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'MERE GOODBYE NOT ENOUGH; RIP KING'

Pelé, the legend who made football 'the beautiful game' is no more

▶ LABELLED "THE GREATEST" BY FIFA, FOOTBALL'S WORLD GOVERNING BODY, NAMED ATHLETE OF THE CENTURY BY THE INTERNATIONAL OLYMPIC COMMITTEE IN 1999 AND INCLUDED IN TIME MAGAZINE'S LIST OF 100 MOST IMPORTANT PEOPLE OF THE 20TH CENTURY, PELE WAS IN 2000 VOTED WORLD PLAYER OF THE CENTURY BY THE INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF FOOTBALL HISTORY & STATISTICS (IFFHS) AND WAS ONE OF THE TWO JOINT WINNERS OF THE FIFA PLAYER OF THE CENTURY AWARD.

▶ A PLAYER OF SUBLIME SKILLS, GREAT PRESENCE IN THE FIELD, IMMACULATE POSITIONAL SENSE, MAGICAL DRIBBLING SKILLS, TWO BRILLIANT FEET AND A DEVASTATINGLY POWERFUL SHOT, RIGHT-FOOTED PELE WAS THUS FAR THE ONLY FOOTBALLER TO HAVE LIFTED THE WORLD CUP THRICE -- 1958, 1962 AND 1970.

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Called by various names such as 'Gasolina', 'The Black Pearl' and 'O Rei' (The King), the nickname that stuck like glue to Edson Arantes do Nascimento, who, as 'Pelé', became the greatest footballer the world has ever known. It is with that name he left the world as the most cherished and

loved sports star we have ever seen.

Pelé, 82, passed away in a private hospital in Sao Paulo, Brazil, after spending nearly a month, battling complications related to advanced cancer.

He had a colon tumor removed in September 2021 and neither his family, nor doctors, specified whether it had spread to other organs. He was recently under "elevated care" related to "kidney

and cardiac dysfunction". But for millions of fans of the game around the globe, Pelé was the first person who made football Jogo Bonito, "the beautiful game". He was the original No. 10 of world football, a number now sported by Lionel Messi and Kylian Mbappé. He was the genius who played the game with passion and was so unstoppable that fouling him was the only option for the numerous defenders that he faced.

MP POLICE BOOK 45 OFFICIALS FOR MISUSE OF PMAY FUNDS

Praveen Dwivedi | Bhopal

At least 45 officials and employees in different departments have been booked for allegedly misusing funds meant for Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY) in Madhya Pradesh's Dewas district.

A police investigation has revealed that the nexus has been operating for the past few years, embezzling several cores of rupees by creating fake bills. The action was taken on the basis of an inquiry report of the Lokayukta department of the state government, which revealed that the officials and employees in Dewas illegally transferred funds meant for PMAY and misused them between 2017 to 2022.

"A preliminary inquiry was conducted and after the facts were confirmed, the investigation report was sent to the Lokayukta office for further action," said a senior police officer.

Reports revealed that a huge amount of money meant for affordable housing for poor people under PMAY was "not only extracted from bank accounts, but also transferred into different accounts". That money was then misused for personal interests by producing fake bills.

The development came after senior BJP leader and former minister Deepak Joshi raised this issue and threatened to stage a protest against his own party's government. On December 25, Joshi had written to Prime Minister Narendra Modi regarding the same, seeking his



attention on this matter.

Subsequently, the state administration swung into action and as many as 45 persons, including government officials, were booked.

"Whenever I raised this matter before, some leaders from my own party (BJP) accused me of playing politics and raising voice against the BJP government. But I kept raising this matter because, my father (former Madhya Pradesh CM Kailash Chandra Joshi) won elections from the Bagali constituency eight times and people have faith in us. At present, this constituency is reserved for Scheduled Tribe (ST) but people still come to me whenever they have any problem," Joshi told correspondent.

Joshi also claimed the MP police action came after his letter to PM Modi

surfaced on social media two day back.

"In the last one year, I raised this issue many times before the state BJP leadership, ministers and top officials, but instead any action being taken, I was blamed for tarnishing the party's image for my own political gain. Worse, when two persons went to lodge a complaint, the local police booked them on fake charges. My father served the people of Bagali for years, we share a special bond with them, and that is why I raised the issue, not for my own political gain," Joshi said. However, it's not the first such instance when embezzlement of funds meant for affordable housing under PMAY has been reported in Madhya Pradesh. A few months back, such cases were reported from Satna district as well.



Use Aadhaar confidently, keep as safe as bank account details, passport: UIDAI

New Delhi: People can use their Aadhaar card confidently to avail of benefits and services, but should maintain the same level of usage hygiene as for any other identity document including a bank account, Permanent Account Number (PAN), or passport, the Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI) said on Friday.

Aadhaar - a resident's digital ID - works as a single source of online and offline identity verification for them across the country. "While sharing Aadhaar with any trusted entity, the same level of caution may be exercised which one does at the time of sharing a mobile number, bank account number or any other identity document like passport, voter ID, PAN, ration card, etc," the UIDAI said in an advisory.

The UIDAI also provides a facility for generating a Virtual Identifier (VID) in case a resident is not comfortable sharing his/her Aadhaar number. VID can be generated in two ways - visiting the official website or via myaadhaar portal. It can be changed after the end of the calendar day.

To remain extra secure, the facility of Aadhaar locking as well as biometric locking is also available.

GOVT HIKES INTEREST RATES OF POST OFFICE SAVINGS SCHEMES

Team Absolute | New Delhi

In good news for senior citizens and common investors, the government on Friday hiked interest rates on post office savings schemes, national saving certificate (NSC), senior citizen savings scheme, and the Kisan Vikas Patra (KVP).

Rates for deposits up to 5 per cent as well as NSC, senior citizen savings scheme and KVP have been hiked by up to 1.1 percentage points, according to a Finance Ministry notification. The changed interest rates would be applicable between January 1, 2023 and March 31, 2023.

However, interest rates for more popular savings instruments like PPF and Sukanya Samridhi Yojana have been kept unchanged at 7.1 per cent and 7.6 per cent, respectively.

This is the second straight quarter, when interest rates have been hiked for select schemes. Prior to October 1, 2022, there was no change in interest rates for these schemes for nine consecutive quarters.

Normally, interest rates for small saving schemes are revised every quarter. With the latest revision, a one-year term deposit with post offices would earn 6.6 per cent interest, for two years deposit, it will earn 6.8 per



cent interest, for three years deposit, it will earn 6.9 per cent interest, while for a five years deposit the interest earned would be 7 per cent, the notification said.

Senior Citizen Savings scheme will earn 40 basis points more at 8 per cent during the January-March period, it added.

For KVP, the government has hiked the interest rates to 7.2 per cent, though on a reduced maturity period of 120 months. Currently, KVP has an interest rate of 7 per cent on a maturity period of 123 months.

Monthly Income Scheme would earn 40 basis points more at 7.1 per cent, while NSC interest rate has been raised by 20 basis points to 7 per cent. Savings deposits will continue to earn 4 per cent per annum interest rate.

The Reserve Bank of India since May this year has raised repo rate five times, thus allowing banks to raise interest rates on deposits.

Most Indians to ring in New Year at home amid Covid scare



Team Absolute | New Delhi

As Covid scare reaches India, 8 in 10 people are likely to ring in the New Year at home with immediate family members as the state governments advise against large gatherings, a report has said.

Only 4 per cent citizens said they will attend big parties and community get-togethers to ring in the New Year, 79 per cent are likely to stay home and either celebrate with immediate family or not celebrate at all.

While 12 per cent plan to visit a friend's place to celebrate, 5 per cent plan to avoid socialising in light of the increased Covid risk, according to social community engagement platform Local Circles.

"Given the Covid risk, those in big cities and celebrating must follow Covid appropriate norms of masking and social distancing

regardless of whether their state or district mandates these norms or not," the findings showed.

The Karnataka government has advised that all large assemblies should be strictly outdoor, and as far as possible during the day to avoid late night and early mornings.

For people over 60 years, those with comorbidities, pregnant and lactating women, the government has advised them to stay away from such assemblies.

For hotels, pubs, restaurants, clubs and resorts, etc., where the celebrations are being organised, the government has restricted the number of guests to the existing seating capacity if held indoors.

India reported 243 new Covid cases in the last 24 hours, against 268 cases reported on the previous day, said the Union Health Ministry on Friday.

VANDE BHARAT EXPRESS INAUGURATION

Irked by 'Jai Shri Ram' slogans, Mamata stays away from dais

Kolkata | Agencies

A controversy erupted at the inauguration ceremony of West Bengal's first Vande Bharat Express on Friday

morning as irked by 'Jai Shri Ram' slogans on her arrival Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee refused to share the dais.

Instead, throughout the programme she sat on a chair adjacent to the dais. From here she expressed her condolences over the demise of Heeraben Modi, the mother of Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

As soon as the chief minister arrived at the inauguration venue at the Howrah Station on Friday morning, the BJP supporters present there raised 'Jai Shri Ram' slogans.

Union Railways Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw, who was present on the dais, then tried his best to control the BJP supporters and requested them to refrain from shouting slogans.

The chief minister however refused to come on the dais. The railways minister was seen pleading to her again and again to get on the dais, which she refused.

Soon the state governor, C.V. Ananda Bose reached the venue and was seen interacting with the chief minister. Initially, she even refused to deliver her speech on the occasion. However, following repeated requests from the governor she agreed to deliver the speech, which she did without getting on the dais.

Rishabh Pant severely injured in car accident

India's wicketkeeper-batter Rishabh Pant has suffered two cuts on his forehead, apart from a ligament tear in his right knee, abrasion injuries on back, and hurting right wrist, ankle, and toe, said Jay Shah, the Honorary Secretary of the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI), in an official statement on Friday.

Roorkee | Agencies

Pant suffered multiple injuries when his car collided with a road divider and caught fire on the Delhi-Dehradun highway. He has been admitted to Max Hospital in Dehradun after being initially taken to Saksham Hospital Multispecialty and Trauma Centre. Pant was on his way to his hometown Roorkee in the state of Uttarakhand from New Delhi.



"DON'T WATCH CRICKET, DIDN'T RECOGNISE HIM": BUS DRIVER

I don't watch cricket and I didn't know this is Rishabh Pant is. But others in my bus recognised him. After removing Rishabh, I quickly searched the car to check if anyone else was there. I took out his blue bag and Rs 7,000-Rs 8,000 rupees from the car and gave it to him in the ambulance."

spot. Dr Sushil Nagar, chairman of Saksham Hospital, said that at present Rishabh's condition is stable, he is being referred from Roorkee to Delhi. According to witnesses, Rishabh's car collided with the railing and caught fire. With great difficulty, the fire was brought under control.

BUS DRIVER AND CONDUCTOR SAVED RISHABH PANT'S LIFE

Dehradun: Indian wicketkeeper Rishabh Pant was saved by the driver and conductor of a Haryana Roadways bus, the 14-second CCTV footage of the accident, which surfaced online showed that his speeding car collided with the iron barrier on the roadside, before catching fire. The driver and the conductor acted promptly and called 112 immediately after the collision. The police sent Pant to the hospital and informed his mother.



