

absolute india



VOL. 10, ISSUE 44, MUMBAI | MONDAY, DECEMBER 26, 2022 | ₹5 | PAGE 08

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In 2023

MILLIONS OF INDIANS LIVING NEAR AIRPORTS MAY NOT GET TO ENJOY 5G

The Department of Telecommunications (DoT) recently sent a letter to telecom providers Bharti Airtel, Reliance Jio and Vodafone not to install C-band 5G base stations within the 2.1 km range of Indian airports with immediate effect, as C-Band 5G can create problems with the radio (radar) altimeters of aircraft. During takeoff and landing, and to help avoid crashing into mountains, pilots depend entirely on radio (radar altimeters). The DoT letter said that the telecom service providers (TSPs) are advised that "in the area 2,100 meters from both ends of runway and 910 meters from centre line of runway of Indian Airports shall have no 5G/ IMT base stations in the 3,300-3,670 MHz".

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The roll-out of 5G in India, which was kicked-off in October 2022, is happening at a much faster scale in India compared to 4G or 3G and millions of people will soon have an agile and faster streaming, gaming and work experience on their devices. Some serious concerns, however, remain to be addressed.

Industry experts believe that consumers who live in the proximity of airports are not likely to get 5G on their devices. And that number runs into millions. The new rule will be applicable till the replacement of all aircraft Radio Altimeters filters is ensured by the DGA.

As high-speed 5G wireless networks roll out across the world, pilots in the US also reported frequent problems with the aircraft's radio (radar)



and the Open RAN 5G network.

Neil Shah, Vice President of Research, Counterpoint Research, said leading operators Jio and Airtel have tremendous scale and strong foundation to build upon existing 4G network coverage.

"Jio, especially, taking a 5G Stand Alone (SA) deployment approach where the 5G network is almost architecturally independent of the 4G network makes it easier for Jio to deploy pan-India 5G network swiftly to kickstart 5G services at scale," said Shah.

Airtel though has to rollout 5G network along with its 4G, 2G networks, is also leapfrogging with 5G deployments for both consumer as well as enterprise use-cases and will fast-follow Jio in terms of coverage at pan India level by end of 2023, Shah added.

INCIDENTS WHICH WERE LINKED BY PILOTS TO PROBLEMS WITH THE AIRCRAFT'S RADIO ALTIMETERS

- One jet lost its autopilot completely, and reportedly had fire trucks waiting for it on landing.
- In February, a passenger plane on approach to the Louis Armstrong International Airport in New Orleans experienced erratic low-altitude warnings as it flew below 1,000 feet.
- In March, a commercial jet landing on autopilot at Los Angeles International Airport suddenly went into an aggressive descent just 100 feet above the ground.
- Between January and May, there were 93 reports of faulty or failing radar altimeters, where a normal year might see only a handful, according to ASRS, a public database maintained by NASA.

altimeters. According to an analysis of reports by IEEE Spectrum (the world's leading engineering magazine) made to NASA's Aviation Safety Reporting System (ASRS), complaints of malfunctioning and failing altimeters soared after the roll-out earlier this year of high-speed 5G wireless networks, which use similar C-band frequencies. With the initial roll-out of 5G in India, global chip-maker Qualcomm has bolstered its efforts with Reliance Jio to help it fast connect 100 million homes through its 5G fixed wireless access including the millimetre wave (mmWave). Qualcomm is working very closely with Reliance Jio to provide its chipset platforms for the 5G fixed wireless access

Telangana farmer's daughter conquers Antarctica's tallest peak

Hyderabad | Agencies

She belongs to a humble family that depends on agriculture but this young mountaineer from Telangana has not let the odds stop her from scaling new heights.

Barely three months after she scripted history as the first Indian woman to scale the 'true summit' of Mt. Manaslu, Anvitha Padamati (24) has gone on to scale the tallest peak in Antarctica.

On December 17, Anvitha scaled Mt. Vinson, the highest peak of Antarctica continent - an altitude of 4,892 m above sea level.

She was part of the international expedition team in Antarctica with Transcend Adventures India that set out from Hyderabad on December 3 to Punta Arenas, Chile. After completing the documentation and other paperwork, she flew to Union Glacier in Antarctica on December 7.

"It was not an easy mountain to climb but I summited it successfully with the team. All the previous mountain climbing experience helped me a lot. It is my 4th summit as part of 7 summits," Anvitha said.

From December 8 to 15, Anvitha spent time getting acclimatized to the harsh Antarctica weather braving extremely windy conditions with temperatures hovering



around minus 30 Degree Celsius. Finally on December 16, she attempted the summit climb.

"It was a very windy day, almost minus 30 degrees and my hands were too cold and I couldn't even put up a tent. With great difficulty we built the tent and it was almost minus 35 degrees inside the tent. On December 16 we set out for a summit around 11 a.m. We reached the summit of Mt. Vinson around 9 p.m. and placed the Indian flag on the summit at 4892 m. Almost 20 minutes on the summit is a very great experience because the mountain on top is like a pyramid.

"Due to very bad wind we packed all our stuff and

descended directly to base camp on the same day. It took us 20 hours. It was a long day but a great day," she reminisces.

Anvitha's father, Madhusudhan Reddy is an agriculturist while her mother, Chandrakala Padamati works in Anganwadi school at Bhongir.

For Anvitha, who is aiming for seven summits spread across the seven continents, this feat in Antarctica marks her fourth achievement, and brings her closer to her goal.

Anvitha's next goal is the tallest peak in South America, Mt. Aconcagua in Argentina. "I'm preparing for a February ascent," she said, signing off.

India becoming world's 5th largest economy, one of 2022 achievements: PM Modi

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday said that among the many successes of the year 2022 was India attaining the status of the world's fifth largest economy.

In his monthly radio broadcast, 'Mann Ki Baat', he said that in 2022 the record of India surpassing the incredible figure of 220 crore vaccines was also one of the landmarks.

"India crossed the magical exports figure of \$400 billion in 2022... In sports, be it the Commonwealth Games or the victory of our women's hockey team, our youth have shown tremendous potential," the prime minister said while listing the achievements of the departing year. Modi also spoke about the



challenge of 'Kala-azar'.

The parasite of this disease is spread through the sting of the sand fly. When someone has Kala-azar, one has fever for months, there is anemia, the body becomes weak and the weight also decreases. This disease can happen to anyone from children to elders. But with everyone's efforts, this disease, named Kala-azar, is now getting eradicated rapidly, the prime

minister said.

"Until recently, the scourge of Kala-azar had spread in more than 50 districts across four states. But now this disease is confined to only four districts of Bihar and Jharkhand. I am sure, the strength and awareness of the people of Bihar-Jharkhand will help the government's efforts to eliminate 'Kala-azar' from these four districts as well," he said.

Two Delhi cops extort Rs 50L worth gold from two businessmen at IGI airport

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Two Delhi Police personnel allegedly extorted gold worth Rs 50 lakh from two businessmen who had arrived at the Indira Gandhi International (IGI) Airport from Muscat and Qatar.

The matter was reported on Saturday while the extortion took place on December 20. According to the information, both the police personnel have been placed under suspension and a case has been lodged against them.

Speaking with Reporter, a police official who did not wish to be named, said that both the accused police personnel are of Head Constable rank.

Sources said the incident occurred on December 20. Two businessmen arrived at the IGI airport in two separate flights, one



from Qatar and second from Muscat. They were having 400 and 600 gram gold with them.

"The Head constables knew about the gold. They took them to a corner on the pretext of searching. They

asked about the gold and threatened the businessmen to lodge an FIR against them. The accused police personnel later told the businessmen that they would set them free if they hand over the gold and leave

quietly," a source said. The victims were too petrified and handed over all the gold to the two policemen. One victim was from Hyderabad and another was from Nagore (Maharashtra).

On Saturday (December 24), they reached the IGI police station with their partners to report the matter. The police found that the gold actually belonged to the victims and it was taken away forcefully by the Head Constables. After this an FIR under section 384 (extortion) of Indian Penal Code (IPC) was filed against the two policemen.

"We have also initiated a departmental inquiry against them," said the official. Meanwhile, a Customs source said that stamp duty on the gold was not paid and customs will contact the fine from the two businessmen. Further probe in the matter was on.

CHHATTISGARH COP SHOTS DEAD HEAD CONSTABLE, SURRENDERS: POLICE

Kanker: A head constable of the Chhattisgarh Armed Force (CAF) was killed after his subordinate allegedly opened fire at him with a rifle in the state's Kanker district on Sunday, police said.



The incident took place in the morning at a government college in Kanker where the CAF's 11th battalion was deployed for security duty as a strong room was set up in the institute for the recently held bypoll to Bhanupratappur Assembly seat in the district, Superintendent of Police Shalabh Sinha said. As per preliminary information, an argument broke out between constable Purushottam Singh and head constable Surendra Bhagat over some issue following which Singh allegedly opened fire with an Insas rifle, he said.

Surendra Bhagat died on the spot in the firing, he added. Purushottam Singh subsequently locked himself in a room with the weapon. After senior officials persuaded him, he came out of the room following which he was taken into custody, the official said. The reason behind the incident is yet to be ascertained, he added. Counting of votes for the December 5 bypoll to Bhanupratappur Assembly seat was held on December 8 at the government college where the strong room was set up.

After counting, the Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs) are kept in the strong room for next 45 days, according to officials.

4-yr UG program to make it easier for students eyeing foreign universities

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The new draft of the Four Year Undergraduate Program (FYUP) will help students who aspire to pursue higher education abroad.

The craze among Indian students to study abroad was increasing every year. According to a government figure presented in the Lok Sabha last week, six lakh Indian students went abroad for higher education till November, this year, while in 2021, the number was 4.44 lakh.

The data states that Canada, Germany, Australia, the US and Italy are the top five countries where Indian students go for further studies. According to the new draft by the University Grants Commission (UGC), students will now be able to get an undergraduate 'Honours' degree after completing four years, instead of three, along the lines of the international standards. One of the benefits of international equality in the education level is that Indian students will get more opportunities for higher educa-



tion in the universities of the US and Western countries. However, some academicians and universities do not agree with the same.

Professor Ashish Gupta, Pro Vice Chancellor of JK Lakshmipat University, Jaipur, believes otherwise. He said: "FYUP will help students who seek admission in many renowned universities of the US, but there is a need to teach such skills in the program to increase employment as that will be of great help to students studying abroad. These skills may include communication, adaptability, foreign languages, and self-awareness. But to make such pro-

posals in Indian institutions to get admission in foreign institutions is not fair for students." He said: "The basic objective was to include more students in the three-year program, whereas FYUP degree is an extension of the same." Gupta gave an example of students getting grades in schools on the basis of their performance in exams, and said: "This type of education does not prepare students to pursue their graduation from a good university as well as make their career but its only aim is to get admission in a foreign university." He said: "The institutes which are planning to start FYUP need to think about it more." However, the UGC has clarified that FYUP has several educational advantages, for instance, Indian students from FYUP can directly pursue PhD from foreign universities, unlike before where it was mandatory for them to do Post Graduation (PG) before PhD. UGC said that flexibility has been provided in the FYUP keeping the students' convenience in view and no curriculum is imposed on them.

South Korean Man, 50, Dies After Paraglider Fails To Open In Gujarat

Mehsana | Agencies

A 50-year-old South Korean man died after falling 50 feet to the ground while paragliding in Gujarat's Mehsana district, police said on Sunday.

The accident took place at around 5.30 pm on Saturday at a school ground in Visatpura village near Kadi town of the district.

