



NATION > 02
SC junks plea against UP CM Yogi Adityanath ...



HOLLYWOOD > 06
'Quentin, let's go!' ...



SPORTS > 07
IND v NZ ODI Series: India could look at making some changes ...

FIRST COVID, NOW LAYOFFS

INDIAN PROFESSIONALS UNDERGO TREMENDOUS STRESS, ANXIETY

About 3,000 tech professionals are losing their jobs on an average daily in the month of January, including thousands in India. According to health experts, the last 2-3 years of Covid lockdowns, deaths, and fear of re-infection, and now massive layoffs, have resulted in extreme stress for Indian professionals.

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Amid the growing layoffs, there has been a surge in the number of patients coming from various companies -- both office-goers and those working from home -- with panic anxiety attacks and depression as they fear losing control over their immediate future plans, mental health experts said on Monday.

Dr Saumya Mudgal, Senior Consultant, Psychiatry, Max Hospital in Gurugram, said that there has been a drastic increase in the number of patients coming from MNCs.

"These patients are usually presented with the issues of panic anxiety and panic disorder with agoraphobia and there is quite an increase in such patients. Some of them are already taking medications and the requirement of medication has gone up and the severity of symptoms has gone up," Dr Mudgal said. According to her, there are a lot of people coming with fresh or recent onset symptoms of anxiety and adjustment issues pertaining to anxiety or mixed anxiety.



Layoffs and loss of employment are very stressful experiences for most people. It is a time filled with uncertainties, economic challenges and loss of control over your future.

Dr Arti Anand, a senior clinical psychologist at Sir Ganga Ram Hospital in Delhi, said that the pandemic and massive layoffs both knocked out the

working class without any warning. "This leads to fear and stress. The way to deal with it is to be able to use your available resources, not to panic and stop thinking negatively about the future," she advised. Health experts said that to cope in these uncertain times is by maintaining supportive relationships with friends and

family, exercising regularly and practicing mindfulness.

Keep a positive attitude and outlook. Stay away from generalising negative thoughts like "I will never have a job again or I will never enjoy my work again etc," said Dr Gautam.

Divya Mohindroo, Founder, Embrace Imperfections and a counselling psychologist, said that those impacted in the current layoffs need to deal with it practically, rather than emotionally. "Start making a list of potential employers, research about available opportunities and companies, look for avenues to up skill and even diversify into other sectors, if required," she advised. "Approach employers while being mentally prepared to describe their situation while pitching their candidature. It is also important to network - with friends, ex-bosses and colleagues," she said.

All professionals should share their work responsibilities with colleagues at work and family members at home, which will help them not only be accountable but also feel light about their life and tasks in hand," Mohindroo noted.

Plea withdrawn against wrestlers alleging sexual harassment by WFI chief

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Hours after a plea was moved in the Delhi High Court on Monday against the sexual assault allegations on Wrestling Federation of India (WFI) chief Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh by multiple wrestlers, it was withdrawn.

Talking to reporter, Lawyer Shrikant Prasad said that Vicky, who was the petitioner, has asked us to withdraw the plea as the matter has been highlighted a lot.

The lawyer further said that the motive to file the plea was about the misuse of law by women on sexual harassment and resorting to protests and there should be some guidelines set up in this context.

In the plea, it is said that Phogat, who is also the first respondent in the plea, started blackmailing Bhushan for resigning from the post of WFI president on the pretext of protest against the sexual harassment of the wrestlers.

It is said that the media thinks of itself as Janata Adalat and has started intervening in the proceedings of the court, the plea said.

It is contended that wrestlers, instead of moving to court, have approached the media to show their concern, said the petitioner.

In the petition, it has been argued that respondents (wrestlers) have crossed all their limits to approach the issue and that his reputation and dignity was being tarnished.

It further claimed that sexual harass-



ment laws were being misused and an extortion was being done on him. This writ petition is filed against the complete misuse of sexual harassment laws by the wrestler women, the petition read. It is in the petition that wrestlers are trying to get their own benefits out of this issue.

A huge protest by the wrestlers at Delhi's Jantar Mantar was called off following assurances from the Centre that grievances would be addressed and Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh was asked to step aside for four weeks.

INS Vagir commissioned, adds teeth and stealth to Indian Navy

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The fifth submarine in the Kalvari Class, INS Vagir, built by the Mazagaon Dock Shipbuilders Ltd., was commissioned into the Indian Navy here on Monday in the presence of Chief of Naval Staff, Admiral R. Hari Kumar, a defence official said.

Adding to the Navy's fighting prowess, the INS Vagir -- literally meaning a sand shark symbolising stealth and fearlessness -- has been indigenously built with technology transfer from France.

Officials said it will further boost the Navy's capabilities to further Indian maritime interests in deterring enemies, for Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance to provide a decisive blow in times of cri-



sis. INS Vagir -- the third submarine to be commissioned into the Indian Navy in two years -- comes with a sophisticated weapons package, the best of the sensors in the world, mine-laying, wire-guided torpedoes, sub-surface to surface missiles capable of neutralising a large enemy fleet.

It can also launch marine commandos for special ops,

has a state-of-the-art torpedo decoy system and its powerful diesel engines can quickly charge batteries for stealth missions, said the officials. INS Vagir comes with a glorious legacy with a submarine of the same name commissioned in November 1973 which was decommissioned in January 2001 after three decades of valorous service to the nation.

BODIES OF 3 OF THE 4 UP YOUTHS KILLED IN NEPAL PLANE CRASH IDENTIFIED

Ghaziपुर: Bodies of three of the four youths from Uttar Pradesh's Ghaziपुर district who died in the January 15 plane crash in Pokhara, Nepal, have been identified.

Ghaziपुर District Magistrate Aryaka Akhauri said the bodies of Abhishek Kushwaha, Anil Rajbhar and Vishal Sharma had been identified and handed over to family members present in Kathmandu. Efforts are on to ascertain identity of fourth youth, Sonu Jaiswal, she added. After the process of identification is over, the bodies will be brought to Ghaziपुर. On January 16, family members of the four youths were sent to Kathmandu by road with head of Chak Jainab village Vijay Jaiswal, nayab tehsildar and a revenue inspector to claim and bring back the bodies.

126TH BIRTH ANNIVERSARY OF NETAJI



Students of Netaji Subhas Vidyaniketan School take part in a rally depicting different parts of the life of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose on the occasion of his 126th birth anniversary, in Agartala on Monday

LOVE ACROSS BORDERS LANDS COUPLE IN TROUBLE

A Pakistani girl fell in love with a boy from Uttar Pradesh

Lucknow | Agencies

It was a case of love across the borders that led to drama across the states. A 19-year-old Pakistani girl was arrested in Bengaluru on Friday for allegedly forging her identity to stay in India illegally.

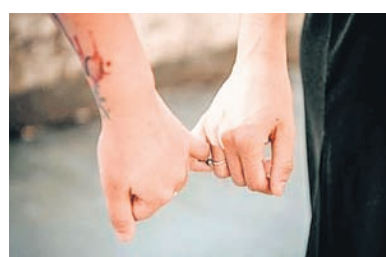
According to the police, the girl, named Iqra Jeevani, met a 25-year-old security guard, Mulayam Singh Yadav from Uttar Pradesh while playing Ludo online. The two fell in love and Iqra entered India through Nepal border where Yadav met her.

The two came to Birganj in Bihar and then Patna. The couple then moved to Bengaluru and stayed in a rented house near the Ayappa temple in Junnasandra where the security guard started working in September 2022.

Yadav, even got an Aadhaar card made for Iqra after changing her name to Rava Yadav and applied for an Indian passport. The case came to light when the Central intelligence agencies came across Iqra who was trying to contact her family members back in Pakistan and alerted the state intelligence.

The police verified the details before swooping down on the house and arresting the couple. A background check is underway to see whether she is part of an espionage ring.

Iqra was later handed over to the FRRO officials, who later remanded her to a state home for women till further investigations are carried out.



TN AIRPORTS ON HIGH ALERT OVER SMUGGLING OF EXOTIC SPECIES INTO COUNTRY

Chennai | Agencies

Security at the four international airports in Tamil Nadu has been heightened to curb the possibility of smuggling exotic species of wild animals into the country through them, officials said on Monday.

A few weeks ago, security officials at the Chennai and Tiruchi airports seized exotic species of coir snakes, ball pythons, pygmy marmosets, and star tortoises that were brought into the country from Thailand and Cambodia.

In Chennai, the exotic species were found to be in possession of a passenger, but in Tiruchi, the animals were found abandoned in the airport.

Sources in the air intelligence unit said that they have received a tip-off that more such species are being sought to brought into the country through Chennai, Coimbatore, and Madurai airports and these are used by people as domestic animals. In rare cases, some of these exotic species are smuggled to China where they are used as medicines.

Customs had made 11 seizures of exotic species from the Tamil Nadu airports in 2022. The seized species include albino porcupines, de braz-



za's monkeys, ball pythons, king snakes, and star tortoises. Five people were arrested and on questioning, admitted to a major racket behind the smuggling of exotic species into Tamil Nadu.

Police sources said that there is a thriving illegal pet trade in many parts of Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Kerala, and Andhra Pradesh and these exotic species are being

brought in for such markets. A senior Greater Chennai Police official said: "The exotic species is a new trade which is slowly catching up in several south Indian states. The airports of Tamil Nadu are becoming the hot spots for smuggling in of exotic species. Central agencies have also provided inputs regarding the smuggling of exotic species into Tamil Nadu airports."

Karnataka couple's attempt to sell infant in Goa



Panaji | Agencies

The Railway Protection Force (RPF) at Margao Railway station has foiled an attempt of a couple from Karnataka's Dharwad to allegedly sell their seven-month-old boy to a couple in Goa, an official said on Monday.

RPF Inspector Vinod Mishra said that an offence has been registered against the couple and three woman mediators (agents), who had done a deal of Rs 3 lakh with a Panaji-based couple to purchase the baby.

"On Sunday, the Panaji-based couple had come to Margao railway station to buy this baby and a couple from Dharwad, who wanted to sell

their first baby, had also come here. They were having an argument with each other, which was noticed by our staff and they were taken to our office. After interrogating them, the matter was clear that they were dealing to buy and sell a baby. Then the three mediators were detained," he said.

He said that initial interrogation revealed that the seller couple is working as labourer and the buyer has two kids. "Buyer said he was interested in buying this baby boy as he loves kids," Mishra said. Goa Police said that the father of the baby boy was arrested, after the case was handed over to them and they are undertaking further investigations.



FULL DRESS REHEARSAL OF REPUBLIC DAY PARADE HELD

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The full dress rehearsal of the Republic Day Parade was held at Kartavya Path in Delhi, in which personnel from the Army, Air Force, Navy and the Paramilitary forces participated on Monday. Twenty three tableaux from 17 states and various departments of the government took part in the rehearsal which started at 10.30 a.m.

Six tableaux of the Central ministries and departments became part of the rehearsal. The country's rich cultural heritage, economic and social progress and internal and external security was depicted in these tableaux.

According to the Ministry of Defence, various successes in different fields will be displayed during the Republic Day Parade this year, reflecting the country's geographical and rich cultural diversity.

Seventeen tableaux from states and UTs like Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Tripura, West Bengal, Jammu and



Kashmir, Ladakh, Dadra Nagar Haveli and Daman and Diu, Gujarat, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Jharkhand, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and Kerala will present a glimpse of historical heritage.

The marching contingent of the

Indian Air Force for the parade will be led by Squadron Leader Sindhu Reddy, a woman officer. The four officers and 144 air warriors in the contingent will march in a box formation.

According to the Indian Air Force, 45 aircraft including 9 Rafale jets and four helicopters will be included in

the fly-past at the celebrations.

