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Trade crosses \$125 billion, but India continues to strike at Chinese firms, apps

In the latest digital strike, the Centre last week ordered to ban around 200 apps, including 138 betting apps and 94 loan lending apps, over "Chinese linkage" concerns. The IT Ministry was recently instructed by the Union Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) to ban such apps, which operate through a third-party link.

NISHANT ARORA | New Delhi

Amid reports that the Chinese "surveillance balloon" collected information on military assets "in countries of emerging strategic interest to China" such as India, New Delhi has had its share of "national security" concerns with Chinese tech companies and platforms.

The total trade between the two countries has surpassed \$125 billion. Chinese exports to India accounted for the majority of this figure, totalling \$97.5 billion.

India's smartphone market has been dominated by Chinese companies like Xiaomi for several years now. Raw materials and components to assemble several tech products in the country are still arriving from China, although the government's emphasis on local manufacturing is slowly changing this scenario.

India's tech tussle with China began in June 2020, after Chinese and Indian troops engaged in aggressive skirmishes at locations along the Sino-Indian border, including near the Pangong Lake in Eastern Ladakh and the Tibet Autonomous Region.

Following the Galwan Valley skirmish on June 15, 2020, some Indian campaigns about boycotting Chinese products were started and calls were



also made to stop the entry of Chinese companies into the country.

The first ban on Chinese apps was announced in June 2020, starting with 59 apps including popular platforms like TikTok, Shareit, WeChat, UC News, UC Browser, Mi Community and more. India then went on to ban more than 300 Chinese apps.

In 2020, the Indian Army also asked its personnel to delete 89 mobile apps that included several Chinese apps, from their smartphones to curtail leakage of information.

However, the bigger tech skirmish

came when India took on the leading Chinese smartphone companies which are a dominant force in the country.

The Indian government looked into cases of alleged tax evasion by three Chinese mobile companies -- OPPO, Vivo India, and Xiaomi. The companies were served notices by the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) for duty evasion.

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) had seized Rs 5,551.27 crore of Xiaomi India lying in its bank accounts under the provisions of the Foreign Exchange Management Act (FEMA).

In a major relief to Xiaomi India in December, the Karnataka High Court quashed the Income Tax department's order of attaching Rs 3,700 crore fixed deposit amount in a tax evasion case against the company.

Indian authorities also prevented Chinese smartphone maker Vivo from exporting 27,000 smartphones worth \$15 million for more than a week.

A Chinese state-run Global Times report later claimed that if India uses more unfair practices to aggravate foreign companies' concerns, "it will not only hurt the interests of Chinese companies, but the reputation of India's business environment may be irreversibly damaged".

"Relevant departments in India need to further investigate and make clarifications in a timely manner to dispel anxiety among the business community," said the publication.

According to technology analysts, it will be difficult for India to rid its dependence on China's relatively cost-effective mobile phones.

Reports also surfaced late last year that China's ZTE Corporation and Huawei's Indian unit workforce have reportedly decreased by about 90 per cent over the past two years, as the companies have been unable to acquire new businesses, including the supply of 5G technology in the country.

Prez Murmu appoints 13 new Governors

Accepts resignations of Maha, Ladakh Guvs



Team Absolute | Mumbai

In an anticipated development, President Droupadi Murmu has accepted the resignation of Maharashtra Governor Bhagat Singh Koshyari.

Simultaneously, the President has transferred Jharkhand Governor Ramesh Bais as the new head of Maharashtra Raj Bhavan, according to an official communique this morning.

The appointment of Bais, 75 -- who has been the previous Governor of Tripura -- will take effect from the date he assumes charge in Maharashtra.

The President has carried out a major gubernatorial reshuffle involving accepting the resignations of one Governor (Maharashtra) and one Lt. Governor (Ladakh), and 13 new appointments/transfers across India. The press communique says, "The President of India has accepted the resignations of Shri Bhagat Singh Koshyari as Governor of Maharashtra and Shri Radha Krishnan Mathur as Lt. Governor of Ladakh."

IT FURTHER NOTIFIES THE FOLLOWING APPOINTMENTS:-

- Lt. General Kaiwalya Trivikram Parnaik, PVSM, UYSM, YSM (Retired) as Governor of Arunachal Pradesh
- Lakshman Prasad Acharya as Governor of Sikkim
- C.P. Radhakrishnan as Governor of Jharkhand
- Shiv Pratap Shukla as Governor of Himachal Pradesh
- Gulab Chand Kataria as Governor of Assam
- (Retd.) S. Abdul Nazeer as Governor of Andhra Pradesh
- Biswa Bhusan Harichandan, Governor of Andhra Pradesh appointed as Governor of Chhattisgarh
- Anusuiya Uikye, Governor of Chhattisgarh appointed as Governor of Manipur
- La. Ganesan, Governor of Manipur appointed as Governor of Nagaland
- Phagu Chauhan, Governor of Bihar appointed as Governor of Meghalaya
- Rajendra Vishwanath Arlekar, Governor of Himachal Pradesh appointed as Governor of Bihar
- Ramesh Bais, Governor of Jharkhand appointed as Governor of Maharashtra
- vBrig. (Dr.) Shri B.D. Mishra (Retd.), Governor of Arunachal Pradesh appointed as Lt. Governor of Ladakh

Pakistan-based handlers pushing drugs into J&K: Police

Srinagar | Agencies

Pakistan-based handlers are pushing drugs into Jammu and Kashmir to spread drug addiction among youth, police said on Sunday after arresting drug peddlers from Baramulla district.

Police said in a major breakthrough, four drug peddlers were arrested in Baramulla and a huge consignment of contraband, along with cash, was recovered from their possession.

"Based on specific information regarding smuggling of narcotics in the area of Kamalkote Uri, a police party led by incharge PP Kamalkote under the supervision of SDPO, Uri, Showkat Ali established a special checkpoint at Sultan Daki Kali Mitti. During checking, a vehicle (Tata Sumo) bearing registration No. JK05D-3680 with four persons on board was intercepted and tried to



flee but was stopped by the alert police party," police said.

"During search of the said vehicle, cash amount of Rs 25,39,000 and 1.17 kg of Brown Sugar like substance was recovered."

The four accused persons identified as Naseer Ahmad Bhatti, Reyaz Ahmad Khanday, Fayaz Ahmad Khanday, and Mohd Pazeer, all residents of Madiyan

Kamalkote Uri, were arrested and taken to the police station.

"During preliminary investigation, it was learnt that under a well hatched conspiracy, Pakistan based handlers are pushing drugs inside J&K through such smugglers to spread drug addiction among youth of J&K. Further investigation into the case is going on," police said.

Transgenders in Karnataka open canteen, start new life

Mangaluru | Agencies

Transgenders, who have always been kept out of the mainstream by their families and the general public, have started venturing into new areas to begin their lives afresh.

In Udupi district, a group of transgenders who are natives of other districts, have set up a canteen for night-time food seekers.

Three of them, Poorvi, Vaishnavi and Chandana, who used to seek alms on the streets of Udupi, have taken the decision to lead a self-reliant life with a canteen near the Udupi bus stand. They run their canteen from 1 am to 7 am when travellers who find themselves lost in the city wander in search of food. The canteen has turned out to be a boon for the night travellers and those who work in the night shift who leave their workplaces at odd hours.

The trio said the response from the public has so far been encouraging and they get respect from the public. They are enjoying the newly found dignified life in the heart of the city.



The Udupi police had recently intensified night patrolling to detect the illicit activities of transgenders including sex work.

With a cloud of distrust looming over the transgender community, the three got down to the new venture in an attempt to remove the tag imposed on them by the public.

The first MBA degree holding transgender in the state Sameeksha Kunder has invested in the canteen and stood by her friends. The three are preparing the food temporarily from her house. Kunder said acceptance from the public is crucial for running the small business. However, they have started work with a positive energy, she said.

SGPGIMS DOES FIRST ROBOTIC SURGERY FOR THYROID TUMOUR

Lucknow: For the first time in Uttar Pradesh, the Department of Endocrine Surgery of Sanjay Gandhi Postgraduate Institute of Medical Sciences (SGPGIMS) has performed robotic surgery to remove a 10 cm thyroid tumour.

According to the SGPGIMS spokesperson, a 39-year-old married woman, resident of Barabanki had a thyroid lump in her neck, which was continuously increasing post which she consulted doctors at Barabanki.

After examination, the doctors told her that the due to its size and complications, its surgery is not possible without making an incision in the neck. She was uncomfortable and disappointed about the incision marks after the surgery.

She was then referred to Robotic Thyroid Surgeon Dr Gyan Chand of SGPGI Lucknow to get the surgery done without incision in the throat.

Dr. Gyan, after necessary tests, said that the tumour could be removed through robotic surgery without making an incision in the throat and this will be the first case in itself. Dr Gyan successfully removed the tumour of thyroid gland in a four-hour operation without making an incision in the throat.

After the successful surgery, Dr Gyan Chand said that the whole process of removing such a large thyroid gland by robotic thyroid surgery is very complicated, but it is a scarless surgery and gives relief to the patient.



'GRAND PICTURE OF DEVELOPING INDIA': PM INAUGURATES SECTION OF DELHI-MUMBAI EXPRESSWAY

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the Delhi-Dausa-Lalsot section of the Delhi-Mumbai Expressway in Rajasthan's Dausa on Sunday.

He also laid the foundation stone for 247 km of national highway projects to be developed at a cost of more than Rs 5,940 crore. The inauguration of the highway section in Rajasthan holds a political significance as the state will go to the Assembly polls in December.

"The Delhi-Mumbai Expressway is one of the most advanced expressways in the world which presents a grand picture of developing India," he said on the occasion.

"For the last nine years, the Central government is continuously making huge investments in infrastructure. This budget has allocated Rs 10 lakh crores for infrastructure which is five times



more than the allocation in 2014," he said in the presence of Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot and Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar. He informed the gathering that in the

"in past few years, Rajasthan has received Rs 50,000 crore for highways." "Delhi-Mumbai Expressway and the Western Dedicated Freight Corridor are going to become two strong pillars of

progress for Rajasthan and the country," Prime Minister Modi added.

The 246 km Delhi - Dausa-Lalsot section of the Delhi Mumbai Expressway has been developed at a cost of more than Rs 12,150 crore.

The operationalisation of this section will reduce the travel time from Delhi to Jaipur from the existing five hours to around 3.5 hours and provide a major boost to the economic development of the entire region.

Delhi-Mumbai Expressway will be India's longest expressway with a length of 1,386 km. It will reduce the travel distance between Delhi and Mumbai by 12 per cent from 1,424 km to 1,242 km and travel time will be reduced by 50 per cent from 24 hours to 12 hours. It will pass through six states - Delhi, Haryana, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat and Maharashtra and connect major cities like Kota, Indore, Jaipur, Bhopal, Vadodara and Surat.

Delhi-Mumbai Expressway will change picture of Haryana: Dushyant Chautala

Chandigarh: Haryana Deputy Chief Minister Dushyant Chautala said that the Delhi-Mumbai Expressway, whose foundation stone was laid by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and other projects inaugurated, will not only improve the state's connectivity with metropolitan cities, but also increase the pace of industrial development. They will change the picture of the state, he told media persons after the inauguration programme of Delhi-Mumbai Expressway.

Chautala said that Phase-1 of the Delhi-Mumbai Expressway, which has been completed, will improve the connectivity of NCR with Mumbai and it will connect Delhi-Gurgaon with three National Parks. Not only this, now the journey from Delhi to Jaipur will also

be reduced by two hours, he added.

Terming the project as beneficial to industrial development as well, he said that Haryana would now be directly connected to various ports through the Expressway and the industries of the state would benefit. He said that Delhi-Mumbai corridor would also give a boost to warehousing and warehouses would be set up in Nuh, Gurugram, and Faridabad districts. Chautala also noted that Prime Minister has also laid the foundation stone of Delhi-Jammu Expressway, which will also pass via Haryana, while the foundation stone of a road project has also been laid to further improve the connectivity of Hansi to Bhiwani.



POST-RETIREMENT APPOINTMENT OF JUDGES THREAT TO JUDICIARY: CONGRESS

Team Absolute | New Delhi

After the appointment of S. Abdul Nazeer as the Governor of Andhra Pradesh, the Congress said on Sunday that 'it was a threat to the judiciary'.

