

# absolute india



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## ECONOMIC SURVEY GIVES PRESCRIPTION FOR ATTAINING MORE EQUITABLE ECONOMIC GROWTH

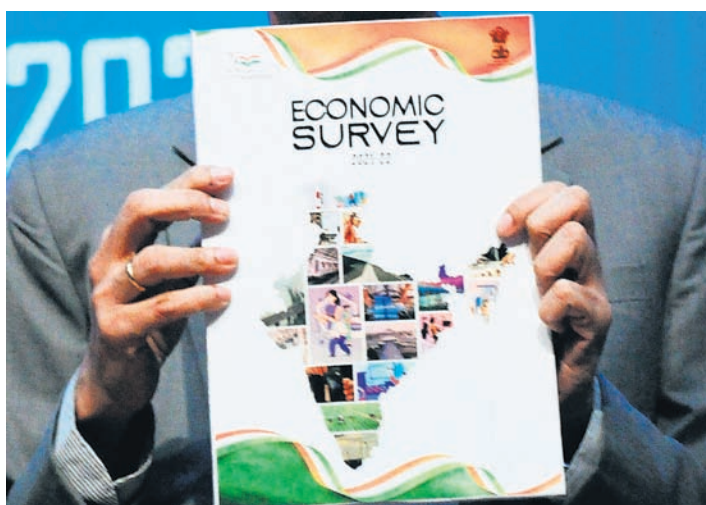
# INDIA'S ECONOMIC RESILIENCE

Despite strong global headwinds and tighter domestic monetary policy, if India is still expected to grow between 6.5 and 7.0 per cent, and that too without the advantage of a base effect, it is a reflection of India's underlying economic resilience; of its ability to recoup, renew and re-energise the growth drivers of the economy, according to the economic survey for 2022-23, which was laid in Parliament by Finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Tuesday.

▶ THE GROUND LOST AS REGARDS SOCIAL SECTOR IMPROVEMENTS DUE TO THE PANDEMIC, HAS LARGELY BEEN 'RECOUPED', POWERED BY 'PROMPT POLICYMAKING' AND 'EFFICIENT IMPLEMENTATION' INTERWOVEN WITH TECHNOLOGY.

▶ GOING FORWARD WITH THE VISION OF 'MINIMUM GOVERNMENT; MAXIMUM GOVERNANCE', FURTHER DEVELOPMENTS WILL HOLD THE KEY TO ATTAINING MORE EQUITABLE ECONOMIC GROWTH.

▶ EVIDENT ONES INCLUDE STEPPING UP LEARNING OUTCOMES THROUGH DIGITAL AND TEACHING INTERVENTIONS IN SCHOOLS. ENHANCING THE ROLE OF COMMUNITY WORKERS IN HEALTHCARE, PUSHING SHGS THROUGH BETTER PRODUCT DESIGN AND UPSCALING ENTERPRISES., THE ECONOMIC SURVEY FOR 2022-23 SAID



### GDP GROWTH TO BE 6.5% IN 2023-24

**New Delhi:** India is set to witness a baseline GDP growth of 6.5 per cent as per real terms in 2023-24. The survey said that in real terms, the economy is expected to grow at 7 per cent in the current financial year (2022-23), a downward revision from 2021-22, when the growth was 8.7 per cent in the previous financial year (2021-22). The fiscal deficit for 2022-23 is estimated to be 6.4 per cent of the GDP, the document said. The survey, which highlights the economic performance of key sectors during the ongoing fiscal, further noted that strengthening of balance sheets of corporates, a well-capitalised public sector banks ready to increase the credit supply and the credit growth to the micro, small and medium enterprises (MSME), were some of the other aspects which have boosted optimism for a healthy growth projection in 2023-24.

### MANUFACTURING LANDSCAPE SHOWS UNEVEN GROWTH

**New Delhi:** The manufacturing landscape further shows uneven growth across various categories, with industries such as automobiles and electronics registering impressive performances while sectors such as textiles have been showing tepid growth, as export demand for these products has been mellowing with the slowing of global output and demand.

India requires the implementation of broad-based inclusive social policies, supported by adequate and commensurate financial resources. Thus, the character and contour of

### SERVICE SECTOR TO SEE STRONG GROWTH IN 2023-24

**New Delhi:** India's service sector witnessed a swift rebound in 2021-22 driven by growth in the contact intensive services sub-sector, which bore the maximum burden of the pandemic, the Economic Survey for 2022-23 noted.

It added that this subsector completely recovered from the pre-pandemic level in the second quarter of 2022-23, driven by the release of pent-up demand, ease of mobility restriction, and near-universal vaccination coverage. Going forward, strong momentum growth and an uptick in the High-Frequency Indicators (HFIs) for the contact-intensive services sector reflect a strong growth opportunity in the next fiscal.

### SLOWING GLOBAL DEMAND WEIGHING ON INDIA'S MERCHANDISE EXPORTS

**New Delhi:** Slowing global demand is weighing on India's merchandise exports, noted the Economic Survey 2022-23.

The empirical literature documents that global growth exerts a strong statistically and economically significant impact on India's real exports, though the impact has reduced over the years.

Global growth is forecast to slow down in 2022 and 2023 as per IMF estimates. This is the weakest growth profile since 2001 except for the global financial crisis and the acute phase of the Covid-19 pandemic. "Thus, the export outlook may remain flat in the coming year if global growth does not pick up in 2023, as indicated by many forecasts," the Survey said.

### INDIAN START-UPS ARE LOOKING AT REVERSE FLIPPING

**Chennai/New Delhi:** Indian start-up companies are looking at 'reverse flipping' - not a cricket terminology - with easy access to capital from private equity and venture capitals, changes in rules regarding round tripping, and the growing maturity of India's capital markets.

According to the Indian government the above measures have not only slowed down 'Flipping' but companies are also exploring 'Reverse Flipping'. The survey said many Indian companies have been getting headquartered overseas, especially in destinations with favourable legal environments and taxation policies.

The technical jargon for this may be identified as 'Flipping', which is the process of transferring the entire ownership of an Indian company to an overseas entity, accompanied by a transfer of all intellectual property rights and all data hitherto owned by the Indian company.

such an approach to development presents a unique set of challenges which is consistently being addressed in the form of mindful reforms," it added.

Ensuring that intended outcomes of social sector development schemes reach the intended, involvement of the grassroots level of governance is imperative and is

being actively pursued. "Technology has been a great enabler in ensuring the last-mile connectivity of government schemes to the targeted citizens. It has revolutionised the delivery of services while ensuring transparency and accountability. It needs to be harnessed further to help the government attain the lofty SDGs on the social front," the Survey said.

## Maha defers new MPSC exam pattern till 2025

- The MPSC had announced its new pattern for the 2023 Main exams which led to massive protests, as the candidates usually prepare for 3-5 years before writing the competitive exam.
- With changes in the exam pattern from objective to descriptive, the preparations had to be changed which couldn't be done overnight, argued the candidates and organisations like Spardha Pariksha Samanvaya Samiti (SPSS).
- Besides the written exams pattern, which will now be similar to the UPSC exams -- the number of papers has been increased from 6 to 9 with a major descriptive component, the total marks has gone up from 800 to 1750, with candidates needing to score a minimum of 25 per cent in each paper to qualify for the merit score.

Team Absolute | Mumbai

In a huge relief to lakhs of aspirants, the Maharashtra Public Service Commission (MPSC) has deferred its new examination pattern till 2025, following a request by Chief Minister Eknath Shinde after massive protests against the new system rocked the state, officials said here on Tuesday. In a letter to MPSC, Shinde said that the June 2022 move to switch the final (mains) exam pattern this year (2023) from the existing objective to

descriptive, besides effecting many other changes, would be unjust and detrimental to the interests of the candidates.

Accordingly, the MPSC has deferred its decision and will implement the new pattern from the 2025 exams, giving candidates sufficient time to prepare as per the new style.

The Maharashtra Congress, which had carried out agitations and supported the aspirants, claimed credit and said the government has finally "bowed down" to the demands of the candidates.

## AIR MARSHAL A.P. SINGH TO TAKE OVER AS NEW IAF VICE CHIEF

**New Delhi:** Air Marshal A.P. Singh will take over as Vice Chief of Air Staff on Wednesday as incumbent Air Marshal Sandeep Singh demitted the office on superannuation on Tuesday, after 39 years of illustrious service. Commissioned as a fighter pilot on December 22, 1983, he had nearly 4900 hours of operational and test flying experience on a range of aircraft including Su-30 MKI, MiG-29, MiG-21, Jaguar, Mirage 2000 as well as Kiran, An-32, and Avro. He has played a key role in the induction, production and weaponisation of the Su-30 MKI aircraft.



Team Absolute | New Delhi

Monetary tightening by the RBI, the widening of the Current Account Deficit (CAD), and the plateauing growth of exports have essentially been the outcome of geopolitical strife in Europe.

As these developments posed downside risks to the growth of the Indian economy in FY23, many agencies worldwide have been revising their growth forecast of the Indian economy downwards.

Further, channelling women's economic potential through ecosystem services such as affordable market alternatives for care work, safe transportation and lodging, and long-term counselling support, "can help capitalise the gender dividend for the country's future economic and social development".

"History suggests that when dif-

ferent aspects of human development like education, skill, employment, health, and rural development are dovetailed with technology, all-round revolutionary innovation resulting in technology-led growth and prosperity follows," the Survey noted.

"Today, India is moving towards the attainment of the UN SDGs. While doing so, it is cognisant of the fact that for equitable development, a country as vast and diverse as

### AI URINATION CASE



## DELHI COURT GRANTS BAIL TO ACCUSED SHANKAR MISHRA

New Delhi | Agencies

Delhi court on Tuesday granted bail to Shankar Mishra, who is accused of urinating on an elderly female co-passenger, while in a drunken state, on a New York-Delhi Air India flight last November.

Additional Sessions Judge, Patiala House courts, Harjot Singh Bhalla, who had reserved his order on Monday, granted bail on the bail bond of Rs 1 lakh.

He had noted that what Mishra has allegedly done is disgusting but the court is bound to follow the law.

"It may be disgusting; that is another matter but let us not get into that. Let's go into how the law deals with

it," the judge said. On January 27, the ASJ had adjourned the matter after the complainant's advocate Ankur Mahindro informed the court that he has not been given a copy of the bail plea.

Currently in judicial custody, Mishra moved the court on January 25 seeking bail against Metropolitan Magistrate Komal Garg's January 11 order, who had earlier rejected his plea, saying that the alleged act of accused of relieving himself upon the complainant is "utterly disgusting and repulsive" and the act itself is sufficient to outrage the modesty of a woman.

On January 21, Mishra's judicial custody was extended by 14 days.

## Asaram sentenced to life imprisonment in Gujarat rape case

**Gandhinagar:** A Gandhinagar court on Tuesday sentenced self-styled godman Asaram Bapu, whom it had convicted in a 2013 rape case, to life imprisonment.

Additional District Sessions Judge D.K. Son, after hearing prosecution and defence lawyers, announced the quantum of punishment, and also ordered Asaram to pay Rs 50,000 compensation to the victim.