PM MODI'S MOTHER HEERABEN MODI DIES AT THE AGE OF 100

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's mother Heeraben Modi passed away at the age of 100 early on Friday morning. She was admitted to Ahmedabad's UN Mehta Hospital after her health deteriorated. UN Mehta Institute of Cardiology and Research Centre said in a statement, "Heeraba Modi passed away on December 30 at 3.30 a.m. (early morning) during the treatment at UN Mehta Heart hospital." Modi wrote with a heavy heart, "A glorious century rests at the feet of God. In Maa, I have always felt that trinity, which contains the journey of an ascetic, the symbol of a selfless Karmayogi and a life committed to values." The Prime Minister met his mother for the last time at the hospital where she had been admitted on Wednesday. The last rites of Heeraben Modi, mother of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, were performed at a crematorium in Gandhinagar on Friday morning. Heeraben passed away at the UN Mehta hospital in Ahmedabad, where



she was admitted on Wednesday for some heart-related problems. Narendra Modi and his elder brother, Somabhai, gave the 'agnidaha' to the mortal remains of Heeraben. Former Chief Minister Shantersinh Vaghela personally condoled with the Prime Minister at the crematorium. The Prime Minister flew down early in the morning from Delhi and paid floral tributes to his mother. The Vadnagar town will remain

shut for the day as a mark of respect to the departed soul. Vadnagar traders Association has appealed to the members to keep shutters down. Union Surface and Transport Minister Nitin Gadkari while paying tributes said in his tweet, "May his soul rest in peace, and I pray to god to give strength to the family to endure the pain." Congress party's president Mallikarjun Kharge paid tribute to Heeraben by saying, "Deeply saddened to hear about the demise of Heeraben Modi. My heartfelt condolences to Narendra Modi on the loss of his beloved mother. Our thoughts and prayers are with the entire family in this hour of grief." Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, paying condolences, has said, "For any son's mother in the entire world, mother's demise is unbearable for any son, I am sad to hear the news." Congress party's General Secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra paying tribute tweeted, "May god give strength to the Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his family to face the demise of Heeraben."

'Celebrate': Nitish's jibe at BJP over its Tejashwi claim

Bodh Gaya | Agencies

Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar on Friday took a dig at the BJP after Leader of Opposition Vijay Kumar Sinha's claim that Deputy Chief Minister Tejashwi Yadav will remove him from his post after March 2023 and take over himself. "It is no better moment for the opposition than this. Go and celebrate the moment," a smiling Nitish Kumar told media persons here. His statement came a day after Sinha claimed that Nitish Kumar had fallen under the trap of RJD chief Lalu Prasad Yadav. "The government of Nitish Kumar will soon be taken over by Tejashwi Yadav. Hence, he has announced to start Yatra from January 5. If he has courage and guts, he should go and meet the victims of Saran hooch tragedy and give compensation to them. Nitish Kumar is doing



under his pressure for Tejashwi Yadav. People of Bihar are understanding it and they will give appropriate answers at the right time," he added. Nitish Kumar was in Bodh Gaya on Friday to meet the Dalai Lama. "I have a great relationship with the Dalai Lama. He used to come to Bodh Gaya. During the pandemic period of two years, he did not come," he said. Yatra for his own benefits. Whenever he goes for Yatra, it is a picnic for him. Nitish Kumar probably realises that in turn as a Chief Minister is over and RJD is preparing to remove him from the top after March 2023," Sinha said on Thursday. "Nitish Kumar is going to purchase a jet and a helicopter with the money of taxpayers. He is actually trapped in the politics of Lalu Prasad Yadav and purchasing it

ED freezes Rs 42.21 cr more in gaming app case

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) carried out search operation on total 1548 bank accounts involved in the cyber crimes and freed an amount of Rs 42.21 crore (balance lying in these bank accounts) in a case related to the Mobile Gaming Application, E-nuggets. So far, an amount of Rs 110.76 crore has been frozen or seized by the ED in the case. The case was registered on the basis of an FIR registered by Park Street Police Station, Kolkata, against Amir Khan and others, based on a com-



plaint filed by Federal Bank authorities, in the court of Chief Metropolitan Magistrate, Kolkata. During the investigation, it was found that Amir Khan

had launched a mobile gaming application namely E-Nuggets, which was designed for the purpose of defrauding public. After collecting handsome amounts from the public, all of a sudden the withdrawal from the said app was stopped on one pretext or the other. Thereafter, all data, including profile information, was wiped off from the app servers. Probe revealed that multiple accounts (more than 300) were used to launder money. Proceeds were also used to purchase Crypto currencies. Amir Khan is currently under the judicial custody.

Rajasthan: Return 90 days salary to treasury, BJP leader tells 91 MLAs who resigned

Jaipur | Agencies

The case pertaining to the en masse resignation by 91 Congress MLAs on September 25 has been listed for hearing in the court of the Chief Justice of Rajasthan High Court on January 2. On December 1, Deputy Leader of Opposition (BJP), Rajendra Singh Rathore, had filed a Public Interest Litigation (PIL) in the Rajasthan High Court seeking judicial intervention in the matter related to the 'dilly dallying' tactics of Assembly Speaker C.P. Joshi in taking a decision on the resignations. Ahead of the crucial hearing, Rathore on Friday demanded that all the 91 MLAs, who had submitted their resignations to Speaker Joshi, should at least deposit their three months' salaries and other incentives,



which they received even after submitting their resignations, to the treasury. Rathore also demanded that the names of these 91 MLAs should be made public so that people get to know how far the leaders elected by them can go to play with their trust and public sentiments for their own selfish gains. "On September 25, 91

MLAs had handed over their resignation letters to the Speaker with their signatures on them. It is not possible that the resignations were forcibly taken from the 91 MLAs, nor is it possible that all the signatures were forged," said Rathore, after the case was listed for January 2 hearing. "According to Assembly rules, the resignations needed to be accepted with immediate effect. The fact that it has taken over 90 days to test the prescribed format of the one-line of resignation letters means that the sponsors of this resignation game will have to face the court, which has listed the matter for hearing on January 2," he added. It needs to be mentioned here that 91 MLAs had resigned on September 25 by calling a parallel meeting to the official Congress Legislative Party meeting called at the Chief Minister's residence.

Odisha Crime Branch quizzes cops, doctors in mysterious death of Russian lawmaker, friend

Bhubaneswar | Agencies

Odisha Crime Branch officials on Friday quizzed police and doctors over the death of Russian lawmaker Pavel Antov and his friend Vladimir Bidenov in a hotel in the state's Rayagada. The Crime Branch team, led by DSP Saroj Kant Mahanto, interacted with the Rayagada IIC and Sub-Divisional Police Officer (SDPO). They also quizzed the doctors, who conducted post-mortem examinations of the two deceased Russians. The team including forensic experts visited the hotel and the spot from where Antov's body was recovered. "We are examining the investigation so far made by the Rayagada police and we will investigate other angles also," Mahanto told media



persons. Meanwhile, Russian Ambassador to India Denis Alipov said nothing wrong has been done in performing

the last rites of the deceased duo. The bodies of Antov and Bidenov were cremated by Rayagada police after receiving approval from their family members through Russian mission in India. "We appreciate the investigation efforts by the Indian authorities into the death of two Russian nationals in Odisha. Meanwhile it would be useful for some Hercule Poirot lovers to learn that cremation in Russia is as customary as burial. 'Idleness is the root of all evil,' Alipov tweeted. Bidenov was found lying unconscious in his hotel room on December 22 and taken to Rayagada hospital, where doctors declared him dead. Following the approval of Russian authority in India, his body was cremated in Rayagada on December 24.

JHARKHAND: VILLAGERS OPPOSE ACTRESS' CREMATION IN VILLAGE DUE TO HER INTER-CASTE MARRIAGE

Ranchi | Agencies

The last rites of Jharkhand film actress Riya Kumari could not take place in her native village due to opposition from the people. Kumari aka Isha Alya was later cremated at the Muktidham crematorium in Khirgaon, Hazaribagh. Kumari, a resident of Mahudi village in Chouparan block, had been in the entertainment industry for more than a decade. She married Prakash Kumar aka Prakash Albela against her family's wishes. The actress' brother, Ajay Kumar said that his Caste Panchayat boycotted his family after Kumari's inter-caste marriage, which is also why



they opposed her cremation in the village. The actress was shot dead on the Ranchi-Kolkata highway by alleged robbers, when she was on her way to Kolkata along with her husband and two and a half year old daughter, on Wednesday. The victim's brother, in the police complaint, alleged that she was killed by her husband who had been lying to the police. He added that Prakash tortured for dowry, among other things.

TWO KILLED IN OXYGEN CYLINDER BLAST OUTSIDE HOSPITAL

Chandauli (UP): Two people were killed in a gas cylinder blast outside a private hospital in Chandauli district on Friday. The impact of the explosion was so intense that it shattered glasses in the hospital and houses nearby, and the two bodies were badly mangled. Visuals showed them lying on the road amid chaos in the area. A truck carrying several oxygen cylinders is also seen parked in the middle of the road. The police took the dead bodies into custody, and sent them for autopsy. CCTV footage from the surrounding areas is being investigated. The explosion outside Dayal Hospital in Ravi Nagar area of Mughalsarai city happened between 9:00 am and 9:30 am while oxygen cylinders were being unloaded from a truck that was parked outside the hospital. A huge crowd gathered around the spot, and the fire brigade was also rushed there. Superintendent of Police, Ankur Aggarwal, inspected the spot and a forensic team was called in. Both the people, who died, used to work in the company that supplied oxygen cylinders. The police are investigating whether the oxygen cylinders' refilling and packing was done properly.

Bus driver charred to death after vehicle collides with truck

Gurugram | Agencies

The driver of a private bus was charred to death after the vehicle collided with a truck at Sidhrawali cut in Gurugram on the Delhi-Jaipur National Highway 48 on Friday, police said. The bus has been completely gutted in the fire. According to police, the private company bus was bound for Gurugram from Taurau in the Nuh district while the container truck was bound for Jaipur when the accident occurred. The bus driver, identified as Rajesh of Uttar Pradesh, could not come out and was burnt alive while the cleaner and three other company staff somehow manage to escape with injuries. Due to the impact of the collision, both the truck and the bus caught fire. The truck driver and 3-4 passengers of bus who suffered serious injuries were shifted to the hospital. Local residents and the fire service personnel rushed to the spot and helped in dousing the fire. "The actual cause of the accident will be known after the statement of the truck driver and others will be recorded. The victims are still unfit for statements and are undergoing treatment," an officer of Bilaspur police station said.