Shin Byeong Moon was killed after the canopy of his paraglider failed to open properly, because of which he lost balance and fell from a height of about 50 feet, inspector Nikunj Patel of Kadi police station said. The victim's friends rushed him in a semi-conscious state to a private hospital where he died during treatment, he said. According to doctors, the man suffered a cardiac arrest due to the shock of falling, the official said. Shin was on a trip to Vadodara. He



and his Korean friend were visiting their acquaintance, who is into paragliding, at Visatpura village near Kadi town. On Saturday evening, Shin and his Korean friend went paragliding," Patel said. "The man fell from a height of around 50 feet after the canopy failed to open properly," he said. A case of accidental death was registered at Kadi police station and the victim's relatives and friends in Vadodara and the Korean Embassy were informed about the incident, he said.



ALLAHABAD HC ASKS UP GOVT TO RAISE RETIREMENT AGE OF LU TEACHERS TO 65 YRS

Lucknow | Agencies

The Lucknow Bench of the Allahabad High Court has directed the state government to increase the retirement age of teaching staff in Lucknow University from 62 years to 65 years.

A single bench of Justice Om Prakash Shukla passed this order while hearing a petition filed by Dr Prem Chandra Mishra.

It is the case of the petitioners that they were entitled to be allowed to continue their services as teachers in the university concerned till the age of 65 years and relied on three identical orders passed by a coordinate bench of the Court in similar situations. All the petitioners have common ground, that in all these cases, it was directed to the state government to incorporate the necessary amendments in the respective university statutes, so as to raise/increase the age of superannuation from the existing 62 years to 65 years.

The petitioner, in the writ petition claims to have been working as a Professor (Psychology) in the University of Lucknow, wherein he superannuated on attaining the age of 62 years in July 2020.

However, since the petitioner was



extended the session benefit, he retired in June 2021.

It is the common submission of the counsels for the petitioners that the Government of India through the Ministry of Human Resources Development, department of Higher Education had decided to increase the age of superannuation for all persons holding teaching positions on regular employment against sanc-

tioned posts as in March 2017 in any of the centrally funded higher and technical education institute under the said Ministry. In the said chronology, the Government of India, on the recommendation of the University Grant Commission has also decided to revise the pay scale of teachers in Central Universities subject to the various provisions of "Scheme of pay scales as contained in Government

Order dated 31.12.2008".

It is the case of the petitioners that although the salaries of the teachers in the state universities, including the Lucknow university, were revised under the scheme, however the Lucknow university failed to modify its statutes so as to bring the age of superannuation of teaching staff in conformity with the said scheme/regulations.

TDP leader dares Andhra Pradesh CM for open debate on state's debts

Amaravati | Agencies

day after Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy stated that the debt growth of the state is less compared to the previous Telugu Desam Party (TDP) regime, TDP leader and former Finance Minister Y. Ramakrishnu on Sunday dared him for a debate.

Ramakrishnu said the Chief Minister should come forward for an open debate on the heavy debt burden on the State.

He said the Chief Minister and his cabinet colleagues have been changing tack quite frequently on the future of Andhra Pradesh with regard to the liabilities of the state. "I am ready for an open debate with the Chief Minister in the presence of the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) officials on the borrowing of the state," Ramakrishnu said.

Expressing anguish at the "distortion of the facts", though as an experienced economist, he has been narrating certain facts on the state's economic condition, the TDP leader said that even constitutional authorities like the CAG are being misled by the state government. "Is it not a fact that the CAG has openly stated that the details are not being submitted to it," he asked.

"The Chief Minister is resorting to false propaganda that the State is making less borrowings than earlier," he said and made it clear that Jagan Mohan Reddy will go down in history as the Chief Minister who made the maximum borrowings. He is more focussing on raising debts and misusing these funds than welfare of the state, Ramakrishnu alleged.

The total debt burden on the state from 1956 till 2019 was Rs 2.53 lakh crore while



Jagan Mohan Reddy, in these three and a half years inflated the level of burden to Rs 6.38 lakh crore, the former Finance Minister said. This apart, the dues to be paid to the employees as salaries and the bills to be cleared for the contractors amount to thousands of crores of rupees, he said.

"This clearly indicates that by the time Jagan's five-year term ends the total debts may cross even Rs 11 lakh crore," he added.

Observing that the total debts during the TDP regime was Rs 1,63,981 crore of which major share was allotted to capital expenditure, Ramakrishnu said during these three and a half years, after the YSRCP came to power, the major share of debts was allotted to revenue expenditure.

The audit report of 2019-20 clearly mentioned that Rs 26,000 crore off-budget borrowings were not reflected in the budget, and in 2020-21 and 2021-22 too the off-budget borrowings were not presented even to the CAG, thus burying the facts, Ramakrishnu said. He demanded that the balance-sheets of the corporations be brought in the public domain and the Chief Minister come for an open debate to present the facts before the public.

Drone falls on Delhi Metro track, disrupts service

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Services on the Jasola Vihar-Shaheen Bagh to Botanical Garden stretch of Delhi Metro's Magenta Line were disrupted for around half an hour after a drone carrying medical supplies fell on the metro track on Sunday afternoon, officials said.

According to the information, the drone fell on metro track near Jasola Vihar. There was panic among the commuters as the metro trains were stopped mid-way.

Delhi Police, the CISE, and DMRC staff immediately swung into action and their teams reached the area where the drone had fallen. It was safely removed from the



metro tracks so that services could be resumed. During the operation, the commuters had to face tough time as neither anyone was allowed to go enter or exit the metro station.

After half an hour, normal services had resumed on the Magenta line, the DMRC said. The Delhi Police has taken the drone into their custody, and it will be handed over to its owner later.

First batch of Agniveers report at Artillery Centre, Hyderabad

Hyderabad | Agencies

The first batch of the Agniveers reported at Artillery Centre, Hyderabad on Sunday after undergoing four phases of grueling, testing, and filtering process.

It is estimated that approximately 2,500 Agniveers from all over the country will be reporting at Artillery Centre, Hyderabad by December 30, 2022 and a total of over 6,000 Agniveers will be trained by the end of year 2023.

According to a defence statement, the Agniveers were welcomed into the folds of the Indian Army with a warm reception. The Centre has already made necessary preparations to cater for such a large number of trainees. It has



beefed up its infrastructure and amended its training program to meet the needs of the Agniveers and the Army as a whole.

Under the Agnipath scheme announced by the Centre, Indian youth will be recruited as Agniveers to serve the Armed Forces for a period of four years.

The scheme launched has now taken the shape and the first batches of Agniveers have started reporting to their respective training centres. After a gap of three years, owing to Covid-19 pandemic, this is the first time that the trainees in the form of Agniveers will be trained at all the training centres across India after undergoing four phases of grueling, testing and filtering process.

Two drug trade kingpins held in Punjab, 10 kg heroin, drone seized

Chandigarh | Agencies

Striking a blow to the trans-border narcotic smuggling networks, the Punjab Police has busted a drug smuggling cartel with the arrest of two kingpins and recovered 10 kg heroin and a sophisticated drone from their possession, Director General of Police Gaurav Yadav said here on Sunday.

The arrested smugglers -- Dalbir and Jagdish, both residents of Gharinda in Amritsar -- were engaged in drug trafficking for the last three years and have no criminal case registered against them.

Yadav said the Amritsar Rural police led by SSP Swapan Sharma, in an intelligence-based operation, busted the drug smuggling cartel, which had been smuggling contraband to other states, including Haryana, Delhi and Uttar Pradesh, after



procuring it from across the border using drones.

He said the US-made drone recovered from them is a DJI series drone of Rs 20 lakh having hi-tech features, including long-lasting battery backup and infrared-based night vision camera. This is the fifth such drone recovered in less than a month, the DGP added. Senior Superintendent of Police Sharma said both the smugglers had a well-oiled distribution network in the neighbouring states, adding police teams have been conducting raids at 12 locations in Haryana and Delhi, and more contraband seizures will follow.

The Amritsar Rural police have seized 39 kg heroin in the past five months. Tight vigil along the second line of defence and close coordination with the Border Security Force (BSF) authorities has resulted in these huge seizures.

It has also recovered five drones in a month.

Quarrel between priests leaves Kerala cathedral deserted on Xmas eve, day

Thiruvananthapuram | Agencies

The St Mary's Cathedral Basilica in the Ernakulam Angamaly archdiocese of the Syrian Catholic church wore a deserted look on Christmas eve as well as on Christmas Day on Sunday, as the two opposing groups decided that there would not be any mass there till the quarrel between them ends.

There were fisticuffs and fights between the two groups on Friday and Saturday. This was following a group of priests and laity wanting to conduct the holy mass by the priest facing the mass instead of the altar as directed by the Cardinal.

The fisticuffs ended with several people including priests getting injured and admitted to hospitals. The basilica is not closed but the two warring groups decided that no holy mass would be conducted until a consensus is reached on the matter.

The laity and priests supporting the mass facing the believers said that the altar of the basilica must be reconsecrated for the Holy



Mass to be conducted there again as that the fight between the two groups had led to even the upturning of the altar.

A letter has already been shot off to the Vatican for intervention in the matter.

3,000 students to parade at Veer Bal Diwas event Today

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Delhi is all set to observe 'Veer Bal Diwas' on Monday in the presence of Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Earlier this year, the Prime Minister declared that December 26 will be observed as 'Veer Bal Diwas' to pay homage to the courage of the 'sahibzades', four sons of Guru Gobind Singh, the last Sikh guru.

While all four were martyred, the date has been chosen as it was the day observed as the martyrdom day of the sahibzadas Zorawar Singh and Fateh Singh, who were killed at the tender age of six and nine in Sirhind (Punjab) by Mughal forces.

Many programmes and competitions are being held on the occasion. An Army band will also take part in a march with the tableau telling the stories of 'sahibzades'.

BJP leader and former Delhi Sikh Gurdwara



Management Committee (DSGMC) president Manjinder Singh Sirsa said, "Thousands of school children of Delhi will on Monday march past from India Gate to Kartavya Path and tell whole India the history of martyrdom of little 'sahibzades' on the occasion of Veer Bal Diwas."

"There will be parade performance in which 3,000 students are participating. Parade will also have tableau showing the life stories of 'sahibzades'. Soldiers and students will march in front of PM Modi," Sirsa stated.

NTA allows TN students without Class 10 marks to apply for JEE

Chennai | Agencies

The National Testing Agency (NTA), the body conducting the Joint Engineering Entrance (JEE), has allowed students of Tamil Nadu State Board, to write the entrance without marks.

This is following a request by the state government to the Union Education ministry for allowing the students of Tamil Nadu who have passed the tenth exam in 2021 to apply for the JEE.

The NTA stated that options of 'passing year' and 'school board' will be disabled and the associated fields for marks/CGPA will not be visible for Tamil Nadu State Board candidates who have passed their Class 10 exams in 2021. There were widespread complaints as the students, who passed the Tamil Nadu boards in 2021, were not able to apply for the JEE. Joint Entrance Examination (JEE) is the prestigious entrance examination for entering the premium engineering institutions of the country, including the elite Indian Institute of Technology (IIT). While



more than 10 lakh students apply for the JEE, there are only around 10,000 seats in the IITs of the country. The JEE scores can be used for admission to other engineering colleges in the country as well. R.Balasubramanian, father of Amish Mohan, a Class 12 student eagerly preparing for JEE and hailing from Nagercoil, while speaking said,

"It's a big relief as my son was in a depressed mood after he was not able to apply for the JEE after spending long grueling hours into preparing for the entrance. I do thank the Tamil Nadu government for having taken up the matter with the Union government and the NTA for allowing the students to apply without marks."

UP youth held for conspiring to poison seers

Prayagraj | Agencies

The Prayagraj police have arrested a youth, named Vikram Sharma, from Sadhvi Trikal Bhavanta's ashram in Arail in connection with a conspiracy to poison many seers, including Mahamandaleshwar Kailashanand of Niranjani Akhara. The youth is a resident of Baghat.

Sadhvi Trikal Bhavanta has levelled several serious allegations against Vikram, including hatching a conspiracy.

The Naini police, along with the Special Task Force (STF) is interrogating the alleged accused.

