

# absolute india

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OVER 50 HIGH-IMPACT INITIATIVES LAUNCHED AT WEF

## FOR MORE SUSTAINABLE WORLD

"Our world is plagued by a perfect storm on a number of fronts," said UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, who called for urgent action on a number of interconnected challenges, including the global economic crisis, climate, income and gender inequality, US-China relations, Russia's invasion of Ukraine and the lingering effects of the Covid-19 pandemic. "Now more than ever, it is time to forge the pathways to cooperation in our fragmented world." World leaders expressed solidarity with Ukraine.

DAVOS | Agencies

With more than 50 high-impact initiatives were launched or profiled, world leaders gathered at the World Economic Forum Annual Meeting 2023 in the first major international gathering of the year to address ongoing economic, energy and food crises laid the groundwork for a more sustainable, resilient world.

While many economists forecast recessionary risks in 2023 and see geopolitical tensions continuing to shape the global economy, there are glimmers of hope that pressures on food, energy and inflation may be peaking.

Cooperation is becoming more virtual and the Forum's Global Collaboration Village showed how the metaverse can be harnessed for inclusive and effective international action. With the golden age of artificial intelligence under way, technology will provide more ways to bring people together.

As crises converge, so too must the solutions. The annual meeting emphasized connections across big systemic challenges. With over 480 sessions, more than 2,700 leaders -- including over 350 public figures government leaders and



47 heads of state -- came together at the annual meeting to address the world's most pressing challenges.

The Forum launched a new network of online regulators from the United Kingdom, Australia, Ireland and Fiji, which aims to create synergies across geographies and protect end users.

The Global Risks Report 2023 ranks the cost-of-living crisis as the most severe short-term global risk, while the failure of climate mitigation and climate adaptation are the biggest long-term concerns for humanity. The risks community identified three priorities

for its mandate: risk foresight, strengthening the quantification of global risks; and linking foresight and preparedness.

On growth, investment, trade and infrastructure, the Forum and the government of the United Arab Emirates signed a collaboration agreement on the TradeTech initiative to use technology to overcome trade impediments across sectors and geographies. They also signed an agreement to host the annual meeting of the Forum's Global Future Council 2023 in Dubai on October 16-17.

More than 50 countries launched a Coalition of Trade

Ministers on Climate to drive inclusive cooperation among trade ministers in the global response to the climate crisis, trade and sustainable development.

The US announced new resources for the Global Alliance for Trade Facilitation to advance work in bright spot countries making tough reforms.

A Forum initiative is supporting the WTO's Draft Investment Facilitation for Development Agreement, which is expected to be completed by the first half of 2023. Nine leading industrial clusters in China, Indonesia, Japan,

Spain and the US have joined the Forum's Transitioning Industrial Clusters towards Net Zero initiative to help industries reduce emissions.

Eight manufacturing companies committed to join forces and mobilize resources to further scale the Global Lighthouse Network initiative to accelerate digitalization, sustainability and inclusive workforce engagement at scale.

On health, the Forum launched its first thematic centre on healthcare and life sciences in Telangana, India, in collaboration with the state government.

On climate, energy, nature and sustainability, a new initiative, Giving to Amplify Earth Action (GAEA), will leverage philanthropic capital to help generate the \$3 trillion needed each year from public and private sources to tackle the climate crisis and nature loss.

The Global Battery Alliance launched a proof of concept for its Battery Passport to help facilitate the rapid scaling of sustainable, circular and responsible battery value chains to meet the targets of the Paris Agreement through electrification of the transport and power sectors.

The president of Tanzania and NITI Aayog CEO committed to joining the Food Action Alliance.

## 21-YR-OLD SONU BREAKS FREE FROM BONDS OF CHILD MARRIAGE AFTER 17 YEARS



Team Absolute | Jaipur

Sonu (21), who was married at the age of four, became free from the curse of child marriage after a court Jodhpur district annulled her wedding which took place 17 years back.

Sonu had pleaded for annulment of her marriage after being encouraged by Saarthi Trust's managing trustee and rehabilitation psychologist Kriti Bharti. Accordingly, judge Pukhraj Gehlot sent out a strong message to the society by annulling Sonu's child marriage.

The daughter of a daily wage labourer at Pithawas village in Jodhpur district, Sonu was married about 17 years ago to a youth from Luni tehsil under community pressure.

Sonu suffered the agony of

child marriage for about 17 years. The somehow she got the information about a campaign against child marriage. After being encouraged by Bharti, Sonu filed a case for annulment of her marriage in the family court. Her family members and even Bharti had to face many threats due to this.

After the jurisdiction of the court was expanded, the case was transferred to the ADJ (additional charge family court) in Bilara.

At the court, Bharti advocated the cause for annulling Sonu's marriage, after submitting all age related proofs and other documents.

Judge Pukhraj Gehlot then gave a historic decision to annul Sonu's marriage. This was the first child marriage that was annulled in the Bilara court.

## CONTINGENT OF IAF WILL BE LED BY WOMEN OFFICER SQN LDR SINDHU REDDY

New Delhi:

Marching contingent of IAF for the Republic Day parade will be led by a woman officer of the Indian Air Force, Sqn Ldr Sindhu Reddy.

Comprising four officers and 144 air warriors marching in a box formation, the contingent will be led by Sqn Ldr Reddy, along with three supernumerary officers -- Flt Lt Ayush Agarwal, Flt Lt Tanuj Maik and Flt Lt Pradhan Nikhil.

According to the Indian Air Force on Wednesday, the fly-past will comprise 45 IAF aircraft, including 9 Rafal Jets and four helicopters from the IA. The IL 38 Jet of the Indian Air Force will take part for the last time in the parade. The fly past would comprise formations of Dhawaj, Rudra, Baaz, Tiranaga Garuda Bheem Amrit Thrial and Vijay.

The IAF had won the Best Marching Contingent trophy in the years 2011, 2012, 2013 and 2020. The award of the Best Marching Contingent in the popular choice category in 2022 was also won by it.



## Adoration in India hasn't spoiled Sachin Tendulkar and that's amazing: Andy Flower

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Andy Flower, the head coach of Gulf Giants in the ongoing inaugural edition of ILT20, expressed his admiration for legendary India batter Sachin Tendulkar, saying despite all the adoration showered on him, he hasn't been spoiled by it as a human being.

"I've always admired Anil Kumble; obviously, he is an amazing bowler and a great competitor. And then I was fortunate enough to work with him in the coaching context. But I've got to settle with Sachin. We played against him a lot, and he scored tonnes of runs against us."

"I had the privilege of sitting behind the stumps with him for hours on end, watching him play. So, I think he's the guy, and not just because of his playing ability, but also because of the way he carried himself throughout his career. Now the adoration that he gets in India



could very easily spoil a person and that hasn't happened to him and that's amazing," Flower, the former Zimbabwe player, was quoted as saying by broadcasters Zee.

Flower, who is also head coach of Lucknow Super Giants (LSG) in the Indian Premier League (IPL), further disclosed how he works with a player individually when they are in their tough times during a tournament.

## UIDAI deliberates on focus areas like resident centricity, 'Ease of Living'

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI) on Friday deliberated on and decided to work on core areas to provide continued support to people in their daily lives, further enhance data security, and play a stellar role in furthering the cause of good governance.

The five core areas are resident-centricity, expanding the usage of Aadhaar, security and privacy, continuous technology upgradation, and collaboration with global economies and support them in their aspiration to achieve SDG 16.9 (provide legal identity for all).

These five focus areas were deliberated in a daylong brainstorming session at Gujarat's Kevadia. UIDAI CEO Saurabh Garg maintained that there is and will always be a continuous focus on how to support residents in improving ease of living, and better their experience in availing services.



Officials said that the Authority is constantly exploring and adopting ways to expand the use of Aadhaar for both ease of living as well as ease of doing business. Its sandbox environment will allow startups, professionals, and companies to explore and test innovative applications for increasing the use of Aadhaar. From expanding e-KYC adoption to popularising

offline verification for better service delivery to residents, UIDAI will strive to expand use of Aadhaar in multiple ways.

The UIDAI will be at the forefront of technology up-gradation to further enhance data security and privacy, seamless service delivery, and proactively address new-age cyber security risks, officials said.

## Bihar village dumps overhead electric lines, diverts road route for the sake of garudas

Rahul Kumar Gaurav | Bhagalpur

Local wildlife conservationist Arvind Mishra saw a Greater Adjutant Stork for the first time during his visit to the wetlands of Kadwa Diyara in Bhagalpur district of Bihar in October 2006. That was the beginning of his long-term association with the migratory bird.

Around 100 of them could be seen across four to five districts of Bihar until 2007. Their main breeding spot was Kadwa Diyara, located 250 km from State capital Patna. "But just as in other Asian countries, their numbers started to dwindle, which set alarm bells ringing for us," noted Mishra, also the state coordinator of the Indian Bird Conservation Network.

He launched conservation efforts through his Mandar Nature Club, but ensuring community participation

was key to his success. That was quite a challenging aspect as the bird, commonly known as garuda in the region, was not popular among the people.

The bird's above-five-foot frame, its grunt, balding looks, the enormous amounts of poop it generated, and the damage it caused to the crops worked against it. Moreover, it was an easy target for hunters due to its big size.

With consistent efforts, the number of Greater Adjutants in Bihar has increased to nearly 700 in 2019 from just 75-80 in 2006, according to Mishra. The latest numbers will be known in February 2023.

Apart from Kadwa Diyara panchayat, Ashram Tola, Kasimpur, Lakhminiya, Bagri Tola and Pratapnagar in neighbouring Khairpur panchayat have a sizeable population of garudas. Its smaller species are found in other areas.

Kadwa Diyara native and veterinarian Nagina Rai attested to the villagers' zeal for conservation. "Until two years ago, deaths of garudas after coming into contact with high voltage cables were common. However, public protests forced authorities to adopt underground cables." She credits the contribution of Dipak Kumar Singh, the then-Principal Secretary of the Environment, Forest, and Climate Change Department, who worked very hard to make this happen.

In 2018, when a four-lane road construction began, the villagers opposed cutting down banyan trees, a favourite nesting spot of garudas. The course of the road was changed to protect the trees.

Rai informed 101Reporters that villagers also protect burflinger trees, another popular nesting place of garudas. "Most of the people here are

farmers. Though they collect wood from their 'bageechas' for personal use, they cut the trees down only under compelling circumstances because they want to ensure that garudas do not face an issue in building their nests."

What is more, the villagers these days do not hesitate to give first aid to the birds in distress as they have received training in this regard.

The Greater Adjutant has transformed Kadwa Diyara in many ways. "People initially complained that the large bird dirtied the area with its droppings and damaged their crops. Hence, they destroyed garuda nests by cutting down trees. Later, they learnt that garudas could protect their crops from rats. They also noticed that incidents of snakebites have come down, as garudas eat snakes, all of which gave the bird a new identity," Dr Kumar said.

Shyamsundar gave a glimpse into how the village flourished after it became associated with the bird.

Bhagalpur Divisional Forest Officer Bharat Chintapalli told 101Reporters that the conservation efforts have earned Kadwa Diyara the tag of 'other effective area-based conservation measures' (OECM), which classifies areas known to promote biodiversity. "The OECM tag helps improve bird conservation efforts in a particular area. We are continuously working to develop garuda nesting spots in areas adjacent to Kadwa Diyara," Chintapalli added.

(This article was originally published by 101Reporters, under the series The Promise of Commons where we explore how judicious management of shared public resources can help the ecosystem as well as the communities inhabiting it.)

## CAMERON RAJAMOULI TO COLLABORATE FOR FILM!

Los Angeles: Hollywood filmmaker James Cameron, who spoke to Indian filmmaker S.S. Rajamouli, at length, was all praise for his vision, his genius storytelling and the emotions that drive his characters.

