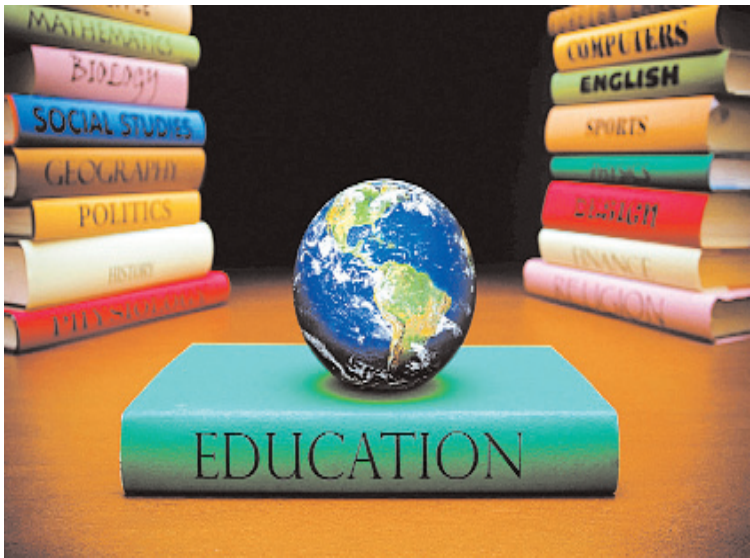


Why India needs to double down on education to emerge as a global superpower

NEED OF HOUR

- While the NEP 2020 holds enormous potential to transform the Indian education segment, the need of the hour is to ensure a holistic collaboration between the government, educational institutions, and private players to ensure the last-mile delivery of quality education.
- India already has the advantage of a vast human resource, and it is time for the country to utilise and upskill it to emerge as the economic hub of the globe.
- For this, a significant investment in research and innovation as well as the digitalisation of education is of utmost importance as citing the colossal number of students in the country, digital learning is not an option but a necessity for India.



Team Absolute | New Delhi

With the global economy grappling with uncertainties coupled with the recent Covid mayhem in China, manufacturers are increasingly looking for options to shift their manufacturing base outside of China. This yields an enormous opportunity for India to emerge as the manufacturing hub and global superpower.

"There is an enormous opportunity

in India, especially given the change in the geopolitical world and companies looking to find a country for manufacturing, other than China. The country has a talented workforce, particularly around technology," said Ezekiel J. Emanuel, Vice Provost for Global Initiatives at the University of Pennsylvania.

However, India needs to address some of the fundamental challenges to fast-track its journey of becoming a global superpower with education

being one of the biggest challenges.

"There simply aren't enough schools in India and most importantly, there aren't enough qualified teachers in the country to educate all the students, because of the enormous number of children here. And similarly, there aren't enough University positions in India for all the talented and capable people. While India is now beginning to open up its higher education to foreign universities like the University of Pennsylvania, universities aren't going to invest heavily and jump in, without Assurances," added Emanuel.

The University of Pennsylvania was the first university in the US to teach Sanskrit and also unveiled the University of Pennsylvania Institute for the Advanced Study of India (UPI-ASI) 25 years back.

Emanuel also opines that India will have to demonstrate its capability to perform high-value manufacturing to prove its mettle across the globe.

"I think the way forward for India is to show that it can do high-value manufacturing, and with high-quality output and consistency. There's nothing like the ability to demonstrate that you can fulfill the market demand and quality education will play a pivotal role here," added Emanuel.

2022 was 5th warmest year on record, situation alarming: NASA

THE BURNING EARTH

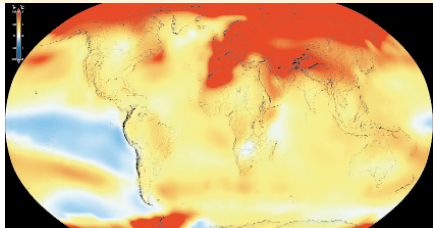
The global temperatures in 2022 were 1.6-degree Fahrenheit (0.89-degree Celsius) above the average for NASA's baseline period (1951-1980), scientists from NASA's Goddard Institute for Space Studies (GISS) in New York reported. Human-driven greenhouse gas emissions have rebounded following a short-lived dip in 2020 due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Recently, NASA scientists, as well as international scientists, determined that carbon dioxide emissions were the highest on record in 2022.

Washington: Earth's average surface temperature in 2022 tied with 2015 as the fifth warmest year on record, according to an analysis by US space agency NASA, which termed the situation as "alarming".

The past nine years have been the warmest since modern record-keeping began in 1880. This means that Earth in 2022 was about 2-degree Fahrenheit (or about 1.11-degree Celsius) warmer than the late 19th century average. "NASA is deepening our commitment to do our part in addressing climate change. Our Earth System Observatory will provide state-of-the-art data to support our climate modelling, analysis and predictions to help humanity confront our planet's changing climate," Nelson added.

NASA also identified some super-emitters of methane - another powerful greenhouse gas - using the Earth Surface Mineral Dust Source Investigation instrument that was launched to the International Space Station last year. The Arctic region continues to experience the strongest warming trends - close to four times the global average - according to a GISS research presented at the 2022 annual meeting of the American Geophysical Union, as well as a separate study.

Several factors can affect the average temperature in any given year. For example, 2022 was one of the warmest on record despite a



"This warming trend is alarming. Our warming climate is already making a mark: Forest fires are intensifying; hurricanes are getting stronger; droughts are wreaking havoc and sea levels are rising."

Bill Nelson, NASA Administrator

third consecutive year of La Nina conditions in the tropical Pacific Ocean.

NASA scientists estimate that La Nina's cooling influence may have lowered global temperatures slightly (about 0.11-degree Fahrenheit or 0.06-degree Celsius) from what the average would have been under more typical ocean conditions.

A separate, independent analysis by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) concluded that the global surface temperature for 2022 was the sixth highest since 1880.

Non-tech offers at the forefront for job recovery in 2023

Ever since the pandemic, tech roles have been on a rise, with even new age roles like Web3, blockchain, cloud and security gaining prominence. However, as effects of the pandemic relatively subsided in 2022, the world saw a return to normalcy in sectors like BFSI and healthcare.

Team Absolute | New Delhi

As the tech sector bleeds in the ongoing global economic crisis, non-tech jobs could be at the forefront for recovery in 2023, a report showed.

The largest increase in jobs was seen for the role of loan officer and bank officer was another role in the same sector that saw a tremendous increase, according to leading job portal Indeed.

"In 2022, we saw a significant increase in non-tech roles, given the relative return to normalcy in various sectors and we expect them to be at the forefront in job recovery in 2023," said Sashi Kumar, Head of Sales, Indeed India.

Additionally, "we foresee the growth of gig roles as well, with Indeed's data showing that a 9-11 million strong gig workforce is in the making in the next



three years," he added.

Tech roles are currently on a downward trend given that global technology companies are hiring cautiously due to the various economic shifts.

"However, in 2023, India will still see a demand for tech roles, especially in areas like 5G and telecommunications,

given India's progress in this space," said Kumar.

Roles in healthcare and allied fields also saw an increase in jobs in 2022 with radiologists, pharmacists and dentists in demand.

"Software engineering manager, application developer, and senior technical specialist are some of the job roles with the largest decrease in jobs," the report showed.

Overall, while employers were cautious in hiring in 2022, job postings were well above their pre-pandemic baseline (February 2020) by 181 per cent on the job portal.

"Looking ahead into 2023, employers are in fact optimistic about their hiring activity -- with 45 per cent of employers surveyed by Indeed foreseeing upto a 20 per cent increase in hiring," said the report.

EIGHT IPL FRANCHISES IN RACE TO BID FOR OWNING TEAMS IN WOMEN'S IPL

Women in fray

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Eight out of ten franchises in the men's Indian Premier League (IPL) are in the race to own teams in the Women's IPL, which will start from March this year with five teams.

A report in ESPNcricinfo says the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) is set to announce the winning cities along with the franchises owning the teams when it opens the sealed bids on January 25.

The report also confirmed that Mumbai Indians, Chennai Super Kings, Kolkata Knight Riders, Rajasthan Royals, Sunrisers Hyderabad, Punjab Kings, Delhi Capitals and defending IPL champions Gujarat Titans will be submitting



bids.

At the same time, it also said the two remaining franchises - Royal Challengers Bangalore and Lucknow Super Giants - did not confirm whether they had bought the tender document and whether they would enter the bidding for teams in Women's IPL.

The BCCI had put out a tender document on January 3, asking for "reputed entities" to acquire the right to own and operate a team in Women's IPL, through a tender process. It asked for interested parties to make a non-refundable payment of INR 5 lakh (USD 6000 approx.) by January 21 to claim the "invita-

tation to tender" for the same.

The report added that January 23 is the deadline to submit the technical bids for evaluation, which the BCCI will conduct along with the Mumbai-based law firm Argus Partners.

"The BCCI has listed 10 Indian cities and the venues in the tender, which allows a single party to bid for more than one city. There is no base price set, and bids will be accepted for 10 years (2023-32)," it added.

The BCCI was also quoted as saying in the report that the audited net worth of the bidder must be at least INR 1000 crore as of March 31, 2022. Consortiums or joint-venture companies are not eligible to bid for Women's IPL teams.

'I JUST MET GOD': RAJAMOULI AFTER MEETING STEVEN SPIELBERG



Mumbai: 'RRR' maker S.S. Rajamouli had a fanboy moment when he met Steven Spielberg at what 'The Hollywood Reporter' Boris Kyt described as an A-list star-stuffed celebration thrown by Universal at West Hollywood's famous Sunset Tower Hotel.