According to police reports, Vikram Sharma, 21, reached Sadhvi's ashram at around 10 a.m. on Saturday. Trikal Bhavanta alleged that Vikram told him that Kailashanand's birth anniversary programme was in Haridwar on January 1. All the seers will come together on the occasion and he will



poison their food.

The Mahamandaleshwar has demanded a fair investigation and action by the police alleging a deep conspiracy against Sanatan Dharma.

Additional Commissioner of Police (ACP) Saurabh Dixit said that Vikram Sharma a.k.a. Yogendra, a resident of Baghat, was being questioned as to why he had come to Prayagraj. Call detail report of his mobile was also being extracted. Information has also been sought from the Baghat police.



OPPOSITION HAS NO LOVE LEFT FOR VIDARBHA: CM SHINDE

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Chief Minister Eknath Shinde on Sunday said the opposition parties have "no love left for Vidarbha" as they are not taking up issues of the region during the ongoing state legislature session in the region's Nagpur city. Talking to reporters at the Aurangabad airport in Marathwada region, Shinde said his government was working for the common people and will continue to do so.

The winter session of the Maharashtra legislature is currently underway in Nagpur.

The opposition has been targeting the state government over various issues, including the raging border dispute with neighbouring Karnataka and a controversial allotment of a land parcel in Nagpur in 2021 when



Shinde was the urban development minister in the previous Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) government.

Vidarbha region, a net producer of power and rich in minerals and forests, comprises 11 districts namely Yavatmal, Akola, Amravati,

Wardha, Buldhana, Washim, Nagpur, Chandrapur, Bhandara, Gadchiroli and Gondia. The region has given four chief ministers Vasantao Naik, Marotrao Kannamwar, Sudhakar Naik and Devendra Fadnis. To a question, Shinde on

Sunday said the Maharashtra legislature session is underway in Nagpur city of Vidarbha.

"The opposition should have spoken about the issues of Vidarbha and taken up questions pertaining to the region. They have no love left for Vidarbha. It is now visible through their actions," he said.

The CM was in Aurangabad to address a cleanliness drive organised by the Nanasahab Dharmadhikari Pratishthan, a non-governmental organisation.

Addressing a gathering after the cleanliness drive, Shinde said, "Our government is based on the common people's expectations and it will work for them. The work of the Nanasahab Dharmadhikari Pratishthan is commendable and is giving a good direction to people in the country."

THREE HELD FOR HIGHWAY ROBBERY IN PALGHAR

Maharashtra: An autorickshaw driver and two others have been arrested for allegedly robbing a passenger on Mumbai-Ahmedabad Highway in Maharashtra's Palghar district, police said on Sunday. The incident took place in the early hours of December 18 when the victim was travelling to Nalla Sopara in an autorickshaw, an official said. The driver allegedly stopped the vehicle midway and assaulted the victim along with the co-passenger and robbed him of his mobile phone and other valuables worth Rs 14,000, assistant commissioner of police (Virar division) Ramchandra Deshmukh. Based on tip-offs, the police apprehended the autorickshaw driver and two others involved in the robbery, the official said.

Calling PM Modi father of New India an insult to him: Sanjay Raut

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Shiv Sena (UBT) leader Sanjay Raut on Sunday asked the Bharatiya Janata Party if it agreed with the view of Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnis's wife Amruta Fadnis who called Prime Minister Narendra Modi as the father of New India. This is an "insult" to Modi as in the new India, ghosts of hunger, poverty, unemployment and terrorism are raising their head, Raut claimed in his weekly column Rokthok in the party mouthpiece 'Saamana', of which he is the executive editor.

"No one in the BJP talks about (freedom fighter) Veer Savarkar being father of the nation. The Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) was always opposed to Savarkar who underwent rigorous imprisonment. These people have partitioned India into old and new," the Rajya Sabha member further claimed.

Amruta, a banker and singer, in a mock court interview recently said, We have two 'rashtra pita'. Narendra Modi is the father of New India and Mahatma Gandhi is the father of the nation of earlier times. It had evoked strong reactions from the opposition Congress as well as Tushar Gandhi, the great-grandson of Mahatma Gandhi.

Raut on Sunday said doesn't the BJP acknowledge the independence gained from the martyrdom of freedom fighters. "Today in



the new India, ghosts of hunger, poverty, unemployment, terrorism are raising their head. Making Modi the father of new India is an insult to him," Raut wrote in the Marathi publication. He claimed the Father of the Nation title was given to Mahatma Gandhi by the people of India. Many political opponents including Shiv Sena founder late Balasaheb Thackeray had objections to it, Raut said. The issue here is not who is the Father of The Nation or Sardar. The matter is about what is the BJP's contribution to the freedom struggle, he said.

"The BJP and the RSS had no role to play in the freedom movement and hence, they have to steal icons linked to the Congress like Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel and Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose," Raut alleged.

Minister Abdul Sattar gets high court notice in land dispute case

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The Bombay High Court has issued a notice to Maharashtra minister Abdul Sattar for ordering 'regularisation' of the possession of land reserved for public 'gairan' (grazing) in favour of a private person in the face of a civil court order. The notice was issued by the Nagpur bench of the High Court on December 22. The details were available on Saturday.

The bench was hearing a petition filed against the order Sattar had passed in June 2022 when he was the revenue minister.

As per the petition, a public utility land meant for grazing measuring 37 acres was 'regularised' in favour of a private person. This was done even after the claim of this private person had been rejected by the civil appellate court, said the petitioner who was represented by advocate Sunil Manohar.

The HC held that prima facie (on the face of it) Sattar passed the order with knowledge that additional district judge, Washim, had disallowed the claim of the private person for continuation of his possession over gairan land. The Washim court had even passed stinging remarks that said private person was



"certainly out to usurp the government land," the HC noted.

"Thus, we find that the issue raised in this petition, which puts a question mark over the manner in which the public utility land/gairan land is allowed to be usurped by private individuals, requires consideration by this Court." "While issuing notice, we would direct the petitioners to deposit in this Court an amount of rupees fifty thousand to show their bona fides," the court added. The HC will hear the matter further on January 11, 2023.

'The Kashmir Files' helmer Vivek Agnihotri retorts to criticism over his security

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Director Vivek Agnihotri who made 'The Kashmir Files' this year, has been at the centre of people's ire over his Y-category security. Recently, the director shared a video on his Twitter that shows him walking around the city in security cover.

He wrote along with the video on Twitter: "The price one has to pay to show the Genocide of Hindus in Kashmir. In a Hindu majority country. Freedom of expression, ha! #ImprisonedInOwnCountry #Fatwa."

Reacting to the video, netizens called the use of Y-security for Vivek 'wastage of taxpayers' money'. The director has made his reply.

For a Twitter user who said: "Shocking to see how much of taxpayers' money is being wasted on security on a s****ag anti-national like you," Agnihotri shared a picture of a heavily guarded street in Kashmir and wrote: "Tax payers money is used here to combat religious terrorism. If this stops, I can also live freely. #Kashmir."

On the work front, Vivek is shooting for his film 'The Vaccine War'. The film, revolving



around the coronavirus vaccine in India, went on the floors earlier this month, and will

be released in cinemas on August 15, 2023 in 11 languages.

Sheezan Mohammed Khan arrested in Tunisha Sharma's death case

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Ali Baba Dastaan-E-Kabul' actor Sheezan Mohammed Khan has been arrested in the suicide case of Tunisha Sharma by Waliv police. The actress reportedly committed suicide on Saturday, December 24 on the set of the show in Vasai in Maharashtra's Palghar district.

Sheezan was arrested after a case of abetment to suicide was registered against him, police said today. He was this afternoon sent to four-day police custody by Vasai court. At the court, Khan's lawyer, Sharad Rai, spoke to the media and said, "Whatever has happened, police and court are working. He (Sheezan Khan) has been produced in court. Allegations against him are baseless." As per the media reports, Tunisha's mother had filed a complaint against Sheezan, who is said to have been in a relationship with her and they had broken up 15



days ago. She has told the police that Tunisha was under stress because of him and that might be the reason she has taken such an extreme step. Tunisha was just 20-year-old. Although it is claimed that she died by suicide, an investigation is going on to find the real cause of her death. Tunisha started her career with 'Bharat Ka Veer Putra - Maharana Pratap' and later featured in shows like 'Chakravartin Ashoka Samrat', 'Gabbar Poonchwala', 'Sher-e-Punjab: Maharaja Ranjit Singh', 'Internet Wala Love', and 'Ishq Subhan Allah', among others.

BJP MLA'S "LOVE JIHAD" THEORY IN ACTOR'S DEATH

Mumbai: Bharatiya Janata Party MLA Ram Kadam today put a so-called "love jihad" spin to the high profile suicide case of an actor in Maharashtra. The case will be thoroughly probed, and all angles will be looked into, Ram Kadam said, adding that the guilty will not be spared, and Tunisha Sharma's family will get justice.

"What was the reason for the suicide? Is there love-jihad in this? Or is there some other issue. Investigation will reveal the truth, but Tunisha Sharma's family will 100 per cent get justice. And if this is a case of love jihad, then the police will also probe what organisations are behind it and who the conspirators are," he added.

Parth Zutshi, another co-actor, was called by the police on Sunday for questioning on the incident. Speaking to media outside the police station, Zutshi, who claims he wasn't present on sets at the time of the incident, said, "I was called for questioning by police and was asked general questions. I can't comment on her relations, I don't have any idea, it was her internal matter."



Police raids dance bar in Kashmir, case registered against 20 people

Mira Bhayandar | Agencies

The Mira Bhayandar-Vasai Virar (MBVV) police raided a ladies bar in Kashmir which was found to be indulged in vulgar dance performances under the guise of live orchestra shows during the wee hours on Sunday. The raid was conducted at Mantra Orchestra Bar near the Dahirat toll plaza on the highway in Kashmir by a team led by senior police inspector- Sanjay Hazare based on specific information. Case has been registered at the Kashmir police station against the 20 people.

The police received information about girls being forced to dance on which patrons were showering money-both of which are criminal acts under the law enacted in 2016. The police



team had initially sent a decoy customer who recorded the performances on video, following which the raid was conducted.

A case under the relevant sections of the IPC and the stringent Maharashtra Prohibition of Obscene Dance in Hotels, Restaurants and Bar Rooms and Protection of Dignity of

Women Act- 2016, has been registered at the Kashmir police station against the 20 people including owner, manager, staff and soliciting customers.

The act has stringent guidelines and convictions in such cases are punishable with five years' imprisonment or a fine of Rs. 25 lakh-or both.

62-year-old held for raping minor stepdaughter for 4 months

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The Shivaji Nagar police in Govandi have arrested a 62-year-old man for allegedly raping his 16-year-old stepdaughter. The victim was drugged and raped, following which she became pregnant. The suspect had earlier served a 19-year jail term for murdering a relative, the police said. The man married the victim's mother, but she left him to marry another man after noticing his 'problematic' behavior. Senior Police Inspector Arjun Rajane from Shivaji Nagar police station said that the woman visited him seven months ago in Govandi. He convinced her to let her daughter live with him and she agreed thinking he had changed his ways. Later, she felt something was wrong



when she noticed her daughter behaving differently. Rajane said that for the duration the victim lived with her stepfather, March to June this year, she was allegedly administered a narcotic substance before being raped. After finding out the truth, her mother alerted the police on Wednesday. Later, the case was transferred to

Shivaji Nagar police. She also found out that her daughter was pregnant but it was late to have a safe abortion.

Rajane said a DNA test would be conducted to ascertain if the suspect is the father. "As of now, he is in police custody as per the court's order, and we are conducting a medical examination of the victim."