In his conversation with S.S. Rajamouli, Cameron said: "It's just such a feeling to watch your characters, and your setup, the fire, water, story, reveal after reveal, then moving on the backstory of why he's doing what he's doing, the twists and turns and friendship."

"It's just so powerful. And I love the fact that you just threw the whole thing out, it's just the full show. I love that. I can only imagine the pride and power your country and your home audience feels you must feel on top of the world."

Apart from speaking highly about the film, which Cameron's wife revealed he watched not once but twice, the 'Avatar' and 'Titanic' director also extended an invitation to collaborate with Rajamouli on an international film.

James Cameron said while the two iconic directors parted ways: "And one thing, if you ever want to make a movie over here, let's talk."

Rajamouli's 'RRR' also won India its first Golden Globe award for 'Best Original Song'. The historic film also won the 'Best Foreign Language Film' and 'Best Song' at the 28th Critics Choice Awards.





# REMDESIVIR SCAM: BMC EXONERATED, GOVT URGED TO LEGISLATE AGAINST MISUSE OF LIFE-SAVING DRUGS

Quaid Najmi | Mumbai

In a New Year gift to the Shiv Sena (UBT) and the BrihanMumbai Municipal Corporation, the Maharashtra Lokayukta has given a clean chit to the civic body from committing any irregularities or non-transparency into the alleged Remdesivir scam, raised by former BJP MP Kirit Somaiya.

Simultaneously, the Lokayukta, Justice V.M. Kanade, has urged the Maharashtra government to enact suitable legislation to ensure availability of life-saving drugs at reasonable prices to the masses and prevent misuse by way of black-marketing.

Justice Kanade said that during the Covid-19 pandemic, there was no effective machinery to direct private manufacturers to sell lifesaving drugs at particular fixed prices.

"The state of Maharashtra ought to have brought a legislation or ordinance directing the manufacturers to make the supply of lifesaving drugs available at a reasonable rate. If the provisions of the Disaster Management Act, 2005, do not give powers to the government, a suitable amendment has to be made to the Epidemic Diseases Act, 1897," the Lokayukta observed.

Justice Kanade said it is common knowledge that whenever demand goes up, and it cannot be matched with the supply of lifesaving drugs, medicines are sold in the black market by anti-social elements.

"The government of Maharashtra, therefore, shall devise a proper action plan by issuing necessary notification, regulation and pass appropriate Act to curtail this menace so that if such a situation arises in future, the government is equipped



with adequate powers to ensure proper supply of lifesaving drugs," said the Lokayukta.

On similar lines, the BMC and other civic bodies should also take a policy decision and ensure that the lifesaving drugs supplied to them do not fall in wrong hands and are used for the purpose of treatment of those suffering from diseases. As to Somaiya's complaint alleging corruption in the procurement of Remdesivir injections at the height of the

pandemic (2020-2021), the Lokayukta said it has not been "established and proved" that there was any corruption in the purchase of the lifesaving injections by the respondent (BMC).

"It is also not proved that there was irregularity and non-transparency in the purchase of this injection by them (BMC)," Justice Kanade said in his 18-page order.

The Lokayukta noted that it is abundantly clear from the documents provided by the BMC, including the Centre's letter, that there was sharp variance in the purchase price of Remdesivir injection in a couple of weeks after March 2021 owing to increased demand and reduced supply by the manufacturers and dealers.

Somaiya had pointed fingers at BMC, the state Director Medical Education & Research (DMER), the Haffkine Biopharmaceutical Corporation Ltd., and the Mira Bhayander Municipal Corporation (Thane) in his complaint dated April 2021. ing norms and there was a huge fluctuation of rates - ranging from Rs 658-1,600 per vial - thus alleging huge corruption in the deal.

The BJP leader's contentions were largely considered political targeting of the BMC, which is ruled by the Shiv Sena for the past over 25 years, even as the civic body is now preparing for elections soon. Accordingly, the Lokayukta probed Somaiya's allegations on the question of non-transparent procurement of Remdesivir injections, corrupt practices by the BMC and other respondents, to see if the justifications given by them on this issue was acceptable, and if any recommendations were needed to be made to the state/civic body to regulate the sale-purchase of such lifesaving drugs during any future pandemic.

## B'lruru Metro pillar collapse: BMRCL MD appears before police

Bengaluru | Agencies

Bengaluru Metro Rail Corporation Limited (BMRCL) Managing Director Anjum Parvez on Saturday appeared before the police in connection with the collapse of an iron pillar at the site of construction of Bengaluru Metro. Two persons were killed in the incident.

A woman and her son were killed following the collapse of the iron pillar that fell on them while passing through the site of construction. The deceased were identified as 25-year-old Tejaswini and her two-and-half-year old son Vihan. The woman was on a motorcycle along with her husband and another son. The Govindapur police had served notice to Anjum Parvez regarding the case. He appeared before the DCP (East) Bhimashankar Guleed and attended the inquiry.

"I attended the inquiry as I was summoned by the police. A report has been sought by the Indian Institute



of Science (IISc) regarding the incident and precautions that need to be taken in future to prevent such incidents," said Parvez. "The reports have to be submitted. The engineers are being trained to take up security measures. Action will be initiated against the construction company as per the contract agreement," he said, adding, "We will see to it that in future such incidents don't take place."

Following the incident, the "negligence" of BMRCL was criticised by the deceased's family as well as the general public.

The victim's family had lodged a complaint in this regard against the contractor and the Nagarjuna Construction Company.

## Wrestlers are scared, feel cheated, may re-start protest on Sunday, claim sources

Chetan Sharma | New Delhi

Unhappy with the outcome of the meeting between Sports minister Anurag Thakur and their leaders, the protesting wrestlers, IANS has learnt, can re-start their agitation against Wrestling Federation of India (WFI) president Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh on Sunday.

Sources close to the wrestlers told IANS, that the grapplers are feeling "cheated" and could resume their protest till Brij Bhushan is sacked. They are also unhappy that the national trials are continuing in Lucknow without them.

"Wrestlers are not at all happy. They feel they were fooled by the ministry. When they saw the news in the morning that the competition is on and Brij Bhushan is relaxed and enjoying bouts as president, (they think) nothing changed, so they are planning to restart their protest on Sunday or Monday," the sources said.

"Some wrestlers are so scared that they are thinking of leaving India and going abroad," the sources added.



# Kolkata streets turn into battlefield as AISF supporters clash with police

Kolkata | Agencies

The Esplanade area located in the heart of the city in central Kolkata turned into a battlefield on Saturday following clashes between the police and All India Secular Front (AISF) supporters.

The police have arrested the lone AISF representative in the West Bengal Assembly, Naushad Siddique. The root cause of the chaos was a development at Bhangar in South 24 Parganas district on Saturday morning, where supporters of AISF and Trinamool Congress had clashed with each other.

The AISF leadership claimed that their supporters were harassed by the ruling party workers when they were going to attend a function at the local AISF office to mark the party's foundation day.

However, the Trinamool leadership



claimed that it was their supporters who were attacked by AISF-backed 'goons', who even ransacked three Trinamool party offices. Since Saturday morning, there were incidents of sporadic violence at Bhangar,

the impact of which later spread to Kolkata.

Late on Saturday afternoon, the AISF supporters led by Siddique blocked roads in the Esplanade area, protesting against the Bhangar vio-

lence. They alleged that the attacks on AISF workers were carried out by the ruling party's 'goons' led by former Trinamool MLA from Bhangar, Arabul Islam. They also demanded immediate arrest of Islam.

As the huge police contingent tried to disperse the mob, the AISF supporters retaliated with brickbats and bamboo sticks. They even removed the guardrail barricades set up by the police.

The cops first resorted to lathi charge before firing teargas shells in their bid to control the mob. Several AISF supporters and some policemen were injured in the clashes.

After the police arrested Siddique, the AISF supporters became even more agitated and another round of clashes ensued between them and the police.

The clashes threw traffic in the area totally out of gear.

# Delhi Police nabs 2 members of Mewat-based ATM robbery gang

Team Absolute | New Delhi

After a brief exchange of fire, the Delhi Police's Special Cell nabbed two members of Mewat-based interstate ATM robbery gang from Delhi's Pul Prahladpur area, an official said on Saturday.

With the arrest of the accused, identified as Shohrab (27) and Sameer Khan (24), both residents of Haryana's Nuh district, the police claimed to have solved five ATM robbery cases registered in Delhi and Madhya Pradesh. The accused took away Rs 87 lakh cash after breaking those five ATMs.

The police said that Shohrab, the kingpin of the gang, is previously involved in 30 criminal cases including 25 ATMs breaking in



Delhi, Haryana and Madhya Pradesh.

According to Alok Kumar, the Deputy Commissioner of Police (Special Cell), in view of the increase in incidents of ATMs breaking in Delhi, a team was deployed to collect intelligence and to identify the gang behind these crimes. "Efforts of three month succeeded when a specific input was received on January 19 about the presence of two members of a gang indulged in ATMs breaking near the sports ground Surajkund road, Pul Prahladpur in their Ecco car," said the DCP. A trap was laid by the police team, and when the Ecco was seen coming from Faridabad side on Surajkund road, it was signalled to stop.

## Nadda kickstarts BJP's 'Vijaya Sankalp Abhiyaan' in K'taka

Vijayapura | Agencies

BJP President J.P. Nadda inaugurated a nine-day long 'Vijaya Sankalp Abhiyaan' in Karnataka at a 'mega' rally organised in Sidhagi town of Vijayapura district on Saturday.

Addressing the rally, Nadda said that he is confident that "the people will ensure blooming of lotus in Karnataka in the upcoming Assembly elections".

"I can see the signs... BJP is marching ahead with an agenda of ensuring welfare of all," he added.

"The good work by (B.S.) Yediyurappa is being continued by Chief Minister (Basavaraj) Bommai in the state," Nadda said. The BJP leader claimed



that mobile handsets sold in the country were earlier made in China, but now, they are made in India. "In production of steel, India has moved to second position from 14th position. In automobile (sector), India is on the third place... In terms of economic growth, Karnataka

is on second position," he noted. "As per the vision of Prime Minister (Narendra) Modi, 12 crore women have been given houses in the country. He (the Prime Minister) has ensured women empowerment in the state by building 27 lakh toilets. All four lane roads are going to be eight lane roads soon," Nadda asserted.

Former Chief Minister B.S. Yediyurappa said, "Congress leaders are in imagination. Under the leadership of Prime Minister Modi, Nadda and Amit Shah, BJP will win more than 140 seats in the state."

"Foreigners are praising PM Modi. Even Pakistani PM is praising him," Yediyurappa added.

## DEF MIN BATS FOR ENDING 'USE & THROW' FOR THE BETTERMENT OF ENVIRONMENT, SOCIETY



New Delhi: Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Saturday called upon the youth to eliminate the concept of 'use and throw', pointing out that the society and environment suffer the most due to this malpractice.

He said that no stone is left unturned by the government to equip the nation to deal with challenges that may arise due to the fast-evolving global security scenario.

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, on January 21 visited the National Cadet Corps (NCC) Republic Day Camp at Delhi Cantt and gave away Raksha Mantri Padak and Commendation Cards to cadets for their exemplary performance and devotion to duty. Saying that destruction of the environment means destruction of life, he appealed to the youth and the nation at large to reuse goods as far as possible and work for the conservation of nature. He also encouraged the youth to not let the 'use and throw' concept enter their personal lives, urging them to respect the elders, family and friends.