Rajamouli shared a string of pictures on Instagram from his meeting with Spielberg along with Golden Globe-winning 'RRR' music composer M.M. Keeravani.

The first shows Rajamouli all excited with both hands on his face on meeting the maestro. The second picture has Keeravani and Rajamouli posing with Spielberg. "I just met GOD!!!" Rajamouli captioned the image.

Spielberg carried home two Golden Globes -- one for Best Film and another for Best Director -- for his semi-autobiographical film, 'The Fabelmans'.

Kyt of 'The Hollywood Reporter' tweeted about the meeting with comment: "The fables men: Oscar voting began today and Universal threw an A-list star-stuffed celebration at the Sunset Tower. The highlight may have been seeing Steven Spielberg meet #RRR filmmaker S.S. Rajamouli and composer M.M. Keeravani. Not sure who was more excited to meet whom."

Tweeting Rajamouli's Insta post, Bobby Kolli (K.S. Ravindra), whose film 'Waltair Veerayya' starring Chiranjeevi just got released, exclaimed: "What a treat to watch the world's maverick filmmakers @ssrajamouli garu & #StevenSpielberg sir together."

Coffee may cut severity of fatty liver disease in diabetics

NAFLD is a collective term for liver disorders caused by a build-up of fat in the liver. These can lead to liver fibrosis, which can progress to cirrhosis (scarring of the liver) and liver cancer, according to a study by the Portugal-based University of Coimbra. The main cause of NAFLD is not excessive alcohol consumption, but rather an unhealthy lifestyle with little physical activity and a high-calorie diet.

- The study suggests that for overweight type 2 diabetes patients, a higher intake of coffee is associated with less severe NAFLD.
- Additionally, the study cited that other coffee components, including polyphenols, reduce oxidative stress in the liver, in turn reducing the risk of fibrosis as well as improving glucose homeostasis in both healthy and overweight subjects.
- All these factors may also alleviate the severity of T2D, the study mentioned.



Team Absolute | New Delhi

Caffeine, polyphenols, and other natural products found in coffee may help reduce the severity of non-alcoholic fatty liver disease (NAFLD)

among overweight people with type 2 diabetes (T2D), a new study has shown.

"Due to changes in modern diet and lifestyle, there is an increase in obesity rates and incidence of both T2D and NAFLD, which can ultimately develop into more severe and irreversible conditions, burdening healthcare systems," said the corresponding author of the study, John Griffith Jones, PhD, Senior Researcher at the University of Coimbra, Portugal.

"Our research is the first to observe that higher cumulative amounts of both caffeine and non-caffeine metabolites in urine are associated with a reduced severity of NAFLD in overweight people with T2D," he added.

In the study, participants who consumed more coffee had healthier livers, but subjects who consumed more caffeine were less likely to develop liver fibrosis, whereas patients who consumed more non-caffeine coffee components had a lower fatty liver index score.

STATIQ TO SET UP 20K EV CHARGING POINTS IN INDIA IN FY23

Team Absolute | New Delhi

EV charging solution provider Statiq on Saturday announced plans to install 20,000 electric vehicle (EV) charging stations across the country in FY23.

The company claims to have over 7,000 public semi-public and captive chargers in the country.

According to Statiq, more than 1,000 charging stations are equipped with fast-charging technology and are located in strategic locations such as malls, highways, airports, residential & commercial complexes, hotels, and office complexes, among others.

"We have installed over 7,000 EV charging stations in 60 cities across India. We remain committed to playing a prominent role in helping the consumers consider sustainable mobility in the future," said Akshit Bansal, Co-Founder and CEO, Statiq during the ongoing Auto Expo 2023.

According to the company, its EV charging initiatives are in line with the Rajasthan



Electronics and Instruments Limited (REIL), Indian Oil Corporation Ltd, GMR and others, which aims to develop EV charging infrastructure using the latest technology platform along with easy access to charging points for electric vehicles.

In addition to a strong network in Delhi-NCR, Statiq EV charging network is spreading to Mumbai, Chandigarh, Amritsar, Udaipur, and Bengaluru and Agra, among others.

"We are witnessing an overall change in how people travel, and to assure this change towards sustainable mobility goes through we want to be on the forefront to provide accessible, affordable, and reliable EV charging solutions to the people," said Raghav Arora, Co-Founder and CTO, Statiq.

G-20'S 1ST INFRASTRUCTURE WORKING GROUP MEETING TO DISCUSS INFRA AGENDA

Team Absolute | New Delhi

With a view to discuss the 2023 Infrastructure Agenda under the Indian G20 Presidency, the first G-20 Infrastructure Working Group (IWG) meeting under G20 India Presidency will be held during January 16-17, in Pune.

The forum will bring together the IWG member countries, guest countries and international organisations invited by India to discuss the 2023 Infrastructure Agenda under the Indian G20 Presidency.

The meeting will be hosted by the Department of Economic Affairs, Ministry of Finance, along with Australia and Brazil as the co- chairs.

The G20 Infrastructure Working Group deliberates on various aspects of infrastructure investments, including developing infrastructure as an asset class; promoting quality infrastructure investment; and identifying innovative instruments for mobilising financial resources for infrastructure investment.

The outcomes of the Infrastructure Working Group feed into the G20 Finance Track priorities and promote infrastructure development.

The Indian G20 Presidency's theme of 'One



Earth, One Family, One Future' sets the tone for the 2023 Infrastructure Agenda under the 2023 Indian G-20 Presidency.

The theme underlines the message of equitable growth and aptly ties up with the central agenda of the discussions which is building resilient, inclusive and sustainable urban

infrastructure.

Officials said that in the Pune meeting, discussions will focus on the agenda for the Infrastructure Working Group under the Indian Presidency.

The flagship priority to be discussed in this meeting is "Financing Cities of Tomorrow:

Inclusive, Resilient and Sustainable".

The theme will focus on various facets of making cities economic centres of growth, financing urban infrastructure, building future-ready urban infrastructure, directing fiscal investments for unlocking private financing for energy-efficient and environmentally sustainable infrastructure and mitigating social imbalances.

On the sidelines, the Pune meeting will also be complemented by a high-level workshop on "Financing of Cities of Tomorrow".

The workshop will discuss relevant themes pertaining to technical and managerial capacity needs to build the 'cities of tomorrow', investors' considerations in increasing private financing and the financial capacity needs of cities of tomorrow.

During India's G-20 Presidency, the G-20 Infrastructure Working Group will be used as a forum to discuss the challenges that cities face and opportunities that cities will bring in the near future and chart out a course that makes cities more liveable.

The Ministry of Finance will steer the G20 Infrastructure agenda to ensure that the G-20 acts as a global prime mover to envision new ideas and accelerate collective action, said officials.

Excise policy case: CBI team 'visits' Manish Sisodia's office



Team Absolute | New Delhi

A team of Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) on Saturday visited the office of Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia in connection with the Delhi excise policy case.

While Sisodia claimed that the CBI raided his office, the central probe agency denied the claim.

A top CBI official said on condition of anonymity that it was only a search operation related to the excise policy case. "Today again the CBI has reached my office. They

are welcome. They raided my house, my office, searched my locker, even conducted an investigation in my village. Nothing has been found against me and nothing will be found, because I have not done anything wrong. I've sincerely worked for the education of the children in Delhi," Sisodia tweeted in Hindi. In November last year, the CBI had filed a charge-sheet in connection with the alleged liquor policy scam, but it did not name Sisodia in it, though he was named in the FIR filed earlier in the matter.

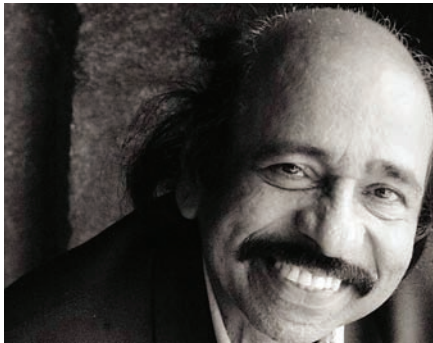
Jaipur Literature Festival 2023

K. Satchidanandan to get 8th Mahakavi Kanhaiyalal Sethia Award for Poetry

Jaipur | Agencies

The sixteenth edition of the iconic Jaipur Literature Festival is all set to run from 19th-23rd January at Hotel Clarks Amer, Jaipur. As every year, the Festival will recognise a poet of repute with the Mahakavi Kanhaiyalal Sethia Award for Poetry. Given in association with the Mahakavi Kanhaiyalal Sethia Foundation, the award is a tribute to Mahakavi Kanhaiyalal Sethia and his immense repertoire. In addition to a cash prize of Rs. 1 lakh, the winner receives a memento of appreciation along with a felicitation at the Festival.

Following a unanimous decision by the jury committee, the winner for the eighth Mahakavi Kanhaiyalal Sethia Poetry Award is the pioneering modern Indian poet, critic, editor, translator, and academic, K. Satchidanandan. A former Secretary of the Sahitya Akademi, Satchidanandan has authored twenty-one collections of poetry, sixteen books of translations of world poetry and



twenty-one works of literary criticism in Malayalam and English besides plays and travelogues. He has won twenty-five awards for his literary contribution from diverse institutions in India and abroad and is a Fellow of the Kerala Academy of Literature. Representative collections of his poetry have appeared in eighteen languages. His work has appeared in anthologies of poetry in several countries across the world from the USA to Australia.

Hubballi (Karnataka) | Agencies

The garland gifted to Prime Minister Narendra Modi by a minor boy during his recent road show here has been sent to the Forensic Science Laboratory (FSL) for testing, police said on Saturday.

According to sources, the garland was subjected to detailed analysis at the FSL to ensure that it did not contain any harmful chemical and poisonous substances.

