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ADANI GROUP STOCKS' FALL CONTINUES AFTER ALLEGATIONS BY HINDENBURG RESEARCH

BLOODBATH IN STOCKS

The Indian equities market continued to extend its free fall. The benchmark indices started the day lower and deepened the cuts during the day. Sensex erased its psychological mark of 60,000, which was down 966.85 points while Nifty 50 slipped below the 17,600 mark down by 300 points. BSE Sensex fell by 874.16 points, or 1.45 per cent, at 59,330.90, while Nifty 50 was at 17,604.35, down 287.60 points, or 1.61 per cent.

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Adani group stocks continued to remain under pressure on Friday, falling up to 20 per cent in morning trade, after the US-based investment research firm Hindenburg Research made damaging allegations.

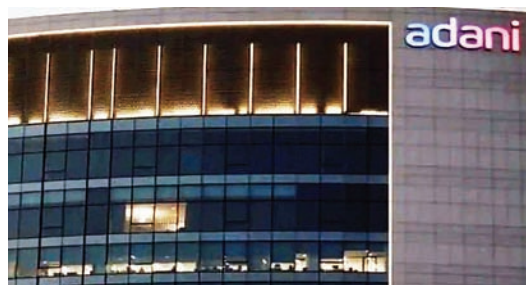
Shares of Adani Total Gas plummeted 19.65 per cent, Adani Transmission tumbled 19 per cent, Adani Green Energy plunged 15.50 per cent and Adani Enterprises tanked 6.19 per cent on the BSE.

Also, Adani Ports and Special Economic Zone fell 5.31 per cent, Adani Wilmar dipped 5 per cent and Adani Power declined 4.99 per cent.

In the broader market, the 30-share BSE benchmark plunged by 1,106 points or 1.84 per cent to trade at 59,098.37 in afternoon session due to heavy selling in financials, banking, oil and IT stocks.

Led by Tata Motors and Bajaj Auto, the BSE Auto index bucked the trend and was the only sectoral index to trade in the green in morning session.

Tata Motors was the lead gainer among Sensex shares rising by 5.14 per cent as the auto maker was back in black in the December quarter after two years. Bajaj Auto jumped 6 per cent while the BSE Auto index was marginally up at 29,619.19. The Adani Group on Thursday said it is examining legal options to take "punitive action" against Hindenburg Research for its "reckless" attempt to



SENSEX DOWN BY 1,200 PTS, NIFTY NEAR 17,500

The BSE Sensex plunged 1.93 percent, or 1,160 points, to 59,045, while the Nifty50 tanked 2.1 percent, or 375 points, to 17,517.

The broader markets were also caught in the bear trap with the BSE Midcap and Smallcap indices declining 1.5 percent and 2.5 percent, respectively as breadth was largely in the favour of sellers. Nearly 5 shares declined for every share rising on the BSE.

Most experts believe the Budget will take a balanced approach towards fiscal consolidation and economic growth while focusing more on capital expenditure on infrastructure (including defence, railway, roads etc), widening production-linked incentive schemes for more sectors, boosting rural demand and divestment targets.

sabotage a mega share sale at the conglomerate's flagship firm - a statement that the US activist investor responded by saying it stands by its report that alleged "brazen" market manipulation and accounting fraud by the group. "The maliciously mischievous, unresearched report published by Hindenburg Research on January 24, 2023, has adversely affected the Adani Group, our shareholders and investors. The volatility in Indian stock markets created by the report is of great concern and has led to unwanted anguish for Indian citizens," Adani Group's lead head Jatin Jalundhwala said in a statement.

The report and its unsubstantiated contents were designed to have a deleterious effect on the share values of Adani Group companies as Hindenburg Research, by their own admission, is positioned to benefit from a slide in Adani shares, he said.

India could emerge as major power next year

Team Absolute | New Delhi

India is slowly emerging as an economic and military power whose ascension affects everyone, Geopolitical Futures said in a report.

It has one of the fastest-growing major economies -- certainly among comparably developed and similarly sized economies. It must now be included with nations that influence the global system, the report said.

India's national strategy is to balance between greater powers, particularly Russia and the US, a practice that will inevitably create tensions inside a country that is famously variegated.

India will, therefore, grow in fits and starts as it manages its relationships with historical adversaries and skews ties with traditional allies, the report said.

New Delhi will, for example, enhance economic and



industrial cooperation with Russia to balance against China. There have always been questions as to when India would emerge as a great power. Next year seems the moment, the report said.

The central issue this year will be the ongoing spasm of economic dysfunction, due in equal parts to the war in Ukraine, post-pandemic recovery efforts, and the more banal aspects of ordinary business cycles.

These problems are compounded by the dramatic economic crisis in China, its

effects inevitably transmitting throughout the world by virtue of China's economic weight, the report said.

Trans-national, multifaceted economic crises like these take years to resolve, and in their resolution, they will generate political consequences within countries and between them. This phenomenon will intensify in 2023. And though the war in Ukraine is agonizing to observe, it is not the most important issue we face this year. That honour belongs to China, the report said.

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi accuses J&K administration of 'big security lapse'

Srinagar | Agencies

Senior Congress leader, Rahul Gandhi on Friday accused J&K administration of a 'big security lapse' at the Banihal tunnel. Addressing a press conference in Khanabal area of Anantnag district, Rahul said that when the Bharat Jodo Yatra crossed Banihal tunnel, there was not a single police man to manage or control the huge crowd that had come to receive him.

He said that his security guards advised him not to go ahead asserting that he cannot go against the advice of his security guards.

He said that he was hopeful that security arrangements would be elaborate for his future programmes those includes the culmination of the Yatra at Pradesh Congress Committee (PCC) office in Srinagar where he is scheduled to hoist the National flag on January 30 and address a public rally.

Senior Congress leader, Jairam Ramesh told the media that Rahul was supposed to walk 16 kms today, but he could walk only 4 kms due to breach of security.

He said that administration must ensure proper security for the Yatra in the days



ahead, especially when it reaches Srinagar. He alleged that due to the wrong policies of BJP and RSS, India as a nation is falling apart and the Yatra is an effort to bring people together.

ASHISH MISHRA WALKS OUT OF JAIL

Lakhimpur Kheri: Union Minister Ajay Mishra Teni's son, Ashish Mishra, an accused in the Lakhimpur Kheri violence case, has been released from jail on Friday evening.

His release comes after the Supreme Court granted him an interim bail of eight weeks. Ashish Mishra was taken out of the jail from the rear gate to avoid the media which had gathered at the jail.

He was taken to his residence. Family members refused to disclose where Ashish would relocate to after one week as per Supreme Court directives.

In its verdict, the Supreme Court had directed Mishra to leave Uttar Pradesh within one week after his release from jail.

Maha govt 'erases' Tipu Sultan's name from Mumbai playground

Team Absolute | Mumbai

In a potentially controversial move, the Maharashtra government has ordered the removal of Tipu Sultan, the ruler of the Mysore kingdom, now in Karnataka, given to a prominent suburban garden and playground by the erstwhile Maha Vikas Aghadi government.

Making the announcement, Bharatiya Janata Party's Mumbai Suburban District Guardian Minister M.P. Lodha said the decision was taken recently at a meeting with the Collector.

"Finally, victory of the Right! Ordered removal of



name Tipu Sultan from the park in Malad after considering protests by Sakal Hindu Samaj and demands by BJP MP Gopal Shetty," said Lodha.

He said in the DPDC meeting last year, the pre-

vious MVA government had decided to name the park after Tipu Sultan and the BJP had protested the move.

However, after dropping Tipu Sultan's name, the government of Chief Minister Eknath Shinde and Deputy CM Devendra Fadnis has not yet decided on its renaming, the Minister added.

The former MVA Minister Aslam Shaikh had revamped the park, included many amenities and sports facilities for the locals and it was named as 'Shaheed Tipu Sultan Playground' in January 2022, ahead of the BMC elections, which got postponed.

BBC docu screening

Several students detained at DU, CrPC Sec 144 imposed



New Delhi: The Delhi police has detained 24 students and imposed section 144 prohibiting gatherings outside the Faculty of Arts at Delhi University after scores of students gathered there to watch the controversial BBC documentary on Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Deputy Commissioner of Police (north), Sagar Singh Kalsi, said that at around 4 p.m. on Friday, some 20 persons came to the Arts Faculty gate to screen the banned BBC documentary.

"As it can cause disturbance of peace and tranquility in the area, they were asked to disperse from there. When they did not, they were peacefully detained. A total of 24 persons were detained. The situation is normal at present," said the DCP.

The call was given by the NSUI-KSU for the screening of the BBC documentary. Students said that the documentary was to be screened at Gate No. 4 of the Arts Department at 4 and 5 p.m. Delhi University authorities said that they have not given permission for the screening.

Some students however watched the documentary on their laptops and mobiles.

Covid immunity strengthens over time in vaccinated people

▶ THE RESEARCHERS MEASURED THE IMMUNE RESPONSE IN 96 GENERALLY HEALTHY EMPLOYEES AND FOUND THAT IT WAS UNIFORMLY STRONGER THE LONGER THE TIME PERIOD BETWEEN VACCINATION AND INFECTION. THE LONGEST INTERVAL MEASURED WAS 404 DAYS.

▶ THEIR FINDINGS SUGGEST THAT VACCINE BOOSTERS SHOULD BE SPACED NO MORE FREQUENTLY THAN A YEAR APART, AT LEAST AMONG HEALTHY PEOPLE, SAID THE STUDY.

▶ MOREOVER, THEIR FINDINGS INDICATE THAT THE MAGNITUDE, POTENCY, AND BREADTH OF THE HYBRID IMMUNE RESPONSE ALL INCREASED WITH THE LENGTH OF TIME BETWEEN VIRUS EXPOSURE - WHETHER THROUGH VACCINATION OR NATURAL INFECTION.



San Francisco | Agencies

The human body's immunity to Covid-19 appears to gather strength with more time between vaccination and infection, a new study has shown.

According to US-based Oregon Health & Science University (OHSU) study, it suggests people, who have

had Covid-19, have benefited from vaccination, even if they delayed it.

In this study, researchers measured the immune response in blood samples for people, who gained hybrid immunity by either getting vaccinated before a breakthrough infection or by getting vaccinated after contracting Covid-19.

"The immune system is learning. If you're going to amplify a response, what this study tells us is that you might want to boost that response after a longer period of learning rather than early after exposure," said co-senior author Marcel Curlin, MD, associate professor of medicine (infectious diseases) at OHSU School of Medicine.

Further, the researchers found that developing hybrid immunity was no different if someone was vaccinated after contracting Covid-19 or after contracting the disease after vaccination. Both groups developed an equally potent immune response.

In this study, the scientists suggest that so-called memory cells, which produce antibodies to neutralise viruses and their variants, are long-lasting. Even those who've delayed vaccination due to the SARS-CoV-2 virus stand to benefit from vaccination, according to the authors.

Worst of inflation, growth and currency crisis behind us: RBI Governor



Team Absolute | Mumbai

Reserve Bank of India governor Shaktikanta Das said the latest data-prints on growth, inflation and currency volatilities indicate that the worst for the financial markets and the world economy is behind us and that high interest rates for a longer period looks a distinct possibility going forward.

Though the global economy is projected to contract significantly in 2023, the worst, both in terms of growth and inflation, seems to be behind us. Lately, with some ebbing of Covid-related restrictions and cooling of inflation in various countries,

though still elevated, central banks have started what appears to be a pivot towards lower rate hikes or pauses, Das told the annual meeting of the Fixed Income Money Market and Derivatives Association of India (Fimmda) and the Primary Dealers Association of India (PDAI) held in Dubai on Friday.

But he put a caveat saying at the same time, central bankers continue to emphatically reiterate their resolve to bring inflation down closer to their respective targets. At the same time, high policy rates for a longer duration appear to be a distinct possibility, going forward.



INDIA ISSUES NOTICE TO PAKISTAN ON INDUS WATER TREATY: REPORTS

Team Absolute | New Delhi

India on Friday issued a notice to Pakistan, blaming it of "intransigence" on the implementation of the Indus Water Treaty (IWT), according to reports.

Reports quoting sources said that the "notice of modification" was sent to Islamabad on January 25.