During the hearing, Special Public Prosecutor R.C. Kodekar had submitted that Asaram Bapu was "habitual offender" and so he should be sent to jail for life, while the defence lawyer had sought minimum punishment.

Two sisters had filed a complaint in 2013 with Surat police against Asaram and his son Narayan Sai, alleging that between 1997 to 2006, that Asaram had raped the older sister between 1997 to 2006 in Ahmedabad, whereas the younger sister had alleged Asaram's son raped her in Surat ashram during same period.

The elder sister's case was transferred to Ahmedabad police and trial conducted in the Gandhinagar court, which on Monday found Asaram guilty of the offence.

The trial against Asaram's son is underway in a Surat court.



# Earth on track to cross 1.5 Degree Celsius in next decade

- Crossing the 1.5 C and 2 C thresholds would mean failing to achieve the goals of the 2015 Paris Agreement, in which countries pledged to keep global warming to "well below" 2 C above pre-industrial levels, while pursuing the more ambitious goal of limiting warming to 1.5 C.
- Previous assessments have used global climate models to simulate future warming trajectories; statistical techniques to extrapolate recent warming rates; and carbon budgets to calculate how quickly emissions will need to decline to stay below the Paris Agreement targets.
- For the new estimates, the researchers used a type of AI known as a neural network, which they trained on the vast archive of outputs from widely used global climate model simulations.



Boston | Agencies

The world will cross the global warming threshold of 1.5 degrees Celsius within 10 to 15 years, even if emissions decline, according to a study that employed artificial intelligence (AI) to predict the

results. If emissions remain high over the next few decades, the study predicts a one-in-two chance that Earth will become 2 degrees Celsius hotter on average compared to pre-industrial times by the middle of this century, and a more than four-in-five chance of reaching that threshold by 2060.

The research, published in the journal Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, employed AI to predict climate change using recent temperature observations from around the world, NDTV reported.

"Using an entirely new approach that relies on the current state of the climate system to make predictions about the future, we confirm that the world is on the cusp of

crossing the 1.5 C threshold," said the study's lead author, Noah Diffenbaugh, a climate scientist at Stanford University in the US.

"Our AI model is quite convinced that there has already been enough warming that 2 C is likely to be exceeded if reaching net-zero emissions takes another half century," said Diffenbaugh, who co-authored the research with Colorado State University atmospheric scientist Elizabeth Barnes.

The finding may be controversial, Diffenbaugh said, because other authoritative assessments, including the most recent report from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), have concluded that the 2-degree mark is unlikely to be reached if emissions decline to net zero before 2080.





# SUPREME COURT COLLEGIUM RECOMMENDS CHIEF JUSTICES OF ALLAHABAD, GUJARAT HCS AS JUDGES OF APEX COURT

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Supreme Court collegium on Tuesday has recommended the elevation of Allahabad High Court Chief Justice Rajesh Bindal and Gujarat High Court's Chief Justice Aravind Kumar as judges of the apex court.

The collegium's resolution published on the apex court website said: "After carefully evaluating the merit, integrity and competence of eligible Chief Justices and senior puisne Judges of the High Courts and also accommodating a plurality of considerations, the Collegium finds the following persons to be more deserving and suitable in all respects for being appointed as Judges of the Supreme Court of India: Justice Rajesh Bindal, Chief Justice, High Court of Judicature at Allahabad, (PHC: Punjab & Haryana), and Justice Aravind Kumar, Chief Justice, High Court of Gujarat, (PHC: Karnataka)."

The collegium is headed by Chief Justice D.Y. Chandrachud and comprises Justices Sanjay Kishan Kaul, K.M. Joseph, M.R. Shah, Ajay Rastogi, and Sanjiv Khanna. It further added that collegium deliberated on and discussed the names of Chief Justices and senior puisne judges of the high courts eligible for appointment to the Supreme Court. "Judgments authored by those falling in the zone of consideration for elevation to the Supreme Court were circulated among the members of the Collegium for a meaningful discussion on and assessment of their judicial acumen," said the resolution.

On December 13, 2022, the collegium recommended five names for appointment as judges of the Supreme Court, namely Justice



recommended five names for appointment as judges of the Supreme Court, namely Justice

Pankaj Mithal, Justice Sanjay Karol, Justice P.V. Sanjay Kumar, Justice Ahsanuddin

## Give CBI access to offshore accounts, SC suggests to Nirav Modi's brother-in-law

New Delhi: The Supreme Court on Tuesday suggested that Mainak Mehta, brother-in-law of fugitive Nirav Modi, should consider providing the CBI a letter of authority to access his offshore bank accounts. The CBI has alleged that Mehta has received a large sum of money siphoned off in the PNB fraud scam, where Modi is the key accused. The investigative agency also alleged that Mehta transferred the money to his and his wife's offshore bank accounts.

A bench headed by Chief Justice of India D.Y. Chandrachud suggested Mehta's counsel that he can give the letter of authority to an official designated by the CBI for accessing the bank details and the matter will end, and if not, then the court will have to take up CBI's plea and decide it.

Amanullah, and Justice Manoj Misra. Their appointment is yet to be notified by the government.

The Supreme Court has sanctioned strength of 34 judges and is presently functioning with 27 judges. Thus, there are seven clear vacancies.

## PM CARES FUND IS NOT PUBLIC AUTHORITY BUT PUBLIC CHARITABLE TRUST: PMO TO DELHI HC

New Delhi: The Prime Minister's Office (PMO) on Tuesday told the Delhi High Court that the Prime Minister's Citizen Assistance and Relief in Emergency Situations (PM CARES) Fund is not a public authority according to the Right to Information Act, 2005 and not a "State" under Article 12 of the Constitution of India, but a "public charitable trust".

The affidavit filed by the Under Secretary of PMO to the court said: "This Trust is neither intended to be, nor is in fact owned, controlled or substantially financed by any government nor any instrumentality of the government. There is no control of either the Central government or any state governments, either direct or indirect, in the functioning of the Trust in any manner whatsoever."

## Giving priority to deprived classes, regions key to holistic development: Prez Murmu

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Budget session of Parliament started with the maiden address of President Droupadi Murmu to a joint sitting of both Houses on Tuesday.

Addressing the joint sitting, President Murmu said that the vision of holistic development can only be achieved by paying proper attention to the hopes and aspirations of the many classes and regions of the country. "Now my government is giving priority to each such deprived class and deprived region," she said.

"My government has awakened the aspirations of the Scheduled Tribes and Other Backward Classes. These classes were most deprived of the benefits of development. Now that basic facilities are reaching this section, these people are becoming capable of having newer dreams.

"Programs such as Dr. Ambedkar Utsav Dham, Amrit Jaldhara and Yuva Udyami Yojana are being run for the socio-economic empowerment of Scheduled Castes. My government has taken unprecedented decisions for the pride of the tribal communities. For the first time, the country started celebrating the birth anniversary of Bhagwan Birsa Munda as 'Janjatiya Gaurav Divas'," the President said in her address.



President Murmu further said, "Recently, the government paid tributes to the tribal revolutionaries at the national level in Mangarh Dham for the first time. Today, more than 36,000 tribal-dominated villages are being developed under the Pradhan Mantri Adi Darsh Gram Yojana. Today more than 400 Eklavya Model Schools have opened in tribal areas in the country. More than 3,000 Van Dhan Vikas Kendras have become new means of livelihood across the country. "My government has demonstrated its commitment to the welfare of OBCs by giving constitutional status to the National Commission for Backward Classes. For the first time, a Welfare and Development Board has also been constituted for the Banjara, nomadic and semi-nomadic communities.

## Take hard line against upper castes: Bihar Minister in purported video

Patna | Agencies

In a purported video of a phone conversation, Bihar Education Minister Chandrashekhar Yadav, who recently made controversial remarks on Ramcharitmanas, was heard telling his supporters to take a hard line against the "upper castes".

A purported video of RJD national vice president Uday Narayan Chaudhary speaking to Yadav over phone went viral on social media, where Yadav was heard telling his supporters to target "upper castes but not the entire Hindu community".

The video was reportedly captured when Chaudhary was in Simultala block of Bihar's Jamui Lok Sabha constituency on Sunday. The farmers of Simultala have donated their land for construction of a school, and they urged Chaudhary to invite the state Education Minister there. After which, Chaudhary called Yadav over phone with his mobile speaker on, and the video of entire conversation was recorded by someone.



Yadav, during the conversation, was heard citing an example of "Mata Sabri" and "Nishadh Raj". He also said that pick Ramcharitmanas or any other holy book and highlight points where people of upper caste were dominating. Yadav suggested his supporters to "avoid saying anything against Ram as it would turn outrageous, and Hindu people may get angry on it."

## 2 held with fake notes of Rs 10 lakh face value in Kolkata

Kolkata: The sleuths of Special Task Force (STF) of the Kolkata Police, on Tuesday morning, arrested two persons with counterfeit notes having face value of Rs 10 lakh.

Police sources said that on the basis of specific information, the STF sleuths raided a residence in South Kolkata and arrested Abdur Rezzak Khan and Saher Ali along with the consignment of fake currency notes. "A total of 2,000 counterfeit each being of the face value of Rs 500 were seized from their possession," said an official. Both Khan and Ali are residents of Assam.

## My party giving sleepless nights to state leaders: Mining baron Janardhana Reddy

Mining baron-turned-politician Gali Janardhana Reddy on Tuesday said that his new party, Kalyana Rajya Pragathi Paksha (KRPP), launched 30 days ago, is giving sleepless nights to state leaders in Karnataka.

Koppala (Karnataka) | Agencies

Addressing a gathering after inaugurating Rath Yatra, Reddy also announced candidature of his wife Aruna Lakshmi in Ballary constituency presently represented by BJP MLA Somashekar Reddy, his brother.

"They tried to seize my property and threaten me. The central leaders forced me to join their party. Though I had lost property,



status, I did not bog down. I am not scared. I have never left a job unfinished. I will

never backtrack from words," he said. "Many invisible hands

tried to prevent me from launching a new party. I have not bogged down. If I am elected from Gangavathi constituency, I will make this model constituency in the state," he said.

Reddy also assured Rs 5,000 crore grant and formation of a trust for comprehensive development of Anjanadri, which is considered to be birthplace of Lord Hanuman. He stated that the manifesto would be released very soon.

## Morbi bridge collapse: Oreva MD & prime accused surrenders before court

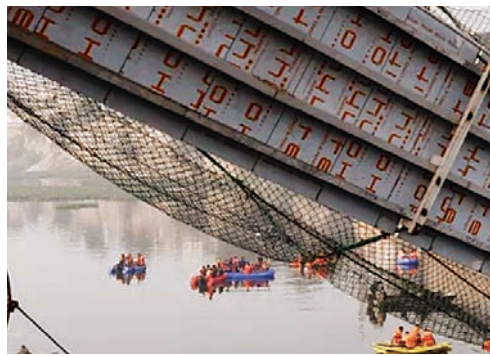
The MD of Oreva Group and the prime accused in the Morbi bridge collapse that left at least 132 persons dead in October last year, Jaysukh Patel, surrendered before the judicial magistrate's court here on Tuesday.