## 'Nora was brainwashing me against Jacqueline', conman Sukesh makes fresh

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Bollywood actress Nora Fatehi's entire statement taken by Delhi Police's Economic Offences Wing (EOW) "is changed and new stories were made up by her, and the same can be very well be verified and compared with the charge sheet of Enforcement Directorate (ED)", jailed conman Sukesh Chandrashekar claimed in his latest letter.

The prime accused in a Rs 200 crore money laundering case, in his letter addressed to the media, said, "Nora was always jealous of Bollywood actor Jacqueline Fernandez, and was always brainwashing me against her as she wanted me to leave Jacqueline and date her."

"... Nora used to try calling me atleast 10 times a day, and if I don't answer her call she used to keep on calling me... Nora claims that she did



not wanted a car, or she did not take it for herself is a very big lie, as she was after my life that her car had to be changed as the 'CLA' that she had looked very cheap. Then it was me and her who selected the (new) car," reads the letter.

"The chats and screenshots are very well with the ED, so there is no lie at all, in fact I wanted to give her Range Rover, but as the car was not available in stock, I gave her the BMW S series, which she kept using for a long time," Sukesh claimed.

"... as she was not an Indian resident, she asked me to register it (the car) on the name of her best friend's husband Bobby. Me and Nora never had a professional transaction, as she is claiming, except for once that she attended an event hosted by my foundation, for which official payment was made to her agency," he said in the letter which was shared through his lawyers.

Sukesh also claimed that he and Jacqueline were in a "serious relationship" and his association with Bollywood celebrities Nikki Tamboli and Chahatt Khanna was "only professional" as they were supposed to act in his production under LS film banner.

He said that the new statements made by them (actresses) before the EOW are "fabricated" and they only want to "save their skin and grab publicity".

## Woman arrested for driving car for 3.5 km with man on bonnet

Bengaluru | Agencies

A woman in Bengaluru has been arrested for driving her car with a man stuck on its bonnet for over 3 km following a heated confrontation between them, the police said on Friday.

The police stated that it was a case of road rage and arrested five persons in connection with the case.

The arrested woman has been identified as Priyanka. The police have slapped charges of the attempt to murder on her. The police have also booked her husband and his friend under IPC Sections 506, 34, 504, 279 and 323.

The action was taken following the complaint by one S. Darshan - a local businessman.

In his complaint, Darshan noted that Priyanka came from the wrong side and kept driving the Black Nexon car in spite of the red signal.

When he questioned, Priyanka showed her middle finger and

started driving towards Mangaluru College in Ullal. The complainant then followed her car and made her stop the vehicle, and sought an apology for her action.

"One stranger came, punched me, and threatened me. The lady used vulgar words against me. The public gathered and criticised her. Police were called to the spot. After the arrival of the police, the lady refused to come to the police station and tried to get back to the car," Darshan said.

"I sat on the bonnet of the car to prevent her from driving away. In spite of this, she started driving. I pleaded with her to stop the vehicle telling her that if I fall down, I will die. She ignored my plea and drove the vehicle from Mangaluru College in Ullal to Ullal Road near Vidyaniketan, for about 3.5 km," Darshan said in his complaint.

The people around who saw everything, came to my rescue and made her stop the car finally, he added.





## "Netaji Was Leftist; BJP And RSS Don't Reflect His Attitude": Daughter

RSS's ideology and the nationalist leader's ideas of secularism and inclusiveness are "poles apart and do not coincide. As far as ideology is concerned, the Congress has a lot more in common with Netaji than any other party in the country, Bose-Pfaff said.

- "From what I hear about the RSS ideology, I would agree that it and Netaji's ideology are poles apart. The two value systems do not coincide. It will certainly be good if the RSS felt it wanted to embrace Netaji's ideals and ideas. Many different groups want to celebrate Netaji's birthday in different ways, and a number of them necessarily agree with his ideas."
- "I don't know any quote (of Netaji) which I can give you. He may have made critical statements about RSS members. I know what his (Netaji's) views are and about RSS. The two value systems do not coincide. RSS and Netaji's ideology of secularism do not coincide with each other."
- "This has two aspects. After Independence, the official Congress stand on Netaji was reserved and not shared by all Congressmen. It wanted to keep the narrative that it was only the civil disobedience movement that led to the country's freedom. But after Netaji files were declassified, we came to know that Indian National Army (INA) played a very key role in it."
- "The BJP has made a lot of effort to honour Netaji. With any politician, you have first to allow them to look at his/her interest. If Netaji was alive today and held a different view from that of the government, then the BJP would not have honoured him. So (in this case) it is their interest that is served."



Kolkata | Agencies

Amidst the fanfare over Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh's plans to celebrate Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose's birth anniversary in the city on January 23, his daughter Anita Bose-Pfaff has said that it is being done to "partially exploit" her father's legacy.

RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat will address a public programme at Shahid Minar ground in the city to commemorate Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose's birth anniversary.

Bose-Pfaff said the BJP and RSS do not reflect the idea of respecting all religions as preached by Netaji, who

was a devout Hindu but believed in respecting other faiths. He was in favour of a productive cooperation between members of different religions, she said.

She agreed that the fanfare over the celebration of her father's birth anniversary is to "partially exploit his legacy". Speaking on the recent pomp and fanfare over Netaji's birth anniversary celebrations, she lauded the BJP-led government at the Centre for taking a "lot of initiatives" to honour him. On the second aspect, Pfaff wondered whether BJP would have honoured Netaji if he had held divergent views from that of the present-day government.

The Trinamool Congress and BJP

"RSS and BJP do not necessarily reflect his attitude... If you want to put a simple label, they are rightists, and Netaji was a leftist," Anita Bose-Pfaff told over phone from Germany, NDTV reported, quoting PTI.

had locked horns to appropriate Netaji's legacy on his 125th birth anniversary ahead of the assembly polls in 2021.

In 2015, the West Bengal government released 64 files on the leader held by the home department. The Narendra Modi government at the Centre released 100 files on him the next year.

After Independence, the Centre had formed three inquiry commissions to unravel the mystery of Netaji's disappearance.

Two of them -- the Shah Nawaz Commission, and the Khosla Commission -- were formed by the Congress governments and concluded that Bose died in an air crash on August 18, 1945, soon after taking off from Taihoku airport in Taiwan.

The third one -- the Mukherjee Commission formed by the BJP-led NDA government -- said he did not

## India International Science fest begins in Bhopal



Team Absolute | Bhopal

The India International Science Festival, an annual flagship programme of the Union Ministry of Science and Technology in collaboration with the Madhya Pradesh government, got underway at Maulana Azad National Institute of Technology (MANIT) here on Saturday. Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan lighted the ceremonial lamp in

the presence of hundreds of scientists from across the country. Promotion of science and technology among the general public and celebrating science as a festival is said to be the aim of the four-day event. As per the information, ISRO Chairman S. K. Somanath, CMD of Bharat Biotech Krishna Ella along with many scientists will attend the event.

Union Minister of State for Science and Technology

Jitendra Singh is also likely to participate. CM Chouhan said that the Indian International Science Festival being held in Bhopal should be used to develop the scientific attitude of the students of the state.

"This event will help in understanding scientific concepts and attracting youth towards new trends in science. The effort should be that the students get inspiration and guidance from this event. India's ancient scientific contribution and outlook should also be presented in the festival," Chouhan said.

He also asserted that the achievements made by the youths of Madhya Pradesh in the field of Science should be publicised using social media. All science colleges, engineering colleges, polytechnics, ITIs etc. of the state should be linked virtually with the various activities to be held in the festival.

## JOSHIMATH CRISIS: BADRINATH NATIONAL HIGHWAY DEVELOPS CRACKS

Joshimath: Cracks of one to two metre long have developed on the Badrinath National Highway in Joshimath, which is the only road that leads to Badrinath, a place of faith for millions of Hindus. Disaster Management Secretary Ranjit Sinha said that the administration has been keeping a close watch on the land subsidence of the highway.

Sinha stated that the concerned agencies have been instructed to repair the road. He said it would be completely repaired before the Char Dham yatra.

Repairing the road before the yatra would pose as a big challenge for the government. Significantly, the number of structures that have developed cracks in the holy city has increased to 863. In view of the cracks, along with the obstruction of the road to Badrinath Dham, the contact of the Indian Army with the China border may also be cut off.

Geologist Prof M.P.S. Bisht, after visiting the area, said that the pattern of the cracks is parallel. Apart from this, sinking of the huge stones on the side of the road is also becoming a cause of concern for the government.

## It's His "Right": Haryana's CM on rape convict Ram Rahim's parole

Team Absolute | Chandigarh

Reacting to the 40-day parole granted to Gurmeet Ram Rahim Singh, who has been serving a 20-year jail term in a rape case, Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar said that it is Dera Sacha Sauda chief's right and he must have got after following all the procedures. He further said that if the Dera Sacha Sauda chief is serving a 20-year sentence for rape and murder in Rohtak's Sunaria Jail.

"Gurmeet Ram Rahim is like every other prisoner here and he also has his fundamental rights. After 3-5 years, a prisoner can apply for parole and it is not in our hands, competent authority



said Khattar.

Earlier in the day, Ram Rahim was released on 40-day parole. The Dera Sacha Sauda chief is serving a 20-year sentence for rape and murder in Rohtak's Sunaria Jail.

"Gurmeet Ram Rahim is like every other prisoner here and he also has his fundamental rights. After 3-5 years, a prisoner can apply for parole and it is not in our hands, competent authority

decides on the bail," said Haryana Jail Minister Ranjit Singh Chautala.

The paperwork for his parole was completed and he was released on Saturday. Earlier, he was out on parole for 40 days in October 2022.

Notably, the Dera chief was also granted parole ahead of the Haryana panchayat election and Adampur Assembly bypoll. Ramim was granted parole for a month on June 17.

## Videos on BBC documentary critical of Modi & Tweets sharing its links blocked

San Francisco | Agencies

New Delhi: The Ministry of Information and Broadcasting has issued directions for blocking multiple YouTube videos which published the first episode of the BBC Documentary "India: The Modi Question".

As per informed sources, orders were also issued to Twitter for blocking of over 50 tweets containing the links of the concerned YouTube videos.

The directions were reportedly issued by Secretary, Information and Broadcasting on Friday using the emergency powers under the IT Rules, 2021. Both YouTube and Twitter have complied with the directions, the sources said.

The documentary produced by British Broadcasting Corporation, UK's Public Broadcaster, has been earlier called by External Affairs Ministry as a "propaganda piece" that lacks objectivity and reflects colonial mindset. While it was not made available in India, some YouTube channels appear to have uploaded it to promote an anti-India agenda.



It is reported that YouTube has also been instructed to block the video if it again uploaded on its platform. Twitter has also been directed to identify and block the tweets containing the link to the video on other platforms.

Reliable sources have confirmed that senior officials of multiple Ministries, including MEA, MHA and MIB, examined the documentary and found it to be an attempt to cast aspersions on the

authority and credibility of the Supreme Court of India, sow divisions among various Indian communities, and make unsubstantiated allegations regarding actions of foreign Governments in India. The documentary was accordingly found to be undermining sovereignty and integrity of India, and having the potential to adversely impact India's friendly relations with foreign States as also public order within the country.

## RAPIDO FLAYS MAHARASHTRA BAN ON BIKE AGGREGATORS

Mumbai: Bengaluru-based bike aggregator Rapido has slammed the Maharashtra government's decision to ban such private aggregators and ride-pooling vehicles from plying, and said it will examine legal remedies, here on Saturday. Referring to the state government's notification of Thursday (January 19), a Rapido spokesperson said that this could adversely impact livelihoods and opportunities of over 200,000 bike captains.

Besides, the company claimed the 'arbitrary decision' will deprive millions of citizens from availing a reliable and efficient mode of local transport, and throw them at the mercy of poor transport facilities and lack of urban infrastructure which doesn't provide a low-cost last-mile connectivity.