India and Pakistan had signed the IWT in September 1960 after nine-year-long negotiations.

The World Bank was a signatory of the pact.

The IWT envisages a mechanism for cooperation and information exchange between the two countries regarding the use of waters of a number of rivers.

The reports quoted sources as saying that India has always been a steadfast supporter and a responsible partner in implementing the IWT in letter and spirit.

Pakistan's actions however have adversely impinged on the provisions of IWT and their implementation and forced India to issue an appropriate notice for modification of the pact,



reports quoting sources said.

In 2015, Pakistan had called for appointment of a neutral expert to its technical objections to Kishenganga and Ratle Hydro Electric Projects in India. In 2016 however, it retracted the request and sought a court of arbitration to adjudicate its objections.

This unilateral action by Pakistan was in contravention of the graded

mechanism of dispute settlement envisaged by Article IX of the IWT, reports quoting sources said.

Consequently India made a separate request for the matter to be referred to a neutral expert.

The initiation of two simultaneous processes on the same questions and the potential of their inconsistent or contradictory outcomes creates an

unprecedented and legally untenable situation, which risks endangering the IWT itself, reports quoting sources said. "The World Bank acknowledged this itself in 2016, and took a decision to 'pause' the initiation of two parallel processes and request India and Pakistan to seek an amicable way out," the sources were quoted as per reports.

Students are taking my test and I enjoy it: PM Modi

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Inaugurating the discussion on 'Pariksha Pe Charcha, 2023,' Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday said that crores of students in the country are taking his exam and he derived pleasure from it.

Modi said that it was perhaps the first time where Pariksha Pe Charcha was being held in such cold weather, since it is usually held in February.

Ashwini, a student of Madurai Kendriya Vidyalaya, asked a question on the stress and pressure to score high marks in exams. Similarly, other students asked questions on how to deal with their family's expectations if they do not score well in the exams.

Modi replied that it is natural for one's family to have expectations from their children but it is concerning if the expectations are a result of social status. He added that sometimes parents, despite knowing their child's capabilities



and their potential. Arushi Thakur, a student from Himachal Pradesh said, "It is not clear from where do I start studying during exams, I often feel that I've forgotten everything that I had studied."

Many other students asked the PM questions regarding time management and exam preparations. Modi said that one should know how to manage time in exams and in life. He said that students' work often piles up due to procrastination and not doing the work at the right time. He advised the students to analyse the amount of time they want to dedicate to a particular subject to avoid spending hours on the subject that they are familiar and good at. He added that the students should start reading the subject that they face difficulty with a fresh mind.

The PM said that the students can learn time management by observing the working style of their mothers and advised them to utilise their time properly for studies.

K'taka CM courts controversy after grabbing mic from religious seer

Bengaluru | Agencies

An incident of Karnataka Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai grabbing the microphone from a religious seer after the latter flagged Bengaluru's 'severe civic issues' came to light on Friday.

Photos and video of the incident, which took place during a religious event organised at a temple in the Garudacharpalya area of Bengaluru on Thursday, have gone viral on social media.

Eshwaranandapuri Swami from the Hosadurg Kanaka Peetha, while addressing the gathering, said that there is water-logging due to heavy rains at many places in Bengaluru.

"There is no permanent solution to this. I fail to understand why the authorities don't get into action and solve



these issues. Don't they understand what the problem is when it rains? Many Chief Ministers said they will find a permanent solution. But I won't agree with just assurances," the seer said.

At this point, a visibly upset Bommai grabbed the mic from the seer and started making clarifications.

"I don't give assurances just like that. The funds have been released and work is under progress. I don't make shallow promises. I will only assure you when something can be

done, otherwise I will say no," Bommai said.

The Chief Minister added that he does not fear anyone. "I am not like others," he said.

After getting the mic back from Bommai, the seer said he agreed with what the CM Bommai said, adding that this has been his experience too.

"CM Bommai has granted funds before making promises. He only makes concrete promises. I was about to tell this but he had taken the mic," he said.

Pune techie murder case

ALL ACCUSED INCLUDING HINDU GROUP LEADER ACQUITTED

Pune | Agencies

Nine years after the murder of an IT professional Mohsin Shaikh rocked Maharashtra, a Pune Sessions Court acquitted all 20 accused including the Hindu Rashtra Sena (HRS) President Dhananjay Desai, here on Friday.

Reading out the verdict on Friday, Pune Additional Sessions Judge S.B. Salunkhe said that the evidence brought on record was not strong enough to convict Desai and other co-accused and the prosecution had failed to prove its case beyond reasonable doubts, lawyer Sudhir Shah said for one of the accused.

"It was a conspiracy to frame me and the police were misused... I was innocent," Desai remarked briefly after the court verdict.

Shaikh, 28, had allegedly posted some objectionable content on social media pertaining to Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj, the late Balasaheb Thackeray and others, which resulted



in protests and violence in Unnatnagar and surroundings of Hadapsar, on June 2, 2014.

At that time, Shaikh, who hailed from Solapur, was returning home with his friend Riyaz A. Shendrare

after offering prayers in a mosque and was targeted by some motorcycle-borne men armed with hockey sticks, cricket bats, stones and other weapons, who created mayhem in the vicinity, attacking people and

properties. Seriously hurt in the attack by a cricket bat blow, Shaikh died while under treatment in hospital, and his brother Mobin Shaikh lodged an FIR.

MOTORCYCLIST DIES AFTER FALLING INTO A PIT IN GUJARAT

Rajkot | Agencies

A motorcyclist died after falling into a pit near Raiya circle in Rajkot on Friday.

The accident occurred when Harsh was proceeding towards his workplace.

Harsh's father Ashwin Davda alleged that he lost his son due to the "negligence" of municipal corporation.

Ashwin Davda told mediapersons that 30 to 45 minutes after Harsh left for office, he received a call by an unknown person informing that his son had suffered injury in accident.

Ashwin Davda further said, "When I reached, I saw my son's body lying on the road, 108 emergency ambulance doctors told me that my son died because of internal bleeding."

An eyewitness said Harsh Davda fell in the pit while overtaking another vehicle. "Construction work is going on in the pit, iron rod frames are fixed and it was lying open, there were no barri-



cades... had barricades been put around the pit, my son would not have died. Because of the Municipal Corporation's negligence, I lost my son," Ashwin Davda claimed.

Municipal Commissioner Amit Arora told mediapersons that city

engineers are asked to inquire into the accident. "However, as per my knowledge, caution tapes were pasted around the pit. If any negligence on contractor's side will be found, action will be taken against him," Arora assured.

'KISSA KURSI KA' AT R-DAY FUNCTION IN LUCKNOW

Lucknow: It was a 'Kissa Kursi Ka' that played out in Lucknow prior to the Republic Day parade.

Former minister Mohsin Raza arrived on the dais, following Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath.

The adjacent seat was occupied by minister Danish Azad Ansari, who stood up to greet the chief minister.

Mohsin Raza pushed the minister to another seat and occupied his seat in the front row. Danish Ansari hesitated for a moment but realizing the sensitivity of the occasion, he quietly moved away to the next seat. It was only later that a video clip of the incident went viral and Raza's behaviour was criticised, both within the BJP and outside it.

Delhi HC directs Kejriwal govt to set up one-stop centres for women, children

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Delhi High Court on Friday asked the Arvind Kejriwal-led AAP government to set up 'One-Stop Centres' for women and children in every district in compliance with a Supreme Court decision of 2018.

The court's direction came while a division bench comprising Chief Justice Satish Chandra Sharma and Justice Subramonium Prasad was hearing a plea against media houses for revealing the victim's identity and accused persons' name in a rape case of Hyderabad.

The court directed the Delhi government to act under the relevant section(s) of the Indian Penal Code and lay down the criteria as directed by the Supreme Court for

identifying social welfare institutions or organisations, to whom the next-of-kin to give the authorisation for declaration of the name.

The court referred to the Supreme Court judgement in Nipun Saxena vs Union of India passed on December 11, 2018.

The bench also noted that the Delhi government has not followed the Supreme Court order to date, wherein the court had requested the state governments and Union Territories to set up at least one one-stop centre in every district within one year of the judgment. The top court had ruled that the centres should employ well-trained staff, have sufficient medical facilities with counsellors and psychiatrists available on call and video conferencing facility for

recording statements of the victims and courtrooms for the trial of such cases in an attempt to make such centres a central police station where all women-and children-related crimes are registered. The bench said: "The state governments are already in contempt in not adhering to the time limit fixed by the Supreme Court in setting up such centres within one year from the date of the judgment passed on December 11, 2018." The high court also said that it does not find it appropriate to initiate proceedings against media houses and reported individuals or to direct investigating authorities to take cognisance of the offence. "With these observations, the writ petition is disposed of, along with pending applications, if any," the court said.

Morbi tragedy

1,262-page charge sheet filed, Jaysukh Patel named prime accused



bridge collapse case and named Orevia Group director Jaysukh Patel as prime accused.

Rajkot range Inspector General of Police Ashok Yadav told media that the charge sheet is filed against 10 accused, of which nine are arrested while the director is absconding.

Officer said managers Deepak Parekh, Dinesh Dave, three security guards, two ticket clerks and as many private contract workers have been arrested and are in judicial custody.

Patel has moved anticipatory bail application.

Major allegation against Orevia group is that without proper fitness certificate whether the suspension bridge is fit for public or not, the company opened it for visitors.

Morbi | Agencies

The Gujarat police on Friday submitted a 1,262-page charge sheet in the Morbi

DELHI HC CONFINES KULDEEP SENGAR'S BAIL RELEASE TO MARRIAGE CEREMONY DATES OF HIS DAUGHTER



Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Delhi High Court on Friday confined Unnao rape convict and expelled BJP leader

Kuldeep Singh Sengar's bail release to the marriage ceremony dates of his daughter.

The interim bail term of Sengar which was granted to him from January 27 to February 10 has been split into two intervals. The court has directed for interim bail from January 27 to 30, post which, he will surrender to police and again be released from February 6 to 9.

He will again surrender to police on February 10. Sengar was handed over life imprisonment in the case.

Today's decision came after the victim on Wednesday moved the High Court against its order granting Sengar interim bail mentioning that she has been receiving information that he is going to harm her and her family during his release period.

Man marries daughter-in-law in Uttar Pradesh



Gorakhpur | Agencies

In a shocking incident, a 70-year-old man has married his 28-year-old daughter-in-law in Chhappia Umara village, here.

Photographs of the 'couple' are now going viral on the social media.

Kailash Yadav, who works as a chowkidar at the Barhalganj police station, lost his wife 12 years ago and his third son also died sometime later.

Kailash got his widowed daughter-

in-law, Pooja, married again but the wedlock did not last, after which she returned home and started living in her husband's home.

Kailash, without informing anyone in the neighbourhood or the village, quietly married Pooja and it was only after the photograph went viral that people came to know about it.

Inspector J N Shukla of Barhalganj police station said that he had seen the photograph on the social media and would now inquire about the marriage.



STUDENTS CAN MAKE THE EXAMINATION A CELEBRATION WITH PM'S SUTRAS: CM SHIVRAJ SINGH CHOUHAN



Team Absolute | Bhopal

CM Shivraj Singh Chouhan has said that PM Modi, on the basis of his life experiences and his scholarship, shared with the children how they could easily solve their problems related to examinations. He told the children how to reduce the stress of exams and make it a joyous celebration. CM Chouhan was addressing students in "Pariksha Pe Charcha-2023" with PM Modi on the topic "Enliven the Exam Warrior within you" after the discussion.

More than 200 students from 8 schools of Bhopal participated in the virtual discussion from Samatva Bhawan along with CM Chouhan. PM Modi thanked for providing guidance to students. CM Chouhan said that PM Modi told the students how to manage and plan time, how to solve problems and do hard work smartly to get better results in less time. PM Modi also discussed with teachers and parents about the way of teaching children, their personality development and expansion of their thoughts. The children are

happy with PM Modi's Pariksha pe charcha. Ritika Ghodke, student of Class 12th of Government Subhash Higher Secondary School, Bhopal, joined the Pariksha pe Charcha from Delhi. She asked PM Modi on "How can we learn more and more languages?" Prime Minister Modi told Ritika that we should be proud of our heritage. The world's richest languages like Sanskrit and Tamil exist in our country. Learning a language other than our own exposes us to a different cultural environment.