Hindu spiritual leader receives threat call from Dubai, amid 'Bhagwat Katha'

▶ POLICE ON SUNDAY REGISTERED A NON-COGNISABLE OFFENCE AGAINST AN UNIDENTIFIED PERSON FOR ALLEGEDLY THREATENING DEVKINANDAN THAKUR MAHARAJ, A SPIRITUAL LEADER FROM MATHURA IN UTTAR PRADESH OVER THE PHONE TO KILL HIM IF HE SPEAKS AGAINST A PARTICULAR RELIGION.

Kharghar | Agencies

A week-long Bhagwat Katha is underway at Central Park in Kharghar. According to the police, the call was received on Saturday, and accordingly they approached the police. Sandipan Shinde, senior police inspector from Kharghar confirmed that Devkinandan Thakur Maharaj received an overseas call on Saturday.

"The caller threatened Devkinandan Thakur Maharaj to refrain from speaking against the Muslim community," said Shinde, adding that the call was made from Dubai. The caller also advised the spiritual leader that if he did not do so, he would kill him.

A week-long Bhagwat Katha started at Central Park in Kharghar on December 24 and will continue



till December 31. "The call was not especially for the ongoing week-long Bhagwat Katha in Kharghar. It was against Devkinandan Thakur Maharaj. It is a coincidence that he is in the city when he receives the call," said Shinde.

Now, the police will take permission from the court to initiate an investigation into the alleged threat call. Meanwhile, the police have beefed up the security at the week-long event underway in Kharghar.



EDITOR'S SPECS

DEMENTIA LINKED WITH COVID-RELATED DEATH IN LARGE STUDY

A large study, that collected data for more than two years of the pandemic, has linked dementia with an increased mortality risk in Covid-19 patients but the association was weaker than in previously published studies. The main outcome of the study was the association of dementia diagnosis with an increased risk of death during the hospital stay. "Dementia was associated with an increased mortality risk, but the association was weaker than that reported in the majority of previous publications," said Marc Axel Wollmer, director of the department of Geronto-psychiatry from the Asklepios Hospital Nord-Ochsenzoll in Hamburg, Germany. This is one of the first studies, to be published in the Journal of Alzheimer's Disease, to have investigated the association between dementia and Covid-19 mortality using data collected for more than two years and applying two different statistical methods in parallel. The association between dementia and death was studied using "multivariable logistic regression" adjusted for age, sex, cancer, diabetes mellitus, lipid metabolism disorder, obesity, heart failure, ischemic heart disease, cerebrovascular disease, cirrhosis of the liver, and probable Covid-19 variant. The goal was to verify the association of dementia diagnosis with the risk of mortality as a result of Covid-19 among patients. "It is possible that the effects of dementia on Covid-19 mortality may have changed over time, especially after vaccines became available and were broadly administered and as different variants of SARS-CoV-2 evolved," explained Karel Kostev, from the Department of Epidemiology at the healthcare organisation IQVIA. Of the 28,311 patients diagnosed with Covid-19, 3,317 (11.3 per cent) had a dementia diagnosis. Although SARS-CoV-2 has changed over time and vaccination has greatly improved the prognosis of individuals who contract COVID-19 in general, "further studies are needed to identify, prevent, and treat risk factors for mortality of this disease," said researchers.

INDIA'S STAND ON UKRAINE COMES BETWEEN NEW DELHI AND WASHINGTON

Yashwant Raj

Ukraine put India-US ties to the test in 2022. The relationship had been sailing high until then, fueled mainly by US President Joe Biden's escalation of engagements with the Quad carrying over from 2021 and the focus on the Indo-Pacific, with China in the crosshairs. Russian President Vladimir Putin's invasion of Ukraine in February changed all that, testing India-US ties like no other issue in recent years. The Ukraine invasion raced to the top of President Biden's foreign policy priorities -- not only to stop President Putin right there, but to also roll him back. If President Ronald Reagan brought down the Soviet Union, which he had so famously branded the "Evil Empire", Biden would go down in history the man who stopped Putin, whose invasion of Ukraine was seen as the manifestation of his deeper desire to expand Russia; comparisons with Nazi Germany have been made by senior members of his administration. Ukraine rallied European allies to oppose the Russian invasion as a block. He did not have to try very hard, with the exception of Germany which had come to depend heavily on Russian oil and gas. Europe was stunned and frightened by the invasion, the first on the continent since World War II. Sweden and Finland, which had long resisted joining the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation, the 30-member military alliance that Putin had set out to weaken, have applied for membership. On February 25, just the day after the Russian invasion of Ukraine on February 24, India abstained in a vote on US-backed draft resolution in the UN Security Council to end the invasion of Ukraine. Russia vetoed the measure. India abstained again on a procedural vote in the UN Security Council on February 26 to call for a session of the General Assembly to condemn the Russian invasion of Ukraine. And, in a vote in the General Assembly on March 2 on Ukraine, India abstained again. "We remain firm in our conviction that differences can only be resolved through dialogue and diplomacy," the then Indian Permanent Representative to the UN, T.S. Tirumurti, said explaining India's decision. "India urges that all Member States demonstrate their commitment to the principles of the UN Charter, to



international law and respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity of all states." India's voting record at the UN has few cheerleaders in the US, so the abstentions on the Russian invasion did not come as a surprise -- New Delhi had also abstained on the Soviet Union's invasion of then Czechoslovakia in 1968 and Afghanistan in 1979. But it rankled when taken with New Delhi's decision to not only defy US-led western sanctions on Russian oil and gas, but step up imports from Russia several fold, because of hugely discounted rates. Though outwardly indifferent, the Biden White House was privately perturbed and peeved, which came out in the open during a visit to New Delhi by then Deputy National Security Adviser Duleep Singh a few days later in March. "I come here in a spirit of friendship to explain the mechanisms of our sanctions, the importance of joining us, to express a shared resolve and to advance shared interests. And yes, there are consequences to countries that actively attempt to circumvent or backfill the sanctions," Singh, who was the architect of the Russia sanctions, said. Singh further said, with a direct reference to India's longstanding ties with Russia, "Russia is going to be the junior partner in this relationship with China. And the more leverage that China gains over Russia, the less favorable that is for India. I don't think anyone would believe that if China once again breached the Line of Actual Control, that Russia will come running

to India's defence." Singh's remarks -- specially the threat of "consequences" -- set off a storm in India and the US sought to soften the blow saying Singh had not issued any warning and that every nation is free to focus on its interests and that he had "productive" meetings while in New Delhi. Singh left the White House national security team shortly, though for unrelated reasons. India's longstanding ties with Russia -- going back to erstwhile Soviet Union -- is generally acknowledged in the US, as does its dependence on Russian arms and weapons and support in the UN Security Council for a whole host of issues, including Kashmir. But does that acknowledgement beget acceptance and appreciation? Straight answer: No. Disquiet over the Indian position on Russia-Ukraine went beyond the White House. Longtime friends of India, such as Congressman Ami Bera, who is of Indian origin, called for India to "speak with a stronger voice". And Ro Khanna, another Indian lawmaker, urged India to choose between the US and Russia. TV and radio news commentators and hosts took to naming India and China in the same breath as Russia's allies and enablers and were, therefore, vicariously responsible for the brutality unleashed by Moscow in Ukraine -- Bucha massacre among them -- which were brought into American living rooms by intense 24x7 coverage by TV and print media. Prime Minister Narendra

Modi broke that spell in September when he was seen to have "rebuked" President Putin over Ukraine in public remarks for a bilateral meeting on the sidelines of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization meet in Samarkand, Uzbekistan. "Modi rebukes Putin over Ukraine", The Washington Post said in a headline, reflecting the typical US response to Modi's remarks. "Today's era is not an era of war," Modi had said to Putin in that meeting. The sentence contained in that sentence was subsequently downplayed by the Indian foreign policy establishment that sought to portray it as a reiteration of existing Indian position, which it wasn't. India has used until then standard UN language to call for immediate cessation of hostilities, respect for UN charter guaranteeing territorial integrity of member states and diplomacy. Modi's remarks were seen as pathbreaking by the US. And its officials continue to cite it as the Indian position on the Russian invasion of Ukraine whenever they are asked. Those remarks also made it into the joint communique of the recently concluded G-20 meet in Bali, Indonesia, in what has been touted as a major diplomatic victory for India. As for all other issues in the relationship. "Pretty OK, nothing great," said a veteran of India-US ties.

international

S.KOREA LOGS 58,448 NEW COVID INFECTIONS

South Korea's registered 58,448 new coronavirus infections, including 64 from overseas, pushing the caseload to 28,659,055, the Korea Disease Control and Prevention Agency (KDCA) said. The daily caseload jumped to 88,160 on Wednesday but has been on the decline through Sunday. Concerns still remain, however, over a possible wintertime surge, Yonhap News Agency reported. The KDCA reported 46 more Covid deaths, bringing the death toll to 31,790. The number of critically ill patients stood at 592, up 58 from the previous day. Last week, health authorities announced plans to scrap



the indoor mask mandate in phases and a set of criteria that need to be satisfied to implement the mask-free policy. The four criteria are a stable number of new infections, a downturn in critically ill cases and deaths, medical response capabilities and a

high vaccination rate among high-risk groups, with at least two of them needed to be reached for the government to put the policy in place. Exceptions will be applied to crowded establishments, such as hospitals, community centres and nursing homes, the KDCA said.

16 KILLED IN RUSSIAN STRIKES IN UKRAINE

Kiev: At least 16 people were killed and 64 others were wounded in Russian strikes in Ukraine's Kherson Oblast. The Russian forces on Saturday shelled the city centre, industrial premises, medical institutions, private and apartment buildings with tubed artillery, MLRS and mortars, Ukrainska Pravda reported. Kherson Oblast military administration chief Yaroslav Yanushevych posted on Telegram, "Over the past day, the Russian army killed 16 people in Kherson Oblast, including three employees of the State Emergency Service, who died during mine clearance operations in the Berslav district. Another 64 people suffered injuries of various degrees of severity."

PAKISTAN MULLS MILITARY OFFENSIVE AGAINST TTP

Islamabad | Agencies Amid an upsurge in terrorist attacks, the country's civil and military leadership is undertaking a major policy review in order to stem the tide of banned Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), local media reported. The rise in the TTP-sponsored attacks has pushed the authorities concerned to revisit the strategy pursued by the previous government, The Express Tribune reported. Official sources say closed-door discussions are ongoing and major decisions are expected in the next couple of weeks. A meeting of the National Security Committee is likely to be convened to debate and take the crucial measures against the renewed threat from the TTP. "The situation in certain areas of Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa, particularly in the tribal districts, has deteriorated to the extent that a major military offensive is not ruled out," an official while speaking on condition of anonymity admitted, The Express Tribune reported. "The talks with the TTP are no longer taking place and the return of militants as part of an earlier understanding will have to be reversed," the official added.



Officials conceded that the policy of talking with the TTP has backfired and the terror outfit had used the talks to regroup. "It was a big mistake and has to be rectified," said another official. There has been a 51 per cent increase in terrorist attacks since the Afghan Taliban takeover in Afghanistan. The suicide attack in Islamabad on Friday was first after several years highlighting the renewed threat posed by TTP. "Indications are and the situation is such that Pakistan can launch a military offensive against the TTP," commented

Dr Asfand Yar Mir, counter-terrorism expert associated with the US Institute of Peace in Washington. "Apart from the military offensive, Pakistan may also consider the option of cross-border operations against the TTP," Mir said, adding that the TTP leadership was operating out of Afghanistan with impunity. Pakistan hoped that the return of the Afghan Taliban would help eradicate the TTP threat. But contrary to those expectations, there has been a spike in the TTP-sponsored attacks, The Express Tribune reported.