Congress leader and eminent lawyer Abhishek Manu Singhvi quoted Late Arun Jaitely, former law and Finance minister, who in 2013 had said, "pre-retirement judgments are influenced by post-retirement jobs and its threat to judiciary."

Singhvi said, "We share the same sentiments... it's a threat to the judiciary."

He said, "It is not about any particular person as I know him personally but in principle we are against the appointment of judges post-retirement."

Singhvi said, "The BJP's defence that it had happened earlier also can't be an excuse and the issue remains the same."

Jairam Ramesh, Congress MP and General Secretary in-charge Communications, shared the video



clip of Arun Jaitely and said, "Adequate proof of this in the past 3-4 years for sure."

This is the second appointment after Ranjan Gogoi, who headed the Ayodhya bench and was nominated to the Rajya Sabha.

Justice S. Abdul Nazeer, who was part of a five-member Supreme Court Bench in the Ayodhya case, retired in January.

Justice Nazeer led-Constitution Bench had upheld the 2016 demonetisation process. He had also

declared that there was no need to impose additional restrictions on the free speech right of ministers, MPs, MLAs and leaders.

Born on January 5, 1958, at Beluvai in Karnataka's Dakshina Kannada district, Justice Nazeer enrolled as an advocate on February 18, 1983, after completing his LLB degree from the SDM Law College, Mangaluru.

He practiced before the Karnataka High Court and was appointed as its Additional Judge on May 12, 2003. He became a permanent judge on September 24, 2004 and was elevated to the Supreme Court on February 17, 2017.

Justice Nazeer was part of several landmark constitution bench decisions, which included triple talaq, right to privacy, Ayodhya case, and recently on the Centre's 2016 decision on demonetisation, and free speech of lawmakers.

Justice Nazeer said that "the situation in the Indian judiciary today is not as grim as it used to be though a wrong impression is conveyed due to misinformation".

Vijayan slams Amit Shah, says Kerala is a safe place to live in

Thiruvananthapuram | Agencies

Lashing out against Union Home Minister Amit Shah, Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan said that Kerala is a safe place to reside for people of all castes, creed and religions.

He was responding to a speech of Amit Shah at Puthur in Mangalore on Saturday in which the Union Minister had warned the people that if the BJP did not return back to power, the state would be like Kerala.

Vijayan, while speaking at a public function in Kottayam, said that the Union Home Minister had said that he does not want to speak further on Kerala and asked the Union minister what was there to speak.

He said that Kerala was a place where there was no demarcation among anyone and people were living in close amity in the state.



The Kerala Chief Minister also said that unemployment and poverty were at their zenith in the country and added that the administration must be for the poor and not for the well-to-do people.

He also said that those who cannot properly administer the country were trying

to create a wedge between people in a communal manner and added that Kerala was an exception to such matters.

The Kerala Chief Minister also said that the people of the state will not allow the state to change from the present situation of people living in harmony and amity.

J&K people want love, but BJP giving bulldozers: Rahul

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Rahul Gandhi on Sunday targeted the anti-encroachment drive in J&K and said that people there want love and not bulldozers.

In a tweet in Hindi he said, "People of J&K want employment, trade and love but what are they getting? BJP's bulldozer. The land which the people there worked upon with hard work for many decades, is being snatched from them. Peace and Kashmiriyat will be protected by uniting, not by dividing people."

The authorities have claimed that out of the total of Kahcharai land illegally occupied, 1,70,918 Kanals



have been restored after eviction of illegal occupants till Sunday.

Government assurance that farmers and poor people would not be impacted by the anti-encroachment drive

has still not been confirmed by some official order.

Small farmers and poor people are apprehensive that such orders might come after they have been uprooted from their dwellings.

KCR SLAMS MODI GOVERNMENT OVER BAN ON BBC DOCUMENTARY

Hyderabad | Agencies

Telangana Chief Minister K. Chandrababu Naidu on Sunday found fault with the Narendra Modi government for banning the BBC documentary on Gujarat riots, saying this is not good for democracy.

Speaking in the state Assembly, he questioned the restrictions imposed on the documentary.

"When BBC aired a documentary on the Godhara riots, it was banned. A lawyer Ashwini Upadhyay filed a case in the Supreme Court to ban BBC in India. Why this arrogance?..."

"Where will this madness take us? Is filing a case in the Supreme Court by a BJP man to ban BBC is an honour for the country. What will the world think about us. Why this intolerance," he asked.

The Chief Minister also remarked that in a big country like India, mistakes do happen and one should admit them. He said in a democracy,



it was not proper to ban the critics or send them to jail.

"One should have patience and tolerance. None is permanent as we are at the mercy of people to come to power," he said.

The Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS) president said that such behaviour will not be tolerated by people for long. "Post 2024, they will be in ruins.

We all saw what one Lok Nayak Jai Prakash Narayan and the subsequent sparks that were generated in the country could do to Indira Gandhi," he remarked.

KCR also slammed Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman for demanding Prime Minister Narendra Modi's photo at a ration shop in Kamareddy district. "The nation's

Finance Minister fought with a poor ration dealer. She threatened him. Why exactly should PM Modi's photo be displayed?" he asked.

The BRS leader also wanted to know why the Modi government is not holding the census exercise in the country. He pointed out that the process of census began way back in 1871 and it continued uninterrupted till 2011.

He pointed out that even during the two world wars, it didn't stop. KCR said that it's only through census does a government know what the situation is in the country. He alleged that the Modi government is not conducting a census because it was afraid of people knowing the facts.

He said that people belonging to the backward classes and scheduled castes are also demanding a caste census. "The SC population was fixed at 15 per cent long back but with authority, I can say that it has now crossed 17 per cent. In some states it even crossed 19 per cent," he said.

Locals clash with police amid anti-encroachment drive in Delhi's Mehrauli

Team Absolute | New Delhi

An anti-encroachment drive in South Delhi's Mehrauli turned ugly on Sunday after locals clashed with the DDA officials and police personnel.

There were reports that the Delhi Police in a bid to normalise the situation used mild laathi-charge, but the official denied it. It was the second day of the DDA's anti-encroachment drive in Mehrauli area on Sunday. Seeing the gravity of the situation a large number of police personnel were deployed in the area.

The police alleged that local women pelted stones at them. However, no one was hurt in the incident. "They also threw chilli powder on us. We have initiated legal action against those involved," said the police. The local residents have



alleged that authorities were hand in gloves when the buildings were built and now the administration had come with

full force to demolish their houses. The ruling Aam Aadmi Party has urged the DDA to stop the anti-encroachment drive.

THREE DIE IN EXPLOSION IN FIRECRACKER GODOWN

Chennai: Three people died and seven people were injured in an explosion at a firecracker godown in Vaniyambadi, Tirupathur district of Tamil Nadu.

Police said that the explosion took place in the firecracker godown and investigation is on regarding the cause of the explosion. The police added that seven people were rescued from the burning godown, the situation of those who survived is not clear.

Police said that the identity of the three, who died in the accident, has yet to be ascertained.

Rs 86 lakh looted from four ATMs in TN's Tiruvannamalai

Chennai | Agencies

In a major crime spree, a gang of robbers looted four ATM machines, located around 20 km from each other at various places on the Cuddalore-Chittoor road (NH 38) in Tamil Nadu's Tiruvannamalai district early on Sunday, police said.

The beat police personnel, who were on routine rounds, found the damaged ATMs and informed the police station. Of the four ATMs that were looted, two are located near the bus stand on the Thandrapattu main road and near Mariammam temple within Tiruvannamalai town.

The third is located near the railway station in Polur town and the fourth near the Government Boys high school in Kalasapakkam town.

Police said that the burgla-



ry would have happened after 2 am on Sunday and gas welding machines were used to cut open the chest and rob the ATM.

The suspects, according to the police, have set fire to all the ATMs after looting the money. The ATM of India One did not have any CCTV cameras while all three SBI

ATMs were equipped with CCTV cameras.

The three SBI ATMs had money to the tune of Rs 30 lakh (Thandrapattu branch), Rs 33 lakh (Mariammam branch), and Rs 20 lakh (Polur town), while the fourth ATM in Kalasapakkam town had Rs 3 lakh.

Delhi L-G reconvenes MCD House to elect mayor on Feb 16

Team Absolute | New Delhi

After three unsuccessful meetings of the MCD House to hold the mayoral elections, Delhi's civic body will meet on Thursday to elect the mayor, deputy mayor and the members of standing committee.

Delhi Lieutenant Governor V.K. Saxena has accepted a proposal by Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal to hold the elections on February 16, the L-G office said on Sunday.

The national capital is yet to elect the Mayor and Deputy Mayor after three previous meetings held on January 6 and 24 and February 6 were adjourned without holding the exercise following a ruckus between the BJP and AAP councillors.

The last meeting of the MCD councillors held on February 6 was adjourned until the next date amid sloganeering and ruckus over



the issues of aldermen voting rights. The MCD Presiding Officer had said that the polls to elect mayor, deputy mayor and Standing Committee members will be held simultaneously. She also said that as per the DMC Act, aldermen are eligible to vote in the mayor, deputy mayor polls. However, the AAP council-

lors protested vehemently against the aldermen being allowed to vote. AAP's Councillor and Leader of the House Mukesh Goel had said, "The Supreme Court order clearly says that aldermen can only vote in ward committee polls but cannot vote in the mayor polls. This is completely illegal."

ACTING ON YATRA FEEDBACK, MP CONG LIKELY TO FIELD 40% NEW FACES

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Determined to return to power with absolute majority after the Assembly elections scheduled later this year, the Madhya Pradesh Congress Committee has stepped up its preparations for the polls and the process of finalising candidates has also been initiated.

The names of least 60-65 candidates, who are considered strong nominees, including some senior party leaders, will be finalised soon and they will be asked to kick-start their campaign in their respective areas.

Sources said MP Congress chief Kamal Nath had initiated the process of taking feedback from party workers during Rahul Gandhi's Bharat Jodo Yatra, which traversed through the tribal and OBC dominated Malwa-Nimar region in November-December 2022.

While he (Kamal Nath) was participating in the MP leg of Bharat Jodo Yatra, he was also taking feedback from party leaders and workers (who had come from across the state for being part of the Yatra) on various Assembly seats, and matched them with the findings of the internal surveys on those seats," a senior Congress leader said.

Besides, the state unit of the grand old party is also likely to spring a surprise by fielding at least 30-40 per cent new faces in the elections to the 230-seat Madhya Pradesh Assembly, which will be



in addition to the list of strong candidates.

According to reliable sources, the fresh candidates will be fielded in those seats where the party has been continuously losing since the past four-five elections.

Sources privy to the developments said that Kamal Nath has started selecting new candidates on the basis of their reputation in their respective areas, and their loyalty towards the party.

However, the new faces will be only those who have been working for the party for the past at least one decade and also if their acceptance among the people is high.

Kamal Nath himself has reiterated that party workers who have been putting their best efforts for several years deserve a chance.

Therefore, it is assumed that there will be a long list of new candidates for the upcoming Assembly elections, which are due at the end of this year.

"The candidates will be finalised first for those seats where the party has not done well in the past four-five elections, but the names won't be declared officially. Instead, these nominees will be conveyed by the party about their candidatures and will be asked to start working on the ground, possibly six months before the polls," an MP Congress leader said on condition of anonymity.

Based on the internal surveys, which have categorised the 230 seats into various segments based on the party's prospects there, some sitting legislators have already been alerted about their performance not being up to the mark and the possibility of them being dropped from the final candidates' list if they don't pull up their socks.

Sources also claimed that some sitting legislators, including a former state minister from the Malwa region who had won the last polls by just 5,000-plus votes, are considering to change their constituency, as internal surveys didn't paint a rosy picture for their poll prospects.



CONSERVATION OF FORESTS AND WILDLIFE MUST TO MAKE EARTH WORTH LIVING- CM

CM releases the film 'Exploring Satpura'

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has said that conservation of forests and wildlife is necessary to make the earth worth living for the coming generations. It is important to ensure that there is no conflict between development and nature, coordination is maintained and that the forest should be a continuous source of livelihood for its inhabitants. The responsibility of their management rests with the officers of the Indian Forest Service. This way the responsibility of the officers of All India Forest Service is very important for smoothness and continuity of human life. Officers should discharge their responsibilities with full commitment and sensitivity. Chief Minister Chouhan was inaugurating the two-day Vaniki Sammelan of the Indian Forest Service Association. Forest Minister Dr. Kunwar Vijay Shah, Chairman of State Forest Development Corporation Madhav Singh Dabur, Additional Chief Secretary Forest J.N. Kansotia, Principal Chief Conservator of Forests and Chief of Forest Force, Ramesh Kumar Gupta, President of All India Forest Service Association, Atul Srivastava were special guests.