NCPCR ISSUES NOTICE TO INDORE POLICE CHIEF AS MINORS SEEN DURING PROTEST

Indore/ New Delhi: The National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) on Friday sent a notice to the Police Commissioner of Indore over the presence of minors during a protest organised by some people of the Muslim community in the Madhya Pradesh city, demanding the arrest of Bajrang Dal workers for their alleged statements against Prophet Muhammad. Stating that the use of minors in protests is in violation of the Juvenile Justice Act, the NCPCR sought a reply within 7 days from the Police Commissioner. A video of the protests that took place on Thursday went viral on social media. The Commission stated that it has taken suo motu cognizance of the media reports that some unruly youths in Indore's Barwali Chowki area, brought minors and raised slogans, including 'sar tan se juda'. The Child Rights body, in its notice, instructed the Commissioner to take action against those who used the children in the protest, after gathering information through surfaced videos and other means, and sought a report on it. The commission said that the minors involved in the protests should be presented before the Child Welfare Committee and a copy of the Committee's order should be sent to the NCPCR.

"Release Surgical Strike Video": Congress Leader Backs Digvijaya Singh

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Amid the ongoing controversy over Congress leader Digvijaya Singh questioning the authenticity of the '2019 Surgical Strike', Congress leader Rashid Alvi today came in support of his party colleague and asked the Centre to release the surgical strike video that it claimed it has. "Government says it has a video (of a surgical strike) so what is wrong with Digvijaya Singh asking the government to show it? We're not asking for proof (of strike) but the government should show the video it claims it has," said Rashid Alvi while speaking to reporters. Alvi's reaction comes days after Digvijaya Singh's remark on the surgical strike. Digvijaya Singh had said the government talks of surgical strikes. "They (government) claim to have killed so many people but no proof is given," Singh had said. Congress leader Rashid Alvi said that the country has confidence in the security forces but can't trust the BJP government. "We have faith in our security forces but can't trust the BJP government," he added. Rashid Alvi further raised questions about various ministers' statements surrounding the surgical strike. "Sushma Swaraj, who was a minister in the government, had said that the air strike was done at a place where there was no possibility of anyone getting killed. Amit Shah claims that more than 300 terrorists were killed in the air strike. Uttar



Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath claims that more than 400 terrorists were killed in the air strike," Alvi pointed out. Citing the above statements, Congress leader Alvi said that it varies and therefore if the government claims to have video proof it should be shown. "These contradictory statements raise questions as to what exactly happened in the surgical air strike. That's why the government if it claims that it has the video evidence of the air strike should make it public," Rashid Alvi demanded. Congress leader Alvi further sought an apology from the Centre in case it does not have video proof. "If they do not have any video evidence to prove its claims, then the government should apologize," he added.

Ex-BJP councilor in MP, family found dead

Team Absolute | Bhopal

In a shocking incident, a former BJP councilor in Madhya Pradesh Sanjeev Mishra and his wife and their two sons were found dead in an alleged case of mass suicide. The incident took place on Thursday in Vidisha, around 60 km away from state capital Bhopal, police said. The victims were identified as Sanjeev Mishra, his wife Neelam, their sons Anmol and Sarthak. Mishra was associated with the BJP and he was a former municipal councilor, who was running a restaurant called Janata Bhojanalaya in Vidisha. Before the incident came to light, Mishra had posted a cryptic message on Facebook, in which he said: "May God spare even the enemy's children from this disease. I am not able to save the children; I do not want to live anymore." Police said that after seeing his post, some of his friends went to the



family's home and upon ringing the door bell; there was no response from

inside. The police were immediately called to the spot. Vidisha ASP Sameer Yadav said on Friday that all four were found unconscious when the police broke open the door. They were immediately taken to a nearby hospital. "While Anmol and Sarthak were declared dead on arrival, Mishra and his wife passed away during treatment late on Thursday night. They had all consumed pesticide," the ASP added. Yadav further said the police were investigating the matter. Preliminary investigation however revealed that it was a suicide case. "According to Mishra's social post, both his children were suffering from an incurable genetic disorder Muscular Dystrophy. A case has been registered in the matter, and further investigation was underway," the ASP said while briefing the press on Friday.

Three killed, four injured in truck collision in Barwani

Three persons were killed and four others were seriously injured after a rashly driven truck hit a pick-up truck from the rear end.

Team Absolute | Barwani

The accident took place on the Agra - Bombay National Highway No 3 near Thikri village in Barwani district on an intervening night of Thursday - Friday. Those who were killed in a mishap are identified as Sunil, son of Govind, a resident of Upla Palsud, Vijay, son of Shankar, a resident of Danod and Rajesh, son of Babulal, a resident of Rampura Pansemal village. Sunil died on the spot,

while two others died while undergoing treatment. Some eyewitnesses say that the accident was so gruesome that after the collision, the remains of the bodies were scattered on the road. Because of this, people had to face difficulties even in rescue work. Those who are undergoing treatment informed that they were returning home after setting up shop at the Patalpani fair. There were 9 people in the loading vehicle at the time of the accident.

Suresh, who was driving the vehicle said that he felt jerked probably due to the less quantity of fuel and the loading vehicle got stopped in the middle of the road. Due to this, all nine people started pushing the vehicle to park it on the roadside. In the meantime, one unidentified truck hit from the rear end causing the death of one person on the spot and injuring eight others. The vehicle left the spot after hitting the spot and no one able to see the vehicle.

IIM Student Aditya Pratap Singh Chauhan Received Pradhan Mantri Rashtriya Bal Puraskar

Team Absolute | Indore

IIM Indore's IPM course participant, Aditya Pratap Singh Chauhan, has been bestowed with Pradhan Mantri Rashtriya Bal Puraskar 2023. Aditya was among the 11 nationwide to receive this prestigious award, presented by the Honorable President Droupadi Murmu at the grand ceremony held at Vigyan Bhawan on January 23. Aditya received the award under the 'Innovation Category' for his groundbreaking research project 'MICROPA: A novel approach for the dye-based detection and algae-driven filtration of microplastics in drinking water'. Through a press release, IIM Indore said that it is committed to encouraging, motivating, and mentoring its participants and contributing to their overall development. "We are so proud of Aditya for receiving the prestigious Pradhan Mantri Rashtriya Bal Puraskar 2023. He is a true inspiration for all our students



who wish to delve deep into research and innovation," said IIM Indore director Prof Himanshu Rai.

Four dead while trying to steal scrap form closed mine in Shahdol

Team Absolute | Shahdol

Four people who went to steal scrap in the closed coal mine of South Eastern Coalfields Limited (SECL) situated in Dhanpuri Sohagpur area of Shahdol district died on Thursday night, said the police on Friday. ADG DC Sagar instituted a special investigation team to look into the matter. Official sources informed that four people died after they inhaled poisonous gas while allegedly trying to steal metal scrap from an abandoned underground coal mine in Shahdol district. Mine closed since 2018. Police said the incident took place late on Thursday night when a group



entered the closed mine of SECL in Dhanpuri Sohagpur area. The mine had been closed with concrete in the year 2018, as per the norms. Administrative officers of the district have reached the spot. Dhanpuri

police station in-charge Ratnambhar Shukla told media that the incident happened in the night. The people went down the shaft and were later found dead. The poisonous gas is yet to be identified. Police were informed about the incident by people associated with the deceased. Deceased were identified as Raj Mahto, Hazari Kol, Rahul Kol and Kapil Vishwakarma - aged 25 to 30 years. As soon as the news broke in the morning, there was a stir in the area. Police said that the cause of death will be ascertained only after complete investigation. Meanwhile locals have blamed SECL for being negligent in proper closure.

Cheetahs from South Africa likely to be flown in next month: report

Team Absolute | Bhopal

After months of delay, a dozen cheetahs from South Africa are likely to be finally flown into India next month and housed in the Kuno National Park (KNP) in Madhya Pradesh, where eight such felines from Namibia were brought last year under a project, an expert said. A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed between New Delhi and Pretoria (South Africa's administrative capital) last week, the expert associated with India's cheetah revival project said over phone on the condition of anonymity. "I think the cheetahs from South Africa will land in India around mid-February," he said. South Africa has donated these big cats to India. But India has to pay \$3,000 for the capture of every cheetah to the African nation before they are translocated, he said. KNP director Uttam Sharma said, "We are waiting for the arrival of 12 South African cheetahs. We have set up 10 quarantine bomas (enclosures) for them. In two of these facilities, two pairs of cheetah brothers would be kept." "We have come to know that Pretoria has issued an order for the translocation of cheetahs after signing the MoU," another official of the MP forest department said. Due to the delay in the signing of the MoU for the inter-continental translocation of these big cats, some experts had last month expressed concern over the health of the South African cheetahs as these animals have been quarantined there since July 15.



As a result of long quarantine, these animals might have lost their fitness, they had said. Prolonged quarantine could be taking a toll on the health of these big cats, who are slated to join the eight cheetahs imported from Namibia and released into the KNP in Sheopur district mid-September, the experts had said. In fact, the 12 South African cheetahs - seven males and five females - have not hunted for themselves even once after being kept in bomas, wildlife experts in the know of India's cheetah reintroduction plan, had said. Three of them have been kept in Phinda quarantine boma in KwaZulu-Natal Province and nine in Rooiberg Quarantine boma in Limpopo Province since July 15, they said. They have lost fitness to a considerable extent as they have not hunted even once since July 15, one of the experts said last month. Experts said that a delegation from South Africa visited the KNP in early September to see arrangements at the wildlife sanctuary for housing the world's fastest land mammals.

SICK FEMALE CHEETAH AT KNP MUCH BETTER NOW: OFFICIAL

The health condition of a female cheetah detected with an infection associated with kidneys and liver at the Kuno National Park (KNP) in Madhya Pradesh was much better now, a senior forest department official said on Friday. The cheetah, Sasha, is more than four-and-a-half years old and was diagnosed with hepatorenal, a kidney and liver-related infection, earlier this week. She is among eight cheetahs translocated from Namibia in September last year and housed in KNP in Sheopur district. "She is much better," MP Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (Wildlife) JS Chauhan told media over the phone when asked about the feline's health. Sasha has some liver and kidney problems and is being treated by three veterinarians who are in constant touch with cheetah experts from Namibia and South Africa, he said. "Her problem came to light on Monday. Dr Atul Gupta, a veterinarian at Bhopal-based Van Vihar National Park, was rushed to the Kuno National Park after the problem was detected. She is suffering from hepatorenal infection and has been quarantined for treatment," Chauhan added.

Newly appointed constables should never forget the dignity of the uniform: CM Shivraj Singh Chouhan



Team Absolute | Bhopal

CM Shivraj Singh Chouhan has said that the face of Madhya Pradesh Police is one of sensitivity, bravery, patriotism and discipline. Never let it get weaker, this is the asset which has earned Madhya Pradesh Police a special place in the country. Today the youths, who are wearing the police uniform, it is not an ordinary uniform. This uniform is for the security of the country and the state, to destroy the criminals, to give strength to the weak, to crush the criminals and to assist the gentlemen. Never

forget its limits and never let it get tarnished. It is your responsibility to maintain the honour of your mother's and Mother India's milk. Exhorting new constables, move forward on the path of your duty with enthusiasm, passion and zeal. CM Chouhan was addressing the appointment certificate distribution and orientation programme to newly appointed 06 thousand constables at Rakshit Kendra, Nehru Nagar Bhopal today. CM Chouhan was welcomed by showering flowers with the sound of bugle and band. CM Chouhan inaugurated the

programme by lighting the lamp. Constables of Madhya Pradesh Police presented the Madhya Pradesh Anthem. CM Chouhan showered flowers on the new constables as a symbol of his blessings and best wishes. All the 6000 new constables greeted CM with thunderous applause. On behalf of the new constables, Raksha Solanki of Khargone and Akash Kushwaha, posted in Niwari, shared their views regarding selection in the police and their goals. CM Chouhan symbolically gave appointment letters to 5 new constables.