Morbi (Gujarat) | Agencies

Patel surrendered a day before his anticipatory bail application was due for hearing on Wednesday.

According to court sources, on Tuesday afternoon, Patel walked into the courtroom and surrendered before the judicial magistrate.

On January 27, the investigating officer and Deputy Superintendent of Police, P.A. Zala, had filed a charge-sheet in the suspension bridge collapse case of October 30, 2022, in which 132 persons were killed.



In the charge-sheet, Jaysukh Patel was named as the prime accused who was absconding. The main allegation against Patel is that though he had to repair and re-open the bridge for public after one year, to make a quick money, he opened the bridge without a fitness certificate within six months.

Though corrosion was found on one of the main cables of the suspension bridge, he did not replace it. This bridge required expert engineers, but he simply got it repaired with ordinary fabricators, putting the lives of visitors at risk.

## VIZAG WILL BE STATE CAPITAL, DECLARED ANDHRA PRADESH CM

New Delhi: Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy on Tuesday announced that Visakhapatnam will soon be the state capital. The chief minister invited industrialists to Visakhapatnam for the global investors' summit scheduled to be held on March 3 and 4.

He was addressing representatives of various companies at a curtain raiser event in New Delhi on Tuesday. Though it was in 2019 that the YSR Congress Party (YSRCP) government had mooted the idea of three state capitals with Visakhapatnam as the administrative capital, the protest by farmers of Amaravati over shifting of the capital and the High Court order directing the government to develop Amaravati as the state capital had delayed the process.

## After Kheer Bhawani, Rahul & Priyanka visit Hazratbal shrine in Srinagar

After paying obeisance at the Mata Kheer Bhawani temple, senior Congress leader Rahul Gandhi and his sister, Priyanka Gandhi Vadra paid obeisance at the Hazratbal shrine in Srinagar.

Srinagar | Agencies

Rahul Gandhi and Priyanka prayed for sometime at the shrine where the devotees like Kheer Bhawani temple spontaneously welcomed them.

Hazratbal shrine is the holiest Muslim shrine in Kashmir which houses the Holy Relic (hair of Prophet's beard). Later, Rahul was seen helping push a car that was stuck in snow on the Boulevard Road by the bank of the Dal Lake in Srinagar city. Earlier in the day, Rahul Gandhi and Priyanka Gandhi paid obeisance at the Mata Kheer Bhawani temple in Jammu & Kashmir's Ganderbal district.

The siblings arrived in Tullamulla town of Ganderbal district early this morning to a warm welcome by the people.

According to party sources, they prayed for peace and brotherhood in the country.

Mata Kheer Bhawani temple is the holiest religious place of the Kashmiri Pandit community. Despite their mass exodus from the Valley, hundreds of displaced Pandits come each year to attend the annual festival at the temple.



## Heavy rains likely in Southern and delta districts of TN on Feb 1: IMD

Chennai | Agencies

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) has predicted heavy to very heavy rains on Wednesday in the Southern and delta districts of Tamil Nadu.

A rare winter depression over the south bay of Bengal is likely to bring heavy isolated rains in southern and delta districts, it said.

According to the weatherman, the rains could continue up to February 3 with Kanyakumari, Thanjavur, and Nagapattinam districts experiencing heavy rains on February 1, Wednesday.

The weather system that causes rains is a rare phenomenon and is a depression over the southeast and adjoining southwest Bay of Bengal. This phenomenon will bring in isolated rains in Southern Tamil Nadu till Thursday and the strength of the rains is likely to dip from Friday.

Additional director general of meteorology, S. Balachandran, in a statement said that the weather system in the lower latitude is likely to move east to



west direction and another westerly trough in the middle level. The interaction of the easterly and westerly systems will lead to rain.

The weather department official said that such weather systems are rare during the second half of January and February. He also cited the example of a

severe cyclonic storm at a lower latitude in February 1987.

It may be noted that the Bay of Bengal had churned out nine weather systems as depressions or cyclones in the last fifty years in January and February since 1971 but none of them has crossed the Tamil Nadu coast.







# BMC SACKS 55 STAFFERS FOR CORRUPTION, SUSPENDS 134 FOR GRAFT & OTHER CRIMES

Team Absolute | Mumbai

In a massive clean-up operation before the upcoming civic elections, India's biggest and richest civic body BrihanMumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) has booted out 55 employees for corruption and suspended another 134 for graft and other crimes, an official said here on Tuesday.

The 55 staffers at various levels have been found guilty after court proceedings in corruption and have accordingly been dismissed from service, as approved by BMC Commissioner I.S. Chahal.

Besides losing their jobs, these staffers will forfeit all other benefits like pension and gratuity, and worse - they are permanently debarred from applying from any government jobs in future, as dismissal is deemed as the most severe punishment.

Another 53 employees have cases of bribes lodged against them, while 81 staffers are facing other minor or severe criminal cases from the police.

Not sparing them either, the BMC has suspended these 134 staffers



from their services for an undisclosed period - when they are barred from attending duties and face other repercussions.

The BMC said that a total of 200 civic staffers are embroiled in 142 cases filed by the Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB) and in 105 cases, the civic body has given its 'pre-prosecu-

tion sanction' to file the cases.

Of the remaining 37 complaints, 30 are under investigation by the departments and no approval has been sought from the BMC, but if they come up for sanction, the suitable action will be taken on priority.

From the remaining 7 cases, in 4 cases, sanction has been given to the

ACB and it is in the process for the 3 other matters.

An official said that they had received 395 complaints against BMC employees under the Prevention of Corruption Act's Section 17(a).

These complaints ranged from potholes to neglected wastes, poor garbage collection, bad condition of footpaths, water problems, improper spraying of insecticides, malpractices in public health services, etc.

Since these do not fall under the pre-prosecution sanction category, all these written complaints are being handled by various departments of the BMC for necessary action. On the flip side, from 2018, the ACB had sought sanctions to investigate a total of 395 cases, but in 359 cases, after a thorough probe, it was found that those complaints were baseless.

In 18 cases, proceedings are currently on at the civic level, but in 14 cases, no prima facie evidence was found, and the remaining 4 are currently being acted upon by the departments concerned against the accused employees.

# Prime Minister to inaugurate Delhi-Mumbai Expressway on Feb 12

Team Absolute | Mumbai/Jaipur

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will inaugurate the much-awaited Delhi-Mumbai Expressway on February 12.

Union Minister Nitin Gadkari informed on his Twitter about the change in plan and said, "Change in the date Now PM Narendra Modi will inaugurate the Sohna-Dausa stretch of the Delhi\_Mumbai\_Expressway on 12th February." In his earlier tweet, he had said that the express highway will be inaugurated on February 4.

"Going to be inaugurated by PM Narendra Modi on 4th Feb, the Sohna-Dausa stretch of the Delhi\_Mumbai\_Expressway will facilitate commuters to reach Jaipur from Delhi in two hours," he had said.

Gadkari, however, did not share any further details. Local BJP sources said that there has been a



change in the date with reference to PM Modi's plan as there are fair chances that he might visit Dausa on February 12 to inaugurate the express highway which earlier were limited to the virtual meeting.

However, the last minute change comes as a part of strategy to woo local voters from different categories. Initially, he visited Mangarh keeping tribal voters in mind, then he visited Malasari Dungi in Bhilwara keeping Gujjars in mind and this time, his visit to Dausa is targeted for the Meena community. Earlier, tribals, Gujjars and Meena were considered to be Congress' vote bank

which the BJP is now eyeing keeping forthcoming Assembly and Lok Sabha polls in mind, said sources.

Gujjars and Meenas make a strong vote bank in East Rajasthan. Raja Sabha MP Dr. Kirodi Lal Meena presently sitting on dharna is demanding a CBI probe in the paper leak case. He is considered to be a pivotal leader in eastern Rajasthan. This dharna is reportedly exposing party factionism as former ministers and CM Raju and her team are extending support to him but not the party organisation. So Modi's visit might help Kirodi Lal Meena to dissolve the protest and hence comes the change in plan, confirmed the officials.

This visit, if it happens, can be described as a balancing act to make Gujjars and Meenas happy. Also this can be ascribed as a political visit as well keeping in mind Rajasthan's Assembly polls and Kirodi's ongoing dharna.

# Eknath Shinde Declares 'Jai Jai Maharashtra Majha' As State Song

The Maharashtra government on Tuesday recognised 'Jai Jai Maharashtra Majha' as the state song.

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The song will be adopted on February 19, the birth anniversary of the founder of the Maratha empire Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj.

The decision was taken by the Maharashtra cabinet, headed by Chief Minister Eknath Shinde. One of the iconic songs in Marathi, 'Jai Jai Maharashtra Majha, Garja Maharashtra Majha', which means 'Glory to



Maharashtra', was penned by Raja Badhe and sung by baladeer Krishnarao Sable, popularly known as Shaheer Sable.

# 'Illegal office razed' - Anil Parab confronts BJP ex-MP

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Shiv Sena (UBT) leader Anil Parab, whose alleged "illegal" office here was razed, on Tuesday challenged Bharatiya Janata Party's ex-MP Kirit Somaiya to prove his charges that the premises were unauthorised.

Addressing the media at the MHADA Colony in Bandra east, Parab said the structure was demolished by the society members on Monday after MHADA last week refused permission to regularise it.

Dismissing Somaiya's claims, he hit back to accuse the BJP leader of "working against the interests of the poor Marathi people" especially since the MHADA complex is now going for a redevelopment.

"By targeting me like this, Somaiya - who has taken a



'supari' (contract) from the builders - will try to misuse the notice and pressurize the society members here against asking for additional area (of the flats) in the redevelopment project," claimed Parab. Along with some society members, Parab emphatically

said that after the MHADA declined permission to regularise the office due to Somaiya's coercion, the society on its own flat-tened the office. Somaiya - who first raised the issue before the Lokayukta in September 2021 - claimed that the MHADA brought

the axe on Parab's "illegal office", which the Society and the Sena (UBT) leader rejected.

Parab, who was a minister then, said that he had informed MHADA of having nothing to do with the land or the structure or the demolition orders then, and Somaiya's false allegations were intended to discredit him.

The society members said that they had asked Parab to base his office here for the benefit of the people in the MHADA complex to which he had agreed.

"Fake news is being spread on this issue. I challenge Somaiya to come and view the demolished office and we shall give him a proper reception," declared Parab. As Somaiya drove to the venue, Mumbai Police stopped his vehicle near Bandra Kurla Complex ostensibly to prevent any law and order issue.

# 5-YEAR-OLD BOY BEATEN BY SCHOOL TEACHER WITH STICK, CASE FILED

Thane: Police have registered a case against a 40-year-old school teacher for allegedly hitting a five-year-old boy with a stick and slapping him in Maharashtra's Thane district, an official said on Tuesday.

The child suffered injuries in the incident which took place on Monday at a private school in Kalyan area, the official from Mahatma Fule Chowk police station said.

A probe was on to ascertain what provoked the accused to thrash the child, he said.