CM releases the film 'Exploring Satpura'
Chief Minister Chouhan released the booklet 'Forest Department- New Dimensions of Success' and the Satpura Tiger Reserve website, the teaser of the film 'Kuno:



Return of Cheetah' made on Cheetah Restoration in Kuno National Park and the natural beauty of Satpura Tiger Reserve and the wonderful bio- Film 'Exploring Satpura' depicting diversity and eco-tourism.

Short films should be made on the forest activities of the state

Chief Minister Chouhan said that Forest Service officers have played an important role in saving forests as well as expanding them. Madhya Pradesh has made remarkable achievements in conservation of tiger, leopard, vulture, alligator etc. Now we have also

become the only Cheetah state of the country. Rehabilitation of tigers in Panna is also an important achievement. For this, Forest Service officers deserve to be congratulated. An example has also been presented in the management of state parks, forest and tiger protection.

Govardhan Puja gives the message of conservation of nature

Chief Minister Chouhan said that according to Indian culture there is only one consciousness in everyone. The Indian mind believes in the philosophy of 'live and let live'. It is being

held on the theme of "one family-one future", which is an extension of the Indian idea. A feeling for protection of nature is inherent in the message of Govardhan Puja given by Lord Krishna.

Activities of Agro Forestry and Bamboo Mission should be encouraged

Chief Minister Chouhan said that the ongoing activities for plantation in the state have yielded positive results. As I plant saplings every day and encourage the participation of the general public in this, the people of the state are now planting saplings on their birthdays, anniversaries and in the memory of family members. Success has been achieved in making plantation a mass campaign. Ankur Abhiyan also has a special contribution in this. There is a need to encourage the activities of agro-forestry, bamboo mission in the state and to simplify the rules related to afforestation through tree plantation.

Crucial role of Forest Department in successful implementation of PESA Act

Chief Minister Chouhan said that the Forest Department has a vital role in the successful implementation of the PESA Act in the state. It is necessary to provide training to the tribal community in relation to the collection and marketing of tendu leaves and other forest produce and support in its management. The participation of tribal youths will also have to be encouraged in the operation of crushers and minor mineral mines operated in tribal areas.

Shivraj Chouhan, Congress's Kamal Nath In "Question War" Ahead Of Madhya Pradesh Polls



Team Absolute | Bhopal

With the Assembly polls in Madhya Pradesh due this year-end, Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan and state Congress president Kamal Nath have been engaged in a bitter 'question war' since a fortnight, seeking to know from each other about the "unfulfilled" poll promises.

The opposition Congress, which formed government in the state in December 2018 but lost power in March 2020, has started making a slew of promises, including farm loan waiver and implementation of the old pension scheme.

However, Chief Minister Chouhan, who has been posing questions to the opposition party almost every day, recently told media persons that, "The Congress has started making false promises again. It was in power for 15 months and had issued a 973-point manifesto."

"They have not fulfilled a single promise. At that time, the Bharatiya Janata Party was in opposition. Now, we are asking questions based on those false promises. We are also asking questions as the Congress has started coming up with false promises again, eyeing the polls," the BJP leader said.

The Congress has promised to give bonus on several crops including wheat, gram, mustard and rice. Did they give it on any crop during "sava saal" (15-month rule)? Chouhan asked.

Countering him, former CM Kamal Nath said, "Heard that Shivraj is asking questions from me about which promises we have fulfilled and which we have not. Only a person with an unstable mind can ask such questions. It is not the chief minister's job to ask questions but to implement public welfare schemes. If our announcements were in public interest, then he should imple-

ment them." Nath also said Chouhan should save queries for future, claiming people will unseat him from power and give a lot of opportunity to raise questions. "I feel he is doing net-practice for the same," he claimed.

However, Chouhan hit back saying, "It is a matter of shame that instead of replying to the question, they are responding in a street-type language. If you have fulfilled the promises, then give an answer. Why are you feeling pinched?" Chouhan said when he put up a query to Nath, the latter got disturbed and asked whether a CM can ask questions.

"You (Nath) continue to mislead people, keep saying false things and expect us not to ask questions. Kamal Nath tum idhar-udhar ki baat mat karo. Yeh batao ki kafilta luta kyun hai" (don't beat around the bush, but give concrete answers), he said.

The CM also said the Congress in its 2018 poll manifesto promised milk producing farmers a bonus of Rs 5 per litre. "Did you give it in 15 months?" he asked.

Kamal Nath, instead of replying to Chouhan's question, asked about a promise made by the BJP government on providing Rs 20 lakh interest free long-term loan to women self-help groups for primary processing of milk.

"What had happened to that promise? Or have you turned that promise on milk into curd?" the Congress leader said in a satirical remark.

"I again request you to follow the decorum associated with the CM's post. Gaal bajana band kariye aur hath chalana shuru kijiye (stop making unnecessary comments and start working). Do at least a single work of public welfare during whatever little time is left of your government that came to power by indulging in selling-purchasing (horse trading)," Nath remarked.

Attempt to make Guinness world record

21 lakh diyas to be lit in Ujjain on Mahashivratri



Team Absolute | Ujjain

Nearly 21 lakh earthen lamps will be lit on February 18 in Madhya Pradesh's Ujjain city as part of the 'Shiv Jyoti Arpanam-2023' programme to mark the festival of Mahashivratri, Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has said. On Mahashivratri last year,

11,71,078 earthen lamps were lit in Ujjain. Now, an attempt will be made to set a Guinness world record by lighting 21 lakh lamps, government officials said.

After a meeting held on Saturday to review preparations for the mega event, CM Chouhan in a statement said the festival of Mahashivratri will be celebrated in Ujjain like Diwali on February 18.

6-YEAR-OLD GIRL RAPED, MURDERED IN SHIVPURI: POLICE

Shivpuri: A six-year-old girl was allegedly raped and murdered in Shivpuri district, police said. The incident took place in Badora village under Karera police station limits on Friday night.

Police station in-charge Satish Chouhan said the girl's mother had taken her to a temple where a religious programme was underway. The girl got separated and her mother thought she must have returned home. But when she was found to be missing, a police complaint was filed. Her body was found behind the village's government school on Saturday morning with a piece of cloth stuffed into her mouth. A case of rape and relevant offences under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act (POCSO) was registered and probe is on, the official said.

Minister Bhupendra Singh offer development works of Rs 7 crores to North Assembly constituency



Team Absolute | Bhopal

Urban Development and Housing Minister of Bhopal district in-charge Bhupendra Singh started the Vikas Yatra on Sunday after offering prayers at the temple located in Indira Nagar in Ward-14 in North Assembly constituency. Singh visited different wards and met the citizens. He dedicated and performed bhoomi-pujan of

various development works costing Rs. 4 crore 35 lakhs for ward no. 8, 9, 11, 13, 15 and 21 in a meeting at Tila Jamalpura. Also, new development works worth Rs. 2 crore 78 lakh were approved. Singh performed kanya puja also.

320 illegal colonies of Bhopal will be made legal. Minister Singh said that the process of legalizing 320 unauthorized colonies of Bhopal is going on. The resi-

dents of these areas will now be able to get all facilities including bank loans.

Singh said that Vikas Yatra is an innovative experiment of Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan. Citizens are being informed about public welfare schemes through the yatra, they are also being provided benefits of beneficiary oriented schemes. Also, bhoomi puja and dedication of development works is being performed.

6-yr-old boy takes ailing father to hospital in wooden cart



Team Absolute | Bhopal

A six-year-old boy pushed a wooden cart to carry his ailing father to a government hospital for treatment, the incident pointing fingers on yet another instance of alleged negligence in providing ambulances to the poor families in remote areas of Madhya Pradesh.

The matter came to the fore on Saturday after some locals spotted the boy along with his mother pushing a wooden cart and recorded it on the social media.

The incident was reported in Baliari town of Singrauli district where the family waited for an ambulance for more than one hour, however, delay in the arrival of the vehicle prompted the clueless boy to take his father to hospital in a wooden cart.

In a viral video, a boy dressed in a t-shirt and blue denims, is seen trying to control the movement of the cart, which he pushed

around for three kilometres, while his mother was seen pushing it from the opposite end.

After the video of the incident surfaced on social media, Singrauli district administration took cognisance of the matter and ordered an inquiry in the matter later on Saturday evening.

"It has learnt that due to non-availability of an ambulance, the patient had to be taken to the hospital by his wife and innocent son. The Chief Medical Officer and civil surgeon have been directed to find out the reason for non-availability of ambulances," Singrauli's Additional Collector D.P. Burman told the press.

These kinds of incidents where people would be seen taking patients to hospitals or their bodies back to their homes and even pregnant women have been coming to the fore from different parts of Madhya Pradesh, especially in rural areas.

Indore ready to host 1st Agriculture Deputies Meeting under India's G20 Presidency

Team Absolute | Indore

Around 89 delegates from G20 member countries will participate in the Agriculture Deputies Meeting and all were expected to reach Indore by February 12, said Collector Ilayaraja T talking to the media here on Sunday. The first Agriculture Deputies Meeting, a three-day event, will be held in Indore starting Monday. Delegates from G20 member countries, guest countries and international organisations are expected to participate in the meeting. About 27 delegates have already reached Indore to attend the summit.

CM Chouhan to inaugurate the event

Briefing the media about the event, he said, "An exhibition

will be inaugurated at 1.30 pm on Monday and Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan will address the media after the inaugural session."

Millets and its value-added food products along with stalls from animal husbandry and fisheries will be a major attraction of this exhibition, informed the government through a release on Sunday.

During the first ADM of the Agriculture Working Group, two side events have been scheduled on day one to deliberate on agriculture-related matters.

Scindia to attend Day 2
Day two will witness the esteemed presence of the Union Civil Aviation Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia following which there will be a general

discussion among the participating members and international organizations, an official release said on Sunday.

Day three will be dedicated to the deliberations on the key deliverables of the Agriculture Working Group. It will be a technical session with round about discussions and participation from all concerned members and international organizations.

Heritage walk along the lines of PBD

During the event, the delegates will get to experience the rich Indian history through heritage walk to Rajwada Palace and an excursion to Mandu Fort. Gala dinners and cultural performances will provide a taste of Indian cuisine and culture.



Political row erupts yet again over Madhavrao's statue at Tikamgarh

Team Absolute | Bhopal

A political controversy erupted yet again over a life-size statue of the Congress stalwart and late former Union Minister Madhavrao Scindia, installed on the premises of the Circuit House in Tikamgarh, Madhya Pradesh, after the district administration issued a notification sanctioning Rs 24.85 lakh for the completion of the project.

The notification issued by Tikamgarh district administration also mentioned that the statue is proposed to be unveiled by Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan, Madhavrao Scindia's son and Union Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia later this month.

Tikamgarh Akhil Bharatiya Kshatriya Mahasabha president Pushpendra Singh Chouhan said:

"We had questioned the legality of the statue when it was installed without any prior information to the local administration, and now tender process for the same project is coming up almost one year later. What is the meaning of issuing tenders when the statue has already been installed there. It means that installed statue was at a questionable stage and now paper works are being done



to create an impression that all has been done following the government's direction."

"The money was sanctioned for establishing only a 'chabutara' (platform) under MLA funds within the premises of Circuit House. But, it turned out to be a statue of Madhavrao Scindia and within a fortnight, the proposal was passed. They (Scindia's supporters) installed the statue of their leader and also removed the photos of (Orchha) Tikamgarh's Bundela king Rudra Pratap Singh from the Circuit House, which was built by Maharaja Veer Singh Judeo," said Chouhan.

Terming it as an attempt to "destroy" Tikamgarh's history, localites said: "Madhavrao Scindia had no

role in the development of the city. So the statues of local heroes should be installed."

The localites called it an attack on rich history of Orchha (Tikamgarh) as the historic Circuit House where late Scindia's statue has been installed, was established by Maharaja Veer Singh Judeo (Bundela clan of Orchha).