EDITOR'S SPECS

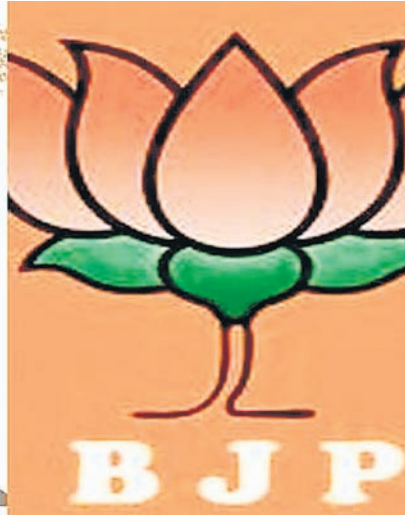
Srinagar-Jammu highway remained closed only for 8 hours this winter

The Srinagar-Jammu National Highway remained closed for just eight hours in total, as against 220 hours in the previous winter, an official said on Tuesday, adding no full day was lost in the last two years due to closure of the highway. Jammu and Kashmir Chief Secretary Arun Kumar Mehta on Tuesday chaired a meeting to review the status of development of different roads and highways connecting different parts of the union territory. "The meeting was informed that this winter the Srinagar-Jammu National Highway remained closed for just 8 hours in total as against 220 hours in previous winter. No full day was lost in the last two years due to the closure of NH. In order to ensure movement of traffic on both the sides of the highway, the T5 tunnel will be dedicated to the public on March 15, and Jaiswal Bridge on February 15," a statement said. Mehta impressed upon the officers to ensure that there is smooth movement of traffic on the National Highway during the winters. He asked them to be ever ready with the requisite men and machinery to deal with the weather vagaries. He stressed minimising disruptions and ensuring that traffic movement remains uninterrupted throughout the year. He reiterated that traffic on this National Highway should move in both ways after March 15 as much of the bridges and tunnels being constructed would be completed by then. He enjoined the officers to focus on the difficult stretches between Banihal and Ramban. He urged them to take instant measures in case of inclement weather. He took note of the under construction bridges at Maitra, Ramban and one at Jaiswal. He passed on directions to the concerned person to accelerate the pace of work so that these vital connections are completed soon.

KARNATAKA HEADING FOR A TRIANGULAR FIGHT!

Vinod Kumar Shukla

After the Congress managing a decisive victory in Himachal Pradesh recently, the party appears to be confident of hitting another penalty kick into the goal post in Karnataka if things go the way they are heading to. The upbeat Congress is counting on factors that will help uproot the BJP in Karnataka which is considered to be BJP's laboratory of Hindutva in south India. Assembly elections are not too far and performance of the Congress and Janata Dal (Secular) led by H D Kumaraswamy was reasonably good even Congress leader Rahul Gandhi's Bharat Jodo Yatra reportedly got a good response. Moreover, differences between senior Congress leader D K Shivakumar and former Congress Chief Minister Siddaramaiah are also ironed out. Now, both these leaders are planning to cash in on anger against the BJP in the state, infighting of senior BJP leaders especially anger of former Karnataka CM B S Yediyurappa, Hijab controversy, Hindu-Muslim polarization, governance issue and the latest border dispute with Maharashtra despite both the states having the BJP and alliance government. A Congress turncoat Basavraj Bommai is heading the BJP government in the state but he is unable to live up to the expectation either of the BJP top brass or his Lingayat community or the common workers of the party in the state. Interestingly two most powerful organizational functionaries -- BJP general secretary (organisation) B L Santosh and BJP's friend, philosopher and guide RSS' Sarkaryawah (general secretary) Dattatreya Hosabale -- are from Karnataka. The BJP has south India as the area where the party wants to harvest the



most as proposed in the National Executive meeting in Hyderabad in 2022 but the party is in complete organizational disharmony, internal squabbling and administrative mismanagement in Karnataka. Karnataka results may impact the performance of the BJP in other neighbouring states. The BJP is trying hard to manage Yediyurappa and Hindutva voters. The party doesn't have much of a problem in coastal Karnataka but other parts are facing difficulties. Yediyurappa is the most difficult task to manage for the BJP as he is constantly demanding that his son should be projected as the CM candidate for the next Assembly but the BJP don't want to do that. But the party cannot afford to annoy him if it wants to win elections in the state as he is still the only leader of the Lingayat community who can get their votes for the BJP. Despite Bommai being the CM, he does not carry even half the weight of Yediyurappa in terms of mass appeal among voters. There are many groups in the

Karnataka BJP and many players in the opposition challenging the BJP. Yediyurappa does not get along with some of the state BJP leaders. The incumbent CM was brought to the BJP by him only but they too are not in their best of terms. Sometimes back Yediyurappa did not address a meeting at Koppal to be addressed by state leadership, Bommai rushed to Delhi to appraise the central leadership and party general secretary Arun Singh had to intervene and somehow the situation was salvaged also with the intervention of Yediyurappa's son. Yediyurappa is already accommodated in the important organizational bodies of the party. But these bickering and mismanagement are good signs for the opposition in the state to bounce back. The Congress is putting up a united face after Bharat Jodo Yatra passed through Karnataka. The election of Mallikarjuna Kharge as national Congress president may be quite helpful for the Congress on two counts that the BJP is still unable to counter. First the

Congress president belongs to Karnataka and second he is from Dalit community which is the traditional voter of the party. The Congress had already benefited from BJP infighting and Dalit votes in Himachal Pradesh besides other factors. So learning a lesson from its Himachal Pradesh loss where it didn't seek the advice of strongman Prem Kumar Dhumal, the BJP has decided to go for the services of former chief minister Yediyurappa in upcoming Karnataka elections. Yediyurappa is considered to be the face of BJP in Karnataka and the leader who toiled hard in its southern bastion. The senior leadership of the party has now involved the former CM in strategy planning for the upcoming Assembly polls. Union Home Minister Amit Shah and party president J P Nadda too started frequently visiting the state. Reportedly, the BJP is planning to release a book, which compares Leader of Opposition and former Congress

CM Siddaramaiah to Tipu Sultan. The Congress too has some plans to release a book on Siddaramaiah with his achievements. The erstwhile Mysore ruler Tipu is considered by the saffron party as a tyrant who killed hundreds of Hindus to expand his kingdom. Siddaramaiah, during his Chief Ministership, had introduced Tipu Jayanti -- a day to celebrate the ruler who they believe was not only a freedom fighter but gave India, especially the Old Mysore state, path-breaking technology in terms of warfare and administration. The BJP will launch the book 'Siddu Nij Nijam', which will highlight the alleged misrule in the state during Siddaramaiah's tenure and allegedly paint him like a tyrant, just like Tipu. But the BJP has to deal with issues like anger of government employees, general anti-incumbency and infighting. The entry of Bharat Rashtira Samithi in Karnataka as an informal ally of Janata Dal (Secular) will leave the Congress alone in the state to make the fight triangular. The JD (S) has its influence in pockets. But if there is a triangular fight with BRS not ready to join the Congress and JD (S) joining hands with the BRS, the fight is expected to benefit the BJP in the state. If the Congress and JD (S) are hurt by triangular fighting in the state, it is the BJP that will be in advantage. However, the condition of BJP in the state is really bad and any vote division is likely to help the party. But who will succeed is a big question. If the BJP is able to deal with issues or the opposition challenge is really big, only time will tell. This will also decide if BJP meets the fate of HP or Gujarat in Karnataka.

international

ISRAELI FIGHTER JETS STRIKE GAZA IN RESPONSE TO ROCKETS FIRING

Gaza | Agencies

Israeli fighter jets on Friday carried out a series of airstrikes on facilities belonging to militant groups in the Gaza Strip in response to rockets fired from the coastal enclave, witnesses said.



Israeli army drones and fighter jets were heard buzzing in the air, and several explosions were heard in central Gaza Strip, the witnesses told Xinhua news agency.

They added that more than 14 missiles were fired at a military post that belonged to Gaza militant groups. Palestinian medical sources said that no injuries were reported during the strikes that mainly targeted posts and facilities that belong to the Hamas and the Palestinian Islamic Jihad

(PIJ). The airstrikes were in response to the firing of two rockets at southern Israel, said a spokesman from the Jewish state's army. No group has claimed responsibility for firing the rockets, which was a response to the killing of nine Palestinians during an Israeli raid in the Jenin

refugee camp, deemed to be the most deadly in nearly two decades. During the Israeli airstrikes on Friday, militants in the Hamas-ruled coastal enclave also fired at least five rockets at southern Israeli communities close to the borders with the Gaza Strip and anti-craft missiles were

fired at Israeli fighter jets by Hamas militants, sources close to Hamas security told Xinhua.

Media outlets in Gaza quoted an Egyptian source as saying that Egyptian intelligence is in intensive contact with the Palestinian factions to prevent an escalation in Gaza.

More than 170 Palestinians were killed in the West Bank in 2022, and at least 29 have been killed in January this year, according to figures from the Palestinian Health Ministry. According to the UN, 2022 was the deadliest year for Palestinians since 2006.

The tensions have been further aggravated since Israel's most right-wing government, headed by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, took office last month.

CANADA TO SEND 4 TANKS TO UKRAINE: REPORT

Ottawa | Agencies

Canadian Defence Minister Anita Anand is set to announce that his country will be sending four battle tanks to Ukraine.

In addition to the initial four Leopard 2 tanks, Canada is considering sending more tanks at a later date, CTV News reported, citing government sources.

The Canadian Armed Forces currently has 82 German-made Leopard 2 battle tanks, but they are in various states of serviceability, Xinhua news agency reported, citing the report.

On Wednesday, Germany and the US announced they would be organising the shipment of dozens of Leopard 2 tanks to Ukraine.

Egypt discovers oldest, most complete unroyal mummy

Cairo | Agencies

Egypt's renowned archaeologist Zahi Hawass has announced the discovery of "important tombs hosting a 4300-year-old mummy" in the Saqqara necropolis near the Pyramids of Giza.

"The mummy is the oldest and most complete unroyal mummy found in Egypt to date," Xinhua news agency quoted Hawass as saying in a press conference on Thursday.

The mummy of a man, Hekashepes, covered with gold leaf, was found inside a large rectangular limestone sarcophagus in a room located under a 15-metre-deep shaft, the archaeologist said.

He added that many stone vessels were seen around the sarcophagus, which was completely sealed when the mission discovered it.

"The oldest mummy is part of the important discovery of a group of tombs that date back to the fifth and sixth dynasties of the Old Kingdom," said Hawass, the director of the Egyptian excavation team working with the Supreme Council of Antiquities at Giser el-Mudir area in Saqqara.

He explained that new discoveries indicated that the site comprises a large cemetery.



According to Hawass, a tomb that belonged to Khnumdjedef, an inspector of the officials, a supervisor of the nobles, and a priest in the pyramid complex of Unas, the last king of the fifth dynasty, is the most important one among the new discoveries. Khnumdjedef's tomb is decorated with inscriptions of daily life.

Iraq, France agree on energy, security cooperation

Baghdad | Agencies

Iraq and France have inked a strategic partnership agreement to enhance bilateral cooperation in various areas including energy and security, according to Iraqi officials.



The agreement was signed during Iraqi Prime Minister Mohammed Shia' al-Sudani's one-day visit to Paris, after he met with French Prime Minister Elisabeth Borne and talked with President Emmanuel Macron, al-Sudani's media office tweeted, Xinhua News Agency reported. During talks with Macron, the two leaders discussed bilateral ties, regional and international issues of common concern, and joint cooperation in vital sectors, said the media office's press release.

The agreement covers cooperation in such areas as combating terrorism and extremism, cultural exchange, cri-

sis management, combating economic and organised crime, protecting the environment and promoting human rights, which, al-Sudani tweeted on Thursday, "lays down a road map for expanding our two countries' cooperation in various fields."

The past years have witnessed deepened bilateral exchanges. Macron has visited Iraq twice, one in 2020 and another in 2021. France-headquartered oil producer TotalEnergies signed a deal with the Iraqi government in 2021, agreeing to invest in oil, gas and renewables projects in southern Iraq over 25 years.

CYPRUS PARALYSIED BY GENERAL STRIKE AGAINST INFLATION

Nicosia | Agencies

Thousands of workers across all sectors in Cyprus staged a three-hour island-wide strike to demand inflation-linked pay increases.

According to the country's trade unions, 70,000 public sector and 40,000 private sector workers participated in the labour action, which shut down the government, public transport, hospitals, airports and ports, factories and offices between 12 noon and 3 p.m. on Thursday, reports Xinhua news agency.