After the boy informed about the incident to his parents, they complained to the police following which a case was registered against the accused under various sections of the Indian Penal Code and the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, the official said. No arrest has been made so far in this connection, the police said.

# From Today, Metro One to hike passenger capacity by 27,000 with 18 new services

The Reliance Infra promoted Mumbai Metro One will increase its daily weekday services from 380 to 397 and augment its passenger capacity by 27,000 on the Versova-Ghatkopar route from February 1, an official said here on Tuesday.

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The city's first metro - which started operations in June 2014 - will also improve its peak hour train frequency to 3.40 minutes which would help decongest the busy Ghatkopar Metro Station.

Presently, the Mumbai Metro One is serving over four lakh commuters daily or more than a crore commuters per month being the sole route on the east-west sector, helping it decongest massively besides slashing the commute time drastically. With the opening of the new Mumbai Metro Line 2A and Line 7 this month, the daily ridership on Mumbai Metro One has shot up by



8,000 commuters on the DN Nagar station and 6,000 on the WEH station with commuters on both the lines travelling towards Ghatkopar in the off-peak hours.

The services will be available from 5.30 a.m. at both Versova and Ghatkopar, and the last service will depart Versova at 11.20 p.m. and Ghatkopar at 11.45 p.m.

# MAN KILLS WIFE SUSPECTING HER OF ADULTERY, ATTEMPTS SUICIDE



Palghar: A 45-year-old man from Boisar town in Palghar district of Maharashtra allegedly killed his 40-year-old wife by slitting her throat on a street and also attempted suicide, police said.

Prima facie, the man suspected his wife's fidelity and attacked her with a sharp weapon. He also slashed himself. Police personnel who rushed to the spot at around 12:30 pm found the man lying injured near the body of his wife and their two children crying. The woman died on the spot. The injured man was rushed to a hospital, a police official said.

# Four killed in car-bus crash on Mumbai-Ahmedabad Highway

Team Absolute | Palghar

At least four people, including a woman, were killed after a car rammed into a luxury bus on the Mumbai-Ahmedabad National Highway in the wee hours of Tuesday, officials said here.

According to officials, the Gujarat-registered car's driver reportedly lost control of the vehicle near Charoti area and rammed into the bus. The incident happened near Dahanu, around 140 kms north of Mumbai, at 3.30 am, an official said.

Even as the police and rescuers rushed to the spot, the driver and the three passengers in the car had perished on the spot. Their identity, place of ori-



gin and other details are being ascertained and further probe is onto into the causes of the ghastly mishap.

# MAN RAPES 6-YEAR-OLD GIRL, ARRESTED: COPS

Mumbai: A 35-year-old man has been arrested for allegedly raping a minor girl in Mumbai today, police said. The incident took place under the jurisdiction of the Mankhurd police station. According to the police, the accused, seeing the 6-year-old girl alone at home, took her to his house and raped her. The girl went home crying and narrated the incident to her mother, who went to the nearest police station and filed a complaint against the accused. The police registered the case under section 376 of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) and the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act and arrested the accused. Further investigation into the matter is underway. On January 27 two persons were arrested for allegedly raping a 17-year-old minor girl by posing as police personnel in Maharashtra's Thane.

# HC directs Govt to submit report based on which security cover for MP was reduced

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The Bombay High Court on Tuesday directed the Maharashtra government to produce the report based on which it decided to reduce the security cover for MP Rajan Vichare, belonging to Uddhav Thackeray's faction of the Shiv Sena. A division bench of Justices A S Gadkari and P D Naik sought the government's reply within two weeks to the petition filed by the Lok Sabha member seeking restoration of his security cover claiming that there is a threat to his family.

"You have impleaded them (Shinde, Fadnis) in personal capacity. How is Article 226 maintainable while making ministers respondents in individual capacity?" the court said.



While Shinde is a dominant Sena figure in Thane, Vichare is aligned with the Thackeray camp.

In his plea filed through advocate Nitin Satpute, Vichare had claimed that one of the two constables deployed for his security was removed in October last year. Alleging danger to the lives of his family members, Vichare said that his security cover ought to be reinstated. Public prosecutor Aruna

Kamat Pai on Tuesday told the court that Vichare's security cover has been reduced and not completely removed.

"Earlier it was two policemen during the day and two during night. It has been reduced, not removed as he is claiming," she said. The bench directed Pai to put the government's contention on an affidavit and also submit the report based on which this decision was taken.

# Another notice served on Raja Singh for hate speech

THE HYDERABAD POLICE HAVE SERVED ANOTHER NOTICE TO TELANGANA MLA AND SUSPENDED BJP LEADER T. RAJA SINGH FOR MAKING HATE SPEECH AT A RALLY IN MUMBAI ON JANUARY 29.

Team Absolute | Mumbai | Hyderabad

Mangalhat police issued the notice to the controversial legislator for making communally provocative comments, thus violating the conditions imposed by the High Court while ordering his release last year.

The Member of Telangana Legislative Assembly from Goshamahal constituency has been asked to submit his reply to the notice in two days.

Reacting strongly to the fresh notice, Raja Singh alleged that the ninth Nizam is ruling the state. He said that he was not afraid of being sent to jail again.

The MLAs demanded that laws should be made to check cow slaughter, religious conversions and Love Jihad.

This is the second notice issued to him by Mangalhat police in a week. On January 26, a notice was issued to him



over alleged objectionable remarks he made last year against a religious community.

The notice under section 41 (a) of CrPC was issued in connection over the alleged provocative speech. He was booked in August 2022 under Section 295 A (deliberate and malicious acts, intended to outrage religious feelings of any class by insulting its religion or reli-

gious beliefs) of the Indian Penal Code by Kanchanbagh police based on a complaint. The case was later transferred to Mangalhat police station.

In December last year, the police had served a show cause notice on Raja Singh for making derogatory comments on Facebook, thereby allegedly violating conditions laid down by the High Court.

It was mentioned in the notice that the Preventive Detention (PD) Act was invoked against Raja Singh for habitually delivering provocative and inflammatory speeches. While setting aside the police order invoking PD Act, the High Court had imposed certain conditions.

The High Court had imposed the condition that the MLA shall not make any provocative speeches against any religion or post any derogatory or offensive posts on any social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, Whatsapp, Youtube etc.





EDITOR'S SPECS

# Lone Maurya

**B**JP MP from Badaun, Sanghmitra Maurya, has, so far, steered clear of the controversy triggered by her father Swami Prasad Maurya's comments on Ramcharitmanas. Sanghmitra, who had stayed back in the BJP when her father joined the Samajwadi party last year, said, "I am focussing on elections and ensuring that my party returns to power. This is not the time to speak about issues other than elections." Significantly, a day ago, Uttar Pradesh BJP chief Bhupendra Chaudhary had asked Sanghmitra to clear her stand. Sanghmitra had maintained that her father's comment on Ramcharitmanas was not a subject of controversy but of "discussion". She had said that there have been discussions when people found something which was against the very character of Lord Ram. With the Lok Sabha elections still a year away, Sanghmitra, experts said, may prefer to tread cautiously while averting any possible backlash from the party high command. The BJP leadership, too, is learnt to be weighing its options heavily to ensure not to annoy the OBC community which has been one of the key elements of the party's poll template. BJP sources said that the party is aware of the fact that the Samajwadi Party is seeking to weave in a fresh social coalition comprising OBCs, Dalits and Muslims in the runup to the civic and then the 2024 Lok Sabha polls. Sanghmitra found herself in a piquant situation last year when Maurya, then a minister in the Yogi Adityanath cabinet, had unfurled the banner of revolt against the BJP and switched over to the SP. She had then maintained that her father deserted the BJP for the interests of his community. This escalated further when Maurya's cavalcade was attacked in Fazilnagar from where he was contesting and Sanghmitra slammed the BJP workers for attacking her father.

# US weapons for Russia, courtesy Taliban

Asad Mirza

**I**ndeed, war and political circumstances can make you sleep with your enemy, and despite different ideologies, they can also make opponents strange bedfellows.

As per reports in the British media, Russia is eyeing weapons left by the hastily-withdrawing US forces in Afghanistan in 2021. To secure these arms, Russian diplomats are reportedly wooing the Taliban elements of the caretaker government in Afghanistan.

British tabloid The Sun reported last week, citing a Telegram channel 'Kremlin Insider', that Russia is seeking weapons from Afghanistan, including those left behind by the US forces in 2021. Though Moscow has denied these claims, Ukrainian and Western officials said Russia is facing a shortage of arms.

Reports claimed that amid planning for an expected spring offensive, Russia has reportedly turned to the Taliban government in Afghanistan for weapons.

As per a US Department of Defence report, the American troops had left more than \$7 billion worth of weapons and equipment when it pulled out of Afghanistan, CNN reported.

## US arms for Russia

The Sun, citing a Telegram channel, 'General SVR', reported that Russian President Vladimir Putin has asked the Taliban for equipment left by the US. The General SVR channel claimed, citing the Kremlin Insider, that in exchange for arms, Putin will "recognise" the Taliban government.

"Putin is overseeing negotiations with the Taliban to recognise the Taliban government. In return, the Russian leadership is offering a major arms and military equipment swap," General SVR claimed, The Sun reported.

General SVR further stated that those aware of the negotiations say that the Taliban are "extremely surprised" by such proposals, however, they are discussing them in



"earnest".

This claim comes amid other conflicting reports claiming that Russia and Pakistan are stressing on the need for "practical engagement" with the Taliban. Some claim that Russia is considering recognising the Taliban government while others claim that it is not considering such a proposal for the time being.

If indeed these reports are true, then it may come as a shot in the arm for the Taliban, as finally they'll be able to get at least one former super power to recognise them and additionally they also might get some financial package from the Russians, money which is desperately needed by the Taliban government to function properly.

Reportedly, the Russian presidential envoy for Afghanistan - Zamir Kabulov - met with Pakistani officials in Islamabad on January 25 and apprised them about his meetings with the Taliban in Kabul earlier this month.

Official Pakistani sources in the know of the meeting told Voice of America (VOA) that Kabulov said Russia will continue to engage with the Taliban, but it is not considering

granting formal recognition to the rulers "for the time being".

The Russian envoy "advised" the all-male Taliban to create a "politically inclusive" government and ease restrictions on women in order to move forward on the issue of their legitimacy, VOA reported citing sources.

## US weapons in Afghanistan

As the US troops withdrew from Afghanistan amid the Taliban's takeover of Kabul in 2021, 70 per cent of American weapons as well as \$48 million worth of ammunition provided to the Afghan forces were left in the war-torn country, Foreign Policy had reported in April last year.

The military equipment included 23,825 Humvees and around 900 combat vehicles. As many as 42,000 pieces of night vision, surveillance, biometric and positioning equipment were also left behind in Afghanistan, as per the report.

The officials familiar with the defence department report had said

that it was unlikely for the Taliban to use the US weapons, which require technical support and specialised maintenance. But they had also expressed concerns about the Taliban fighters using small arms, including automatic rifles.

