

# absolute india

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## LISTEN TO NATURE AND MAKE BUILDINGS EARTHQUAKE RESISTANT

India has been classified into four Seismic Zones (state wise) by the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) based on the past seismic history, namely, Zone-II, Zone-III, Zone-IV and Zone-V. Out of all these four zones, Zone-V is the most seismic active region whereas Zone II is the least active. Lucknow and most part of the Ganga Plain lies in EQ zone III. It means it may be affected by moderate EQ only. All the tectonic factors which cause EQ are almost inactive in most part of the Ganga Plain.

DR DHRUV SEN SINGH | Mumbai

Floods, droughts, cyclones, tsunamis, landslides and earthquakes are all natural events that have been taking place even before the evolution of man. However, these natural events become hazards when loss of life and property takes place due to the interference of man in the natural cycle of these events.

All components of the environment -- the atmosphere, hydrosphere and lithosphere -- are providing free of cost the air, water and soil without which we cannot sustain. Despite all efforts, we repeatedly fail to exercise any control over natural disasters.

An earthquake is a vibration of the surface of the earth, it is caused due to internal disturbances of the earth. It may be caused by humans as well as natural activities.

The upper part of the Earth, which is 100 km thick, is known as the Lithosphere.

The Lithosphere is broken into a number of smaller fragments known as plates. These plates are continuously moving in different directions. Plate Tectonics describes the movement and deformation of plates and provides an explanation for various natural processes such as the origin of mountains, oceans, earthquakes,



volcanoes, and upland/lowland areas. The Indian Plate is continuously moving towards the north at the rate of about 6.5 cm per year. This north moving Indian Plate is colliding with the south-moving Tibetan plate, which is responsible for the evolution of the Himalaya. The continuous movement, collision of the plates and radioactive minerals releases energy which is stored in the subsurface.

This stored energy is released through the weak zones and causes earthquakes. Frequent earthquakes means that the entire energy has not been released. The EQ waves are not harmful, it is because of the collapse of the buildings that loss of life and property takes place. EQ is the prop-

erty of brittle material, so any technique which reduces the brittle property of building minimises the damage by EQ. Iron rods, wood, and Acrelic are materials which should be used in building to make it EQ resistant.

The place below the surface where EQ originates is known as Focus and the point on the earth surface perpendicular to Focus is known as Epicentre. The Richter scale is based on the magnitude of the Earthquake at its source, whereas the other two are based on the intensity, and amount of shaking at a particular location and hence explain the amount of damage caused.

The EQ having 7 or 8 magnitude on

### Three types of earthquake waves are generated P, S and L waves.

- ▶ PRIMARY OR LONGITUDINAL WAVES ALSO KNOWN AS P-WAVES
- ▶ SECONDARY OR TRANSVERSE WAVES ALSO KNOWN AS S-WAVES
- ▶ SURFACE OR LONG WAVES ARE ALSO KNOWN AS L-WAVES

the Richter scale may have 0 scale on the Mercalli scale if the damage is negligible. To minimize the panic among the people we should use the modified Mercalli scale as well.

Earthquake is not a killer, it is because of the building collapse that loss of life and property takes place.

In our country, on 2.4 per cent of the world's total land 17 per cent of the total population is living. This means there is tremendous pressure of population on land, and we are forced to live in the peril zone.

Due to this pressure, caution is needed while constructing the buildings to make them earthquake-resistant to minimize the damage.

### Nepal plane crash

## 68 bodies recovered 12 identified

Kathmandu | Agencies

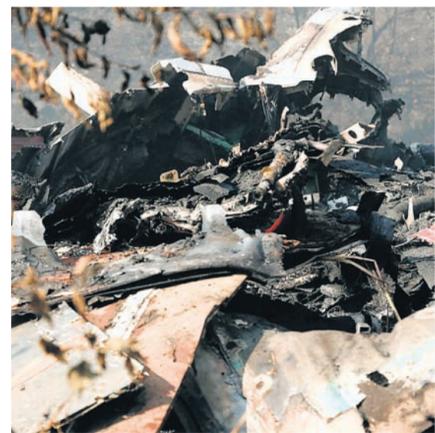
A total of 68 bodies have been recovered so far by the rescuers from the debris of the ill-fated Yeti Airlines plane that crashed in Nepal's Pokhara on Sunday, officials said.

An ATR 72 aircraft of Yeti Airlines that took off for Pokhara from Kathmandu crashed at Nayagaun at around 10.30 a.m., killing all 72 people -- 68 passengers and 4 crew members on board. The aircraft crashed between the old airport and the Pokhara International Airport, according to Yeti Airlines. Among the passengers were three infants, three children and 62 adults.

According to the Civil Aviation Authority of Nepal, the deceased passengers included 53 Nepali citizens, five Indians, four Russians, one Irish, one Australian, among others.

The Rescue Coordination Centre of the Tribhuvan International Airport in Kathmandu said the search of the remaining four bodies was underway at the site of the crash.

Of the 68 bodies which got charred by the fire, 12 have been identified. After identifying the bod-



ies, the process of handing them over to their family will begin, officials said.

According to Kaski Police Chief Superintendent Ajay KC, the bodies of 64 victims have been taken to the Pokhara Academy of Health Sciences in the city of Pokhara.

Four Armed Police Force personnel have deployed in the cliff of Seti River to find the bodies of four others.

Meanwhile, an emergency meeting of the Cabinet held on Sunday, following the accident, has announced a

public holiday to mark a national day of mourning for the loss of lives in the crash.

Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal had called an emergency meeting.

The Cabinet meeting has formed a five-member probe committee under Nagendra Ghimire, former secretary at the Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation, to investigate the accident.

The government has also directed that every domestic airline's aircraft undergo rigorous inspections before taking a flight.

## Nizam Mukarram Jah passes away in Turkey, to be laid to rest in Hyderabad

Hyderabad | Agencies

The titular Nizam of Hyderabad and the grandson of last ruler Hyderabad Nizam Osman Ali Khan, Nizam Mir Barkat Ali Khan Siddiqi Mukarram Jah, Asaf Jah VIII, has passed away in Turkey. He was 89.

Prince Mukarram Jah, who was suffering ailments for some time, passed away 10.30 p.m. in Istanbul, his office informed on Sunday. He was the eighth of the royal dynasty which came to power in 1724.

"We are deeply saddened to inform that Nawab Mir Barkat Ali Khan Walashan Mukarram Jah Bahadur, H.E.H The Eighth Nizam of Hyderabad passed away peacefully in Istanbul late last night at 10.30 p.m. (IST)," a release issued by his office stated.

As per his desire of being laid to rest in his home land, his children are scheduled to travel to Hyderabad with his mortal remains on Tuesday.

On arrival, the body will be taken to the Chowmahalla Palace and after completing



the required rituals the burial will take place at the Asaf Jahi family tombs.

Mukarram Jah was anointed as Nizam VIII at the Chowmahalla Palace on April 6, 1967. He was chosen by his grandfather Nizam Osman Ali Khan as his successor, bypassing his own sons in the process.

Born in France to Prince Azam Jah and Princess Durrushehvar in 1933, Mukarram Jah lived for many years in Australia before moving to Turkey.

## In a first in UP thyroid cancer removed by robotic surgery

Lucknow | Agencies

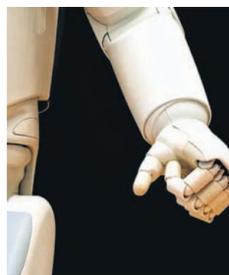
For the first time in Uttar Pradesh, thyroid cancer has been removed by robotic surgery.

Doctors at Sanjay Gandhi Postgraduate Institute of Medical Sciences (SGPGIMS) have successfully operated on a 21-year-old woman, who was suffering from papillary thyroid cancer, through robotic surgery.

The hospital release said it was the first time in India that a cancerous thyroid gland was entirely removed through robotic surgery at a government institution.

The patient, who hails from Prayagraj, had developed a lump in her, after which she was diagnosed at Kamala Nehru Cancer Hospital.

As surgery without making an incision in the throat was not possible due to complications, she was referred to the



Lucknow hospital, Dr Gyan Chand, the robotic thyroid surgeon at SGPGIMS, said.

The patient a 21-year-old unmarried girl from Prayagraj -- had a thyroid lump in her neck, which was increasing continuously.

After necessary tests at Kamla Nehru Cancer Hospital in Prayagraj, the doctors there told the family that it was a lump and it was malignant. Due to these complications,

its surgery was not possible without making an incision in the throat.

In such a situation, the patient and her family were very depressed and disappointed as this would leave the incision marks after the surgery.

Doctors at Kamla Nehru Hospital then referred the patient to Dr. Gyan Chand, Robotic Thyroid Surgeon, SGPGI, Lucknow, for the surgery without making an incision in the neck.

After necessary tests, it was found that the patient had papillary thyroid cancer, which could be removed by robotic method.

After the consent of the family, Dr Gyan successfully removed many lumps, including the cancerous thyroid gland, in the patient's neck, without making an incision in a four-hour operation. The patient is now recovering well.

## PREGNANT WOMAN TIED TO BIKE, DRAGGED BY ALCOHOLIC HUSBAND IN UP

**Pilibhit (Uttar Pradesh):** In a shocking incident, an alcoholic husband tied his pregnant wife to his motor-bike and dragged her for more than 200 metres when she protested against his drinking habits.

The incident took place in the Ghungchai village on Saturday and the accused Ram Gopal has been arrested while the wife Suman has been admitted to a hospital for treatment.

According to reports, Ram Gopal came home drunk on Saturday and Suman protested. An angry Ram, Gopal first thrashed her and then tied her to the bike and drove off. Passers-by tried to stop Ram Gopal, but he refused to listen. Finally, Suman's brother managed to save his sister and took her to the hospital.

Ram Gopal and Suman got married three years back. The couple had a love marriage. Suman alleged that after a few days of marriage, the husband became addicted to drugs. Suman, who is now eight months pregnant, said that they often fought over his drinking habits. Ram Gopal's brother and mother were present in the house at the time of the incident, they protested and tried to save Suman. The police reached the spot on getting the information and took Ram Gopal into custody. Ghungchai Station officer Rajendra Singh Strohi said that a report has been registered for dragging and beating Suman with the intention of killing her on the complaint of Vaishpal, the brother of the married woman.

## Lalit Modi resigns from K K Modi Family trust, names son as successor

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Controversial cricket administrator and former IPL chairman Lalit Modi on Sunday announced that his son Ruchir Modi would succeed him as head of Lalit Kumar Modi (LKM) branch of the K.K. Modi Family Trust.

He also announced his resignation as head of LKM branch and beneficiary of the K.K. Modi Family Trust.

Modi in a letter to members of the K.K. Modi Family Trust, namely Bina Modi, Charu Modi and Samir Modi, said that the ongoing litigation between him and his mother and sister have been going on for too long and caused a lot of distress to him, despite several rounds of negotiations for settlement.

Thus he has decided to name his son, Ruchir as his successor of the LKM branch, who would handle all



its affairs.

Lalit Modi said in the letter that he took the decision to name his son as his successor after discussions with his daughter Aliya Modi. In a separate letter, he also announced his resignation as the head of LKM branch and beneficiary of K.K. Modi Family Trust.

The move by the businessman has come after he was recently hospitalised and placed on oxygen support after suffering from Covid-19.

"In light of what I have gone thru, it's time to retire and move on. And groom my kids. I am handing them all," Modi tweeted later.

## What exactly is ChatGPT?

IS IT THE TECH WORLD'S NEW FRANKENSTEIN?

Team Absolute | New Delhi

As the world goes gaga over artificial intelligence (AI)-driven chatbot called ChatGPT -- that writes poems and essays and makes humorous comments like your friendly buddy, the conversational AI has opened several frontiers for real-life use cases going forward, only if handled with care.