Madhavrao Scindia's statue was installed in March, 2022 by a group of local BJP leaders, who are considered to be loyalists of his son Jyotiraditya Scindia. A petition challenging the project was filed before the High Court earlier in October-November last year, however, the court was yet to give any date for hearing in the matter.



EDITOR'S SPECS

Can the Kerala CPI (M) do no wrong?

The same Kerala unit of CPI(M) which once opposed tractors and computers with all its might in 70s and 80s, is now ironically battling for mechanisation, computerisation and opening the doors for foreign educational institutions to turn Kerala into an educational hub.

Over the years, the party has realised that what it considered as "detrimental" to the interests of the state is actually the "need of the hour". They attribute the paradigm shift to nothing else but people's welfare. "Present circumstances are totally different and there is no other way out," said Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan on Thursday when reminded that once he had asked the people of the state not to pay the increased charges when the Congress-led UDF raised taxes.

A media critic on condition of anonymity said that "Their biggest advantage is their disciplined cadres, who have no other way but to just follow their leaders on issues and take the message to the people. There is not a word of discontentment from any levels. Can this phenomenon ever happen in parties like the Congress and the gullible masses believe, just see there are no issues in the CPI(M). Whereas in the Congress, it's just chaos and there is no unanimity on any issues, leaving many to think that things will not be good for them. This is what the CPI(M) exploits and does it well," said the critic.

And the latest being the Rs 2 fuel cess introduced none other than by Finance Minister K.N. Balagopal, who as a student was always at the forefront of the protests.

Hence, the party feels that Vijayan and the other leaders take divergent positions on the same issue just for the people.

RAHUL MUST GO BEYOND RHETORIC, OFFER CREDIBLE VISION FOR 2024

DEEPIKA BHAN

Leading a Yatra with emotional and idealistic talks and steering a party to the polls are two entirely different ball games. Ultimately, all that matters is the vote-winning ability. Has Rahul Gandhi finally arrived and will the Congress rise up to be the fulcrum of the Opposition?

The Bharat Jodo Yatra was conceived by the Congress to do just this. But mere rhetoric cannot get the magic numbers to lead Parliament or any Assembly. What is needed is a plan, rather a vision that can put an alternative before the people.

The Bharat Jodo Yatra had moments of eloquence, photo-ops, juicy quotes, but ended up more as a marathon than a political rally with a message and a part of a larger vision. The rally was more about anti-Modism than providing an alternative plan to the BJP.

This has continued after the Yatra also and become all the more direct, as was seen during the motion of thanks to the President's Address in Parliament.

Making a monster out of Modi may be lauded by his close supporters and coterie, but this is not the strategy to win over people. Perhaps the Congress can take the cue from Arvind Kejriwal, who no longer makes personal attacks against PM Modi, but has successfully demolished the BJP in Delhi and has crept up in Gujarat too.

What the nation needs is a working plan to address the issues. Growing unemployment and inflation are the two major problems affecting the people directly. Raising the issues is important for the opposition, but what is the working plan to address the issues?

Almost all the neighboring countries are failing and in a bad state. Even the European countries, the US and others are under immense economic strain and so is China also. In this scenario, how can India be insured? The opposition and especially the Congress has to make a blueprint. Similar is the case with issues like security, law and order, health, etc.

If the Congress and the rest of the Opposition want to take Modi head on, then they need a matching charismatic leadership and a vision for overall growth and peace. The grand old party needs to unveil the vision to



address people's issues and take the country forward. It needs to come out with a credible long-term plan and not hang out with the rhetoric-laden short strategies.

There is still a long way to go after the 4,000 km Bharat Jodo Yatra for the Congress, which sought to rekindle itself and tried to prove that it is the principal opposition to the BJP.

The party claims that the Yatra has done the necessary work -- to unite the country, which it says has been divided by the BJP's religious polarisation, and given a new image to Rahul Gandhi. His tagline "opening the shop of love in the market of hatred", was propagated by the party and his supporters in the hope of sweeping the people off their feet. But did people fall?

The effect on people can be judged only by the EVM result, but the yatra has failed to get the Congress house in order. Dissensions continue and leaders are resigning and leaving.

Severe differences cropped up in the Maharashtra Congress where Balasaheb Thorat, the party's legislative party leader, resigned from his position. All he had to say

was "internal politics distressed me".

Just before him, Congress loyalist A.K. Antony's son Anil Antony quit the party, blaming the intolerance within the party. Hitting out at his former party, BJP spokesperson Shehzad Poonawalla said nothing has changed in the Congress since he was 'forced out' of the party for 'speaking against dynasty'.

In Rajasthan, the Gehlot vs Pilot saga continues, and similar internal tussles are prevalent in almost every state.

The party's aim to rejuvenate the cadre and unify the party has not yielded the results. But the message that the Yatra has ended up with is that Rahul Gandhi is very much there and this time with the salt-and-pepper look. He even tweeted (January 29), "Bharat Jodo Yatra has been one of the most beautiful and profound experiences of my life. It's not the end, it's the first step, it's the beginning!"

The yatra may have been his first step, but what is the follow up?

Five months of the yatra may not produce immediate results, but the only question from the

marathon that has emerged is -- where does Rahul Gandhi go from here?

His coterie may want him to be at the helm of Indian politics and grab power in 2024, but nothing comes without a plan. A strategy to outdo Modi is the challenge and even more difficult is to lay a credible and meaningful vision that can convince the people.

Also, the Congress and Rahul Gandhi seriously need to rethink its 'anti and hate Modi attack policy'.

A lot is at stake for the Congress and the Gandhi scion. They need to work on their strategies thoughtfully and not rhetorically.

The Assembly polls in nine states will be the first test of Rahul Gandhi in his new bearded avatar. If the Congress is able to do well, then the opposition regional parties can drop their reluctance to accept it as the fulcrum of an anti-BJP alliance in the crucial 2024 Lok Sabha polls.

international

SYSTEM CAN'T WORK IF AUTHORITY LIES WITH ARMY CHIEF AND RESPONSIBILITY LIES WITH PM: IMRAN KHAN

Lahore | Agencies

Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan believes that a country's system fails if its elected government doesn't have both responsibility and authority, a local media outlet reported.

The former Pakistani Prime Minister - who was ousted via a no-confidence motion last year - expressed these views in an interview with the US broadcaster, Voice of America, stressing that the elected governments must have authority as well as responsibility. The News reported. "The leading principle of the balance (of power) is that the elected government that has the responsibility,



which people have mandated through their vote, must also have the authority," Khan said. He said that responsibility and authority cannot be separated and

hence a system cannot work if the two things are not vested in the same individual.

"If the authority lies with the army chief, (but) responsibility lies with the Prime

Minister, no management system works," Khan added, the media outlet reported.

While responding to a question regarding his relationship with the military as the premier, the PTI chief said that all the policies of the military in Pakistan depend on one individual.

"Military (in Pakistan) means one man, the army chief. So, the whole policy of military vis-a-vis their dealing with the civilian government depends on the personality of one man," he said.

Khan said that the positive side of his relationship with the then-army chief, General Qamar Javed Bajwa was his government having the "organised strength of Pakistan army to help us".

TWO KILLED IN HOUSE FIRE IN JAPAN

Tokyo | Agencies

Two men were found dead after a fire on Sunday morning burnt down three houses in Tochigi city in Japan, local media reported. Local police said the house fire at a two-story wooden house in the city of Oyama was reported after 2:00 a.m. local time, Japan's public broadcaster NHK reported Sunday. The local fire department extinguished the fire about three hours later, but two bodies were found in the burnout of the house, which is believed to be the source of the fire, Xinhua News Agency reported. In the accident, a total of three residential houses were burnt down as the initial fire further spread to two nearby ones, according to the reports.

SL postpones non-essential, non-urgent surgeries at govt hospitals

Colombo | Agencies

Sri Lankan Health Minister Keheliya Rambukwella on Sunday announced that all non-essential and non-urgent surgeries at government hospitals have been postponed. He said that essential and urgent surgeries will be carried out without hindrance and that the measure is only temporary, Xinhua news agency reported.

The decision comes in the wake of Sri Lanka Medical Association, the national professional medical association, warning that the health sector would face a serious crisis within a few weeks, if shortages of medicines, surgical equipment, and chemicals used in labs are not



addressed now. Sri Lanka has been facing a medical shortage since 2022 due to its balance of payment crisis, and the price of medicine has also gone up last

year due to rising inflation. Reports said that Sri Lanka relies on imports for about 85 per cent of its pharmaceutical needs and about 80 per cent of its medical supplies.

SKorea, US hold counter-drone drills amid NKorean UAV threats

Seoul | Agencies

South Korea and the US staged combined counter-drone drills at a US air base in a southwestern city last week, US military photos showed Sunday, as Seoul seeks to reinforce readiness following North Korea's drone incursions late last year.

Posted on the Pentagon's Defense Visual Information Distribution Service on Friday, photos showed the drills taking place at Kunsan Air Base in Gusan, 275 kilometers south of Seoul, on Tuesday, Yonhap News Agency reported.

One photo depicted a US Air Force officer aiming a "dronebuster" at a small simulated enemy drone. The dronebuster is a radio frequency jammer that can neutralize



enemy drones, according to the US military.

Another photo showed a member of a South Korean Air Force explosive ordnance disposal (EOD) team checking the drone while wearing a "bomb suit" designed to protect personnel from possible explosives carried by the drone. The North's drone infiltrations in December have laid bare the South Korean military's lack of readiness against such small crafts that could potentially carry lethal weapons. The South has recently come up with a series of anti-drone plans, including conducting regular drills, building a real-time target intelligence-sharing system and securing kinetic and non-kinetic assets, such as drone jamming guns.

TURKEY-SYRIA EARTHQUAKE DEATH TOLL SURPASSES 28,000

Ankara/Damascus | Agencies

The combined death toll in the devastating earthquake that struck Turkey and Syria on February 6 has surpassed 28,000.

The rescue operations, which were paused on Saturday after two unidentified groups clashed, resumed after Turkish army stepped in to offer protection, BBC reported.

Nearly 50 people have been arrested for looting rations at gun point, local media reported.

As food supply is dwindling, security is expected to worsen; BBC quoted a rescuer as saying.

During a visit to the disaster zone, Turkish President Recep Tayyip



Erdogan said: "We've declared a state of emergency and would use emergency powers to punish anyone breaking the law."

BANGLADESH SENDS RELIEF PACKAGE TO EARTHQUAKE-HIT SYRIA

Dhaka: A humanitarian assistance package for the earthquake affected people of Syria from the government of Bangladesh has reached Damascus, Syria.

The assistance package containing dry food, medicines, blankets, tents and winter clothes was sent on Saturday by a special flight of Bangladesh Air Force Aircraft C-130J.

Earlier, Bangladesh President Md. Abdul Hamid, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and Foreign Minister Dr. A.K. Abdul Momen conveyed condolences to their Syrian counterparts on behalf of the government and the people of Bangladesh.

The Bangladesh Ministry of Foreign Affairs coordinated the relief operation in collaboration with the AFD, BAF and the MDMR. Nahida Sobhan, Ambassador of Bangladesh to Syria and a resident in Amman and Deputy Minister of Local Administration and Environment of Syria Moutaz Douaji, received the relief goods at the Damascus international airport. The relief goods were later handed over to the International Committee of Red Cross (ICRC) for proper coordination and distribution among the earthquake-affected people in Syria.

Tea crisis looms in Pakistan as prices surge

Karachi | Agencies

Ahead of Ramadan, the price of black tea (loose) in Pakistan has swelled to Rs 1,600 per kg from Rs 1,100 in the last 15 days as around 250 containers are still stuck at the port that arrived from late December 2022 to early January, local media reported.

A retailer said a leading brand has raised the price of 170-gram Danedar and Elaichi packs to Rs320 and Rs350 from Rs 290. The 900 and 420-gram packs now cost Rs 1,480 and Rs 720 as against Rs 1,350 and Rs 550. Other packers are set to follow suit, Dawn reported. Zeeshan Maqsood, Convener Standing Committee of the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI) on Tea, said that imports are currently under crisis which may lead to huge shortages in March, Dawn reported. He said banks say they



have instructions from the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) to release documents on 180-day defers of credit (LCs).

He added that the situation is getting worse because if anyone gets these containers released on 180-day deferred payment then how he would calculate the cost of imported tea as nobody knows what would be the dollar rate after six months on the interbank market, Dawn reported.