## The reality

The big question is whether Russia is actually short of weapons. No, claims former Russian President, Dmitry Medvedev, the newly-appointed head of the military-industrial commission that is monitoring weapons production for the war.

Hitting out at Western media reports that Russia is facing a paucity of missiles and artillery, Medvedev had said last week that Moscow's weapons stocks are adequate to continue the fight in Ukraine.

A video posted on the former President's Telegram channel showed him taking a stock of

Kalashnikov rifles, artillery shells, missiles and drones. Russian troops have also deployed Iran-made 'kamikaze' drones for their attacks in Ukraine.

Despite Russia's denial, Ukrainian and Western military officials have claimed that Russia is facing a crunch of arms.

In December last year, Britain's armed forces chief - Admiral Sir Tony Radakin - had said that Russia had planned for a "30-day war" and is now facing a "critical shortage" of artillery shells.

The Guardian had reported him as saying that Russia faces a critical shortage of artillery munitions. This means that their ability to conduct successful offensive ground operations is rapidly diminishing.

When Russia launched its invasion of Ukraine in February last year, it was planned to be a blitzkrieg-like operation that would sweep the capital Kiev. However, the fierce resistance by the Armed Forces of Ukraine (AFU) pushed the Russian troops to the fringes and made it a war of attrition that will complete a year next month.

The war has essentially proved to be a double whammy for Russia. Not only has the country lost a massive number of men and materials, Moscow has also been unable to manufacture weapons at pre-war levels due to crippling sanctions.

Going by the daily estimates published by Ukraine's Ministry of Defence, Russia has so far lost more than 3,100 tanks, over 6,300 armoured vehicles, more than 2,100 artillery, over 1,900 drones, and almost 300 military jets, to name a few. Meanwhile, there are also reports that NATO is going to supply Ukraine with more superior tanks to counter the hotly-predicted pre-spring Russian offensive.

(Asad Mirza is a political commentator based in New Delhi. He can be contacted at [www.asadmirza.in](mailto:www.asadmirza.in). The views expressed are personal)

## international

# WW II sex slavery victims in Philippines urge Japan to recognise war crimes

Manilla | Agencies

**S**urviving Filipino women sexually enslaved by Japan's World War II military on Tuesday urged the Japanese government to acknowledge its war crimes, resolve the "comfort women" issue, and stop "war-mongering."

"It is very unjust on the part of the Japanese government to continue ignoring the issue of Filipino comfort women who have suffered long enough, more than half a century in silence," Sharon Cabusao-Silva, the executive director of Lila Pilipina, told reporters.

Lila Pilipina is a Philippine organisation helping women forced into Japanese military brothels in their fight for justice. There are only a few survivors, and most are in their 90s and sick, Xinhua News Agency reported.

Silva said Japan must recognise the trauma inflicted on the women by the Japanese Imperial Army.

"We urge Japan to finally acknowledge its war crimes against Asian nations and take the necessary steps toward a fair and long-overdue resolution of the 'comfort women' issue," the group said. Lila Pilipina's call came when Japan was set to present its human rights report for the Fourth Cycle of the United

Nations' Universal Periodic Review of Human Rights in the country.

"We are outraged that Japan has chosen to ignore once again the issue of its wartime military sex slavery of thousands of Asian women in the fourth human rights report it submitted to the UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC)," it added.

While declaring its achievements in various human rights areas, the Japanese government was utterly silent about the "comfort women" system which is also at the core of these issues, the group said.

The group added Japan "totally ignored" the recommendations made by other countries "for Japan to finally address this long-standing issue."

Estelita Dy said the new generation must not experience war. "We do not want the new generation to experience the atrocities of war; what we went through during the war, so we are against war," she told reporters.

During World War II, hundreds of thousands of women and girls from China, the Korean Peninsula, Southeast Asia and other countries and regions were forcibly conscripted by Japanese militarists as sex slaves and experienced horrific sexual violence, both mentally and physically.

# SUICIDE BOMBING AT PAKISTAN MOSQUE: DEATH TOLL REACHES 96

**Islamabad:** The death toll in the suicide bombing in a mosque in Pakistan's Peshawar province mounted to 96 on Tuesday after more bodies were recovered from the attack site.

The explosion occurred in the central hall of the mosque leading to roof of the place of worship crashing down when devotees were offering prayers on Monday, Dawn News quoted police as saying.

More than 90 per cent of the victims were policemen, between 300 and 400 of whom had gathered in the compound's mosque for prayers, as per Peshawar police chief Muhammad Jjaz Khan.

The suicide bomber who blew himself up was present in the first row, police said.

A joint investigation team, comprising intelligence, police and security officials, has been formed to probe the incident, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province Inspector General of Police (IGP) Mauzzam Jah Ansari told mediapersons. After the TTP denied their involvement in the attack, police suspect that Jamaat-ul-Ahrar may be involved in the incident, he said.

# Biden says "no" to sending fighter jets to Ukraine

Washington | Agencies

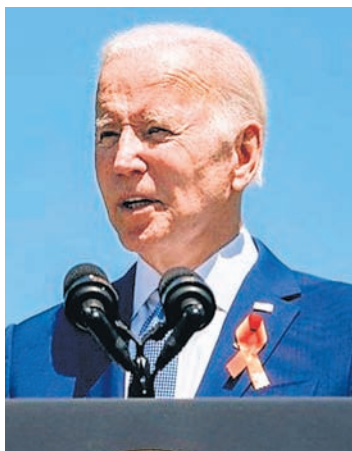
**U**S President Joe Biden has said that he won't approve sending F-16 fighter jets to Ukraine.

"No," Biden said on Monday in response to a question about the possibility of such a decision, Xinhua News Agency reported.

As he spoke, Biden arrived back at the White House from a trip to Baltimore, Maryland. Biden also said he was planning to visit Poland but didn't yet know when.

The president's remarks came as debate picked up steam over whether to arm Ukraine, which has been in conflict with Russia for nearly a year, with Western-made fighter jets.

Asked about the administration's decision on potential delivery of F-16s to Ukraine, US Deputy National Security Advisor Jonathan Finer said during an appearance on MSNBC last Thursday that "we have not ruled



in or out any specific systems." "We have tried to tailor our assistance to the phase of the fight that the Ukrainians are in. I don't have an announcement to make one way or the other," he added. Albeit a constant request from the authorities in Kiev, fighter jets have long been regarded by the West as a taboo in terms of mili-

tary assistance for Ukraine, for fear that such deliveries would lead to an uncontrollable escalation of the conflict.

Ukrainian Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba said on Twitter last Wednesday that securing the provision of Western-type fighter jets are among the "new tasks ahead" for Ukraine. On the same day, the United States and Germany announced their respective decisions to send combat tanks to Ukraine.

Ukraine's plea for fighter jets met with refusal from Germany, whose chancellor, Olaf Scholz, recently said combat aircraft is not an item on Berlin's list of weapons for Ukraine.

"The question of combat aircraft does not arise at all," Scholz said in an interview with Tagesspiegel published on Sunday. "I can only advise against entering into a constant competition to outbid each other when it comes to weapons systems."

# New Zealand scientists warn 'more extreme rainfall in warming world'

Wellington | Agencies

**W**ith the maximum amount of water vapour in the air increasing exponentially with temperature, the potential for extreme rainfall grows as the climate warms, New Zealand scientists warned on Tuesday.

Auckland is currently challenging the record for its wettest month ever. More than 769 per cent of its rainfall in a normal January has been recorded so far, which was about more than a third of Auckland's entire annual average, with further round of downpours likely to hit again on Tuesday night, Xinhua News Agency reported.

"Not that every storm brings a deluge, but as we warm the climate, we constantly weight the dice towards heavier rainfall events," Prof. James Renwick from Victoria University of Wellington explained the link



between a warming climate and such extreme rains.

Record rainfall from Friday morning through overnight to Saturday morning in Auckland caused massive

flooding across the biggest city in New Zealand.

New Zealand Prime Minister Chris Hipkins said the severe weather was a climate change.

"When the rain hit, it hit very hard and very fast... Aucklanders need to brace for the fact there could be more rain. This is quite unprecedented," Hipkins said.

The country's national meteorological service MetService issued Red Heavy Rain Warning for the Auckland area overnight and recorded 249 mm of rain in 24 hours until 1 a.m. Saturday.

The previous 24-hour record of rainfall was 161.8 mm, dating back to February 1985, according to MetService. The red warnings are only issued for the most significant weather events.

The record rainfall has caused massive flooding to houses and properties, claiming four people's lives and forcing the closure of state highways and the Auckland Airport, with the state of emergency declared by the government.

# Britain the only G7 economy forecast to shrink in 2023

London | Agencies

**B**ritain is expected to be the only major industrialised country to see its economy shrink this year after the impact of Liz Truss' brief premiership prompted a sharp growth downgrade from the International Monetary Fund.

Adding to growing political pressure on UK Prime Minister Rishi Sunak after the sacking of the Conservative party chair Nadhim Zahawi, the Washington-based IMF warned on Tuesday it expected the UK economy to contract by 0.6 per cent this year - 0.9 percentage points worse than it had pencilled in just three months ago and slower even than sanctions-hit Russia, The Guardian reported.

The IMF said that while the prospects for every other member of the G7 group of leading developed nations had improved or remained unchanged since October, rising interest rates and higher taxes had made the outlook for the UK gloomier.



Pierre-Olivier Gourinchas, the IMF's economic counsellor, said 2023 would be "quite challenging" for the UK as it slipped from top to bottom of the G7 league table. "There is a sharp correction," he added, The Guardian reported. The UK chancellor, Jeremy Hunt, last week warned a sense of decline was hampering the UK's economic recovery, and has come under pressure to come up with a credible plan to boost growth. His speech, which focused on "enterprise, education, employment and everywhere", was widely criticised by business leaders as being devoid of policies.





## CHOUHAN, KAMAL NATH SPAR OVER FARMER ISSUES

## The growth of society depends on education: Governor Mangubhai Patel

Accuses each other of lying

It is time to collaborate education institutions and industries to ensure economic progress, as it is the need of the hour

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has asked yet another question from Madhya Pradesh Congress president Kamal Nath on Tuesday. Talking to the media here, Chouhan alleged that the previous Congress government had not given even a single penny to the farmers under the Crop Insurance Scheme.



He accused the Congress of framing such rules for the scheme that no farmer was able to get money. "However, the BJP government had deposited Rs 17000 crore into the accounts of farmers under the Crop Insurance Scheme in two years", he claimed.

manifesto even after one and a half years tenure of his government. You have ditched, you lied, you confused people. You should tell which promise was fulfilled by you".

"The film Chouhan is acting in will come to an end in six months". Replying to the questions, MP Congress chief Kamal Nath accused Chouhan of lying and said that the film he is acting in will end in six months.

"I ask you a question, in your manifesto you had promised to make sure 100 percent purchase of pulse crops. Is your government buying 100 percent crops from the farmers?" Kamal Nath said in a tweet.

Notably, from the past few days, CM has been asking one question from Kamal Nath everyday and seeking his reply.