Khalistan issue remains a major irritant between India and Canada

Toronto | Agencies The Khalistan referendum - held in September and November - became a huge irritant in India-Canada relations in 2022 and a major point of friction in the Indo-Canadian community as pro-Khalistan and pro-India supporters clashed in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA). India called the referendum a "farical exercise held by extremists and radical elements" and asked Canada for "action in this matter." In a rare travel advisory, New Delhi urged travellers to Canada to be cautious about the possibility of anti-India violence in Canada. Canada said it supports India's integrity, but it won't stop the referendum as its citizens were free to protest. Though Ottawa is trying to warm to India as outlined in its recently announced Indo-



Pacific Strategy in which it calls India "a critical partner in Canada's pursuit of its objectives under this strategy." Khalistan will continue to be a major issue in India-Canada bilateral relations in 2023 and beyond. "Though one can agree with Canada's stand that it cannot stifle free expression, the fact remains that Khalistani activities are a direct interference in India's internal affairs because most pro-Khalistani elements are now Canadian citizens with Canadian passports. For India, they are foreigners and Canada must rein in them," said a Brampton-based Indo-Canadian leader, requesting anonymity.

US govt declares power emergency in Texas amid Arctic blast

Houston | Agencies The US Energy Department has declared a power emergency in the country's second-largest state Texas amid an Arctic winter blast that was feared to cause a shortage of electricity in the state. The Electric Reliability Council of Texas (ERCOT), the state grid operator which serves 90 per cent of electric customers in Texas, requested the order on Friday, allowing it to exceed certain air pollution limits to boost generation amid record power demand in the state, Xinhua News Agency reported. The Energy Department said in the order that units that produce about 11,000 megawatts of coal and gas-fired power, 4,000 megawatts of wind and 1,700 megawatts of solar power were down or



scaled back on Friday due to the winter storm. "While the vast majority of generating units in the ERCOT region continue to operate without any problem, a small number of units have experienced operating difficulties due to cold weather or gas curtailments," said the order. Local media reported some power production went offline as power demand reached an unexpected high across Texas on Friday, citing ERCOT officials, who admitted that power demand had been underestimated in the forecast. However, ERCOT said on Saturday afternoon that the

state's power grid has withstood freezing temperatures through much of the state, expecting the power supply to keep up with demand. According to the Energy Department, power demand in Texas reached an all-time winter peak of over 74,000 megawatts on Friday morning. Earlier this week, AccuWeather Senior Meteorologist Jon Porter called the Arctic blast the "biggest test" of the state power grid since the February 2021 winter storm, which killed more than 200 Texans and pushed the state grid to the brink of total failure. AccuWeather estimates that Texas suffered 130 billion US dollars in economic damage due to the 2021 winter storm that led to widespread blackouts across the state.

Californian city gets its first Sikh mayor

New York | Agencies Mikey Hothi has been unanimously elected as the 117th mayor of Lodi city in northern California, becoming the first Sikh to hold the position in the city's history. Hothi, whose parents are from Punjab, previously served as vice mayor under mayor Mark Chandler. As a mayor of the city, Hothi will serve a two-year term, chair the Common Council meetings, and serve as executive officer of the city. "Honored to be sworn in as the 117th Mayor of the City of Lodi," Hothi tweeted after taking oath this month. "Everyone came to Lodi because they realized it was a safe family town. (It has) great education, great people, great culture, great values, and just hard-working people



in this town. I'm just proud to represent this community as its next mayor," Hothi was quoted as saying in Lodi Times. Hothi, who graduated from Tokay High School in 2008, said that growing up in the city was a challenge, especially post 9/11, when many Muslims and Sikhs experienced unfair harassment. His family was also instrumental in founding the Sikh temple on Armstrong Road, the Lodi Times reported.



GOVT ALLOTS 4,050 HECTARES LAND FOR VAJPAYEE MEMORIAL IN GWALIOR



Team Absolute | Gwalior

The Madhya Pradesh government has allotted 4,050 hectares of land to build a memorial of former prime minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee at his birthplace Gwalior, an official said on Sunday. In accordance with the proposal submitted by the district collector, about 4,050 hectares of land was allotted for building a memorial of Vajpayee in Sirol area, Gwalior's Divisional Commissioner Deepak Singh said.

and early 2000s and remained India's prime minister for six years. The proposal of land allotment was cleared by the divisional-level Nazool committee with the consent of the municipal corporation and town and country planning department, the official said. On Vajpayee's death anniversary on August 16 last year, Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan had announced to build a grand memorial for the former prime minister in Gwalior. Meanwhile, Chouhan arrived at Shaurya Smarak Square in Bhopal to pay floral tribute to Vajpayee on his 98th birth anniversary. He also

PROMISE TO BUILD MEMORIAL OF ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE IS INCOMPLETE FROM 2020

Gwalior: Madhya Pradesh government celebrated Atal Gaurav Diwas in Gwalior. Several politicians including CM Shivraj Singh Chouhan, Jyotiraditya Scindia, Narendra Singh Tomar, and other ministers were present during the event at the state. However, the celebration sensed some incompleteness. Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan had promised to build a memorial in memory of Atal Bihari Vajpayee three years ago, which has not yet seen completion even as we are about to conclude 2022. On Atal Bihari Vajpayee's birth anniversary today, people remembered CM Shivraj Singh Chouhan government's promise from years ago that suggested to build a memorial for the 10th Prime Minister of India. It was during the by-election in October 2020 that Chouhan announced the construction of the Atal Memorial in Gwalior.

addressed a gathering there and recalled the former prime minister's contribution to nation building.

BOYFRIEND BEATS WOMAN AFTER SHE REFUSED TO MARRY

Team Absolute | Bhopal

In a shocking incident from Madhya Pradesh's Rewa district, a 24-year-old man was filmed brutally assaulting a 19-year-old woman for allegedly refusing to marry him. A viral video of the heart-wrenching attack showed the couple walking while holding hands when suddenly the man slaps her, grabs her hair, and slams her into the ground head-first. He then mercilessly kicks her with full force in the face and all over her body. The woman appears unconscious from the attack, and the man tried to steady her on her feet while instructing his friend who was recording the video to delete the footage. The woman was seen lying unconscious for hours on the side of the road.



The distressing video was shot on Wednesday in the Mauganj area of Rewa. The police registered a case against the two men under different sections of the law, including the IT Act, and have arrested the accused, Pankaj Tripathi, and the man who was recording the video. Pankaj Tripathi was caught from Mirzapur in Uttar Pradesh after being on the run for days. Police are now

interrogating both men. Pankaj allegedly got furious when the woman refused to marry him, as her family didn't approve. Locals found the woman unconscious on the side of the road, and informed the police, who took her to the hospital for treatment, and also registered a case.

the young couple with them. The woman was then sent to the hospital for treatment," Sonkar said, adding that the woman's mother, who reached the police station, did not take any action. The police, acting on the basis of the viral video, has registered a case against the man. The victim filed a complaint against the person who shot and circulated the video, and a case has been registered under the Information Technology (IT) Act.

NO ONE WHO COMMITS ATROCITIES ON WOMEN WILL BE SPARED: CM CHOUHAN

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has said that no one who perpetrates atrocities on women on the soil of Madhya Pradesh will be spared. The perpetrators of atrocities will receive the harshest punishment, so that they may not commit the crime again. In a tweet, CM said that Pankaj Tripathi, the culprit of the incident of barbarity with a girl in Mauganj area of Rewa district, was arrested from Mirzapur and his house was demolished with a bulldozer. The license of the criminal Pankaj has also been cancelled. TI of Mauganj police station has also been suspended.

Madhya Pradesh has gets its first Vande-Bharat Express train

Team Absolute | Indore

Madhya Pradesh has received its first semi-high-speed Vande-Bharat Express train. It will ply between Indore and Durgapur station in Rajasthan. Railway authorities have released the schedule. However, the date of commencement of its operation is yet to be announced. MP Shankar Lalwani said he has discussed with the railway ministry about the logistics of the commencement of its operation. He, however, said efforts were being made to inaugurate the services during the high-octane Pravasi Bharatiya Divas Conference and if the Prime Minister agrees to inaugurate the services, it would be an icing on the cake. The PM is scheduled to visit Indore for



the PBD Conference on January 9. Initially, the operations were planned during the week of November 2022 and later in January 2023, though MP Lalwani has laid emphasis on rolling out the services on January 9 during the PBD conference. The train will depart from the city at 5.50 am and reach

Ujjain at 7.20 am; Nagda at 8.30 am; Sawai Madhopur 12.45 pm; and reach Durgapur station at 2.40 pm. On its return journey, the train will depart from Durgapur at 3.10 pm and reach Sawai Madhopur at 4.45 pm; Nagda 9.25 pm, Ujjain 10.35 pm and finally reach the city at 12.15 pm.

MAN DUPED OF RS 1.87 LAKH, CRIME BRANCH RECOVERS AMOUNT WITHIN 24 HOURS

Indore: A conman managed to steal Rs 1.87 lakh from the credit card of a person in the city. The online fraud victim lodged a complaint with the cyber cell after which the officers managed to return the entire amount to the complainant within 24 hours. According to a crime branch officer, complainant Sudeep contacted the cyber helpline (7049124445) that he had received a call from a person, who posed as an officer from the credit card department of a bank. The caller informed him that there are some reward points and the complainant can redeem the same. After gaining his trust, the conman sent a link to the complainant and using his credit card details, the accused managed to steal Rs 1.87 lakh from his credit card. The money was transferred to an e-wallet. The fraud investigation cell of the crime branch gathered information of the transaction of the bank and e-wallet. The officers contacted the bank and the e-wallet and managed to return the entire amount to the original payment mode of the complainant within 24 hours. The complainant thanked the officers. The crime branch has urged people not to share credit or debit card details with anyone. People are advised not to open any link sent by an unidentified person to avoid cybercrime and to report any case of online fraud to the cyber helpline of the crime branch immediately.

Disproportionate assets case: 4 years RI, Rs 65 lakh fine to ex-Railway head clerk

Team Absolute | Bhopal

CBI special court has sentenced Railway head clerk to four years of rigorous imprisonment (RI) in a corruption case on Saturday. The Court has also imposed a fine of Rs 65 lakh on the convict. Ghanshyam Singh Rajput, the then head clerk, at office of the commercial divisional manager, West-Central Railway, Bhopal, and his wife Sandhya Singh were held guilty in a corruption case, said CBI public prosecutor Manphul Vishnoi. According to the CBI, a case was registered against Rajput on February 28, 2007 for possessing assets disproportionate to his known sources of income. CBI had recovered documents of 137 Benami properties of Rohit Society from Rajput's residence. Rajput had created assets



during his posting at DRM, Jhansi and DRM, Bhopal between September 26, 1995 and March 01, 2007. The clerk was suspended after the case was filed against him. After investigation, the CBI had filed a charge sheet before the Court Special Judge, CBI Bhopal in 2008. In all 60 witnesses were examined by the prosecution and eight witnesses by defense lawyer.

Punishment awarded to corrupt

- 4-Yr-RT and Rs 65L fine under Section 13(2), Section 13(1)(e) of the Prevention of Corruption Act 1988.
- 1 year simple imprisonment in case of non-payment of fine. Sentence to Shandhya Rajput
- 1 year RI to Sandhya Singh, wife of Ghanshyam Singh, under Section 109 of IPC and Section 13(2), Section 13(1)(e) Prevention of Corruption Act 1988 and Rs 5,000/ fine and 3 months imprisonment in case of non-payment of fine.

Green peas growers stage protest, demand fixed minimum support price for open market

Team Absolute | Jabalpur

Farmers engaged in the cultivation of green peas have staged a protest on Jabalpur-Bhopal national highway after getting low prices for their produce and demanded the Madhya Pradesh government fix a minimum support price for it in the open market. The protest staged by farmers on Saturday is significant since the Madhya Pradesh government has selected green peas under "one-district one-product scheme" for Jabalpur district. Bharatiya Kisan Sangh national spokesperson Raghendra Patel said on Sunday. Green peas are grown on a large scale in the district and supplied to various other states, he said. "The farmers want the state



government to fix the minimum price for the trading of green peas in the open market," he said. This has been a long pending demand of farmers from the district, he said. Currently, in the absence of such norms, farmers incur losses

in the production of green peas if the rate per kilogram goes down in the open market - below the actual production cost per kg, Patel said. "We are getting Rs 10 to Rs 20 per kilogram from local mandis," he said.