Airport authorities said that 22 flights were affected and had to be rescheduled.

However, they said that air controllers continued to service international flights in the eastern Mediterranean air corridors, which are among the busiest in the world.

Thousands of demonstrators gathered outside the Ministry of Finance and then marched on to the Labour Ministry in the capital Nicosia demanding the full restoration of the Cost of Living Allowance system (CoLA) aimed at compensating workers for the loss of



purchasing power as a result of inflation.

The strike, the first major nationwide industrial action involving all trade unions of the eastern Mediterranean island in more than a decade, was

called after talks between workers and employers on the full restoration of the CoLA broke down.

The CoLA was suspended in 2013 under pressure by the Eurogroup as part of austerity measures in exchange

for a ten-billion-euro bailout of the near bankrupt Cypriot economy.

It was partly restored in 2017 under an agreement providing that until the end of 2022 workers would receive an increase in their salaries equal to 50 per cent of the annual inflation rate.

Following the soaring of inflation rate in 2022, the trade unions demanded the full restoration of the CoLA to compensate for the loss of the purchasing power of workers' salaries.

The country's inflation rate in 2022 rose to 8.1 per cent year-on-year. Employers' associations suggested replacing the system with a new system of a yearly increase in salaries tied to productivity and growth.

The trade unions turned down the suggestion, arguing that they would only accept the full restoration of the CoLA within three years.

Labour Minister Kyriakos Koushos, who acted as a mediator, said the differences between the two sides were so large that he could not submit a conciliatory proposal.

Cyprus will hold presidential elections on February 5.



In 2024 Lok Sabha polls, PM Modi will break all records and NDA will retain power: CM Shinde

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Chief Minister Eknath Shinde on Friday said that in the 2024 Lok Sabha elections, Prime Minister Narendra Modi will break all records and the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) will retain power with a thumping majority. He was talking to reporters after attending the live screening of 'Pariksha Pe Charcha' event addressed by PM Modi. Shinde saw the programme at the municipal school in Kisan Nagar locality of the city, where he had studied. Stating that he was pleased to witness the 'Pariksha Pe Charcha' programme in Thane, where he grew up, Shinde added that he was proud of being a civic school student.



Shinde said a survey conducted on just a handful of people does not give a true picture.

"They ignored the results of the recently-concluded gram panchayat elections, where the Balasahebchichi Shiv Sena (Shinde-led faction) and the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) performed very well," he said.

"In politics, two plus two is not always four. A survey based on just a handful of people does not give the real picture...I have got the details of how many people were surveyed. I do not want to go into any figures," he said. In the two-and-a-half years before he became the chief minister, a "government with negativity" was in

power, Shinde said while referring to the Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) government led by Uddhav Thackeray.

But there is a government with positivity in the state now. There was dissatisfaction in the state during the previous government's rule. But we launched several development works and changed the entire atmosphere in the state, he said.

"Now, even I will not be able to say as to who will join hands with whom and whose alliance will break apart. But the Balasahebchichi Shiv Sena and BJP have been doing good work and this is a government of the common man. People have already decided whom they will vote for and we understand people's response," he said. The survey said that the NDA government will come to power and that the popularity of PM Modi is increasing. Is it any different in Maharashtra?...We will be leading whenever elections are held. People of the state have already made up their mind. Hence, those who want to enjoy the opinion poll results for the next one-and-a-half years, let them enjoy," he said.

'Mind your language' - Sanjay Raut to new ally Prakash Ambedkar

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Barely five days after the Shiv Sena (UBT)'s alliance with Vanchit Bahujan Aghadi (VBA), an apparent war of words has suddenly erupted between two new allies, here on Friday. Sena (UBT) MP and Chief Spokesperson Sanjay Raut has advised VBA President Prakash Ambedkar to "watch his words" while talking about the Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) supreme Sharad Pawar.

He was referring to Dr. Ambedkar's remark that "Pawar is still with the BJP". Soon after the VBA-Sena (UBT) partnership was announced on January 23, Ambedkar made the said remark sparking a fresh political row.

Responding sharply, Raut declared that "we do not agree with Dr. Ambedkar's statement on Sharad Pawar at all".

"The Congress and NCP are the allies of the Sena (UBT) in the Maha Vikas



Aghadi (MVA) Opposition coalition. We would request Dr. Ambedkar to be careful what he speaks about Sharad Pawar henceforth," said Raut.

He said that all must work together in the MVA by keeping past differences at bay and forge a strong united front to tackle the political challenges ahead.

Undeterred by Raut's snub, Dr. Ambedkar retorted by saying dismissively he would have obliged "if the same advice had come from Sena (UBT) President and ex-chief minister Uddhav

Thackeray". The VBA chief reiterated that in politics "no parties are enemies of each other", but made it clear that his party would not tie-up again with the All India Majlis-E-Itehadul Muslimin (AIMIM), its former partner for a few years.

Dr. Ambedkar also said that if the BJP discards its 'Manusmriti' there would be discussions with them since stopping dictatorship and saving democracy is the need of the hour for which all like-minded parties should come together.

"Boycott culture spoils atmosphere": Anurag Thakur amid 'Pathaan' row

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Union Information and Broadcasting Minister Anurag Thakur on Friday deplored the "boycott culture" targeting certain films and said such instances vitiate the atmosphere at a time when India is keen to enhance its influence as a soft power. In case someone has a problem with a movie, they should talk to the concerned government department which can take up the issue with the filmmakers, he said.

"At a time when India is keen to enhance its influence as a soft power, at a time when Indian films are making waves in every corner of the world, such talk vitiates the atmosphere," Thakur told reporters here responding to questions on boycott of films by various interest groups.

The minister's remarks come at a time when Shah Rukh Khan-starrer "Pathaan", which released on Wednesday, is facing boycott calls over one of its songs.

In the past, actor Akshay Kumar's "Samrat Prithviraj", Aamir Khan's "Laal Singh Chaddha" and Deepika Padukone's "Padmaavat" had faced boycott calls.

"If someone has a problem (with a film), then they should talk to the concerned

department which will take it up with the producer and director," Thakur said.

"But sometimes, just to vitiate the atmosphere, some people comment on something even before knowing about it fully. That causes problems. This should not happen," he said. Thakur was in Mumbai to inaugurate the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) Film Festival that will showcase 58 movies from the regional grouping of eight Eurasian nations. SCO observer countries and dialogue partners have sent entries in the non-competition section of the film festival. The minister also made a strong pitch for creative autonomy and said there were adequate safeguards in place for monitoring content on over-the-top (OTT) platforms.

"There should be no restrictions on creativity," Thakur said.

He said the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting does receive complaints about the content on OTT platforms, but almost 95 per cent of grievances are settled at the level of producers and the others get resolved at the second stage of the association of publishers of the content. The minister said only one per cent of complaints reach the inter-departmental committee and it is ensured that strict action is taken in such cases.

1 DEAD, ANOTHER INJURED AS PORTION OF BUILDING COLLAPSES

Bhiwandi: A man was killed, while another was injured after a portion of a building collapsed in Bhiwandi, Thane Municipal Corporation said on Friday.

According to Thane Municipal Corporation officials, one person was safely rescued and has been shifted to a hospital. The exact reason behind the collapse incident is yet to be ascertained, civic body officials said.

CONMAN CASE

Delhi court allows Jacqueline Fernandez to travel abroad

Team Absolute | Mumbai/ New Delhi

Delhi court on Friday allowed Bollywood actress Jacqueline Fernandez, who is one of the accused in the Rs 200 crore money extortion case involving conman Sukesh Chandrasekhar, to fly to Dubai.

Fernandez had filed an application on Wednesday to travel from January 27 to 30 ahead of the Pepsico India Conference.

The Patiala House Courts took note of Fernandez's submission that she is under a contractual obligation with the company and if she is not able to make it, she could be sued. She will be performing at the event on January 29 with other stars.

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) had however, opposed it and said the actress did not put any contractual obligation on record before.

Additional Sessions Judge of the Patiala House Courts, Shailendra Malik on Friday granted relief saying that she has profes-



sional commitments and personal liberty can't be curtailed.

On Monday, he had granted the actress a one-day exemption from personal

appearance. The judge was supposed to hear the arguments on framing charges in the matter but adjourned the hearing for February 15.

Fernandez, even in December last year, had moved a plea seeking to travel abroad to visit her ill mother in Bahrain. But, she withdrew it as the court wasn't willing to allow her to travel abroad.

In the case, Chandrasekhar is accused of extorting money from politicians, celebrities and businessmen, and allegedly duped pharma company Ranbaxy's former owner Shivinder Mohan Singh's wife Aditi Singh of Rs 200 crore.

He had allegedly sent super expensive gifts to Jacqueline, while he also booked a chartered flight for her from Mumbai to Chennai during his bail period.

Moreover, according to the ED, it is suspected that he had sent huge chunks of money extorted from Aditi Singh to the actor.

THREE BOYS DROWN IN POND IN CHANDRAPUR

Mumbai: Three boys drowned while swimming in a pond at a village in Maharashtra's Chandrapur district, police said on Friday. The incident took place in Awarpur village of Korpana tehsil on Thursday and the bodies were fished out from the pond on Friday, said an official from Gadchander sub-division police office.

The victims Paras Deepe, Darshan Shankar Bacha Shankar and Arjun Singh, all aged 10 years, were Class 4 students of Aditya Birla Public School, Korpana, some 54 km away from the district headquarters, he said.

The boys had gone to the pond to play after attending a Republic Day programme in the village, and had ventured into the water for a swim, the official said.

When the children did not return home in the evening, the parents started looking for them. Shoes and clothes of the boys were found next to the pond, he said.

"The boys could not be traced due to poor light on Thursday evening. Following a search operation, three bodies were found in the pond on Friday," sub-divisional police officer Sushilkumar Nayak said, adding that a case has been registered in this regard.

Man involved in 39 cases of sextortion nabbed by crime branch

Team Absolute | Ghatkopar

The Mumbai Crime Branch on Friday said that the police nabbed a 28-year-old man who had been allegedly involved in at least 39 cases of sextortion across the country. The police said that the suspect was arrested from Ghatkopar area in Mumbai on January 26 by team of officials from unit 4 of the crime branch, the police said. According to the police, the police officials have found that there are at least 326 sextortion complaints allegedly filed against him which are being further investigated.

The police said that the Mumbai Crime Branch had been working on information on the suspect who had been allegedly cheating people



online by offering them prostitution services online, through social media and a website. The modus operandi of the suspect included to cheat the customers who reached out to his contact numbers. The customers who contacted the suspect for online services from call grills through a video call were blackmailed

after the calls were over, the police said. "On the video call, the customers' videos were allegedly recorded which were objectionable. The suspect then threatened them to viral the videos if he was not paid a certain amount," an official said.

The police said a complaint was registered by a victim at

Antophill Police Station in the eastern suburbs last year. The police had been since investigating the matter and trying to locate and nab the culprit. A team of officials from the Mumbai Crime Branch used technical analysis and traced the number of the suspect.

"On January 26, the officials got information that the suspect was coming to the Ghatkopar area to meet someone. They immediately laid a trap and nabbed him from the Asalfa area of Ghatkopar," the official added. The police said that with his arrest, the police have detected at least 39 cases registered against him in different parts of the country including 35 cases in Telangana, 2 cases in Jharkhand, 1 in Maharashtra and 1 in Delhi.

WOMAN KILLED BY FAMILY OVER LOVE AFFAIR, BODY BURNT TO DESTROY EVIDENCE

Team Absolute | Mumbai

A 22-year-old medical student was strangled to death and set ablaze allegedly by her father, brother and three other male relatives over her love affair in Maharashtra's Nanded district, an official said.

The police on Friday arrested the five for the killing that took place on January 22 in Pimpri Mahipal village under Limbgaon police station, around 600 km from Mumbai, an official said.

The woman was strangled to death with a rope by her family members, who later set her ablaze and threw her remains in a stream to destroy the evidence, he said.

The victim was a third year student of Bachelor of Homeopathic Medicine and Surgery (BHMS) and her marriage had been fixed. However, she informed the man chosen by her family that she was in love with another man from her village, the official said. The victim's family had been upset after the wedding was called off, he said. The woman's father, brother, uncle and cousins took her to a farm on the night of January 22, and they allegedly killed her and tried to destroy the evidence, the official said.