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Governor Mangubhai Patel said that it is time to encourage collaboration between educational institutions, research centres and industries by synergizing research and teaching to ensure economic progress of the country, social unity and empowerment of the youth of the country. Patel was addressing the launch programme of the report of the State Level Analysis of Accredited Higher Education Institutions at People's University auditorium today.

Governor Mangubhai Patel said that the progress and growth of citizens and society depends to a large extent on the development of education, especially higher education. The need is to be aware of quality, knowledge and innovation as well as excellence, dissemination and evaluation of higher education institutions as per international standards and challenges. It is crucial to understand that



for the expansion of the higher education system, we have to mandatorily improve the teaching methods, only then the relevance and existence of the institutions can be maintained. Therefore, it is necessary that higher education should be designed in such a way that it provides responsible and civilized citizens of the society, capable of serving the state and the people and meeting the challenges of the future.

Governor Patel has urged all higher education institutions to use the

NAAC report as a mirror for introspection and self-reflection. Pay special attention to the topics highlighted in the report. Make improvements in the system of the institute. Ensure the best educational experience for all stakeholders of education by identifying sustainable practices that exist in the higher education environment. Envisioning the National Education Policy scenario, make arrangements to provide quality educational experience to the learners through modification, redesign and restructuring as

suggested in the NAAC Quality Analysis Report. It is also necessary to strengthen the infrastructure of the institutions to ensure a quality system of teaching and learning. He expressed hope that the analysis report would accelerate the implementation of measures to enhance quality in recognized higher education institutions of the State.

NAAC's Communication cum Publication Officer Prof. Waheed-ul-Hasan gave information about the state level analysis report. He recalled the contribution of the author of the book Late Ganesh Hegde, Advisor to NAAC. Expert Dr. DN Sanswal told that 7 parameters have been analysed in the report. People's University Vice-Chancellor Rajesh Kapoor gave the welcome address. Shyam Singh Inda, Assistant Advisor, NAAC proposed vote of thanks. The Governor was welcomed in the programme by presenting a bouquet and memento.

## Uma Bharti wrote a letter to Shivraj

## Two killed after train engine collides with inspection trolley

Gave suggestions regarding liquor ban in MP

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Former Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh, Uma Bharti, who has been advocating prohibition and alcohol-free for a long time, has written a letter to Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan giving suggestions. Uma Bharti believes that by implementing these, one will be able to move towards getting rid of alcohol and drugs.



In a letter written to Chief Minister Chouhan on behalf of former CM Uma Bharti, it has been said that on Gandhi Jayanti, a resolution for de-addiction was organized in which the government had announced a consultation before running a de-addiction campaign and formulating a new liquor policy. The consultation has not yet taken place, but the process of making a new liquor policy is going on at the government level.

Uma Bharti had also discussed this issue with CM Shivraj Singh Chouhan in the past, on which Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan said that the new liquor policy will be announced only after the consultation is done. Uma Bharti has written a letter

to Shivraj Singh Chouhan saying, the aim of the liquor policy should not be to discourage people

from drinking liquor and the state should move towards drug addiction and alcohol-free through the liquor policy. The suggestion given by Uma Bharti states that the system of drinking liquor in the open premises should be stopped immediately, the minimum distance of liquor shops from all types of educational institutions should be within one kilometer radius.

The minimum distance between wine shops and religious places of all religions should be a half a kilometer. The minimum distance of liquor shop should be of half a kilometer radius from labourers' settlement, hospital, court, bus stand and the place from where defects of liquor and cigarette are sold in cinema hall or other places and people are advised to stay away from it. It is said that such big hoardings should be everywhere outside the liquor shop and the evils of liquor should be written on the liquor bottle. Former CM Uma Bharti has also suggested that there should be strict instructions to the police station of those places where there is a liquor shop that no one can drink liquor while sitting inside or outside the shop.

Team Absolute | Seoni

Two railway employees were killed in a collision between a train engine and an inspection trolley in Madhya Pradesh's Seoni district on Monday late evening, police said.

The accident occurred near Bhoma railway station, some 15 km from the district headquarters, Kanhiwada police station in-charge Monish Singh said.

The train engine was coming from Nainpur to Seoni, while an inspection trolley was going to Bhoma from Seoni, when they collided, he said. People travelling in the trolley could not see the engine due to a turn, resulting in the accident, the official said. Of the five persons



present in the trolley, three of them managed to jump off and two were killed in the accident, he said.

One person was seriously wounded, while two other sustained minor injuries, the official said. Sub-Divisional

Officer of Police (SDOP) Bhagat Singh Gotharia said the deceased Ramsanjay Yadav was a senior section engineer of South East Central Railway (SECR) and Lallan Yadav was a trackman.

## Tigress gave birth to 5 cubs in Kanha Tiger Reserve



Team Absolute | Mandla

A tigress has given birth to five cubs in Madhya Pradesh's Kanha Tiger Reserve (KTR), officials said on Tuesday. The tigress, named T-27, was spotted with the five cubs for the first time on Saturday in Mukki zone of the reserve in Mandla district, KTR's field director SK Singh said.

Agrawal said.

Tourists coming to the KTR have been excited after seeing the tigress, who is popularly known as DJ, with the cubs, Mr Singh said. According to the All-India Tiger Estimation Report 2018, Madhya Pradesh was home to 526 tigers, the highest in any state of the country.

The work on the next tiger census in the country was completed last year and the report is now due. Madhya Pradesh has a number of tiger reserves, including Kanha, Bandhavgarh, Pench, Satpura and Panna.

## ANGANWADI WORKERS, ASSISTANTS BEAT PLATES TO DRAW GOVERNMENT ATTENTION TOWARDS THEIR DEMANDS

Agar: On the 12th day of their ongoing indefinite strike, Anganwadi workers and their assistants demonstrated against the state government. Anganwadi workers and their assistants beat plates and chanted anti-government slogans to draw the government's attention to their demands.

The Anganwadi workers and helpers union are on indefinite strike, demanding regularisation, fixed pay, and no duty in jobs other than Anganwadi. During the strike, they first staged a sit-in in the Gandhi Upvan cantonment. They then raised slogans by clapping plates to attract the attention of the government by shouting slogans against the administration. Quoting that their demands are legitimate, union president Radhabai Rathore stated that the strike has been ongoing for many days in support of our legitimate demands, but the government has paid no attention, causing resentment in the union. A large number of Anganwadi workers and assistants were present at the protest site at the time.

## NO ACTIVE COVID-19 CASE IN THE STATE, HOME MINISTER NAROTTAM MISHRA

Team Absolute | Bhopal

There is currently no active COVID-19 case in Madhya Pradesh, but collection of samples for test of the viral infection and vaccination against it are underway, state Home Minister Narottam Mishra said on Tuesday.

A total of 13.38 crore COVID-19 vaccine doses have been administered so far in Madhya Pradesh, the minister told reporters. Madhya Pradesh has so far reported 10,54,938 COVID-19 cases including 10,777 casualties, according to health officials.



son.

He, however, did not disclose that since when no new case has been recorded in the state. The minister said the state now has zero infection rate.

"Despite all this, we have been collecting samples for COVID-19 tests. On Monday, 308 samples were collected in the state. The vaccination is also continuing and 81,281 vaccine doses were administered on Monday," Mishra said.

## CM Chouhan plants saplings with the representatives of social organisations



Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan planted saplings of Banyan, Khirmi and Gulmohar in the Park located at Shyamala Hills. Along with Chief Minister Chouhan, Archana Sharma, Riya Choubey, Kirti Chaurasia, Swati Mishra and Shradesh Mishra of Asmita Women and Welfare Society planted saplings.

Along with Chief Minister Chouhan, Sonam Chouhan

planted saplings on her birthday. Her father Prem Singh Chouhan and mother Mithlesh Chouhan were with her. Gwalior's social worker Gaurav Kishore Mishra also planted saplings on his birthday. Arun Bhadoria and Ashish Mishra participated in plantation. Social worker Shekhar Srivastava planted saplings on his birthday. His wife Sandhya Srivastava, son Samarth and daughter Navya Srivastava were with him.

## KIYG gives confidence to future generation to move forward: Swimmer Apeksha Fernandes

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Apeksha Fernandes, one of India's brightest rising stars in swimming, is participating in the Khelo India Youth Games (KIYG) for the second time and believes that this is a great platform as it provides opportunities to showcase one's potential also giving confidence to the future generation to move forward.



part of the Silver winning Maharashtra team in the relay competition.

Apeksha, who practiced under the supervision of Mohan Reddy at IIT Mumbai Swimming Pool and Forest Club Hiranandani, described Khelo India as a very positive platform. She said, "I think it is a great platform for everyone. Even young swimmers participate in this event, so you get a chance to compete with the next generation and that gives you a chance to compete with them. This gives them confidence and a much-needed platform to move forward.

It features the best athletes in the country, so you get to know about them and their sport. You learn something from everyone. For every player who takes part in these games it's a great opportunity."

The 17-year-old said: "This time I will compete in only four events as I have two events back-to-back as per the schedule. I want to give my best and that's why this time I will only participate in four individual events. Right now there is a pressure of the board exams also, so I will choose only four events. I have taken this decision on my own. My family has always been with me but I have the right to take decisions in sports matters."

Apeksha, who idolises Roger Federer and Serena Williams, said that some swimmers from Karnataka may pose a challenge to her but she is ready for it as only when the competition is tough, an athlete can give their best.

## 'WE DON'T TALK ABOUT OTHER COUNTRIES': MP MINISTER ON ODISHA NABA DAS' MURDER

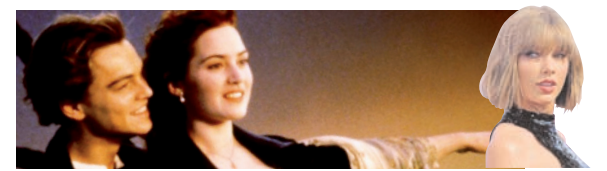
Bhopal: At a time when Odisha is observing a three-day mourning following the death of health minister Naba Kisore Das, a minister in the Madhya Pradesh government made an inappropriate comment.

A purported video is now getting viral on Twitter where Madhya Pradesh's Animal Husbandry Minister Prem Singh Patel can be heard saying he does not want to talk about other countries when reporters asked him about Das' murder.

In the video, when asked to comment on the murder of Odisha health minister Naba Kisore Das, Patel said, "Kaun se mantri ko mar diya (Which minister has been murdered?)" The reporters replied that the victim is the minister of Odisha. Patel said, "We don't talk about other countries."