According to OpenAI, the company behind ChatGPT, they have trained an AI model which interacts in a conversational way. The dialogue format makes it possible for ChatGPT to answer follow-up questions, admit its mistakes, challenge incorrect premises, and reject inappropriate requests.

ChatGPT is a sibling model to "InstructGPT", which is trained to follow an instruction in a prompt and provide a detailed



response, according to OpenAI which was acquired by Microsoft for \$1 billion. This is how it works. The company trained the model using 'Reinforcement Learning from Human Feedback' (RLHF), using the same methods as InstructGPT, but with slight differences in the data collection setup.

"We trained an initial model using supervised fine-tuning;

human AI trainers provided conversations in which they played both sides - the user and an AI assistant," says OpenAI.

The teams gave the trainers access to model-written suggestions to help them compose their responses.

"We mixed this new dialogue dataset with the InstructGPT dataset, which we transformed into a dialogue format," the

company informed. To create a reward model for reinforcement learning, it took conversations that AI trainers had with the chatbot.

"We randomly selected a model-written message, sampled several alternative completions, and had AI trainers rank them. Using these reward models, we can fine-tune the model using 'Proximal Policy Optimisation'. We performed several iterations of this process," explained OpenAI.

What are its limitations? ChatGPT sometimes writes plausible-sounding but incorrect or nonsensical answers.

According to the company, fixing this issue is challenging, as during RL training, there's currently no source of truth and training the model to be more cautious causes it to decline questions that it can answer cor-

rectly. Also, supervised training misleads the model because the "ideal answer depends on what the model knows, rather than what the human demonstrator knows". ChatGPT is sensitive to tweaks to the input phrasing or attempting the same prompt multiple times. For example, given one phrasing of a question, the model can claim to not know the answer, but given a slight rephrase, can answer correctly, according to OpenAI.

The model is often excessively verbose and overuses certain phrases, such as restating that it's a language model trained by OpenAI. These issues arise from biases in the training data (trainers prefer longer answers that look more comprehensive) and well-known over-optimisation issues," the company admitted.

The company is currently collecting user feedback.



# RAJNATH SINGH RECALLS BRAVERY OF ARMED FORCES ON 75TH ARMY DAY

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Sunday recalled the bravery of the armed forces during 1962, 1965, 1971, 1999 wars and the recent incidents in Galwan and Tawang while noting that "all the three wings of the services have always discharged their duties with efficiency from time-to-time".

He said the spirit and bravery of the soldiers has not only enhanced India's respect around the world but also increased faith in the hearts of all Indians.

The Minister said this in Bengaluru while speaking on the occasion of 75th Army Day and paid glowing tributes to Field Marshal K.M. Cariappa.

It was the first time that the Army Day was held outside the national capital in order to increase the participation of people, especially the youth in 'Knowing their Army'.

Rajnath Singh pointed out that all the three wings of the Services have always discharged their duties with efficiency from time-to-time, adding that in Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) management, the Armed Forces have been a reliable partner not only for India but also for friendly countries.

Singh asserted that India is known across the globe for its strong military.

"Be it valour, loyalty and discipline or its role in HADR, Indian armed forces have always been one of the strongest & most reliable pillars of the country," he added.

"Over the years, there has been a significant change in every field -- from society,



politics to economy. Security challenges have also witnessed that change. Not only are they evolving with time, the pace of that change is also increasing rapidly. Drones, underwater drones and weapons powered by artificial intelligence are being used today. This era has become technology intensive. Latest technological advancements have increased these challenges," the Defence Minister said.

He exhorted armed forces to further develop their capabilities and implement the lessons learnt from the ever-evolving

global security scenario, including the Ukrainian conflict.

He stated that militaries across the world are actively engaged in modernisation and are working on new ideas, technologies and their organisational structure. He urged the Indian armed forces to work on their strategies, tactics and policies keeping the future challenges in mind.

"It is imperative to work on tomorrow, the day after and the next 25-30 years. This will ensure our security and prosperity. Let us together build a developed and secure

India," he said.

Singh asserted that the government's focus has always been on developing a strong and foolproof security apparatus and it is now playing a crucial role in the progress of the nation.

He said that due to the strength of its security system, India has become the fifth largest economy in the world and emerged as a preferred and reliable investment destination. He voiced the government's resolve to continue strengthening national security by equipping the military with indigenous state-of-the-art weapons, technologies and make India one of the most powerful countries and strongest economies in the world by 2047. He assured the nation that the armed forces will always be ready to deal with all future challenges.

**Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday extended his best wishes to all army personnel, veterans and their families on the occasion of Army Day. In a tweet he said: "On Army Day, I convey my best wishes to all army personnel, veterans and their families. Every Indian is proud of our Army and will always be grateful to our soldiers. They have always kept our nation safe and are widely admired for their service during times of crisis."**



## Army evacuates 172 stranded workers at Zojila Tunnel site in J&K



Srinagar | Agencies

The Indian Army after hectic efforts succeeded in evacuating 172 workers stranded at the Zojila Tunnel construction site in J&K's Ganderbal district.

An Army statement said on Sunday, "Yesterday in a major avalanche occurrence near Sarbal Nilagar workers of the construction company got stuck.

"Avalanche rescue teams of Army and Ganderbal police got into action & after hours of gruelling effort

finally all 172 workers were brought to safety.

"This incident happened immediately after 12 January when due to a major avalanche two workers lost their lives.

"Having received the information 34 AR got into action. A detailed plan was made.

Army pressed into effect not only avalanche rescue equipment but also avalanche rescue dogs."

A senior official said that no effort would be spared to save the lives of the brave-hearts working in the Zojila tunnel tirelessly.

## Three persons shot dead in MP's Bhind by political rivals, hunt on for accused

Team Absolute | Bhopal

A former village sarpanch, and two of his relatives, were shot dead at a village in Madhya Pradesh's Bhind district on Sunday, by his opponent in the panchayat elections and his supporters, police said.

The incident occurred the former sarpanch (one of the deceased), along with his two nephews, were on their way to their farm in Pachera village on a motorcycle.

According to the police, a group of people, who were supporters of the opposition candidate for gram panchayat at elections held recently, cornered them and opened fire on them. After firing on the trio, the gunmen ran.



Locals informed the police and the three, identified as Hakim, Golu, and Pinku, were taken to a nearby hospital and where doctors declared them brought dead. Police said the trio were going to their farm when Sarpanch Nishant and his

dozen family members surrounded them and fired on them. "The accused absconded after executing the incident. Police are probing the matter and involved in searching the accused," said a police official.

## CBI ARRESTS 7 INCLUDING RAILWAY OFFICER RECOVERS RS 47L

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) on Sunday arrested seven persons, including a hawala operator and an Additional Divisional Railway Manager (ADRM) of Indian Railways posted in Guwahati, in connection with a bribe case of Rs 50 lakh.

The accused were identified as Jitendra Pal Singh (IRSE-1997) ADRM, Guwahati; Shyamal Kumar Deb (contractor, who arranged the money), Hari Om (acquaintance of the public servant), Yogendra Kumar Singh (driver of Hariom), Dilawar Khan, (cashier of the hawala shop), Vinod Kumar Singhal alias Mukesh (owner of hawala shop) and Sanjeet Ray (hawala cashier).

A senior CBI official said that a case was registered against Singh and other private persons, including contractors on the allegations of bribery.



The CBI said that the accused entered into a conspiracy with the intention of showing undue favours to the private contractors for awarding of contract agreements, preparation of measurement book, process-

ing of running account bills, early release of payment against pending bills and for the ongoing work of construction in North East Frontier Railway as well as for early release of security deposit and bank guarantees.

"Singh was habitual of demanding and accepting undue advantage from various contractors while being posted as the Chief Engineer, Construction, New Jalpaiguri, NFR. Deb was facilitating the delivery of the bribe to Singh through Om from Ray, the Hawala Operator in Delhi," the official said.

The CBI laid a trap and caught Om while accepting a bribe of Rs 50 lakh on behalf of Singh, the money was delivered through the hawala channel. Later on Singh and other private persons were also caught.

Searches were conducted at the premises of Singh and others in various locations, including at Delhi, Narora, Guwahati, Siliguri and Aligarh which led to the recovery of Rs 47 lakh cash, laptops and several incriminating documents.

All the arrested accused will be produced later in the day before the competent court.

## No non-veg food in DU's Hansraj college hostel

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Hansraj College, one of the most famous colleges of Delhi University, has stopped serving non-vegetarian food to the students in its hostel.

Giving information in this regard, the college administration said that the decision was taken with the commencement of offline classes for the first time after the Covid-19 pandemic by the concerned committee.

Along with this, the college accepted that students were not given prior information about the changes made in the hostel's menu and said that it should



have been discussed. The administration further said that no complaint had been received so far from any student regarding the non-provision of non-veg food. It is not clear when and on whose orders the non-veg food was banned. The administration apprised that the non-veg food was never served in the college canteen, and was

later banned in the hostels due to the pandemic. Some people associated with the university said that during the pandemic and after the lockdown was lifted, students themselves were seen abstaining from non-vegetarian food for a long time. The merit list of the college goes up to 99 per cent for admission to undergraduate courses.

## BSF THWARTS PAKISTANI DRONE'S ARMS DROP ATTEMPT IN PUNJAB

New Delhi:

The Border Security Force (BSF) has foiled another Pakistani attempt to smuggle drugs and weapons to India, by shooting down a drone in Punjab's border region, officials said on Sunday.

The BSF fired 7 rounds at the drone after its movement was detected late on Saturday night in Kalia village of Tarn Taran district, alongside the India-Pakistan border. A search operation has been launched in the area.

This is the second instance this month where a drone arms drop attempt was prevented by the BSF. On January 3, the troopers fired 15 rounds at a Pakistani drone after hearing its noise in Kalia village and drove it away.



## Haryana Home Minister orders suspension of two cops for serving tea to accused

Gurugram | Agencies

Haryana Home Minister Anil Vij has ordered suspension of two policemen after a woman complainant showed him a video in which the said cops can be seen serving tea to a person who is an accused in Rs 25 lakh fraud case.

The minister had directed for the suspension of two police officials on Saturday.

The Minister called up Kaithal SP, and said: "Tea is being served to the accused in the police station and you are saying that the accused is not being found. The criminals are sitting in the police station. Suspend both policemen immediately."

Not convinced with the reply of the Superintendent of Police, Vij said, "Should I close the police station? How can this happen, SP sir? Will the goons rule the state? I want immediate action."

The woman from Kaithal has complained to Home Minister Vij that police are not nab-



bing the accused in the fraud case. The accused is roaming freely and the police is serving him tea in police station, she alleged. Within an hour of Vij's reprimand, Haryana police DGP P.K. Aggarwal informed him that the accused has been nabbed.

## PATEL NAGAR MURDER: 3 JUVENILES, ONE MORE HELD

New Delhi: Four persons, including three juveniles, have been apprehended in connection with the murder of a 32-year-old man in Patel Nagar area of central Delhi, police said on Sunday.

A senior police official said that they got a PCR call on January 13 that a person is lying in a pool of blood in Prem Nagar area and a team was sent to the spot. Soon after the incident, police learnt that the injured went to a medical shop to buy medicine but then collapsed. He was taken to the Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel Hospital by police where he was declared dead on arrival.

The doctors told the police that the deceased, later identified as Nitin alias Chela, had stab wounds on his chest and right arm. The police said that during the investigation, it was learnt that the deceased was a vagabond of the area and was involved in 40 cases.

A case under Section 302 of the IPC was lodged and an investigation launched. CCTV footage was checked and local intelligence also gathered, and on the basis of this, police identified the accused, including three juveniles, involved in the matter. Acting on tip off the police apprehended all the accused. The major was identified as Karan alias Mota.

The three juveniles were sent to child observation home while Mota was sent to judicial custody.