Zeeshan, who is also an executive member of the Pakistan Tea Association (PTA), said the banks are not opening LCs saying they do not have any instructions from the SBP for new contracts.



PREZ ACCEPTS MAHA GUV KOSHYARI'S RESIGNATION, RAMESH BAIS IS NEW GOVERNOR

Maha Opposition 'welcomes' Governor Koshiyari's departure

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The opposition in Maharashtra erupted into joyous celebrations as the President accepted Governor Bhagat Singh Koshiyari's resignation and named Ramesh Bais as the new Governor on Sunday.

Top leaders of the Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) alliance comprising Congress, Nationalist Congress Party, Shiv Sena-UBT and others termed it as a "welcome" and "long overdue" development.

Governor for 42 months since September 2019, Koshiyari, 80, goes into retirement as per his own request made to Prime Minister Narendra Modi in January which has been accepted to.

From its 31-month long tenure, the MVA harbours a host of unpleasant memories of their political tussle with the Governor, and even his controversial remarks against top state icons like Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj, Dr B.R. Ambedkar, Mahatma Jyotirao Phule and Savitri Phule, the slight of the Marathis vis-



a-vis Gujaratis-Marwaris, and many other happenings. NCP President Sharad Pawar said: "Maharashtra has become free. He should have been removed much earlier. The decision has come now. Such a Governor was never seen in Maharashtra's history."

"It's a big win for Maharashtra! The resignation of the Governor has finally been accepted. He who constantly insulted Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj, Mahatma Jyotirao Phule and Savitri Phule, our Constitution, Assembly and democratic ideals, cannot be accepted as Governor," declared

Sena-UBT's Aditya Thackeray. "Finally, he has to go... he has been given an exit though he insulted the state repeatedly. The people of Maharashtra know how to take their revenge," said state Congress President Nana Patole.

Some like NCP state President Jayant Patil also expressed cautious hopes that the new Governor should not be a puppet of the Bharatiya Janata Party like Koshiyari.

Other senior leaders of all the three parties like Naseem Khan, Atul Londhe, Ajit Pawar, Supriya Sule,

Dilip Walse-Patil, Dr. Jitendra Awhad, Sanjay Raut, Arvind Sawant, Dr. Manisha Kayande, and many more expressed their sentiments at the Governor's impending departure after his turbulent tenure, some saying "finally the state has been spared". On the other hand, BJP leaders like Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis, Minister Chandrakant Patil, Nitesh Rane, ex-MP Kirit Somaiya and more bid a farewell to the Governor and recalled his dedicated services to the state.

Last month, Koshiyari had expressed his desire to spend the rest of his life in reading, writing and other leisurely activities.

"I was an absolute honour and privilege for me to serve as the Rajya Sevak or Rajyapal of a great state like Maharashtra - the land of Saints, Social reformers and valiant fighters," Koshiyari said.

"I can never forget the love and affection I have received from the people of Maharashtra during the last little more than 3 years," he said.

"Truth shall prevail": Sanjay Raut on BJP leader's sena case prediction

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Slamming Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis for his remark that the Supreme Court will rule in their favour in a disqualification plea filed by the Sena (UBT) faction against MLAs of the Eknath Shinde-led group, Shiv Sena (UBT) leader Sanjay Raut on Sunday said "truth shall prevail". Fadnavis on Saturday said the ruling Eknath Shinde-BJP coalition in Maharashtra is a legitimate government.

"What we have done was legal, as per the Constitutional norms, and the law was properly studied, and therefore, the result will be in our favour," the BJP leader said. The Uddhav Thackeray-led Shiv Sena faction has predicted the collapse of the state government, which came to power in June 2022 after Shinde pulled down the tripartite Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) government.

On Sunday, Raut in a tweet said, "Neither Hon'ble Supreme Court nor Election Commission pay heed to what NON-ENTITIES say. Truth shall prevail." "Who is Devendra Fadnavis to claim that Hon'ble SC will pronounce in their favor? & Narayan Rane announces that EC will give the Shiv Sena Symbol to Shinde?" the Rajya Sabha member asked.

In the 2019 state Assembly polls, the BJP emerged as the single largest party by winning 105 seats in the 288-member House. The BJP's then ally Shiv Sena (undivided) had won 56 seats, but the saffron allies fell out over the post of the Chief Minister. Fadnavis on Saturday



refuted the criticism that the state government was illegal and that many members (of Balasahebanchi Shiv Sena led by Chief Minister Eknath Shinde) will be disqualified (by the top court). "This message is being spread so that the remaining 10-15 MLAs (in the Thackeray-led Shiv Sena camp) don't defect. Whatever we have done is as per the rules and adhering to the Constitution," Fadnavis said.

The Supreme Court last month said that it will commence hearing on February 14 on pleas related to the Maharashtra political crisis triggered by the Shiv Sena's division.

Last year, the Uddhav Thackeray-led MVA government in the state (that comprised the Shiv Sena, NCP, and Congress) collapsed after Sena MLA Shinde and 39 other legislators rebelled against the party's leadership. This later led to the division in the Shiv Sena with one faction headed by Thackeray and the other by Shinde.

TWO YOUTHS KILLED IN BUILDING SLAB CRASH

Mumbai: Two teenagers were killed when the slab of a building under repairs crashed at Khindipada in Bhandup suburb of north-east Mumbai, here on Sunday, the BMC Disaster Control said.

The incident occurred around 9.30 a.m. during some ongoing repair works to a ground-plus-one storied structure when a portion of the slab collapsed.

Mumbai Fire Brigade, police and other agencies were rushed for the rescue efforts and two injured youth were taken out of the debris.

The duo, identified as Ramanand Yadav, 18 and Rajkumar Dhotre, 19 -- were declared dead when taken to the M.T. Agarwal Hospital, said the BMC.

Further details, including the causes leading to the tragedy and if any more casualties have occurred, are awaited.

MURDER ACCUSED MISSING FOR 20 YEARS FOUND IN JAIL IN ANOTHER CASE

Team Absolute | Mumbai

It's an "unrevealed mystery", a court here noted on Mumbai Police's failure to trace for 20 years an alleged sharp shooter of Chhota Shakeel gang in a 1999 murder case, even as the accused was an undertrial prisoner lodged in jail for some of this period in another case.

Special judge for the Maharashtra Control of Organised Crime Act (MCOCA) cases, A M Patil, made the observation in its order passed on February 3 while acquitting Mahir Siddiqui, accused of the killing Wahid Ali Khan, president of the Bombay Aman Committee, in 1999.

The court cited multiple discrepancies in the prosecution's case. As per the prosecution, Siddiqui and a co-accused had allegedly shot dead Khan near his house in L T Marg area of Mumbai in July 1999. The duo fled the spot after committing the crime.

In May 2019, police traced Siddiqui and arrested him. They got sufficient evidence against him and thereby filed a chargesheet against him.

During investigation, police found the involvement of six persons, including Siddiqui and Chhota Shakeel.

They also found that the crime took place at the



behest of Chhota Shakeel, police had said. The court in its order said at the time of filing the supplementary chargesheet against Siddiqui,

the prosecution claimed he was absconding since the date of the incident till his arrest. But he was an undertrial prisoner in another

case between 2014 and 2019 and he was arrested by the CID. Then how police failed to trace him when he was in jail, the court asked. "Police failed to find him, though they maintain the record of the absconding accused and UTP (undertrial prisoner). It is an unrevealed mystery for the reason best known to the police agency," the judge said.

Further underlining discrepancies in the prosecution case, the court said no alleged eyewitnesses claimed to have seen the accused at the time of firing at the deceased.

The testimony of the informant is surrounded by many doubts and does not corroborate with other witnesses, the judge observed.

The court also said the police failed to prove the recovery of the pistol by which Khan was shot and did not recover the motorcycle on which the accused fled away after committing the crime.

The material evidence of confession made before magistrate has also come under the clouds of doubt because the accused "specifically denied" giving any such statement, it said.

"Considering the above discussion, it can be certainly said that the prosecution failed to prove the case against the accused beyond reasonable doubt," the court observed.

Proud father Madhavan celebrates Vedaant's imposing win at Khelo India 2023

Team Absolute | Mumbai

It is a proud moment for actor R. Madhavan, as his son Vedaant has won seven medals at the Khelo India Youth Games 2023. He brought home five gold medals and two silver medals.

A proud father, Madhavan took to Twitter to share pictures of his son, who is a national-level swimmer, posing with his medals.

"VERY grateful & humbled by the performances of @fernandes_apeksha (6 golds, 1 silver, PB \$ records) and @VedaantMadhavan (5golds & 2 silver). Thank you @ansadxb & Pradeep sir for the unwavering efforts &

@ChouhanShivraj & @ianuragthakur for the brilliant #KheloIndiaMP. So proud," he tweeted. He added: "With gods grace - Gold in 100m, 200m and



1500m and silver in 400m and 800m." Madhavan also congratulated the team that represented Maharashtra at this year's Khelo India Youth Games for bagging



the top spot on the points table with 161 medals (56 gold, 55 silver, and 50 bronze medals). "CONGRATULATIONS team Maharashtra for the 2 trophy's .. 1

for boys team Maharashtra in swimming & 2nd THE OVERALL Championship Trophy for Maharashtra in entire khelo games," he tweeted.

MINOR GIRL RAPED BY COUSIN AND UNCLE, BOTH ARRESTED

Borivali: Two people have been arrested for allegedly raping a minor girl, who also happened to be their relative, the police informed on Sunday. The 14-year-old girl was raped several times by her cousin and maternal uncle, while she was living at her maternal aunt's house in Borivali. The victim girl informed about this incident to her uncle in Virar, after which they complained to the Virar police, following that the case was transferred to Mumbai's MHB police station.

The police said that both the accused aged 50 years and 19 years respectively, were arrested within four hours of receiving the information.

The police have also registered the case under the POCSO Act and sections 376, 376(2)(n), 376(2)(f) of the Indian Penal Code (IPC). Both the accused will be presented in court today.

Woman robbed, stabbed by men posing as Wifi repair crew



Team Absolute | Mumbai

A 59-year-old woman was injured after two men entered her flat and attacked her with a knife before robbing a gold chain at Parel in central Mumbai, police said on Saturday.

The men gained entry into her flat on Friday evening when she was alone by posing as technicians to fix Wifi connection.

One of them gagged her with cotton and snatched her gold chain, an official said.

They demanded the keys of the cupboard but she refused, following which one of them stabbed her in her chest with a kitchen knife before fleeing.

The injured woman alerted her neighbours and called up her husband, following which she was rushed to a hospital, the official said. A case was registered at Bhoiwada police station under various sections of the Indian Penal Code and a search is on to trace the duo, he added.

RS 25 LAKH AID FOR SON OF MURDERED MAHARASHTRA JOURNALIST, GOVERNMENT JOB FOR SON

Mumbai: The Maharashtra government on Sunday a financial aid of Rs 25 lakh will be given to the family of journalist Shashikant Warishe who was mowed down by an SUV allegedly driven by a land dealer in Ratnagiri district. The government will also give a permanent job to the son of the dead, Ratnagiri district guardian minister Uday Samant said. "A financial aid of Rs 25 lakh will be provided to journalist Warishe's family. Rs 10 lakh will be given from the chief minister's relief fund and Rs 15 lakh from other sources," Samant told reporters.

He said various organisations of journalists have been demanding that the government help the family of Warishe comprising his grandmother and son.

Warishe was mowed down by an SUV allegedly driven by land dealer Pandharinath Amberkar at Rajapur, some 440 km from Mumbai, on February 6. He died in the hospital the next day. Amberkar, arrested for murder, allegedly used to threaten any person who opposed land acquisition for a proposed refinery in the area. An article written by Warishe against Amberkar had appeared in a local Marathi newspaper on the morning of the incident. The Maharashtra government has already ordered a probe by a special investigation team (SIT) into the alleged murder.

A day earlier, Shiv Sena (UBT) leader Sanjay Raut had demanded that the state government provide aid of Rs 50 lakh to Warishe's family.

Don't delay in making Thane pothole-free

TMC CHIEF ASKS OFFICIALS TO COMPLETE ROAD WORKS BEFORE MAY 3

Team Absolute | Thane

In a relief to residents and motorists, Thane Municipal Commissioner Abhijit Bangar on Friday asked officials and contractors to complete road work before May 31, 2023.