ADITYA BIRLA CAPITAL		ADITYA BIRLA HOUSING FINANCE LIMITED	
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<b>DEMAND NOTICE</b> (under Rule 3 (1) of Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002)			
<b>SUBSTITUTED SERVICE OF NOTICE U/s. 13 (2) OF SECURITISATION AND RECONSTRUCTION OF FINANCIAL ASSETS AND ENFORCEMENT OF SECURITY INTEREST ACT, 2002.</b>			
Notice is hereby given to the borrowers as mentioned below that since they have defaulted in repayment of the Credit facility availed by them from Aditya Birla Housing Finance Limited (ABHFL), their loan accounts have been classified as <b>Non-Performing Assets</b> in the books of the Company as per RBI guidelines thereto. Thereafter, ABHFL has issued demand notices under section 13(2) of the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 (SARFAESI Act) on the last known addresses of the said borrowers thereby calling upon and demanding from them to repay the entire outstanding amount together with further interest at the contractual rate on the aforesaid amount and incidental expenses, cost, charges etc. as stated in the said demand notices. However, the demand notice is also being served by way of publication, as per Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 (SARFAESI Rules):			
Sl. No.	Name and Address Borrower/ Co-Borrower and Guarantor / Co-Guarantor & Loan A/C No.	NPA Date	Date of Demand Notice / Amount due as per Demand Notice as on Date
1.	1. SANJAY CHAWDA, House On Plot No. 354, Mahatma Gandhi Marg, Tehsil Kannod, District Dewas, M. P. (Yatra Maidan Road), Near By Madar Shah Wali Dargah, Dewas, Madhya Pradesh 455332. 2. BARKHA CHAWDA House On Plot No. 354, Mahatma Gandhi Marg, Tehsil Kannod, District Dewas, M. P. (Yatra Maidan Road), Near By Madar Shah Wali Dargah, Dewas, Madhya Pradesh 455332. 3. RAHUL DRESSESS House On Plot No. 354, Mahatma Gandhi Marg, Tehsil Kannod, District Dewas, M. P. (Yatra Maidan Road), Near By Madar Shah Wali Dargah, Dewas, Madhya Pradesh 455332. 4. SANJAY CHAWDA Ward No. 13, Kannod, Dewas, Madhya Pradesh 455332. 5. RAHUL DRESSESS 13, M.G. Road, Kannod, District Dewas, Madhya Pradesh 455332. 6. SANJAY CHAWDA C/O RAHUL DRESSESS 13, M.G. Road, Kannod, District Dewas, Madhya Pradesh 455332. 7. BARKHA CHAWDA Ward No-13, Kannod, Dewas, Madhya Pradesh 455332. Loan Account No. LNBHOLAP-02190019532 & LNBHOLAP-02190019544	08.01.2023	25.01.2023 Rs. 15,07,171.1/- (Rupees Fifteen Lakh Seven Thousand One Hundred Seventy One and One Paisa Only) by way of outstanding principal, arrears (including accrued late charges) and interest till 11.01.2023.
<b>DESCRIPTION OF IMMOVABLE PROPERTY/PROPERTIES MORTGAGED:</b> All That Piece And Parcel Of One Residential House No. 354 (Old No. 335/3) Comprising Of Plot Area Is 200 Sq.Ft. Situated At Mahatma Gandhi Marg, (Yatra Maidan Road) Tehsil Kannod & District Dewas, Madhya Pradesh-455332, And Bounded As: North: Shri Of Gopal Solanki Sons; Medical Shop Of Mohanlal Solanki East: Mahatma Gandhi Marg Boraji Wali Gali West: House Of Babul Lahoti.			
2.	1. SARVAN JAT, Unit No Lg- 13, Survey No 490/ 1, 490/2, 490/3, 490/4, 490/ 5, Lower Ground Floor, Pithampur Trade Center Phase-1, Pithampur, Dhar, Madhya Pradesh 454775. 2. SATYANARAYAN JAT Unit No Lg- 13, Survey No 490/ 1, 490/2, 490/3, 490/4, 490/ 5, Lower Ground Floor, Pithampur Trade Center Phase-1, Pithampur, Dhar, Madhya Pradesh 454775. 3. SARVAN JAT Gram-Datoda, Post-Methwada, Datoda, Indore, Madhya Pradesh 453001. 4. SATYANARAYAN JAT Gram-Datoda, Post-Methwada, Datoda, Indore, Madhya Pradesh 453001. 5. SARVAN JAT C/O GIRIRAJ FOODS 67/21, Lodhipura No. 1, Indore, Madhya Pradesh 452002. Loan Account No. LNBHOLAP-02190018782 & LNBHOLAP-02190018797	08.01.2023	25.01.2023 Rs. 9,54,768.91/- (Rupees Nine Lakh Fifty Four Thousand Seven Hundred Sixty Eight and Ninety One Paisa Only) by way of outstanding principal, arrears (including accrued late charges) and interest till 11.01.2023
<b>DESCRIPTION OF IMMOVABLE PROPERTY/PROPERTIES MORTGAGED:</b> All That Piece And Parcel Of Unit No. L.G.-13, Lower Ground Floor, "Pithampur Trade Center Phase-1", Ward No. 8, At Commercial Plot Of Chitra Chhaya Parisar Colony, Aabadi Area, Mhow-Neemuch Road, Pithampur, District Dhar, Super Builtup Area 259 Sq Ft, I.E., 24.07 Sq. Mtrs., Madhya Pradesh-454775, And Bounded As: North: Unit No. L.G. 12 South: Unit No. L.G. 14 East: Unit No. L.G. 40 West: Ptc Corridor.			
We hereby call upon the borrower stated herein to pay us within 60 days from the date of this notice, the outstanding amount (s) together with further interest thereon plus cost, charges, expenses, etc. thereto failing which we shall be at liberty to enforce the security interest including but not limited to taking possession of and selling the secured asset entirely at your risk as to the cost and consequences. Please note that as per section 13(13) of the SARFAESI Act, all of you are prohibited from transferring by way of sale, lease or otherwise, the aforesaid secured assets without prior written consent of the Company. Any contravention of the said section by you shall invoke the penal provisions as laid down under section 29 of the SARFAESI Act and / or any other legal provision in this regard. Please note that as per sub-section (8) of section 13 of the Act, if the dues of ABHFL together with all costs, charges and expenses incurred by ABHFL are tendered to ABHFL at any time before the date fixed for sale or transfer, the secured asset shall not be sold or transferred by ABHFL, and no further step shall be taken by ABHFL or transfer or sale of that secured asset.			
Date: 01.02.2023 Place: INDORE		Sd/- Authorised Officer (Aditya Birla Housing Finance Limited)	





# Adam Levine, wife Behati Prinsloo are focusing on family

Los Angeles | Agencies

**M**aroon 5 lead singers Adam Levine and his model wife, Behati Prinsloo are putting their family first. The couple welcomed their third baby together earlier this month, reports People magazine.



They are also parents to daughters Gio Grace and Dusty Rose. Levine and Prinsloo "were very focused

on special family time before the new baby arrived", a source told People.

The source added: "After the drama in the fall, Adam has really tried to just focus on his family. He was very embarrassed and remorseful. She and Adam are doing great. They are excited about the new baby."

And their daughters are excited about being big sisters. "The girls are great with the baby," the insider said.

Prinsloo and Levine tied the knot in Mexico in July 2014 after dating for a year.

The couple overcame a tough time in their marriage following allegations against the singer, last fall.

"They are working on their marriage and plan on staying together," a source said at the time, adding that the Montecito, California, based pair were putting their family first.

Addressing the controversy in a public statement shared on Instagram, Levine admitted, "I used poor judgment in speaking with anyone other than my wife in any kind of flirtatious manner."



# 'MY TWITTER HAS BEEN HACKED'

**Anya Taylor-Joy's Twitter hacked, post on 'The Queen's Gambit' Season 2 is fake**

Los Angeles | Agencies

**A**ctress Anya Taylor-Joy has confirmed her Twitter account was hacked in the wake of a cryptic post that touted a second season of her beloved Netflix limited series 'The Queen's Gambit'.

Taylor-Joy, who has not posted on Twitter since November 2020, excited fans on the morning of January 30 when she seemingly tweeted: "'The Queen's Gambit' Season 2."

The post was up for around 10 minutes before it was taken down, but it was enough time to ignite rumours that Netflix was moving forward with a new season, reports Variety.

Taylor-Joy confirmed the Twitter hack on her Instagram story, where she wrote: "My Twitter has been hacked. Apologies for all inconveniences. It's not me!" Sources close to the actor also confirmed that there was no truth to 'The Queen's Gambit' Season 2 tweets.

Taylor-Joy was quite active on Twitter during the fall in which 'The Queen's Gambit' debuted on Netflix and became one of its most popular limited series.

# Michael Jackson's nephew Jaafar Jackson to play King of Pop in biopic

Los Angeles | Agencies



**L**ate King of Pop Michael Jackson will be played by the late icon's nephew Jaafar Jackson in the Antoine Fuqua-directed film biopic. Fuqua just posted a confirmation on Instagram. The singer and songwriter is the son of Jermaine Jackson, who is the brother of Michael and member of The Jackson 5. Jaafar has been singing and dancing since age 12, and has showcased himself singing tunes from Sam Cooke to Marvin Gaye, along with originals, reports Deadline. The Emancipation helmer signed on to next direct Michael, which has a script by John Logan. The film's being produced by Graham King, who turned the Freddie Mercury Queen story into the blockbuster 'Bohemian Rhapsody'. According to 'Deadline', the film will not shy away from the controversies of Jackson's life, the pedophile accusations that haunted his latest years up to his death in 2009 at age 50, from cardiac arrest caused by a cocktail of sedatives. The MJ estate's presence gives rights to Jackson's musical catalog, but has led some to question how protective they will be, but clearly things will have to be explored for the film to have dramatic edge and enough truthfulness to stand up to scrutiny while not turning off fans of Jackson's songs and musical legacy.

King and Oscar-nominated Gladiator screenwriter Logan previously threaded the needle perfectly with director Martin Scorsese on 'The Aviator', with Leonardo Di Caprio playing Howard Hughes as he tried to pursue his innovations before mental illness turned him into a germophobic recluse.

Los Angeles | Agencies

**A**ctress Emma Myers has discussed the direction she thinks 'Wednesday' season 2 should take. In a new interview, the actress portraying Enid Sinclair shared her thoughts on possible romance between Enid and Wednesday Addams, played by Jenna Ortega, reports aceshowbiz.com.

The actress was asked by Variety whether or not she's seen posts about 'Wenclair', Wednesday and Enid's ship name, on the Internet. "I'm not on Twitter, and I'm not really on social media very much, but my sisters find it amusing to send me stuff. Fan art, tweets talking about it," she responded.

"My Instagram comments are flooded with it, and so are my DMs. So yeah, I have seen it."

As for a potential romance between

**EMMA MYERS DISCUSSED THE DIRECTION SHE THINKS 'WEDNESDAY' SEASON 2 SHOULD TAKE**

Wednesday and Enid, whose dynamic charmed viewers, Emma said: "Anything is possible." She continued: "We haven't really spoken about direction at all, so I don't really know what the game plan is for anything," referring to the possible direction the show writers could take.

"As far as love interests go for Wednesday, I feel like at least for a second season, she needs to take her season of singleness. She just had a whole fiasco with her men, she's got to lay it off for a little bit," Emma elaborated more. "I would be deterred from dating anybody if I had gone through that."



# I truly had the best experiences with Batgirl: Grace

Los Angeles | Agencies

**'B**atgirl', from directors Adil El Arbi and Bilall Fallah, was intended to be an HBO Max original but was axed in post-production in part so that Warner Bros.-Discovery could take a tax write-off on it.