Madhuri Jain Grover pays Rs 1.15 cr advance tax, still remains 'housewife' on Golden Dubai visa

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Former BharatPe co-founder and managing director Ashneer Grover recently said that his wife Madhuri Jain Grover submitted Rs 1.15 crore as advance tax. However, on her Golden Dubai visa issued during her tenure at BharatPe, her occupation is written as "House Wife". Madhuri Jain Grover's Golden Dubai visa, issued in September 2021 and seen by IANS, clearly mentions her occupation as "House Wife" in the name "Madhuri Grover Suresh Jain" (Jain is Madhuri's father). At the time of visa issuing, Madhuri Jain was working at BharatPe as Head of Controls. She has been an entrepreneur since 2000 and worked as senior fashion designer for years, before joining BharatPe in 2018. At BharatPe, she managed, HR, finances and other internal operations. The question now arises that why she preferred to be known as a "House Wife" on the Golden Dubai Card? The 10-year Golden Dubai visa is a long-term residence visa which enables people to live, work or study in the UAE while enjoying exclusive benefits. On December 15, Ashneer had tweeted that "my wife Madhuri Jain Grover submitted Rs 1.15 crore advance tax just now". "She has been among the highest individual female tax payers of India for many years. How many VC partners do you think paid as much tax in India? Not many -- most of them pay zero tax being in



Singapore/Dubai," he had posted. Earlier this month, BharatPe initiated criminal and civil proceedings against Ashneer, Madhuri Jain and their relatives over huge misappropriation of company funds.



ANIL DESHMUKH 'UNTAINTED', VICTIM OF PROBE AGENCIES: SANJAY RAUT

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Shiv Sena-UBT MP and chief spokesperson Sanjay Raut on Friday said that former Maharashtra minister and Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) leader Anil Deshmukh is "untainted" but became a victim of central investigation agencies.

Raut called on Deshmukh who was released earlier this week after spending nearly 14 months behind bars in separate cases filed by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) and Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI).

After their private meeting at Deshmukh's residence, he and Raut came to interact with the media, though the NCP leader and his family didn't make any comments.

"I have experienced the same trauma he (Deshmukh) has undergone for over a year, so I specially came to see him. During his long innings in public life of many decades, he has worked with many leaders and always enjoyed a clean image," said Raut, who was released on bail in November after spending 110 days in jail in an ED case. However, Raut said that like him, even Deshmukh was targeted by the Central government through the federal probe agencies which are being deployed against political rivals in Maharashtra, Delhi, Jharkhand, Bihar, and other opposition-ruled states.

"We have ruled here for two-and-a-half-years, we have also seen the 10 years of the



UPA government closely... But never were political rivals hounded in the way it is being done now through blatant misuse of various probe agencies by the Central government. We have never treated even our enemies like this," thundered Raut.

The Sena-UBT leader said that these laws (money-laundering) were enacted for terrorists or anti-national elements, but they are being used against patriotic persons to settle political scores in the most inhuman manner.

Raut made it clear that this is a legal battle now, and both he and Deshmukh would fight it out in the courts till the logical end while reiterating his full faith in the country's judiciary to give them justice.

'Pressure' on Tunisha to embrace Islam, claims mom Vanita Sharma

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Making a sensational claim, Vanita Sharma -- mother of the late actress Tunisha -- said for the first time that her daughter was under 'pressure' to convert to Islam, here on Friday.

Speaking to the media, she said that Tunisha was constantly harassed in different ways by her ex-boyfriend Sheezan Khan -- currently in custody -- and his family, she was forced to do many things against her wishes and was allegedly under duress to embrace Islam.

"They had an undue influence on our innocent, sensitive girl. She had even started addressing Sheezan's mother as 'Ammi', his sister used to take him to a 'dargah' and celebrate her birthday," said Vanita.

She said that Sheezan was allegedly forcing her to accept Islam religion, and she had reportedly started sporting a 'burqa'.

Vanita slammed the Khan family for compelling Tunisha to spend long hours or days at their home, ostensibly against her will, decorating their



home for her birthday party, and she bought expensive gifts for them.

The distraught bereaved mother called upon the Palghar Police to

rope in the Khan family for their investigations and at one point even voiced suspicions that Tunisha's death could be a 'murder'.

Recalling the sequence of events, Vanita said Tunisha wanted to go to celebrate Christmas in Chandigarh for a couple of days to get a change.

"A day before (December 23), I had dropped in on the teleserial sets unannounced, but she was very busy... Yet she told me to speak with Sheezan. I met him, but he just said he was 'sorry' and told me I could do whatever I want," said Vanita.

TUNISHA SHARMA WAS DEPRESSED, EX PRETENDED TO CARE: POLICE IN COURT

Sheezan Khan knew of Tunisha Sharma's mental health issues and had recommended doctors to her too, police tell court while seeking custody. India News/NTV News Desk Updated: December 30, 2022 4:53 pm IST Tunisha was depressed, Ex pretended to care: Police in Court "She was very sensitive. She also suffered from anxiety and OCD. The accused (Sheezan Khan) had recommended three doctors to her for treatment. He was aware of all of these things. In spite of this, he got into a relationship with her and then broke up with her against her will. Even after their breakup, she used to work with him on the sets every day. So it was difficult for her to forget all this. She used to be very sad. The crime is of serious nature and there is widespread public discontent in society regarding it. That's why there is an urgent need to investigate," the police further told the court.

18 MORE FROM MUMBAI HELD IN GOA FOR STEALING MOBILES

Panaji | Agencies

With the arrest of 18 more people from Mumbai involved in stealing mobile phones, Goa Police on Friday claimed to have recovered 29 high-end mobile phones worth Rs 10,00,000 from their possession.

Calangute Police had on Thursday arrested 12 members of two gangs from Maharashtra involved in theft of mobile phones in the coastal state. About 41 mobile phones worth Rs 30 lakh had been recovered.

According to Deputy Superintendent of Police Jivba Dalvi, Anjuna Police have busted a mobile thieves gang at Sunburn venue in North Goa. "We had received information that many thieves will be coming to the Sunburn festival to commit thefts of mobile phones. Accordingly the staff were deployed in civil clothes at specific points to keep a watch on suspicious persons moving around. Two persons were found moving suspiciously after



which they were rounded up and questioned. Further, they disclosed that they along with their friends have come to the festival to steal mobile phones," he said.

He said that further investigation

led the police team to one hotel in Calangute, during which the remaining 16 persons were also arrested. "Three vehicles which were used by the accused persons have also been seized by the police," Dalvi said.

A total of 29 high-end mobile phones worth around Rs 10,00,000 have been seized from their possession. "An offence under section 379 R/w 34 IPC has been registered and all accused persons are arrested,"

Woman gets husband killed, hangs body to make it look like suicide

Akola | Agencies

A 28-year-old woman allegedly hired a man to kill her husband and made it appear like a suicide at a village in Maharashtra's Akola district, police said on Friday. The 32-year-old victim was found hanging at Punda village in Dahihanda police station limits on Wednesday morning, an official said.

The man's body was tied with a rope and bore injury marks, which indicated murder, he said.

During investigations, the police questioned the victim's wife who confessed that she had plotted to kill him and hired another villager to commit the crime for Rs30,000, the official said.



The victim was strangled with a rope and his body was hung from an iron beam to make it look like he had committed suicide, he said. The woman has claimed that her husband was an

alcoholic and used to beat her up and she was tired of the harassment, the official said, adding that the accused have been arrested under relevant sections of the Indian Penal Code.

MURDER ACCUSED ON RUN FOR 28 YEARS CAUGHT AT MUMBAI AIRPORT

Mumbai: A man accused in a murder case, who had been on the run for 28 years, was apprehended at Chhatrapati Shivaji International Airport in neighbouring Mumbai, police said on Friday.

The police on Thursday arrested the accused who was wanted in connection with the killing of five members of a family in Kashmir in November, 1994, senior inspector Aviraj Kurade of MBVV police said.

Jagrani Devi Prajapati (27) and her four children, in the age group of three months to five years, were killed in their house by three men, he said.

The police had received tip-offs about one of the accused who was working in Qatar and they were tracking his movements. He landed in Mumbai on Thursday and was apprehended with the help of the airport authorities, the official added.

RESIDENT DOCTORS AT BMC HOSPITALS TO JOIN MARD STRIKE ON JAN 2

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Resident doctors at Mumbai's civic hospitals have threatened to go on strike from January 2 if their demands, including payment of arrears, are not met.

Their peers in government-run medical colleges in the state have already announced to skip work from Monday.

The strike by the resident doctors, who get hands-on experience while pursuing medical education, at Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) hospitals could potentially cripple outpatient department (OPD) services of the facilities.

There are thousands of resident doctors attached to BMC hospitals.

The BMC wing of the Maharashtra Association of Resident Doctors (MARD), an umbrella body of resident doctors in the state, has said that resident doctors will continue to be a part of emergency services.

In a letter to the authorities, the BMC MARD



has sought the implementation of a Government Resolution on dearness allowance at BMC hospitals along with clearance of arrears of dearness allowance from July 1, 2018. "The payment of eight months of COVID

arrears of resident doctors of Nair Hospital (NAIR MARD) and two months arrears of resident doctors of KEM and Cooper hospitals are pending. The BMC should provide adequate hostel facilities for the resident doctors of all

BMC and GMC hospitals," the letter said.

The resident doctors have pressed for the recruitment of 1,432 senior resident doctors as well as bringing parity in resident doctors' salaries across the state.

It has also asked the government to fill vacancies of associate and assistant professors to overcome shortage of teaching staff.

The association has also sought equal pay to all senior resident doctors across Maharashtra to remove any discrepancies in pay.

The BMC MARD said it had raised its demands with the civic body and the state government on multiple occasions, but they were not heeded.

"We have requested the authorities to kindly look into the matter and take necessary actions for the same on an immediate and urgent basis. If these long pending, genuine demands are not addressed, BMC MARD will have to take harsh decision of withdrawal of non-emergency and OPD services from the morning of January 2," the association said.

SEBI: MANY MUMBAI IT DEFAULTERS OPERATED FROM DINGY 'CHAWLS'!

Quaid Najmi | Mumbai

In a curious revelation, the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) has found that several 'missing' Income Tax defaulters were operating from dingy chawls in Mumbai.

In a new announcement, the SEBI has published a black-list of 'untraceable defaulters', some who are missing since 2014, and hence it has been unable to serve them the Notices of Demand.

A few of the SEBI listers operating from tenements are: Prakash Gaurishankar Joshi, from Dilkhush Chawl No. 3 in Borivali east, untraceable since August 2018; Ashok Bhagat of H-19 Ramji Gupta Chawl in Santacruz west, unavailable since June 2014 and for another demand notice since August 2019.

There is also Mahesh Mistry with an address at No. 1 Manraj Driver Chawl in Andheri east, and other addresses at Marine Lines, Fort, Vile Parle and in Thane, out of bounds since July 2014, August 2018 and May 2019 for multiple demand notices that remain unserved.

One Jayesh Shah has given an address at 82, Kishan Chawl in Borivali east, a commercial premise at Crystal Plaza in Andheri west, a building in Bhayander town of Thane, but since he is not traceable, his demand notices of July 2014 and December 2017, could not be served.



Vinod Patel of Patel Building in Fort is 'missing' since December 2017; Kina Dilip Mewada of Naigaon in Mumbai and BP Road in Thane are not traceable since August 2018, according to SEBI. The list has one Sunil D. Ingawale of Jain Nagar in Bhayander east, not available since August 2018;

Pankaj Saraiya with addresses of Andheri west and Vile Parle west, apparently gone 'missing' since June 2021; and the most recent addition, Hussain Sattaf of Cuffe Parade, who is not traceable since March 2022. These defaulters -- who have to cough out unspecified amounts of dues -- are

missing for the past between eight years to eight months, from one or multiple addresses that are available with the market regulator.

Admitting to the 'untraceable defaulters', the SEBI said that it has not been able to serve the Notice of Demands on them "at their last known address".