However, the tests have confirmed the absence of harmful or suspicious substances in it. A report in this regard has been submitted to the state police department and the Special Protection Group (SPG).

The boy, Kunal Dhongadi, had breached security to garland the Prime Minister. Later, he had described PM Modi as god. "He is



not an ordinary human being. I am his fan and want to meet him" he said.

He further stated that he is in love with PM Modi and wanted to take a closer look at him. "I want to invite

him home. I am inspired by his speeches. I had come to see PM Modi with my grandfather, uncle and a two-and-half-year old child. We had got the RSS dress for the kid," he said. "We wanted the child to garland

the PM Modi but it could not happen. So, I initiated to garland PM Modi and I also wanted to shake hands with him. But, the police prevented me," he said.

Former legislator Ashok Katawe stated that the boy was an energetic person. There is no violation with PM Modi's security due to his act. He is a die hard fan of PM Modi. However, he made a mistake by breaching the security of PM Modi.

He should be pardoned. The boy doesn't have an idea about police security, sensitivity of the issue and consequences, he added.

Union Minister for Parliamentary Affairs Pralhad Joshi stated that there will be huge security cover for the PM. The boy had breached the security to garland PM Modi. According to our information, he did it out of love for the PM.

AI urination case: Complainant rubbishes accused man's claim against her

Team Absolute | New Delhi

After Shankar Mishra, the accused in the Air India urination case, claimed that the complainant had soiled her own seat, the latter on Saturday rubbished the allegation saying that it was "completely false and concocted".

"The said allegation is also in complete contradiction and a complete volte-face of the statements and the pleaded case of the accused in his bail application," she said.

Mishra's claim came after a sessions court issued a notice on an application by the Delhi Police requesting his custody.

The victim said that her intention has all along been of ensuring that institutional changes are made so that no individual has to go through the "horrendous experience" she went through.

"Instead of being remorseful for the utterly disgusting act committed by him, he has adopted a campaign of spreading misinformation and falsities with the intent of further harassing the victim," she further said.



On January 13, Mishra told the court that he is not the accused. "There must be someone else who

peed or it must be her who urinated," he had said.

He further claimed that the woman was suffering from some prostate-related disease.

"Her seat was such that it could only be accessed from behind and in any case, the urine could not reach the seat's front area. Also, the person sitting behind the complainant did not make any such complaint," he had said. On January 11, Mishra's counsel had contended that his actions, while obscene, were not intended to sexually harass the victim. Metropolitan Magistrate, Patiala House courts, Komal Garg, who had reserved the verdict earlier, had also denied Mishra's bail plea, saying that the alleged act of accused of relieving himself upon the complainant is "utterly disgusting and repulsive" and the act itself is sufficient to outrage the modesty of a woman.

As Mishra had failed to join the investigation even after notice under section 41A CrPC being issued to him, his conduct "does not inspire any confidence", the court had observed.

On January 7, the court sent Mishra to 14 days judicial custody.

Goddess Kali poster: Filmmaker Leena Manimekalai moves SC to quash FIRs

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Filmmaker Leena Manimekalai has filed a plea in the Supreme Court seeking protection in the multiple cases registered against her for depicting Goddess Kaali smoking a cigarette in a poster of her documentary titled after the Hindu deity.

The matter was mentioned before a bench headed by Chief Justice D.Y. Chandrachud on Friday. The top court has scheduled the matter for hearing on January 20. The plea in the apex court sought a direction to quash all the FIRs registered against the filmmaker in various states over the poster of her documentary titled 'Kaali'.

The plea sought to quash the multiple FIRs registered



in Delhi, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Uttarakhand on complaints against the poster of the documentary. The plea has also sought a stay on the proceedings in the meantime, besides seeking action against those who issued threats to her on social media. The plea contended that the petitioner did not attempt to offend the reli-

gious sentiments of any person. The filmmaker claimed that she had also received open calls for violence against her and her family after she tweeted the poster of the documentary.

The petitioner submitted that multiple FIRs amount to infringement of her constitutionally guaranteed fundamental right to freedom of expression.

'BOYCOTT BANNER' ON MUSLIM TRADERS IN K'TAKA TEMPLE FAIR

Dakshina Kannada: Members of Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) and Bajrang Dal have put up a "boycott banner" against Muslim traders at a religious fair in Kavuru near Mangaluru city on Saturday.

The banner has been put up on the premises of Sri Mahalingeshwara temple which comes under the Religious Endowment department. The religious fair will be held from January 14 - 18.

"Earlier, majority of stalls were put up by Muslims. This time, the management of allocating contracts for stalls has been given to the Bajrang Dal activists," local said. The Bajrang Dal activists said that the "boycott" decision had been taken in the meeting of the temple management committee. The banner states that opportunity to carry out trade will only be given to Hindu traders who have belief in Hindu religion and traditions.

"There is no scope for anyone who believes that worshipping an idol is 'haram'," the banner said.

The constituency is represented by BJP MLA Bharat Shetty. In the wake of the development, police department has deputed force and platoons of the City Armed Reserve (CAR) on the premises and surrounding areas of the temple.

Will get your tongue cut, K'taka Min to BJP MLA on 'pimp' remark

In an embarrassment to the ruling BJP in Karnataka, two senior leaders, an MLA and another minister have indulged in a war of words by trading charges against each other.

Team Absolute | Bengaluru

BJP Minister for Heavy Industries Murugesh R. Nirani on Saturday warned party MLA Basanagouda Patil Yatnal that his tongue will be cut if he continues to talk "senselessly".

Earlier, MLA Basanagouda Patil had called Minister Nirani a pimp while talking about reservation quota under OBC category to Panchamasali Lingayat sub sect. He had also stated that he had no faith in Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai and approached the party high command.

Minister Nirani stated, "He (Basanagouda Patil Yatnal) had used the word 'pimp'. He is very much in that culture and uses the same language. Those who are born to their fathers don't use such language," he said.



"If he is talking without sense, his tongue will be cut. Chief Minister Bommai has given directions to be quiet.

If he doesn't want to be in the party, let him go out and stage a protest," he stated.

Vijayapura people from where he hails would give him a befitting answer. The reservation demand is not recent one. CM Bommai has committed to giving reservation for Panchamasali sub sect. The government had created 2C and 2D categories to accommodate the OBC quota. In spite of all this, Basanagouda Patil Yatnal is trying to put blame, Minister Nirani stated.

He also condemned the protest staged in this regard by Basava Jayamrutyajaya Swamiji terming it "politically" motivated. The SC/ST and Vokkaliga communities have made their submissions peacefully, he said. MLA Basanagouda Patil is issuing statements and embarrassing the government.

Twin brothers cremated on same pyre in Rajasthan

Team Absolute | Jaipur

Twin brothers residing hundreds of kilometres apart in different states, who died under similar circumstances, were cremated on same pyre in Rajasthan's Barmer district.

A pall of gloom descended on the Sarnon Ka Tala village after the tragic incidents.

Sumer and Sohan, 26, were cremated on the same pyre on Thursday.

Sumer Singh, who used to work in Surat, lost his balance and fell from terrace while he was talking over phone on Tuesday. He was rushed to hospital where he died during treatment. On Wednesday, his body was brought to his native village.

Sohan Singh, who was preparing for Grade II teacher recruitment exam in Jaipur, was called home on the pretext of his father Babusinh's ill health.

On Thursday morning, when Sohan Singh had went to fetch water from a tank, 100 meters away from the house, he fell into the tank. When he did not return home for long, the family members searched



for him and were shocked to find his body in the tank. Later, villagers fished out Sohan's body.

Villagers told the media that the two brothers had a strong bond.

They finished their studies together. Sumer Singh was not good in studies but he encouraged Sohan to study hard and get a teacher's job, the villagers added.

THE NEXT JOSHIMATH

IMD weather forecast Jan 14-17: Cold wave set to hit northwest India

Some other places are also at risk of sinking

Team Absolute | New Delhi

A sinking Himalayan town is highlighting the dangers posed to the region and the fragile ecology of the mountain range disturbed by a proliferation of dams, roads, and military sites near the border with China.

The risks, flagged for decades by environmentalists and activists, came to the fore recently after land subsidence - gradual sinking due to displacement of underground earth layers - led to cracks in hundreds of homes in the tiny town of Joshimath, located at an altitude of over 6,000 feet (1,830 meters) in the northern hill state of Uttarakhand.

The high seismic risk zone is dotted with several picturesque towns and villages that are gateways to hiking trails, Hindu pilgrimage sites, and strategic outposts in India's lingering border dispute with China.

The region is already vulnerable to frequent extreme weather events and landslides. A massive cloud-burst in 2013 left more than 5,000 dead in the state. Incidents of land sinking in the Joshimath area were reported as early as the 1970s. A rapid subsidence of a maximum of 5.4 centimeters was triggered in Joshimath town in the 12 days up to January 8. Slow subsidence of a maximum of 9 centimeters (3.5 inches) was recorded in the seven months leading to November last year, according to a statement and satellite images released by the



National Remote Sensing Centre of the Indian Space Research Organisation, NDTV reported.

Other places at risk

Tehri: Cracks have appeared in some houses in the region. The nearby Tehri Dam is India's tallest dam and one of the largest hydro-electric power projects. It's also a popular tourist destination. The project also raised concerns about the environmental problems of locating a large dam in the delicate ecosystem of the Himalayan foothills.

Mana: Considered the last village at the border with China, it's also a key military installation where troop strength was boosted after the latest India-China border stand-off erupted in the summer of 2020.

Dharasu: The hill town has a landing ground critical for both locals as well as the military for moving troops and material to the disputed Himalayan border. US-made C-130 transporters land in this patch.