The IL-38 plane of the Indian Air Force will take part in the Republic Day parade for the first and perhaps the last time. Formations of the flag, Rudra, eagle, Tiranga, Garuda, Bhima, Amrit, and Vijay among others will be made in flypast.

Six tableaux from the Ministry of Culture, Central Armed Police Forces, Narcotics Control Bureau, Central Public Works Department, Indian Council of Agricultural Research will show the work and achievements of the last few years.

Generally, around 15 tableaux are selected from the States/UTs depending on the proportional size of each region. In the selection process, an expert committee examined the tableaux proposals of various States and Union Territories.

Apart from this, several rounds of discussions were held by the committee members with the representatives of the states on the theme, presentation, artistic performance and technical aspects of the tableau.

SC junks plea against UP CM Yogi Adityanath

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Supreme Court declined to entertain a plea seeking direction for registration of a case against Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath in connection with an objectionable speech allegedly made in 2018 during an election campaign in Alwar, Rajasthan.

A bench headed by Justice B.R. Gavai told the petitioner's counsel that such litigations are meant for page 1 of newspapers. The petition was filed by Naval Kishor Sharma of Mau district. The petitioner moved the apex court challenging the Allahabad High Court order, which dismissed his plea and also imposed a cost of Rs 5,000.

Declining to entertain the plea, the bench, also comprising Justice Vikram Nath, said "dismissed..."

The petitioner had claimed that Adityanath in November 2018, in an election speech in Alwar hurt his religious sentiments. Initially, the petitioner had filed a complaint against the speech before the district court of Mau, which was rejected.

Later, he moved the high court, which too dismissed the plea. The high court said the court at Mau had no territorial jurisdiction to entertain the said complaint and its dismissal



with order dated March 11, 2022, under Section 203 Cr.P.C. is just and proper.

Dismissing the plea, the high court added that the dismissal of the revision wide judgment and order dated April 26, 2022 (wherein the order dated March 11, 2022 was challenged) is also without any illegality, irregularity and perversity.

According to the petitioner on November 28, 2018, Adityanath addressed a public meeting with regards to general Vidhan Sabha elections in Malakheda, Alwar (Rajasthan) in which he stated certain words for Lord Bajrangbali due to which the religious sentiments of public who are followers of Sri Bajrangbali have been hurt.

Passenger on Spice Jet's Delhi-Hyderabad flight misbehaves with cabin crew

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Another incident of an unruly passenger behavior has come out, this time on SpiceJet. The airline said that a passenger, on its SG-8133 Delhi-Hyderabad flight on Monday, behaved in an unruly and inappropriate manner, harassing and causing disturbance to the cabin crew.



On January 23, 2023, SpiceJet wet-leased Corendon aircraft was scheduled to operate SG-8133 (Delhi-Hyderabad). During boarding at Delhi, one passenger behaved in an unruly and inappropriate manner, harassing and causing disturbance to cabin crew," a SpiceJet spokesperson said.

The crew informed the pilot-in-command (PIC) and security staff of the same. The said passenger and a co-passenger, who were travelling

together, were offloaded and handed over to the security team, added the spokesperson.

Aviation regulator DGCA said that it is looking into the matter. There have been many incidents of unruly passengers on flights in the last couple of months. Apart from peeing incident in Air India, two incidents of passenger misbehaviour occurring on Air India flight AI-142 on December 6, 2022 from Paris to New Delhi, came to the

notice of the DGCA.

One passenger was caught smoking in the lavatory, was drunk and not listening to the crew. Another passenger allegedly relieved himself on a vacant seat and blanket of a fellow female passenger when she went to the lavatory. Earlier, a high pitched argument between an air-passenger and one of the crew members of an IndiGo flight went viral on social media. The argument started on the airline's Istanbul-Delhi flight over food.

WOMAN PUSHES HER TWO CHILDREN INTO GODAVARI, KILLS SELF

Hyderabad: A woman pushed her two children into the Godavari river in Telangana on Monday before jumping into to die by suicide.

The shocking incident occurred in the Basar town of Nirmal district. The police pulled out all three bodies with the help of swimmers.

The woman, identified as Manasa (27) pushed her son Baladitya (8) and daughter Navasri (7) into the river near the ghat where devotees offer Ganga Harathi.

Police found school bags and empty tiffin boxes near the ghat. The woman is believed to have served food to the children before killing them.

She along with the children arrived from Nizamabad. After alighting from a bus at Godavari bridge, they reached the river bank.

Police registered a case and took up investigation. They suspect that the woman may have killed the children and committed suicide due to family problems.

Telangana official suspended for trespassing woman Indian Administrative Service officer's house

Hyderabad | Agencies

The Telangana government on Monday suspended a Deputy Tahsildar after he was arrested for intruding into the house of senior Indian Administrative Service (IAS) officer and chief minister's secretary Smita Sabharwal here.

Taking a serious note of the incident, the government suspended Anand Kumar Reddy.

Medchal Malkajgiri district collector issued orders suspending the Deputy Tahsildar. Officials of the revenue department will serve the orders on Anand Kumar Reddy in Chanchalguda Central Jail where he is currently lodged.

The incident reportedly took place on the night of January 19 but came to light on Sunday.

Smita, who is secretary to Telangana chief minister, raised an alarm when the Deputy Tahsildar approached her around 11.30 a.m. in her villa in IAS officers' quarters in Jubilee Hills. The security staff apprehended him and handed over to

SUSPENDED

police. He was booked for criminal trespass.

Anand Reddy's friend K. Babu, who was waiting in the car outside the house, was also caught and handed over to the police. The official took to Twitter on Sunday to reveal the incident.

"Had this most harrowing experience, a night back when an intruder broke into my house. I had the presence of mind to deal and save my life. Lessons: no matter how secure you think you are- always check the doors/ locks personally," she tweeted and advised people to dial 100 in an emergency.

Anand Reddy (48) entered the high-security quarters saying he was going to B-17 villa but instead tres-

passed into the woman IAS official's villa (B-11).

He reportedly told police that he had gone to the IAS officer to discuss the issue related to his promotion.

The Deputy Tahsildar also reportedly tweeted to the IAS officer that he is at her doorstep.

Both Anand Reddy and Babu were produced before a magistrate, who remanded them to judicial custody for 14 days. Police have launched a high-level probe into the incident.

Smita Sabharwal was staying in the house with her two children. Her husband Akun Sabharwal, an IPS officer, is on Central deputation serving an intelligence agency.

500 engineering students donate blood on Netaji's birthday



Team Absolute | New Delhi

As many as 500 engineering students on Monday donated blood on the birth anniversary

of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose at the Maharaja Agrasen Engineering College in Outer Delhi. The young engineering students said that they are celebrating

'Parakram Day' to send a message across the nation that Netaji still inspires the youth. Doctors associated with Rotary Club and Red Cross Society helped in the blood donation drive.

Cases of cruelty to dogs on the rise in UP

Agra (Uttar Pradesh) | Agencies

Incidents of cruelty to dogs are on the rise. A female dog and two pups were put in a cardboard box and abandoned near a petrol pump in the Tedhi Bagiya area in Agra.

A passer-by saw the box and opened it. The female dog was unconscious while the pups were yelping.

The passer-by informed an NGO Casper's Home that took the female dog to a veterinarian. The vet said that the dog had been given anaesthesia injection before being abandoned in the box.

The vet, Dr Dilip Kumar, said that the condition of the dog was critical, probably because of anaesthesia overdose. The two pups are being looked after at the NGO's shelter home.

Vineet Arora of Casper's home said, "It appears that the owner did not wish to take care of the female dog and her pups but it is absolutely inhuman to throw them by the roadside in a sealed box."

Meanwhile, in another instance of cruelty to



animals in neighbouring Mathura district, a young man poured petrol on a stray dog and set it on fire. The man was reportedly upset at the dog that was

barking at him.

The incident took place in the Sadar Bazaar area of Mathura.

A milkman, Mukesh Kumar, however, saved the dog by dousing the flames with his jacket. He also took the dog to a local veterinarian and ensured the necessary treatment.

Later, he along with a local resident, Ravindra Bharadwaj, filed a police complaint against the culprit, Devesh Agarwal.

SHO of Sadar, Ajay Kishore, said, "An FIR has been registered against the accused under the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act and he has been arrested."

The SHO said, "Initial questioning of the accused revealed that he was annoyed with the female dog, who had recently delivered puppies in the neighbourhood. He claimed that the animal used to bark at him often and attacked him once. CCTV footage is being examined and the matter is being investigated."

Mukesh Kumar, the milkman, said, "The dog is critical and will take time to fully recover. We are taking care of the puppies."

MALABAR GOLD & DIAMONDS CONTINUES RAPID EXPANSION

Opens its 300th global showroom in Dallas, USA.

Kerala | Agencies

The grand inauguration of the 300th global showroom of Malabar Gold & Diamonds, the 6th largest jewellery retailer globally with a strong retail network of 300 showrooms across 10 countries, was held in Dallas, USA.

Susan Fletcher, Collin County Commissioner and Jeff Cheney, Mayor of Frisco, Texas, jointly inaugurated the showroom in the presence of Shamlal Ahmed, Managing Director - International Operations. The event was virtually attended by M P Ahammed, Chairman, Malabar Group; KP Abdul Salam, Vice-Chairman, Malabar Group; O Asher, Managing Director - India Operations, A. K. Nishad - Group Executive Director Manufacturing & B2B, other team members, well-wishers and dignitaries.

"It is a moment of great pride for us as we touch the 300th mark with this new showroom in Dallas, USA.



We started off with a small showroom in Calicut, Kerala, India and today, in less than 30 years, we have a strong retail presence of 300 showrooms across 10 countries; all thanks to our customers, shareholders, employees and other stakeholders. We will continue to strengthen our retail presence in the regions where

we have established a robust presence, as well as enter new markets with our differentiated products, services and assurances. The acceptance and patronage received by the brand gives us the confidence to further speed up the expansion process and pursue our goal of becoming the No. 1 jewellery retailer globally," said

MP Ahammed, Chairman, Malabar Group. In addition he also said that the group will be further strengthening its manufacturing capabilities to support its retail expansion drive globally.

Malabar Gold & Diamonds has immediate expansion plans into the other states of India as well, which involves large cities like Bhopal and Surat as well as key Tier 2 markets such as Iritty, Anapapalle, Nanded, Vapi, Vasai and Vizianagaram. As part of the global expansion, Malabar Gold and Diamonds also plans to open stores in UK, Bangladesh, Australia, Egypt, Canada, Turkey, South Africa. These future expansions are expected to create approximately 6,000 job opportunities in the retail, manufacturing, technical and management areas related to jewellery trade. To further enhance its Omni channel initiative, services from prominent technology partners like Microsoft, IBM, Accenture, E & Y, Deloitte are also being availed.

ED attaches assets worth Rs 7.90 cr in 2 NDPS cases

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Monday said that they have attached assets worth Rs 7.90 crore in connection with two NDPS cases pertaining to Gurdeep Singh Rano and others, and Rajesh Kumar and others.

The attached assets include 16 immovable properties consisting of land and building in Punjab pertaining to Gurdeep Singh Rano and his family members and 11 immovable properties consisting of land in Punjab pertaining to Rajesh Kumar and his family members.

The assets attached also included movable properties, balance in bank accounts, cash and gold ornaments.

The ED initiated money laundering investigation on the basis of the FIR registered by Special Task force, Punjab Police under various sections of the NDPS Act, IPC and Arms Act. An official said that Rano had links with other suspected illicit drug smugglers, namely Simranjit Singh and Tanvir Bedi, who are residing abroad. The ED initiated money laundering investigation against Rajesh Kumar on the basis of the FIR registered by



Punjab Police at Police Station City Faridkot, under NDPS Act. Kumar was selling intoxicant drugs in the guise of medical store run by him.