To make Thane pothole-free, Bangar told officials not to delay road works. "Executive Engineers should start working from now to make Thane pothole-free," he said.

Recently, Maharashtra Chief Minister Eknath Shinde allocated Rs 391 crore to the Thane Municipal Corporation (TMC) for the improvement and upgradation of 156 roads in the city. On Friday, Bangar held a meeting to review the work on 156 roads.

In this meeting, City Engineer Prashant Sonagra, Suburban Engineer Ramdas Shinde, Professor from IIT K. V. Krishna Rao, all Executive Engineers, and representatives of contractors were present.

During the meeting, Bangar told contractors to commence road repair and upgradation works immediately. "If these works are not completed before May 31, strict action will be taken against the contractor," Bangar said.



The Municipal Commissioner also warned contractors of strict action and a penalty if the potholes resurface. "A penalty of Rs 1 lakh will be levied on the contractor if potholes resurface during the defect liability period," a civic official said.

As per the official release of the Thane Municipal Corporation (TMC), under the 'pothole-free Thane' campaign, 8.5 kilometres of the Thane roads will be cement concretized, 26.69 km of city roads will be upgraded by Ultra Thin White Topping (UTWT) method and 47.51 km of city roads will be upgraded by using the asphaltting method. The state government has allocated Rs 391 crore, with the aim of providing a pothole-free journey for Thanekars. A total of 156 roads, which are 82.73 km of city roads, will be upgraded.

As per the TMC, the state government has sanctioned a total of Rs 605 crore to the Thane Municipal Corporation for road repair and upgradation. It also includes 127 more road works worth Rs 224 crore.

"We are following up with the state government to make this fund available immediately," an official said.



Harry Styles dominated The BRIT Awards 2023

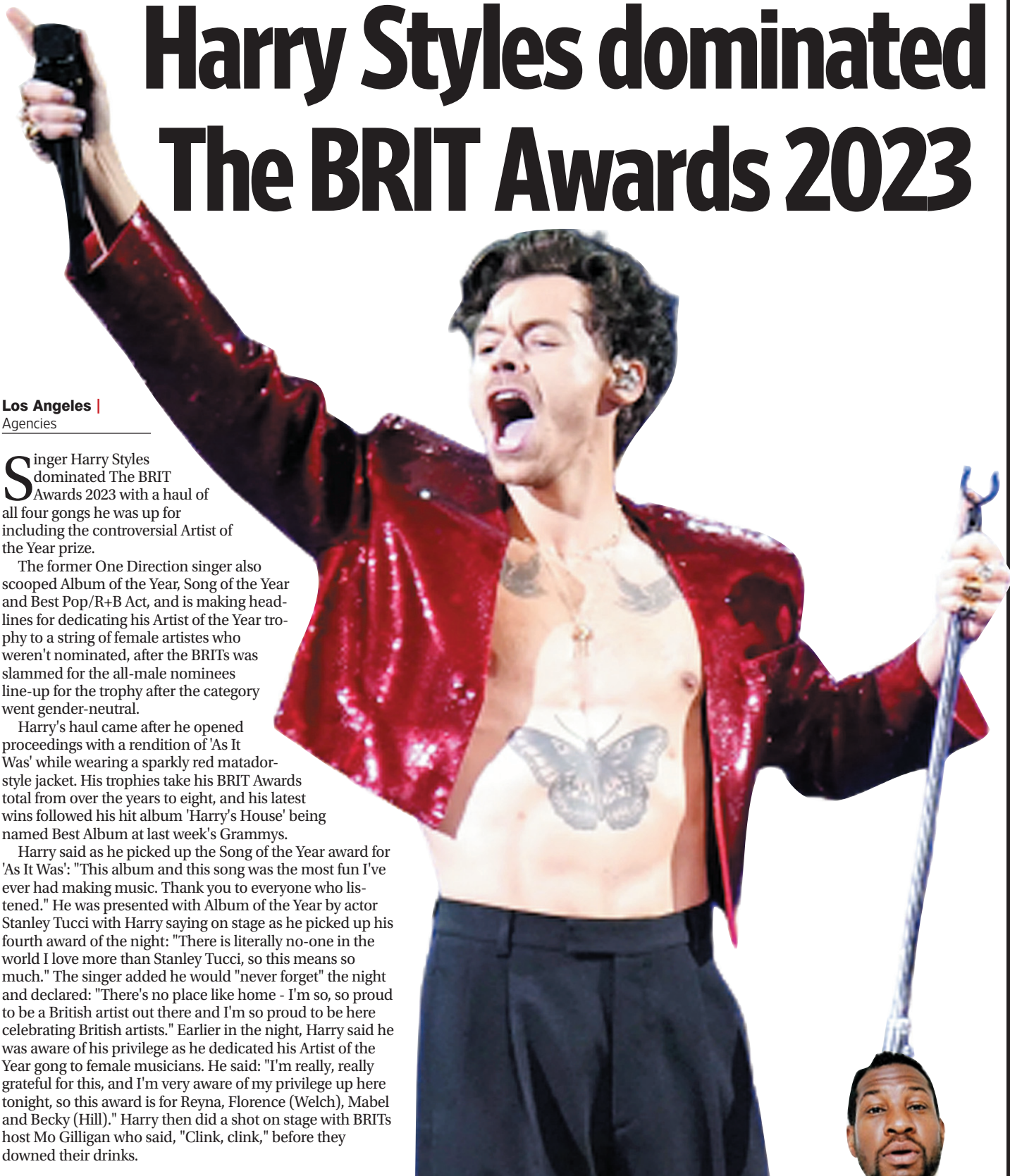
Los Angeles | Agencies

Singer Harry Styles dominated The BRIT Awards 2023 with a haul of all four gongs he was up for including the controversial Artist of the Year prize.

The former One Direction singer also scooped Album of the Year, Song of the Year and Best Pop/R+B Act, and is making headlines for dedicating his Artist of the Year trophy to a string of female artists who weren't nominated, after the BRITs was slammed for the all-male nominees line-up for the trophy after the category went gender-neutral.

Harry's haul came after he opened proceedings with a rendition of 'As It Was' while wearing a sparkly red matador-style jacket. His trophies take his BRIT Awards total from over the years to eight, and his latest wins followed his hit album 'Harry's House' being named Best Album at last week's Grammys.

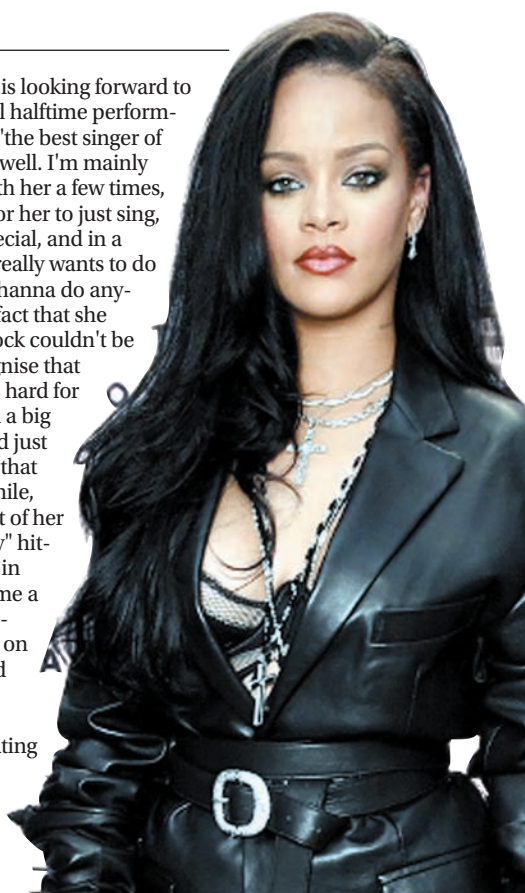
Harry said as he picked up the Song of the Year award for 'As It Was': "This album and this song was the most fun I've ever had making music. Thank you to everyone who listened." He was presented with Album of the Year by actor Stanley Tucci with Harry saying on stage as he picked up his fourth award of the night: "There is literally no-one in the world I love more than Stanley Tucci, so this means so much." The singer added he would "never forget" the night and declared: "There's no place like home - I'm so, so proud to be a British artist out there and I'm so proud to be here celebrating British artists." Earlier in the night, Harry said he was aware of his privilege as he dedicated his Artist of the Year gong to female musicians. He said: "I'm really, really grateful for this, and I'm very aware of my privilege up here tonight, so this award is for Reyna, Florence (Welch), Mabel and Becky (Hill)." Harry then did a shot on stage with BRITs host Mo Gilligan who said, "Clink, clink," before they downed their drinks.



RIHANNA IS THE BEST SINGER OF ALL TIME: CHRIS MARTIN

Los Angeles | Agencies

Coldplay frontman Chris Martin is looking forward to watching Rihanna's Super Bowl halftime performance and has described her as "the best singer of all time." "I don't know Rihanna very well. I'm mainly just a fan, and we have performed with her a few times, and you're right, it is rarer and rarer for her to just sing, which is what makes it even more special, and in a strange way, it shows that she really, really wants to do it," Martin said. "No one can make Rihanna do anything at this point, and so I think the fact that she has chosen to do it now, when her stock couldn't be ... you have to be an idiot not to recognise that she's the best singer of all time. So it's hard for me, I'm very biased because I'm such a big Rihanna fan. I mean, I think she could just walk out in sweatpants and sing, and that would be just great," he said. Meanwhile, Rihanna can't wait to perform in front of her son at the Super Bowl. The "Rude Boy" hit-maker - who gave birth to a baby boy in May - recently said: "When you become a mom, there's something that just happens where you feel like you can take on the world." "You can do anything, and the Super Bowl is one of the biggest stages in the world. So, as scary as that was ... there's something exhilarating about the challenge of it all, and it's important for me to do this year. It's important for representation. It's important for my son to see that," she added.



'I'M SUCH A HUGE FAN OF ROBERT DOWNEY JR.'

JONATHAN MAJORS WANTS DOWNEY JR. TO REPRIS IRON MAN ROLE IN 'AVENGERS'

Los Angeles | Agencies

Actor Jonathan Majors enters the MCU as the next major villain portraying Kang the Conqueror in 'Ant-Man and the Wasp: Quantumania'. Looking ahead at 'Avengers: The Kang Dynasty', Majors recently revealed he would like to share the big screen with Robert Downey Jr. reprising his role of Iron Man. "So Kang Dynasty - I can't even think about it because I'm so excited about [Quantumania] - but Kang Dynasty feels to me that it has the potential to grow the mythology of Kang, to grow the curiosity of Kang that much more, which is extremely exciting," the actor said.



in [to my head]," Majors added. "Like, I know he's an OG. I mean, he's one of the originals. I'm just such a huge fan of him as an actor. I think what he did with Iron Man was such a gift to the culture at large." He continued: "I would love to be across from him on screen to see how our philosophies, acting-wise and character-wise, just personally, match up. You know, I find him to be such a fascinating artist, which is why Iron Man is so fascinating. His portrayal of Iron Man is so fascinating and he represents a very clear world view and energy of the Avengers. And I think Kang represents a different era."



Channing Tatum says Salma Hayek 'saved' 'Magic Mike's Last Dance'

Angeles | Agencies

Actor Channing Tatum is giving actress Salma Hayek Pinault her props after coming into 'Magic Mike's Last Dance' and taking over the female lead role. "That was the one want for how we are in this story," Tatum said.

"I just really wanted the strongest possible (woman) and she came in (and) actually controlled the whole thing."

Tatum continued: "She came and saved our movie because we had a bunch of men that were trying to tell a story about a woman."

Thandie Newton was initially cast opposite Tatum but dropped out of the film due to personal reasons with Hayek Pinault joining in her place.

"I went in and, you know what, (it was the) first time I feel like I was really heard, respected and invited," Hayek said.

"It was actually very interesting because we would get together and have many very different opinions. It was very interesting to see three different men have such different perspectives. (Although) sometimes they seem like the perspectives of Martians."

Hayek Pinault also recently revealed that during the filming of the steamy lap dance scene, she was "nearly killed" by her co-star. "You know, this one part that's not in it where I'm upside down, and my legs had to be somewhere. But upside down, one loses sense of direction, and I didn't do what I was supposed to do, so in the rehearsal, I went like, head down, almost hit my head," she said. Hayek continued: "(Tatum) held on to my pants, but I was really concerned because my pants were going away, and I couldn't remember if I had underwear or not in this moment. So, instead of putting my hands to protect my head, I just held onto the pants. He's like, 'Put your hands up,' and I'm like, 'No, no, no, no.'"