NDMA BARS SHARING DETAILS ON JOSHIMATH

New Delhi: The National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) has issued a letter to the government authorities and scientific departments not to share details regarding ground subsidence in Joshimath with the media till a conclusion is drawn. The office memorandum came following widespread media coverage on the ISRO data on the ground subsidence at Joshimath in Uttarakhand. The memorandum released by the NDMA pointed out that the data released by government institutions are creating confusion among residents.

CRACKS APPEAR IN AULI ROPEWAY

Joshimath: The local residents have organised a front against the NTPC in Joshimath, by putting up posters demanding their exit from the holy city. Meanwhile, cracks have also appeared on the platform of the Auli ropeway.

The locals consider the National Thermal Power Corporation (NTPC) responsible for the the constant threat of landslides being faced by them. The cracks on the ropeway were spotted on Friday night and its operation has been stopped in view of the danger. One of its towers is situated in Manoharbaag ward, that has been declared unsafe by the administration, which intensified apprehensions about the ropeway. Ropeway Manager Dinesh Bhatt said that the tower is being regularly checked.



Celsius on January 5.

Chandigarh witnessed a bright sunny day after days of cold and foggy weather. The city recorded a minimum temperature of 9.2 degrees Celsius. In Haryana, Ambala recorded a low of 8 degrees Celsius, Hisar 8.5 degrees Celsius, Karnal 8.7 degrees Celsius, Narnaul 9 degrees Celsius, Rohtak 9.2 degrees Celsius and Sirsa 9.2 degrees Celsius.

The higher reaches of Kashmir received snowfall for the second consecutive day as the night temperature dropped below freezing point across the Valley, officials said on Thursday.

Snowfall continued in Sonamarg, Gulmarg, Pahalgam and other higher reaches of Kashmir. The officials said many areas in the plains of Kashmir received intermittent light rain.

The officials said there was some delay in the flight operations at Srinagar airport here due to low visibility. However, the operations took place in the afternoon after the visibility improved.

The meteorological office, in a statement, said, "Minimum temperatures over many parts of northwest India are very likely to fall by three five degrees from January 14."

"Severe cold wave conditions (are) likely over some parts of north Rajasthan and cold wave conditions in isolated pockets likely over Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Punjab, Haryana on January 15, 16 and 17," it said.

Maheesh Palawat, vice president (meteorology and climate change), of Skymet Weather, said sub-zero temperatures are expected in some parts of Rajasthan such as Churu and Sikar next week. "The mercury may dip to minus 2 degrees Celsius at these places, which is not unusual," he said.

After Singapore, Twitter likely to vacate India offices



Team Absolute | New Delhi

Elon Musk-owned Twitter is reportedly looking to shed its co-working spaces in Delhi and Mumbai after having already done so in Bengaluru.

The process for vacating offices was initiated in December last year, according to reports citing sources.

Around 150 of the company's employees work at the WeWork facility in Mumbai's BKC, and 80 at The Executive Centre in Delhi's Qutub area.

According to the sources, the company has also given up co-working spaces in Bengaluru, indicating that this was due to global changes within the company.

CONGRESS MP DIES OF HEART ATTACK, BJI SUSPENDED FOR DAY

Chandigarh: Congress MP Chaudhary Santokh Singh on Saturday died of a heart attack during party leader Rahul Gandhi's Bharat Jodo Yatra in Punjab. He was 76 years old.

Chaudhary fell during the rush of the yatra in Phillaur town and was taken to a hospital in Phagwara in an ambulance where he died. Leader of Opposition in the Punjab Assembly Partap Singh Bajwa said Chaudhary was walking along with a fellow MP from Kerala and suddenly collapsed.

In 2019, Chaudhary became the second-time MP from Jalandhar with a margin of 19,491 votes.

His cremation will take place on Sunday at 10.30 a.m. at his native Gakhlan Dhaliwal village in Jalandhar.

Apple releases music, TV, Devices apps on Microsoft Store

San Francisco | Agencies

Apple has quietly released pre-view versions of its Music, TV, and Devices apps for Windows 11 on Microsoft Store.

These three apps will eventually replace the Windows version of iTunes, which Apple previously made available in the Windows 10 Microsoft Store alongside iCloud for Windows.

According to GSMArena, Apple Music will support a Windows user's local music library while also providing access to Apple Music's paid service.

Apple TV will include original content as well as content from Paramount+, AMC+, Showtime, Starz, and other providers. Users can also rent new releases and view their iTunes purchases.

Moreover, when users connect an iPhone, the Apple Devices app will take over sync to devices (iPhone, iPad, iPod), as well as local backup and restore, and emergency software updates - this functionality has been



moved to macOS' Finder, according to the report.

Meanwhile, Apple introduced a new free tool named 'Apple Business Connect' which will allow businesses of all sizes to customise the way their information appears across Apple applications like Maps, Messages, Wallet and Siri. With this new tool, all businesses can now directly manage their information in the interactive Apple Maps place card, such as inviting customers to take actions like ordering food or making a reservation directly from Maps, the tech giant said in a blogpost.

AVALANCHE DAMAGES WORKSHOP IN J&K'S SONAMARG HILL STATION

Srinagar: A workshop was damaged on Saturday when an avalanche hit Sarbal area of Sonamarg in Jammu and Kashmir's Ganderbal district.

Officers said a workshop of Megha Engineering And Infrastructure Limited got damaged. The workshop was located near the Zojila Tunnel project. "There was no loss of life in this accident," officials said. Officials said that all the labourers working at the tunnel project will be shifted to safer places.

This is the second avalanche to strike Sarbal area in two days. An avalanche had killed 2 labourers in the same area on Thursday.

One dead, 8 injured in stampede at Makar Mela in Cuttack

Bhubaneswar: At least one person died while eight others were injured, of which four are in serious condition, in a stampede in Cuttack district on the occasion of Makar Mela on Saturday, the police said.

The untoward incident happened on the Badamba-Gopinathpur T-bridge where a large number of devotees had gathered for Makar Mela. The devotees were crossing the bridge to visit a fair and also to pay obeisance to Lord Singhanath near the bridge.

Local MLA Debi Prasad Mishra confirmed that a 45-year-old woman named Anjana Swain died in the stampede, while four seriously injured persons were admitted to the SCB

Medical College Hospital in Cuttack city.

The other injured persons were admitted to the nearby community health centre (CHC) in Badamba, he said.

Meanwhile, the locals alleged that the administration was not fully equipped to manage such a large number of devotees. Adequate number of police personnel were not put in place, they alleged. Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik expressed grief over the incident and announced ex-gratia of Rs 5 lakh for the family of the deceased.

The Chief Minister also instructed the concerned officials to provide free treatment to all the injured persons.

Man dragged on car's bonnet in Delhi; 1 arrested

A man was dragged on a car's bonnet in the west Delhi area, the police said on Saturday, adding it was an incident of road rage. The video of the incident, which occurred on January 12, was also doing rounds on social media.

Team Absolute | New Delhi

In the video, a man is seen on the bonnet of a moving white Maruti Dzire car. Police said that they have arrested an individual -- identified as Ishant (19), a resident of Bhopura in Ghaziabad.

According to a senior police officer, on Thursday, a police control room (PCR) call regarding a quarrel at Ring Road was received at Rajouri Garden police station following which a police team was dispatched for the spot.

"During enquiry, it came to notice that an incident of road rage had happened between two persons (driving their respective cars), Jaiprakash and Ishant Sapolia. They



both also sustained minor injuries during the scuffle," said the official.

"Jaiprakash told police that Ishant, who was driving a Maruti

Ex-SC Judge Indu Malhotra prays at Sabarimala temple



Thiruvananthapuram | Agencies

Former Supreme Court Judge Indu Malhotra prayed at the famous Sabarimala temple on Saturday.

She garnered widespread attention when she battled for religious bodies to be able to decide their customs themselves in the Sabarimala case in 2018.

As a member of the Supreme Court's five-judge Constitution bench,

Malhotra differed from the other judges who stood with allowing women's entry in the temple. According to custom, women in the age group of 10 to 50 are banned from entering the temple. However, the apex court bench lifted the ban, which was strongly opposed by many devotees who chased away several women who reached the temple.

Malhotra refused to comment on the case, saying that the purpose of her visit was to pray.



NEED TO RESTORE REPUTATION OF POLICE, TARNISHED IN PAST: DY CM FADNAVIS

Fadnavis launched Maharashtra Emergency Response Team (MERS). Under MERS, after dialling the dedicated number 112, callers can reach the Maharashtra police using social media platforms. "The integration of social media platforms (Twitter, Facebook, WhatsApp), email, web portal, and citizen mobile app will help citizens to reach out to the police even faster and help curb crime with immediate action and minimum response time," he concluded.

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis on Saturday underlined the need to restore the "reputation" of state police which he said was "tarnished" by some people in the recent past. Fadnavis, who handles the Home portfolio, was speaking on the sideline of a conference of senior police officers on the Crime and Law and Order held at the centre for police research here. He said a strategy is being prepared to eradicate the drug menace in the state and a drive would be launched. "A conference of senior police officials on crime was organised. The status of crime rate in different units of police, the rate of conviction, strategies, and other aspects of policing were discussed and deliberated during the meeting," he said. Fadnavis said he assured police officers that in the new regime, they will not have to face any "wrongdoing" in terms of transfers and postings.