Rapido said it is planning a legal challenge for the rejection of its licence ostensibly as the government lacks the will to formulate a policy in this regard.

## JAIPUR LITERATURE FESTIVAL 2023

# Day 3 features a gamut of ideas



Lalit Sharma | Jaipur

The third day of the multi-faceted and exuberant Jaipur Literature Festival began with a soulful performance by the Indian classical ensemble, The Anirudh Varma Collective. The Quintet performed Vansanthi raga, which was led by pianist, composer, and producer, Anirudh Varma. Anirudh Varma was on the keyboard, Madhur Chaudhary on the bass, Abhay Nayamally on Carnatic guitar, Sowmya Gurucharan on Carnatic voice, and Varun Rajasecharan on ghatam.

The third day of the Festival featured Sri Lanka author Shehan Karunatilaka in conversation with writer Nandini Nair. In the context of the novel's inspiration from demons, bhoot-pret and rebirth, Karunatilaka said, "...and then I thought...what if I write from the ghost's point of view and it took me to this idea of what if Sri Lanka's dead could speak..."

International Booker Prize winner Geetanjali Shree, well-known Rajasthani and Hindi writer Nand Bhardwaj, Sahitya Akademi Award recipient and novelist Anamika, Managing Director and CEO of Bank of Baroda Sanjiv Chadha and author-translator and columnist Pushpesh Pant focused on the diversity of Hindi and the difficulty of 'purifying' it. They discussed how the different variants of Hindi across India get embedded in languages across the subcontinent, resulting in a Kolkata Hindi, a Mumbai Hindi, and so on. Sharing her thoughts, Shree noted, "I feel that language can never have a strict boundary, and it never should. The people who are drawing such strict boundaries are, in the name of purifying them, segregating them."

At another book launch, celebrated poet, author, music and cinema scholar Yatindra Mishra and one of India's most respected scriptwriters, directors, and leading poets Gulzar, were in conversation with celebrated author and screenwriter Anu

Singh Choudhary which focused on Mishra's new book, Lata Mangeshkar: A Life in Music. This panel of speakers discussed the making of the book and the limitations of using English as the sole language of writing it. The decision to write the book in Hindi and then translate it to English was also informed by the different readerships that both languages attract. Speaking about his interactions Gulzar said, "If there are two creative minds, they can't be parallel lines, they have to cross each other".

Anti-caste activist, poet, novelist, and translator Meena Kandasamy was in conversation with award-winning writer Manasi Subramaniam, discussing the two-thousand-year-old text, Tirukkural. During the session, Kandasamy also spoke about the importance of Tirukkural in Tamil culture and also about its anti-caste identity that counters the Manusmriti. The discussion was centred around the significance of female intervention in the translation of ancient texts.

## US citizen with Chinese satellite phone held at Bagdogra airport

Kolkata | Agencies

The CISF on Saturday arrested a US citizen with a Chinese satellite phone while he was attempting to board a Delhi-bound flight at the Bagdogra airport near Siliguri in West Bengal.

The arrested person has been identified Thomas Esroh Seitz (45).

According to Bagdogra airport sources, three US citizens, including Seitz, arrived at the airport on Saturday afternoon to board a Delhi-bound flight. However, Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) jawans, while checking the luggage of Seitz, detected a Chinese satellite phone.

Airport sources said that there are several restrictions on carrying satellite phones in aircraft in India. As per the rules of the Bureau of Civil Aviation Security (BCAS), barring satellite phones provided by Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL), no other satellite phones or any other similar devices are allowed to be carried in an

aircraft.

Also, for carrying a satellite phone in an aircraft, one needs to obtain authorisation and documents stating the reasons for the same.

However, when questioned by the CISF personnel and the security staff, Seitz was unable to furnish any such document justifying him carrying the device. Thereafter, the CISF arrested him and later handed him over to the local police.

Seitz told the police that he and two other US citizens were representatives of Shield AI, a US-based company, and they were in India for drone surveillance training at an Indian Army base at Lachung in Sikkim.

He claimed that he arrived in India on January 12 and received the satellite device through Air Cargo on January 16. He also said that he was going back after completing the drone surveillance training.

The police have contacted the Indian Army to authenticate the claims made by Seitz.





## SEHORE TEACHERS CREATED HISTORY BY MAKING EVERY CLASS A SMART CLASS - CHIEF MINISTER CHOUHAN

I HAVE COME TO FELICITATE THE TEACHERS, WITH THE HELP OF PEOPLE, 1630 SMART TV DONORS WERE FOUND IN 1552 SCHOOLS OF THE DISTRICT, TEACHERS, PUBLIC REPRESENTATIVES AND SOCIAL WORKERS WERE HONORED, ANSWERED THE QUESTIONS OF THE RESPECTED STUDENTS AND TOLD THEM BY DOING PRANAYAMA, HONORED THE MERITORIOUS STUDENTS, DEARNESS ALLOWANCE OF THE TEACHERS CHIEF MINISTER CHOUHAN PARTICIPATES IN "HAR SHALA-SMART SHALA" PROGRAM AT NASRULLAGANJ.

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has said that the teachers of Sehore district have created history by making every class of the district a smart class with public cooperation. The teachers collected Rs 4 crore 25 lakh from their hard earned money and provided 1630 Smart TVs to 1552 schools in the district. The people's representatives and the administration of the district also cooperated fully in this. This is an exemplary example of cooperation of the society with the government in the development of the state. This unique work will inspire the entire state. Today I have come to congratulate and thank the teachers of the district. Chief Minister Chouhan appealed to all the teachers to work with this holy spirit and make every school in the state a center of better and quality education. Showing respect to the teachers, I announce a 4 percent increase in their dearness allowance.



Chief Minister attended the "Har Shala-Smart Shala" program at Nasrullaganj in Sehore district today. Chief Minister's wife Mrs. Sadhna Singh also participated in the programme. Chief Minister honored the donor teachers, public representatives and social workers. Chouhan gave satisfactory answers to the questions of the students and told

them by doing Pranayama. The Chief Minister also honored the meritorious students. Chief Minister said that the state government is starting CM Rise Schools in every 20 to 25 km radius, which will be centers of modern and high quality education. Buildings with all facilities like modern lab, library, smart class etc. are being

constructed for them. The cost of each building is around Rs 35 crore. Students from nearby villages will go to these schools by buses.

Chouhan said that the government is providing all possible help to the children for their education. Meritorious students are provided with laptops for securing 75% and above marks in class 12th. Now the government is thinking of giving laptops to the meritorious students of class X also. The government is also paying the fees for higher education. Medical and engineering education has been started in the state in Hindi. Chouhan said that one should study English but it should not be compulsory. Chief Minister Study Centers are being opened in schools for additional study support to the students. Soon there will be recruitment on 1 lakh 14 thousand government posts in the state. The government will also provide training facilities for this.

Chief Minister interacted with the students and gave satisfactory answers to their questions.

## Shivraj govt failed to tackle migration and drought problems in Bundelkhand: Kamal Nath

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Former Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister and state Congress chief Kamal Nath on Friday accused the BJP government in the state of failing to control migration and drought-related problems in the Bundelkhand region.

Kamal Nath said the people of Bundelkhand region are suffering from the same old problems of migration and drought, and despite being in power, the Shivraj Singh Chouhan government has done nothing to resolve these issues.

While addressing a gathering of Congress workers and local people in Tikamgarh district, Kamal Nath said that despite having a rich history and being an influential part of the Bundelkhand region, the people of Tikamgarh are forced to leave to the district because of the same old problems. "What developments have been done in Tikamgarh district in the last 17 years? Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan should reply to the people," Kamal Nath said.

The former Chief Minister



also expressed confidence that the Congress would make a comeback in this year's Assembly elections and launch 'welfare schemes for farmers, young people and the poor' in the state.

"Despite the long tenure of the BJP government, unemployment, migration and drought-related problems still plague the Bundelkhand region," Nath said.

After Tikamgarh, the state Congress President went to the Prithvipur Assembly constituency in Niwari district, where he chaired a meeting with local party workers and instructed them to get ready to take on the BJP in the upcoming Assembly elections. He leveled a series of allegations against the ruling

BJP. Kamal Nath dared Chouhan to come for a debate with him on development issues.

"I would like to ask CM Chouhan to come on stage and show a progress report to the people. I will show a report of the 15-month Congress government," Nath said. "I don't know what these people (government) are scared of, what are they trying to hide. They should announce a caste-based Census in the state immediately."

Take the examples of Bundelkhand, Mahakoshal, Gwalior and Chambal divisions, in which several castes are living who are not getting proper representation and facilities," Kamal Nath said.

## Cong appoints coordinators for 50 reserved parliamentary seats

Team Absolute | New Delhi/Bhopal

The All India Congress Committee (AICC) on Friday appointed its coordinators for 50 SC/ST reserved parliamentary constituencies, including 10 in Madhya Pradesh.

The list of 50 coordinators was released naming it as 'Leadership Development Mission'.

Of the total 50 coordinators appointed for the SC/ST reserved seats for several states, 10 of them have been appointed for the reserved parliamentary constituencies in Madhya Pradesh. Reserved parliamentary seats in Madhya Pradesh are -- Betul (Rajkumar Upadhyay), Bhind (Swadesh Sharma), Tikamgarh (Santosh Tiwari), Ratlam (Sajid Khan), Shahdol (Amit Gupta), Mandla (Kavita Kahar), Dhar (Pankaj Sharma), Khargone (Ajay Thakkar), Dewas (Sanjay Yadav) and Ujjain (Spencer Lal).

Beside Madhya Pradesh, the reserved constituencies for coordinators have been appointed for reserved seats in different states such as Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Haryana,



Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh, Punjab, Maharashtra and Karnataka.

Rajasthan also goes to polls this year and in the state, coordinators have been appointed for Ganganagar, Bikaner, Bharatpur, Dausa, Udaipur and Banswara. Coordinators have also been put in place for Warangal in Telangana and Tripura East. "The party has approved the proposal for the appointment of leadership development mission parliamentary coordinators for SC/ST reserved parliamentary constituencies with immediate effect," a communication from AICC General Secretary K.C. Venugopal said.

## NOW A COPY OF THE COURT CASE WILL BE AVAILABLE AT HOME: JUSTICE ARYA

The e-certificate copy project has been widely praised, the e-court committee reviewed the works

Team Absolute | Bhopal

High Court Justice Rohit Arya has said that as per the instructions of the Supreme Court, the e-court committee of Madhya Pradesh is doing good work with the cooperation of all. He told that the project e-certificate copy implemented by the High Court is being praised in the country. He said that the Integrated Video Surveillance System (IVCS) of the state is also being praised. He directed all department heads to promptly complete all pending works related to e-courts to provide justice to the common man in an easy manner. Justice Arya was reviewing the works of the e-courts committee at the Academy of Administration. The Registrar of the High Court Fasahat Qazi was also present in the meeting.

In the review of the Interoperable Criminal Justice System (ICJS), Additional Chief Secretary Home Dr. Rajesh Rajoura said that one thousand tablets have been given to sub-



ordinate officers in the police department for better investigation. Along with this, the process of providing 26 thousand more tablets is going on. ADG SCRB Chanchal Shekhar informed about the measures being taken in the state to make the ICJS system effective. He informed that

the state government has received the first prize in the country for the e-discussion app. More than Rs 27 crore has been recovered through e-challan and POS machine.

Justice Arya gave instructions to audit and update the data from time to time. He also instructed the offi-

cial of NIC Bhopal to discuss with the officials of Pune to make the ICJS system more robust. He said that if necessary, he should also be informed about the decisions taken in the meeting of the state level e-court committee. Instructions were also given to increase the number of forensic science labs for thorough investigation. Additional Chief Secretary Home Dr. Rajoura told that 4 labs including Gwalior are working. Approval has been received for labs in Rewa and Ratlam also. Presently 600 samples are being tested per month. Earlier only 250 were being investigated. Justice Arya gave instructions to increase it to 1000 per month.