The SEBI Recovery Officer Suchsmita Sahoo has called upon these 'untraceable' nine defaulters and members of the public who have any information on them, to send letters or emails by January 14, 2023, though again, no telephone or WhatsApp number is provided.

A couple of days ago, the SEBI had published a list of nine companies in Mumbai and neighbourhood which have been similarly 'untraceable' for over two years.

A banking expert and Trade Unions Joint Action Committee (TUJAC) Convenor Vishwas Utagi termed it as "a serious matter" that such defaulter companies and individuals have disappeared off the radar and sought a probe, while welcoming the SEBI's pro-active year-end moves.

He pointed out that these defaulters are liable to pay up their dues and various government taxes, but if they fail to come forward, the SEBI and other agencies can invoke relevant laws to attach and sell off their assets to recover the outstanding amounts.

WALL COLLAPSE IN MULUND KILLS 40-YEAR-OLD WOMAN

Mumbai: A 40-year-old woman died after a wall collapsed on her in the Mulund area early morning on Friday, an official said.

The incident took place around 5.25 am pm in Hanumanpada, Mulund West.

Teams from the fire brigade, police and BMC officials reached the spot on being alerted. The incident was reported by the Chief Medical Officer of M. T. Agarwal Hospital.

The fire brigade declared it to be a level-01 incident.

"A dilapidated wall of an empty house collapsed on an adjacent house," said a BMC official. Chief Medical Officer of M T Agarwal Hospital informed BMC officials that two injured people were brought to the hospital. Laxmibai Katade, 40, was declared dead and Raghunath Katade, 50, was treated in the hospital and discharged later.



EDITOR'S SPECS

2070 ZERO EMISSION TARGET NEEDS HUGE INVESTMENT

On November 1, 2021, at the UN Climate Summit COP 26 in Glasgow, Prime Minister Narendra Modi had announced that India would achieve the net zero emission target by 2070, a rather ambitious deadline, which according to experts would require no additional greenhouse gases emission into the atmosphere. There are a lot of short term as well as solid sectoral targets which need to be set to achieve this goal, they added. China has said that it plans to achieve it by 2060 and the US along with the European Union (EU) aims to do so by 2050. To achieve this target, India will have to move away from its heavy dependency on coal and a proper roadmap is required to first achieve this goal, before moving towards achieving the larger target. India will have to look at gathering funds to achieve the objective as well as having the desired technologies to meet the target in the long run, experts say. According to a study, an investment of \$10 trillion, starting from this year itself would be needed to achieve the net zero target. And if the deadline is advanced to 2050, then the amount may go up to \$13.5 trillion. A report titled "Getting India to Net Zero" released in August this year by the High-Level Policy Commission On Getting Asia to Net Zero, said that achieving the zero emission target by 2070 could boost the country's economy by around 4.7 per cent above the projected baseline growth in GDP terms by 2036, which would be worth \$371 billion and create around 15 million new jobs by 2047. It added that by achieving the net zero target by 2050, India could boost the annual GDP by around 7 per cent (\$470 billion) and around 20 million jobs could be created by 2032.

Neeraj Dhankher

Time and again, numerous attempts have been made to malign the credibility of astrology. One such attempt was made recently when, in a video, a fame-hungry, self-styled influencer described astrology as a 'fraud' industry meant only for feeble minded Indians.

The creator of the video claimed how millions of Indians are being 'fooled' into believing astrology and it is nothing but just a sham.

The video's claims regarding the veracity of astrology and other mystical disciplines like numerology seem too bold to be supported by any evidence or in-depth understanding of the topic presented.

On the other hand, the only information available was a generalised description of the planets and a simplistic interpretation of the zodiac.

The astrological systems of the West and India were lumped together without any consideration for their differences. It turned out that the video was really a covert advertising ploy for an audio-book service, and the creator picked a subject connected to astrology because of the subject's widespread popularity throughout the world.

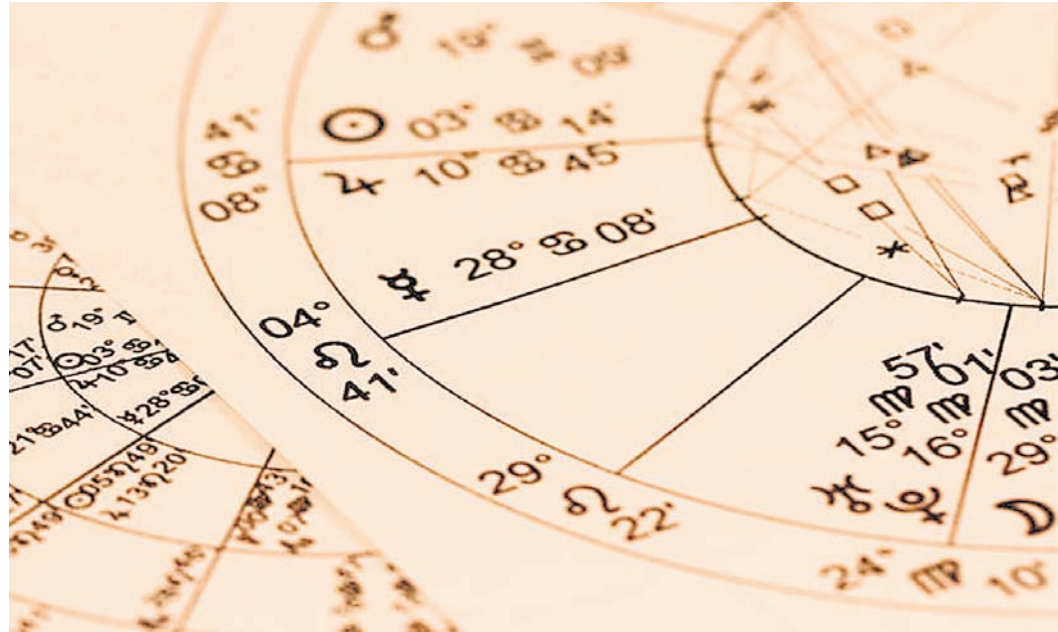
Nonetheless, it poses some pertinent questions about astrology and its believers.

Is it true that astrology followers are 'fooled' into their beliefs, and are they 'weak-minded' because they turn to astrology for solace?

Is it true that astrology is a "fraud"?

As mentioned earlier, astrology has a history of being the target of caustic assaults.

One of the main points of contention has been whether astrology can be considered rational and sci-



entific, or whether it is more akin to a superstition.

The answer to this question lies in the legal dynamics of astrology in India.

In 2004, the Supreme Court of India proclaimed astrology as a science. In a historic judgement, the apex court noted, "Astrology is a science, which claims to foretell the future or make predictions by studying the supposed influence of the relative positions of the moon, sun, planets and other stars on human affairs. It, therefore, requires study of celestial bodies, of their positions, magnitudes, motions, and distances, etc.."

The court further directed the universities in India to consider adding astrology as a subject.

Again in 2011, the Bombay High Court dismissed a plea that had challenged astrology as science.

It refused to consider astrology and other allied sciences like Palmistry as part of The Drugs and Magical Remedies Act of 1954.

It sided with the view that astrol-

ogy is a time-tested science and dates back more than 4,000 years old and refused to ban on practices promoting astrology.

Since then, astrology is being taught in several universities in India. In fact, very recently, IGNOU introduced a Master's programme in Jyotishvia distance learning which can only be pursued by students who have completed their undergraduate degree.

This goes on to show that there is definitely an educational criterion to study astrology since it involves various computations and abstract ideas. Clearly, astrology cannot be called a 'fraud' industry.

The subject matter of astrology is human beings and how they are affected by the motions and placements of the planets, stars, and other heavenly bodies across the Zodiac.

Astrology draws heavily from two 'pure' sciences - Astronomy and Mathematics. The influence of planets is studied using data gathered by astronomers on the orbits

of planets and other celestial bodies on a daily basis.

Information on the daily motion of the planets and its effect on human behaviour is compiled in a log-book called Ephemeris.

In order to determine the precise degree of the ascendant and the planets, complex mathematical calculations must be performed throughout the horoscope-making process.

The accuracy of horoscope predictions is highly sensitive to even the smallest of mathematical errors.

In the same way, astrology makes use of the fundamentals of geography like longitude and latitude to interpret the positioning of the stars and planets in relation to Earth.

Thus, a significant quantity of "verifiable" data is amassed. The astrologer then analyses the data and uses it to make predictions about the person's life.

Like a scientist, an astrologer

becomes more reliable and effective with time and practise.

Astrology is undeniably a scientific discipline. It's an integral component of Indian culture and has been for centuries.

It was always practiced by Indians as a scientific way of life, be it the type of food to be eaten according to the body type, auspicious timings for various activities calculated from the distance between Sun and Moon, health matters, direction of houses, to understand relationship between man and other living and non-living beings and to decipher the purpose of life through karmic patterns generated through subconscious and conscious emotional interplay.

The foundation of astrology is the concept of 'harmony' between the many types of energy in the cosmos. It has withstood the onslaught of western culture throughout the years and continues to evolve, adapt and re-invent itself in line with the changing times.

It would be a great disrespect to people of India to call them as 'weak-minded'. Indians have long looked to astrology as a means to better align their karmas with the energy of nature in pursuit of spiritual bliss and understand truth behind human existence.

The science of astrology has been dedicatedly adhered to as a matter of belief and faith.

It has been, should be and will always be used as a tool for course correction.

(Neeraj Dhankher is an astrologer with proficiency in Vedic, KP and Nadi Astrology. He is Founder and CEO of Astro Zindagi. The observations are made by the writer based on his own analysis)

international

PEOPLE IN PAK'S GWADAR CITY RISE UP AGAINST CPEC

Islamabad | Agencies

People of Balochistan are rising up in protests across the Pakistan province, threatening a stumbling country, challenging the politicised army and upsetting Chinese dreams of a transnational corridor project. Public anger has now spilled out into the streets of the port city of Gwadar where shelling and stoning between the police and protesting public have become a common occurrence.

The public protests are being organised under the banner of a new group called Haq Do Tehreek (Give Rights Tehreek). The group is led by Maulana Hidayatur Rehman Baloch, who is also the general secretary of the Balochistan chapter of Jamaat-e-Islami. The group is



angry at the federal and provincial governments for ignoring the genuine demands of the people. These demands include illegal trawling in Gwadar's water, high number of security checkpoints and trade on the Pakistan-Iran border. The local communities want a visible reduction in the military presence in the

strife-torn province. The Baloch militants have of late become active in the region, targeting the military.

The government, instead of using talks to address the real issues, has adopted a headline approach by mass-scale arrests, cases filed against activists, shutting down of communication networks and cane-charging of

protesters. The project has taken away the traditional fishing areas in the region, making the majority of people worry about their future.

The CPEC projects Gwadar as the next Dubai, a dream which is fast turning into a nightmare for the local fishermen communities.

The community, a majority of the population in the affected region, have seen their increased marginalisation since their displacement from Mulla Band in 2017.

As more fishermen localities were displaced with the expansion of CPEC projects, the anger and frustration have grown across the region against the CPEC projects.

The Chinese are deeply worried about the protests.

A rolling wave of protests in Gwadar could only add to the troubles.