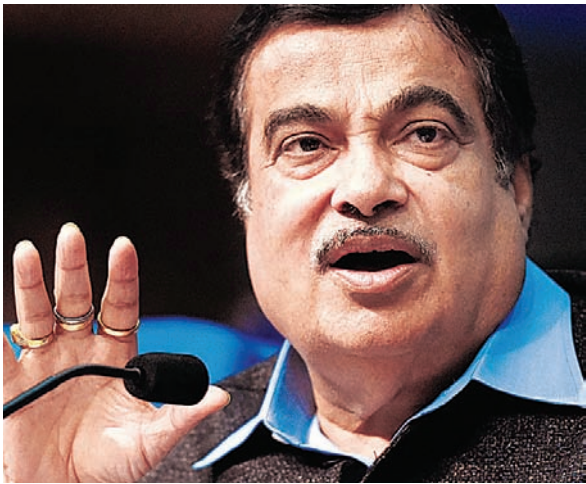


"Recently, we effected transfers and postings, and nobody had to face any (allegations) related to corruption. It is expected they (police officers) will perform their further duties transparently," the Deputy CM said. The Eknath Shinde-BJP government came to power in July last year. "The reputation of the Maharashtra Police was tarnished by some people of late. Work should be done to restore that reputation," he added. Notably, then state home minister Anil Deshmukh of NCP had faced allegations of ordering Mumbai Police to collect money every month from bars and hotels, following which CBI registered a case. Deshmukh, currently out on bail, had denied the allegations raised by former Mumbai police commissioner Pram Bir Singh. Fadnavis said the police department faced challenges such as communal and religious tensions. "I have directed everyone to bring these tensions down," he added.

Union Minister Nitin Gadkari receives death threat from 'Dawood Ibrahim's gang'

Team Absolute | Nagpur

Union Minister Nitin Gadkari has reportedly received death threats at his public relations office in Nagpur on Saturday. His office received three threatening calls, in which the caller threatened to kill Gadkari and demanded extortion money. The caller reportedly mentioned the name "Dawood" (referring to Dawood Ibrahim) during the calls. The threats calls were made at 11:29 am, 11:35 am and 12:32 pm. The police and senior officials have reached Gadkari's office and are investigating the matter. Rahul Madane, DCP Nagpur spoke to the media about the incident and said, "There were three phone calls. The



details are being found, and our crime branch will work on the CDR. An analysis is underway. Existing security has been increased. Security

has also been increased at the venue of the program of minister Gadkari." Gadkari is currently in Nagpur.

SECURITY INCREASED AT GADKARI'S NAGPUR HOUSE

Security was beefed up at Union minister Nitin Gadkari's residence and office in Maharashtra's Nagpur after an unidentified person made threat calls, police said. Three threat calls were received at Gadkari's public relations office in Khamla area between 11.25 am to 12.30 pm, an official said. "We are working to identify the caller," the senior police official added.

40 hurt as tempo carrying workers plunges into Mahabaleshwar gorge



Team Absolute | Satara

At least 40 people were injured when a tempo carrying them plunged into a 300-foot deep valley in the Mugdev village ghats of the Mahabaleshwar hills, police officials and rescuers said here on Saturday. The tempo had left Pune on Friday evening with around 44 people comprising 17 women and 11 children, all hailing from Akola and

Buldhana districts.

It was bound for a new work site at the Tapola resort near Mahabaleshwar hill station. As per investigations, the tempo driver lost control of the vehicle and tumbled into the gorge, around 9 a.m. on Saturday. Luckily, most of the 40 injured, including two pregnant women and around 11 children, sustained only minor injuries despite the deep plunge and many managed to jump out as the

tempo rolled down. On learning of the incident, several volunteers of Sahyadri Trekkers like Sanjay Parthe, Deepak Jadhav along with local villagers launched a rescue operation. They climbed down with ropes and managed to bring a majority of the victims to safety even as Satara Police, fire-brigade and disaster teams rushed there. Of the three kids injured, the condition of two was critical and they were shifted to a Satara hospital, while the status of two pregnant women is said to be stable. According to the initial police probe, the tempo may have slid from the road while negotiating a steep curve, the driver lost control and the vehicle fell into the gorge. The police are probing other angles like whether the tempo was overloaded by the labour contractor, whether the driver was inebriated and the road-worthiness of the vehicle for plying in the treacherous ghats.

STUDENT, "HUMILIATED", OVER UNPAID FEES



Mumbai: A First Information Report has been registered against the principal and a class teacher of a prominent school in Dadar area for allegedly not allowing an 8-year-old girl to take a unit test over unpaid school fees, police said on Saturday. "She was also made to sit separately from other students in the classroom to humiliate her," the official said, quoting the father's complaint. The police have registered an FIR under Section 75 of the Juvenile Justice Act. The section provides for punishment if any person having control of a child, assaults, abandons, abuses or willfully neglects him or her. Investigation is on and no arrest has been made, said the official.

"Government of traitors" to collapse in next 2 months: Aaditya Thackeray

Team Absolute | Thane

Shiv Sena (UBT) leader Aaditya Thackeray on Saturday said there has been a "radical change" in his party which was once known for its aggressive "sons-of-the-soil" politics. The former Maharashtra minister was speaking at a job fair organised by the Shiv Sena faction led by his father Uddhav Thackeray in Thane. "There has been a radical change in the Shiv Sena which used to launch agitations for the rights of the sons of the soil...now we organise job fairs to address the issues of the sons of the soil, especially the youth," the 32-year-old MLA from Worli said. A new and stronger Shiv Sena was in the making as youths were becoming part of it, the Thackeray family scion added. The coalition government of the BJP and the Eknath Shinde-led Balasahebchanchi Shiv Sena has done nothing for Maharashtra other than dividing people, Aaditya Thackeray said. This "government of gaddars" (traitors) will collapse in the next two months, he claimed. Thane, notably, is the home turf of Chief Minister Eknath Shinde,



whose rebellion led to the collapse of the Uddhav Thackeray-led Maha Vikas Aghadi government in June 2022. Mr Shinde then tied up with the BJP to form the government. Of the 55 Sena MLAs, 40 are with the Shinde camp, while 12 of the party's 18 MPs have deserted the Uddhav Thackeray faction. "The ones who left us are 'gaddar' and those who remained with us are the real Shiv Sainiks," said Aaditya. Instead of focussing on unemployment and industries going out of the state, the government is busy settling political

scores, he said, daring it to hold civic body elections in Maharashtra. The Opposition had last year blamed the Shinde government over Maharashtra losing two mega industrial projects - the Vedanta-Foxconn and Tata-Airbus - to Gujarat. Even after two sessions of the legislature, not a single woman has been included in the Shinde cabinet, Aaditya Thackeray further said. He also expressed confidence that local MP Rajan Vichare, who belongs to Sena (UBT), will win the Lok Sabha election again in 2024.

6 ARRESTED AFTER GANGSTER CHHOTA RAJAN'S BIRTHDAY POSTER APPEARS



Mumbai: The Mumbai Police have arrested six people, including an organiser of a kabaddi programme for putting up posters celebrating gangster Chhota Rajan's birthday on Saturday and Sunday. The police found the poster in the Malad area of Mumbai. The posters "welcomed the honoured dignitaries" in the Kabaddi programme that was organised for January 14 and 15. Underworld don Rajan was deported to India after being arrested in 2015 from Bali in Indonesia. Since then, he has been lodged in Tihar jail in Delhi. In 2018, Rajan was sentenced to life imprisonment for the murder of journalist J Dey in 2011.

WOMAN INJURED IN ACID ATTACK, ACCUSED ARRESTED: COPS

Mumbai: A woman was severely injured in an acid attack in Lokmanya Tilak Marg area in south Mumbai in the early hours of Friday, a police official said. The 62-year-old accused, who is known to the victim, has been arrested, he said. "The police was alerted by staffers at the hospital where she was rushed following the attack. Officials including the deputy commissioner of police have visited the spot. The attack was carried out due to previous enmity," he said. "Acid was thrown at the woman at around 5:30am when she was filling water. The accused first abused her. He was held from the vicinity while trying to flee," the official said. The man has been charged under Indian Penal Code sections 326 (a), 307, 504, 506 for attempt to murder, causing grievous hurt using acid and criminal intimidation, the official said.

NMMC SEIZED 7 KG BANNED SINGLE-USE PLASTIC IN AIROLI

Team Absolute | Navi Mumbai

As part of the Cleanliness Survey 2023, the Navi Mumbai Municipal Corporation (NMMC) has increased action against the use of banned single-use plastics in the city. The civic body seized 7 kg of banned plastic and recovered Rs 15,000 from three shops in Airoli. The campaign against the use of banned plastic has been intensified keeping in mind the goal of a plastic-free Navi Mumbai. The Municipal Commissioner Rajesh Narvekar directed to speed up the campaigns in all departments. Following his direction, Deputy Commissioner of the Solid Waste



Management Department Dr Babasaheb Rajle, and other officials

carried out a surprise inspection in Airoli and seized banned plastic.

Andheri (W) station will ensure seamless connectivity between Metro Line 2A and 1

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Andheri (W) station (Line 2A) is the last station of Phase 2 section and it is a three level single pier cantilever station, which consists of a Property Development Level, Concourse Level and Platform Level. Andheri (W) station has three dedicated entry/exits connecting both sides/ footpaths of Link Road. The additional concourse level was constructed at Andheri (W) Metro Station on Metro Line 2A which was called Property Development (PD) Level, which will help to increase the NFBR and forecasted to earn approx 70 lacs per month non-fare box revenue to MMRDA. Andheri (W) station of



Metro Line-2A is connected with D N Nagar station (Line 1) at two levels for seamless passenger movement between two Metro Line's. This additional level has been provided to due to the fact that there already a running Metro Line i.e. Metro Line-1 just after the station location. In order to cross Metro Line-1 safely the rail level of Metro Line-2A had to be increased by 22 meters above the road level,

resulting in increased height of platform level 8 meters higher than usual platform height. Therefore, to utilize the increased height, an additional level has been introduced. Working on linking road was a challenging part. Traffic and Barricading Permissions in phase manner due to heavy traffic on Link Road. Conducting of initial survey of location was a challenge in view of the dense traffic flow in Link road during the day time. This activity was a challenge as a large number of vehicles were parked on both sides during night hours. However, this activity could be undertaken with slow pace under lot of co-ordination and liaison work with traffic Police.