I WANTED TO BE A NUN OR A LIBRARIAN: PAMELA ANDERSON

Los Angeles | Agencies

Actress Pamela Anderson has revealed that her childhood dream job was to be a nun before she found Playboy fame. The star has opened up about where she thought her life would go before she got the call to be a Playmate at the Playboy mansion. She shared how she thought she would become a nun or a librarian before she got the opportunity to be a model. She talked about how she would visit the library every day when she was younger but she doesn't know "what happened" for her to eventually work for Playboy.

Pamela spoke about where she'd be if she didn't become famous. Speaking to Drew Barrymore, the star said: "I wanted to be a nun or a librarian. And I kind of took a different route. I don't know what happened." Anderson reminisced about how she tended to be "at story time everyday" when she was a child and her passion for reading tied within her passion for the bible. The former Baywatch star said: "I was at the library every day - I was at story time everyday and I really wanted to be a librarian, and then I thought, 'No, I really wanna be a nun.'"

The revelation comes after Pamela starred in her own groundbreaking documentary, Pamela, A Love Story. The film will see her open up about her life, career and past loves.



ABSOLUTE PIC OF THE DAY



Maya Jama



WOMEN'S T20 WORLD CUP

JEMIMAH, RICHA HELP INDIA CRUSH PAKISTAN BY 7 WICKETS



Cape Town (South Africa) | Agencies

India produced an impressive performance to beat arch-rivals Pakistan by seven wickets in their opening match of Women's T20 World Cup 2023 at Newlands Cricket Ground. Riding on brilliant performances by Bismah Maroof and Ayesha Naseem, Pakistan posted a competitive total of 149-4 in stipulated 20 overs. Chasing 150, Shafali Verma was partnered by Smriti Bhatia for India at the top with Smriti Mandhana out injured. The duo put on 38 for the opening wicket before Yastike was dismissed by Sadia Iqbal in the final over of the Powerplay.

Verma and Jemimah Rodrigues

Brief scores

Pakistan Women 149-4 in 20 Overs (Bismah Maroof 68 not out, Ayesha Naseem 43 not out; Radha Yadav 2/21) lost to India Women 151-3 in 19 Overs (Jemimah Rodrigues 53 not out, Richa Ghosh 31 not out; Nashra Sandhu 2/15) by 7 wickets.

rebuilt, but Pakistan struck in the 10th over when Sidra Amin pulled off a stunning catch close to the ropes to send back Verma. While Harmanpreet Kaur and Jemimah fought back for a bit, Nashra Sandhu sent back Kaur in the 14th over to give Pakistan a massive boost. But, Jemimah Rodrigues led India's

AUSTRALIA THRASHES NEW ZEALAND BY 97 RUNS

Paarl (South Africa) Alyssa Healy smashed 55 on her return from injury while Ashleigh Gardner picked a five-wicket haul as Australia thrashed New Zealand by 97 runs.

Alyssa's 55, her highest score in the format since the 2020 Women's T20 World Cup Final helped Australia post an imposing 173/9 in their 20 overs. In reply, New Zealand lost Suzie Bates on the very first ball and was bundled out for just 76 in 14 overs.

Ashleigh, the top-ranked all-rounder in Women's T20is, was the chief destroyer with a sublime spell of 5/12; by some way her best T20 bowling figures, to give the five-time champions a dominant victory.

Alyssa and Captain Meg Lanning joined forces for a 70 stand for the second wicket until Amelia Kerr bowled the latter while playing a cut shot to a straight delivery for 41. There was a late flurry of wick-

ets as Alana King and Tahlia McGrath came and went in quick succession, but Australia still got above 170. In defence, Megan Schutt bowled five wides with the first ball and with the second, bowled Suzie while going for an improbable scoop. In the end, New Zealand lost three wickets for four runs in 11 balls and Ashleigh taking the final two wickets to close the game.

Brief Scores: Australia 173/9 in 20 overs (Alyssa Healy 55, Ellyse Perry 40; Amelia Kerr 3/23, Lea Tahuhu 3/37) beat New Zealand 76 all out in 14 overs (Amelia Kerr 21, Bernadine Bezuidenhout 14; Ashleigh Gardner 5/12, Megan Schutt 2/8) by 97 runs



Alyssa Healy batting during the match.

Maroof completed her fifty soon after as the duo put on a partnership that pushed India onto the back foot. The unbeaten 81-run stand helped Pakistan to 149/4 at the end of 20 overs. The last five overs yielded 58 runs as Pakistan gave India a stiff target.

fight in the run chase by smashing a fine unbeaten fifty and along with Richa Ghosh, took India over the victory line in 19 overs with seven wickets in hand. Earlier, Pakistan, who won the toss and opted to bat first, lost opener Javeria Khan to Deepti Sharma in the second over.

London Stadium, with Joao Felix putting Chelsea ahead with his first goal for the club in the 16th minute, only for Emerson Palmieri to level for West Ham before Eddie Howe's return to Bournemouth as coach of Newcastle United ended with a 1-1 draw. Tottenham were unable

to build on their win over Manchester City last weekend as they were thrashed 4-1 by Leicester City. Although Rodrigo Bentancur put Tottenham ahead after 14 minutes, Leicester hit back with three goals before halftime, thanks to Nampalys Mendy, James Maddison and Kelechi Iheanacho, before Harvey Barnes added the fourth with nine minutes left. Fulham ended Nottingham Forest's five-game unbeaten run with a 2-0 win at Craven Cottage, which leaves them seventh on the table, thanks to goals from Willian in the 17th minute and Manor Solomon with two minutes left to play.

SA20

Rossington, Van der Merwe help Sunrisers lift inaugural title



Johannesburg | Agencies

A 30-ball 57 from Adam Rossington, which included 4 fours and 5 sixes, followed a disciplined performance with the ball - led by Roelof van der Merwe's 4 for 31 - as Sunrisers Eastern Cape became the champions of the inaugural SA20 with a four-wicket win against Pretoria Capitals. Having restricted the Capitals to 135 in the rescheduled final, Sunrisers took 16.2 overs to reach the target.

Rossington set the tone for the chase with two fours off Wayne Parnell in the opening over, while Jordan Hermann struck three successive boundaries off Eathan Bosch soon after Temba Bavuma's dismissal. While Hermann continued to collect runs, Rossington cleared the ropes twice in a Bosch over and then took the attack to Migael Pretorius in the final over of the powerplay as he struck two sixes and three fours to bring up a 20-ball fifty, powering Sunrisers to 76/1 after six overs.

The 67-run second wicket stand, which came off 32 deliveries, came to an end in the

seventh over when Hermann was stumped off Adil Rashid for 22. Aiden Markram then hit a four and a six off Anrich Nortje, and a boundary off Colin Ingram as Sunrisers raced to 103/2 after 10 overs. Nortje finally ended Rossington's stay as the batter got a top-edge attempting a pull.

But there wasn't any scoreboard pressure on the Sunrisers, with the required rate a little over 3. The Capitals still fought on, with Ingram dismissing Markram, Neesham bagging the wicket of Jordan Cox and Nortje sending Tristan Stubbs back. But Marco Jansen finished it off with a four and a six off Neesham in the 17th over, leading to celebration in the Sunrisers camp.

Brief scores

Pretoria Capitals 135 in 19.3 overs (Kusal Mendis 21; Roelof van der Merwe 4-31, Ottniel Baartman 2-22) lost to Sunrisers Eastern Cape 137/6 in 16.2 overs (Adam Rossington 57, Aiden Markram 26; Anrich Nortje 2-21) by 4 wickets.

IND VS AUS TEST SERIES

Jaydev Unadkat released from 2nd Test squad, to play Ranji Trophy final

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Left-arm pacer Jaydev Unadkat was on Sunday released from India's squad for the second Test of the ongoing Border Gavaskar Trophy against Australia in order to allow him to join the Saurashtra team for the Ranji Trophy 2022-23 final.

As per a media release from BCCI, the All-India Senior Selection Committee took the decision to release Unadkat in consultation with the Indian team management. "The All-India Senior Selection Committee in consultation with the Indian team management has decided to



release Jaydev Unadkat from India's squad for the 2nd Test of the Australia tour of India for the Border-Gavaskar Trophy," the media release said. "Jaydev will now join the

Saurashtra squad, which qualified for the Ranji Trophy final to be played against Bengal from 16th February at the Eden Gardens, Kolkata," it added.

ARSENAL HELD, SPURS THRASHED IN PREMIER LEAGUE

London | Agencies

Premier League leaders Arsenal was held to a 1-1 draw at home by Brentford.

Leandro Trossard scored at the far post for Arsenal in the 66th minute after great work from Bukayo Saka down the right, but Ivan Toney earned a well-deserved point for the visitors 16 minutes from time.

Although Arsenal are still six points clear of Manchester City, that lead will be cut to three if Manchester City beat Aston Villa on Sunday, three days ahead of the two sides' league meeting.

West Ham and Chelsea took a point each from their London derby at the



London Stadium, with Joao Felix putting Chelsea ahead with his first goal for the club in the 16th minute,

only for Emerson Palmieri to level for West Ham before Eddie Howe's return to

Bournemouth as coach of Newcastle United ended with a 1-1 draw. Tottenham were unable

to build on their win over Manchester City last weekend as they were thrashed 4-1 by Leicester City.

Although Rodrigo Bentancur put Tottenham ahead after 14 minutes, Leicester hit back with three goals before halftime, thanks to Nampalys Mendy, James Maddison and Kelechi Iheanacho, before Harvey Barnes added the fourth with nine minutes left.

Fulham ended Nottingham Forest's five-game unbeaten run with a 2-0 win at Craven Cottage, which leaves them seventh on the table, thanks to goals from Willian in the 17th minute and Manor Solomon with two minutes left to play.

RANJI TROPHY 2022-23

Pradipta Pramanik's fifer leads Bengal to final with win over MP

Indore | Agencies

Left-arm spinner Pradipta Pramanik's brilliant fifer (5/51) led Bengal to the Ranji Trophy 2022-23 final with a massive 306-run win over defending champions Madhya Pradesh in the second semi-final at Holkar Cricket Stadium.

Chasing a mammoth target of 548, Madhya Pradesh could only score 241 in their second innings.

With this, Bengal also avenged last season's semi-final loss to MP. They will now face Saurashtra in the summit clash on February 16 at the Eden Gardens, Kolkata.

Since MP was chasing a big total, most of their batters looked to play with positive intent on the final day. However, in the process, they ended up losing wickets at regular intervals.

Rajat Patidar was the top-scorer for the side with a 58-ball 52 while no other MP batter passed the 50-run mark. The likes of Yash Dube and Anubhav Agarwal scored 30 each. On the other hand, Mukesh Kumar, Shahbaz Ahmed and Akash Deep provided support to Pramanik by chipping in with crucial wickets.

Earlier, Anustup Majumdar and Sudip Gharami scored hundreds in the first innings to lay the foundation for Bengal's win. Akash then ripped through MP's batting order to bag a five-for as Bengal gained the crucial first innings lead of 268.

In their second innings, Bengal scored 279, leaving MP with an improbable target to chase on the last day.

Brief scores: Bengal 438 (Anustup



VASAVADA GUIDES SAURASHTRA TO FINAL WITH 4-WICKET WIN OVER KARNATAKA

Bengaluru | After his brilliant double-century in the first innings, Arpit Vasavada followed up his with a vital unbeaten 47 to guide Saurashtra to the Ranji Trophy 2022-23 final with a four-wicket win over Karnataka in the semi-final at the Chinnaswamy Stadium.

Vasavada's knock helped Saurashtra chase down the target of 115 in the 35th over. With spinner Krishnappa Gowtham running through Saurashtra's batting order by removing Sheldon Jackson, Vishvaraj Jada and Chirag Jani, Saurashtra were struggling at 42 for 5. But, Chetan Sakariya scored a crucial 47-ball 24 and also stitched a key partnership of 63 runs with Vasavada to almost seal the win for his team.

For Karnataka, Gowtham and Koushik took three wickets each.

Earlier, Nikin Jose smashed a superb 161-ball 109 to give Karnataka a glimmer of hope of registering a come-from-behind win. He also strung together vital stands of 35 and 60 with Gowtham and Vyshak respectively. On the other hand, Sakariya and D Jada took eight scalps between them.