MAN HELD FOR THREATENING TO BURN MANUSMRTI, MAKING 'OFFENSIVE' REMARKS ON BHARAT MATA

Bhopal: A person was arrested in Ashok Nagar in Madhya Pradesh for allegedly making objectionable comments on social media about 'Bharat Mata' and also for threatening to burn 'Manusmriti' (a Hindu text on societal laws), a police official said on Sunday. Babulal Dailwar, who claims on Facebook to be associated with a political party, was booked on December 23 on the complaint of a functionary of the Sakal Brahmin Sabha Samaj, he said. "The man made objectionable comments about Bharat Mata and also announced the burning of the Manusmriti in a programme on December 25," Additional Superintendent of Police Pradeep Patel said. Based on the complaint against his Facebook comments, Dailwar was arrested under Indian Penal Code sections 153A, 295A and 505(2) for promoting enmity between groups, outraging religious feelings and other offences, said Ashok Nagar Dehat police station in-charge Rohit Dubey.



Samajwadi Party to contest all seats in MP Assembly polls

Team Absolute | Lucknow:

The Samajwadi Party (SP) has announced that it will contest all seats in the Madhya Pradesh (MP) Assembly polls, scheduled next year. The party also said that it has launched its preparation for the forthcoming state polls. "The party will contest the polls in MP with all its strength to emerge as an alternative to the BJP's hate politics. It is only our socialist ideology that will end BJP's hate politics," said a party spokesman. While the Samajwadi Party -- founded in 1992 by Mulayam Singh Yadav -- is not seen as a major political force outside



Uttar Pradesh, it recently won a seat (out of the 20 contested) in the Gujarat Assembly elections. Earlier, at a party convention in September, Akhilesh Yadav had pledged to make the SP a national party.

BJP FEMALE LEADER SLAPS ANOTHER NETA ON STAGE IN MADHYA PRADESH'S PANNA FOOTBALL EVENT

BJP female leader Chandraprabha Tiwari slapped another woman neta in Madhya Pradesh's Panna during the 25th National Volleyball Championship closing ceremony.

Team Absolute | Panna

A video is making rounds on the Internet wherein BJP leader Chandraprabha Tiwari slapped another leader Neelam Choubey on stage during the closing program of the 25th National Volleyball Championship in Panna in Madhya Pradesh. Reportedly, two female leaders clashed over sitting arrangements on stage during the event. In the viral video, one woman can be seen approaching another. Soon,

they start arguing. Moments later, one of them slaps the other. In the video, BJP leader Chandraprabha Tiwari got up from her chair in the midst of an argument with Neelam Choubey who was sitting nearby. Moments later, as the argument escalated to a brutal fight, Tiwari slapped Choubey in front of all senior dignitaries on stage. Notably, BJP state president and regional MP VD Sharma was invited as the chief guest to award the players in Panna. Shivraj Singh Chouhan-led

Madhya Pradesh government's Agriculture Minister Kamal Patel, Labor Minister Brijendra Singh and MLA Sanjay Pathak were also present at the closing ceremony of the 25th National Volleyball Championship. It is worth noting that in the 25th National Volleyball Championship organised by Madhya Pradesh Volleyball Association in Panna, Gujarat in the men's category and West Bengal in the women's category became champions. Taking to Twitter, Madhya Pradesh BJP president VD Sharma congratulated the team.

BJP MP urges Mandaviya to open Govt Medical College in Nimar region

Team Absolute | Bhopal

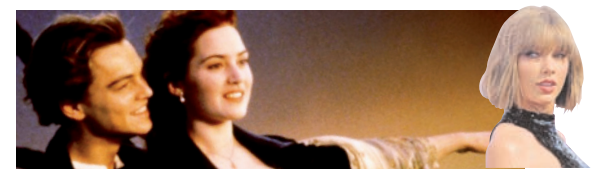
Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) Rajya Sabha MP from Madhya Pradesh Sumer Singh Solanki wrote a letter to Union Health and Family Welfare minister Dr Mansukh L Mandaviya and urged him to open a Government Medical College in Nimar region of tribal districts in Madhya Pradesh. Sumer Singh Solanki in a Letter to Union Health Minister wrote, "I would like to draw your attention to the fact that Nimar region of Madhya Pradesh is a tribal dominated area where seven districts come in this region including Barwani, Dhar, Alirajpur, Jhabua, Khargone, Mandla, Dindori. At present, considering the geographical location and population ratio there is not even a single Government med-



ical college in these districts, due to which tribal people of this area are not getting the benefit of modern medical facilities." "Most of the tribal people of Nimar region live in hilly areas, whose life

completely depends on agriculture and agriculture wages. At present, the people of this region are affected by serious diseases and some other genetic diseases" the letter read. Pointing towards the absence of

government-aided Medical Colleges for tribals, BJP MP said, "despite 75 years of independence, there is not a single Government medical college in Nimar region tribal-dominated districts, due to which research cannot be done for the prevention of serious diseases arising here. For the treatment of serious diseases, it is painful that poor tribal people have to move to metro cities. Sometimes people even die due to lack of timely treatment so people of this region are demanding to open a Government Medical College for a long long time." "Therefore, I humbly request you that in view of the importance of the above subject, the Nimar area of Madhya Pradesh Sanction to open new government medical colleges in tribal districts" the letter read further.



Lindsay Lohan celebrated Christmas with her hubby

SHARED A CHRISTMAS SELFIE

Los Angeles | Agencies

Actress-singer Lindsay Lohan is cosying up with her husband, Bader Shamas, this Christmas. The actress recently took to Instagram and shared a photo of herself and Shamas smiling in front of a white Christmas tree adorned with colourful ornaments, reports.

"Merry Christmas Everyone," wrote Lohan, who wore a festive green silk blouse alongside Shamas, who donned a white sweater for the selfie.

Several of the 'Falling for Christmas' star's family members sent their love to the couple in the post's comment section. "Merry Christmas my Lovesss," wrote Lindsay's mom, Dina.

"My Beautiful Family," commented Lindsay's sister, Aliana, while their brother, Dakota, wrote: "My best friends."

According to the reports, in a second solo shot, Lindsay posed in front of the tree while making a kissing face.

"The most memorable, because it's off the top of my head, was from my husband," she said. "He gave me a Cartier bracelet, and it was our first Christmas together, so that was really special to me. That will always stay with me and go to my daughter when we have kids."

She added: "I don't know how to react when I get gifts at Christmas a lot of the time, but I love [buying] gifts and wrapping them. I'd like to consider myself a professional gift-wraper," Lindsay continued. "I'm really good at it, even with the bows and the scissors - that little trick."

"Adele sends her best wishes to Megan"

Los Angeles | Agencies

Los Angeles| British singer Adele is saying 'Hello, it's me' to Megan Thee Stallion and is sending her love this holiday season after rapper Tory Lanez was convicted of shooting Megan in July 2020.

The verdict was produced following a nine-day trial, and the 'Easy on Me' singer wished Megan a "very, very merry, merry Christmas" during her Weekends with Adele residency concert in Las Vegas.

Speaking to the crowd during the show, Adele first recalled a viral video of the rapper performing choreography to her 2020 hit 'Body', which was edited to seem like she was dancing to 'Water Under the Bridge' from the British Grammy winner's 2015 album 25.

"Someone said, 'Why doesn't Adele have back-up dancers?' and then someone made a video of 'Water Under the Bridge' with Meg Thee Stallion doing the dance to it," Adele said onstage. "Remember that?"

She then seemed to reference Lanez' guilty verdict while expressing support for the Traumazine rapper. "Well today, tonight, I would like to wish Meg Thee Stallion a very, very, merry, merry Christmas," continued Adele. "Girl, get the peace. Do whatever you want now, baby. I love you."



CHRIS PRATT GETS STUNG IN THE EYE BY A BEE

Los Angeles | Agencies

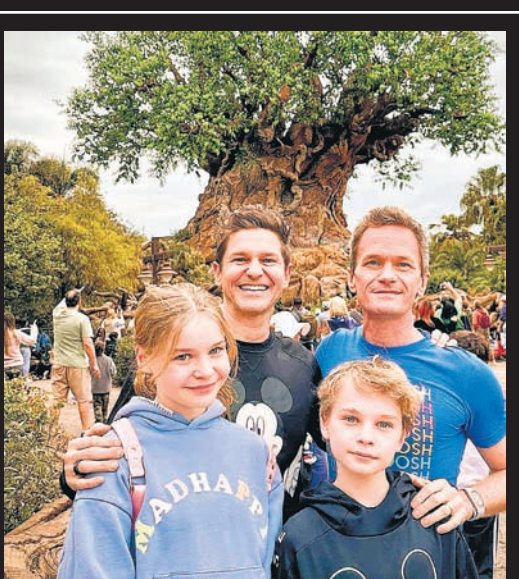
'Guardians of the Galaxy' star Chris Pratt has been stung in the eye by a bee. The actor admitted he had a "false sense of security" after watching videos of Texas-based beekeeper Erika Thompson, who regularly handles the creatures and their hives without protective gear. But, his idea that he thought he could "control" the stinging insects quickly backfired, reports.

Wearing sunglasses, he said in a video shared on his Instagram account: "So I've been following this bee lady on Instagram, she's so cool and brave and she goes in front of these hives of bees and says, 'They're very calm today. I'm going to remove the bee, I'm going to use my bare hands to sift through the bees and look for the queen'. It built this false sense of security in me to where I said, 'I think I can control bees, too.'"

According to the reports, the actor decided to attempt to get close to some bees earlier this week, believing the buzzy honey-makers to be "calm".

He continued: "So I saw a beehive two days ago and I went towards it and the man standing next to me said, 'Be careful, there are bees', and I said, 'These bees look very calm'."

"And I just stared at these bees and then one of them came out and stung me in the eyeball. So, anyways, f*** that bee lady." Chris then took off his sunglasses to show his swollen eye.



Patrick Harris enjoys some family time at Disney World

Los Angeles | Agencies

American actor Neil Patrick Harris is enjoying some family time at Disney World along with some friends who have never been to the famous park before.

In a recent Instagram post, the 'Uncoupled' star shared some sweet snaps from his trip to the theme park in Orlando, Florida with husband David Burtka and their twins Harper Grace and Gideon Scott, reports.

The family of four was also joined by 'Law & Order: SVU' actress, Mariska Hargitay and her family - including husband Peter Hermann - who Harris revealed had never visited Walt Disney World before.

"We had a most amazing Disney adventure last week," Harris wrote in the caption. "I got to narrate the exquisite Candlelight Processional (my 10th year!), our family created new holiday memories, and we brought friends who had never been to WDW before! Who doesn't love Disney firsts!"

"Thank you Walt Disney World for showing such kindness to our family, for allowing Candlelight to exist, and for making so many dreams come true. Our family deeply appreciates it," he finished the caption, tagging Burtka and Hargitay.



Kate Winslet mocks Tom Cruise, calls him "Poor Tom"

Los Angeles | Agencies

Hollywood actress Kate Winslet is poking fun at Tom Cruise after breaking one of his impressive records.

While filming 'Avatar: The Way of Water', Winslet famously held her breath underwater for seven minutes and 47 seconds, reports.