"When the Metro Line 2A & 7 commissioned, it will be serving Lakhs of passengers. Andheri station itself will serve approximately 30 thousand passengers. They will be using in peak direction daily as this station is connected with Line 1. It will also become a conjunction point for passenger travelling from Andheri (W) to either north or east direction. The travel time for passengers boarding from Dahisar to Goregaon section to Ghatkopar will be reduced significantly": said Metropolitan Commissioner S. V. R. Srinivas, IAS.



Four arrested for tiger death in Pench reserve

Team Absolute | Mumbai

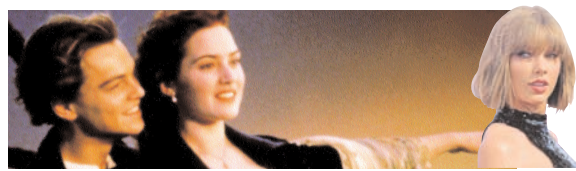
Four persons were arrested for alleged involvement in the death of a tiger in Pench Reserve, a Maharashtra forest department official said on Saturday. The carcass of the tiger was found in Paoni unified buffer range of the reserve on January 12, after which a probe began, he said. Three persons were arrested for alleged poaching on the same day, while one person was held on Friday evening, said Pench Tiger Reserve Deputy Director Dr



Prabhunath Shukla. The post mortem was carried out as per National Tiger Conservation Authority guidelines, he said in a release. Primarily located in the southern part of Madhya Pradesh, the Pench tiger reserve is also spread across 257 square kilometres in Maharashtra.

FAMILY INCLUDING 2 CHILDREN, FOUND DEAD AT HOME IN PUNE: COPS

Pune: A couple and their two children were found dead in their house here, police said suspecting it to be a case of suicide pact. Dipak Thote, his wife Indu, their son, and daughter were found dead in their house in the Keshavnagar area late Friday night, said a police officer from Mundhwa police station. "No suicide note has been found so far. We are probing the suicide angle and according to the preliminary information, there was some financial loss to the family," the police officer said. He said the deaths were caused due to consumption of a poisonous substance.



EMMA ROBERTS

SET TO STAR AND EXECUTIVE PRODUCER NEW SERIES



Los Angeles | Agencies

Emma Roberts is teaming back up again with Meaghan Oppenheimer for the new Hulu and 20th Television series, *Second Wife*. Only this time, the actress will be serving both as an executive producer and star in the romantic dramedy alongside *Lucifer* actor Tom Ellis, according to Deadline.

The announcement comes on the heels of the season two renewal of the drama series *Tell Me Lies*, which Oppenheimer served as creator, executive producer and showrunner alongside Roberts, who was also among the nine executive producers. Oppenheimer, 36, created *Second Wife*, and will also work as executive producer and showrunner. The show will also mark the first project Oppenheimer will be working on with Ellis as a married couple, who will be celebrating their fourth wedding anniversary in June. Roberts, 31, will be executive producing the half-hour show through her Belletrist TV banner.

It also reunites Ellis with Hulu and 20th TV as she stars in their upcoming limited series *Washington Black*. Roberts, 31, will be executive producing the half-hour show through her Belletrist TV banner.

Based on Carola Lovering's 2018 novel of the same name, *Second Wife*, considered a dark comedy, focuses on the ups and downs of a blended family, while exploring intimacy, failure, and second chances.

The actress will also appear in the superhero Marvel film *Madame Web* which is slated for a February 2024 premiere. She's also been linked to the upcoming films *Saurus City* and *Space Cadet*. This past year the daughter of actor Eric Roberts and niece of Julia Roberts starred in the romantic comedy, *About Fate*, that was released in September, as well as the horror film *Abandoned*, starring John Gallagher Jr. and Michael Shannon, that dropped last June.



BRITs 2023

Rebecca Lucy Taylor slams absence of female nominees in the Artist Of The Year category

Los Angeles | Agencies

Self Esteem singer Rebecca Lucy Taylor has slammed the absence of any female stars nominated in the Artist Of The Year category at The Brits 2023. Female artists were shut out of the category, which last year introduced a gender-neutral overhaul by scrapping its male and female-centric sections. In reaction to the news Rebecca Tweeted: 'R we sure it's not just best artist at Reading and Leeds award though.' The comment came in response to the Reading and Leeds Festival being slammed in previous years for a lack of female representation among its headliners. Nominated for Artist Of The Year are Central Cee, Fred Again, George Ezra, Harry Styles and Stormzy. The category saw snubs for artists including Charli XCX and Florence & The Machine, despite Adele scooping the top prize last year, the first time it introduced its gender-neutral overhaul. In 2021, the BRIT Awards announced that they would be abolishing its male and female categories, in bid to celebrate artists 'solely for their music.'

It comes after earlier on Friday George Ezra waded into the row over the gender-neutral of the BRIT awards amid a storm of criticism. He had to face the music after he was called out on Twitter for being nominated for the BRITs' Artist Of The Year award while female stars were snubbed.

The singer, 29, appeared on Lorraine and said the BRITs panel had done a 'great job of recognising talent' - despite the fact nominees in his category are made up purely of males following a gender-neutral overhaul.

Viewers took to Twitter in fury to question organisers' decision not to put forward a single female act and, awkwardly for George, many said they thought the likes of Dua Lipa, Raye and Florence & The Machine were more worthy than him.

One wrote: 'Are the BRITs truly saying they don't think there are any female artists in this country better than George Ezra?'

Los Angeles | Agencies

Coco Lodge today claimed Love Island producers forced her to wear a bikini against her wishes, leaving her feeling 'humiliated.' The former Islander, told MailOnline she fought against bosses who insisted she couldn't wear a swimsuit during her entrance despite her saying she felt 'uncomfortable' in the look they had chosen. She joined the 2022 cast as a Casa Amor bombshell and was filmed in slow motion walking into the Spanish villa ready to entice the boys away from their partners during the show's dramatic loyalty test.

Coco was left mortified after producers told her to go after Andrew Le Page, who was coupled up with girlfriend Tasha Ghouri, and they were intimate under the sheets, only to be rejected by the real estate agent once the challenge was over. In scenes that were never aired on the ITV2 show, Coco sobbed after Andrew kissed her breasts and then attempted to lessen the sexual act to 'I licked her tit or whatever' in what became the standout quote of the series.

Producers ordered Coco to be a 'bad b****' and not a 'sad b****' and riled her up until she confronted Andrew, in a move she said was to create more drama when in reality she was suffering a 'meltdown.'

Coco explained: 'I wanted to wear this orange swimsuit I had, which was flattering for my body. They decided I should wear a bikini though so I was going back and forth with them because I didn't feel comfortable. 'They said they didn't want anyone in swimsuits and they wanted us all in bikinis. They forced me to wear a bikini and when I got there, one of the other girls was in a swimsuit so I thought... you told me I wasn't allowed and I really didn't feel comfortable walking in wearing a bikini. 'I knew there were going to be slow mo cameras and I'm sorry, we don't all have perfect bodies. I wanted to feel really great just for that moment walking in. You put a lot of pressure on yourself and they forced me to wear a bikini... I was humiliated.'

Producers on Love Island forced me to wear a bikini: Coco Lodge



John Legend, wife Chrissy Teigen are proud parents once again, welcome third baby

Los Angeles | Agencies

Grammy winner John Legend and his wife Chrissy Teigen's family just got a little bigger as they couple welcomed another baby.

The baby was born on Friday (pacific standard time), the pro father confirmed hours after his child's arrival, reports People magazine. Legend, 43, told a crowd at a private concert that they welcomed "the little baby." "What a blessed day," he said. The singer added that while he "didn't get a lot of sleep" he "feels energised" after spending "a lot of time" at the hospital. Attendees of the special event immediately headed to social media to share the big baby news. "@johnlegend just told us he had a baby this morning," one concert-goer wrote, quoted by People. The

The first image of actress Marisa Abela as Amy Winehouse has been released and fans are divided in their opinions. The English actress, 26, will take on the role of the late star when production begins on a biopic about the 'Back to Black' singer's early life in London in the early 2000s and her rise to global fame, reports *The Mirror*. Amy's loved ones have backed the project, with the late star's estate previously releasing a statement saying: "We are thrilled that Studiocanal, Focus Features and Monumental are making this movie celebrating our daughter Amy's extraordinary music legacy and showcasing her talent in the way that it deserves."

'Mirror' further states that the upcoming movie is set to be directed and executive produced by Sam Taylor-Johnson - best known for her work on the John Lennon biopic 'Nowhere Boy' - and the director has said she is "excited and humbled" to be entrusted with such an important piece of cinema.

Despite passing away at the age of just 27, Amy managed to cement her status as legendary singer-songwriter during her short life - winning multiple awards and millions of loyal fans across the world thanks to her unique voice, personality and heartbreaking music. Following the first image of Industry actress Marisa of Amy being released, fans have been reacting and giving their expectations for the film. In the first snap of the 'Back to Black' star in character, Marisa can be seen rocking Amy's famous beehive hair 'do - with a glimpse of the late star's iconic tattoos etched on her upper arms.