The accused have been arrested under section 302 (murder) and other relevant provisions of the Indian Penal Code, he added.

METRO CAR SHED

PIL in HC against BMC notice for removal of 177 trees in Aarey Colony

Team Absolute | Mumbai

A public interest litigation (PIL) was filed in the Bombay High Court on Friday against the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation's notice seeking suggestions and objections for removal of 177 trees in Aarey Colony for the construction of a car shed for Metro Line 3.

The civic body had issued a notice on January 12, following an application filed by the Mumbai Metro Rail Corporation Ltd (MMRCL) seeking permission to remove 84 trees for the car shed project.

In the PIL, activist Zoru Bathena claimed that the notice was in violation of the Supreme



Court order of November 2022, which only allowed for removal of 84 trees. "The notice dated January 12, 2023, issued by the tree authority is for removal of 177 trees, having a different set of tree ID numbers in comparison to the MMRCL's application, which was only for 84 trees," the petition stated. The notice was issued without application of mind and hence, deserves to be quashed and set aside, it said.

The metro car shed project at Aarey Colony in suburban Goregaon has been embroiled in controversy since 2014, with environmentalists holding protests against indiscriminate felling of trees in the area which they claim is a forest area.

Three held for house break-ins, valuables worth Rs 5 lakh seized

Palghar | Agencies

Three persons have been arrested by the Mira Bhayandar-Vasai Virar police in Maharashtra in two separate cases of house break-ins, and recovered valuables worth more than Rs 5 lakh from them, an official said on Friday.

Assistant Police Commissioner (Virar division) Ramchandra Deshmukh said the crime detection branch at the Tuljani police station picked up two persons on Wednesday on the suspicion of house break-ins and thefts.

"During their interrogation, the duo revealed that they were involved in a crime registered with the police station in 2021. Eleven grams of gold ornaments, some silver items and a colour television set, collectively worth



Rs 3,88,000, were seized from him, the official said. There were six cases registered against the two accused under the police commissionerates of Thane, Mumbai and Mira Bhayandar-Vasai Virar, he said.

In a separate development, the police arrested a Nalasopara-based man in a case of house break-in. They seized from him mobiles worth Rs 1.55 lakh. An offence of theft was registered against him at Tuljani police station, another official said.

GUTKA WORTH RS 9 LAKH SEIZED; TEMPO DRIVER HELD

Palghar: Police have seized gutka, a banned substance, worth more than Rs 9 lakh in Palghar district of Maharashtra, and arrested a man in this connection, an official said on Friday. The seizure was made by the Palghar district rural police on Thursday on the Mumbai-Ahmedabad highway, he said. "A tempo was found transporting gutka worth Rs 9,00,700 into Maharashtra. Its driver Ramshingh Deoda, a resident of Navi Mumbai, was arrested and the gutka was seized," the official of Talasari police station said.

An offence under the Food and Drugs Administration (FDA) regulations and various sections of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) was registered against the accused, he said. Investigation into the case is on, the official said.



AMBER ROSE VOWS TO STAY SINGLE AND NEVER HAVE SEX AGAIN

Los Angeles | Agencies

Model Amber Rose has admitted she's struggled with dating in recent years and has now decided to stay single. The model, which previously dated Kanye West and was married to Wiz Khalifa, has struggled on the dating scene in recent years and now insists she's completely disillusioned about finding love so she's planning to stay single indefinitely, reports femalefirst.co.uk.

Speaking on the 'Sofia with an F' podcast, she told host Sofia Franklyn: "It's (the dating scene) worse than ever. They're (the men) pretty disgusting out here. They're f***** gross. Like, I wanna be single for the rest of my life."

Rose, who is mom to a son with Wiz Khalifa and another boy with her ex Alexander Edwards, went on to add: "I don't want to share my house or my life with anyone. I don't want anyone around my kids. I don't want to have sex ... It's so gross. I don't want it ... I'm very happy to not be in my bed with anyone." Amber's last serious relationship was with music executive Alexander. They became parents to three-year-old son Slash Electric before parting ways in August 2021. She is also mom to nine-year-old son Sebastian with Wiz Khalifa. Alexander recently hit the headlines after it was revealed he was now dating pop superstar Cher. The singer opened up about their romance during an appearance on 'The Kelly Clarkson Show', admitting the relationship with

Alexander is going well despite the 40-year age gap. She explained: "On paper, it's kind of ridiculous. But in real life, we get along great. He's fabulous. And I don't give men qualities that they don't deserve ... He's very kind, very smart, he's very talented, and he's really funny. And I think he's quite handsome."

PAMELA SAYS SHE HELPED JACK NICHOLSON 'FINISH THREESOME' WITH OTHER WOMEN

Los Angeles | Agencies

Actress Pamela Anderson is spilling the beans in her upcoming memoir, including a detail of Jack Nicholson's tryst. In an excerpt of 'Love, Pamela' obtained by Variety, the actress reveals she once caught the Oscar-winning actor having a threesome at the Playboy mansion, reports aceshowbiz.com.

Pamela writes that she caught 'The Shining' actor with "two beautiful women with him" in a bathroom at the mansion.

"They were all giggling and kissing up against the wall, sliding all over each other," she recalls.

But that's not all, as Pamela claims that she made Jack orgasm merely by making eye contact with him.

"I walked by to use the mirror, bending over the sink to fix my lip gloss. Trying not to look, but I couldn't help myself and caught his eye in the reflection. I guess that got him to the finish line, because he made a funny noise, smiled and said, 'Thanks, dear,'" she concludes the story.

In the book, Pamela also claims that Tim Allen flashed her during the filming of 'Home Improvement' back in April 1991.

"He opened his robe and flashed me quickly - completely naked underneath," she writes in her soon-to-be-released memoir. "He said it was only fair, because he had seen me naked. Now we're even." Pamela says she just "laughed uncomfortably" at the shocking sight.

Tim, who was 37 at the time of the alleged incident, was presumably referring to Pamela's modeling for Playboy, which helped turn the budding actress into an internationally known sex symbol.

Tim has since denied Pamela's claim, saying in a statement to Variety, "No, it never happened."

The funnyman further insisted that he "would never do such a thing."



AYO EDEBIRI JOINED MARVEL STUDIOS' ANTI-HERO TEAM-UP FEATURE 'THUNDERBOLTS'

Los Angeles | Agencies

'The Bear' breakout star Ayo Edebiri has joined Marvel Studios' anti-hero team-up feature 'Thunderbolts' in an undisclosed role.

Jake Schreier is directing from a script by Eric Pearson. As is the case with every Marvel Studios production, Kevin Feige is producing, reports Variety.

Feige announced 'Thunderbolts' at San Diego Comic-Con in 2022, as the climax of Phase 5 of the Marvel Cinematic Universe. It is currently set to premiere on July 26, 2024, reports Variety.

'Thunderbolts' will bring together several anti-heroes across the MCU, including from 'Black Widow', Yelena Belova (Florence Pugh), Red Guardian (David Harbour) and Taskmaster (Olga Kurylenko); from 'The Falcon and the Winter Soldier', Bucky Barnes (Sebastian Stan) and John Walker (Wyatt Russell); and from 'Ant-Man and the Wasp', Ghost (Hannah John-Kamen). Julia Louis-Dreyfus' Contessa Valentina Allegra de la Fontaine - who's appeared in 'Falcon and Winter Soldier', 'Black Widow' and 'Black Panther: Wakanda Forever' - will lead the team; Louis-Dreyfus recently told Variety that 'Thunderbolts' starts shooting in June.

Edebiri's career has been scorching since FX's 'The Bear' debuted on Hulu in June 2022.

She appears opposite Ben Platt in the feature 'Theater Camp', which just premiered at the Sundance Film Festival and was promptly picked up by Searchlight, and she'll next appear in the LGBTQ coming-of-age comedy 'Bottoms', set to debut on Amazon Prime Video later this year.

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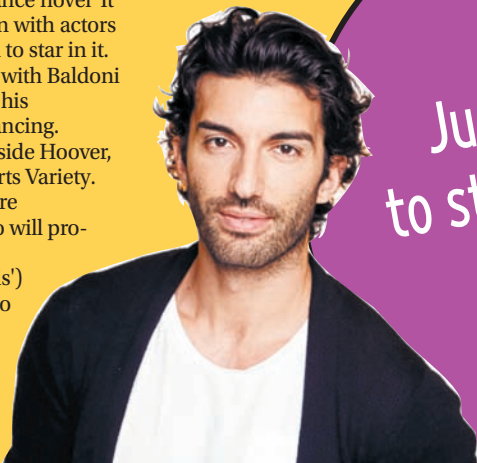
Los Angeles | Agencies

Author Colleen Hoover's bestselling romance novel 'It Ends With Us' is getting a film adaptation with actors Blake Lively and Justin Baldoni attached to star in it. The film is in development at Sony Pictures, with Baldoni set to direct and executive producer under his Wayfarer Studios banner, which is co-financing. Lively is also executive producing alongside Hoover, Steve Sarowitz and Andrew Calof, reports Variety.

Alex Saks will produce for Saks Picture Company, along with Jamey Heath who will produce on behalf of Wayfarer Studios.

Christy Hall ('I Am Not Okay With This') penned the current screenplay and is also set to produce.

'It Ends With Us' follows small-town girl Lily, who moves to Boston to start her own business. Sparks immediately fly between her and neurosurgeon Ryle, but his "complete aversion to relationships is disturbing," the book's description reads. "Even as Lily finds herself becoming the exception to his 'no dating' rule, she can't help but wonder what made him that way in the first place. As questions about her new relationship overwhelm her, so do thoughts of Atlas Corrigan - her first love and a link to the past she left behind. He was her kindred spirit, her protector. When Atlas suddenly reappears, everything Lily has built with Ryle is threatened." Hoover is currently the highest-selling novelist in the U.S., writing five of the top 10 best-selling books of any genre last year, with over 20 million books sold. 'It Ends With Us' ended 2022 as the top-selling print book and has been on the New York Times' bestseller list for over 90 weeks. Baldoni and Wayfarer have been working closely with Hoover as a consultant on the film. She's set to make her feature directorial debut with 'Seconds', an adaptation of Bryan Lee O'Malley's graphic novel, written and produced by Edgar Wright alongside Marc Platt.



Blake Lively, Justin Baldoni to star in 'It Ends With Us' adaptation

'Avatar 2' becomes the fifth highest-grossing movie ever, passes 'Avengers: Infinity War'

Los Angeles | Agencies

James Cameron's 'Avatar' sequel is now the fifth highest-grossing movie of all time, passing 'Avengers: Infinity War' to take its spot. 'Avatar: The Way of Water' has now grossed a whopping \$2.054 billion at the global box office. 'Infinity War' had an equally impressive \$2.052 billion total, after releasing back in 2018, reports Variety. Only 'Avatar' (\$2.92 billion), 'Avengers: Endgame' (\$2.79 billion), 'Titanic' (\$2.19 billion) and 'Star Wars Episode VII - The Force Awakens' (\$2.07 billion) rank higher on the all-time list. 'Avatar: The Way of Water' has also earned more than 'Spider-Man: No Way Home' (\$1.92 billion), making it the highest-grossing movie of the pandemic era, reports Variety.

Internationally, 'The Way of Water' has grossed \$1.5 billion, making it the fourth-biggest movie in history. At the domestic box office, it's made \$603 million, standing as No. 13 of all time. It's just the sixth movie ever made that has crossed \$2 billion globally, doing so in its sixth week of release.



Sources say that 'Avatar: The Way of Water', which required the development of new technology to shoot motion-capture scenes under water, needed to earn \$1.5 billion to break even. Most films would have been wildly profitable from

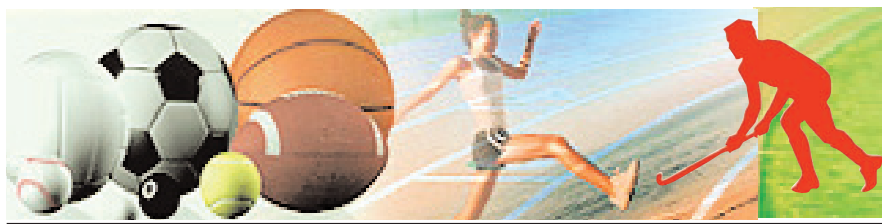
that point. Cameron is hoping to turn 'Avatar' into a five-film franchise, one that will tell a multi-generational family saga.