INDONESIA LIFTS COVID RELATED PUBLIC MOBILITY RESTRICTIONS

Jakarta: The Indonesian government has decided to lift Covid-19 related public activity restrictions nationwide, President Joko Widodo announced on Friday.

The decision was taken on the basis of the latest infection figures, Widodo said at the Presidential Palace in Jakarta, Xinhua news agency reported. After more than 10 months of deliberation and consideration of the numbers available, the government has decided to put an end to the public mobility restriction protocol, locally known as 'PPBM', Widodo said.

"There will be no more restrictions on gatherings and movements," the President said. However, the president called on the public to stay vigilant despite the PPBM termination. "I advise all sectors of the nation to be careful and alert. The public must increase their awareness of vigilance against the risk of Covid-19." He also recommended that people should continue to wear face masks in crowded places or indoors.

S.Korea's consumer price growth hits 24-yr high

Seoul | Agencies

South Korea's consumer prices grew 5.1 per cent on-year in 2022, accelerating from a 2.5 per cent gain in 2021, marking the steepest on-year rise since 1998, when consumer inflation spiked 7.5 per cent in the wake of the Asian financial crisis, government data showed Friday.

According to the data compiled by Statistics Korea, the 2022 reading came in line with the government's previous estimate, reports Yonhap news Agency.

South Korea has been grappling with inflation following a sharp rise in energy and raw material prices amid the Russia-Ukraine war.

The price of utility services gained 12.6 per cent on-year in 2022, as South Korea, which depends heavily on imports for its energy needs, was hit by soaring global prices of key resources.

It marked a drastic turnaround from a 2.1 per cent on-year decline posted in 2021.

The price of agricultural, fisheries and



livestock products increased 3.8 per cent in 2022, slowing from an 8.7 per cent spike tallied a year earlier.

Industrial product prices, however, increased 6.9 per cent on-year in 2022, with those of oil and processed food-stuffs rising 22.2 per cent and 7.8 per cent, respectively, the data also showed.

Prices of services increased 3.7 per cent this year, compared with a 2 per cent growth posted in 2021. The rise was led by higher insurance fees, rents, and dining-out costs.

Core inflation, which excludes volatile agricultural products and oil prices, rose 4.1 per cent in 2022, rising sharply from 1.8 per cent growth tallied last year.

US INITIAL JOBLESS CLAIMS RISE, SIGNAL SOFTENING LABOUR MARKET

Washington: US initial claims for unemployment benefits rose last week, a signal that the tight labour market could be softening.

Initial jobless claims climbed by 9,000 to 225,000, according to data published on Thursday by the US Labour Department.

Economists surveyed by The Wall Street Journal had predicted that new claims would increase 7,000 to 223,000, after claims grew 2,000 to 216,000 in the previous week, Xinhua news agency reported.

The number of individuals collecting unemployment increased to 1.71 million, the highest level since February.

30K PEOPLE DISPLACED IN SOUTH SUDAN AMID SKIRMISHES

Juba | Agencies

The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) has said that an estimated 30,000 people have been displaced following skirmishes in the Greater Pibor Administrative Area.

Humanitarian Coordinator for South Sudan, Sara Beysolow Nyanti said an attack by armed youths from Jonglei state on December 24 on the communities of Greater Pibor Administrative Area resulted in cattle raiding, destruction of properties, and displacement of 5,000 people, including women and children who fled to Pibor town from the conflict areas of Gumuruk and Lekuangle.



Nyanti said in a statement issued in Juba, the capital of South Sudan, that humanitarian partners were providing much-needed assistance to those affected by the violence, adding that the recent skirmishes follow another massive displacement of civilians which was triggered by fighting in mid-November 2022 in Fashoda County, in Upper Nile State.

Ukraine comes under massive Russian missile attacks

Kiev | Agencies

Cities across Ukraine were targeted by the latest wave of Russian missile strikes, deemed to be one of the largest bombardments since the war began on February 24, authorities said.

Thursday's strikes followed overnight attacks with kamikaze drones across the war-torn nation, Xinhua news agency quoted the Ukrainian Air Force Command as saying in a social media post. Ukraine's military said 69 missiles were launched, with air defences intercepting 54 of them.

Earlier, presidential adviser Mykhailo Podolyak had said more than 120 missiles had been launched at civilian infrastructure.

Media reports said air raid sirens rang out across the country and in Kiev sounded for five hours.

At least three people, including a 14-year-old girl, were injured as a result of the impact of a strike on a private residence in Kiev's southeastern Darnytskyi district, the capital's Mayor Vitali Klitschko said. At least



four S-300 missiles hit critical infrastructure facilities in the city of Kharkiv in the east of Ukraine, Kharkiv regional governor Oleg Sinegubov said. Local authorities also reported explosions in the Lviv region in the west, and in the Poltava region in the central part of the country.

In the southern Odesa region, fragments of a cruise missile fell on a residential build-

ing, Kyrylo Tymoshenko, deputy head of the Ukrainian president's office, said on Telegram.

Eyewitnesses reported strong blasts in the northwest of the Ukrainian capital and its outskirts, and according to some people in Kiev, glass was shaking in apartment buildings, it said.

Dozens of Russian attacks have pounded Ukraine in recent weeks, causing repeated power cuts across the country. Ukraine's Energy Minister Herman Halushchenko said Thursday's strikes had damaged power generating facilities and said the situation was "difficult" in the Odesa and Kyiv regions.

The mayor of Lviv said on Thursday that 90 per cent of his city was without power, while Klitschko said that 40 per cent of Kiev had been left without power. Power cuts were also reported in the Odesa and Dnipropetrovsk regions.

Thursday's attack came just hours after the Kremlin rejected Ukraine's suggestion that peace talks could begin in 2023.



"LORD RAM AND HANUMAN ARE NOT BJP'S COPYRIGHT"

Upset Uma Bharti courts more trouble for BJP

A day after she told BJP supporters that they should "look around" and decide which party to vote for, senior BJP leader Uma Bharti has courted more trouble for the party. Devotion to Lord Ram and Hanuman is not the copyright of the BJP, she said while responding to a question on former Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Kamal Nath getting a Hanuman temple built in the state.

Team Absolute | Chhindwara

Former Chief Minister has also been cornering the Shivraj Singh Chouhan-led state government with a prohibition demand. Recently, she made headlines for throwing stones at a liquor store while demanding a blanket ban on alcohol in Madhya Pradesh.

Bharti, also a former Chief Minister of the state and one of the party's tallest leaders there, has reportedly been upset with the party leadership for sidelining her.

She backed BJP MP Pragna Singh Thakur's controversial remark that Hindus should keep weapons at home.

"Even Lord Rama had taken a vow not to give up weapons during his exile," she said, adding that it is not wrong to keep arms, but it's wrong to have violent thoughts.

Uma Bharti was in Chhindwara, where Pragna Thakur had made her provocative remarks, to participate in several events.



On the uproar over the film 'Pathan', Uma Bharti questioned the need for protests. "The censor board of the BJP government should immediately remove the objectionable scenes," she said, adding

that there is no need for politics in this.

"Scenes that hurt anyone's religious sentiments should be removed. India will not tolerate insult of any colour. Saffron is the identity of Indian culture, the censor board should immediately remove the scenes," she said.

Uma Bharti also took a dig at senior Congress leader Salman Khurshid, who recently compared the ongoing pan-India march of the Congress, the 'Bharat Jodo Yatra', to the epic Ramayana, and party leader Rahul Gandhi to Lord Ram.

"It's wrong to compare Lord Shri Ram, the lord of the universe, with Rahul Gandhi. They are only making themselves subjects of ridicule," she said, adding that there is no need for any 'Jodo Yatra' in India.

The divide is more visible in the Congress itself, she said, and further took a jibe at Salman Khurshid. "I thought they had dug him out of the Mohenjo-daro civilization," she said.

Rahul Gandhi to be opposition's PM face for 2024 polls: Kamal Nath



Team Absolute | New Delhi/Bhopal

Senior Congress leader and former Madhya Pradesh chief minister Kamal Nath on Friday said Rahul Gandhi will be the opposition's prime minister candidate for the 2024 Lok Sabha elections.

In an email interview with a news agency, Nath lauded Rahul Gandhi for leading the Congress' countrywide Bharat Jodo Yatra, saying he is not doing politics for power but for the common people of the country, NDTV reported. "As far as the 2024 Lok Sabha election is concerned, Rahul Gandhi will not just be the face of the opposition but will be its prime ministerial candidate too," he said.

Nath also said that no one in the history of the world has undertaken such a long 'padayatra'. No family other than the Gandhi family has given so many sacrifices for the country, the Congress leader said. "Rahul Gandhi does not do politics for power, but for the people of the country who make anyone sit in power," he said. The former Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister is the lone leader to have come forward in favour of Rahul Gandhi's candidature for the 2024 polls. The 76-year-old Congress chief of Madhya Pradesh also said there was no place for "traitors" in the party after they betrayed the organisation. Asked if there was any chance of Jyotiraditya Scindia's return to the party in the future, Mr

Nath said, "I would not comment on any individual, but those 'traitors' who betrayed the party and broke the trust of its workers, there is no place for them in the organisation." He further said that the old pension scheme would be implemented in the state soon after the Congress assumes power in Madhya Pradesh. Nath said that the BJP may change any chief minister but it would not matter as people have made up their minds to elect the Congress in Madhya Pradesh. He also said that organisational changes would be initiated in the state ahead of the assembly elections. Madhya Pradesh will go to polls later next year and the Congress is eyeing to wrest power from the BJP in the state.

Man killed by family for objecting to sister's harassment

Team Absolute | Harda

A 22-year-old man was stabbed to death allegedly by five members of a family at Harda in Madhya Pradesh on Thursday after he objected to one of them harassing his sister, a police official said.

Rahatgaon police station in charge Manoj Uike informed that the five accused comprise a 26-year-old man, his two brothers, their father and mother, while the victim has been identified as Jitendra Damade. The incident took place in Dudhkutch village, some 15 km from the district



headquarters, and Damade died after receiving grievous injuries with a sharp weapon on the chest and belly, he said. "The victim's sister has said that the main accused used to harass her and send her messages on the mobile phone. She said Damade confronted the accused and

asked him to desist from such acts, which led to the murder," he said.

The kin of the victim held a protest seeking strict action against the accused, including demolition of their home, Uike said. All five have been arrested and charged with murder, he added.

WOMAN INJURED AS BANK GUARD'S GUN GOES OFF IN INDORE

Indore: A woman was injured after the gun of a security guard fell and accidentally went off at a bank in Madhya Pradesh's Indore, police said.

The incident took place at State Bank of India's Sadhna Nagar branch on Thursday evening, an official said. The gun accidentally went off and the bullet hit the woman's right foot, Aerodrome police station in-charge Sanjay Shukla said. The bank employees took the injured woman to a private hospital nearby and first aid was administered, he said. "A case under section 308 (attempt to commit culpable homicide) of the Indian Penal Code has been registered against the guard and further probe is underway," the official said.

PARTY MEN CREATING TROUBLE FOR BJP IN MP!