## Mamata to address a rally in Meghalaya on Jan 18

Shillong | Agencies

Trinamool Congress chairperson and West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee would visit Meghalaya on January 18 to address an election rally in North Garo Hills district, party sources said on Sunday.

A Trinamool Congress spokesman said that in her second visit to the hill state, Banerjee would address a public meeting at the Dilma Apal Playground, Mendipathar in North Garo Hills on January 18.

Banerjee would be accompanied by the party's National General Secretary Abhishek Banerjee, leader of



Trinamool Parliamentary Party in Rajya Sabha Derek O'Brien, Meghalaya state party-in-charge Manas Ranjan Bhunia, Meghalaya state party president Charles Pyngrope and opposition leader Mukul Sangma would also attend the public event. To woo the electorate, in December last year, Banerjee was on a two-day visit to the capital city of

Shillong where she promised to launch Trinamool Congress' Meghalaya Financial Inclusion for Women Empowerment (MFI-WE) if the party is voted to power after the polls. The Trinamool Congress is the first party in Meghalaya that recently declared their candidates for 52 of the total of 60 seats.

Twelve MLAs, led by former Chief Minister Mukul Sangma (2010-2018) who had won in the 2018 Assembly election as Congress nominees joined the Trinamool Congress in November 2021, making the West Bengal-based party the main opposition in the northeastern state overnight.

## 23 injured in TN jallikattu event

Chennai | Agencies

At least 23 people were injured in a jallikattu event being held in Avaniapuram of Tamil Nadu's Madurai district on Sunday. Thirteen of the injured were admitted to Madurai Rajaji Government Medical College.

The jallikattu, considered one of the most popular bull-taming events, was being held on Sunday early morning and coincided with the Mattu Pongal.

The jallikattu festival is considered a dangerous sport in which people injure themselves



while trying to tame raging bulls. The winners are given two-wheelers, clothes, jewels, and money, and several youths participate in the jallikattu events at various places in Tamil Nadu during the Pongal festival.

It is to be noted that Pongal is the biggest festival of Tamil Nadu which is held from January 15 to 18.

## TN POLICE SHOOT AT FLEEING TWO RAPE ACCUSED

Chennai: Tamil Nadu Police on Sunday took into custody two youths who were accused of raping a 20-year-old private company employee on January 11 after firing at their legs.

The incident occurred at Sriperumbudur near Chennai on Sunday. The arrested have been identified as Nagaraj and Prakash who belong to Tiruvallur. Police said that the duo are habitual criminals and accused in several cases. The 20-year-old woman had lodged a complaint with the police stating that she was forcibly kidnapped by the two youths after identifying themselves as policemen and then taken her to a desolate place and raped her at knifepoint. CCTV visuals led the police to Nagaraj and Prakash. When the police team zeroed in on the youths, they hurled country-made bombs at the police and tried to escape.



AT BJP'S NATIONAL EXECUTIVE MEET, EYES ON POSSIBLE CHANGE IN MP

Team Absolute | Bhopal

With the Bharatiya Janata Party's (BJP) two-day National Executive meeting set to begin in the national capital on Monday, there is buzz about a major reshuffle in Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan's cabinet as well as state BJP unit. The decisions taken in the National Executive's meet will give a go ahead signal for the party for the Assembly elections late this year.

Sources claimed one out of six incumbent Union Ministers from the state is likely to be sent back to Madhya Pradesh with an important role in view of the Assembly elections, while two state leaders are likely to be inducted in Prime Minister Narendra Modi's cabinet. The one to return to the state could be either Agriculture and Farmers Welfare Minister Narendra Singh Tomar, Minister of State for Food Processing Industries and Jal Shakti Prahlad Patel and Civil Aviation Minister



Jyotiraditya Scindia.

Sources in the BJP said that Tomar is likely to be the first preference. Beside these three, one more name is doing the rounds here - that of for-

mer BJP Secretary Kailash Vijayvargiya. According to sources, each of these four BJP leaders have been lobbying. "Tomar is backed by the 'sangathan', whereas Scindia and

Patel are also runners-up. Patel has an edge against Scindia due to OBC face, which is going to be a crucial factor in the elections," a high-placed source in BJP said.

"Factionalism is undoubtedly high within the MP BJP unit, and therefore, the Central leadership would come out with a final decision keeping all these factors in mind. After CM Chouhan, the only senior party leader who can get support from all factions is Tomar. But, what will he be offered? Chief Minister's post of state president is unclear," a senior BJP leader said, requesting not to be named. "Kailash Vijayvargiya can also be in the race for state President, but as PM Modi and Home Minister Amit Shah have always surprised with their decision, and till then, all is speculation only." The buzz of changing in leadership has been doing more because of the term of Madhya Pradesh BJP president V.D. Sharma would end in February, eight months before the next assembly elections due at the end of this year.

3 dead, more than 40 injured as passenger bus overturn near Barwaha village

Team Absolute | Khargone

As many as three passengers were killed and 43 were injured after a passenger bus moving from Khandwa to Indore met with an accident near Barwaha village of Khargone district on Sunday. The condition of seven people is said to be serious and they have been referred to Indore. According to preliminary information, injured passengers quoted different reasons for the accident. Police informed that the bus belongs to Sharma Travels and was travelling from Khandwa to Indore when it met with an accident between Baghphal and Manihar village, about 7 kilometres from Barwaha tehsil at around 11 am on Sunday morning.

The passengers injured in the bus accident have been admitted to a hospital in Barwah.



Some of the eyewitnesses claimed that there was chaos on the spot after the accident. The screams of the injured passengers could be heard. Immediately after the accident, the people on the spot took charge and evacuated all the passengers from the damaged bus.

Passengers claimed that the driver was in an inebriated state and was driving the bus at high speed. While attempting to overtake a car

moving ahead, the driver lost control of the bus and subsequently, it went off-road and overturned.

The bus was 38 seater and was carrying 45 passengers at the time of the accident. Two men and one woman are among the dead passengers. Among them, Shrawan, a resident of Chegaon Makhan, has been identified, while the identity of the remaining two deceased is yet to be ascertained.

'Congress does politics only to abuse BJP': Narottam Mishra

Team Absolute | Gwalior

State Home Minister Narottam Mishra, on the occasion of Makar Sankranti, reached Datia on his three-day tour, where he offered prayers at the Pitambara Peeth temple. During the inauguration of a cafe in Datia, the minister served tea to the people present there with a kettle in his hand and said, "Congress does politics just to abuse BJP, but BJP does politics to win people's heart and for the development."

"If not today, then tomorrow we will win everyone's heart. Do not fall for Congress' misleading talk and give importance to development work," said Mishra while performing Bhumi Pujan of a road worth Rs 11 crore that connects Ghungshi to Hidora village.

"Congress people mislead the public during elections to gain votes by making fake promises, as they had previously made



regarding loan waive, so be careful of them," he added.

CM Chouhan anguished over use of objectionable language against him during Karni Sena protest

Team Absolute | Bhopal

CM Shivraj Singh Chouhan on Sunday expressed anguish over the use of objectionable language against him and his family during a protest by the Karni Sena in Bhopal. A 30-year-old Karni Sena activist from Haryana was arrested on Thursday for allegedly raising objectionable slogans against Chouhan during the protest in the state capital over their various demands, a police official said on Saturday.

A video had surfaced on social media in which the man was heard shouting slogans in obscene language against the CM during a protest by the outfit at Jamboree Maidan in BHEL township here a few days back. On Sunday, Chouhan in a Twitter post expressed distress over the incident without naming the Karni Sena. "Recently, indecent language was used during an agitation. The people have the right to criticise the Chief Minister, but the use of indecent



language for the mother (Chouhan's mother) who passed away years ago in my childhood has disturbed me," the CM tweeted. He said an apology has been sought in this matter. "I also pray to my mother, wherever she is, to forgive these children. I have no grudge against them now. You all are our own and if someone our own commits any mistake then they cannot be separated," he said. In another tweet,

Chouhan said he is committed to the welfare of all and has worked for the development of all sections of the society and will continue to do so in the future. After the video of the protest in Bhopal surfaced, Karni Sena's office-bearers in MP tendered an apology over the use of such language and said those people were not part of the main protest. Karni Sena activist Okendra Rana, who was arrested from his home at Bhiwani in Haryana on Thursday, was booked under Indian Penal Code Sections 294 (uttering obscene words) and 353 (assault or criminal force to deter public servant from discharge of his duty), a police official said on Saturday. Another case related to alleged objectionable sloganeering against the CM has been registered against an unidentified person in Gwalior, Crime Branch Additional Superintendent of Police Rajesh Dandotiya said. He said a man has been arrested by Bhopal police and he may be brought to Gwalior for further probe.

CM Chouhan takes road to reach Dhar from Manawar, after helicopter faces technical snag



Team Absolute | Dhar

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan arrived in Dhar from Manawar by road after the chief minister's helicopter reportedly had some technical snag, sources said.

CM Chouhan, BJP state president

Vishnudutt Sharma and national general secretary Kailash Vijayvargiya are supposed to address a public meeting here in Dhar district headquarters ahead of the civic-body polls across the district.

Before this, Chouhan visited Manawar village, about 75 kilomet-

res from the district headquarters. He addressed a public meeting there. BJP state general secretary Bhagwandas Sabnani, district president Rajeev Yadav, Dhar MLA Neena Vikram Verma, former minister Ranjana Baghel and other veteran ministers also took part in the meeting.



MAN ARRESTED WITH 90-GRAM MD DRUGS

Indore: A joint team of the city crime branch and the Rajendra Nagar police caught a man with MD drugs in the area, police said on Saturday. The consignment including a bike worth lakh of rupees was seized from the accused and a search is on for his source of the drugs. According to the police, information was received that a man would deliver MD drugs to a person in the Retimandi area. After that the crime branch and the Rajendra Nagar police reached the mentioned place and arrested a youth named Jahuddin from there. Drugs weighing around 90 grams were recovered from him. He didn't give a satisfactory reply about the drugs after which he was taken to the police station and booked under the relevant section of the NDPS act. A bike used in the crime was also recovered from him.

Mayor flies kites

People played 'gilli danda' at 'Mitra Sankranti Mahotsav'



Team Absolute | Indore

Makar Sankranti was celebrated with much zeal and enthusiasm in the city with people taking part in the 'Mitra Sankranti Mahotsav' organised by Indore Mayor Pushyamitra Bhargav on Sunday. Bhargav also took part in the kite festival and was also seen playing 'sitoliya' with other people

present at the festival. The Mahotsav was organised at Dusshehra Maidan and was celebrated by scores of people even though chill has made its return to the city.

The Mahotsav aimed at bringing people together by making them play children's games like kite flying, 'sitoliya', 'gilli danda', chair race, etc. People participated in all the games actively and enjoyed reminiscing about

their childhood days with their friends.

On this occasion, women also organised a program of 'Haldi Kumkum' in which married women applied haldi, kumkum to each other as a mark of happy marital life. A selfie point was also made at the venue for people to click pictures with their loved ones and cherish the memories forever.

MAN HELD FOR KILLING FRIEND FOLLOWING ARGUMENT OVER NOT GIVING MONEY

Indore: Police arrested a man on Saturday for killing a person following an argument between them over not giving money to the accused for buying liquor in the Azad Nagar a couple of days ago. Azad Nagar police station in-charge Indresh Tripathi said that Mohammad Irfan, a resident of Azad Nagar area was found murdered under Teen Imli Bridge a couple of days ago. The lower portion of his body was charred. After the identification of the deceased, the police examined the CCTVs installed at many locations including the spot. His body was found in the busiest area, so it was a challenge for the police to identify the accused through the CCTVs. A team was constituted to identify the accused. After gathering information about the accused, the police managed to arrest the accused Sundarlal Dawar, a resident of Bargonda area in Mhow. He was staying somewhere near Teen Imli Square for a few days. The accused allegedly informed the police that he used to meet Irfan and they used to consume liquor together. On the day of the incident, Irfan had called Sundarlal with liquor. He reached there with liquor and asked Irfan to give money, but he snatched the liquor bottle after slapping Sundarlal.