"ED investigation revealed that in both PMLA cases, most of the immovable properties were bought in cash wherein the accused were not able to produce any documentary evidences in support of source of cash.

Investigation further revealed that in some cases, cash was deposited in the bank accounts of known persons to layer the Proceeds of Crime for purchasing immovable properties," the official said.



THACKERAY-AMBEDKAR 'UNITY' RATTLES MAHA POLITICS

MVA LAUDS, BJP TRASHES

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Ending two months' political suspense, the Uddhav Thackeray's Shiv Sena (UBT) and Prakash Ambedkar's Vanchit Bahujan Aghadi (VBA) entered into a brand-new 'Shiv Shakti-Bhim Shakti' alliance here, coinciding with the 97th birth anniversary of the late Balasaheb Thackeray, on Monday.



Bhim Shakti' tie-up will work to save the Constitution and Democracy. Thackeray claimed that the new partnership has been discussed beforehand with the Maha Vikas Aghadi allies comprising Congress-Nationalist Congress Party-Sena (UBT), while Ambedkar expressed the hope that the MVA would soon accept the VBA.

Janata Party and would work in tandem with other political parties. Confirming that Thackeray had discussed the partnership with Ambedkar, Congress state President Nana Patole welcomed the new 'Shiv Shakti-Bhim Shakti' alliance saying it will help the Opposition parties' ambitions of dislodging the BJP in the state and Centre.NCP leader Anil Deshmukh also welcomed the Sena (UBT)-VBA tie-up saying all parties have a right to make their alliances.

should unite in the state". Asked what will be the impact of the tie-up in the upcoming civic polls, Ambedkar said it will work with other MVA parties, "will succeed and emerge victorious". In his first reaction, Balasahebanchi Shiv Sena (BSS) leader and Chief Minister Eknath Shinde expressed his 'good wishes' to the new entity, while the ally and BJP's leaders like Union Minister Narayan Rane and state President Chandrashekar Bawankule trashed it saying it will make no difference to the party.

SC junk CBI's plea against bail granted to Anil Deshmukh

Team Absolute | Mumbai/ New Delhi

The Supreme Court on Monday declined to entertain a plea by CBI challenging bail granted by the Bombay High Court to former Maharashtra Home Minister Anil Deshmukh regarding a corruption case in connection with alleged illegal gratification sought from bar owners and corruption in police transfers and postings in Maharashtra.



Anil Deshmukh in a money laundering case. The high court had allowed Deshmukh's bail plea in the money laundering case being probed by the ED. It had noted that dismissed cop Sachin Waze, who was co-accused in the case before he turned into an approver, statements lacked certainty. Waze had made a statement that an amount of Rs 1.71 crores was transferred during the months of February and March, 2021 allegedly extorted from the bar owners and handed over to Deshmukh's personal assistant.

Bombay High Court issued directions for an inquiry in response to a petition filed by Param Bir Singh, former Commissioner of Mumbai Police. The ED initiated a case of money laundering against Deshmukh and arrested him. Singh had accused him of trying to extort money from bar owners in the city via some police officials, including Waze. Also, claimed that he took money for transfers and postings of police officers. In a letter written to then chief minister Uddhav Thackeray, Singh alleged Deshmukh had instructed certain cops, including Waze, to collect Rs 100 crore every month from owners of bars in Mumbai.

Governor Koshiyari wants to quit post and retire

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Maharashtra Governor Bhagat Singh Koshiyari has conveyed his desire to step down from his post and lead a retired life, an official said here. He expressed his sentiments to Prime Minister Narendra Modi during his visit to Mumbai last week, seeking to spend the rest of his life in reading, writing, and other leisurely activities.



the recent visit of the PM to Mumbai, I have conveyed to him my desire to be discharged of all political responsibilities and to spend the remainder of my life in reading, writing and other activities," the Governor told the PM. He said he always received love and affection from the PM, and expressed hope this continues.

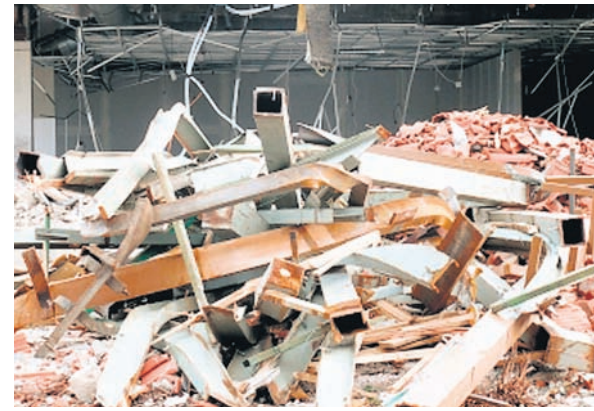
MAN ARRESTED FOR RAPING 20-MONTH-OLD BABY

Mumbai: A 20-month-old baby girl was allegedly raped by her neighbour in central Mumbai, police said on Monday. The incident came to light after the child's parents approached the police to lodge a complaint against their neighbour on Sunday, an official said. As per the complaint, the family lives in a tenement and their 35-year-old neighbour had raped the toddler when the parents were away a couple of days ago, he said. The parents realised something was amiss when the child kept crying and complaining about being in pain, the official said. An FIR under section 376 (rape) of the Indian Penal Code and relevant provisions of the Protection of Children against Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act was registered against the accused, who has been arrested, he added.

Bombay HC refuses bail to ex-cop Pradeep Sharma in Antilia case

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The Bombay High Court on Monday declined to give bail to former cop Pradeep Sharma who was arrested in connection with the planting of an SUV laden with gelatin sticks outside the residence of billionaire industrialist Mukesh Ambani, and the subsequent murder of the vehicle owner and Thane businessman Mansukh Hiran. A division bench of Justices Revati Mohite-Dere and R. N. Laddha dismissed Sharma's appeal challenging a Special NIA Court order which had rejected his bail plea of



February 2022. The SUV laden with gelatin with a printed death threat to the Ambani family was found

found dead in the Thane Creek. The National Investigation Agency (NIA) which took over the probe from Maharashtra Police and arrested Sharma in June 2021, contended that he allegedly conspired with another sacked policeman Sachin Vaze to finish off Hiran, considered a 'weak link' in the entire conspiracy to terrorise the Ambanis. The NIA said that Hiran was in the know of the entire plot and the accused Sharma-Vaze were worried that he would spill the beans on them, so they plotted to eliminate him.

SCHOOL IN VILLAGE OF 150 PEOPLE HAS ONLY 1 STUDENT

Ganeshpur: Kishore Mankar who is teaching at a Zila Parishad Primary School in Maharashtra's Ganeshpur village says the school has had only one student in the last two years. Located 22 kilometers from Maharashtra's Washim District, Mankar further stated that the population of Ganeshpur is only 150. Kishore Mankar said he has been teaching at this school for the last two years. "I'm the only teacher in school," said Kishore Mankar, a school teacher who has been showing up every day on his bike for two years to teach just one student. "There is only one teacher in the school for the last two years. I have been teaching during this period," Mankar added. "From 10:30 am to 12 pm, I follow all the rules and regulations including singing the national anthem," Mankar stated. "I teach him all the subjects. All the facilities given by the government including mid-day meal are being provided to the student," Mankar added.

Rakhi Sawant gets relief till tomorrow in obscene video case

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The Bombay High Court on Monday directed the city police to not take any action against actor Rakhi Sawant till Tuesday in connection with a case lodged against her by a model for allegedly circulating and displaying her obscene and objectionable video. Ms Sawant moved the High Court seeking pre-arrest bail in the case. Her lawyer on Monday told a single bench of Justice M S Karnik that Ms Sawant had been cooperating with the police in its probe since the FIR was lodged in November 2022. Justice Karnik posted the



matter for hearing on Tuesday and directed the police to not take any action against her until then. The bench was informed by the additional public prosecutor that Ms Sawant had

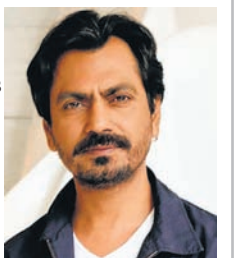


appeared before the police last week for questioning but before handing over her phone she deleted the said video. The police would now also charge Ms Sawant with the destruction of evidence, he said.

Justice Karnik asked Sawant's lawyer to take instructions on this. Based on the model's complaint, the suburban Amboli police had booked Ms Sawant and her lawyer Falguni Brahmabhatt on November 8, 2022, under sections 354A (sexual harassment), 500 (defamation), 504 (intentional insult) and 509 (insulting modesty of woman by act, word or gesture) of the Indian Penal Code and section 67 (transmission of obscene content in electronic form) of the Information Technology Act. Ms Sawant approached the court after a sessions court last week rejected her anticipatory bail application.

ACTOR NAWAZUDDIN SIDDIQUI'S WIFE CHARGED ON HIS MOTHER'S ASSAULT COMPLAINT

Mumbai: The wife of actor Nawazuddin Siddiqui was booked for alleged trespass and voluntarily causing hurt on the complaint of his mother, a Mumbai police official said on Monday. The FIR against the actor's wife Zainab was registered on Sunday, the Versova police station official said. "The complainant Mehrunisa Siddiqui, who is the actor's mother, has alleged Zainab trespassed into her home and assaulted her after picking up an argument. Zainab has been questioned in the case," he said. A case under Indian Penal Code sections 452 (house-trespass after preparation for hurt, assault or wrongful restraint), 323 (voluntary causing hurt) and other offences has been registered against Zainab Siddiqui, he said. No arrest has been made in the case and further probe is underway, he added. Police sources, meanwhile, said the incident may be the fallout of a property dispute between the actor, his wife and his mother.



MINOR GIRL KILLED BY FALLING DEBRIS OF UNDER-CONSTRUCTION TOWER

Team Absolute | Mumbai

In a freak incident, a seven-year-old girl was killed by the falling plaster from an under-construction residential high-rise here in the early hours of Monday. According to the BMC Disaster Control, the incident occurred around 8 p.m. on Sunday near Chandanwadi in south Mumbai. As per initial reports from the V.P. Patel Road Police Station, the falling debris from the 24-storied structure, Shripati Jewels building, crashed on the girl below, injuring Krishna Patel seriously. The Patel family lives in

the 7th floor of the same partly-built building where construction work is going on above the 15th till the 24th floors. Krishna was rushed to the Reliance Foundation Hospital nearby and died early this morning, around 1.30 am, during treatment, said the BMC official. Treating it as a case of 'negligence,' the V. P. Road Police Station has booked the building developer Rajendra Chaturvedi and a site supervisor Raghav Parmar. The police and fire brigade have cordoned off the building premises and surrounding as a precaution and further investigation is underway.