Justice Arya instructed the Secretary of the Finance Department to promptly take necessary action for approval of posts for the High Court and E-Court. He said that due to lack of human resources, there is difficulty in following the instructions of the e-courts committee.

## Bhopal Tamil Sangam to organise Thai Pongal Festival

Madhya Pradesh's biggest south Indian Festival event

Team Absolute | Bhopal

The Bhopal Tamil Sangam (BTS) is organising Thai Pongal Festival 2023 on 22nd January 2023, Sunday at Career College auditorium, Govindpura, BHEL, Bhopal. The event will start at 11 am. Pongal celebrations aimed at imparting the culture and tradition to the younger generation and sharing the festival with other communities in the State.

'Thai Pongal', as it is popularly called in Tamil Nadu, is a thanksgiving ceremony celebrated by Tamil farmers to thank the spirits of nature, the sun and farm animals for their assistance in providing a successful harvest all through the year. BTS will also felicitate, acknowledge, and applaud the achievements of students who have excelled in academics and brought laurels to the society. The Festival will feature a mix of vibrant Tamil traditions and a unique cultural program.

## TWO-DAY WORKSHOP ON CRANIO-FACIAL SURGERY ORGANISED AT AIIMS

Team Absolute | Bhopal

The department of burns and plastic surgery of AIIMS Bhopal organised a two day workshop on Cranio-facial surgery from 20th- 21st January 2023. Senior professors, Dr Rajiv Agarwal, SGPGI Lucknow, Dr Rakesh Kain, VMMC Safdarjung Hospital, Dr Ashish Kumar Gupta, CMC Vellore, Dr Sunil Kumar Rout, AIIMS Bhubhaneshwar, Dr Ankur Bhatnagar, Prof. SGPGI Lucknow graced us with their presence. Live surgical demonstrations were done on the 1st day. On the 2nd day, various academic activities such as hands on workshop on skull models with lectures by the invited faculty, paper presentation competition were also conducted. There was active participation and support from the Department of



Neurosurgery, Anaesthesia and Anatomy. The event was attended by approx 50 delegates from all over India.

A one of its kind case of multiple sutural craniosynostosis surgery was performed by Dr Rakesh Kain. Cases such as this are not only rare but also complicated in nature and require multi departmental involvement. Dr Ajai Singh, executive director, AIIMS Bhopal also graced the event by his presence and stated that such events bring improvement in skills and quality of patient care and promotes professional networking. Dr Rajesh Malik, Dean Academics, AIIMS Bhopal and Dr Manisha Shrivastava, Medical Superintendent also obliged us with their presence and appreciated the great teamwork efforts by the department of Burns and Plastic Surgery.

## Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan planted saplings of Peepal, Jamun and Khirni



Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan planted saplings of Peepal, Jamun and Khirni in the garden located at Shyamala Hills. Former Mayor of Bhopal Alok Sharma partici-

pated in the plantation. Along with Chief Minister Chouhan, Music Director Harsh Deep Singh Ratan planted saplings. V.S. Ratan, Sambhav Parashar, Adil and Hritik Chowkse also planted saplings.

## 2 Bodies missing an eye each in Sagar Hospital, Rats are suspects

In a shocking case of medical negligence, an eye each from two dead bodies went mysteriously missing from a mortuary in Madhya Pradesh's Sagar district within 15 days. According to sources, rats gnawed the eyes of the dead bodies at the Sagar District Hospital.

Team Absolute | Bhopal

The first case is of January 4 while the second is of January 19.

In the first case, 32-year-old Motilal Gound was brought to the district hospital by his family members after he fell unconscious in a farm in Amet village. He was declared brought dead in the OPD of the hospital. In the morning, when the doctor arrived for the postmortem, he saw that one eye of the dead body was missing. At that time, due to the malfunction of the deep freezer, the dead body was kept on an open table in the mortuary.

More recently, 25-year-old Ramesh Ahiwar was admitted to the district hospital on January 16 and put on ventilator support. He died the next night. Ramesh had gone some-

where on January 15 without informing anyone. He was found injured the next day. Since the matter was medico-legal, the hospital management called the police twice. On January 19, when the dead body was taken out from the deep freezer, one eye was missing. Dr Abhishek Thakur, Resident Medical Officer of the district hospital, said that the dead body was kept in the freezer in the mortuary, which was functioning normally. Preliminary investigation pointed to a possibility of rats gnawing on the eye of the dead body. CCTV cameras installed in the mortuary are being scrutinised. Further action will be taken after detailed investigation.

Chief Medical Health Officer (CMHO) of the hospital, Dr Mamta Timori, has issued notices to four medical officers, including civil surgeon Dr Jyoti Chauhan, and sought their reply within 48 hours.

## CANDIDATURE OF BJP'S THREE-TIME MLAS IN DANGER IN UPCOMING ELECTIONS

Sandeep Puranik | Bhopal

Assembly elections are going to be held in Madhya Pradesh this year and before the elections, lines of worry have started appearing on the forehead of the Bharatiya Janata Party, because the ground feedback is not coming in its favor. This is the reason that the party is going to strictly implement the Gujarat formula in the state. Due to this, the candidature of MLAs of three or more terms may be in danger, along with veteran leaders may even announce not to contest elections.

In the assembly elections held in the state in the year 2018, the BJP had to be thrown out of power after a decade and a half, but this time the situation seems more challenging to the party than the last election. The feedback coming from the ground level is giving a message to the party that the ground situation is not in favor of the BJP. Also not so bad that they can't be handled.

If sources are to be believed, in the meeting of the National Working Committee held in Delhi recently, there was a discussion regarding the situation in the state. Only after that the idea has started making waves that Gujarat should move forward on the formula. Based on the details of the ground situation that have come to the party



so far, the party will not only deny tickets to many MLAs, but there will be a large number of such leaders who have contested the assembly elections more than three times. In the meeting of the National Working Committee, there was talk of the Gujarat formula, on the basis of which the BJP achieved a record victory by demolishing all predictions. State President of Gujarat CR Patil also gave a presentation.

Significantly, on the suggestion of Patil in Gujarat, where a large number of MLAs were denied tickets, many veterans themselves had announced not to contest the elections. Patil has suggested to the party that tough decisions have to be taken if we want to continue the winning

streak in the future. By doing this, the displeasure of the public can be reduced. Since then, homework is being done on how to win elections in Madhya Pradesh. Party sources say that the party called for ground feedback several times in the state on three issues. These were what is the attitude of the voters towards the government, what is the opinion of the public towards the ministers and how satisfied are the voters with the regional MLA. The feedback regarding these three issues has made the party worried. If sources are to be believed, the party is eyeing more than three times MLAs, leaders who have crossed 60 and those special people, due to whom there is a possibility of loss to the party. An opinion is also being formed in the party that the leaders whose image is not good or there is displeasure among the public, should be announced about two months before the elections that they will not contest the elections. By doing this, anti-incumbency can be reduced. After this, a decision should be taken on three-time MLAs and others. There is a possibility of rebellion in the party, but the party is ready to take the risk. The reason for this is also because the party is so confident that out of those whose tickets will be cut, hardly five percent of the leaders will be such, who will take the risk of changing the party.





# Mumbaikars embrace extended Metros, chuck autos-taxis-buses

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Mumbaikars have warmly embraced the new full-length operations of the Mumbai Metro's Lines 2A and 7 which were inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi this week. On the first day of public runs, the combined ridership was over 65,000 on the two lines, with commuters appreciating the world-class ambience, ease and services.

Many have decided to discard their regular form of bus, taxis or autorickshaws and now swear by the metro travel.

The two fully operational crucial routes are -- Line 7 Dahisar East-Andheri East, 16.50 km and Line 2A Dahisar East-Andheri West, 18.60 km -- the first phases of which were inaugurated in April 2022, and now the suburbanites are delighted.

On Saturday morning, a harried marketing consultant Pradeep S. Menon was beaming when he hopped onto a Metro train from Borivali to Andheri, and reached it in barely 25 minutes.

"Usually, I dread this stretch. By



auto or taxi, it can take anything from 90-125 minutes each way during the peak hours, besides burning my pockets. Today, I spent Rs 50 for a comfortable ride and feel so fresh," gushed Menon.

Similar is the experience of Trupti Joshi, a student who traveled from Dahisar to D.N. Nagar in barely 30 minutes -- compared with her usual commute of nearly two hours through autorickshaw, suburban

train, then bus or auto.

A Malad businessman Kiran Shah is especially thrilled by the Line 7 connection with Mumbai Metro One as he can now totally avoid autos, taxis, buses, or local trains, besides "the errant, grumbling and arrogant cabbies who do us a paid favour to take us to our destination." "My home is around 300 metres on the Western Express Highway from the Kurar Metro sta-

tion and my office is 500 metres from the D.N. Nagar Metro station, both in walking ranges. I used to take almost 100 minutes to reach my office, now I can do it in barely 25 minutes," an elated Shah said.

Similar is the view of Snehal Buke who has 'defected' to the Metro line 7 from Saturday for her short Dahisar-Kandivali commute, from the regular 45-60 minutes by bus to just 10 minutes now!

According to official figures, in just three hours after its opening on Friday evening, the two lines doubled their ridership.

An autorickshaw driver Manohar Yadav of Poisar, who usually makes a killing with long-distance rides is now crestfallen and is now considering optional sectors for survival.

"Since last evening most commuters want to drop off or board from the Metro stations like Magathane, Akurli or Kurar, which are barely a few hundred meters and tedious in the traffic," rued Yadav. The Mumbai Metropolitan Region Development Authority plans to run 225-plus services on the new routes with higher frequency during the morning and evening peak hours with eight-minute intervals.

## SHARAD PAWAR IS AN EXPERIENCED LEADER HIS CONTRIBUTION CAN'T BE IGNORED: SHINDE

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Maharashtra Chief Minister Eknath Shinde on Saturday praised Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) supremo Sharad Pawar, saying his contribution to the cooperative sector cannot be ignored.

Shinde was speaking at the 46th annual general meeting of the Vasantdada Sugar Institute (VSI) in Pune, where Pawar shared the dais with him. Pawar is the chairman of the VSI.

"Pawar is an experienced leader at the state and national level. His contribution to the cooperative sector is huge and cannot be ignored," the chief minister said.

In the interest of the people and welfare of the state, Pawar is always available for guidance and suggestions to whoever is in power, he said.

"He often calls me over the telephone to make suggestions and give advice," Shinde said.

Notably, Shinde and his supporting MLAs had rebelled against Shiv Sena leadership and questioned party chief Uddhav Thackeray's decision of joining hands with the NCP and



Congress to form a government in the state. The Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) dispensation headed by Thackeray collapsed following the rebellion and Shinde became the chief minister on June 30 last year.

CM Shinde said the cooperative sector has played an important role in the country's development and realising its importance, the Centre has set up a separate ministry for the sector.

"The central government has assured full support to the cooperative sector in Maharashtra," he said.

Shinde also lauded the cooperative sector for fol-

lowing its social responsibility even during the time of crisis and not just focusing on profit or loss.

The chief minister said his government was committed to protecting the interests of the cooperative sector. A total of 2.5 lakh hectares will be brought under irrigation in the next few years, he said. Speaking on the occasion, Pawar said the need of the hour is to focus on the production of products other than sugar to strengthen sugar factories and make them economically strong. "Additional sugar should be used for ethanol production," he felt.

## CBI lodges 3 cases on illegal FOREX remittance; recovers Rs 94.37L

Team Absolute | Mumbai/Bhopal

The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) on Friday registered three separate cases against unknown officials of multi-state co-operative societies and others in connection with the alleged forex remittance, an official said.