HOW POONAM GUPTA SET UP RECYCLED PAPER EMPIRE IN SCOTLAND

Team Absolute | Indore

Scrap paper counts as junk, but an Indian woman has succeeded in establishing a company worth crores with the paper waste in Scotland.

Poonam Gupta, a native of Delhi graduated in Economics Honours from Lady Shri Ram college and later pursued MBA. She has created a new market to scrap paper. She was in Indore, Madhya Pradesh to participate in the Pravasi Bhartiya Divas convention.

Poonam tied the knot with Puneet, who worked in the medical field in Scotland in 2002. Her initial plan was to acquire a job there, which did not materialise. She then decided to do something new and started researching for the same, during which she realised that tonnes of good quality scrap paper is thrown away everyday in Europe and America. This is because better quality paper is produced there and



using the scrap paper to produce that kind of paper would be an expensive strategy. Poonam recollected that the idea struck when she could not achieve success anywhere, based on which she focused on reusing the scrap paper. She soon realised that the paper scraps would be of better use in India and walked in that direction. She contacted an Italian company and started trying to sell what the company considered

'garbage', something that occupied space even while being of no use and cost money in dumping. The first deal that Poonam secured was of Rs 40 lakh, following which her work gradually increased and she registered a company in Scotland named PG Paper in 2004. She then made efforts to buy scrap paper from some companies in Italy, Finland and the US. She offered the companies money in

return for the waste and gained their interest. She got the first job by the Italian company.

Later, her work came to be known in many countries and she tried her hand in other fields as well. Presently, she owns nine companies, and does business in more than 60 countries. Her company's network is worth Rs 1,000 crore.

When asked about her inspiration for the idea, she said that people in India are usually attached to old things and do not get rid of them easily. She said that Indians reuse things and do not reject them, which inspired her. Better quality paper cannot be regenerated from scrap paper in other countries, whereas the paper made from scrap paper in India is of better quality.

Poonam said that these possibilities gave her the opportunity to step in the field and reach the level she is at today. She added that she has been researching to reuse the fabric scrap

MANY FALL SICK AFTER HAVING FOOD AT MAKAR SAKRANTI FAIR



Sidhi: Several people fell ill on Saturday after having food during a Makar Sankranti fair in Madhya Pradesh's Sidhi district, officials said. Officials did not specify the number of persons affected, adding they were being treated in Rampur Naikin and Churhat hospitals.

"Teams of doctors have been sent to Rampur Naikin and Churhat. Several persons, mostly women and children, fell ill after consuming food at Maheshan Ghat fair," Collector Saket Malviya said. Other officials said they had eaten 'chaat' and 'panipuri' at the fair.



EDITOR'S SPECS

EYEING 2024 POLLS, BSP LAUNCHES 'CHALO GAON KI ORE'

The Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) has launched 'Chalo Gaon ki Ore', a mass outreach programme to consolidate its base among voters at the grassroots level. BSP national president Mayawati has directed party leaders and senior functionaries to start visiting villages to interact with voters. A party functionary said, "The state government's 'goof-up' on OBC reservations for the urban local body polls has given the BSP an opportunity to reach out to voters and expose the BJP's anti-reservation mindset". 'Chalo Gaon Ki Ore' has been designed by the party to hammer on the issue. The BSP's campaign has OBCs as the target audience though the party has not ruled out reaching out to others. "When we go to villages, we find a mixed audience. But we know what we have to talk about. It is how the state government is not serious about OBC reservations," said party national spokesperson Dharamvir Chaudhary. The OBCs and the most backward among them are on the priority list of political parties for the 2024 Lok Sabha elections. Mayawati has asked her leaders to mobilise the voters at the booth level. Four booths will be organised into a sector and a public meeting will be held at the sector level. She has also asked her party members to keep the interaction more personal and direct. "We do not know when urban local body polls will be held in the state. It may take time. In that case, these meetings will help the party to prepare a ground for the 2024 general elections also," said the party leader.

TWO QUAKES, ONE WARNING: HIMACHAL SITS ON VERY SHAKY GROUND

Vishal Gulati

Two back-to-back earthquakes, one of a medium intensity measuring 3.2 magnitude on the Richter scale, on early Saturday rocked Himachal Pradesh where climate change is already having a drastic and detrimental effect.

Also indiscriminate drilling of the hills for constructing tunnels is forcing rural communities, mainly in fragile and eco-sensitive zones of Chamba, Kinnaur and Lahaul-Spiti districts, to raise clamour against upcoming hydropower stations with their houses developing cracks and natural water resources disappearing.

In recent years, seepage in the Chamera III project that washed off Mokhar village in Chamba district, the bursting of reservoir of Aleo-II project in Kullu district at its first testing, and the seepages in the Karchham Wangtoo tunnel are indicators of a disaster waiting to happen.

Currently, the 180 megawatts (MW) Bajoli Holi hydropower project in Chamba has been facing anger from the tribal Gaddi community as they fear the project is posing threat to their houses and fields owing to cracks and seepage in private and public land.

The question is: Does the state have made scientific assessment of disaster-prone areas, studied geological and hydrological impacts for strict compliance with environmental and safety norms and prepared exigency plans?

These frightening realities have been mentioned several times in performance audits by the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) that is to ascertain the state's preparedness.

According to Himdhara, a state-based environment action group, the sheer negligence is evident at two levels -- firstly, the failure in ensuring compliance with environmental and safety norms by hydropower project authorities and the government, and secondly, the negligence towards the very impacts of unregulated hydropower development.

Local NGOs and green activists are also demanding that international financial institutions must be held accountable for their financing of disastrous hydropower projects in the Himalayas.

Several shortcomings surfaced during the crisis -- man-made or natural -- admit government officials.



An official, requesting anonymity as he is not authorised to speak to the media, told IANS in case of disaster or natural calamity coordination among state and Central agencies involved in relief and rescue operations is almost a miss.

"No nodal officer is appointed at the state level to coordinate and monitor the operations," he remarked.

Also there is no mechanism for reaching out to the affected people in the shortest possible time and no round-the-clock dedicated helpline service to provide information regarding post-disaster actions.

"The state has no special chopper to handle emergencies. Only the chief minister's official chopper is deployed for airlifting victims," added the official.

The hills of Himachal Pradesh, especially in Kullu, Shimla and Kinnaur districts, are more prone to natural disasters like flash floods, cloudbursts and landslides.

Official data show more than 1,500 people have been killed in flash floods in the state in the past 20 years.

Besides the construction of mega hydropower projects, roads and large-scale unregulated mining are generating mountains of debris, responsible for increasing the

magnitude of the natural calamity.

Often the debris is haphazardly dumped on hill slopes, eventually finds its way into rivers and streams, raising the bed level.

The carrying capacity of rivers and streams is reduced and during heavy rain they often change their course, causing widespread destruction downstream.

State Disaster Management Department Director Sudesh Kumar Mokhta told IANS the state is prepared to handle any exigency relating to landslides.

When asked about the state's preparedness and the need for an updated disaster plan in the wake of the sinking town of Joshimath in neighbouring Himalayan state Uttarakhand, he replied: "We don't foresee any exigency like Joshimath in this (Himachal Pradesh) state."

But the question is: Like Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh has also been undergoing unplanned construction of road networks and hydropower projects.

The ground is sinking in several villages and towns of Himachal Pradesh's Chamba and Kinnaur, a wake-up call for authorities as the robust forecasting system is a miss in the state.

A devastating earthquake in 1905 severely damaged property in the Kangra region, including St. John's Church where many British officials were buried, and claimed over 20,000 lives.

The frightening reality of a performance audit in 2017 on disaster management, with specific focus on earthquake and fire, conducted by the CAG said 90 per cent of buildings, mainly houses, in rural areas of the state do not follow safe construction rules.

In Shimla town, 83 per cent out of a sample of 300 selected buildings were highly vulnerable if there was a major earthquake.

However, construction of buildings and houses in rural areas (89 per cent of total houses) is not regulated by any law.

Construction of seismic-resistant buildings in rural areas has, thus, not been ensured, the CAG had observed.

This is a wake-up call for authorities as seismic sensitivity of the state is high. Seven out of 12 districts have over 25 per cent of their area falling in seismic zone V (very high damage risk).

international

India in best position to be a bridge between debt-ridden developing countries and G20; SL President

Colombo | Agencies

Sri Lankan President Ranil Wickremesinghe stressed that India was in the best position to act as a bridge between the developing countries which are facing a debt crisis and the G20 in which Prime Minister Narendra Modi holds the current chairmanship.

The Sri Lankan President made the remarks while addressing the Concluding Leaders' session of a two-day Voice of Global South Summit hosted by India virtually.

Addressing the Summit, Sri Lankan Finance Minister Shehan Semsasinghe said that the delay in getting the debt assurance from bilateral creditors which has dragged the much-needed bailout by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) was taking a heavy toll on 22 million people in the island nation which is going through the harshest economic crisis since its 1948 independence.



"... we are confident of securing the approvals with the assistance of our partners. However, this uncertainty surrounding technical concerns and the delay in the vital approval is taking a heavy toll on the people of Sri Lanka," Minister Semsasinghe was

quoted as saying at his address virtually from Colombo.

"The discussions are undergoing, and such technical issues and delays are taking a heavy toll on the lives of the country's people. Therefore, we expect, through mutual understand-

ing, the final step in this process would take place soon," the State Minister urged.

The IMF has agreed a \$2.9 billion conditional bailout package to Sri Lanka but the country has to convince the bilateral creditors including India, China and Japan, the major lenders to restructure the loans they have lent. With 10 sessions in total, the Summit saw the participation of Leaders and Ministers from 125 countries of the Global South including Sri Lanka. Under the theme 'Unity of Voice, Unity of Purpose', this one of a kind Summit focused on priorities, perspectives and concerns of the developing world.

The Summit was particularly relevant as the world passes through a difficult period marked by challenges to health, food security, affordable access to energy, climate finance and technologies, and economic growth, Indian High Commission in Colombo stated.

Over 100 traffic accidents amid heavy snowfall in S.Korea

Seoul | Agencies

Over 100 traffic accidents have been reported amid heavy snowfall in South Korea's Gangwon province on Sunday, officials said.

Many parts of Gangwon province had heavy snow from Saturday to Sunday, including 55.9 centimeters of snowfall in the Misiryong mountain ridge and 52.3 cm of snow in the Hyangroong hill, Yonhap News Agency reported.

Heavy snow blanketed a section of highway in the coastal county of Goseong around noon, stranding about 10 vehicles in the area.

Drivers had struggled to steer their cars out of accumulated snow for about 1 1/2 hours before police, fire and military authorities removed snow.

Several sections of roads in Sokcho and Yangyang were



temporarily blocked as authorities had difficulties deploying snowplow trucks due to accumulated snow.

Police estimated the latest snow caused more than 100 traffic accidents. No death or serious injuries has been

reported.

Gangwon Governor Kim Jin-tae convened a virtual emergency meeting of officials from cities and counties in the province and requested all-out works to remove snow on roads.

RUSSIAN STRIKE IN UKRAINE'S DNIPRO: DEATH TOLL MOUNTS TO 21



Kiev: The death toll in the Russian missile attack on a nine-storey apartment building in Ukraine's Dnipro climbed to 21 on Sunday.

Confirming the death toll in Saturday's incident, Dnipro Regional Council Head Mykola Lukashuk posted on Telegram that 73 people were injured while 38 were rescued.

Relief and rescue operations are on, Ukrinform reported.

In the attack, 72 apartments were destroyed and over 230 damaged in the apartment block, where two sections, from floor 2 to floor 9, were smashed.