"Decision Is Hers Alone To Make": Court Allows 32-Week Pregnancy Termination

Team Absolute | Mumbai

A woman has the right to choose whether to continue her pregnancy or not and the decision is hers and hers alone to make, the Bombay High Court said while allowing a married woman to terminate her 32-week pregnancy after the fetus was detected with severe abnormalities. A division bench of Justices Gautam Patel and S G Dige, in its judgment of January 20, a copy of which was made available on Monday, refused to accept the medical board's view that the even though the fetus has serious abnormalities it should not be terminated as the pregnancy is almost at its

end. The woman had approached High Court seeking to terminate her pregnancy after a sonography revealed the fetus had severe abnormalities and that the baby would be born with physical and mental disabilities. "Given a severe fetal abnormality, the length of the pregnancy does not matter. The petitioner has taken an informed decision. It is not an easy one. But that decision is hers, and hers alone to make. The right to choose is of the petitioner's. It is not the right of the Medical Board," the court said in its order. Refusing termination of pregnancy only on grounds of delay would not only be condemning the fetus to a less than optimal life but would also be condemning the mother to a



future that will almost certainly rob her of every positive attribute of parenthood, the High Court said. "It would be a denial of her right to dignity, and her reproductive and decisional autonomy. The mother knows today there is no possibility

of having a normal healthy baby at the end of this delivery," the court said. The petitioner's fetus is detected with both microcephaly and lissencephaly, and this is what the future portends, the bench said. Asserting that the rights of the woman should never be compromised in the "blind application of a statute", the court said, "Justice may have to be blindfolded; it can never be allowed to be blindsided. We are agnostic about the relative positions of parties. We can never be agnostic about where justice needs to be delivered." It said cases such as this often raise profound moral questions and dilemmas, but it is immutable that the "arc of the moral universe always bends

towards justice". The bench said the existence of the fetal anomaly, as well as its severity, was certain as also the fact that it was detected late. The bench noted the medical board did not take into account the social and economic position of the couple. "It ignores their milieu entirely. It does not even attempt to envision the kind of life, one with no equality at all to speak of, that the petitioner must endure for an indefinite future if the Board's recommendation is to be followed," the court said. "The Board really does only one thing: because late, therefore no. And that is plainly wrong, as we have seen," the court said while allowing the pregnancy to be terminated.



EDITOR'S SPECS

Polls ahead, prospects of populist budget appear bleak

The scope for a blatant populist budget looks bleak amid moderating tax revenue, high committed reves, and market loans, Emkay Global Financial Services said in a report. On the revenue side, lower tax buoyancy could be partly countered by higher RBI dividend and still-healthy assumption of divestment proceeds. "We watch for possible changes to capital gains tax structure and new personal tax regime, extension of concessional 15% tax rate for new manufacturing units, and higher import tariffs on PLI-related products," the report said. On the revenue front, gross tax/GDP ratio is expected to moderate to 10.9 per cent after a robust tax-buoyant FY23 across segments. "We will watch for possible changes to the capital gains tax structure to bring uniformity among tax rates/holding periods of various asset classes and some tinkering around the new concessional tax regime and an extension of concessional 15 per cent corporate tax rate for new manufacturing units and marginally higher customs duties on PLI-related products," the report said. Separately, higher non-tax revenue would be led by bumper RBI dividends amid FX sales. The upcoming budget faces acute policy trade-offs between nurturing a nascent growth recovery and diminishing fiscal space with challenging debt dynamics. The FY24 Union Budget will be presented against the backdrop of renewed uncertainties around global and domestic growth, tighter financial conditions, and the Union elections in CY24, the report said. However, even as additional support to some vulnerable segments of the economy is warranted, a delicate balance needs to be maintained, ensuring the fiscal impulse is maximized to boost potential growth, even as policy adherence to medium-term fiscal sustainability is signaled.

ILLEGAL COAL MINING MAY PUSH WB'S RANIGANJ TOWARDS JOSHIMATH-LIKE CRISIS

SUMANTA RAY CHAUDHURI

Is Raniganj, the coal belt in West Burdwan district of West Bengal, heading towards a crisis similar to that of Joshimath in Uttarakhand where land subsidence has affected hundreds of houses, shops and other establishments? For several reasons, experts do not rule out Raniganj facing a Joshimath-like situation in the coming days unless all necessary steps are taken to arrest the man-made irregularities that are making the area increasingly subsidence-prone.

A caution on this count has been flagged off by the West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee last week as she claimed that a Joshimath-like tragedy in Raniganj will affect the lives and livelihood of over 20,000 people in the region.

She had blamed the Central government for not providing adequate funds for rehabilitation of the people of Raniganj.

Trinamool Congress MLA from Raniganj assembly constituency, Tapas Bandyopadhyay claimed that Asansol-Durgapur Development Authority (ADDA), the implementing authority for rehabilitation of the people of the affected people in the area, has received just Rs 150 crore as against the Centre-announced rehabilitation package of Rs 2,600 crore.

Local BJP leader and former mayor of Asansol Municipal Corporation Jitendra Tiwari has claimed that rampant corruption by ADDA in utilisation of the Central funds is pushing Raniganj towards this inevitable crisis.

While a political slugfest in the matter is going on, we made an attempt to get into the technical details on why this region has become so vulnerable to land-subsidence -- somewhat like Joshimath.

According to a civil engineer Pradipta Mitra, after a mine is abandoned by the official coal excavating authority like Coal India Limited the abandoned mines need to be filled up with a mixture of sand, soil and water.

"But often, there is grave negligence in this filling up process, which creates a vacuum there in the abandoned mines area. And after new constructions are made over these vacuum spots, the soils there are often unable to bear the weight and pressure of the new con-



structions and as a result frequent subsidence takes place in these areas," Mitra pointed out.

However, he added, that there will be a difference in the land-subsidence nature in Raniganj that of Joshimath.

"In case of Joshimath the entire area is highly prone to land-subsidence. However, in the case of Raniganj, those areas are prone to land subsidence where there are constructions over such abandoned mines which have not been properly filled up. So, the land-subsidence nature in Raniganj area will be in a scattered manner unlike Joshimath. Still the apprehension of loss of life and property is there," Mitra explained.

Columnist and a veteran observer of the coal sector, Sunil Mukhopadhyay, said that since the abandoned mines of Coal India Limited in the Raniganj area are not filled up with the mixture of sand-soil-water adequately, such abandoned mines become the easy target for the smugglers for illegal coal mining.

"When regular mining takes place, the coal

is excavated leaving pillars of coal blocks, which act as the support for the land over the undergrounds. Now it is the duty of the coal excavating entity to fill up the gaps between the pillars after abandoning the mines with that sand-soil-water mixture, so that the illegal miners are unable to target those coal-block pillars for illegal excavation.

"Now since there is blatant negligence in that filling up process, the smugglers target those pillars and start cutting and excavating coal from those pillars. Naturally, in this process the pillars become weak and the land-subsidence happens. And why does this negligence in filling up happens? The guess is easy... it is a nexus between the officials of the coal mining entity and the coal smugglers," Mukhopadhyay added.

According to the two-time former CPI-M Lok Sabha member from Asansol, Bansal Gopal Chowdhury, there was a verdict of the Supreme Court in 2004 which said that the coal excavating entity will also have to take the responsibility of filling up the

abandoned mines.

"ADDA was made the implementing authority for the Raniganj masterplan for which the Union government sanctioned Rs 2,600 crore. As the local MP, when I was the chairman of ADDA, the work started for identification of subsidence prone lands in Raniganj, Jamuria areas. However, later that process stopped totally and the crisis deepened," Chowdhury said.

At the same time, an ADDA official said that there is yet another problem that is halting the progress of rehabilitation in the region.

"Many of the residents in the region are reluctant to vacate their existing places and move to alternative places. They want the government authorities to take steps to arrest land subsidence without displacing them. But that is often not possible for technical reasons," the official said.

international

Not a single foreign mountain expedition in Gilgit-Baltistan amid political chaos

Lahore | Agencies

Mounting political uncertainty in Pakistan and visa delays have poured frigid water on foreign adventurers plans to visit Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) this winter and attempt to scale some of the world's highest mountains, and not a single foreign mountain expedition has arrived this season. High permit fees and the US, Australia and Saudi Arabia cautioning their citizens against travelling to Pakistan also added insult to injury, Dawn reported.

According to the GB tourism department, no foreign expedition or trekking group has been issued a permit this winter expedition season, which usually lasts from November to February.

And the fact the season is set to end after a little over a month, no adventure group is expected as they usually need



at least two months to prepare for expeditions.

Only two foreign expedition groups applied for a visa to summit Nanga Parbat this winter, but visa delays compelled them to cancel their plans. This stands in stark contrast to previous years when hundreds of foreign mountaineers visited Pakistan in winter to attempt to summit the mighty mountains like K2 and Nanga Parbat, Dawn reported.

Besides, last summer was

the first time when more than 1,600 international climbers visited GB. Karar Haidri, secretary to the Alpine Club of Pakistan, said that prevailing political uncertainty in the country was the main factor behind the decline, as many adventure tourists cancelled their visits to the region.

However, Asghar Ali Porik, a tour operator from GB said the visa policy was main cause, as it resulted in delayed issuance of visas, Dawn reported.

16 KILLED AFTER BUILDING COLLAPSES IN SYRIA



Damascus: A total of 16 civilians were killed, and four others wounded when their residential building collapsed in the northern Syrian province of Aleppo.

The five-storey building, which the Interior Ministry said had housed seven families in the predominantly Kurdish neighborhood of Sheikh Maksoud, collapsed on Sunday due to a water leakage affecting its basis, SANA news agency reported. Rescuers are still working on finding survivors, Xinhua news agency reported, citing SANA.

Thailand saw jump in tourist numbers last yr, but below pre-Covid level

Bangkok | Agencies

Thailand saw 11.81 million tourists in 2022, up from just 400,000 the previous year, but the figure was still lower than the record 39.8 million people that visited the Southeast Asian country in 2019.

The figures were released by the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) on Monday and predicted that 2022's number will double to 25 million this year, reports the BBC.

The country is set to start charging overseas visitors 300 baht (\$9.20) each from the start of June and now it has a target to increase tourist numbers to 80 million a year by 2027.

Tourism revenue accounted for more than 10 per cent of the country's gross domestic product (GDP) in 2019, says the TAT. In 2021, it was just 1 per cent.

By aiming to more than double the number of people who visited before the pandemic, the Thai government hopes to see tourism spending rise above \$150 billion. "This target, once achieved, could raise the country's tourism revenue to 5 trillion baht in 2027," the BBC quoted the government's Public



Relations Department as saying in a Facebook post.

The announcement also said Thailand plans to upgrade "tourism safety standards in order to accommodate the influx of visitors".

Like much of Southeast Asia, Thailand is expected to see a jump in tourist numbers from China, which dropped the strict border controls it put in place during the pandemic.

In December 2022, China's immigration administration said passport appli-

cations for its citizens wishing to travel internationally would resume from January 8.

The announcement brought to an end almost three years of strict quarantine rules for arrivals and prompted a rush of people booking overseas trips, with travel sites reporting a spike in traffic. Before the pandemic, China was Thailand's biggest source of tourists, with almost 11 million visitors in 2019.

This year the country is expecting at least five million Chinese tourists.

Addressing plunging birthrate top priority for Japan's govt: PM

Tokyo | Agencies

Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida on Monday warned that the country is on the "edge of losing its social function" owing to its plunging birthrate and addressing this will be the government's top priority.

Kishida's remarks were made during his policy speech on the first day of a 150-day regular parliamentary session, reports Xinhua news agency.

The Japanese leader highlighted that births last year are estimated to have fallen below the 800,000 mark for the first time since the government data available. As a result of the rapidly declining birthrate, coupled with Japan's ever-ageing population, the workforce is quickly being hollowed out and social welfare costs are ballooning.

Kishida said in his policy speech that the government will try to implement unprecedented countermeasures to

boost the number of births, pledging to "create a children-first economy and society to reverse the country's plummeting birthrate that is hampering longer-term productivity growth".

He said he intends to devise steps and seek stable financial sources to achieve this goal. Kishida mentioned the Children and Families Agency will be launched in April and a plan actualized by June to increase by 50 per cent an allocation of funds connected to child-rearing looking ahead. The Japanese leader also touched on the country's poor fiscal health, calling on politicians to put Japan on a "new growth track" in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Kishida said rising wages is the way to establish a "virtuous cycle" of ensuring increased profits from companies find their way into workers' pockets and in turn consumption, which has been stifled by inflation peaking to more than 40-year highs, would be stimulated.

Wage expansion should outpace current inflation, the Prime Minister said, which in December rose 4.0 percent from a year earlier, to hit its highest level since 1981, amid soaring food and energy prices, the latest core consumer price index data showed.