After lodging the case, the CBI conducted raids at more than 18 locations in Mumbai and Bhopal, which led to the recovery of cash worth Rs 94.37 lakh and incriminating documents as well as electronic gadgets.

The CBI official added that during 2014-2016, huge amount was remitted in FOREX, abroad from the accounts of nine entities through eight nationalised banks, by submitting fake import documents such as bills of entry and bills of lading without any actual



trade. "Aspects of trade based money laundering (TBML), were enquired bank-wise. In the instances of TBML related to Bank of Maharashtra, Mumbai, Canara Bank (e-Syndicate Bank), Mumbai, and Bank of India, Mumbai, facts emerged from the

acts of commission and omission on part of the accused that there was disclosure of cognisable offence committed by them. An amount of Rs 105.27 crore, Rs 41.17 crore and Rs 8.69 crore were allegedly remitted from the accounts of private companies (all based in Mumbai), maintained with the said three banks without any actual trade. Thus they caused loss of foreign exchange to the Government of India," the official said.

The CBI official added that the current accounts were opened in the names of firms with namesake persons as Directors. Huge cash was allegedly collected from various sources and layered into bank accounts of the said firms.

The bills of entry were later forged to show higher USD value than the actual import value and were submitted to the bank.

## Woman forced to eat powdered human bones to conceive child; MSCW seeks report

Team Absolute | Pune

In a bizarre case of superstitions, a married woman was allegedly forced to consume a concoction of water containing human bone powder and ashes ostensibly to help her get pregnant, police said here on Saturday.

The victim, aged around 27, lodged a complaint with Sinhgad Police Station which swung into action and arrested the woman's husband Jayant Kokale, his parents, his brother and three others for the torture meted out, said Investigating Officer Inspector Jayant Rajurkar.

Simultaneously, taking serious note, the Maharashtra State Commission for Women Chairperson Rupali Chakankar has sought a detailed report on the shocking allegations. According to Inspector



Rajurkar, the woman was married with the accused in 2019 and the weird black magic rituals were started by the family after she reportedly failed to conceive.

In her complaint, the woman has contended that she was forcibly taken to a crematorium, made to take bath with some

strange water mixture and compelled to drink water allegedly mixed with powdered human bones or ashes.

The family also made repeated demands for money from her and fed up with all the harassment, she finally walked out of the Kokale household nearly two

years ago, Rajurkar said. "Presently, in connection with their divorce proceedings, the victim has filed a detailed complaint with the police in which she has narrated her ordeal, how she was subjected to black magic, superstitions and other behaviour during her stay with her husband and in-laws," Rajurkar told reporter.

Taking serious cognisance of the victim's complaint, the Sinhgad Police have arrested several members of the Kokate clan on various charges under the relevant laws and further investigations are on, including the possible involvement of any local godmen (tantrik) or black magicians.

On her part, the MSCW chief Chakankar appealed for strict exemplary action by the Pune Police to ensure that similar blind beliefs are not repeated by anyone in future.

## Being human: Salman's brother Sohail Khan helps woman on the street

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Filmmaker and actor Sohail Khan, who is Bollywood superstar Salman Khan's younger brother, was seen helping a woman after she fell down on the road.

A video of Sohail joining local people to help the woman was shared by a paparazzi named Yogen Shah. The clip shows Sohail helping the woman get up. She is heard saying, "Kaise uthaoge? Mera pair toh."

The 52-year-old actor, who is the son of veteran screenwriter Salim Khan and Salma



Khan, held her with others. Sohail is the younger brother of actors Salman and Arbaaz Khan. He also has two sisters, Alvira Agnihotri and Arpita Khan.

Sohail made his directorial debut in 1997 with 'Auzaar', starring Salman and Sanjay Kapoor. Later, he made films such as 'Pyaar Kiya To Darna Kya' and 'Hello Brother'.

## TV PRODUCER ARRESTED FOR HARASSING ACTOR ON SOCIAL MEDIA

Mumbai: A 27-year-old television actor and producer has been arrested from the western suburb of Andheri in Mumbai after he allegedly created a fake account on social media and sent obscene messages to another actor, police said. Officials from the local police station arrested the accused following a search operation in the area on Friday, an official said.

The accused had allegedly created a fake account of the woman on Instagram and sent obscene messages to her, her relatives and friends, and defamed her, he said. The woman filed a police complaint earlier this week, based on which an FIR was registered under sections 354 (assaults or uses criminal force to any woman), 506 (criminal intimidation) and other relevant provisions of the Indian Penal Code and Information Technology Act, the official said.



## Mumbai Air Quality improves marginally after being 'Very Poor' for six days

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Mumbai's air quality improved slightly today, to the 'poor' category, after six consecutive days of recording 'very poor' quality. Mumbai recorded an Air Quality Index of 287 on Friday, a slight improvement from 319 (very poor) on Thursday. Air quality in the financial capital in January hasn't been this bad in the last eight years, data shows.

The toxic air has caused respiratory issues for many, with some even falling ill.

Hospitals have reported a 50-60% increase in patients suffering from shortness of breath and prolonged cough. Mumbai recorded very poor air quality for 10 of the last 20 days this month. Chembur and Navi Mumbai are the worst



hit. According to SAFAR, a government agency that monitors air quality in major Indian cities, Mumbai usually sees a "moderate" to "poor" AQI during the winter months. However, for the first time, the city has seen a long period of "poor" to "very poor" AQI.

Mumbai's AQI was, in fact, worse than Delhi for a week in mid-December.

Experts say a combination of factors like metro construction, repair of roads, falling temperature, and increasing number of vehicles have caused the deterioration in air quality.

# The Aristocrats to headline Oddball Festival India in Feb

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Rock/funk music The Aristocrats are set to headline the Oddball Festival in three cities Mumbai, New Delhi and Bengaluru in February 2023.

Guitarist Guthrie Govan, bassist Bryan Beller and drummer Marco Minnemann of The Aristocrats will return to India for the first time since the pandemic for the gigs.

The Aristocrats' Guthrie Govan said: "We three Aristocrats are very happy indeed to announce that we'll be returning to India in February 2023, serving up a menu of musical mayhem which will feature not only some old favourites but also a few

'surprises' which are so new that they haven't even made their way onto an album yet!"

He further mentioned, "We've always had a great time touring in India - there's definitely something special about the vibe of the audiences, who always manage to bring a combination of vibrant rock 'n' roll energy and deep musical appreciation - so we can't wait to come back and we really look forward to seeing you at these forthcoming shows. It's been too long!"

They'll be joined by folk-metal front-runners Bloodywood, YouTube-famous rock act Li-sa-X and her band KOIAI, jazz fusion supergroup MaMoGi (collaborating with Lydian



Nadhaswaram) and instrumental rockers Blackstratblues.

Talking about their debut India shows at Oddball Festival, KOIAI said in a statement, "We at KOIAI are delighted to be able to perform our memorable first live show in India. It will surely be an unforgettable show for you as well. Come and meet us!"

At the kickoff edition in Mumbai on February 17, New Delhi-bred rock band Kraken will join the lineup, while guitarist-composer Sanjeev T. will perform at the Bengaluru show on February 18.

Oddball Festival 2023, promoted by BlueTree and ODDC, is set to be held in three cities Mumbai, Bangalore and Delhi along with pop-up editions featuring The Aristocrats in Hyderabad, Guwahati and Kolkata.

## Fake call centre busted in Mumbai, 11 Arrested

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Police have busted an illegal call centre in Mumbai by arresting 11 persons, who used to cheat American citizens by promising them attractive returns on investment, an official said on Friday.

Officials of Unit-3 of the crime branch had specific information about the unauthorised call centre being operated from Wadala (East) that was involved in cheating people by asking them to credit USD 500 to 1000 in their bank accounts to get attractive returns, the official said. The accused persons used to approach US citizens by making them believe they were calling from the UK, New Delhi and Mumbai, and would ask them to invest in shares, currencies and commodities promising good returns, he said.

However, those who invested in these instruments were not paid what they were promised, the official said.

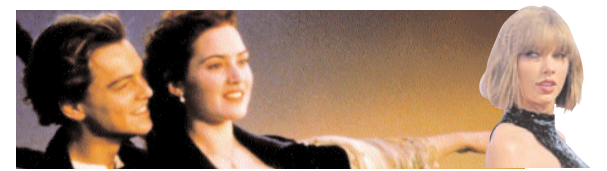
During investigation, police found the



accused persons had contacted more than 2,000 investors and cheated them to the tune of several crores, he said. Police seized 15 laptops, 1 desktop, 2 routers and a LAN machine from the call centre premises, said the official.

The arrested persons were produced before a court, which sent them to police custody till January 27, he said.





# Jennifer Lopez was reluctant to star in 'SHOTGUN WEDDING'

Los Angeles | Agencies

Hollywood star Jennifer Lopez, who leads the cast of Jason Moore's film "Shotgun Wedding", was initially unsure about starring in the project after working on the movie "Marry Me" and was only convinced after reading Mark Hammer's script, media reports said. Jennifer said: "(I had) just signed on to do 'Marry Me' and was about to do it and was like, 'Ah, I don't want to do another wedding movie'."

"I remember, I was in my tub and was like, 'Let me read it and I was like, 'Oh this is funny, this could be good; depending on who directed this, and it could be really good.' And then when we got (director) Jason Moore I was like, 'OK, this is gonna be fun', and we got this amazing cast," she told "The Hollywood Reporter", "Female First UK" reports.

As per "Female First UK", the movie tells the story of a couple who gather their families for a destination wedding but the pair must save their loved ones when the guests are taken hostage. Josh Duhamel plays the male lead in the flick after he replaced the scandal-hit Armie Hammer and had no problems with "connecting" with JLo on set. He said: "I knew that it wasn't going to be difficult for us to connect in a way that was realistic on film, because if we weren't able to do that the movie wasn't going to work and we talked about that. We talked about trusting each other and no matter what: I've got your back and you've got mine so go for it, don't be afraid to do something silly."



# MILEY CYRUS' 'FLOWERS' HAS BROKEN SPOTIFY'S ALL-TIME ONE-WEEK RECORD

Los Angeles | Agencies

Singer Miley Cyrus' "Flowers" has broken Spotify's all-time one-week record with 100 million streams in a single week.

The service announced Friday morning that, as of Thursday, "Flowers" had become the most-streamed song in a seven-day period in Spotify history, reports "Variety".

As of Friday morning, the latest update for Cyrus' "Flowers" streams on the site showed that it had racked up 101,838,799 stream since coming out late in the day on January 12. On Thursday, it reached the 100 million points faster than any other song ever has to date on Spotify.

Rather than seeing massive streams on day one that decline throughout the week, each day since release has been bigger than the one before. Miley is back, and with her album "Endless Summer Vacation" coming out in a few months this is just the beginning.

The giant results for "Flowers" on Spotify bode extremely well for the odds of "Flowers" coming out on top of the Billboard Hot 100 when that chart's top 10 is announced on Monday. "Flowers" has been seen as in hot competition with SZA's multi-week riser "Kill Bill" to claim the Hot 100's No. 1 spot away from the current leader, Taylor Swift's "Anti-Hero."

Although downloads are not nearly as big of a factor in the Hot 100 as streaming and radio, digital sales for

"Flowers" have also been unusually high, with the tune not budging from the top spot on the iTunes song sales chart since it came out eight days ago.

If "Flowers" does prevail in debuting at No. 1, it will be Cyrus' first song to top the Hot 100 since "Wrecking Ball" a decade ago; that smash remains her lone topper on that chart to date.

However big "Flowers" becomes, it will still have a way to go in becoming her most-streamed song ever.