The filmmaker not only directed the latest 'Avatar' movie, he also co-wrote it with Rick Jaffa and Amanda Silver.

ABSOLUTE PIC OF THE DAY



April Banbury



U19 WOMEN'S T20 WC

INDIA BREEZE INTO FINAL WITH EIGHT WICKET WIN OVER NEW ZEALAND

Potchefstroom | Agencies

Riding on performances from leg-spinner Parshavi Chopra and opener Shweta Sehrawat, India have breezed into the final of the inaugural U19 Women's T20 World Cup with an eight-wicket victory over New Zealand in the first semifinal at the JB Marks Oval.

Electing to field first, Parshavi justified captain Shafali Verma's call to bowling first with a spell of 3-20 in her four overs and helped India restrict New Zealand to a mere 107 in 20 overs.

In reply, Shweta asserted her run-making process by hitting her third half-century in the competition and remained unbeaten on 61 off 45 balls to complete the chase in 14.2 overs.

After electing to bowl first, India were on the money from the word go and never let New Zealand get away, with Anna Browning and Emma McLeod dismissed in the first six overs by left-arm spinner Mannat Kashyap and right-arm pacer Titus Sadhu respectively.



As Parshavi and other spinners caused New Zealand's meltdown from 40/2 to 95/8 and eventually to end up at 107/9. In reply, India lost Captain Shafali Verma early for 10 off nine balls in the third over off Anna. Shweta and Soumya Tiwari took their time to build a 62-run partnership for the second wicket. Shweta showed signs of aggression when she hit a hat-trick of fours off the gentle medium pace of Paige Loggenberg, who kept bowling short

and wide, with the right-hander cutting with ease through the off-side.

Brief scores

New Zealand 107/9 in 20 overs (Georgia Plimmer 35, Isabella Gaze 26; Parshavi Chopra 3-20, Shafali Verma 1-7) lost to India 110/2 in 14.2 overs (Shweta Sehrawat 61 not out, Soumya Tiwari 22; Anna Browning 2-18) by eight wickets.

India vs New Zealand 1st T20I

Kiwis lead series to 1-0 with 21-run win

Ranchi | Agencies

Daryl Mitchell and Devon Conway's fine half-centuries followed by captain Mitchell Santner's superb spin show guided New Zealand to 21-run win over in the first T20I and a 1-0 lead in the three-match series at the JSCA International Stadium, here on Friday.

After Mitchell and Conway hit 59 not out and 52 respectively in powering New Zealand to 176/6 in 20 overs on a spin-friendly pitch, including the former taking 27 runs off the final over against Arshdeep Singh, India lost their top three batters in powerplay as Santner, Michael Bracewell and Ish Sodhi made the most out of turn while controlling their trajectory, line and length well to give visitors' their first win of the tour.

For India, there was a 68-run stand off 51 balls for the fourth wicket between Suryakumar Yadav and captain Hardik Pandya, followed by Washington Sundar notching up his maiden T20I fifty. But a climbing asking rate and losing wickets at regular intervals meant India ended up at 155/9 in 20 overs.



Put into bat first, NZ got going by hitting back-to-back boundaries in the opening over. As Conway got his ninth T20I fifty in 31 balls, Mitchell got going by smashing sixes. Conway fell for 52, followed by Bracewell run-out at striker's end.

Chasing a challenging target, Bracewell struck on his third ball in the second over, Kishan's outside edge and hit the off stump. In the next over, Rahul Tripathi fell for a six-ball duck as his attempted slog took an edge behind off

Jacob Duffy. Santner struck on his first ball as Shubman Gill went back foot to pull off a slower delivery.

Brief scores

New Zealand 176/6 in 20 overs (Daryl Mitchell 59 not out, Devon Conway 52; Washington Sundar 2/22, Kuldeep Yadav 1/20) beat India (Washington Sundar 50, Suryakumar Yadav 47; Mitchell Santner 2/11, Michael Bracewell 2/31) by 21 runs

Buttler confirms England planning for ODI World Cup without Stokes

London | Agencies

England are going ahead with their plans for this year's ODI World Cup in India without all-rounder Ben Stokes, the country's Test captain who was the hero of his country's 2019 ODI World Cup win.

England white-ball captain Jos Buttler has confirmed that at this moment they believe that Stokes has retired from limited-overs cricket and therefore are planning without him for the 50-over World Cup to be held in October-November.

One of England's best all-rounders in recent times, Stokes had retired from the 50-over format last year over concerns about his gruelling schedule.

But this week, England's white-ball coach Matthew Mott revealed that he would like the Stokes to be part of the England team when it defends its 50-overs World Cup title in India.

"The door is always open for a player of that quality but we are also very aware that his main focus is



red-ball cricket as the captain," he said, adding "we leave the door open." However, when asked about this on the eve of the three-match ODI series against South Africa at Bloemfontein on Friday, Buttler said at the moment they are planning without Stokes's involvement. "If he wants to change his decision, of course, he'd be welcomed back with open arms but we are very much at the moment planning as if he won't be available," Buttler was quoted as saying in a report by mirror.co.uk.

Indonesia Masters

Lakshya Sen loses to Jonatan Christie, bows out in quarterfinals

Jakarta | Agencies

Commonwealth Games champion Lakshya Sen crashed out of Indonesia Master Super 500 badminton tournament after losing to world No.3 Jonatan Christie in the quarterfinals.

Sen went down to local favourite Jonatan Christie 21-15, 10-21, 13-21 in 61 minutes of play. This was the Indian shuttler's first loss against Christie in their second meeting.

Both players engaged in high-quality rallies from the start but it was the Indian who went into the first mid-game break with an 11-8 lead. He built on his lead to take the first game convincingly. After the change of ends, Christie turned the table in his favour with a



clever mix of backhand and forehand shots and forces the match into the decider.

In the deciding game, Sen continued to trouble Christie by engaging him in longer rallies but the Indonesian, with more energy in the bank, led Sen 11-6 at the time of the break.

Sen produced a few good winners and reduced the deficit with four straight points post-interval. The fatigue, however, caught up with him as Christie sealed the match with his deadly crosscourt smashes.

Hockey World Cup

Late-blooming Germany ride Peillat hat-trick to stun Australia 4-3, reach final

Bhubaneswar | Agencies

Argentine-turned-German Gonzalo Peillat struck a second-half hat-trick and Niklas Wellen scored a last-minute goal as Germany fought back from a two-goal deficit to stun World No. 1 Australia 4-3 and reach the final of the FIH Odisha Hockey Men's World Cup.

With drag flicker Jeremy Hayward (11th min) and Nathan Ephraums (26th min) scoring a goal in each of the first two quarters, Australia looked on course to win the first semifinal with a 2-0 lead at half-time.

But Peillat, who switched allegiance to Germany just before the Tokyo Olympics and did not play international hockey for three years, struck with his drag-flick in the 42nd minute to reduce the margin and then levelled the scores in the 51st minute to pull Germany, who dominated the



second half, level 2-2.

Forward Blake Govers converted a penalty corner in the 57th minute to give Australia a 3-2 lead and once again it looked like the three-time winner's Kookaburras were on their way to their sixth final with three minutes remaining on the clock. But Peillat pulled Germany level again, converting another penalty corner in the 58th minute to complete his hat-trick. And then

Niklas Wellen stunned the Aussies by scoring the winner in the 59th minute, sealing a memorable victory for Germany. A yellow card to Australia's Top Craig (five-minute suspension) in the 59th minute too helped the Honamas prevail 4-3 at the Kalinga Stadium here. Australia earned five penalty corners and converted two of them. Germany earned 13 penalty corners of which they converted three.

La Liga

Catalan Derby to end first half of the season in Spain; Real Madrid face Sociedad

Madrid | Agencies

This weekend's matches for Matchday 19 of the 2022/23 La Liga season, closing the first half of the campaign and involve some huge fixtures including a Catalan derby between Girona FC and FC Barcelona and a top-of-the-table duel between second-placed Real Madrid and third-placed Real Sociedad.

Though the matchday begins on Friday night on the south coast with Almeria hosting the in-form Espanyol, the focus will be on the big encounter between Girona and Barcelona.

The action stays in the south of Spain for the first fixture of Saturday, which is Cadiz CF vs Mallorca. Given that the Andalusian side are currently in the relegation zone, they need to start picking points up quickly, especially at home.

Barca won 3-0 and 2-0 in their previous two visits



to Girona FC's home ground and will hope to achieve another victory in the neighbouring city to

secure their position as winter champions, finishing on top of the table at the midway stage of the season. Sevilla FC then have a second home game in a row just like they achieved last weekend thanks to a late Ivan Rakitic penalty. This time they'll take on bottom-placed Elche CF and Jorge Sampaoli knows that this is the kind of game that Los Nervionenses need to win if they're to pull away from the relegation zone. Osasuna vs Atletico de Madrid is next up, as Atleti hope to keep up their fantastic record against the Pamplona-based club. Los Colchoneros have won their past eight clashes with CA Osasuna, scoring 22 and conceding two in that run. After that, Athletic Club will be chasing their first La Liga win of 2023 when they visit Celta. The Basque side have had a tough run since the resumption of club football, but they'll hope to win in Galicia just like they did last season when an Iaki Williams goal earned them a 1-0 win.

Australian Open

Djokovic overcomes Paul to set No.1 showdown with Tsitsipas in final

Melbourne | Agencies

Novak Djokovic inched closer to a record-extending 10th Australian Open title after he overcame a sluggish start to defeat Tommy Paul 7-5, 6-1, 6-2 in the semifinals at Melbourne Park.

Djokovic's two-hour and 20-minute win set up a championship match clash against Greek player Stefanos Tsitsipas, who earlier defeated Karen Khachanov 7-6(2), 6-4, 6-7(6), 6-3.

Sunday's final will also be a straight shootout for No. 1 in the ATP Rankings, with the winner set to leapfrog Carlos



Alcaraz into the top spot on Monday. The Serbian struggled to find his best level at times during his maiden tour-level meeting with the American. Despite dropping

four straight games from 5-1 to let Paul back into the opening set on Rod Laver Arena, Djokovic ultimately converted seven of 11 break points to move within one win of equalling Rafael Nadal's tally of 22 major titles.

Djokovic was comfortable throughout the majority of his clash with Paul. The only exception was an uncharacteristic lapse in the first set, when Paul took advantage of a flurry of uncharacteristically wayward groundstrokes from the Serbian to recover a double-break deficit and level at 5-5.

Athletic Bilbao, Real Madrid complete tough last-four lineup

Madrid (Spain) | Agencies

Real Madrid and Athletic Club Bilbao joined FC Barcelona in the semifinals of the Copa del Rey knockout competition after beating Atletico Madrid and Valencia in their respective quarterfinals.

Real Madrid came back from a goal down at home to Atletico after former Real Madrid striker Alvaro Morata finished off a swift passing move from close range, on Thursday night.

Atletico sat deep in the second half, hoping to hold on to their advantage, but a brilliant individual goal from Rodrigo in the 79th minute took the game to extra time. Atletico were reduced to



virtually unchallenged. Earlier in the evening, Athletic Club qualified for the semifinal in four years with a 3-1 win away to Valencia. An own goal from Oscar de Marcos, who put the ball into his own net under pressure at the far post, drew Valencia level in the 44th minute, but Inaki Williams turned provider again for his younger brother, Nico, to put Athletic back in front before halftime, reports news agency Xinhua. That goal left Valencia groggy and Athletic controlled the second half, extending their lead from the penalty spot in the 74th minute from Mikel Vesga after the VAR spotted a foul on Nico Williams.

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ILT20: Sharjah Warriors-Dubai Capitals match called off due to rain

Sharjah | Agencies

Rain forced the Sharjah Warriors-Dubai Capitals match in the ongoing ILT20 to be called off after five overs of play at the Sharjah Cricket Stadium.

Dubai Capitals were 17 for 4 in five overs when heavy downpour ended the 17th match of the ILT20. As a result, both teams shared one point each.