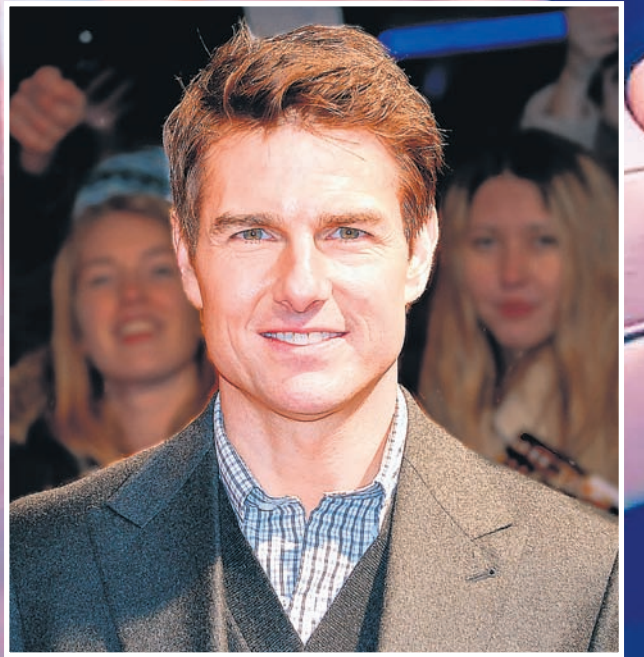
Though Winslet said that Cruise hasn't reached out to her since she broke his record, she shared a message for him with the outlet: "Poor Tom."

"I mean, I don't know Tom at all - I've never met him in my life - but I'm sure he's getting very fed up of hearing this story of how I broke his record," she joked. "I loved it, though ... I was amazed how good I was at it and how I just kept getting better."

According to the reports, Winslet also credited her husband Edward Abel Smith (formerly known as Ned Rocknroll) for helping her practice.

"Ned is an extremely fit, healthy person and is capable of a great many things," Winslet shared with the publication. "He trained with me so that if I needed to practise without our instructor there we were safe because you really can't do it by yourself. It's the same as scuba diving: You have to have a buddy. It's a sport, it's a skill, and your body adjusts to be able to do that thing. So having Ned there was very important."

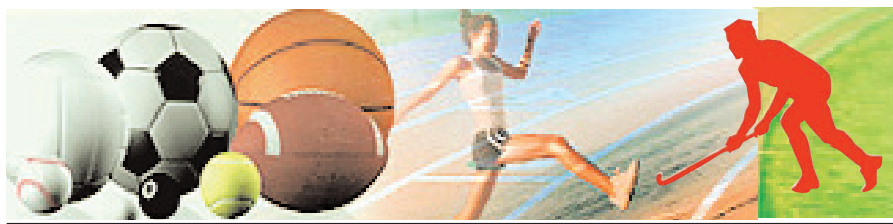
"We were delighted for Kate that she did that," said Weaver. "My husband (theatre director Jim Simpson) and I both did six and a half minutes, which was astonishing to us and our teacher, Kirk Krack, who teaches the Navy SEALs. Everyone had a personal best."



ABSOLUTE PIC OF THE DAY



Abbie Quinnen



IND VS BAN TEST SERIES

INDIA WON THE SERIES OVER BANGLADESH



Dhaka | Agencies

A magnificent unbeaten 71-run partnership off 105 balls between Ravichandran Ashwin and Shreyas Iyer took India out from jaws to defeat and steered the visitors' to a three-wicket victory over Bangladesh in the second Test at the Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium.

On day four, India was needing 100 runs with six wickets in hand. But Shakib Al Hasan and Mehidy Hasan Miraz took three wickets in the first hour to leave India in spot of bother at 74/7. The wicket-taking balls from Bangladesh were on straighter deliveries at a pitch which was offering huge assistance to spinners, making life difficult for India.

But Ashwin and Iyer, India's last-recognised batting pair, defended solidly, mixed caution with aggression and then brought out a flurry of boundaries at the end to take the visitors' over the line. In a cracking finish at Dhaka, the Ashwin-Iyer partnership lasted 17.3 overs and scored at a run-rate of 4.05. In securing a 2-0

series sweep, Ashwin was unbeaten on 42, while Iyer was 29 not out for India to complete a chase of 145 in 46 overs. Resuming from 45/4, India almost lost Jaydev Unadkat when Mehidy Hasan Miraz beat him on forward defence and survived by a whisker when replays showed impact was on the umpire's call. On the very next ball, Unadkat brought out the slog-sweep against the off-spinner over mid-wicket fence for six. When Mehidy bowled too short, Iyer was deep in the crease and punched the ball firmly through the gap at cover. Ashwin joined the boundary-hitting spree when he clipped pacer Khaled Ahmed through fine leg and then had an outside edge going wide to the left of gully to pick two boundaries.

The duo's partnership meant Bangladesh began to feel the pressure, which was evident with Najmul Hossain Shanto misfielding at mid-off, giving India an extra run. Ashwin greeted Mehidy on his return with a one-handed pull off the backfoot over deep mid-wicket for six. He would hit back-to-back boundaries off Mehidy - lofting over mid-off and pulling

past wide mid-on, second of which got India the victory in a cliffhanger of a game, putting off the tremendous fight shown by Bangladesh with bat and ball. The series victory also solidifies India's quest for a spot in the World Test Championship final. Currently, India are at number two in the table, behind top-ranked Australia. The Pat Cummins-led side are supposed to tour India in February next year for four Tests. Despite the series win, India still have many questions to answer, especially about the top order and the approach while playing against spinners in spin-friendly conditions. For now, they have Ashwin and Iyer to thank for securing a hard-fought win at Dhaka.

Brief scores

Bangladesh 227 in 73.5 overs and 231 in 70.2 overs lost to India 314 in 86.3 overs and 145/7 in 47 overs (Ravichandran Ashwin 42 not out, Axar Patel 34; Mehidy Hasan Miraz 5/63, Shakib Al Hasan 2/50) by three wickets.

THE GAME HAD TO BE WON THE HARD WAY: ASHWIN



Dhaka | In India's three-wicket nail-biting victory over Bangladesh at Dhaka on Sunday, Ravichandran Ashwin reiterated why he's an ever-dependable person in tough situations for the visitors' with the bat in Test cricket.

"Game was on the line. I thought Bangladesh played really well. The game had to be won the hard way. Shreyas batted beautifully, if he wasn't the player of the series, I'd have shared this with him. In these situations, sometimes you feel you need to hit your way," said Ashwin in the post-match presentation ceremony.

The off-spin all-rounder, named Player of the Match for a match haul of six wickets and scoring 12 and 42 not out in both innings, added that his plan was to support Iyer through a gritty partnership for the eighth wicket. "They bowled well. But we needed to trust our defence. I wanted to get in and support Shreyas. Pitches were good, they were a touch slow. But the ball made a difference. The hosts put us under a lot of pressure. Good performances as well."

"It's been a hard series. Series was very competitive. I feel I've found my rhythm. A lot of hard work has been put in, I've played many first-class games and have worked on my game." "If you look at the gap between Test series, playing first-class helps keep in touch. Each game is important with the WTC and you have to be on top of your game. I've played many first-class and Test matches. You need to be mentally strong."

Women's National Championships

Eight Railways boxers including Manju Rani reach finals



Team Absolute | Bhopal

Defending Champions Railway Sports Promotion Board (RSPB) dominated the proceedings as eight of their boxers, led by 2019 World Championships silver medalist Manju Rani (48kg) and 2017 World Youth Champion Jyoti Gulia (52kg) stormed into the finals of 6th Elite Womens National Boxing Championship.

Manju Rani continued her great form and showed great composure against Madhya Pradesh's Anjali Sharma in a one-sided bout. Manju played from long range and convincingly won the bout 5-0. She will take on S Kalavani of Tamil Nadu in the final on Monday.

Jyoti Gulia faced a tough challenge from Uttar Pradesh's Sonia as she started on the backfoot and took some time to gauge her opponent's strategy. Jyoti bounced back in the last two

rounds, played from close distance and landed regular punches to secure a 4-1 verdict in her favour. She will square off against SSCB's Sakshi in the final.

The other 6 Railways boxers who moved into the finals are Anupama (50 kg), Shiksha (54kg), Poonam (60 kg), Shashi (63 kg), Anupama (81 kg) and Nupur (81+kg).

Reigning World Champion Nikhat Zareen (50 kg), who is representing Telangana, comfortably won 5-0 against AIP's Shvinder Kaur. Nikhat will take on Anamika for the coveted yellow metal.

Assam's Lovlina Borgohain (75 kg) too had an easy out against Madhya Pradesh's Jigyasa Rajput as she dictated the terms throughout the bout and won by unanimous decision to advance to the finals. The Tokyo Olympic bronze medalist Lovlina will be up against 2021 World Youth Champion Arundhati Choudhary of SSCB in the gold medal bout.

AUSTRALIA ANNOUNCE PLAYING XI TO FACE SOUTH AFRICA IN SECOND WTC23 TEST

Melbourne | Australia has locked in their XI for the Boxing Day Test against South Africa here.

Josh Hazlewood is set to miss another Test as he continues his recovery from a side strain. The hero of last year's Ashes, Scott Boland has retained his place in the XI with the local star hoping to continue his good form. Speaking to reporters on Christmas morning, Australia captain Pat Cummins addressed the selection of Boland over the seasoned campaigner Hazlewood. "We gave Joshy (Hazlewood) every chance, (but) it just got to a stage where (he) more than anyone else felt like he was a little bit underdone." "It's a mark of the man really, he himself said 'don't feel quite right' so he kind of pulled himself out of selection."

Neeraj Chopra's successes, CWG medals reasons to be bullish on athletics

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Olympic gold medalist javelin thrower Neeraj Chopra's Diamond League trophy, his silver at the World Athletics Championships and Indian athletes success at the Commonwealth Games in Birmingham made 2022 a fruitful year for Indian athletics, which gave fans numerous opportunities to celebrate.

After his gold at Tokyo Olympics, Neeraj was expected to bring more laurels for the country, and he didn't disappoint with his performances in 2022.

However, a groin injury forced him to miss the CWG 2022, but he marked his return by becoming the first Indian to win a Diamond League meet in Lausanne and eventually became the first Indian to win a Diamond League trophy.

Indian athletes will look to



fine-tune their skills in the domestic competitions, and test themselves at the Asian Games and the World Athletics Championships by competing against the best in the business.

Not only will they look to win medals at Asian Games and World Athletics Championships, they will also look to qualify for the 2024 Paris Olympics enroute these events.

Once again, all eyes will be

on Neeraj Chopra who has already begun his training at Loughborough University in England, ahead of the 2023 season.

He will be camped at Loughborough University, which is known for its state-of-the-art sports gym and training facilities, for 63 days.

The athlete is accompanied by his coach and biomechanics expert Klaus Bartonietz, and physiotherapist Ishaan Marwaha.

Santosh Trophy

Jaideep's hat-trick gives Delhi big win

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Jaideep Singh's hat-trick handed hosts Delhi their first win in Group 1 of the Hero Santosh Trophy 76th National Senior Men's Football Championship. Karnataka and Gujarat too won their matches in this cluster.

Delhi's attitude, which played a goalless draw with Tripura in their first match, looked sharp on Sunday. In a one-sided contest played at the Dr. Ambedkar Stadium, Delhi thrashed new-entrant Ladakh 7-0. In the day's other matches played at the Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium, Karnataka defeated Uttarakhand by 3-1 after a hard-fought fight, while Gujarat thrashed Tripura 6-0.

In the second half, Uttarakhand played attacking football throughout but just before the end of the match, substitute Ankit P. scored a goal in the 90th+3rd minute to give Karnataka a 3-1 win.

In the third match of the day, Gujarat trounced Tripura 6-0 with Jay Kanani scoring four goals including a hat-trick in the 20th, 67th, 90+2nd and 90+5th minutes. Captain Moinuddin and Dharmesh Parmar were the other scorers for them.



Women's cricket set for a surge with inaugural IPL

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Indian Premier League (IPL) gave birth to the biggest revolution in the cricketing world, bringing in massive attention, great quality of cricketers and high viewership every year, before and during a global pandemic.