Marisa

Abela's first look
as Amy
Winehouse from
biopic released

ABSOLUTE PIC OF THE DAY



Kylie-Jenner



Hockey World Cup

NETHERLANDS BEAT MALAYSIA 4-0 IN OPENER

Rourkela | Agencies

Three-time champions Netherlands got off to a brisk start on the second day of the FIH Odisha Men's Hockey World Cup 2023 by defeating Malaysia 4-0 in a Pool C match at the Birsamunda Stadium, here on Saturday.

Holland, who had won the title in the 1973, 1990 and 1998 editions, scored twice in the second quarter, survived some good attacks in the third quarter and then slotted two more goals in the fourth quarter as they started their campaign on a winning note.

Thijs Van Dam opened their account in the 19th minute with a field goal and four minutes later, Jip Janssen made it 2-0 by converting a penalty stroke as the Dutch held a 2-0 lead at half-time.

Malaysia had the better of the exchanges in the third quarter as they earned three penalty corners but could not capitalise on the



chances.

The Netherlands, the World No. 3 and one of the favourites for the title here, got going again in the fourth quarter when they scored off their second penalty corner when Teun Beins converted in the 46th minute.

The Dutch lead the standings in Group C on goal difference ahead of New Zealand, both teams will three points from their opening game. The Netherlands have a goal difference of +4 while New Zealand have a GD of +2.

NEW ZEALAND BEATS CHILE BY 3-1

Rourkela: The New Zealand men's team opened their campaign in the FIH Odisha Hockey Men's World Cup 2023 with a 3-1 win over Chile in a Group C match at the Birsamunda International Hockey Stadium, here on Saturday.

Sam Hiha struck a brace of field goals while Sam Lane contributed the third as the Black Sticks scored all three of their goals in the first half. Ignacio Contardo scored the lone consolation for Chile in the 49th minute of the match.

New Zealand are ranked 9th in the World while Chile are 22nd. The Black Sticks would have loved to have won the match by a bigger margin but that was not to be.

The three points they bagged augur well for New Zealand in the race for a place in the quarterfinals with World No 3 Netherlands and 10th-ranked Malaysia the other teams in Group C.

U19 Women's T20 WC

Bangladesh open tournament by stunning Australia, UAE begin with win over Scotland



Benoni | Agencies

The opening day of the ICC U19 Women's T20 World Cup 2023 in South Africa saw Bangladesh open the inaugural edition of the tournament by stunning a much-fancied Australia while UAE got going with a victory against Scotland.

At Willowmoore Park in Benoni on Saturday, Bangladesh registered their first-ever win over Australia at any ICC tournament, continuing their stunning run after winning warm-up matches against India and South Africa.

Bangladesh, led by Disha Biswas, chased down 130 with seven wickets in hand with

Sumaiya Akter hitting the winning runs and triggering euphoric scenes in the dressing room. They were also helped by Australia dropping catches at crucial juncture of the chase.

Disha had landed early blows by removing the Australian openers early. They managed to make a recovery to post a competitive total of 130/5, thanks to the efforts of Ella Hayward (35 from 39 balls) and an impressive Claire Moore (52 from 51 balls) steadying the ship with their 76-run partnership, apart from smashing 28 runs in last two overs.

In the other Group D match, nothing went Scotland's way as UAE

showed why they are a dangerous team in the competition, winning by six wickets. Indhuja Nandakumar (2/20), Vaishnav Mahesh (2/19) and Samaira Dharmidharka (2/22) were the pick of the bowlers to restrict Scotland to a paltry 99/9 in their 20 overs. Their only bright spot was Emma Walsingham top-scoring with 37 from 33 balls.

Brief scores

Australia 130/5 in 20 overs (Claire Moore 52, Ella Hayward 35, Disha Biswas 2/25, Marufa Akter 2/29) lost to Bangladesh 132/3 in 17.5 overs (Sumaiya Akter 41 not out, Dilara Akter 40, Chloe Ainsworth 2/9, Rhys McKenna 1/31) by seven wickets

Scotland 99/9 in 20 overs (Emma Walsingham 37, Katherine Fraser 17, Vaishnav Mahesh 2/19, Indhuja Nandakumar 2/20) lost to UAE 100/4 in 16.2 overs (Mahika Gaur 33 not out, Theertha Satish 27, Maisie Maceira 2/7) by six wickets

IND v SL, 3rd ODI

India aim for clean sweep, Sri Lanka seek to end tour on a high

Thiruvananthapuram | Agencies

Though India have already clinched the ODI series against Sri Lanka by winning the first two matches in Guwahati and Kolkata, the Rohit Sharma-led side will be aiming for a clean sweep at the Greenfield International Stadium here on Sunday.

For Sri Lanka, who have been outwitted in the matches at Guwahati and Kolkata despite showing some fight, ending the tour on a high with a victory will be on their minds.

In India's build-up to the 2023 ODI World Cup, to be held in the country in October and November, they have done fairly well. Rohit, Shubman Gill and Virat Kohli did very well with the bat in Guwahati.

At Kolkata, wicket-keeper-batter K.L. Rahul showed that he can be a reliable batter at number five when he shared vital stands with Hardik Pandya, Axar Patel and Kuldeep Yadav in acing a chase of 216.

With the series already in the bag, it remains to be seen if India can experiment by getting Ishan Kishan and Suryakumar Yadav in the playing eleven at Thiruvananthapuram. Sri Lanka, on the other hand, have shown, but in patches. In



Guwahati, Pathum Nissanka scored 72, Dhananjaya de Silva made a 40-ball 47, and Dasun Shanaka smashed an unbeaten 102. At Kolkata, Kusal Mendis and debutant Nuwanidu Fernando did well, but despite some lofty lower-order hits, Sri Lanka weren't up to the mark with the bat. At Thiruvananthapuram, they would like for a performance where the bowlers and batters click in unison to give a strong fight to a formidable Indian team, who are aiming for a series sweep after the 2-1 series loss to Bangladesh in December 2022.

SFI ANNOUNCES FIRST EVER INDIAN CONTINGENT FOR ISA WORLD SURFING GAMES

Mangalore:

Surfing Federation of India (SFI) has announced the first ever Indian team that will represent the country at the ISA World Surfing Games 2023 that will be held at El Salvador from May 30 to June 7, 2023.

Ajeesh Ali, Sanjay Selvamani and Sivaraj Babu from Tamil Nadu and Ramesh Budihal from Karnataka are the four who made to the first ever Indian surfing team for ISA (International Surfing Games) World Surfing Games who were selected after a 3-stage selection process. Surfing Federation of India is supported by its lead sponsor, TT Group, through the non-profit Covelong Arun Vasu Foundation. The Indian team that will be participating in this world surfing games will look forward to make the most from the competition as the ISA World Surfing Games also act as an Olympic qualifier event for Paris 2024 where Surfing will make its second appearance after its debut as an Olympic sport in Tokyo 2020.



Serie A: Napoli hand Juventus 5-1 thrashing, remain on top

Rome | Agencies

Napoli turned a showdown between two top teams into a lop-sided one as the Serie A leaders tore Juventus apart 5-1, with Victor Osimhen bagging a brace while Khvicha Kvaratskhelia contributing to three goals.

Napoli led 2-1 at halftime on Friday night, but Juve collapsed after the break to concede another three goals.

Napoli had won the Serie A winter champion with two rounds to spare as they had a seven-point advantage over second-placed Juve, while the Old Lady were coming off eight consecutive victories with clean sheets in the league, reports Xinhua. The home side went ahead in the 14th minute when Kvaratskhelia's acrobatic kick forced Wojciech Szczesny to parry it into the path of Osimhen to head in from close range before the Nigerian returned



the favour in the 39th minute for Kvaratskhelia to finish with a low strike.

Juve pulled one goal back in the 42nd minute as Milik tapped for Angel Di Maria to complete a left-footed curler. The Partenopei restored a two-goal lead 10 minutes into the second half when Andre-Frank Zambo Anguissa flicked on Kvaratskhelia's corner

and Amir Rahmani swept it in at the penalty spot. Moments later, Juve defender Bremer was robbed near the by-line and Kvaratskhelia's pinpoint cross allowed Osimhen to steer in a header. It was not finished yet as Napoli completed the scoreline in the 72nd minute when Elif Elmas' deflected strike wrong-footed Szczesny.

ILT20

Skipper Powell leads Dubai Capitals to thumping 73-run win in tournament opener

Dubai | Agencies

Skipper Rovman Powell with his brilliant all-round performance (29-ball 48 and 2 wickets) led Dubai Capitals to a thumping 73-run victory over Abu Dhabi Knight Riders in the opening match of the inaugural International League T20 at the Dubai International Stadium, here on Friday night.

Powell's aim to win the campaigner opener was well supported by opener Robin Uthappa (43) and quick knocks of 26 runs each from opener Joe Root and all-rounder Sikandar Raza as Capitals posted an



impressive total of 187 for 6 in 20 overs.

Thereafter, Powell (2 for 15) along with Akif Raja (2 for 20) and Mujeeb Ur Rahman (2 for 16) restricted Abu Dhabi Riders to 114 for 9 in 20 overs, for a massive win. Another highlight of Dubai Capitals' splendid win was Root's four catches.

Brief scores

Dubai Capitals 187-6 in 20 overs (Rovman Powell 48, Robin Uthappa 43; Ravi Rampaul 2-36) beat Abu Dhabi Knight Riders 114-9 in 20 overs (Paul Stirling 54; Rovman Powell 2-15) by 73 runs.

Almost done with BCCI and looking for opportunities abroad: Murali Vijay

Team Absolute | New Delhi

India Test opener Murali Vijay stated that he is almost done with the Indian team and is currently in search of opportunities to play overseas.