Team Absolute | Bhopal

In Madhya Pradesh, its own people are becoming more of a problem for the BJP than the Congress. A new name has been added to it that of former minister Deepak Joshi. Earlier, MLAs Ajay Vishnoi and Narayan Dutt Tripathi have been creating trouble in front of both the government and the organization through their statements. Assembly elections are due in the state next year and the BJP is trying its level best to retain power. On one hand, while the organization is engaged in ground preparation, on the other hand, the state government is busy in winning the hearts of the common voters.

Where the govt. and the organization are trying to strengthen their hold among the workers and the gen-



eral public, many leaders are creating a problem in the party. MLAs Ajay Vishnoi and Narayan Tripathi have raised questions several times and are not missing out on openly challenging them. Meanwhile, Deepak Joshi has written a letter to Prime

Minister Narendra Modi regarding irregularities in housing construction at Badli in Dewas district.

While these BJP leaders are working to put the party in trouble, they are also giving issues to the Congress to encircle the government and the organization while sitting. The party is keeping an eye on every activity of these leaders, but is hesitating to take a decision.

Political analysts believe that the voice rising from within the party is becoming a bigger challenge for the BJP than the Congress. This situation is going to weaken the efforts of the BJP with the help of which it is preparing to win the next elections. If the party does not stop them in time, then it will not be surprising if the number of such people increases by the time the elections come.

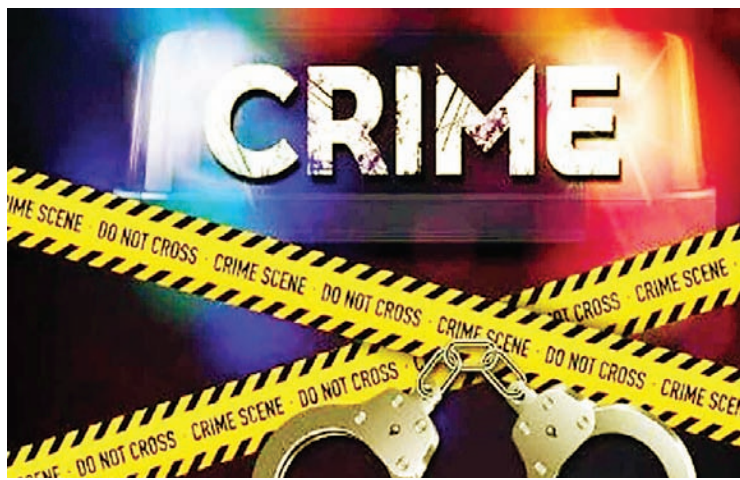
YOUTH KILLED OVER MONEY DISPUTE IN GWALIOR, 2 ARRESTED

Team Absolute | Gwalior

Two persons were arrested in connection with the murder of a 22-year-old youth over money dispute in Madhya Pradesh's Gwalior district, the police said on Thursday.

The youth was identified as Prakhar Parmar (22), a resident of Satyam Tower in Alkapuri locality under University police station limits in the city. His father runs colleges in the district. The incident occurred on Tuesday when Prakhar went to take money from a Municipal Corporation employee Karan Verma in the afternoon.

When Pakhar did not return home till late evening, his father Prashant Parmar informed the Police about the matter. He told police that he had given around 9 lakh to his acquaintance Karan Verma, an employee of the Municipal Corporation, for permission to construct a building. But



Karan neither provided permission nor returned the money. He was demanding his money back from Karan for the last month.

On Tuesday afternoon, Karan

called Prakhar and asked him to collect the money. Prakhar went to the Municipal Corporation office to collect money from Karan, but Prakhar did not return till late evening, his

phone was also switched off. After that his father informed the police.

Gwalior Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Amit Sanghi said, "The accused had taken Prakhar in his car from the Municipal Corporation office along with his two accomplices. The accused took him outside the city and shot him dead. After that they put the body inside the trunk of the car and reached near the highway of Sipri Bazar police station area of Jhansi and burned the body."

"The main accused Karan Verma had to return Rs 9 lakh. The Parmar family used to ask for the money again and again. Due to which, the main accused conspired the murder along with his accomplices. The main accused and one of his accomplices have been arrested whereas one is absconding. Efforts are on to nab him soon. The police also recovered the murder weapon and the car involved in the crime," SSP Sanghi added.

Accused involved in leopard hunting arrested

Team Absolute | Bhopal

M.P. State Tiger Strike Force Indore arrested the warrant and main accused Mohanlal Dabi involved in the hunting of a wild animal leopard in the forest area Indore and presented it in the court. The accused has been sent to the district jail Indore in judicial custody by the court. A reward of five thousand rupees was declared on the main accused. A criminal case is also registered against the accused in the past.

Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (Wildlife) J.S. Chouhan told that on July 10, 2020, on receiving information about an injured leopard, the forest staff was rescued and brought to Van Vihar Bhopal. 46 pieces of iron pellets were found in the leopard's brain and other parts.

After the investigation of the case by Tiger Reserve, 4 accused involved in the hunting of



the injured leopard were earlier arrested and presented in the court and sent to jail. Live wild animal turtle, 6 jaws of wild boar and 2 guns were seized from the arrested accused. A total of 6 accused in the case have been arrested and sent to jail. Further investigation is on in the case.

HOME AWAY



Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan in Puduchery. He planted Gulmohar sapling there. Notably, MP CM is daily planting a sapling since over one and a half year, no matter where he is.

VHP's three-day meeting begins in Indore

Team Absolute | Indore

The three-day meeting of the Central Management Committee and Board of Trustees of the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) began on Friday at the Agrasen Mahasabha Bhawan in Indore. Addressing the press conference, VHP General Secretary Milind Parande said that the meeting will discuss topics like freeing temples from government control, religious conversion, love jihad, Muslim infiltration, population imbalance, increasing Islamic jihadi violence and stopping cow slaughter. To deal with anti-Hindu forces, we will plan to increase the pace of works that promote social harmony and unity. In which the present condition of the Hindus of the country, the challenges facing them will also have measures to deal with them. He further said that the meeting is also considering passing a resolution on the subject of religious extremism, challenges and solutions. Apart from these, other contemporary topics related to Hindu society will also be discussed in the meeting.

Milind Parande said that VHP's public



relations program has been successful and more than 72 lakh people have joined it. We have reached 1,23,000 villages under the mass contact programme. We will form committees in more than one lakh villages by the time VHP completes 60 years in 2024. More than 350 provincial level and above officials from India and abroad are participating in the meeting. Workers from different states will discuss the work done in the last six months as well as inform about the current situation of Hindu society.

For the vigilance of the Hindu society, Bajrang Dal's Shaurya Yatra program was completed at thousands of places in the country in the month of December. Big programs have also been organized at thousands of places to expose the conspiracy of religious conversion.

He further said that in the last six months more than 2 thousand small and big projects have been started in the service of Vishwa Hindu Parishad. We will plan new service works in the field of education, service, health, employment and women empowerment, especially for the deprived sections of the Hindu society.



'IT'S UTTER LOVE'

Lily Collins 'loves' being compared to Sarah Jessica Parker on 'Emily in Paris'

Los Angeles | Agencies

Actress Lily Collins "loves" being compared to Sarah Jessica Parker on the Netflix show, 'Emily in Paris'. The 33-year-old actress takes on the title role of Emily in the Netflix hit about an ambitious marketing executive who relocates from Chicago to the French capital and said that her role is like that of stylish New York columnist Carrie Bradshaw, who was played by Sarah Jessica Parker, 57, in the cult 1990s series 'Sex and the City' as well as its spin-off 'And Just Like That', reports femalefirst.co.uk.

Lily told E! News: "That is one that I will always take with utter love. I just love Carrie Bradshaw. I love Sarah Jessica. We both are very much fashion shows and they celebrate the cities in which they film, Paris and New York. They're characters unto themselves, the fashion and the city."

Meanwhile, the 'Les Miserables' actress recently revealed she was determined to develop her understanding of "French culture" with her starring role in the series.

Asked what she most enjoyed about her character's journey during season three of the show, Lily explained: "For me, I was excited to ground myself more in the French culture, whether that be the language, the fashion, or just feeling a deeper sense of home within the city. And I was excited that the show, itself, leans more into the comedy among the characters, as opposed to all being about Emily's fish-out-of-water experience."

"It allowed me, as Emily, to feel a little bit more grounded, as a character, knowing that the comedy wasn't just about me and my experiences and the culture clash. It was more about the comedy that each of the actors brings to the characters."

was more about the comedy that each of the actors brings to the characters."



It would be 'natural progression' to move into directing: Idris Elba

Los Angeles | Agencies

While still passionate about his career in front of the camera, Hollywood star Idris Elba believes it would be a "natural progression" to move into directing. The 'Luther' actor is looking ahead to the possibility of juggling more than one role on set at a time, citing Denzel Washington and Jon Favreau as inspirations, reports aceshowbiz.com.

"I love acting but I feel like there's much more to offer as a director, as a writer and a producer perhaps. There are characters and roles that I haven't done yet and I still want to do those, but the truth is that I'd probably like to do that as an offering as a film director/actor," he said.

"There are some incredible people like Jon Favreau, like Denzel who have acted and directed, and directed themselves in movies and I feel like that's a natural progression for an actor."

"It turns out that it's 30 years I've been in the game already, it still feels like only yesterday. I love acting, don't get me wrong, but there are other things that I like to do," the actor adds.

Idris prides himself in always taking on different kinds of roles. He said in a recent podcast interview: "I've tried not to repeat myself as an actor, there's only one 'Luther' character, there's only one 'Beasts of No Nation' character. I try not to repeat anything."

And the 50-year-old star is also hoping to do more with his music career.

'I WASN'T HAPPY BEFORE BUT TRIED TO PRETEND I WAS'

Los Angeles | Agencies

Ola Jordan showed off her 3.5 stone weight loss as she slipped back into green bikini on Friday, five months after that 'unflattering' holiday snap husband James. The dancer, 40, looked sensational in the two-piece as she showcased her new toned figure in comparison snaps on Instagram, reports dailymail.co.uk. The former Strictly Come Dancing professional has bounced back into shape with husband James and they have been flaunting their combined 6.5 stone weight loss after gaining weight following the birth of daughter Ella, their only child, in 2020. Ola previously admitted she was 'horrified' and 'disappointed' at what she perceived as her 'mum bod' after sharing an unflattering holiday photo with Instagram followers in July.

Ola Jordan dons green bikini as she flaunts dramatic 3.5st weight loss - after THAT 'unflattering' holiday snap.



Miley Cyrus' New Year's resolution

Los Angeles | Agencies

She will lead the mid-night countdown with co-host Dolly Parton during Miley's New Year's Eve Party on NBC this coming Saturday.

But ahead of the festivities, Miley Cyrus shared her big resolution for 2023 with Today's Hoda Kotb, as obtained by PEOPLE.

"I guess my resolution would really be - my instinct is very loud, but I'm not a great listener sometimes," admitted the 30-year-old hit-maker.

She was inspired by a quote used by Dolly's longtime husband Carl

Thomas Dean, reports dailymail.co.uk.

"Dolly was telling me, her husband says, 'You're not hard of hearing. You're hard of listening.'"

"And I guess that would kind of be my resolution, to not just listen to myself, but listen to others," Miley explained.

Miley - who rose to superstardom as a teen on Disney's hit TV series Hannah Montana before coming into her own as a multi-platinum recording artist - turned 30 this past November.