AFTER THREE YEARS OF COVID RESTRICTIONS, HONG KONG, CHINA RESUME HIGH SPEED RAILWAY SERVICES

Hong Kong, Jan 15 (IANS) China on Sunday resumed the high-speed railway services connecting the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) and the mainland after nearly three years of suspension due to Covid-19 curbs.

At 7:03 a.m. local time, a high-speed train left the Hong Kong West Kowloon Station for Shenzhen, the first of such trains since the pandemic disrupted the cross-border bullet train services, Xinhua News Agency reported.

Liao Jun, a student from Jiangxi Province who studies in Hong Kong, was excited to catch the first train back to the mainland.

"Today will be a day to remember. The resumption of



high-speed rail services is of great significance to the overall

connectivity between the HKSAR and the mainland," he

said.

At the Shenzhen North railway station, high-speed trains restarted to travel south to Hong Kong, with many Hong Kongers working in Shenzhen finding the service a convenient and economical choice to travel back home during weekends.

China Railway Guangzhou Group said that it will arrange an average of 38.5 pairs of high-speed trains on a daily basis running from stations in Guangzhou and Shenzhen to the Hong Kong West Kowloon Station at the initial stage of service resumption.

It would optimise the operation plan in the future according to passenger flow and promote the orderly recovery of cross-border high-speed rail services, the Group said.

PAKISTANI PM URGES CIVIL SERVANTS TO WORK HARD TO STEER PAKISTAN OUT OF CHALLENGES

Islamabad: Pakistan Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif urged the civil servants of the country to work hard to steer the nation out of the challenges it has been facing.

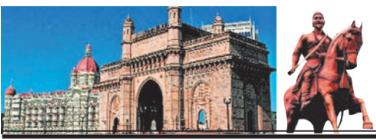
Addressing the passing-out ceremony of probationary officers of the Pakistan Administrative Service on Saturday in Lahore, Sharif appreciated the active service of the new civil servants during their training period in the areas which were affected by the devastating floods last year, Xinhua News Agency reported.

The prime minister said that he had visited several flood-affected areas including the under-developed southwestern Balochistan province, and personally witnessed the tremendous work carried out by the civil servants.

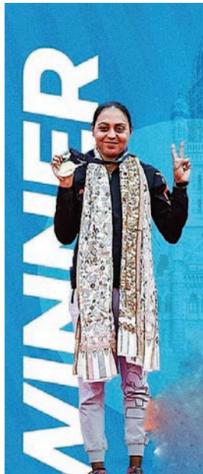
He said Pakistani public servants can serve the nation very well given that they are provided with a conducive working environment and their services are properly acknowledged.

Sharif reminded the young officers that after assuming their basic responsibilities in practical life, they would be confronted with issues like unemployment, poverty, disease, lack of education and delayed response to public problems. The prime minister expressed hope that they would be able to deal with these challenges successfully.





# Mumbai Marathon: Ethiopia's Lemi, Haymanot set course records; Gopi wins in Indian section



Team Absolute | Mumbai

Ethiopian duo of Hayle Lemi and Anchaalem Haymanot won the men's and women's elite titles with new course records to take home the USD 45,000 winners

prize and a course record bonus of USD 15,000 each in the 18th edition of the Tata Mumbai Marathon here on Sunday.

Lemi won the men's Marathon Elite race in 2 hours seven minutes and 32 seconds to finish ahead of Rono Philemon of Kenya (2:08.44).

Haymanot bagged the title in the Women's Elite Race in a timing of 2 hours 24 minutes and 15 seconds, ahead of second-placed compatriot Tusa Rahma (2:24.22) as Ethiopia swept the first eight spots. Gopi won the Marathon Elite Male Indian section in 2:16.41 with Man Singh

(2:16.58) while Chavi Yadav won the Marathon Elite Women Indian race in 2:50.35 with Arati Pati 3:00.44.

Gopi T. made a winning return to competitive action while Chavi Yadav pulled off a spectacular victory on her marathon debut in the

Indian race. "It felt good to be back after three years. I maintained a good pace for the first 30-odd kilometres but slowed down towards the end," the Army runner told a news conference. "I never give up," added Gopi, who previously won in 2018.

# THREATS MADE INVESTOR DROP 6,000-CRORE MAHARASHTRA PLAN: DEVENDRA FADNAVIS

Team Absolute | Pune

Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis has said a businessman who wanted to invest Rs 6,000 crore in the state shifted his project to Karnataka after receiving threats and extortion calls last year.

Fadnavis, who heads the Home Ministry in the Eknath Shinde government which came to power last June, also directed the police to take strict action against those harassing industries.

Speaking at an event in Pune on Saturday, the deputy CM appealed to leaders not to bring politics into the industrial sector and warned of strict action against those minting money in the garb of backing labour issues.

"I feel bad to say that an investor met me in the afternoon and said he wanted to invest Rs 6,000 crore here (Maharashtra) a year ago, but shifted it to Karnataka after receiving threat and extortion calls," he said.



"If this situation prevails, the state's youth will not get jobs. This is why such tendencies (harassment of industries, and business persons) should be crushed. I have directed police to take stringent

action against such trouble-making elements without thinking about party, organisation, community, religion etc," Fadnavis said.

The noose has to be tightened around such elements, and action would be taken against police if they fail to act, the senior Bharatiya Janata Party leader added.

"Investors are coming to Maharashtra in a big way as there is a huge pool of human resources. I would urge all leaders to not bring politics into industries. Labourers should get protection but if some political leader is trying to use the shoulders of labourers to mint money, I will not shy away from taking action," he said. Pune is the second growth engine of the state (after Mumbai) and the state government will pay complete attention to the region, he said.

The Shinde-Fadnavis coalition took charge of the state after the Maha Vikas Aghadi government led by Uddhav Thackeray collapsed in June last year.

# Narrow escape for MP Supriya Sule, saree catches fire at event

Team Absolute | Pune

Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) MP Supriya Sule's saree accidentally caught fire during an event in Maharashtra's Pune on Sunday.

In a statement, Sule later said that she is safe and there was no reason to worry.

The Baramati MP was at an event in Hinjawadi to inaugurate a karate competition, when her saree caught fire while she was garlanding a small statue of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj.

A video of the incident shows the NCP leader's saree accidentally a lamp kept on a table while she garlanded the statue. "At the inauguration of a karate competition, my saree accidentally caught fire.



However, the fire was doused in time. Request all wellwishers, citizens, party workers,

and leaders not to worry as I am safe," Sule said in a statement.

# Empty water bottles, chips help cops solve theft at shop

Team Absolute | Thane

Police have solved the case of theft of garments worth Rs 99.44 lakh from a godown in Maharashtra's Thane district with the help of empty mineral water bottles found there, an official said.

The theft took place on January 8 at the godown located in Bhiwandi town following which a case was registered against unidentified persons, Bhiwandi zone Deputy Commissioner of Police Navnath Dhavle told reporters on Saturday.

The police probe team worked on various leads including the CCTV footage of the area and intelligence inputs. They also found empty bottles of mineral



water and packets of chips at the crime spot, he said.

The labels on the water bottles found in the godown matched with those on water bottles in a hotel in the vicinity. Based on this, the police examined the CCTV footage and spotted a man who had purchased water bottles from

the hotel, the official said. The man, who has a criminal record, was arrested on Friday, he said.

The police carried out a search and recovered the entire stock of the stolen garments from the possession of the arrested accused, the official said.

# THREE HELD FOR PRACTISING 'WITCHCRAFT' TO CHEAT MAN

Palghar: Police have arrested three men from Maharashtra's Palghar district for allegedly practising 'witchcraft' and collecting money from a person by promising to get it doubled, an official said on Sunday. Based on a tip-off, the police intercepted a car and a motorcycle in Jawhar area on Friday and apprehended the three accused, district Superintendent of Police Balasaheb Patil said. During the probe, the police came to know the accused had asked for Rs 1.5 lakh from a man from Valsad in neighbouring Gujarat and promised him Rs 5 lakh in return with the help of their "supernatural power", the official said.

# Case against Ex-Mumbai mayor for allegedly acquiring flats under slum rehab programme

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Police have registered a cheating case against former Mumbai mayor and Shiv Sena (UBT) leader Kishori Pednekar and three others for allegedly acquiring flats built under the Maharashtra government's Slum Rehabilitation Authority (SRA) in suburban Worli, a police official said.

No arrest has been made so far in the case lodged on Saturday against Ms Pednekar and three officials of a private firm for alleged cheating and forgery in connection with the acquisition of the flats located in Gomata Janata SRA society, he said. "As per the complaint filed



by SRA official Uday Pingle, former mayor Pednekar had acquired a flat, which was in the name of one Gangaram

Boga, in the Gomata society. The flat was allotted to Boga in 2008 but Pednekar mentioned it as her property in

the 2017 Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation polls," he said.

A commercial unit allotted to another person in 2008 was declared by the private firm as their office while filing registration documents with the Registrar of Companies (RoC), the official said quoting the FIR. Another unit too was allegedly taken up by the firm in 2017 in violation of SRA norms, he added.

"A case under section 420 of the Indian Penal Code for cheating and other offences has been registered against Kishori Pednekar, and three others. No arrest has been made so far and the probe is underway," the police official said.

# THREAT CALL TO KILL NITIN GADKARI, BLOW UP HIS NAGPUR OFFICE; PROBE ON IN K'TAKA PRISON



Maharashtra/ Belagavi: Karnataka Police on Sunday initiated a search operation to find out an inmate in Hindalga prison in Belagavi district who threatened to kill Union Road, Transport and Highways Minister Nitin Gadkari and blow up his Nagpur office.

A police team from Maharashtra has also arrived in Belagavi and joined the Karnataka police team to conduct the investigation.

The threat call was made to PRO thrice on Saturday by a man, who claimed himself to be Jayesh Pujari, an associate of underworld don Dawood Ibrahim.

# 1,023 farmers died by suicide in marathwada in 2022: official

Aurangabad | Agencies

The Marathwada region of Maharashtra reported 1,023 farmer suicides in 2022, up from 887 in the previous year, an official from the divisional commissioner's office said.

The region comprising Jalna, Aurangabad, Parbhani, Hingoli, Nanded, Latur, Osmanabad and Beed districts had recorded one farmer suicide in 2001.

So far, 10,431 growers have ended their lives in the region's eight districts since 2001, show figures from the divisional commissionerate.

Between 2001 and 2010, the maximum 379 farmer suicides were reported in 2006. In the 2011-2020 decade, the highest number of farmer suicides at 1,133 was reported in 2015, the data showed.



ditions in some years and excess rain in others, which has compounded the difficulties of crop growers, according to activists and officials.

The irrigation network in the region is also not being used to its full capacity, they said. Vinayak Hegana, who runs a counselling centre for farmers in Osmanabad in collaboration with the district administration, stressed on the need to work on a micro level while doing an analysis of farmer suicides.

"Policies are being prepared at the top, but the implementation on the ground can be improved,"

he said. Earlier, most farmer suicides were reported between July and October but the pattern has changed. "We see the numbers growing between December and June," he said.

On the policies to curb the numbers, Mr Hegana said, "Finding lacunas in these policies and making them better should be a continuous process and there should be a group of people who can work on this." When contacted, Leader of Opposition in the Maharashtra Legislative Council Ambadas Danve said, "Though there have been multiple loan waivers for farmers, the figures (of suicide) are growing. When we waive their loans, we also have to see to it that their crop yield also gets good returns." Mr Danve also highlighted the concerns over substandard seeds and fertilisers being sold at high rates. "These are harmful to the farming sector," he said.

"The quality of these farm resources should be up to the mark, which is most important," Mr Danve added.