Vijay last represented India in the 2018 Perth Test while his last first-class appearance for his state team Tamil Nadu came in the Ranji Trophy in December 2019.

"I am almost done with BCCI (smiles) and looking for opportunities abroad. I want to play a little bit of competitive cricket," Vijay said to former India and Tamil Nadu player WV Raman in a weekly show on Sportstar.

In his 61 Tests for India, Vijay scored 3982 runs averaging 38.29,



including 12 centuries and 15 fifties, and was also the leading run-scorer in the 2014 Test tour of England. He also featured in 17 ODIs and nine T20Is for India, scoring only 339 and 169 runs respectively.

Vijay also lamented the mentality of the people towards players after turning 30. "After 30 in India, it's a taboo (smiles). I think people see us as 80-year-olds walking on the street. The media should also address it differently."

"I feel you are peaking in your 30s. Sitting here right now, I feel I can bat the best way I can. But unfortunately, the opportunities were less, and I had to search for chances outside."

IND V AUS

Sarfaraz would feel "cheated" after SKY picked for Tests, say experts, fans

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The national selection committee's decision to include white-ball specialist Suryakumar Yadav ahead of upcoming red-ball specialists, especially Mumbai batter Sarfaraz Khan, has raised a lot of dust with some former players and fans blasting the selectors for their decision.

Former India opener and noted commentator Aakash Chopra is one of the first to react on the issue and said Sarfaraz Khan might feel cheated for not being picked in the squad for the first two Tests of the Border-Gavaskar Series despite some good performances in domestic red-ball cricket. The selectors on Friday evening named wicket-keeper-batter Ishan Kishan beside stylish batter Suryakumar Yadav in the 17-member



Indian Test squad for the first two games against Australia, beginning on February 9. Noted commentator Harsha Bhogle said it was "very hard" on Sarfaraz.

Fans on social media concurred with

Aakash Chopra that Sarfaraz should have gotten the chance. "Selecting Suryakumar Yadav ahead of Sarfaraz Khan in Tests is an insult to Ranji Trophy. That guy has been one of the most consistent run-getters in First Class cricket and deserved that call-up more than anyone. Baffling selection by this committee, yet again," a fan Shivani Shukla tweeted.

Said another fan, Akash Kumar Jha, "Ishan Kishan and SKY in the squad, fair to say that Ranji performances have started to hold less value and public opinion has started to hold more sway. Ishan still understandable but SKY selection is baffling and won't send good signal to guys like Sarfaraz and Hanuma."

The topic is going to generate more heat in the run-up to the run-up to the first Test against Australia, starting in Nagpur on February 9.

Current Australia team has a huge chance to beat India: Justin Langer

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Former Australia head coach Justin Langer believes that the current Test side has got a huge chance to beat India in the upcoming four-match Test series, starting from February 9 in Nagpur.

It was in 2004 when Australia claimed a historic 2-1 Test series victory in India, where Langer was a member of the side led by Adam Gilchrist. Since then, Australia have been unsuccessful in winning a Test series in India. "Yeah, I do. Absolutely, I do. I can't wait to watch it. It's the hardest tour. I look back to 2004 when Australia won for the first time in 35 years ... it has a similar feel about it. It was a very balanced and confident team. The



(current team) are winning and I think they're a huge chance to beat India. "That was my Mt Everest tour. I always said I wanted to be able to do it again because it was so hard to do. You take on the biggest challenges. We took on sandpaper, we took on COVID, we're taking on India. If you have success in those periods like the boys are, this would literally be the icing on the cake for them to beat India in India," Langer was quoted as saying by The Sydney Morning Herald on Saturday.



'WE WERE NOT ALLOWED TO WATCH THE FILM BEFORE PUBLIC'

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actor Ram Charan, whose song 'Naatu Naatu' from the historical fiction film 'RRR' recently bagged the Golden Globe for Best Original Song in a Motion Picture, recently revealed that he saw 'RRR' for the first time in theatre with director S. S. Rajamouli at 4 a.m. in a local theatre because none of the actors were allowed to watch the film before it was opened to the public.

Needless to say, the actor was bowled over by how the director put the film together with the editing and

the spellbinding VFX.

Ram Charan told film critic David Poland, "My mind was blown and we never knew the same when we were shooting it".

'RRR' is the second film on which Ram Charan and Rajamouli worked together, the first was 'Magadheera'. Ram Charan said just like 14 years ago when his first film with Rajamouli was released, he watched 'RRR' too with the director at 4 a.m. in the local theatre. "We had the masks on because it was post pandemic, the cap and everything, but somehow I guess the audience figured out that it was me and

my family because I was sitting next to the director".

The actor also mentioned that 'RRR' was his 14th film and his 15th is on its way.

He further mentioned, "I am getting older and I plan to do two films a year. I have signed three films in 2023. For 2024, I have signed three films. I have six films under proposal".

When asked about his challenging performances, the actor spoke about 'Rangasthalam'. "I played a deaf character from a remote village. It was a great experience to learn the nuances of how a villager behaves who is also deaf," he concluded.

'ONE OF THE BEST & MEMORABLE SHOOTING EXPERIENCE'

Sidharth Malhotra shares his fond memories with cast of his upcoming film

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actor Sidharth Malhotra, who went through a host of workshops and conducted rigorous research to understand the psyche of a RAW agent 'Mission Majnu', has shared his fond memories with the movie cast.

Netflix's 'Mission Majnu', is a film inspired by true events, in which Sidharth Malhotra will be seen uncovering one of India's most important missions in the 1970s alongside Rashmika Mandanna, Kumud Mishra and Sharib Hashmi and Shantanu Bagchi.

Sidharth Malhotra said, "I have always been in awe of their work and watched almost every movie they have been a part of. Kumud sir is extremely chatty on set and the way he slipped in and out of his character the minute we were in action was very intriguing. I personally feel like he had the best character arc in the film and I'm really excited to see what the viewers feel about it."

"Sharib is extremely entertaining on and off camera and not only is he an excellent actor, but also a great singer. I am extremely glad I got to work with both of them!"

On set, Sidharth built a great rapport with the cast and crew of Mission Majnu and had one of the best and most memorable shooting experience.

On working with Rashmika Mandanna and Shantanu Bagchi, Sidharth said, "Shantanu has made his debut with Mission Majnu and I've been in awe of him seeing his

sincerity towards his work. We used to constantly keep pulling his leg for having a little diary where he would sketch every single shot of the film. He is an extremely visual director and I love that about him." "Rashmika and I had such an effortless friendship on set and I would love to work with her again. She is a fitness freak and we made our own makeshift gym on set to workout together in between shots. I am really happy she played the role of Amrin and cannot wait to see the viewers' reaction to our pairing."

'Music has no language': Adnan Sami

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Music composer Adnan Sami said that music has no language and boundaries, and has shared a heartfelt video compilation of all his hit tracks from South. His video comes out after he lashed out at Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy on the latter's separatist tweet on 'Naatu Naatu' from 'RRR' winning a Golden Globe this year. Post Adnan's tweet, Minister Rajni Vidadala entered the feud and defended the CM. Adnan wrote: "For those who try to curtail art within defined parameters, remember that MUSIC HAS NO LANGUAGE & BOUNDARIES."

The video shared by him is his popular track titled 'Nenante Naaku' from the movie 'Oosaravelli', 'Nachave Nizam Pori', 'Thangame Thangame'.



Ram Charan saw 'RRR' for the first time with Rajamouli at 4 am in local theatre

Sapthami Gowda joins Vivek Agnihotri's film cast

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actress Sapthami Gowda of 'Kantara' has joined the cast of director Vivek Agnihotri's next film 'The Vaccine War', the shooting of which is already in motion.

The actress, who plays the character of Shiva's (Rishab Shetty) love interest in 'Kantara', took to social media to express her gratitude to Vivek as she wrote: "I'm glad and excited to be a part of this project. Thank you @vivekagnihotri sir for this opportunity."

Extending a warm welcome to the actress, the director replied to her saying: "Welcome Sapthami. Your role in #TheVaccineWar will touch many hearts."

'The Vaccine War' is based on Indian scientists and on the people who have sacrificed their days and nights for over two years to develop a vaccine against covid. It tells the side of the story of Indian scientists who survived the pressure from global manufacturers and worked at odd hours to save the lives of countrymen.

Vivek Ranjan Agnihotri, along with the producer Pallavi Joshi, is all set to bring the movie to theatres on the occasion of the India's Independence Day on August 15, 2023. 'The Vaccine War' will be released in 11 languages.



'It made me realise what actually matters': Mithila Palkar

As she celebrated birthday with underprivileged children

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actress and singer Mithila Palkar, who celebrated her birthday on January 11, spent the week in a special way by celebrating it with underprivileged children. She celebrated it with children of Angel Xpress Foundation which enables educated, committed citizens to tutor, mentor and guide children from slums, and put their best foot forward towards the cause of educating kids. Mithila interacted with the children at the foundation and said, "I am glad to be a part of this initiative towards making a difference in various ways of creating sustainable surroundings for children." She added, "Celebrating my birthday by spending time with these confident and adorable children made me realize what actually matters. It was a fulfilling experience, and I am delighted to have interacted with these cheerful children who are so full of life. This birthday has been an unforgettable one for me." A few days ago Mithila took to her Instagram to wish all of us a Happy New Year and to talk to us about her new year's resolution which was to have a sustainable lifestyle. In the video, she said that she would be starting small, by carrying her own water bottle whenever she went out. She captioned the post saying "It's the beginning of a new year - the start of all things hopeful and new! This year, I have made a resolve to take small steps in the direction of a sustainable lifestyle. So...here's my attempt of a new beginning. MiConscious"



Navina