'Fight Club' saga

Courtney Love says she lost role after rejecting Brad Pitt's Kurt Cobain movie.

Los Angeles | Agencies

Singer and actress Courtney Love joined Marc Maron for an interview on the "WTF" podcast and said that David Fincher hired her to star opposite Brad Pitt and Edward Norton in 1999's 'Fight Club'. Love said she had won the part of Marla Singer, eventually played by Helena Bonham Carter in the film, reports Variety.

The "Hole" frontwoman was fresh off strong reviews for 'The People vs. Larry Flynt' at the time. According to Love, she got fired from 'Fight Club' after rejecting Brad Pitt's pitch for a Kurt Cobain movie. Love said she "went nuclear" on Pitt after he and director Gus Van Sant approached her about making a Kurt Cobain movie. Love and Cobain married in 1992 and they were together until his death in 1994 at age 27.

Van Sant eventually made the Cobain-inspired drama 'Last Days', starring Michael Pitt, but Love said this wasn't the project Pitt and the director wanted her approval on.

"I wouldn't let Brad play Kurt," Love



said. "I went nuclear. I don't do Faust. Who the f**k do you think are?"

Love added that she told Pitt the following: "I don't know if I trust you and I don't know that your movies are for profit. They're really good social justice movies, but if you don't get me, you kind of don't get Kurt, and I don't feel

like you do, Brad."

It was after rejecting Pitt's Cobain movie that Love was then fired from 'Fight Club', she said. According to Love, Norton broke the news to her. The two were romantic partners at the time. "He starts sobbing," Love told Maron. "And he was like, 'I don't have the power.'"

James Corden auditioned for 'Lord of the Rings' to play Samwise, got two callbacks

Los Angeles | Agencies

Actor Sean Astin's performance as Samwise Gamgee represents the beating heart of Peter Jackson's 'The Lord of the Rings' trilogy. It's an iconic performance for many fans, capped off by Astin's powerful Mount Doom speech in which Samwise tells Frodo: "I can't carry it for you, but I can carry you!" Suffice to say, Jackson's 'Rings' movies would feel far different without Astin in the role, reports Variety.

Perhaps that's why 'Lord of the Rings' fans are buzzing over James Corden's recent revelation that he sought out the role of Samwise.

Corden appeared on the "Happy Sad Confused" podcast and was if the rumors were true that 'The Lord of the Rings' was one of his first major film auditions. "Yeah," Corden answered, adding that his audition was "not good". "Every single person in London auditioned for 'Lord of the Rings'. Everybody," Corden said. "I auditioned for Samwise. I was doing it! The accent and everything! 'Mr Frodo'."

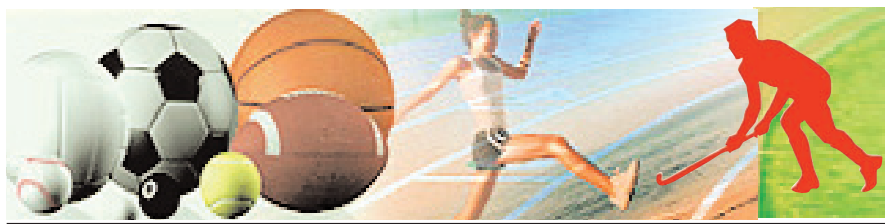
"Two of my other friends went in," Corden added, "and we all got called back the next day, and then we got called back the next day. And then none of us got called back after that!"



ABSOLUTE PIC OF THE DAY



Chantel Jeffries



PELE: THE KING MAY HAVE DIED, BUT HIS MEMORIES WILL BE ALIVE FOREVER!



Mumbai | Agencies

Football's original G.O.A.T., the man who made football 'the beautiful game', global sporting hero and Brazil's former sports minister, Edson Arantes do Nascimento, who, as 'Pele', overawed the world and became the sport's original legend, passed away on Thursday night in Sao Paulo, Brazil, losing his battle against cancer, at the age of 82.

He was called by various names such as 'Gasolina', 'The Black Pearl' and 'O Rei' (The King), but it was as 'Pele' that he has left the world as the most cherished and loved sports star it has ever seen. Pele passed away in a private hospital in Sao Paulo, Brazil, after spending nearly a month, battling complications related to advanced cancer. He had a colon tumour removed in September 2021 and neither his family, nor doctors, specified whether it had spread to other organs. He was recently under "elevated care" related to kidney and cardiac dysfunction. Labelled "the greatest" by FIFA, football's world governing body, named Athlete of the Century by the International Olympic Committee in 1999 and included in TIME Magazine's list of 100 most important people of the 20th century, Pele was in 2000 voted World Player of the Century by the International Federation of Football History & Statistics (IFFHS) and was one of the two joint winners of the FIFA Player of the Century award.

But for millions of fans of the game around the globe, Pele was the first person who made football 'Jogo Bonito', "the beautiful game".

MOHUN BAGAN VETERANS SHARES MEMORIES OF PLAYING AGAINST PELE IN 1977

Kolkata: The year 1977 is memorable for various people for various reasons.

The year 1977 was memorable for football fans in Kolkata and a team from the iconic Mohun Bagan club as they saw football royalty in person as the legendary Pele, the three-time World Cup winner, visited the City of Joy for an exhibition match.

Pele visited Calcutta (now Kolkata) as part of the New York Cosmos team and played an exhibition match against a team from Mohun Bagan, giving fans the opportunity of watching the emperor of world football in action. The exhibition match happened because of the initiative of the then assistant general secretary of Mohun Bagan, Late Dhiren Dey, who later became the president of the club and was always considered the most iconic football administrator of the Kolkata football circuit. The match was played in the afternoon of September 24, 1977, at Eden Gardens, which had not been converted into an exclusive cricket field. Bidesh Bose, one of the players for Mohun Bagan in that

unforgettable exhibition match and currently a Trinamool Congress legislator, said that because of the muddy condition of the Eden Gardens on that day, the insurers of Cosmos Club initially refused to allow the players to participate in the match.

Right-stopper-back Subrata Bhattacharya, who captained Mohun Bagan in that match, said Cosmos were lucky to draw that match as they equalised on a move that should have been ruled off-side.

"The second goal in the match that Cosmos scored was clearly from offside. Even during the match, Pele acknowledged that. But since it was an exhibition match, we did not make any issue of it. After the match, there was a party for the players of both teams. As the captain of Mohun Bagan then, I went to Pele's room in the hotel to escort him to the party room. When I knocked at his door seeming me, he said, "Come in captain." Such memories can never fade, said Bhattacharya.

He will remain the King for them forever.

King Pele: A glorious life of setting and breaking records

New Delhi: Here is a look at the records and accolades that came Pele's way during his career and beyond:

FIFA World Cup Winner: 1958, 1962, 1970.

FIFA World Cup Best Young Player: 1958.

FIFA World Cup Golden Ball (Best Player): 1970.

FIFA World Cup Silver Ball: 1958.

France Football's Ballon d'Or: 1958, 1959, 1960, 1961, 1963, 1964, 1970.

Campeonato Brasileiro Serie A: Winner in 1961, 1962, 1963, 1964, 1965, 1968.

Copa Libertadores: Winner in 1962, 1963.

Elected Citizen of the World by the United Nations: 1977.

International Peace Award: 1978.

FIFA Order of Merit: 198.

Elected UNESCO's Champion of Sport: 1993.

Winner of France Football's World Cup Top 100 in 1930 to 1990: 1994.

Football Player of the Century, elected by France Football's Ballon d'Or Winners: 1999.

TIME Magazine: One of the 100 Most Important People of the 20th Century: 1999.

Greatest Player of the 20th Century, named by World Soccer: 1999.

Athlete of the Century, elected by International Olympic Committee (IOC): 1999.

World Player of the Century, voted by the IFFHS: 2000.

South American Player of the Century, voted by the IFFHS: 2000.

FIFA Player of the Century: 2000.

Laureus Lifetime Achievement Award: 2000.

Global Citizen Award, by the World Economic Forum: 2018.

Ballon d'Or Dream Team: 2020.

Knight of the Order of Rio Branco: 1967.

Commander of the Order of Rio Branco (after he scored the 1,000th goal): 1969.

RECORDS SET BY PELE

Most goals for Brazil's national football team: 77 (95, including unofficial friendlies). Tied with Neymar.

Most goals in the Intercontinental Cup: 7.

Most goals for Santos: 643 (in 659 competitive games).

Most goals scored in a single Campeonato Paulista season: 58 (in 38 competitive games, 1958).

Most goals in a calendar year (recognised by FIFA): 127 (1959).

Most hat-tricks in world football: 92.

Most career goals in world football (including friendlies): 1,283 (in 1,363 games).

Most FIFA World Cup winners' medals: 3 (1958, 1962, 1970).

Youngest winner of a FIFA World Cup: Aged 17 years and 249 days (1958).

Youngest goal scorer in a FIFA World Cup match: Aged 17 years and 239 days (Brazil vs Wales, 1958).

Youngest player to score a hat-trick in a FIFA World Cup: Aged 17 years and 244 days (Brazil vs France, 1958).

Youngest player to play in a FIFA World Cup Final: Aged 17 years and 249 days (1958).

Youngest goal scorer in a FIFA World Cup Final: Aged 17 years and 249 days (Brazil vs Sweden, 1958).

Youngest player to start a knockout match at a FIFA World Cup.

Youngest player to reach five FIFA World Cup knockout stage goals.

Youngest goal scorer for Brazil's national football team: Aged 16 years and nine months (Brazil vs Argentina, 1957).

The first player to score in three successive FIFA World Cups.



Premier League and EFL players to wear black armbands in Pele's honour

London: Premier League and English Football League clubs will wear black armbands and hold a minute's applause to honour Brazil football legend Pele.

Tributes have poured in for the legendary footballer from across the world and Brazil has declared three days of national mourning.

The Premier League's next round begins with two matches on Friday and concludes on Sunday, with all 10 games paying tribute.

"In tribute to Pele, Premier League clubs will remember his contribution to football at matches taking place from Friday 30 December-Sunday 1 January (Matchweek 18) by holding a minute's applause prior to kick-offs. Players and match officials will wear black armbands," the league said in a statement.

On the other hand, the EFL said it would hold a minute's applause before EFL fixtures on Friday and on January 1 and 2.

"In memory of the life of Pele, there will be a minute's applause before EFL fixtures today and on 1 and 2 January, while players will wear black armbands," it said.

Meanwhile, football's world governing body FIFA has lowered flags at its headquarters in Switzerland to half-mast for Pele "as a symbol of mourning and respect".

Apart from leagues and governing bodies, the managers also paid respect, with Manchester City boss Pep Guardiola saying Pele made football "a better place" for his ability to give people an emotional connection to the sport.

Newcastle manager Eddie Howe hailed the Brazil great as an "absolute giant" of football.

LA LIGA LEAGUE: Atletico Madrid returns to action with a win



Madrid (Spain) | Agencies

Atletico Madrid moved back into the top four in La Liga with a 2-0 win at home to bottom-of-the-table Elche as they returned to action after the five-week World Cup break.

Goals from Joao Felix and Alvaro Morata gave Atletico three points against a rival that has not won all season with just four points but who gave Diego Simeone's side plenty of problems in the match.