On foreign diplomacy, Kishida reiterated his keenness to establish "constructive and stable relations with China" and "communicate closely" with South Korea. In terms of the approval rating for his Cabinet tanking recently over a controversial defence spending plan and a number of ministerial dismissals, Kishida said the government will do its best from allowing similar problems to happen again. With specific reference to some Cabinet ministers resigning last year over political funds scandals and ties to a dubious religious group, Kishida said all steps would be taken so that there will not be a recurrence of such scandals.

N.Korea received \$2.3 mn in humanitarian aid last year



Seoul | Agencies

North Korea saw a significant decline in humanitarian assistance from the international community last year amid prolonged border closures due to the coronavirus pandemic, new data revealed.

The financial tracking service of the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) revealed that assistance to Pyongyang from international organisations and other agencies in 2022 reached around \$2.3 million, down sharply from \$14

million the previous year, reports Yonhap News Agency.

Switzerland's provision for the reclusive country last year through the Unicef and the Swiss Development Cooperation had accounted for 69.5 per cent of the total funding, or \$1.6 million.

Sweden provided \$513,927 to the North last year via the Swedish Red Cross, while the Norwegian Red Cross in Oslo contributed \$199,601.

Data showed that several countries, including Canada, Finland, France and Germany, had offered contributions to the North in 2021 but did not provide any last year.

Switzerland will contribute another \$1.2 million through Unicef this year for "essential nutrition services" in the impoverished country, according to the data as of January 4 shown on the OCHA website.

12 shot in US nightclub

Washington: Twelve people were shot and injured at a nightclub in Baton Rouge, capital city of the US state of Louisiana.

Three of the injured were in critical condition and were rushed to the hospital, Xinhua news agency quoted local media reports as saying. On Sunday evening, police spokesman L'Jean McNeely Jr. said all the injured were in stable condition.

The shooting occurred at the Dior Bar and Lounge around 1.30 a.m., said McNeely. No arrest has been made so far, and the motive of the shooting remains unknown. The Baton Rouge incident comes a day after at least 10 people were killed during a mass shooting in Monterey Park, California, deemed as one of the deadliest in the US state's recent history.

The incident on Saturday night took place at the Star Ballroom Dance Studio, a popular dance hall, as thousands gathered Asian-American majority city to mark the Lunar New Year state holiday.

According to police, the suspected gunman identified as 72-year-old Huu Can Tran shot and killed himself inside a white van that officers had surrounded earlier on Sunday.



GITA, MAHABHARATA AND RAMAYAN WILL BE INCLUDED IN SCHOOL CURRICULUM - CHIEF MINISTER CHOUHAN

CM Chouhan was addressing 1500 students on birth anniversary of Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose at the Sughosh Darshan programme

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has said that books like Ramcharitmanas show us the path and guides us. The episodes of Gita and Mahabharata along with Ramcharit Manas will be included in the school curriculum. This context will be helpful in moral and spiritual education. The best manifestation of knowledge is in one's mother tongue. The state government will make every effort to encourage education in the mother tongue by ending the supremacy of English. In this direction, initiative has been taken to conduct medical and engineering studies in Hindi. Chief Minister Chouhan was addressing the Sughosh Darshan program of Vidya Bharti Madhya Bharat Prant, Saraswati Vidya Pratishthan Madhya Pradesh on the birth



anniversary of Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose. Chief Minister Chouhan offered floral tributes at the statue of Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose and garlanded the picture of Maa Saraswati and a figure of Om at the venue.

All India Organization Secretary Govind Chandra Mahant, retired Major General T.P.S. Rawat also

expressed their views. Banwari Lal Saxena, President of Vidya Bharti Madhya Bharat was also present. More than 1500 students, professors and teachers from 75 schools of 16 districts participated in the programme. Students of 75 Ghosh units of Madhya Bharat formed Om, Swastik symbol, Sughosh 2023 and number 75 while playing

instruments including flute, conch shells, side drum, bamboo drum and other instruments on the Amrit Mahotsav of Independence.

Retired Major General T.P.S. Rawat said that India's independence was not possible without the contribution of Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose. Citing the context of India's 1962 war with China, Major General Rawat said that courage and determination are necessary to face the challenges ahead.

He said that a person should be ready for the supreme sacrifice by giving utmost importance to his name i.e. his identity, his motherland and his community, organisation, country. He told the students that it is necessary to keep the desire and effort to be a constant learner in life. It is not appropriate for anyone not to try any work or to avoid the work due to the fear of making a mistake.

'Students should not wait for jobs, aim for self-employment' - Governor

Governor Mangubhai Patel distributed certificates to the students after completion of their training at Kaushal Samrasta Programme held at Subhash Yadav Bhawan on January 23. After the completion of training around 237 students from Scheduled Caste received the certificates

Team Absolute | Bhopal

There is a need for Skill Development for the new generation because this is the foundation stone of a self-reliant India. Students should keep upgrading their skills and it is our responsibility to make students skilled according to the changing socio-economic conditions, so they will remain relevant to the industries. I request the students not to wait for the job but to try for self-employment." Said Mangubhai Patel during the certificate distribution ceremony, 'Kaushal Samrasta' organised by Centre for Research and Industrial Staff Performance (CRISP) at Subhash Yadav Bhawan on Monday

Further, he said that it is important for every section of society to come forward to fulfil the PM Modi's dream of Atmanirbhar Bharat. He also said that this free residential training program organised by Centre for Research and Industrial Staff Performance would help these students to excel in their life.

"Our country's youth is more focused on employment generation because this is their need in this changing time. We have to up-skill our young generation for capturing better opportunities for them",



said Satish Kumar from Swadeshi Jagran Manch.

While welcoming the guests at the beginning of the program, Managing Director of CRISP Dr. Shrikant Patil said that a lot of work is being done in Madhya Pradesh on Skill Development and the Entrepreneurship sector. He also said that, "Babasaheb Dr. Bhimrao Ambedkar had foreseen the concept of skill development long back. His dream was to bring backward people into the mainstream. PM Modi is implementing this vision like a mission through various

schemes like Stand-up India, and Start-up India."

He further narrated that CRISP has recently completed Rural Tribal Technical Training Program under Gramin Udyami project in which 132 youths from across the State have been provided technical training in various trades. CRISP has also worked overseas. In the future CRISP also wants to contribute to G-20 skill and strategy planning. At the end of his speech, he thanked Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan for his guidance.

Nitin Gadkari offers prayers at Peetambra Peeth in MP's Datia

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Union Minister Nitin Gadkari on Monday arrived in Madhya Pradesh's Datia to offer prayers at the renowned temple of Ma Peetambra. State Home Minister Narottam Mishra received Gadkari at the helipad.

Shri Peetambra Peeth, which is also called Shakti Peeth Or Tapasthali (place of meditation) is an ancient temple with a big Asharam in Datia, is located around 40 km from Jhansi railway station in Madhya Pradesh's Bundelkhand region. Being local politician from Datia, Narottam Mishra, who has been winning the elections since 1990 and became minister first time in 2005, would personally receives provide political personalities visiting to seek blessings of at Shri Peetambra Peeth in Datia.A

In political circles of Madhya Pradesh, it is well-known that even if a non-BJP politician visits Datia to offer prayers at the renowned temple, Mishra welcomes them and arranges a guest house and food for the visitors.

About Datia temple, a mythological belief is that Venkateshwar Shiva belongs to the same age as that of Mahabharata. This place is also famously called - 'Satta Ki Devi' (Goddess of Power). Big politicians have always made a



beeline here to seek blessings.

Reports suggested that during India - China War in 1962, the then Prime Minister Jawahar Lal Nehru had visited Datia temple and '51 kundaliya' mahayagya was performed. India's first Chief of Defence Staff, General Vipin Rawat had also visited Datia to offer his prayers here a few months before he died in a tragic plane crash. Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Union Home Minister Amit Shah has also visited the temple to offer their prayers. Former Presidents Ram Nath Kovind and (late) Pranab Mukherjee had also visited the temple. Beside these politicians, Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan, former MP CM Digvijaya Singh, Uma Bharti, Kamal Nath have offered prayers here.

LIST OF OFFICE-BEARERS FOR MPCC IS NOT FINAL: MP CONGRESS

Team Absolute | Bhopal

The All India Congress Committee (AICC) is in the process of reconstituting the Madhya Pradesh Congress Committee (MPCC), which also includes a 21-member Political Affairs Committee and district presidents.

According to sources, the AICC has appointed 64 district Congress presidents, however, a list of secretaries of the MPCC is yet to be announced.

Senior leader and in-charge for Madhya Pradesh J. P. Agrwal said the list issued by the AICC "is not the final", and modifications will be carried out after the 'Bharat Jodo Yatra'. "List released by AICC for Madhya Pradesh Congress Committee is not final. A modification is expected after the Bharat Jodo Yatra is over," the MPCC said in an official communication.

The state Political Affairs Committee (PAC) includes MP Congress head Kamal Nath, Rajya Sabha MP Digvijaya Singh, LoP Govind Singh, and former ministers such as Kanti Lal Bhuria, Suresh Pachori, Rajya Sabha MP Vivek Tankha, Jitu Patwari, Kamal Nath's son



and Chhindwara MP Nakul Nath, Shoba Ozha and others.

Insiders said that the state leadership wanted a "compact" committee from state to district level. Sources also said that many who were holding posts in MPCC were excluded from the new list, and therefore, a modification will be done in the fresh list.

Explaining further about MPCC members, a senior Congress leader said the compact in the sense that a proper designated team. "For instance, if there are so many members appointed as secretaries or any

other designated post in the organisation, it may create confusion.

Therefore, the state leadership wants a compact team at every step of the organisation, so that everyone can freely execute the role assigned," Congress leader said on condition of anonymity.

AICC general secretary K. C. Venugopal in a release on Monday said Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge has approved the proposal for the appointment of office-bearers and presidents of various district committees in Madhya Pradesh.

CONGRESS TO RELEASE SEPARATE MANIFESTO FOR WOMAN IN MP POLLS

Bhopal: The Madhya Pradesh Congress will release a separate manifesto for women in the Assembly polls, likely to be held later this year, a party functionary said on Monday.

The decision to release such a manifesto, christened 'Priyadarshini', was taken in a meeting chaired by state unit chief Kamal Nath on Sunday, he said.

'Priyadarshini' will be a manifesto for women, while there will be a common manifesto as well. Ten sub committees have been formed to submit manifesto related information pertaining to different segments of society,"

Vachan Patra Advisory Committee chairman Rajendra Singh said. A meeting of the sub committees will be held after one month, he added. Incidentally, in May last year, the Congress had said it would release a separate manifesto for each district in the state.

CM Chouhan planted saplings with CRISP MD and students



Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan planted saplings of Peepal, Gulmohar and Guava in the garden located at Shyamala Hills. Finance and Commercial Taxes Minister Jagdish Deora and

Managing Director of CRISP Dr. Shrikant B. Patil also planted saplings in the Smart city park. CM Chouhan also met 250 students trained by CRISP Institution under skill up-gradation in 8 sectors and guided and motivated them. He also inspired them to plant saplings.

ARMY OFFICER DIES BY SUICIDE AT TRAINING CENTRE

Jabalpur: A 43-year-old Indian Army colonel allegedly died by suicide by hanging at a training centre in Madhya Pradesh's Jabalpur city, police said on Monday. The body of Colonel Nishith Khanna, posted as Commanding Officer in the 1-Technical Training Regiment (TTR), was found hanging from a ceiling fan in a room of the officers' mess in the One Signal Training Centre at around 10.30 pm on Sunday, City Superintendent of Police (CSP) Priyanka Shukla said. Police found a suicide note purportedly written by the dead Army officer stating he was "sorry". The preliminary investigation suggested a family dispute could be the reason behind Colonel Khanna taking the extreme step, the CSP said. The Army officer was staying away from his family, which included his wife, son and daughter, since October 25, 2022, she said.