# I'LL ALWAYS BE AQUAMAN: JASON MOMOA ON DC MEETING JAMES GUNN

Los Angeles | Agencies

"I'll always be Aquaman," Jason Momoa said at the Variety Studio presented by Audible at Sundance. Momoa is at the Park City festival as the narrator of the new documentary "Deep Rising", which investigates organisations that are extracting metals from the deep seafloor.

Momoa recently met new DC Studio heads James Gunn and Peter Safran to talk about his future in the DC Universe, in which he's played Aquaman in several movies.

"It's very, very wonderful," Momoa said of the meeting, reports

"Variety".

"I'm in the house of Warner Bros. and them like a lot of stuff I'm doing. We got a lot of good things coming."

One thing coming is Momoa's second standalone 'Aquaman' movie, 'Aquaman and the Lost Kingdom'. There's also rumours that Momoa will be playing a different superhero character, Lobo, in the new DC Universe under Gunn and Safran. Momoa would not confirm such rumours, but he did say "there might be other characters" coming from him down the line regarding DC.

"The beautiful thing (about 'Aquaman and the Lost Kingdom') is me and my partner wrote the first treatment for it and it was about a 55-page treatment, and a lot of it has to deal with me talking to the U.N. about what's happening with the melting ice caps," Momoa said.

"There's no far off galaxy coming to destroy us or aliens from another place. It's us ruining our planet. We need to get it together and save our home."

Momoa concluded, "I'll always be Aquaman. Ain't anyone coming in there and taking shit. There might be some other characters, too. I can play other things, too. I can be funny and savage and charming."

"Listen, I never thought in a million years that people would be using my voice," Momoa said. "It's wonderful and I just want to shine a light on films like this."



Response to coming out as non-binary has been positive for Janelle Monae

Los Angeles | Agencies

Actress-singer Janelle Monae said that the response to coming out as non-binary has been extremely positive and wants everyone to walk in their own truth. The "Knives Out: Glass Onion" star, who uses she/her and they/them pronouns, came out as non-binary last year and has had a great reaction from the general public, reports femalefirst.co.uk.

Monae told People: "It's been great. And I say that because I think that there are a lot more discussions, and that's so important. I think that all of us want to walk in our truth. We're just trying to find a name to put with how we feel. And I think that's always great."

"I try to challenge people to listen. Yeah, you may not necessarily understand. But listening is such a free thing we can do. I think that by listening you can give somebody more compassion, more empathy, and that's just one more step [to] bridging that gap between us."

The "Yoga" hitmaker added: "Being non-binary has opened up my mind in terms of the type of art I can make and where I can go, who I can be. I'm all about surprising myself and discovering something new."

At the Critics Choice Awards earlier this month, the star accepted the seventh annual SeeHer Award, for actors who advocate for equality, defy stereotypes and push boundaries.

# ABSOLUTE PIC OF THE DAY



Anastasia Karanikolaou

# CATE BLANCHETT'S HUSBAND WARNED HER THAT HER FILM CAREER WOULD LAST ONLY FIVE YEARS

Los Angeles | Agencies

'Tar' star Cate Blanchett's husband warned her that her film career would only last five years. Blanchett, who has four children with spouse Andrew Upton, said the theatre director, advised her to "enjoy" her moment in the spotlight when she first found fame because it was so hard for women to have longevity in the industry. Reflecting on how things have progressed for women, she told OK! magazine: "Well, the landscape has certainly changed." "You know, in the dawn of time when I entered the film industry, which was a very long time ago, I remember my husband saying to me in an incredibly supportive way, 'Enjoy it babe, you've got five years, if you're lucky.' And that was true for women."

"I think there are a lot of people who have been changing those landscape, not only female, but trailblazing actors who have pushed the boundaries." The star acknowledged that she is in a "privileged position in certain environments" but doesn't feel particularly powerful. Asked if she feels powerful, she said: "No I don't. I mean you get certain environments, you know, I'm a white woman who is financially secure, who has gone through primary, secondary and tertiary education, who is in a non-abusive relationship and who is in work and has good health." "So yes, on that level, I am incredibly powerful."







## IND vs NZ 2nd ODI

# IMPRESSIVE BOWLERS, ROHIT'S FIFTY LEAD INDIA TO SERIES WIN

Raipur | Agencies

Captain Rohit Sharma smashed an eye-catching fifty while Shubman Gill remained unbeaten on 40 to guide India to a comprehensive eight-wicket victory over New Zealand in the second ODI at the Shaheed Veer Narayan Singh Cricket Stadium.

After the Indian bowlers, led by Mohammed Shami's 3/18, were accurate in their bowling, fetched good swing, turn, bounce, and took sharp return catches in an impressive show to bowl out New Zealand for just 108.

In reply, Rohit made 51 and led the way for the total to be chased down in 20.1 overs. The victory also means that India have taken an unassailable 2-0 lead in the three-match series, which is also their second ODI series victory of the year at home.

New Zealand bowlers, barring Lockie Ferguson, were unable to extract the same amount of movement which the Indian bowlers were able to do in the first ten overs. That allowed Rohit



### Brief scores

New Zealand 108 all out in 34.3 overs (Glenn Phillips 36, Mitchell Santner 27; Mohammed Shami 3/18, Washington Sundar 2/7) lost to India 111/2 in 20.1 overs (Rohit Sharma 51, Shubman Gill 40 not out; Mitchell Santner 1/28, Henry Shipley 1/29) by eight wickets.

and Gill to tee off with ease.

While Rohit pulled and slashed off Henry Shipley's short balls with ease, Gill started off with an uppish square drive over backward square leg to make it two fours in the 17th over. Though Kohli was stumped off Santner for 11, Ishan Kishan hit two boundaries off spinners before Gill hit the winning runs by dancing down the pitch and lofting over mid-on off Santner to seal a crushing victory for India.

Virat Kohli dished out a lovely straight drive, presenting the full face of the bat for a delightful boundary off Shipley, before pulling fiercely through backward square leg to make it two fours in the 17th over. Though Kohli was stumped off Santner for 11, Ishan Kishan hit two boundaries off spinners before Gill hit the winning runs by dancing down the pitch and lofting over mid-on off Santner to seal a crushing victory for India.

### THE BOWLERS DELIVERED: ROHIT SHARMA

Raipur| India skipper Rohit Sharma showered praise on the bowlers, saying they have delivered every time they were asked to live up to a particular challenge.

"I thought these last five games, the bowlers have really stepped up. Whatever we have asked of them, they have delivered. Especially doing this in India. You can expect these performances away from India, but they have real skills," said Rohit in the post-match presentation ceremony.

"When we trained here yesterday in the night, it moved around, there was good carry. Which is why we wanted that challenge: 250 would have been quite challenging," he said. "Shami and Siraj did want to go on for longer spells, but I told them a big Test series is coming up (against Australia in February). I had to step in and say, boss there are other bowlers as well," he added. "I am happy with my batting. I have kept my approach quite similar. I try to take the bowlers on. It is important to do that: to try to get the pressure back. I know a big score hasn't come, but I am happy with how I am going. I know a big score is around the corner." With an unassailable 2-0 lead in the three-match series, India will be aiming to make it 3-0 in the third and final ODI at Indore on Tuesday.

## Hockey World Cup

# Hardik-less India take on New Zealand in must-win Crossover match



Bhubaneswar | Agencies

Having finished second in their group, India take on New Zealand in a must-win Crossover stage match in the FIH Odisha Hockey Men's World Cup here on Sunday with a place in the quarterfinals on the line.

India had started their campaign with a 2-0 win against Spain, held fifth-ranked England to a draw and managed to prevail 4-2 over minnows Wales to finish unbeaten in Pool D, tied on seven points with England but with an inferior goal difference.

New Zealand, on the other hand, finished third in Pool C after suffering a shock 2-3 defeat against Malaysia. The Black Sticks had also lost 0-4 to the Netherlands, managing to score only five goals and conceding eight -- their lone win coming against Chile. India too has struggled to score goals and have a tally of six goals from three matches. They have also conceded two goals against Wales in two minutes of sustained pressure that saw the Indian defence crumble.

They have to iron out a few of these issues against New Zealand as they meet in the Crossover encounter. But they will have to do that without key midfielder Hardik Singh, who had to withdraw from the tournament because of a hamstring injury he suffered towards the end of the match against England. India also missed a creative spark in the midfield and forward line against a team that packs the defence and looks to capitalise on counter-attack -- something New Zealand is also expected to do.

## Bundesliga

# Leipzig holds front runners Bayern Munich to 1-1 draw



Berlin (Germany) | Agencies

Former European champions Bayern Munich shared the spoils with resilient Leipzig in a match that could be considered the curtain raiser of the second half of the Bundesliga season.

Marcel Halstenberg's goal in the second half cancelled out Bayern striker Eric Maxim Choupo-Moting's first-half opener as the two teams came out tied 1-1 on Friday night.

The Bavarians took the reins from the kick-off and almost opened the scoring with eight minutes played when Serge Gnabry rattled the woodwork with a shot from the edge of the box.

Bayern enjoyed more possession of the ball, but Leipzig looked quick and dangerous on counterattacks as the match progressed. Emil Forsberg forced Yann Sommer into action in the

22nd minute, but his effort was denied comfortably by Bayern's new goalie, reports Xinhua.

Andre Silva had a lot of space ahead but couldn't go through as Dayot Upamecano dispossessed Silva inside the box in the last nick of time in the 35th minute.

Clinical Bayern eventually broke the deadlock with 37 minutes played as Gnabry whipped a pinpoint cross allowing Choupo-Moting to slot home his seventh goal of the season.

Leipzig started powerfully into the second half and got rewarded in the 52nd minute when Bayern failed to clear the ball before Halstenberg poked home a cross from very close range to restore parity.

The Red Bulls pressed frenetically for the decider, but Bayern's defense stood firm to secure a point on the road.

## Australian Open

# SABALENKA, BENCIC WIN TO SET UP INTRIGUING FOURTH-ROUND CLASH

Melbourne | Agencies

Fifth seed Aryna Sabalenka and No.12 seed Belinda Bencic continued their winning streaks as they won their respective women's singles third-round matches on Saturday to set up a blockbuster Round-of-16 encounter in the Australian Open.

Bencic of Switzerland continued her excellent start to the season, claiming a 6-2, 7-5 victory over Italy's Camila Giorgi to reach the fourth round. She was followed into the second week by Sabalenka, who maintained her undefeated run of 2023 by easing past her former doubles partner, No.26 seed Elise Mertens, 6-2, 6-3.

Bencic and Giorgi have not met since 2019 but the Tokyo Olympic Games gold medalist enjoyed a 3-2 head-to-head advantage going into their sixth clash. She is also on an unbeaten run in January, having begun the 2023 season with a bang, defeating players like Garbine Muguruza, Caroline Garcia and Daria Kasatkina en route to the Adelaide International title.

But Giorgi has a reputation for slaying seeds and that set the scene for an intriguing clash in the Round of 32 at Melbourne Park on Saturday.

Giorgi broke Bencic's serve in the 10th



game to make it 5-5 but the Swiss star broke right back in the 11th game and

then held her serve to seal the set 6-4 and victory in one hour and 40 minutes.

# DE MINAUR OVERCOMES BONZI, SHELTON CONTINUES HIS DREAM DEBUT

Melbourne| Home favourite Alex de Minaur equalled his best result at the Australian Open on Saturday when he cruised past Frenchman Benjamin Bonzi 7-6(0), 6-2, 6-1 to reach the fourth round for a second consecutive year.

After winning a tight first set, in which he twice squandered break advantages, the Australian pulled away, committing just 12 unforced errors in the second and third sets combined to seal victory after two hours and 10 minutes.