# MANDUPED HOME BUYER OF RS 1.42 CR, CAUGHT



Thane: A Thane-based man was arrested by Kalachowky police for allegedly duping several people of Rs 1.42 crore in total, on the pretext of allotting inexpensive MHADA apartments. The accused was identified as Prashant Mestry, 42. Complainant Ashok Gamre, 63, was searching for a flat in Mumbai. He came across an online advertisement of Mestry's as a real estate agent. Gamre and his son contacted Mestry in October 2019 and later met him at his Lalbaug-based office. Gamre was living with his family in a rented accommodation and had to vacate in a few months.

# Hari Prasad Chaurasia to be honoured on Ustad Gulam Mustafa Khan's 2nd death anniversary

Team Absolute | Mumbai

World-renowned Flautist and music director, Pandit Hariprasad Chaurasia shall be conferred the first 'Padma Vibhushan Ustad Gulam Mustafa Khan Award', instituted in his memory on the occasion of his second death anniversary here on Tuesday (January 17).

The event, 'Haazri', will see a grand musical concert at the Shanmukhananda Hall when Ustad Khan's disciples like Ustad Zakir Hussain, Hariharan, Faiz M. Khan and other music stalwarts shall render their melodic tributes. An overwhelmed Pt. Chaurasia, 85, decorated with the Padma Vibhushan, expressed gratitude to the Ustadji family's gesture with a smile, "Ustad Khan Sa'ab and his family have always been very special to me".

"Khan Sahab was an exemplary singer, performer and Guru. He is unparalleled in the number of new talents he mentored to reach greater



heights of glory, and several of the popular singers of the current generation are his students... he must be so proud of them," said Pt. Chaurasia. Ustadji's widow, Amina Mustafa Khan, 76, will give away the annual maiden award -- comprising a specially-crafted, 18-inch, 3 kg brass 'Tanpura', Rs 2.51 lakh cash, a certificate and a shawl -- to her late husband's associate.

"This year, Pt. Chaurasiaji, one of the senior most artistes who was close to my father, shall be conferred the first award. They had performed together all over the world and there couldn't be a better personality to start the award journey with," Ustadji's son Rabbani Mustafa Khan, said.



# 'This has made us stronger!' Ekin-Su

**Beau Davide treats her to salt baths and foot massages amid her gruelling training**

**Los Angeles | Agencies**  
Ekin-Su Culcologlu has revealed that her training for Dancing On Ice has made her relationship with Davide Sanclimenti 'stronger'. The Love Island winner, laughed off the show's 'boring' curse and says things between her and the Italian businessman, are better than ever as he's been supporting her so much with her training ahead of the ITV show's launch this weekend. Amid her gruelling rehearsals to perfect her moves with pro partner Brendyn Hatfield, Ekin told how beau Davide has been on hand to provide her with soothing 'foot massages and Epsom salt baths' as he wants her to 'smash it!'

Speaking to MailOnline and other press about the how much her partner has been there for her, Ekin-Su said: 'He's been very supportive.'

'He's been putting salt baths Epsom salt baths in the bath for me, me making sure I'm home, my

body's relaxed, nice foot massages, nice back massages, nice healthy nutritional meals...Yeah, he's really supportive! He wants to be smash it, he really does.'

When asked about the supposed Dancing On Ice curse - which has seen several contestants break-up with their partners over the years - Ekin-Su insisted there was nothing to worry about.

The actress - who recently sparked engagement rumours with Davide - said: 'Boring! I'm saying boring to the idea of that [the curse] because it has made our relationship a lot stronger.'

'It's really crazy. Like this show has made us stronger, made us love each other more because I've got this passion, I've got this quality that I'm always doing something I love and that's really attractive for a person anyway. 'So it's great. I'm happy I'm doing it, no regrets at all. See you later to the curse!'



Los Angeles | Agencies



**Selena reacts to body shaming comments after her Golden Globes appearance**

**Los Angeles | Agencies**  
Singer-actress Selena Gomez appeared to react to her online critics with a laugh. After attending the 2023 Golden Globes, the star apparently received comments from internet users regarding her physical appearance while posing for the cameras at the event.

Wearing a show-stopping Valentino design featuring a velvet column gown with a high-slit and statement puff sleeves with a long train, Gomez, 30, showed up at the Beverly Hills Hotel after being nominated for best performance by an actress in a television series, comedy or musical for her role of Mabel Mora in the Hulu series, reports People magazine.

Although she did not score a trophy for the category, the singer may have won the internet by seemingly responding to users who left unpleasant comments about her body after pictures and clips of her at the event were shared online.

According to People, in a recorded Instagram Live video reposted via Pop News Daily account on TikTok, Gomez addressed the critics while chatting with her 9-year-old sister, Gracie Elliott Teefey.

"I'm a little bit big right now because I enjoyed myself during the holidays," she told her followers before turning her head to Gracie, asking for her opinion, "Right?"

After Gracie appeared to agree with the singer, Gomez later began to burst into laughter. Earlier this week, Gomez - who has long had a complicated relationship with social media and even deleted it from her phone in 2019 - teased her return to Instagram.



# Demi Sims flashes her legs in a denim miniskirt during night out in London

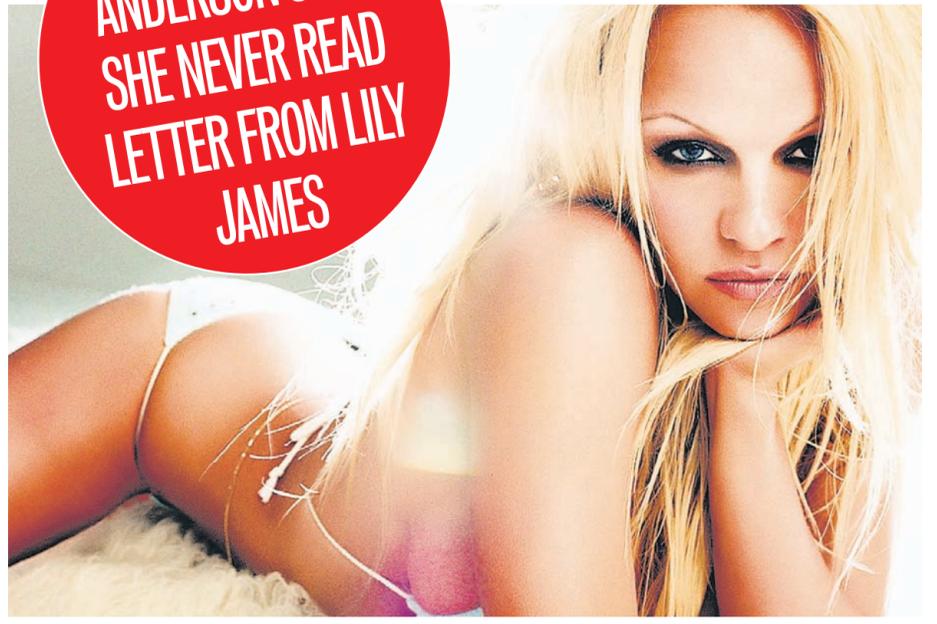
Los Angeles | Agencies

Demi Sims sent pulses racing as she enjoyed a Saturday night out in London with her sister Frankie at South American restaurant Inca. The former TOWIE star, put on a leggy display in a high-waisted denim miniskirt featuring colourful strings while donning a green bustier and neon yellow boots.

It marks the first time sisters have been pictured since returning to London after moving to LA to shoot their OnlyFans series, House Of Sims. Meanwhile, 27-year-old Frankie flashed her cleavage in a plunging black minidress and added inches to her enviable frame with a pair of light brown suede boots. Debuting her newly-dyed black locks, Frankie toted her essentials around in a leather handbag while strutting through the swanky district of Mayfair. They were joined by Too Hot To Handle's Beau Raymond, who exhibited her ample assets in a very skimpy black leather dress.

Just a day earlier, Demi surprised fans by getting a small love heart inked onto her cheek, however it was nowhere to be seen during her most recent outing. Sharing a glimpse into the trip with her 573K Instagram followers, Demi shared a mirror snap before going as she penned: 'Tattoo time!'

**PAMELA ANDERSON SAYS SHE NEVER READ LETTER FROM LILY JAMES**



Los Angeles | Agencies

Hollywood actress Pamela Anderson is done with letting other people tell her story. After her infamous 1995 stolen sex tape scandal was depicted on 'Pam & Tommy', the Canadian actress, model and sex symbol, said that she never read the handwritten letter actress Lily James sent her before portraying Anderson in the limited series, reports People magazine.

She told The New York Times: "It was already hurtful enough the first time," Anderson said of reliving the traumatic experience through the show. "It's like one of those things where you're going, 'Really?' People are still capitalising off that thing?" Although 'Pam & Tommy' received several Emmy and Golden Globe nominations, including best actress for James, she's said she's "done" playing icons: "That was enough."

A source told People that when the

limited series premiered last February that Anderson felt like she was "being re-subjected to this trauma, like reopening a wound" after the sex tape she made with then-husband Tommy Lee was stolen from their home and distributed online.

"This was a very traumatic time of her life," the insider said. "She's a really good person, and I think all she's really ever wanted was to be married and have a partner and have a nice life."

**Todd Field recalls how Tom Cruise saved his film from Harvey Weinstein**

Los Angeles | Agencies

Hollywood actor-director Todd Field is recalling the moment he found out that Harvey Weinstein's Miramax had acquired his debut film 'In the Bedroom' at the Sundance Film Festival and how Tom Cruise's advice saved him.

Weinstein was known to reshape the visions of filmmakers and Field was worried that when his film was acquired, he would have no say in the editing process, reports Deadline. In an interview with The New Yorker, Field talked about calling the 'Mission: Impossible' star, who gave him some sound advice. "I was weeping in the bathroom," Field recalled. "I called up Tom Cruise and said, 'Something terrible has happened.' He basically said, 'This is how you're going to play it. It's going to take you six months, and you'll beat him, but you have to do exactly what I'm going to tell you to do, step by step.'"

Cruise, according to Deadline, advised Field to not give Weinstein any pushback and allow him to make all the edits. He suggested Field wait until it tested poorly with audiences and then remind them of how well the film did at the festival, so they would release the original cut.

Cruise's advice ended up working and 'In the Bedroom', according to Field, "grossed more than twenty-five times its budget and was nominated for five Oscars, including Best Picture." Field's newest film 'Tar' is another critically acclaimed work and star Cate Blanchett recently took a Golden Globe in the Best Actress in a Motion Picture - Drama category. Field was nominated in the Best Screenplay category but the trophy was awarded to Martin McDonagh for 'The Banshees of Inisherin'.



# WHEN JOHN LARROQUETTE GOT PAID IN WEED TO NARRATE 'TEXAS CHAINSAW MASSACRE'

Los Angeles | Agencies

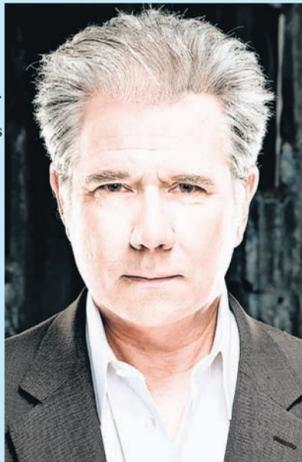
American actor John Larroquette gets high with a little help from his friends. And, in return, he narrates their horror movies.

The actor, who returns as Dan Fielding in the new 'Night Court' revival, confirmed the long-standing internet rumour that director Tobe Hooper paid him in weed to narrate the prologue to his 1974 film 'The Texas Chainsaw Massacre', reports Entertainment Weekly.

"Totally true," he told Parade. "He gave me some marijuana or a matchbox or whatever you called it in those days. I walked out of the (recording) studio and patted him on the back side, and said, 'Good luck to you!'"

As Larroquette tells it, he and Hooper struck up a fast friendship when he was working as a bartender in Colorado back in 1969. When he headed to Hollywood to kickstart his acting career four years later, Hooper reached out to ask for his help on a little project that would change the horror genre forever.