Brief scores: Karnataka 407 (Mayank Agarwal 249; Chetan Sakariya 3-73) and 234 (Nikin Jose 109, Mayank Agarwal 55; Chetan Sakariya 4-45) lost to Saurashtra 527 (Arpit Vasavada 202, Sheldon Jackson 160; Vidwath Kaverappa 5-82) and 117/6 (Arpit Vasavada 47 not out; V Koushik 3-32, K Gowtham 3-38) by four wickets.

Majumdar 120, Sudip Gharami 112; Kumar Kartikeya 3/95 & 2/79 (Anustup Majumdar 80; Saransh Jain 6-103) beat

Madhya Pradesh 170 (Saransh Jain 65; Akash Deep 5-42) & 241 (Rajat Patidar 52; Pradipta Pramanik 5-51) by 306



I am confident, positive and learning from my mistakes: PV Sindhu

Team Absolute | New Delhi

As Indian shuttler P V Sindhu is eager to return to attack after the forgetful beginning of the 2023 season as the stress fracture on the left foot that kept her away from the circuit for five months has completely healed.

Sindhu was sidelined after winning the Commonwealth Games women's singles gold in August last year. She made her comeback at the year's first event - Malaysia Open, where she lost in the opening round to traditional rival Carolina Marin of Spain. Then, another first-round exit followed a week later at the India Open. "I'm completely alright now. Physically and mentally I'm completely fine. Injuries happen but it's important to keep your body healthy and come back

stronger every time. I am confident, positive, and learning from my mistakes.

"My parents were athletes too. The support and motivation they give me keep me going during low moments," Sindhu was quoted by BWEThe 27-year-old, who had a successful 2022 season with three titles - Syed Modi India International, Swiss Open and Singapore Open -- hoping that her campaign this season will be better than before. "I hope it will be. You also have to be 100 percent but I'm completely recovered now. It takes time to get into that rhythm and play tournament matches. I'm on track," she said.

Along with Lakshya Sen and Prannoy HS, Sindhu will spearhead India's challenge at the Badminton Asia Mixed Team Championships, starting from February 14 in Dubai.

Athletic deepen Valencia crisis, Sevilla pull clear from danger in La Liga

Madrid | Agencies

Athletic Club Bilbao moved up to sixth in La Liga after coming back from a goal down to win 2-1 away to Valencia.

The Basque side claimed their third away win of the season after falling behind to Samu Castillejo's 17th-minute goal. The visitors leveled the score after half an hour when Nico Williams beat the Valencia defense with speed and poked the ball home.

Oihan Sancet, who scored a hat-trick against Cadiz last week, netted the winning goal in the 72nd minute when he side-footed home after good work from Inaki Williams.

Valencia worked hard for an equalizer,

er, but Athletic's Spain international keeper Unai Simon kept them at bay with a string of fine saves.

The result leaves Valencia in the relegation zone and with fans protesting before and after the match against owner Peter Lim, the club is in a difficult situation on and off the pitch.

Sevilla's recovery continued at the expense of Mallorca, as Jorge Sampaoli's side won 2-0 at home thanks to first-half goals from in-form striker Youssef En-Nesyri and winger Bryan Gil, who netted his first goal since returning to the club on loan from Tottenham.

Betis won a thrilling match 3-2 away to Almeria after Andres Guardado scored the winning goal in the 70th minute.





'I AM A HUGE FAN OF MARVEL FAMILY'

SHARAD KELKAR TO LEND HIS BARITONE VOICE TO THE CHARACTER OF WOLVERINE

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actor Sharad Kelkar, who has now joined the Marvel family by lending his baritone voice to the character of Wolverine, finds it a great opportunity because he said that he can play the role of the superhero in his own way.

A mutant with an unstoppable healing power, adamantium metal claws and no-nonsense attitude

made Wolverine, one of the most ferocious heroes in the Marvel universe.

Interestingly, life has come full circle for Sharad Kelkar, who has also been a follower of the character and recently revealed how he also bought a jacket over a decade ago inspired by Wolverine, which he wore to the announcement event of the audiobook.

Sharad said: "You know I am a

huge fan of Marvel Family and you can see the jacket I bought 10 years back because of Wolverine. And now it's time to play Wolverine. As an actor it's a great opportunity because I can play the role of Wolverine in my own way."

"Really excited for this and it's a different world, different time and different emotion to play Wolverine so it's going to be fun."

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Bollywood star Ranbir Kapoor, who will be seen in Netflix's documentary 'The Romantics' based on legendary filmmaker Yash Chopra, said that the iconic film 'Dilwale Dulhania Le Jaayengay' has been the 'defining film of our generation.'

"The Romantics' will see Ranbir, talk about how Aditya Chopra directed the all-time blockbuster Dilwale Dulhania Le Jaayenge (DDLJ) that gave shape to Indian pop culture.

"DDLJ has been the defining film of our generation! I can't even tell you that feeling is still alive inside me. It influenced the way I dressed. It influenced the way I spoke to a girl. It influenced how I was with my parents. Everything!" said Ranbir Kapoor in a new video.

From Aamir Khan to Salman Khan, Shah Rukh Khan to Ranbir Kapoor, Amitabh Bachchan to Ranveer Singh, Rani Mukerji to Hrithik Roshan, Katrina Kaif to Anushka Sharma, the mega-stars and icons of Hindi cinema have come together and spoken about Yash Chopra and YRF's contribution to Indian cinema in upcoming documentary.

"The Romantics' has been directed by Oscar and Emmy-nominated filmmaker Smriti Mundhra, who returns to Netflix after the phenomenal success of 'Indian Matchmaking' and 'Never Have I Ever'.

This four-part docu-series will also feature 35 leading personalities from the film industry, who have closely worked with YRF through its 50-year glorious existence.

Interestingly, the reclusive head of the iconic Yash Raj Films, Aditya Chopra, has also recorded his first on-camera interview for 'The Romantics'. Hearing him speak about YRF and the Hindi film industry in this docu-series is something

most people didn't see coming and has caused quite the excitement within the fraternity.

DDLJ HAS BEEN THE DEFINING FILM OF OUR GENERATION: RANBIR KAPOOR



URVASHI'S NEWS OF JOINING RISHAB SHETTY'S MOVIE IS 'BASELESS, UNTRUE'

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The news about actress Urvashi Rautela joining the cast of Rishab Shetty's 'Kantara 2' are reportedly "baseless and untrue." Urvashi on Saturday had announced on social media with a picture with Rishab stating that she will be seen in the second installment of the film.

A source close to production has come up with the clarification stating that all these rumours are baseless.

A source close to the production house has revealed: "All the rumours around

Urvashi Rautela cast in Kantara 2 are totally baseless and untrue."

"Recently, Urvashi Rautela just happened to be on the same premises as Rishab Shetty, where she requested to meet the Kantara fame and he politely obliged. She posted the picture clicked with him with a cryptic caption, giving rise to these completely false rumours."

"Kantara" stars Rishab as a Kambala champion who is at loggerheads with an upright forest officer, Murali (played by Kishore). The story is set and filmed in Keradi in coastal Karnataka.

Priyanka, Shiv Thakare to have a dance-off in reality show's finale

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The 'Big Boss 16' grand finale is just hours away as one contestant will be taking home the trophy. However, before the winner is announced, a dance-off between rivals Priyanka Choudhary and Shiv Thakare will be seen. A promo shared by the channel Colors on Instagram gives a sneak-peek into the grand finale performance between Priyanka and Shiv. Priyanka is making waves on Twitter with fans talking about her win. The hashtag 'Jeet Ke Aana Priyanka' is currently trending on the micro blogging site with over 239,000 tweets in her favour. However, before the winner is announced in the show, a dance-off between rivals Priyanka and Shiv Thakare will be seen.

A promo shared by the channel Colors on Instagram gives a sneak-peek into the grand finale performance between Priyanka and Shiv.

In the clip, the two will be seen performing a dance on the number 'Dhan Te Nan 2.0' from the film 'Kuttey'.

Currently, the Top 5 competing for the winner's trophy include Shiv, Priyanka, Archana Gautam and Shalin Bhanot. The finale will be held on Saturday and will be hosted by Salman Khan.



Tiger chose a new way of reaching the sets of his upcoming film

Team Absolute | Mumbai

ditching the comfort of luxury cars, action star Tiger Shroff chose a new way of reaching the sets of his upcoming film 'Bade Miyan Chote Miyan' - rollerblades.

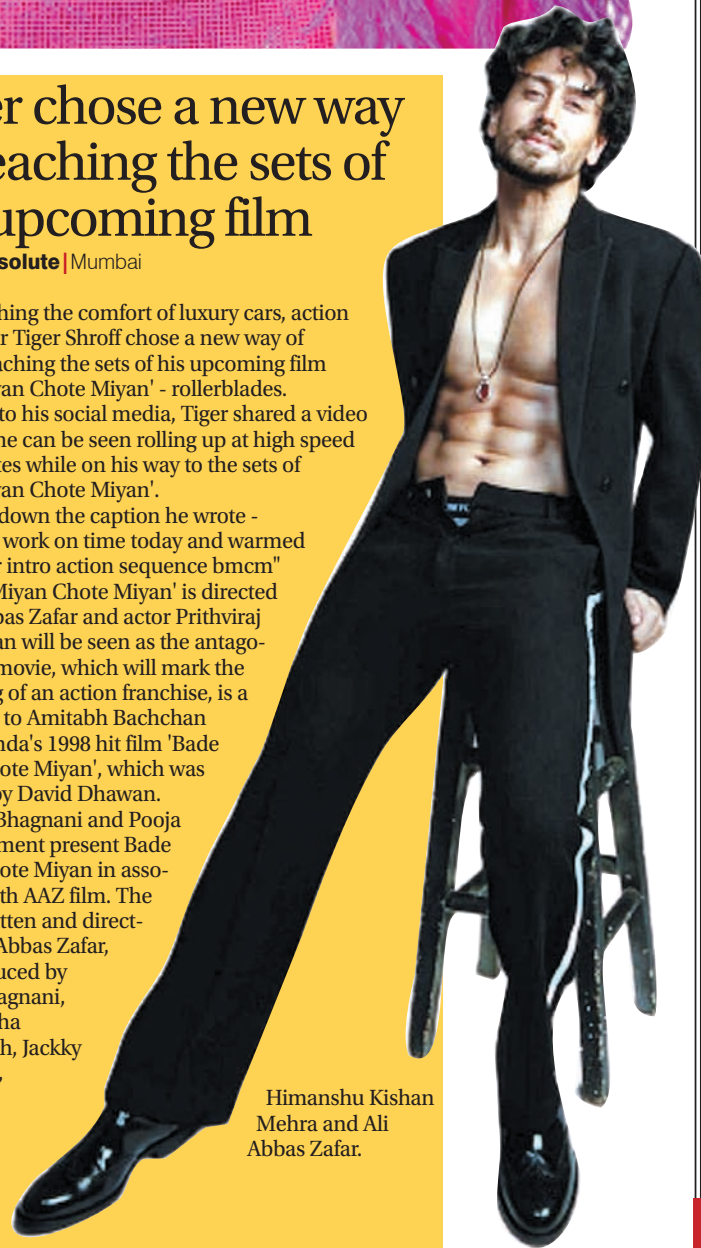
Taking to his social media, Tiger shared a video in which he can be seen rolling up at high speed in his skates while on his way to the sets of 'Bade Miyan Chote Miyan'.

Jotting down the caption he wrote - "Reached work on time today and warmed up for our intro action sequence bmcmm"

'Bade Miyan Chote Miyan' is directed by Ali Abbas Zafar and actor Prithviraj Sukumaran will be seen as the antagonist. The movie, which will mark the beginning of an action franchise, is a follow-up to Amitabh Bachchan and Govinda's 1998 hit film 'Bade Miyan Chote Miyan', which was directed by David Dhawan.

Vashu Bhagnani and Pooja Entertainment present Bade Miyan Chote Miyan in association with AAZ film. The film is written and directed by Ali Abbas Zafar, and produced by Vashu Bhagnani, Deepshikha Deshmukh, Jacky Bhagnani,

Himanshu Kishan Mehra and Ali Abbas Zafar.



INSTAGRAM PIC OF THE DAY



Shweta Tiwari