has repeatedly shown that he is a master of creating good comedy. This time he highly disappoints his audience. In the attempt to create a chaotic comedy, the filmmaker ends up making a mess. The movie's dialogues fall flat and one cannot even force a laugh on them. Only a few instances make you



laugh out loud; otherwise, the whole movie is like a bland meal; which just looks fancy but tastes nothing.

Regarding the star performances, this multi-star movie boasts a fantastic star cast that includes talented performers like Johnny Lever, Siddhartha Jadhav, and Sanjay Mishra, among others. However, it appears that Rohit Shetty has forgotten to put the skill to use.

When it comes to the main lead of the film, Ranveer Singh is an unmitigated letdown. When utilized properly, Ranveer is a talented actor who has enormous potential, but it seems like he is a big misfit for a Rohit Shetty comedy.

Varun Sharma doesn't try anything new, which is often preferable than overacting or doing too much. He is a good talent but his dialogues are so lame that even a kid seating next to me in the theatre, doesn't laugh. Although Pooja Hegde has a small role, she is bearable. I still don't get why Jacqueline is in the movie, she doesn't do anything that advances the story or the humour. Her presence in the film is quite avoidable. To be honest, the supporting cast of the film is the only thing that has a chance of keeping everyone

interested till the very end. This movie's true star is Sanjay Mishra. He displays his true talent in the movie by playing Jacqueline's father. Despite lousy writing, he succeeds in making the audience laugh with his facial expressions and dialogue delivery. Even Siddhartha Jadhav, Vrajesh Hirjee, and Johnny Lever are deserving of praise. Coming on to the film's music and background score. Rohit Shetty's film has a very particular background score, which he uses in his comedy films. This time as well the technical team has used the exact same soundtrack which is okay. The songs of the movie are totally forgettable except Deepika's Current Laga song. It is a nice track which makes you want to groove. Looking at the Technical aspects of the film, the CGI and VFX are poorly done. The script of the film needs major editing and some good jokes to make the movie palatable.

CONCLUSION

There is nothing outstanding about the film, which disappoints audiences. Instead of cribbing in the theatre, I would much rather rest and relax at home.



I'M SOMEBODY WHO IS BUILT TO CONQUER: YASH

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Pan-India star Yash has had a great 2022 as his film 'KGF: Chapter 2' broke records at the box-office.

The actor says he is built to conquer much more and adds that it's okay if he dies fighting but he is somebody who will be fighting for something that excites him. Yash revealed, "Lot of people ask me, what do you do now, what can you do (post KGF success). I said what do you think, this is the ultimate (the success of KGF and box office numbers) may be it is for you or someone else." "I'm not somebody who is going to say that I must just encash this success, establish myself and just relax now. I'm not somebody who is built for administration, I'm somebody who is built to conquer much more."

The actor added: "I'll do something which gives me excitement. It's okay if I die fighting but I am somebody who will be fighting for something that excites me." Yash has given the biggest blockbuster of the year with 'KGF: Chapter 2' grossing over Rs 1,250 crore worldwide.

INSTAGRAM PIC OF THE DAY



Aisha Sharma