Shivraj Chouhan vs Kantilal Bhuria on government staff supporting RSS

Team Absolute | Bhopal

The ruling Bharatiya Janata Party and the Congress in Madhya Pradesh were engaged in a verbal tussle on Monday after a leader from the opposition party allegedly threatened to prepare a list of government staffers who attend Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh shakhas so as to "fix them".

After former Union leader and Congress veteran Kantilal Bhuria issued the threat, Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan hit back, saying "Several persons who have had this wish have



come and gone".

Bhuria, speaking to reporters on Sunday, said a list of employees who work for the government during the day and attend RSS shakhas at night will be prepared. "It is wrong to do so when you are a government

official or staffer. You (media) too should expose such people so that we can fix (take action) them," Bhuria said.

Asked about the statement, Chief Minister Chouhan said, "Kantilal, several people with this wish have come and gone. The RSS is an organisa-

tion of patriots. Such a process of personality building has started through this organisation that lakhs of volunteers are ready to live and die for the country."

Slamming the use of terms like "fix them", Chouhan said those being threatened in this way are also human beings and must not be insulted.

"The public will give a befitting reply to such persons (who issue threats). The Congress' frustration is not understandable," he asserted. Assembly polls are likely to be held at the end of this year.

FARMERS RAISE HONEY BEE ARMIES TO WARD OFF WILD ELEPHANTS

Team Absolute | Bhopal

In an attempt to prevent incidents of human-elephant conflict, the Madhya Pradesh government has decided to pit tiny honey bees against wild elephants that stray into farms and destroy crops in the border districts of the state.

Intoxicated on mahua flowers, elephants wander into the border districts and leave a trail of destruction before they are driven away or return to neighbouring Chhattisgarh.

In a circular issued last week, the state government listed a standard operating procedure (SOP) with a host of do's and don'ts for people in the eastern part of the state, officials said.

As one of the measures, people have been advised to install bee boxes in the affected areas to ward off elephants, they said. Elephants have a natural fear of bees, as they dislike being stung on their trunks and eyes.

Beekeeping will be promoted in the villages of Sidhi, Singrauli, Shahdol, Anuppur, Umaria, Dindori and Mandla districts that have a significant indigenous population, officials said.

The latest step will not only protect crops and property, but it will also provide livelihood to



indigenous population in the districts bordering Chhattisgarh, officials said.

According to officials, the Khadi and Village Industries Commission, through its flagship "Honey Mission" program, had distributed 100 bee boxes to 10 beneficiaries in Morena district

last year. The state forest department has roped in NGOs to spread awareness among local communities about tricks to tame and drive away tuskers, they said. "We have asked NGOs that have experience of working in areas affected by wild elephants to impart training and share their

experiences with the local communities," principal chief conservator of forests (wildlife) J S Chauhan said.

With a little bit of understanding about the animal and by exercising restraint, people can avoid damage to life and property to a great extent, he said. Solar fencing will be put up in sensitive areas to keep elephants at bay, he said. Locals will be told not to hurl stones at elephants or confront them, as it may agitate the animals, the official added. As per official data, more than eight people were killed last year by wild elephants that wandered into the state from Chhattisgarh.

According to wildlife experts, elephants move towards human settlements in search of water and fodder in summers, as the water bodies in forests dry up and run thin.

As per official data, Madhya Pradesh had just seven elephants in 2017.

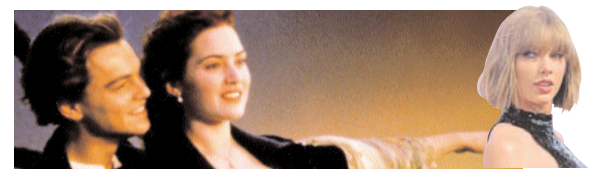
"This number has now touched the 60 mark. At least 60 wild elephants from Chhattisgarh have settled in Bandhavgarh Tiger Reserve (BTR) and Sanjay Dubri Tiger Reserve (SDTR) besides other animals straying occasionally," Chauhan said.

NATIONAL SEMINAR ON HOMEOPATHY SYSTEM OF MEDICINE AND COURSE IN BHOPAL

Bhopal: A two-day national seminar of principals and doctors of homeopathy colleges across the country on homeopathic system of and course is going to be held in Bhopal on January 24 and 25. The National Seminar will be held at the Government Homeopathy Medical College and Hospital, AYUSH Complex, MACT Hills.

The aim of the seminar is to make students aware of ability-based dynamic course, modern information technology techniques under the new education policy. The seminar is being organized by the National Commission for Homeopathy, New Delhi. In the seminar, principals of more than 250 homeopathy colleges across the country and officials of the commission will hold discussions. Secretary, Ministry of AYUSH, Central Government, Vaidya Rajesh Kotecha will be present as the chief guest in the programme.

Such a seminar is being organized for the first time in Bhopal by the National Homeopathy Commission in collaboration with the Union Ministry of AYUSH.



Cate Blanchett

considered retiring from acting after demanding last role

Los Angeles | Agencies

Hollywood star Cate Blanchett was left so drained by her latest role as obsessive Lydia Tar she thought about quitting acting, which she says has also left her profoundly homesick for her Australian homeland. The actress is being tipped for another Oscar for her portrayal of an obsessive composer in 'Tar', but said it was so physically and emotionally draining she thought about giving up work, reports femalefirst.co.uk.

She told Australian show 'The Sunday Project': 'I think it was because it was such a physical role, the echoes of it are still with me and I think I'm like a lot of audience members, I need time to process it.'

"Obviously I'm lucky enough to work with some amazing directors who have changed my life, but when it all comes together like that, it does stay with you." Blanchett then laughed: "So I don't ever want to work again." The actress, who has three sons and a daughter with her screenwriter husband Andrew Upton, 56, added her work across the globe has left her pining for her family and she has been left "profoundly homesick over the last four years" and she dreams of returning to her native Australia so she can garden and be near water. She added: "I'm very obsessed, as most Australians, obsessed by water. I want to be by the water, in the water. I would love to learn to be patient, to be still and think. My grandmother was a wonderful gardener and my mother is likewise an excellent gardener and she lives with us, and I really want to spend time in the garden with my mum."

'Quentin, let's go!'

VIVICA FOX RALLIED FOR THE MARTIAL ART FILM 'KILL BILL 3'

Los Angeles | Agencies

Actress Vivica Fox has rallied for the martial art film 'Kill Bill 3' and knows fans are ready for 'Vol. 3'. "People are hungry," she said at the Variety Studio presented by Audible at Sundance. "Quentin (Tarantino), let's go!" reports Variety. Fox portrayed Vernita Green in Tarantino's 2003 martial arts revenge drama 'Kill Bill Vol. 1' and the 2004 sequel 'Vol. 2', opposite Uma Thurman and Lucy Liu. The first movie stars Thurman as the Bride, who swears retribution on a team of assassins (Fox and Liu among them) after they try to kill her. There's nothing official in the works, but Tarantino has mentioned a potential 'Kill Bill Vol. 3' would focus in part on the daughter of Fox's character as she sets out to avenge her mother's death by killing Thurman's the Bride. Though her character doesn't survive the original 'Kill Bill', Fox says she'd "absolutely" participate in the third film, should it ever come to fruition. "I've been waiting," she said. "They said it's going to be my daughter growing up. I know he'll figure out some kind of way maybe I'll be in a flashback. I'd love to work Quentin again and I'd love to work with Uma again. It was a lot of training." Fox, who was at Sundance to promote 'Skilled', a documentary about trade workers, even has dream casting to portray her offspring. "Zendayaa she's beautiful, she's amazing. She's winning Emmys," Fox says. "We'd have to fit it in her schedule. She's killing the game."



Christian Bale thought he'd never work again after portraying Batman

Los Angeles | Agencies

Hollywood star Christian Bale thought he'd never work again after portraying Batman. Warned that he'd run the risk of being typecast and damaging his career when he accepted the role of the Caped Crusader in 'Batman Begins', the 'Pale Blue Eye' star actor admitted he was "tempted" by the prospect, reports aceshowbiz.com. "I've had no strategy for anything I've ever done. I was quite taken with the idea of Batman being the last thing I ever did, the thing I'm remembered for," said Bale - who played Batman in a

further two films. "I was also tempted by the fact that people said I might be typecast and not work again. But I've kept on working." When it comes to starting a new job, Bale, whose first film, 'Empire of the Sun', was made when he was just 13, approaches it like he's never worked before. He explained to Radio Times magazine: "I like approaching every film as though it's the first film I've ever made and it's the last film I'm ever going to make, so not going in with any arrogance." And despite his years of success, the 47-year-old star insisted he still doesn't know what he is doing on set so would

never offers advice to his co-stars. Discussing working with Harry Melling on 'Pale Blue Eye', he said, "Harry knows what he's doing, I can't teach him anything." "What kind of a*** would I be if I said, 'Harry, let me sit you down for a second and teach you a thing or two about acting?' I don't know what I'm doing; I don't know why I keep getting cast in things." Bale also doesn't worry about what his career legacy will be. He added: "I've heard someone say, 'If you want to be remembered, shoot a president' but if you want to have a legacy, you've got to do something good." It's the last thing on my mind."

'Avatar: The Way of Water' becomes sixth film in history to pass \$2 bn globally

Los Angeles | Agencies

It's just six weeks since award-winning filmmaker James Cameron's blockbuster sequel 'Avatar: The Way of Water' released and it has surpassed \$2 billion in global ticket sales. It's the sixth film in history - and first in pandemic times - to cross the coveted milestone, joining an exclusive club that includes 'Avatar', 'Avengers: Endgame', 'Titanic', 'Star Wars: The Force Awakens', and 'Avengers: Infinity War', reports 'Variety'. Now, Cameron is responsible for three of the six-highest grossing movies of all time. He's also the only director with three films to cross \$2 billion. Notably, Zoe Saldana, who plays Neytiri in the 'Avatar' series, has now starred in four of the six films to cross \$2 billion. She also appears in both 'Avengers: Endgame' and 'Avengers: Infinity War',



reprising her 'Guardians of the Galaxy' role of Gamora. Notably, 'The Way of Water' has officially hit the lofty goal that Cameron set for himself prior to the film's release. Before the sequel opened in theaters, he told GQ that 'Avatar 2' represents "the worst business case in movie history" because it needs to become one of the three or four top-grossing movies of all time just to break even. But in the coming days, it'll take down the fourth- and fifth-biggest movies, 'Star Wars: The Force Awakens' (\$2.07 billion) and 'Avengers: Infinity War' (\$2.04 billion), to achieve that feat. The original 'Avatar', which debuted in theaters 13 years ago, remains the biggest movie of all time with \$2.9 billion. 'Avengers: Endgame' trails closely behind in second place with \$2.79 billion, while 'Titanic' stands as the third-highest grossing release ever with \$2.19 billion. The long-delayed sequel to 2009's 'Avatar' opened in December and remained hugely popular in the weeks since its release.