Sharjah's medium pacer Naveen-ul-Haq, fresh from this five-wicket haul in the last match against Gulf Giants, bowled a tight first over giving away just one run.

UAE's Junaid Siddiqui struck in the second over, bowling out opener Hazratullah Zazai for 1 with the fifth ball and trapping Bhanuka Rajapaksa



leg before with the next delivery. When Naveen also had opener Daniel

Lawrence play into the hands of Joe Denly at mid-off, Dubai Capitals were

tottering at 8 for 3. Junaid bowled a brilliant fourth over giving away just four runs while Naveen struck again in the fifth over to force Shanaka to edge to wicket-keeper Rahmanullah Gurbaz for 2. At 17 for 4 in five overs, rain returned and forced the umpires to call off the match. Sharjah Warriors will remain in fourth position with five points from six matches while Dubai Capitals are at the fifth spot with five points from six matches due to a lesser run-run rate.

Brief scores

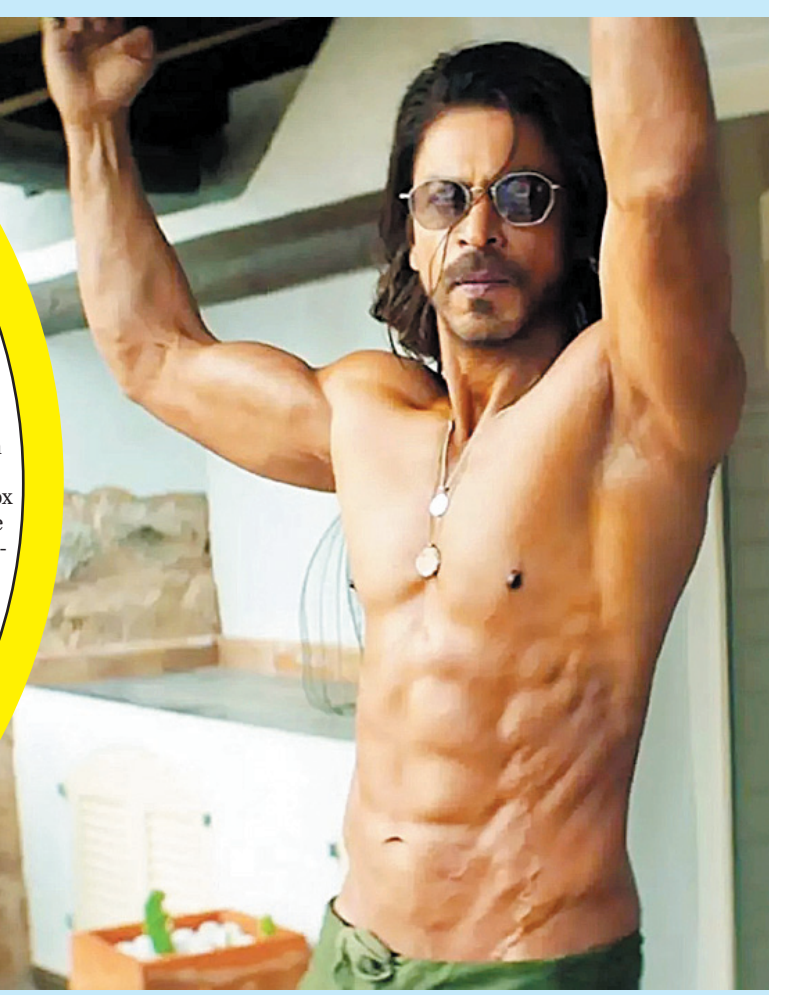
Dubai Capitals 17 for 4 in 5 overs (Naveen-ul-Haq 2 for 9, Junaid Siddiqui 2 for 4) vs Sharjah Warriors Match called off due to rain.



SRK & DEEPIKA'S MOVIE CREATES HISTORY, RAKES IN RS 219.6 CRORE WORLDWIDE ON DAY 2

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Bollywood superstar Shah Rukh Khan's latest release 'Pathaan' has created a storm at the box-office as it has crossed a whopping Rs 100 crores since its release on January 25. According to boxofficeindia.com, 'Pathaan' raked in Rs 68 crore approx in Hindi on day two and with the dubbed versions the total is likely to be above 70 crore nett. The two day business of the film is Rs 123 crore nett which is already the third highest weekend of all time after 'KGF 2' (Hindi) and 'Bahubali - The Conclusion', reports boxofficeindia.com. The film had registered a record opening of Rs 57 crore (NBOC) across India. The film, which also stars Deepika Padukone and John Abraham, released in three languages -- Hindi, Tamil and Telugu. 'Pathaan' marks the return of King Khan, as he is known, on the silver screen after 4 long years of waiting. His last film was the ambitious 'Zero' directed by Aanand L. Rai, which was released in 2018. The film was a box-office disaster as it earned Rs 88.74 crore in India. Prior to that, SRK's 'Jab Harry Met Sejal', which released in 2017, earned Rs 62 crore in India as per Box Office India.



I WILL BE BACK IN THE FUTURE AT SOME JUNCTURE: ALI FAZAL



Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actor Ali Fazal will not be returning as Zafar in the third installment of 'Fukrey 3' as "time and schedules" don't allow him to.

Amid the release date announcement of 'Fukrey 3', the poster created a tizzy as it did not feature the fourth 'Fukra' Ali Fazal. He has now come out with a statement saying that he will not be a part of the third installment.

Ali in a statement said: "So Zafar aayega ya nahi? Sab yahi puch rahe hain baar baar. Sorry saathiyon, iss baari nahi! (Everyone is asking if Zafar will come or But Sorry, not this time.)"

He added: "Zafar bhai ko kabhi kabhi Guddu bhैया bhi banna padhta hai. Aur do universes overlap ho jaate hain kabhi kabhi. (Zafar sometimes has become Guddu bhैया. Overlapping happens in two universes.)"

Ali said: "Once a fukra always a fukra so I am around. . . But I won't be coming on screen for the third outing of the Fukras, Bholi and Panditji! I would have wanted to be part of it but time and schedules didn't allow me to."

"I will be back in the future at some juncture, maybe sooner than you expect. Zafar will be back after a small detour to entertain you guys!"

The third installment of actors Varun Sharma, Pulkit Samrat, Manjot Singh and Richa Chadha's comedy film 'Fukrey' is all set to hit the big screen on September 7 on the auspicious occasion of Krishna Janmashtami.

'Fukrey 3', which also stars Pankaj Tripathi, is directed by Mrighdeep Singh Lamba and produced under Ritesh Sidhwani and Farhan Akhtar's Excel Entertainment.

Moose Jattana loses cool with Kashish Thakur

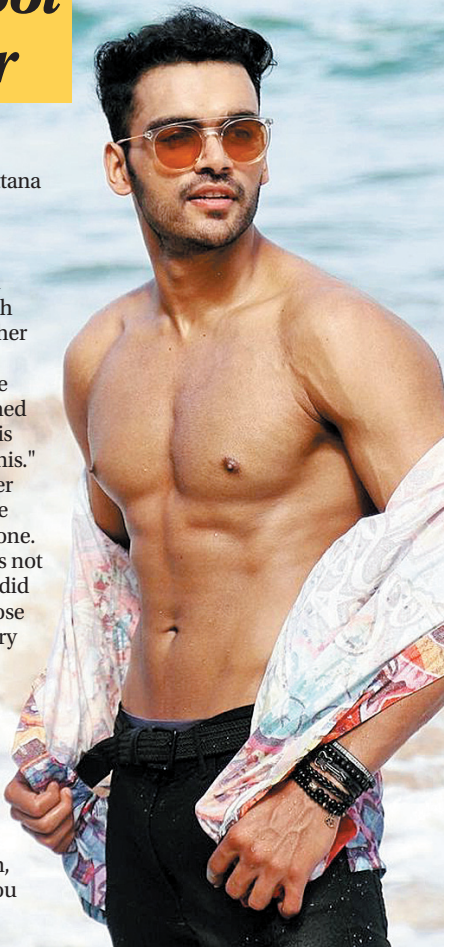
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'Splitsvilla X4' contestant Moose Jattana was seen getting upset with the behaviour of her co-contestant Kashish Thakur with her best friend Soundous Moufakir and she came forward in support of her. During one of the tasks, Kashish went to Soundous and told her he will not let her stay peacefully on the show.

Hearing this, Moose got angry about how he can say such words to her friend and she warned him, saying, "Don't cross your limits. She is my friend and how can you speak to her like this."

Furthermore, he shared a story of his mother and recalled how during a difficult situation he took a stand for his mom and never left her alone. After sharing this he started crying. Moose was not ready to believe him and said: "Whatever you did today was extremely low. I don't know how close you are to your mother, but to use that story just to stay is very low and disgusting. Everyone can notice that you are a bad actor." After listening to her words, Kashish started crying and other contestants including Honey Kamboj and Akashlina Chandra came in support of him.

Akashlina told Moose: "Sometimes you speak for him, sometimes against him, what are you up to? You are stooping low; you cannot speak like this about his mother."



Maira Dharti Mehra learns Punjabi for her role in the show

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Actress Maira Dharti Mehra, who worked in TV shows such as 'Sasurala Genda Phool 2', 'Yeh Rishita Kya Kehlata Hai', 'Kumkum Bhagya', 'Tera Yaar Hun Mai', 'Shaadi Mubarak', among others, shared how she learned Punjabi for her role in 'Pandya Store'. She said: "Every character needs a certain depth of preparation and with new characters comes a new challenge. To essay the role of Prema, I had to learn basic Punjabi. As my family members usually speak pure Hindi, so I have no link with the Punjabi language. When I got this role, I studied about the language and learned a few a Punjabi words. I worked on inculcating the Punjabi accent in my dialogues. I am still learning the language and proper pronunciation of words."

The actress was last seen in the web series 'Aashiqana 2'. She talked about her character in the show and said: "I am essaying the role of Prema, a Punjabi girl who has a very positive aura and energetic vibes. She is a happy go lucky girl who doesn't mind the negativity around her. Though she has returned from Canada, she has some Indianness in her." At last, she talked about the shooting experience and shared: "The working experience has been wonderful, to say the least, because the team of 'Pandya Store' works like a family. I am glad that I have an amazing team that is very supportive and fun to work with. I have everything I could wish for."

INSTAGRAM PIC OF THE DAY



Zaara Yesmin

TINA DATTA ELIMINATED; PRIYANKA, SHALIN, SHIV ESCAPE EXIT DOOR

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Contestant and television actress Tina Datta, who gained recognition with the serial 'Uttaran', has been shown the exit door from the controversial reality show 'Bigg Boss 16'. A tweet from The Khabri read: "Exclusive and Confirmed Yes #TinaDatta Is eliminated from the house. Elimination took place few minutes back."

Tina was nominated alongside names such as Priyanka Choudhary, Shalin Bhanot and Shiv Thakare.

Tina was making headlines in the show with her on and off relationship with Shalin. However, post New Years' celebrations in the show, the two were seen having differences. Shalin and Tina were also at loggerheads since the last two weeks.

After Tina's eviction, contestants left in the house include, Shalin, Archana Gautam, Priyanka, Shiv, Sumbul Touqeer, Nimrit Kaur Ahluwalia and MC Stan.

Nana Patekar is of a rare breed of actors who shine in any role: Vivek Agnihotri

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Filmmaker Vivek Agnihotri, who announced that Nana Patekar will be seen as the lead in his upcoming film 'The Vaccine War', called him a rare breed of actors who shines in any role.

Talking about the same, Vivek Ranjan Agnihotri said: "At 'I Am Buddha' we are committed to working with the best talent of Indian Cinema. For the vaccine war, the protagonist had to be powerful, credible and underplayed." "And when we were thinking to cast somebody whose performance is unquestionable the only name we thought of was Nana Patekar. He is one of that rare breed of actors who in any role shines and who has never compromised with his craft, with his performances."

He further added: "I am extremely glad that Pallavi and I made this choice of Nana Patekar leading the film. He has given one of the most powerful, credible, and amazing performances of his career." "He surrendered himself to the script and the character which is a very very rare quality among stars. And we are so happy and delighted that Nana Patekar is acting in one of the most important films of our times. Most inspiring and honest film of our times, the most sincere and truthful film of our times, The Vaccine War."