"Tobe heard I was in town and asked for an hour of my time to narrate something for this movie he just did," Larroquette recalled. "I said, quoted by Entertainment Weekly. 'Fine!' It was a favour."



# ABSOLUTE PIC OF THE DAY



Draya Michele



## HOCKEY WORLD CUP

# INDIA, ENGLAND PLAY A THRILLING 0-0 DRAW



Rourkela | Agencies

India vs England Pool D match in FIH Hockey Men's World Cup on Sunday ended in a goalless draw as both the teams missed plenty of chances. England goalkeeper Oliver Payne was felicitated with the Player of the Match award for his outstanding saves. On the other hand, India's Hardik Singh was equally impres-

sive. In the first quarter, none of the teams could score a goal with England getting more opportunities, while in the second quarter, India missed plenty of chances, though they put up a better show. The third quarter saw India being further better on attack but a goal was always missing. The final quarter saw England pressing hard for a goal, but the score remained 0-0 till the final whistle.

## Spain thrash Wales 5-1 to claim the first win

Rourkela: World No. 8 Spain recovered from their opening match defeat against hosts India to thrash Wales 5-1 and maintained their chances of advancing from Pool D in the FIH Odisha Hockey Men's World Cup 2023 at the Birsamunda Hockey Stadium. Marc Reyne (16th min, 38th min) and Marc Miralles (32nd min, 56th min) scored a brace of goals each while skipper Alvaro Iglesias (22nd min) struck one goal for Spain, who had lost 0-2 to India at the same venue on Friday. James Carson scored the lone goal for Wales in the 52nd minute. However, they got going at the start of the second quarter with Marc Reyne scoring a field goal in the 16th minute and six minutes later skipper Iglesias made it 2-0. They could have made it 3-0 in the 25th minute but failed to convert a penalty stroke. At the start of the second half, Spain earned a penalty corner in the 32nd minute and Marc Miralles converted the third PC,



awarded immediately after, to make it 3-0 for Spain. Marc Reyne made it 4-0 in the 39th minute when he scored a field goal. They were soon reduced to 10 men when Xavier Gispert got a green card. Wales earned their first PC within a minute but they could not convert it as the score stayed 4-0 at the end of the third quarter. James Carson, however, was successful for Wales at the start of the fourth quarter in the 52nd minute to make 1-4. But Miralles scored his second goal of the match in the 56th minute to make it 5-1 as Spain sealed a comprehensive victory.

## IND VS SL 3RD ODI

# India sweep to 3-0 series win against Sri Lanka

Thiruvananthapuram | Agencies

India completed a 3-0 series win by thrashing Sri Lanka by 317 runs, the biggest margin of victory in ODI history, in the third and final match of the series at Greenfield International Stadium.

After Virat Kohli dished out another batting masterclass on a placid pitch with his 46th ODI century and Shubman Gill strengthened his chances of being a long-term opener with his second hundred and propel India to a mammoth 390/5 on a slow, flat pitch, Sri Lanka crumbled like a pack of cards. They were all out for just 73 in just 22 overs, their fourth-lowest total in the history of the format. Mohammed Siraj got the ball to move around to run through the top order and pick his career-best figures of 4-32 in ten overs, while Mohammed Shami and Kuldeep Yadav had figures of 2-20 and 2-16 respectively in India's dominating victory.

Under scoreboard pressure, Sri Lanka just wilted and couldn't put up a fight. Siraj,



central to India's success in Power-play in ODIs, delivered the first blow by having Avishka Fernando edge straight to the first slip for a low catch. With half the side back in the pavilion, panic ensued, resulting in a bizarre run-out of Chamika Karunaratne, who was out of the crease after defending against Siraj, and saw the bowler fire in a direct hit at the striker's end. The crumbling continued with Kuldeep drawing Dasun Shanaka forward and then casting him through the gate. Dunieth Wellalage, coming in as a concussion substitute for Jeffrey Vandersay after his nasty collision with Ashen Bandara

while fielding, chipped a drive straight to point off Shami. With Bandara absent injured, Kuldeep finished off the match by casting Lahiru Kumara and ending a 22-run partnership for the ninth wicket, completing a monstrous victory for India.

### Brief scores

India 390/5 in 50 overs (Virat Kohli 166 not out, Shubman Gill 116, Kasun Rajitha 2-81, Lahiru Kumara 2-87) beat Sri Lanka 73 all out in 22 overs (Nuwanidu Fernando 19; Mohammed Siraj 4-32, Kuldeep Yadav 2-16) by 317 runs

## Premier League

# Rashford scores winner in Manchester derby while there is drama in drop zone

London | Agencies

Marcos Rashford's 16th goal of the season sealed Manchester United's comeback to beat local rivals Manchester City 2-1 and put them firmly in the race for the Premier League title, just a point behind their neighbors.

Rashford poked the winning goal home in the 82nd minute following a low cross from the right to seal the win, just four minutes after Bruno Fernandes had canceled out Jack Grealish's looping header, which had given City a 60th-minute lead, reports Xinhua news agency. Fernandes' goal was surrounded by controversy



as Rashford, who was in a clear offside position had run alongside the ball, before the Portuguese latched onto it, but the goal was given after the VAR decided he had not interfered with play. Solly March scored twice and Danny Welbeck added a third as Brighton beat Liverpool 3-0 to move above their rivals into seventh in the table. Brighton outplayed Liverpool from the start and missed chances in

the first half, before March's two goals in the 46th and 53rd minute put Brighton on track for a win. Liverpool coach Jurgen Klopp described his side's performance as the "worst" since he has been in charge. There were post-match protests at Goodison Park after Everton surrendered a lead to lose 2-1 to bottom-of-the-table Southampton. Andre Onana had put Everton ahead in the 39th minute, but two second-half goals from James Ward-Prowse -- the second a perfectly taken free kick, gave Southampton their first league win under Nathan Jones and increase the pressure on Everton coach Frank Lampard.

## AUSTRALIAN OPEN

# DJOKOVIC, RUUD, TSITSIPAS BATTLE FOR NO. 1

Melbourne | Agencies

Novak Djokovic, Casper Ruud and Stefanos Tsitsipas all start their campaigns knowing they will become the new No. 1 in the ATP Rankings by lifting the 2023 Australian Open trophy.

World No. 3 Ruud can also claim top spot by reaching the final, as long as neither Djokovic nor Tsitsipas wins the title. If none of those scenarios play out, the reign of current World No. 1 Carlos Alcaraz, not playing in Melbourne due to injury, will continue, reports atptour.com.

World No. 5 Djokovic arrives in Melbourne as one of the title favorites. He has won a record nine Australian Open titles, owns an 82-8 tournament record, and began his 2023 season in impressive fashion by



lifting his 92nd four-level trophy at the Adelaide International 1. He can return to World No. 1 for the first time since June by winning his record-equaling 22nd Grand Slam title in Melbourne.

The No. 3-ranked Ruud is chasing his maiden Grand Slam crown in Melbourne and achieving the feat would give the Norwegian double cause for celebration. He would become the first Norwegian World

No. 1 at the age of 24, having already become the first ATP Tour titlist, Nitto ATP Finals competitor, and Grand Slam finalist from his country.

Like Ruud, Tsitsipas is aiming for his maiden major crown and to become World No. 1 for the first time. The World No. 4 can count on vocal crowd support in Melbourne, which is home to a large Greek community, and his record there suggests the 24-year-old relishes the vibrant atmosphere. Tsitsipas reached the semi-finals in 2019, 2021 and 2022, and holds a 15-5 tournament record overall. The nine-time ATP Tour titlist Tsitsipas must win the title in Melbourne to become World No. 1. The closest he has come to victory at a Grand Slam was at Roland Garros in 2021, when he fell to Djokovic in a five-set thriller.

## Malaysia Open

# AXELSEN, AND YAMAGUCHI WIN SINGLES TITLES

Kuala Lumpur | Agencies

Olympic champion Viktor Axelsen on Sunday retained his Malaysia Open Super 1000 men's singles title while the reigning world champion Japan's Akane Yamaguchi clinched the women's singles trophy.

It was Axelsen's record ninth consecutive final in the BWF Super 1000 tournaments and eighth in the top-tier level series. The Dane defended his title by beating Naraoka Kodai of Japan in



straight sets, 21-6, 21-15 in the final here at Axiata Arena.

Carrying her scintillating form from 2022, Yamaguchi outplayed number two seed An Se Young of Korea 12-21, 21-19, 21-11 for the women's



singles title in the opening World Tour event of 2023.

In the mixed doubles, world number one and Olympic silver medalist pair Zheng Si Wei and Huang Ya Qiong got better of Tokyo

2020 bronze medallists Yuta Watanabe and Arisa Higashino of Japan 21-19, 21-11 in 44 minutes.

Women's doubles duo Chen Qing Chen and Jia Yi Fan trounced South Korea's Baek Hana and Lee Yulim 21-16, 21-10 in 52 minutes to seal the victory.

The new world number one in men's doubles, Fajar Alfian and Muhammad Rian Ardianto of Indonesia beat the Chinese combination of Liang Wei Keng and Wang Chang 21-18, 18-21, 21-13 in the final.

## Serie A

# LAUTARO DECISIVE IN INTER'S VICTORY OVER VERONA

Rome | Agencies

Lautaro Martinez managed three consecutive games on the score-sheet as his sole goal saw Inter Milan beat Hellas Verona 1-0 at San Siro.

The Nerazzurri just needed an extra time to get the better of Parma in the Coppa Italia midweek and entered Saturday's game without Romelu Lukaku and Marcelo Brozovic, reports Xinhua news agency.

Lautaro got the job done in the opening minutes as the World Cup winner sent the ball into the net after a series of ricochets.

The Argentinean had doubled the lead in the second half as he dinked it over an on-rushing goalkeeper, but it was wiped



out as Lautaro had a foul in the build-up.

The win, coupled with Juve's frustrating 5-1 defeat to Napoli on Saturday, allowed Inter to level the Bianconeri on 37 points, but still rank fourth due to an

inferior goal difference.

Another Milanese club AC Milan suffered a different fortune on Saturday, as they fought back from 2-0 down to draw with Lecce. Theo Hernandez's own goal and Federico Baschirotto's header let the home side establish a 2-0 lead before the break, but Rafael Leao's strike from a tricky angle and Davide Calabria's header saw Milan claim a back-to-back 2-2 stalemate.

Milan overtook Juve to second place, but table leaders Napoli run away with a 9-point advantage.

Elsewhere, Cremonese lost 3-2 to Monza on home turf. With a poor start of seven draws and 11 defeats, Cremonese sacked head coach Massimiliano Alvini.

## AUSTRALIAN TENNIS LEGEND KEN ROSEWALL HONOURED ON THE AUS OPEN 2023 COMMEMORATIVE COIN

Melbourne | Australian tennis legend Ken Rosewall has been revealed as the face of the Australian Open 2023 commemorative coin, honouring the 70-year anniversary of his 1953 men's singles triumph. The Australian tennis legend is being honoured on the official Australian Open 2023 coin in a 'grassroots to Grand Slam' moment at Melbourne Park on Sunday. Rosewall remains the youngest man to have won the Australian Open men's singles title, winning at just 18. Claiming subsequent titles in 1955 and 1971, Rosewall also won in 1972 aged 36, marking 19 years since his inaugural title - another record that remains to this day. Rosewall amassed an impressive 18 major titles across three decades including nine men's doubles titles and a mixed doubles title at the US Open in 1956.



"It's a wonderful honour to be recognised on the Australian Open coin. Seventy years seems like a long time, but it feels just like yesterday that I was a young hopeful stepping out on court for a shot at my first major title," Rosewall said. A Member of the Order of Australia, Sport Australia Hall of Fame inductee (1975), International Tennis Hall of Fame and Australian Tennis Hall of Fame, Rosewall holds the distinction of being named an Australian Living Treasure for his outstanding contributions to Australian society.