PAMELA ANDERSON SAYS TIM ALLEN FLASHED HIS PRIVATES AT HER WHEN SHE WAS 23

Los Angeles | Agencies

Hollywood actress Pamela Anderson in her upcoming memoir has detailed a disturbing incident that took place on the set of 'Home Improvement' in 1991 when she was 23 years old. "On the first day of filming, I walked out of my dressing room, and Tim was in the hallway in his robe. He opened his robe and flashed me quickly - completely naked underneath. He said it was only fair, because he had seen me naked. Now we're even. I laughed uncomfortably," according to an excerpt in 'Love, Pamela', reports 'Variety'. Allen, who was 37 at the time of the reported incident, was presumably referring to Anderson's modeling for Playboy, which helped turn the budding actress into an internationally known sex symbol. "No, it never happened. I would never do such a thing," Allen told 'Variety' in a statement. The explosive claim is one of many in the book, which traces Anderson's rise from small-town girl from Vancouver Island to one of the most recognizable women in the world. 'Home Improvement' marked one of Anderson's earliest credits, where she played Lisa the Tool Girl in what quickly became the No. 1 TV series in the United States. She appeared in the first two seasons of the ABC sitcom before leaving to focus on 'Baywatch', which became a global phenomenon exported to 150 countries. 'Love, Pamela' is one of the most anticipated titles of the year from HarperCollins. In it, Anderson addresses last year's hit Hulu series Pam and Tommy. Anderson remained mum on the series, which delves into the infamous sex tape that was stolen from her home with then-husband Tommy Lee, when it launched in February 2022.

ABSOLUTE PIC OF THE DAY



Bella Thorne



IND V NZ ODI SERIES

INDIA COULD LOOK AT MAKING SOME CHANGES AS THEY SEEK 3-0 FINISH

Indore | Agencies

After taking an unassailable 2-0 lead in the three-match ODI series, India could be looking at making some changes to their playing eleven for the third and final game as they seek a 3-0 finish against New Zealand at Holkar Stadium.

After a 3-0 series victory over Sri Lanka, India wouldn't want to let their guard down in a dead rubber and inflict a series sweep over a New Zealand missing stalwarts like Kane Williamson and Tim Southee.

India could make some changes in the bowling department to manage the bowlers' workload in an ODI World Cup year. Fast bowlers Mohammed Shami and Mohammed Siraj, the heroes of a comprehensive eight-wicket Indian victory in Raipur, could be given a break in Indore.

Both Shami and Siraj will be playing vital roles in the four Tests against Australia for the Border-Gavaskar Trophy from February 9. That gives tearaway pacer Umran Malik a chance to be given a game,



so as leg-spinner Yuzvendra Chahal. In the batting, Shubman Gill and Rohit Sharma have been doing the bulk of the scoring for the hosts. Virat Kohli will be keen to correct his record against falling to left-arm spin, while Ishan Kishan, Hardik Pandya and Suryakumar Yadav would be itching to get some runs under their belt. If changes do happen for the Indore ODI, then Rajat

Patidar could be in line for an international debut at his home ground. New Zealand, meanwhile, would be eager to grab a consolation win to get their first victory on the tour of India. For that to happen, the batting line-up, especially the top-order, will have to step up massively in Indore. Their only impressive batters in the series have been Santner and

Michael Bracewell, who almost took New Zealand over the line in Hyderabad and attempted to resurrect the innings in Raipur before falling in quick succession. With the ball, there is scope for them to put up an improved show. The pitch at the Holkar Stadium is usually friendly for batting and with the smaller boundaries present, fans will be in store for a run-fest.

Hockey World Cup

Germany outplay France 5-1 to seal berth in quarterfinals

Bhubaneswar | Agencies

Germany qualified for the quarterfinals of the FIH Odisha Hockey Men's Hockey World Cup beating World No. 121 France 5-1 in a Crossover Stage match at the Kalinga Stadium.

Germany, who had finished second behind Belgium in Pool B on goal difference after both teams had finished with seven points from two wins and a draw, scored just before the end of the first quarter and then added three goals in the second period as they led 4-0 at half-time. The first two goals came off two faulty defensive traps by the French.

After a goalless third quarter, Germany scored one more goal before absorbing some strong pressure from France during which they earned seven penalty corners and also scored a consolation goal.

Marco Miltkau (14th min), Niklas Wellen (18th min), Mats Grambusch (23rd min),



Moritz Trompertz (24th in) and Gonzalo Pelliat (59th min) scored for Germany in the match while Francois Goyat scored the lone consolation goal for France in the 57th minute. Germany will now take on European rivals England in the last-eight stage encounter.

Germany had a brilliant first half as they controlled the game, attacked in numbers and defended superbly to overwhelm France. With France coming into

the Crossovers after holding Argentina 5-5 in their last league match and spearheaded by the ever-dangerous Victor Charlet, the top scorer with six goals, Germany had to be on their toes and not allow the French any opportunities and they did just that. Substitute Gonzalo Pelliat converted a penalty corner in the 59th minute to restore Germany's four-goal advantage and sealed a place in the quarterfinal.

Premier League

Nketiah makes last-minute winner for Arsenal as Haaland scores hat-trick for Man City

London | Agencies

Striker Eddie Nketiah scored a last-minute winner to give Arsenal a 3-2 win at home to Manchester United and retain their five-point lead over Manchester City at the top of the Premier League, with a game less played.

The striker scored a left-foot volley in the 90th minute to decide an edge-of-the-seat game that Arsenal deserved to win, although it also highlighted Manchester United's continued improvement under Erik ten Hag, reports Xinhua news agency.

Marcos Rashford's hot streak continued in the 17th minute when he put United ahead, but Nketiah's first goal of the match quickly leveled the scores seven minutes later. Bukayo Saka put Arsenal ahead in the 53rd minute, only for Lisandro Martinez's diving header six



minutes later to leave things all square.

Arsenal did most of the pressing from them on, but it wasn't until the last minute of normal time that Nketiah's second goal of the match assured the points. Earlier in the day, Erling Haaland's fourth hat-trick of the season saw Manchester City to a 3-0 win at home to Wolverhampton Wanderers.

He opened the scoring in the 40th minute with a powerful header from Kevin de

Bruyne's cross and netted his second from the penalty spot four minutes after the break. The Norwegian then scored his 25th league goal of the campaign after good work from Riyad Mahrez to round off the afternoon. Leeds United controlled their match at home to Brentford and never looked in danger of losing as Brentford failed to have a shot on target, but despite five shots on target, they failed to really test Brentford keeper David Raya.

KOHLI, SURYAKUMAR, HARDIK NAMED IN ICC MEN'S T20I TEAM OF THE YEAR 2022

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Talismanic India batters Virat Kohli, Suryakumar Yadav, and fast-bowling all-rounder Hardik Pandya on Monday were named in the ICC Men's T20I team of the Year for 2022, which is captained by England's T20 World Cup winning skipper Jos Buttler.

Others who made the cut for the Men's T20I team of the Year 2022 include Pakistan opener Mohammad Rizwan and pacer Haris Rauf, New Zealand batter Glenn Phillips, Zimbabwe's off-spin all-rounder Sikandar Raza, England's Sam Curran, who was Player of the Tournament at T20 World Cup, Sri Lanka's leg-spinner Wanindu Hasaranga and Ireland's left-arm pacer Josh Little. The latter half of 2022 saw Kohli showing glimpses of his vintage run-



making self. He took the T20 Asia Cup in the UAE by storm, finishing as the second-highest run-getter with 276 runs in five games. He also brought an end to his century drought of close to three years with a magnificent career-best 122 off just 61 balls against Afghanistan in Super Four stage of the tournament,

laced with 12 fours and six sixes, at a strike-rate of 200. Suryakumar, nominated for ICC Men's T20I Cricketer of the Year 2022, had a sensational year in the shortest format of the game, becoming just the second batter to score more than 1000 runs in a year in the format with his 360-degree strokeplay.

SMRITI, DEEPTI, RICHA, RENUKA INCLUDED IN ICC WOMEN'S T20I TEAM OF THE YEAR FOR 2022

New Delhi | Agencies

India's left-handed opener Smriti Mandhana, off-spin all-rounder Deepti Sharma, wicketkeeper-batter Richa, and right-arm fast-bowler Renuka Singh Thakur were included in the ICC Women's T20I team of the Year for 2022 captained by New Zealand all-rounder Sophie Devine, said cricket's global governing body.

Smriti, the India vice-captain who is also nominated for ICC Women's T20I Cricketer of the Year and ICC Women's Cricketer of the Year, had a terrific 2022 with the bat, making 594 runs at an average of 33 and a strike-rate of 133.48. She hit five half-centuries in 21 innings during the year, including one in the final of the Women's Asia Cup at Bangladesh in October against Sri Lanka.

Deepti took 29 wickets in the year, the joint-third-highest by any bowler in women's T20Is in 2022. Averaging 18.55 with the ball, Deepti also bowled at an economy rate of just over six, while making 370 runs in the year with the bat. Richa was a standout player for India in T20Is in 2022. In 18 matches, she amassed 259 runs, smashing 13 sixes and showcasing incredible flair in the lower middle-order. Her best came at Brabourne Stadium in a home series against Australia when she smashed an unbeaten 40 in just 19 balls, an effort which went in vain. Renuka, one of the nominees for the ICC Women's Emerging Cricketer of the Year award for 2022, picked 22 wickets at an average of 23.95 and an economy rate of 6.50. She was a thorn in the side of Australia's line-up in the seven T20I meetings across the year, taking eight wickets.



Australian Open

Magda Linette stuns Caroline Garcia to reach her first grand slam quarterfinal

Melbourne | Agencies

Poland's Magda Linette stunned World No.4 Frenchwoman Caroline Garcia in straight sets to reach her first Grand Slam quarterfinal.

Playing in her 30th Grand Slam main draw, Linette registered a 7-6(3), 6-4 upset win over WTA Finals champion Garcia in 1 hour and 57 minutes. She will next face former World No.1 Karolina Pliskova of the Czech Republic.

The win over Garcia is Linette's fourth career top-10 victory, and all four of them have come at Grand Slams. Three of them have been over the top-5 opponents. On the other hand, Pliskova extended her head-to-head dominance over Zhang Shuai of China to advance to her 11th career

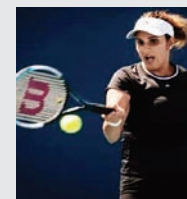


Grand Slam quarterfinal. The Czech's 6-0, 6-4 win in just 55 minutes improved her career record against Zhang to 8-0, and put her into the final eight of the Australian Open for the fourth time. The former No.1 came from 2-4 down in the second set but cruised against No.23 seed Zhang, who is a former Australian Open quarterfinalist. With the win, Pliskova improves to 11-3 in her career in Grand Slam fourth rounds, including 4-0 at the Australian Open.

Sania Mirza-Rohan Bopanna pair advances to mixed doubles quarterfinals

Melbourne | Agencies

Ace Indian tennis players Sania Mirza and Rohan Bopanna sailed into the mixed doubles quarterfinals of the Australian Open. The Indian pair defeated Japan's Makoto Ninomiya and Uruguay's Ariel Behar 6-4, 7-6(11-9) in their second-round match to set up a quarterfinal clash with Latvian-Spanish duo Jelena Ostapenko and David Vega Hernandez. Sania and Bopanna, the Rio Olympic semi-finalists, had earlier beaten Australia's Jaimee Fourlis and Luke Saville in the first round. The Indian pair drew first blood and broke the Uruguay-Latvian pair in the third game but the Ninomiya-Behar responded immediately to level the score. But the Indians then make it 4-3 and quickly raced to a set lead. Both the pairs went toe-to-toe in the second as the hard-fought set ended with the Indian pair triumphing 11-9 in the tie-breaker, keeping the Indian challenge alive at the year's first Grand Slam. Sania is playing her last Grand Slam as the six-time Grand Slam champion earlier this month announced that she will retire from professional tennis at Dubai Tennis Championships, a WTA 1000 event, which begins on February 19.



Bundesliga: Dortmund overpower Augsburg

Berlin | Agencies

Dortmund worked out a 4-3 victory over stubborn Augsburg after Giovanni Reyna provided the winner in the closing stages of the 16th round.