But when it comes to creating a league of the same kind for women's cricket, the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) has been very laidback. The BCCI's unwillingness, despite a three-team women's T20 Challenge, means Cricket Australia and the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) have raced ahead to create hugely popular women's T20 cricket leagues. For long, many have demanded a Women's IPL, which was either delayed due to citing of lack of player pool or doubts over financial viability.



But ever since the launch of Women's IPL became formal in 2022 as the BCCI finally found the will and intent to do so, many are now seeing it as one of the big breakthrough events for women's cricket in what promises to be a big 2023 for the sport after 2022 saw Australia get back ODI World Cup trophy, clinch a gold medal in the

Commonwealth Games. And 2023 will begin with the inaugural edition of the ICC Women's U19 T20 World Cup, an event which was in making for long before Covid-19 pandemic further delayed it. 16 teams will be competing in 41 matches across four venues in Benoni and Potchefstroom in South Africa.

CHESS GM ARJUN TARGETS WORLD TITLE

Chennai | Agencies

Warangal-based 19-year old chess Grandmaster (GM) Arjun Kumar Erigaisi has had a great run in the international chess arena in 2021 and 2022.

One of the 2022 milestones, for Arjun and also for Indian chess, is the signing a five-year \$1.5 million sponsorship deal with the Singapore-based Quantbox Research.

The sponsorship deal takes out the big financial worry from his mind so that he can focus on strengthening his chess prowess and gear up to achieve his target -- becoming a world chess champion.

"There will be no change in my playing schedule. The sponsorship does not come with any strings attached like Elo rating to be achieved, tournaments to be won and others. The sponsor has not stipulated any targets so that I can focus on my target -- the world championship cycle," Arjun said.

The first step towards his goal of becoming a world champion is to get qualified to play in the Candidates Tournament 2024.

"However, staying overseas like India's former world champion Viswanathan Anand and training is not in my immediate plans," he said.

According to Arjun, the short-term goal is to increase his rating to 2,750 points. "It is not easy to go on increasing the



rating upwards from 2,700 levels. Focusing on rating is important up to a certain level. The target Elo rating in the short-term is 2,750," Arjun said.

From April 2021, his rating started going up with a series of tournament successes. In October 2022, with a rating of 2,728, Arjun was ranked 21st in the world.

Now Arjun is ranked third in the world juniors and 26th in the world open with an Elo rating of 2,722.

ISL 2022-23

Kerala Blasters and Odisha FC gear up for crucial Boxing Day bout

Kochi | Agencies

Kerala Blasters FC and Odisha FC lock horns in a Boxing Day encounter of the Indian Super League (ISL) 2022-23 at the Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium, here on Monday, with both teams eyeing the third position in the points table.

The Blasters will be looking to even things out this time around, as Odisha FC came back from a goal down to take all three points in the reverse fixture earlier this season.

The midfielder now has



five goal contributions in ten games. Ahead of him, in the striker's role, Dimitrios Diamantakos has scored five goals in ten games so far and is just two goals behind the league's leading goalscorer

Abdenasser El Khayati. Adrian Luna had an impressive outing in the last game and also has five goal contributions to his name.

Odisha FC was gaining fine momentum before their

short winning run was ended by FC Goa two weeks ago, and then they were held to the ISL's first goalless draw of the season by ATK Mohun Bagan. The Juggernauts have failed to score in consecutive games for the first time this season. After scoring four goals in nine games, Nandhakumar Sekar is the club's leading goal scorer this season. The winger served his suspension during the last game and will be available against the Blasters. Josep Gombau will again have to decide if he wants to start Diego Mauricio or Pedro Martin up front.



"A scary Christmas for Nushratt Bharuccha"

Team Absolute | Mumbai

It's a working Christmas for Bollywood actress Nushratt Bharuccha as she is busy with the shoot of her film "Chhorii 2". The film's team kick-started the shoot for the sequel to the 2021 horror film "Chhorii" a few weeks ago.

Taking to the story section of her Instagram, Nushratt shared a picture of a clapping board and wrote "A scary Christmas for us!"

The actress earlier received a lot of positive response for "Chhorii" in which she played the role of Meenal, a pregnant woman who starts experiencing paranormal activities.

Meanwhile, on the other hand, she has an interesting lineup of films like "Selfie" alongside Akshay Kumar and Emraan Hashmi, and "Akelli", which is another solo lead film by the actress.



Neetu Kapoor rang the Christmas celebration bells with family

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Senior actress Neetu Kapoor rang the Christmas celebration bells with her family. The 'Jug Jugg Jeeyo' actress took to her Instagram to share a picture from the celebrations.

In the picture, one can see Bollywood actor and Neetu's son Ranbir Kapoor, his wife Alia Bhatt, 'Brahmastra' director Ayan Mukerji, Alia's mother Soni Razdan, and her sisters Shaheen Bhatt and Pooja Bhatt.

Sending best wishes to her followers, Neetu captioned the picture: "Merry Christmas."

Soni Razdan too shared the pictures on her Instagram. What caught everyone's attention was a small red ball hanging on a Christmas tree that had Ranbir-Alia's baby girl's name Raha written on it.

In the picture, Alia can be seen rocking a red top which she teamed with a cute Christmas-themed hairband. Ranbir, on the other hand, wore a white shirt and a beanie for the small get-together.

Alia Bhatt tied the knot with Ranbir Kapoor in April after dating for a couple of years. They welcomed their daughter Raha in November this year.



"Neeti Mohan wants to be Santa Claus all her life"

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Playback singer Neeti Mohan has revealed that she has planned to release an album with the top five 'Sa Re Ga Ma Pa Li' Champs' contestants. She also expressed her wish of turning to Santa Claus on the Christmas special episode. Neeti said: "I feel I want to be Santa Claus all my life. There is something that has been in my heart from the time I met these little talented contestants, and because today we are celebrating Christmas special, I want to say that I will release an album with the Top-5 contestants of the show." The singer, who got a lot of popularity for her songs such as 'Ishq Wala Love', 'Tu Hi Tu', or 'Naino Wale Ne', added that she always wanted to give a platform to the young talents and this she will make possible through her album. "I have been thinking about it for a very long time. I want all of them to get a platform, even after this show gets over, and we stay connected forever. So, I will be very grateful if I get to make an album with the top 5 contestants. I will be honoured, and it will be the most memorable part of this show for me," she added. The Top ten contestants including Jetsheh Dohna Lama, Atanu Mishra, Devika Sharma, Prajyot Gundale, Rana Yeasmin, Harsh Sikander, Palakshi Dixit, Dnyaneshwari Ghadge, Atharva Bakshi, and Aarohi Soni had a gala time with their favourite cartoon characters Chhota Bheem and Little Singham, who appeared on the show for 'Christmas Special' episode. 'Sa Re Ga Ma Pa Li Champs' is judged by Neeti Mohan, Shankar Mahadevan, and Anu Malik.



I AM A LITTLE SCEPTICAL ABOUT DOING THE SHOW:

SHEFALI SHARMA

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Shefali Sharma, the actress well-known for portraying Bani in 'Bani-Ishq da Kalma', has been part of several movies like 'Toofan Singh', 'Sooran', and many more. She opened up about doing reality shows like 'Bigg Boss' and why Shehnaaz Gill is her favourite contestant from the show so far.

When asked about doing 'Bigg Boss', Shefali said: "I am a little sceptical about doing the show as I am not sure whether I will be able to fit it. But there is a different section of the audience that watches reality TV, as they get to see celebrities without any filters. The audience connects with you and not with what you play on screen in a TV show. Yes, there are advantages and disadvantages, but the format is such that there are fights and personal attacks that are shown which I personally don't like so I am not sure if I would want to place myself there." Shefali added: "A very well-known casting agency's coordinator asked me that he would want to recommend my name for 'Bigg Boss', but I said no, it is just not my cup of tea. In real life, too, I can't handle arguments and fights, and my heart rate goes up. My husband keeps saying I should do it; he says that if negativity can spread, so can positivity, so I should go there and spread positivity." When asked about her favourite contestant from all the seasons of 'Bigg Boss', the 'Sanjog' actress said: "Shehnaaz Gill is my favourite contestant because she never tried to pretend anything and was herself, and she is fun to watch, and I also have that Punjabi connection with her."



I felt like a kid working in the movie: Anushka Kaushik

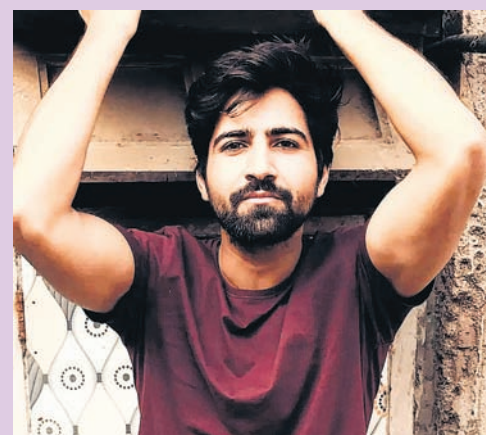
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Anushka Kaushik has made her mark with her performances in projects like 'Ghar Waapsi', 'Thar', and 'Crash Course'. She recently wrapped up the shoot of two projects that will be released in 2023; one of them being Arbaaz Khan's 'Patna Shukla' and the other Tigmanshu Dhulia's 'Garmi'. She got candid about her working experience with Arbaaz Khan and Satish Kaushik in 'Patna Shukla'. Commenting on her collaboration with Arbaaz, Anushka said: "I felt like a kid working on 'Patna Shukla' because amongst my co-actors I was the youngest one, so everyone pampered me a lot. Arbaaz (Khan) sir has told us so many incidents from the industry which proved like a learning experience for me." She further talked about the way Arbaaz managed the role of a producer on the film's set. She added: "Arbaaz sir has been doing a good job as a producer and since he has been an actor, it's easier for him to understand how it feels when you are

enacting a scene and what all anxiety or problems an actor might face." Sharing a shooting experience, she further mentioned: "As a producer, he keeps all that in mind and makes it easy for the actors. For example, while shooting for a scene in 'Patna Shukla', there was a prop that was falling repeatedly, so he got a little agitated seeing that the actor wasn't comfortable. Throughout the film, he was right behind the monitor and he always made sure that everything was right." Speaking about how it was to work with a senior actor like Satish, Anushka added: "Satish Sir was the funniest person on set. He is senior as an actor but I never felt a gap between us through the shooting process because his energy was just like a kid whenever he used to enact his scenes." "If I was occupied somewhere else, he would call me by our shared surname 'Kaushik'. Interestingly, one of the junior artists told me that I'm doing this film only because I am from Satish Kaushik's family - because of nepotism! And we used to laugh a lot at this," she concluded.



AMIT PAHEL SHARED HOW HE PREPARED TO PLAY 'A TERRORIST'



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Actor Amit Pahel, who was seen in the web series 'Crackdown 2', is all set to be part of the upcoming second season of the web series 'Kathmandu Connection'. While the first season of the web series had a storyline revolving around the horrific 1993 Bombay bombings, the second season revolves around the 1999 plane hijacking.

Hailing from Jhajjar, Haryana, Amit said that he portrays the character of a 27-year-old guy, who has connections with a Pakistan-based terrorist organisation. "He comes to Kathmandu with 3 more people and led his group to hijack the Indian plane IC-814 so that his seniors could negotiate or make a deal with the Indian government, which could possibly cause a national security threat for India," he shared.

Speaking about his character and the difficulties he faced portraying it, Amit revealed: "I think the most difficult part was to actually understand the psyche of a terrorist because when you portray such a character, it becomes imperative to actually live that particular character and to get into the skin of it. It should always be relatable. So yes, that was challenging for me. But at the same time, I really enjoyed it."

INSTAGRAM PIC OF THE DAY



Aditi Budhathoki