Elche were looking comfortable in the first half until the last minute when Gonzalo Verdu was shown a direct red card for bringing down Morata on the edge of the area, with the VAR advising that he had frustrated a clear scoring chance.

Things were evened up seven minutes after the break when Mario Hermoso was sent off for a second yellow card, but in the 55th minute, Antoine Griezmann and Joao Felix combined for the

latter to score a simple finish.

Morata doubled the lead in the 73rd minute with a shot that took a slight deflection to take it past Elche keeper Edgar Badia.

Betis and Athletic Club Bilbao drew an intense game between two sides battling to qualify for Europe, 0-0, with Athletic's Spain international keeper, Unai Simon making three saves to deny Betis in a game in which both sides had their moments of control, reports Xinhua.

Betis ended the game with 10 men after Luiz Felipe was sent off for a bad challenge on Iker Muniain.

Camello latched onto a poor backpass to open the scoring in the first minute, while Isi scored with a powerful shot in the 61st minute.

Valentin Castellano levelled for Girona just after the half-hour after he had been fouled, while Samuel Saiz netted another penalty 20 minutes from time after a questionable handball.

PAK VS NZ TEST SERIES: BAD LIGHT HALTS NEW ZEALAND'S WIN AGAINST PAKISTAN, FORCES A DRAW

Karachi | Agencies

The first Test ended in a draw as bad light halted New Zealand's victory bid and denied them a chance to go 1-0 up in the two-Test series after five half-centuries by Imam-ul-Haq, Saud Shakeel and Sarfraz Ahmed helped Pakistan to declare and set a target of 138 in 15 overs for the visitors on the fifth day.

Resuming the fifth and last day at 77 for two and still needing 97 runs to make New Zealand bat again, Pakistan looked down and out when they slipped to 206 for seven (32 runs ahead) with 49 overs still remaining in the match. However, the eighth and ninth wicket partnerships between Saud Shakeel (55 not out) and Mohammad Wasim Junior (43), and Saud and Mir Hamza, respectively helped Pakistan to declare their second innings at 311 for eight.

Sarfraz's 53 came off 76 balls and included seven fours, while Imam was unlucky to miss his fourth Test century when he was dismissed for



96. His 206-ball knock was laced with 10 fours and a six.

For New Zealand, Ish Sodhi recorded his maiden five-fer while finishing with career-best figures of 6/86, while wicketkeeper Tom Blundell accounted for three Pakistan batters in the second innings to finish with seven dismissals in the match.

Brief scores: Pakistan 438 (Babar Azam 161, Agha Salman 103; Tim Southee 3-69) & 311/8 d (Imam ul Haq 96, Saud Shakeel 55*, Sarfraz Ahmed 53; Ish Sodhi 6-86) drew with New Zealand 612/9 d (Kane Williamson 200 not out, Tom Latham 113, Devon Conway 92, Ish Sodhi 65; Abrar Ahmed 5-205) & 61/1

Smriti Mandhana nominated for 'ICC Women's Cricketer of the Year 2022 award'

New Delhi: India vice-captain Smriti Mandhana on Friday earned a nomination for the ICC Women's Cricketer of the Year award for 2022.

Smriti had been honoured with the Rachael Heyhoe-Flint Trophy for winning the women's cricketer of the year award in 2018 and 2021. Smriti continued her rich vein of form in international cricket for the second year running, finishing as India's highest run-scorer across formats. The left-handed opener showed her incredible prowess in the white-ball formats and was the highest run-getter in T20Is (594 runs) and the second-highest in ODIs (696 runs) for India in 2022.

Smriti made her presence felt at both the major tournaments this year -- the Women's ODI World Cup and the Commonwealth Games. In the latter, she was one of the driving forces in India going through to the final and bagging the silver medal in the first-ever Women's cricket event at the Commonwealth Games.



WOMEN'S HOCKEY

Indian team returns to national camp ahead of new season

Team Absolute | New Delhi

With some key tournaments ahead in 2023, the Indian women's hockey team is all set to come back to the National Camp to kick off their preparations for the events, building up on the good show in the previous year.

The team is high on confidence after recently winning the inaugural edition of the 2022 FIH Women's Nations Cup in Spain and securing qualification for the 2023-24 FIH Hockey Women's Pro League, Hockey India informed in a release on Friday. Hockey India have named 33 play-

ers as the Core Probables Group for the National Camp beginning January 2 to 13 when the players will be putting in the hard yards to further fine-tune their strategies and combinations, starting with the upcoming tour of South Africa beginning January 14 and going on till January 28.

The core group for the national camp includes the experienced goalkeeper Savita, Rajani Etimaru, Bichu Devi Kharibam and Bansari Solanki. Among the defenders named for the camp are Deep Grace Ekka, Gurjit Kaur, Nikki Pradhan, Ishika Chaudhary, Akshita Abaso Dhakale, Udita, Reet and Mahima Chaudhary.





Mouni Roy

in black bikini; Faces body shaming

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actress Mouni Roy, who is currently holidaying in the UAE for the New Years, has been brutally trolled and body shamed over her latest picture on social media.

Mouni took to Instagram, where she shared a photograph of herself dressed in a black bikini with the ocean in the backdrop.

She captioned the image: "ME TO THE SEA x." Social media users took to the comment section and trolled her. One said: "Can someone feed her some food plz." "Trust me mam... You are looking so weird... Itna bhi maat diet Koro... Lag tahe Hawa se ur jayogi," another wrote.

One even compared Mouni to a video game character.

The user wrote: "Animated pubg girl."

A netizen called her a skeleton.

"Skelton lag rahi hai isshe acha to common ladki achi lagti h."

On the work front, Mouni was last seen on screen in Ranbir Kapoor and Alia Bhatt-starrer 'Brahmastra Part One: Shiva.' She will next be seen in Sanjay Dutt's 'The Virgin Tree'. She was also seen in a music video titled 'Gatavidhi' with Yo Yo Honey Singh.



Team Absolute | Mumbai

Bollywood actress Urvashi Rautela has shared a cryptic post after learning about Indian wicketkeeper-batsman Rishabh Pant's horrific car accident. Urvashi took to Instagram, where she shared a picture of herself dressed in an all white dancer outfit. She captioned it: "Praying" and added a white heart and a white pigeon in the caption. Early on Friday morning, Pant suffered multiple injuries when his car collided with a road divider and caught fire on the Delhi-Dehradun highway. He has been admitted to Max Hospital in Dehradun after being initially taken to Saksham Hospital Multispecialty and Trauma Centre. Pant was on his way to his hometown Roorkee in the state of Uttarakhand from New Delhi.

Pant has suffered two cuts on his forehead, apart from a ligament tear in his right knee, abrasion injuries on back, and hurt his right wrist, ankle, and toe, said Jay Shah, the Honorary Secretary of the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI), in an official statement on Friday.

Pant was part of the India Test squad that sealed a 2-0 series victory over Bangladesh a couple of days ago in Dhaka, where he hit a match-winning 93 in the first innings of the second Test at the Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium. He was not named in India's T20I and ODI squads for matches against Sri Lanka starting on January 3.

It was in 2018, when dating rumours about Pant and Urvashi started doing the rounds.

The two were spotted entering and leaving restaurants. However, a year later, Pant dismissed all rumours and shared that he is in a relationship with girlfriend Isha Negi.

Urvashi Rautela prayed for 'Rishabh's speedy recovery'



Tara Sutaria wrapped up shooting of her upcoming thriller

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Bollywood actress Tara Sutaria has wrapped up shooting for her upcoming thriller titled 'Apurva', which also stars Dhairya Karwah. The official Instagram page of the production house Cine1Studios shared a picture from the film's set and captioned it: "Teamwork is the best work. Ending 2022 on a high note as we wrap our film Apurva."

Directed by Nikhil Nagesh Bhat, the film will showcase the gripping story of a girl who survives a dangerous night using her wits and strength in this high-stakes game of life and death. 'Apurva' is an edge-of-the-seat thriller and will see Tara Sutaria in an avatar never seen before, based on a story that will keep audiences hooked right to the very end. Along with Tara Sutaria the film also stars Abhishek Banerjee and Rajpal Yadav in pivotal roles. Apurva is produced by Star Studios and Murad Khetani- Cine1 Studios, and is directed by Nikhil Nagesh Bhat.

Only a true comedian can make people laugh: Zakir Khan



Team Absolute | Mumbai

Comedian Zakir Khan revealed how during his first performance on stage, he was asked to leave within two minutes of his act. He added that it is never easy to make the audience laugh and there are a lot of challenges in front of a comedian to perform well.

He shared: "When I went on the stage to perform for the first time, I was removed from the stage within two minutes. In

front of your friends and family, you might be funny because they know the context of your joke and could relate to it, but when it comes to a completely unknown audience, it is a huge task to narrate a story and make them laugh and only a true comedian can do that."

Zakir became popular after winning India's Best Stand-Up Comedian competition and later he also released three-hour-long stand-up comedy special shows like 'Haq Se Single', 'Kaksha Gyarvi', and 'Tathastu'.

"During my childhood, we used to get CDs of Raju bhai, Johnny bhai, and their comedians and I used to love watching them. Then during my school days, the 'Laughter Challenge' started and whenever anyone would try to be funny my friends would pull his/her leg asking them to try the show as a joke. I would religiously watch that show and imagined how it would feel to perform like the comedians on the show. Watching the show made me think of it as a cakewalk, but later when I tried for real I understood how hard it is," he said.

Zakir then talked about his new video on ladies' make-up and how just after knowing about a moisturizer he got the idea to make the video. He said: "Make-up is a mad topic and such a big universe; I went crazy when I got to know about a mere moisturizer. I don't have a sister so neither sensitivity nor make-up knocked on our doors."

He also added that YouTuber and internet personality Kusha Kapila also helped him while making the video.

"So I got help from my friends and learned about the make-up products and their applications. That's how I learned about it and I even asked Kusha to help me understand how to apply kajal," he concluded.



Vicky Kaushal is blessed with a 'beautiful problem'!

Team Absolute | Mumbai

National crush Vicky Kaushal made a shocking revelation, which he tags as a "beautiful problem", on television that he can lose weight by eating junk food such as pizzas and burgers. He talked about the issue of not gaining weight on the sets of Kaun Banega Crorepati 14 (KBC) with host Amitabh Bachchan.

The channel shared a promo on Instagram, where Vicky was seen telling Amitabh: "Sir mujhe na ek bohot khoosurat problem hai. Mera wazan nahi badhta sir." Big was shocked to hear this. Vicky continued: "Main burger pizze kha ke wazan ghata sakta hun." Big B asked him: "Wazan badhane k liye phir kya karte hai aap?"

Vicky replied: "Phir sir bohot boring sa khana khana padhta hai. Jaese ki sab kuch grilled khana hai." Kiara asked: "For gaining weight?" and Vicky agreed. She looked at Amitabh as he had a confused look.

Vicky continued: "Log gym jaate hai wazan ghatane k liye mujhe gym jana padhta hai wazan badhane k liye." When Amitabh replied: "Yeh toh ulti baat hogayi ekdum", Vicky smiled and said: "Lekin sir Punjabiyo k liye bohot acchi problem hai."

INSTAGRAM PIC OF THE DAY



Elena