The player's best result at a major came at the US Open in 2020, when he advanced to the quarter-finals. Meanwhile, Ben Shelton continued his dream debut at the Australian Open after he advanced to the fourth with a win over home favourite Alexei Popyrin 6-3, 7-6(4), 6-4.

The player saved all four break points he faced to become the fifth man to reach the Round of 16 on his Australian Open debut in the past 10 years. The fourth player to accomplish the feat, J.J. Wolf did so earlier in the day and will also be Shelton's next opponent.

Shelton cracked the Top 100 for the first time in November 2022, and is now No. 65 in the ATP Live Rankings. His next opponent, Wolf, defeated countryman Michael Mmoh 6-4, 6-1, 6-2 earlier in the day.



# ZHANG CHARGES INTO LAST 16



Melbourne| China's highest-ranked player Zhang Shuai brushed aside American qualifier Katie Volynets 6-3, 6-2 on Saturday to storm into the women's singles fourth round of the Australian Open.

The 23rd-seeded Zhang gained a crucial break in the sixth game of the second set and then ran away with a one-sided victory in 63 minutes.

She had 20 winners in a polished performance on her 34th birthday to overwhelm Volynets, who had caused a major boilder in the second round by beating the ninth seed Veronika Kudermetova 6-4, 2-6, 6-2.

Zhang is getting closer to matching her fairytale quarterfinal runs at the Australian Open in 2016 and at Wimbledon in 2019, reports the news agency Xinhua.

To do that she will need to defeat former world No. 1 Karolina Pliskova, who beat Russian Varvara Gracheva 6-4, 6-2.

In the last 16, Zhang joins her compatriot Zhu Lin, who knocked out the sixth seed Maria Sakkari 7-6(3), 1-6, 6-4 in the biggest win of her career.

## Premier League

# Arsenal strengthen title bid by signing Trossard from Brighton

London | Agencies

Premier League leaders Arsenal on Friday strengthened their bid to win this season's title by signing attacking midfielder Leandro Trossard from Brighton.

The Belgian international joins Arsenal for an initial fee of 20 million pounds (24.7 million U.S. dollars), with a further seven million pounds in possible 'add-ons'.

He could make his debut when Arsenal play Manchester United on Sunday, reports news agency Xinhua.

"They told me they really like me as a player, that I would really suit the system and how they want to play," commented Trossard on the

Arsenal website.

"It helps me that I'm versatile and that I can play in different positions. They're looking forward to working with me and vice versa. I'm really excited to work with them and I think Mikel (Arteta) is a top coach," he added.

The Belgian scored 25 goals in 116 league appearances for Brighton, with seven of those coming in 16 games this season.

"This has been my best season in the Premier League until now. We did a great job at Brighton and my form has been really good. Obviously, I haven't played much since the World Cup, but I'm so excited to start at Arsenal and show myself at a top club to help the team," added Trossard.

# Australia's veteran T20 specialist Dan Christian to retire at end of BBL season

Sydney | Agencies

Australian white-ball cricketer Dan Christian, who played 20-odd ODIs and T20Is for his country besides playing in Big Bash League (BBL), Indian Premier League (IPL) and leagues in Caribbean and Pakistan during an 18-year career, has decided to retire at the end of BBL12.

Daniel Trevor Christian, who is currently representing Sydney Sixers in Season 12 of the BBL, has announced he will retire from playing after helping the Sixers, who are currently sitting in second place in the standings, chase what would be a record-equalling fourth BBL title.

In a post on social media, the all-rounder with Aboriginal ancestry, who played for Deccan Chargers, Royal Challengers Bangalore, Delhi Daredevils besides the now-defunct



Rising Pune Supergiants in the IPL, said he was calling time on a "dream" run that has seen him land nine titles in more than 400 games. "Yesterday at training I told my Sydney Sixers teammates that I'll be retiring from playing at the end of

the BBL season," Christian wrote in his social media post. "Hopefully we can go all the way again this season, but regardless, it's been a great run. I've achieved things and made some memories that I could have only dreamt of as a kid."

## SA20

# Pretoria Capitals run riot in Durban to cement top spot

Durban | Agencies

Pretoria Capitals ran riot at Kingsmead in the SA20 league as they defeated Durban's Super Giants by eight wickets to earn a bonus point victory to cement the top spot in the standings.

Quinton de Kock won the toss for the Super Giants and chose to bat first at a humid Kingsmead, but things did not go according to the plan for the home team on Friday night.

Capitals skipper Wayne Parnell wasted no time drawing first blood with the opening ball of the innings to dismiss West Indies' Kayle Mayers for a duck. The home side's innings continued to



collapse when Wiaan Mulder (5) and De Kock (13) followed Mayers shortly afterwards. The tournament's leading run-scorer Heinrich Klaasen tried valiantly to keep his team afloat with 31 off 24 balls but had no support with Player of the Match Senuran Muthusamy (3-12), Anrich Nortje (2-15) and Eathan Bosch (2-10) following their skipper Wayne Parnell's (2-12) lead. The Super Giants folded for just 80 in 18.1 overs.





## RASHMIKA TO START SHOOTING FOR HER MOVIE SEQUEL FROM NEXT MONTH

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actress Rashmika Mandanna has given an update on the sequel of the 2021 blockbuster 'Pushpa: The Rise'. The actress shared that while 'The Boys' (insert the soundtrack of 'Bones' as per the Insta reel ritual) Allu Arjun and other actors have started the shoot of the film, she will join the shoot next month. She said, "The boys have started shooting, and I'll be joining the shoot next month, so I'm really excited! And, the things that I'm hearing from the second half is (made the explosion sound). Really mind blown about how (director) Sukumar sir is coming up with these things, because if you watch the first half, you just feel like that is the story itself."

She further mentioned while talking on FC Front Row, "But the second part is something much more than the first part and you are like 'wow, now that's something fabulous!'"

"At the same time, I think all of us actors from Pushpa 1 have seen our work in the first half, and now we're much clearer on what kind of a world we're living in. So I think all our performances are going to change. I think the performances are going to get more intense in the second half. And yeah guys, it's going to be amazing."

Meanwhile, her 'Mission Majnu' co-actor Sidharth Malhotra broke silence on the similarities being drawn between 'Mission Majnu' and the 2018 film 'Raazi'. He said, "I think it's never a bad thing when people are trying to use a reference point for a film, especially comparing it to a good film. Yes, the elements on the outer periphery of seeing a trailer might look similar; it is in the same decade, similar elements."

"But, I think the experience is completely different. It's only fair to speak to people once they see the film, the arcs...as I said, we're only trying to give the elements which you need to decide to click, in today's day and age, or to get engaged."



## Kangana mortgaged her properties while making the movie

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actress Kangana Ranaut has wrapped up the acting schedule for 'Emergency'. In a post on social media, she hinted about enemies who worked over time to stop her from making the film, and shared that she had to mortgage her properties while making it. Taking to Instagram, Kangana shared a string of BTS pictures from the sets of the film and shared a long note about her experience working on 'Emergency'. The actress mentions: "As I wrap Emergency as an actor today, a tremendously glorious phase of my life comes to its full completion... It may seem I sailed through it comfortably but the truth is far from it."

"From mortgaging all my properties, every single thing that I owned to being diagnosed with dengue during the first schedule and having to film it in spite of alarmingly low blood cell counts, my character as an individual has been severely tested." "I have been very open about my feelings on SM but I didn't share all this, honestly because I didn't want people who cared to worry unnecessarily and those who desperately want to see me fall and were doing everything to make me suffer, I didn't want to give them the pleasure of my pain." She added: "At the same time I want to share with you all that if you believe just working hard for your dreams or for what you want is

enough, think again because that's not true...You must work hard that's given even if you are worthy you will be tested beyond your limits and you mustn't break." "Hold on to yourself till you can... you are fortunate if life spares you but you are blessed if it doesn't... if you break and shatter in pieces... celebrate... Because it's time for you to reborn. It's a rebirth for me and I feel alive like never before...Thanks to my tremendously talented team for making it happen for me." "PS all those who care about me please know that I'm in a safe place now... I would have not shared all this if I wasn't...please don't worry, I only need your blessings and love." The actress will be seen playing former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi in 'Emergency'.



## ANUBHAV SINGH BASSI ALL SET TO MAKE BOLLYWOOD DEBUT

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Stand-up comedian Anubhav Singh Bassi will be making his film debut in the upcoming film 'Tu Jhoothi Main Makkaar', which stars Ranbir Kapoor and Shraddha Kapoor in lead roles. His performance in the movie is an interesting aspect.

In addition, the comedian will also give a performance as a part of his hosting at the film's trailer launch which is scheduled on January 23. Talking about the trailer launch, a source informed, "Anubhav is sure to leave everyone in splits. Bassi is a fantastic stand-up comedian and is a master of humorous punches and knows how to hold the audience's attention and keep them entertained."

The source added, "Moreover, he's spent a lot of time with Ranbir and Shraddha throughout the shoot of the movie and the three share an amazing bond together, so it just made sense to have him host the event and do the honours."

Bassi is especially flying down for the event after wrapping a show in Benaras. In addition, the makers have also planned some fun activities for Ranbir and Shraddha to go with the theme of 'difficulties in love in 2023'.

'Tu Jhoothi Main Makkaar', which brings along Ranbir and Shraddha together for the first time, is directed by Luv Ranjan, produced by Luv Films' Luv Ranjan and Ankur Garg, and presented by T-Series' Gulshan Kumar and Bhushan Kumar.



Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actress Parineeti Chopra started scuba diving as a hobby, but it now seems to have become her passion.

After 9 years of rigorous training, rescue sessions, and more than a hundred dives later, Parineeti has achieved the title of 'master scuba diver'.

Parineeti Chopra took to her social media to share this special news. She wrote: "I'm now a MASTER SCUBA DIVER!!! It is an absolutely surreal feeling! My dream of 9 years has finally come true... All those years of focus, rescue training and hard work have paid off!" "I'm truly honoured and cannot thank padity enough for their constant support, training and help in my journey! You are like family now. Also, thank you Anees and Shameen Adenwala for teaching me everything I know. You are my dive parents forever! scubanees shameenadenwala."

Parineeti Chopra turns to a 'master scuba diver'

Parineeti was last seen in 'Uunchaai' directed by Sooraj Barjatya, written by Abhishek Dixit on the basis of an original story by Sunil Gandhi, and produced jointly by Rajshri Productions, Boundless Media and Mahaveer Jain Films. It stars an ensemble cast of Amitabh Bachchan, Anupam Kher, Boman Irani, Danny Denzongpa, Parineeti Chopra, Neena Gupta and Sarika. She will next be seen in 'Chamkila' alongside Diljit Dosanjh and 'Capsule Gill' starring Akshay Kumar.



INSTAGRAM PIC OF THE DAY



Shalini Kapoor

## Prateek Kuhad feels the Internet has empowered musicians like never before

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Indie music star Prateek Kuhad, who is known for songs like 'Cold/Mess', 'Kho Gaye Hum Kahan', feels that the Internet has completely changed the way music industry functions and has also empowered musicians.

Talking about the same, the singer, who will be soon taking the stage at the Lollapalooza music festival in Mumbai said: "The Internet has kind of changed everything for the music industry in not just India but across the world. It all boils down to the distribution of music and the Internet has empowered every musician and

the music fraternity in that aspect."

Furnishing the reason behind his statement, he added: "Earlier, there were music label heads who used to dictate what must be created, composed and sound like to make it commercially viable. Today, thanks to the Internet, a musician can create the music of their liking."

"And, that's how it is with me, it starts from me, I don't create a song thinking how the audience would react to it. For me it has to sound good to me first, because my audience is a reflection of me. If I don't like something I have created, why would my audience do so?" he concluded.