## ILT20

# UAE's Muhammad Waseem's fifty takes MI Emirates past Sharjah Warriors

Abu Dhabi | Agencies

Displaying his wide repertoire of aggressive strokes, UAE's Muhammad Waseem produced a spectacular knock of 71 runs in 39 balls and steered MI Emirates to a 49-run win over Sharjah Warriors in the second match of the ILT20 at the Zayed Cricket Stadium.

Waseem was backed by Nicholas Pooran's innings of 49 runs to help MI Emirates post a whopping total of 204 for 5 in 20 overs.

The Waseem, who has been a consistent performer in franchise league matches and for the UAE team, made the home fans proud through his knock that came off 39 balls with five boundaries and four sixes. Pooran's 49 was scored off 30 balls with four sixes and two boundaries.

Sharjah Warriors wilted under the pressure of MI Emirates' mammoth score. They had won the toss and elected to bowl. Waseem, opening with England's Will Smeed, hit back-to-back boundaries off Naveen Ul-Haq, who bowled the second over.

Waseem too reached his half century in style hitting Moeen Ali for a six to mid-wicket. Eighteen runs each were scored off Ali's over.



Pooran's third six over point off Siddiqui was a treat to watch. Waseem's stupendous knock came to an end in the 15th over when he hit Nabi to Evin Lewis at deep midwicket for 71. At the end of the 15th over MI Emirates were 151 for 3 with skipper Kieron Pollard joining Pooran.

In the last five overs, MI Emirates scored 53 runs with Pooran on 49 pulling Siddiqui into the hands of Denly at deep mid-wicket. Chasing a run rate of 10.20, Sharjah opener Evin Lewis got out for a duck playing Faisalhaq Farooqi on to his wicket. One-drop Dawid Malan too fell trapped leg before to the first ball from Farooqi forcing skipper Moeen Ali to face the fifth ball of the second over and avoid a hat-trick.

Chris Woakes hit a fighting 62 off 29 balls with nine boundaries and two sixes to delay MI Emirates' victory.

### Brief scores

MI Emirates 204/5 in 20 overs (Muhammad Waseem 71, Nicholas Pooran 49; Chris Woakes 2-23) beat Sharjah Warriors (Chris Woakes 62, Rahmanullah Gurbaz 43; Imran Tahir 3-26) by 49 runs.



# Sanjana Sanghi wraps up film alongside Pankaj Tripathi

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The shooting of the Pankaj Tripathi, Parvathy Thiruvothu and Sanjana Sanghi-starrer untitled film was wrapped up on Sunday after an extensive schedule. While everyone was enjoying the festive colours of the New Year, the actress was busy shooting for Aniruddha Roy Chowdhury in Kolkata. Taking to her social media, Sanjana shared a string of BTS pictures from the film's set. She wrote in the caption, "ITS A WRAP! Words fall short to explain this feeling. But one must try (sic)."

She went on to laud everyone involved with making the film. "Over the last few months of working on this incredible story written by the maverick Ritesh Shah," Sanjana said. "I have been reminded every day why I do what I do."

She continued: "Aniruddha Roy Chowdhury - thank you for making me fall in love with life, and with performing, in a way, I had never known before. Everything was great, but it just got a whole lot better with you holding my hand every step of the way. You are my greatest gift."

"Pankaj Tripathi- played my reel father, and did



everything a real father would. Thank you for protecting, correcting, guiding and spoiling me every day of this journey. With you incredible skill, and your beautiful heart. Parvathy Thiruvothu - it seems like this union was always meant to be. You are special in more ways than can be described."

"Viraf Sarkari and Indrani Mukerjee: the warmest safety nets, the absolute rockstars. So grateful for you and your trust. Jogi Mallang: thank you for having so much faith in me to become Sakshi. Breathing her breath has been the most satisfying challenge I've taken up yet. Jaya Ahsan, Paresch Pahuja and Varun Buddhadev: the epic team players," she added.

"Samimira Das, Anosh Sarkari, Bidisha Kohli, Forum Majithia, Rohit Chauhan and the entire stellar direction and production team (many of whom aren't on Instagram): making memories with you guys every day, while also making this film has been such a joy. And of course, my team, my backbones," she concluded. Apart from Aniruddha Roy's untitled next film, Sanjana will be seen in 'Dhak Dhak' opposite Ratna Pathak Shah, Dia Mirza and Fatima Sana Shaikh.



## SRK's upcoming trailer screened on Burj Khalifa

Team Absolute | Mumbai

A Bollywood superstar Shah Rukh Khan gears up for his upcoming spy-action thriller film 'Pathaan' and his return to the silver screen after four years, the makers of the film are leaving no stone unturned to establish a monumental buzz around the film.

The film's trailer was recently shown at the world's tallest building Burj Khalifa in Dubai. It didn't take long for people to start talking about the trailer display at the monument - the name of the building is trending on Twitter.

Bollywood studio conglomerate Yash Raj Films took to Twitter to share a video and a few images of the trailer playing on Burj Khalifa. "When Pathaan took over the tallest building in the world #PathaanTrailerOnBurjKhalifa," they wrote and posted a series of images. They also shared a video in another

post. The superstar too attended the display of the trailer at the venue. SRK looked dapper in a black t-shirt and matching pants. He layered his look with a black leather jacket and added sunglasses to accentuate his look.

Some fans' pages have also shared videos of Shah Rukh Khan interacting with the audience and mouthing his dialogues from Pathaan.

In a viral video, SRK can be heard saying from the Burj: "Party rakhoge to mehman navazi ke liye Pathaan to ayege aur saath mein pataakhe bhi layega. (If you will host a party, Pathaan will obviously come and bring firecrackers as well)."

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Bollywood actress Sonam Kapoor complained about pollution due to construction work in Mumbai and said that it is 'torturous' to drive in the city.

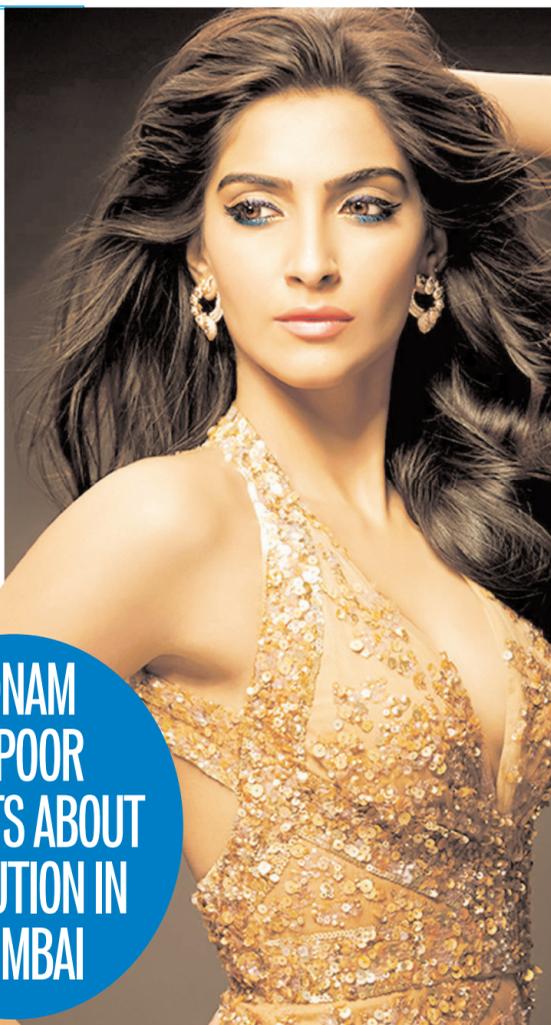
She mentioned in her tweet that she was travelling from her house in Juhu to Bandra bandstand but it took really long to reach to her destination. She tweeted: "It's torturous to drive through Mumbai. It's taken me an hour to reach the bandstand from Juhu. Too much construction and digging everywhere. Pollution is through the roof. What's going on." "Some social media users said she was right, but many criticised her as well.

One user commented: "Have you even SEEN outside? We can't even breathe or open windows. It's THAT BAD. VISIBLE & invisible pollution are two different levels of devastation. If she's trying to make a good change, support."

Another said: "Yes, why are they making the Metro and roads for better infrastructure of common people? They should send common people packing in overcrowded local trains, so rich people can enjoy their luxury drives." But most weren't as critical. Sharing Sonam's thoughts, one user commented: "Glad to see @sonamakapoor speak honestly. The city with the worst roads to add to the above. People of influence, please bring more attention to this topic."

Sonam is all set for her next project, 'Blind', in which she is playing a visually challenged cop. The movie, directed by Shome Makhija, will also star Purab Kohli, Vinay Pathak and Lillete Dubey in prominent roles.

**SONAM KAPOOR TWEETS ABOUT POLLUTION IN MUMBAI**



'TIL KE LADDU, KHICHDI AND KITES'

## Vidisha shares Makar Sankranti memories

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Well-known TV actress Vidisha Srivastava recalled the Makar Sankranti celebrations during her childhood and also shared what she is doing this year.

She said: "Makar Sankranti is an auspicious occasion for us, and I follow all the rituals and traditions associated with it. We would wake up early in the morning, dress up, and perform Surya puja. I remember my mother doing daan, in which she distributed til, daal, rice, and jaggery to those in need."

"The khichdi or tehrī prepared by my mother on this day has always been a favourite of mine. I still follow all the rituals in my home because I believe giving something back and helping the poor are two of the most significant aspects of Indian culture."

The actress, who is known for her TV shows such as 'Yeh Hai Mohabbatein', 'Meri Gudiya', among others, is currently seen in the popular sitcom 'Bhabiji Ghar Par Hain'.

She said how she loved flying kites during this festival: "Kite flying is not practised much in Mumbai, but I remember, when I was in Varanasi, we all liked to gather on the terrace to fly kites. We would also have competitions with people on other terraces. We used to cut each other's kites and jump out for joy and our whole day would go like that."

"When we were children, Makar Sankranti was all about eating til and murrā laddus and flying kites. My brothers would give me the phirki to hold and they would fly the kites, which used to make me upset and I used to cry."

While talking about her plan for the entire day this year, she added: "I called my brother and we would fly kites in the sky like we used to do in childhood, it is very nostalgic. Also, I will be preparing some til laddu (prepared with sesame seeds and jaggery) at my house with the help of my mother." "I will also prepare tehrī, made from seasonal vegetables like green peas, carrots, potatoes, cauliflower, green onions, and garlic for my family. In my hometown, it is believed that eating tehrī or khichdi on this day with curd is auspicious," Vidisha concluded.



INSTAGRAM PIC OF THE DAY



Sreejita De

## Maanvi Gagroo shows off engagement ring; 'Four More Shots Please!' mates cheer

Team Absolute | Mumbai

'Four More Shots Please!' actress Maanvi Gagroo made an announcement about her engagement and shared a picture of herself while showing off her engagement ring. However, she has not posted any pictures of her fiancé.

She looked excited and cheerful in the picture and wrote in the caption with a heart emoji and a ring: "So this

happened. #Engaged". After the post, many of her fans congratulated her.

Sriti Jha commented: "Oh my god!!! I am shocked!" Actress Kirti Kulhari also wrote: "When u first shared and today, same reaction...super happy for u and only love and best wishes always."

Sayani Gupta, who is Maanvi's co-star in 'Four More Shots Please!', said: "Chalo! Cat's out of the bag... love you & jijaji too." Other co-stars of

Maanvi, including Sumeet Vyas, Naveen Kasturia, Prateik Babbar, Kubbra Sait, Jitendra Kumar and Vipul Goyal, also congratulated her.

On the work front, Maanvi has worked in a few movies like 'PK', 'No One Killed Jessica' and 'Kill Dill'. She became popular with the web series 'TVF Pitchers' followed by 'Tripling', 'Four More Shots Please!' and 'Made In Heaven'.