The "BVB" started brightly into the encounter, but the hosts had to wait until the 29th minute when Jude Bellingham danced through Augsburg's defense before slotting home the opener, reports Xinhua news agency. Mats Hummels had the chance to extend the lead from a promising position, but instead, Augsburg restored parity against the run of the game as Arne Meier benefitted on a miscued clearance and tapped home right-footed in the 40th minute.

Dortmund remained unimpressed and took the lead two minutes later after Nico Schlotterbeck utilized Julian Brandt's free-kick to head home from ten meters.

The host's advantage didn't last long, though, as Augsburg leveled the scores out of the blue again in the dying seconds of the first half when Ermedin Demirovic made the most



of Arne Engels' groundwork. Dortmund continued offensively minded but needed some time to find the back of Augsburg's goal as Jamie Bynoe-Gittens finished off his solo run to make it 3-2 on the scoreboards in the 75th minute. Dortmund's lead lasted only two minutes as resilient Augsburg tied the scores for the third time in a row after substitute David Colina latched onto a loose ball inside the box. The hosts had the last laugh and snatched all three points on home soil in the 80th minute when Bellingham flicked on a long ball from Schlotterbeck, allowing Reyna to score the 4-3 winner with a half volley.

SA20: Miller leads Royals to victory over Capitals

Paarl, South Africa | Agencies

Paarl Royals captain David Miller came to the rescue as he helped his side defeat Pretoria Capitals by six wickets in their SA20 clash at Boland Park.

Miller belted an undefeated 28 runs to keep the Royals playoff qualification hopes alive. The visitors' captain Wayne Parnell won the toss and decided to bat first in the final game in Paarl.

Capitals' batters Kusal Mendis and Theunis de Bruyn scored 37 and 53 respectively as they helped the visitor's post 158/6.

Proteas seamer Lungi Ngidi continued his good form with 1/19 from his allotted four overs, while Ferischo Adams claimed 2/38.

The chase started well for the home side, even though they lost both Jason Roy (21) and Wihan Lubbe (29) early, but that did not stop the Royals moving train.

Jos Buttler (37) and Dane Villus (24) then attempted to drive to the Cape Winelands



train through the last stop. Miller was next and he put up a brave fight in helping his side towards achieving the winning goal.

Serie A: Juve fight back twice to hold Atalanta

Rome | Agencies

Juventus showed their tenacity as they trailed behind twice but eventually registered a 3-3 tie against Atalanta in Serie A.

The Bianconeri were dealt a huge blow off the pitch as they were docked 15 points for financial issues and plummeted to the 10th place with just 22 points before Sunday's game, reports Xinhua news agency.

In the highly-anticipated game, Atalanta went ahead minutes into the game when Ademola Lookman unleashed a missile that squirmed past Wojciech Szczesny's gloves.

The home side leveled the game in the 25th minute as the referee awarded them a penalty, Angel Di Maria kept his cool to convert it, before Arkadiusz Milik turned around the game with a first-time strike.

The Dea scored the equalizer at



the dawn of the second half, as Lookman's smart pass found Joakim Maehle to beat Szczesny one-on-one.

Atalanta restored the lead six minutes later, this time Lookman was involved again, as his twisting header left Szczesny rooted to the ground.

But it was not finished yet, Juve got back on level terms on 65 minutes when Di Maria's dummy allowed Danilo to hit in a free kick with pure power.

Juve had the chance to seal the win but Fabio Mirretti's attempt was too weak to surprise the goalkeeper.

With the tie, Juve currently sit on the ninth place, 14 points off the Champions League zone.

Elsewhere, Paulo Dybala's two assists for both Stephan El Shaarawy and Tammy Abraham saw Roma sailed away with a 2-0 victory over Spezia.



I'm collaborating with my most favourite co-star: Deepika on working with SRK



Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actress Deepika Padukone has spoken about her pairing with Bollywood superstar Shah Rukh Khan, whom she calls her "favourite co-star", as they are all set for the release of their upcoming film 'Pathaan'.

The two stars have previously worked in films such as 'Om Shanti Om', 'Happy New Year' and 'Chennai Express'.

"Shah Rukh and I have been very lucky to have had the opportunity to work in some incredible movies starting with Om Shanti Om! I'm collaborating with my most favourite co-star Shah Rukh. We have a beautiful relationship and I think the audience always sees that in the movies that we do," said Deepika.

SRK and Deepika also spoke about the secret behind their electric chemistry in 'Pathaan'.

She said: "Well, he and I can both take credit for that. Again he was also on this intense diet and exercise. So, he and I can both take credit for the work we have put individually. But at the end of the day, it is the team that you work with."

Deepika added: "Whether it is the director (Siddharth Anand) and his vision or it's the cinematographer (Sathith Paulose) and how he is envisioning lighting us, whether it's the stylist (Shaleena Nathani) - how she envisions these characters, whether it is your hair and make-up team. So, it's your entire team that sort of comes together, so sure you can put in the work and do the best you can but you also have incredible world class professionals who come in and make us look the way we do!"

For Deepika, 'Pathaan' is a very special film in her filmography.

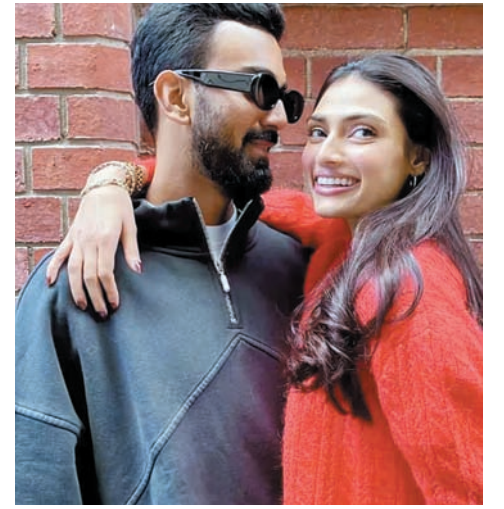
"The character that I am playing in this movie is extremely exciting, it is something that I haven't done before and even the movie - just this kind of spy thriller, an out and out action movie is something I haven't done before."

'IT'S OFFICIAL!'

Athiya Shetty, KL Rahul are now married

Team Absolute | Mumbai

It's official! Athiya Shetty and cricketer KL Rahul have been pronounced the man and the wife. The wedding ceremony, which took place on Monday at Suniel Shetty's farmhouse in Khandala, saw the pheras taking place close to the magic hour in the evening. After the ceremony concluded, Suniel and his son Ahan Shetty came out of the venue greeted the media and distributed sweets to the media personnel stationed outside the venue. The father-son duo donned Indian ethnic wear. While Suniel wore a crepe coloured Kurta and pyjama, his son was seen decked up in all white ethnic attire. Expressing his happiness, Suniel told the media that he is very happy as the function went on really well and the family has something planned up for the reception once the Indian Premier League gets completed given Rahul has work commitments in the cricket league. The 'Phir Hera Pheri' actor also mentioned that he still remains a father for Rahul like he is for his daughter Athiya and opined that the 'in-law' is a thing of the past. Ahead of the wedding, Athiya and KL Rahul hosted a sanjeet night for their guests. Suniel and his wife Mana, along with Athiya's besties Krishna Shroff and Akansha Ranjan had set the dance floor on fire with the celebrations.



NAWAZ, BHUMI WILL BE SEEN TOGETHER IN A MOVIE

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actors Nawaz

and Bhumi

Pednekar's next film

'Afwaah', helmed by Sudhir

Mishra, is set to hit the screens on

February 24. Mishra, who is known for films such

as 'Hazaaroon Khwaishein Aisi',

'Dharavi', 'Chameli' and 'Yeh Saali Zindagi',

has previously worked with Nawaz in the

satirical comedy-drama 'Serious Men'.

Talking about the film, the director

shared, "Afwaah' is a thriller which

speaks of a very important mes-

sage in the current times. I am

glad that the release date is

finally out and I am really

looking forward to its

release." "The super-tal-

ented combo of Bhumi

and Nawaz has given

their best to this uncon-

ventional story and I am

sure the audience is going

to love watching them on the

big screen." The film has been

jointly produced by Bhushan

Kumar's T-Series and Anubhav Sinha's

Benaras Mediaworks. Bhushan Kumar

added, "The power-packed team of 'Afwaah' has

done a brilliant job and this is something that will

be worth a watch for movie lovers."

Sunny Leone goes meticulously de-glam for her role in the upcoming movie

Team Absolute | Mumbai

ditching make-up, actress Sunny Leone decided to go de-glam for her role in the upcoming crime-drama 'Quotation Gang', directed by Vivek K. She said didn't want to compromise on the director's vision.

Sunny and her make-up artist worked extensively with the director in creating basic looks for her char-

acter. After cracking the genesis of the character and her backstory, the team put together some options. It is a raw part and Sunny didn't want to compromise on the authenticity.

The actress said: "The film's DNA is such that it hinges on its authenticity. I didn't want to compromise on the director's vision. I trusted the director completely. Now when I see the love our teaser is getting, I am glad that the power of his vision

is getting its due."

"Sometimes when the character has some much meat, you don't care about anything else. What matters is your performance. Once I stopped focussing on how I will look, I was able to be the character. I am grateful for the faith the director showed in me!"

Her make-up artist Richard Joseph said that the look is organically de-glammed.



PIA BAJPIEE ALL SET TO REPRISER HER ROLE IN A MOVIE

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Actress Pia Bajpiee will be seen reprising her role of Poonam Sharma in Syed Ahmad Afzal's 'Laal Rang 2'. She talked about working with the same team after six years and also explained the way her role has shaped up with



time. She shared about continuing to play the role of a girl from Saharanpur in the second part.

She said: "I couldn't have asked for a better debut, and now that its sequel is coming soon, I'm super excited. It was an amazing experience working with the entire cast and the team, and a chance to

reunite with them makes me so happy." The actress, who is known for her roles in Venkat Prabhu's comedy drama 'Goa', Tamil film 'Ko', Telugu movie 'Dalam', Malayalam movie 'Masters' and Hindi movie 'Mumbai Delhi Mumbai', expressed her happiness at joining the entire team of the film after six years. She added: "Working with the entire team after 6 years will be exciting and fun. My role is still shaping, I have a lot to add and learn. I can't wait to start shooting as this time, my fans and audience will surely get to witness a lot more of me on screen."



Trolling does affect mental health; it can disturb one's life: Anjali Arora

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Anjali Arora of 'Lock Upp' fame opened up about her depression and mental health issues and shared how tough it is to deal with unnecessary trolling. She shared: "When it comes to talking about anything wrong happening with anyone, there will be a lot of intellectual people seen putting forth their views and experiences, but the moment they switch off from society and open their social media, their mature, open, understanding thoughts get vanished and all they would leave with will be hate speech, abusive words, and I do not know what more."

She spoke about facing severe mental illness after getting brutally trolled online.

She shared: "Yes, trolling does affect mental health deeply and it can disturb one's life to the core. I know this very well as I have faced trolling at an immense amount, which not only made me cry a lot but also made me think about quitting social media."

Anjali has been facing depression for quite long. In fact, once she revealed on a reality show that she attempted suicide in the 11th Std.

"I have been in a depression for a very long period, about some months. There was just one thing on my mind: why these things are happening to me and why I have to face such things in life. But by speaking about those things to my close ones, I made myself stable, and after putting up so much effort and giving more time to myself, I became stronger and I bounced back into a life full of enthusiasm." Talking about the solutions to deal with depression and mental illness, Anjali concluded, saying: "There is not a single solution for everyone, as everyone's life, struggles, surroundings, thinking, mental health, and problems are not the same."

"But one can surely keep their mind healthy and strong through meditation, by following a good diet, ignoring haters, and most importantly, by running far away from those people who are just good in front of them and not in the back. By following these steps, one can keep their mind healthy," she concluded.

INSTAGRAM PIC OF THE DAY



Heli Daruwala