'Batgirl' will never see the light of day, but information about the completely-filmed superhero movie continues to trickle out. Leslie Grace, who played the eponymous hero, recently told Collider that she filmed numerous action scenes opposite Brendan Fraser, who starred as the villainous Firefly, reports Variety.

"I truly had one of [the best] experiences with Batgirl," Grace said. "In terms of the experience of shooting, we were all so excited for people to see a lot of the action, a lot of the practical shots we did with fire. Our movie was full of practical fire, which was really hard to shoot."

"Brendan (Fraser), our villain, our Firefly, he was just so outstanding. I felt so blessed to have him as my sparring partner. We had so many amazing action scenes together where we were beating each other up, but hugging in between takes because he's just so sweet."

Grace continued: "I would've loved people to see those moments, but you know what? You have the experience, and you keep on rolling, and I feel so blessed, all in all, that I have those memories and hopefully maybe in some future, some clips will arise and people will get to enjoy a little bit of it. But for now, we'll just have to keep it going as it going in comic folklore, I guess, with all of our memories and our stories while we can."

Warner Bros. announced August 2, 2022 that it would not be releasing the \$90 million 'Batgirl' in theaters or on its HBO Max streamer, despite the movie being fully shot and in post-production.



Jasmine Sanders





## Women's T20 Tri-series

# DEEPTI SHARMA HELPS DOMINANT INDIA THRASH WEST INDIES

East London | Agencies

Spinner Deepti Sharma's three- and Pooja Vastrakar's two-wicket haul restricted West Indies to 94 for 6 as India won the last match of the Women's T20I Tri-series by eight wickets.

After Deepti Sharma claimed 3-11 in her four overs and Pooja bagged 2-19, Jemimah Rodrigues and Harmanpreet Kaur shared an unbeaten stand of 54 to help India race to 94/5 in 13.5 overs.

It was a great performance by the Indian bowlers as the Indian bowlers kept the West Indies women under a tight leash. Rajeshwari Gayakwad claimed 1-9 in her four overs and Renuka Singh gave away only 22 runs off her four overs as West Indies batters failed to get going.

Ror West Indies women, opener and skipper Hayley Matthews top scored with a run-a-ball 34, hitting five boundaries. But her opening partner Rashada Williams was bowled by Deepti Sharma for eight off 12 balls as West Indies lost their first wicket with 18 runs on the board. She claimed the wicket of Shemaine Campbelle off the next ball to claim two wickets in two



balls. Zaida James scored 21 off 31 balls towards the end of the innings, hitting two sixes in the process as West Indies could manage only 94/6 in their 20 overs.

Chasing a small target, India lost Smriti Mandhana early for five runs with the score reading eight runs in the second over. However, fellow opener Jemimah Rodrigues struck an unbeaten 42 off 39 balls, hitting

five fours while skipper Harmanpreet Kaur hammered an unbeaten 32 off 23 balls as India raced to 95/2 in 13.5 overs to win by eight wickets with 37 balls to spare.

With this dominant performance, India remained unbeaten in this Tri-series while West Indies lost all their matches ahead of the T20 World Cup. West Indies women have not a T20I game since September 2022.

## REALLY HAPPY THAT JEMIMAH GOT SOME RUNS: HARMANPREET KAUR

East London (South Africa) | After

a comfortable eight-wicket victory over West Indies in the women's T20I tri-series, India captain Harmanpreet Kaur was delighted over Jemimah Rodrigues getting some runs as they continue to prepare for the upcoming Women's T20 World Cup.

"Really happy that Jemi (Jemimah Rodrigues) got some runs. And it's always good when you are getting runs and I'm happy about my performance. Going forward, we have to work on things that didn't work, but the batting was good."

"We bowled well; still we could have done better than this. A target less than 100 was okay but I was looking at less than 80," she said after the match ended.



## ICC Women's T20I Bowler Rankings

# Deepti Sharma climbs to second spot

East London | Agencies

India's off-spin all-rounder Deepti Sharma has climbed to second spot in the latest ICC T20I bowling rankings announced by cricket's global governing body.

Deepti, who is leading the wicket-taker's list in the ongoing Women's T20I tri-series in South Africa with nine wickets, is now just 26 rating points behind England's left-arm spinner Sophie Ecclestone.

Deepti, who now has 737 points, has moved up one spot, while South Africa's left-arm spinner Nonkululeko Mlaba, who has picked four wickets in the ongoing tri-series, also climbed a spot to occupy the third position with 732 points.

If the duo continues their form, they could occupy Sophie's top spot ahead of the Women's T20 World Cup, scheduled to be held in South Africa from February 10-26.

India's left-arm spinner Rajeshwari Gayakwad moves up four places to 14th overall on the list for women's T20I



bowlers, while Australia duo of leg-spinners Alana King is up 12 places to 17th and pacer Darcie Brown has jumped eight spots to 26th position.

There was plenty of movement inside the top 10 on the rankings update for bowlers, with Australia pacer Megan Schutt up six places to fifth place and England's veteran seamer Katherine Sciver-Brunst up two spots to sixth

position. In the batting rankings led by Australia all-rounder Tahlia McGrath, South Africa's Laura Wolvaardt improves four places to ninth overall on the back of her strong start to the tri-series against India and the West Indies, while teammate Tazmin Brits jumps 10 spots to 18th after an impressive half-century last week.

## BADMINTON

# India placed in Group B of Asia Mixed Team Championships 2023

Dubai | Agencies

India has been placed in Group B alongside Malaysia, UAE, and Kazakhstan in the Asia Mixed Team Championships 2023, which will be held here at the Dubai Exhibition Centre, from February 14 to 19.

The draw for the continental event, which will have 17 teams, took place here at Dubai Sports Council on Tuesday, where Indian ace shuttler PV Sindhu was present as the Guest of Honour.

Group A consists of China, Korea, Singapore and Uzbekistan. Group C includes Indonesia, Thailand, Bahrain, Syria and Lebanon while Japan, Chinese Taipei, Hong Kong



and Pakistan are drawn in Group D. China, Japan, Indonesia, and Malaysia are the top four seeded teams. All 17 teams are divided into four groups of four countries, and one group with five, where they compete in Round Robin format with the top two teams advancing to the knockout stage. Each tie

group shall be decided by the results of two singles and three doubles matches. In the Group stage, all five matches of each tie shall be played. In the Knockout stage, each tie shall be stopped when the tie is decided. A draw of the knockout stage will be made after the completion of the last match of the Group Stage.

## ILT20

# Adam Zampa's spell, George Munsey's half century sink Abu Dhabi Knight Riders

Abu Dhabi | Agencies

Dubai Capitals produced a brilliant all-round show to outplay Abu Dhabi Knight Riders by seven wickets in the 22nd match of the DP World International League T20 at the Zayed Cricket Stadium.

Adam Zampa, through a spell of 3 for 16, backed by UAE bowlers Hazrat Luqman (2 for 41) and Akif Raja (2 for 23), restricted Abu Dhabi to 149 for 9 in 20 overs. Chasing the target, Dubai Capitals and Scotland opener George Munsey cracked 57 runs off 43 balls with six boundaries and a six to ensure a comfortable win with 14 balls to spare.

Scotland opener Munsey and Sri Lankan wicket-keeper Niroshan Dickwella, who hit 37 off 22 balls with four boundaries and two sixes, put on a 59-runs opening partnership to set the base for their victory. Dubai Capitals thus recorded their third win in eight matches while Abu Dhabi remains winless in this tournament. For Abu Dhabi, opener Joe Clarke's 52 runs off 27 balls with eight boundaries and two sixes went in vain. Dubai Capitals,



after winning the toss, had elected to bowl. It was an eventful start to the match with Fred Klaassen bowling a maiden over to Abu Dhabi opener Paul Stirling. UAE's Hazrat Luqman removed Stirling with the third ball of the second over by having him caught by skipper Rovman Powell at mid-off for a duck. Chasing a run rate of 7.45, Dubai Capitals openers George Munsey and Niroshan Dickwella opened the innings and put on 59 runs during the powerplay. When six runs were needed, Munsey's innings too came to an end caught behind by wicketkeeper Joe Clarke off Russell for 57. Rovman Powell through an unbeaten 21 steered his team safely to the target.

## Brief scores

Abu Dhabi Knight Riders 149 for 9 in 20 overs (Joe Clarke 52, Sunil Narine 23, Hazrat Luqman 2 for 41, Adam Zampa 3 for 16, Akif Raja 2 for 23), Dubai Capitals 150 for 3 in 17.4 overs (George Munsey 57, Niroshan Dickwella 37, Dasun Shanaka 28, Rovman Powell 21n.o.)

## Border-Gavaskar Trophy

# AUSTRALIAN TEST TEAM TO TRAIN IN BENGALURU AHEAD OF SERIES OPENER

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Australian men's team will undergo a four-day specialised training camp in Bengaluru before heading to Nagpur for the Border-Gavaskar Trophy series opener.

The Pat Cummins-led side will train at the Karnataka State Cricket Association (KSCA) Cricket Ground in Alur, where they can concentrate on individual skills and get ready for India's spinning tracks in a controlled environment. The Australian side left for India from Sydney.

Australian Test squad had a pre-series training camp in North at Bon Andrews Oval that closely resembled subcontinent conditions. Cricket



Australia had requested the North Sydney Oval ground staff for a turner pitch to aid the Test squad. The pitch had been scratched and

sacrificed to imitate the wickets of Nagpur and Ahmedabad along with artificial footmarks on both sides of the deck as there would be on the fifth day of a Test match.

The visiting side, who has not won a Test series in India since 2004, will not be going to play a warm-up match. The first Test will be played at Vidarbha Cricket Association Stadium in Nagpur from February 9 to 13, and the second at New Delhi from Feb 17-21. The third Test will be played at Dharamshala from March 1-5 while the fourth will be held at Ahmedabad from March 9-13.

The Test series will be followed by the three-match ODI series, starting on March 17 at the Wankhede Stadium in Mumbai.

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Volleyball World and FIVB on Tuesday announced India as the host nation for the Men's Club World Championships for two years in partnership with the Prime Volleyball League.

As the host nation, the winners of the Prime Volleyball League in 2023 and 2024 will represent India in the tournaments, where they will face fierce competition against established clubs from the top volleyball nations from around the globe like Italy, Brazil, Iran and others. The champi-



onships will be staged between December 6 and 10, 2023. The host city will be announced later this year. The tournament brings the best of international volleyball to India, where the sport is seeing a meteoric rise since

the commencement of the Prime Volleyball League in 2022. Season 1 of the league saw a cumulative TV viewership of 133 million in India alone and managed to reach over 84 million fans on digital platforms.

## 'Probably meet the guys in Delhi': Starc confirms he will miss first Test against India

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Australia fast bowler Mitchell Starc has confirmed that he will be missing the first Test of the Border-Gavaskar Trophy against India as he continues to battle a finger injury.

Starc suffered an injury on the finger of his left hand in the Boxing Day Test against South Africa and subsequently missed the last game of the series.

During the Cricket Australia's awards, when the host asked the Starc about his fitness, the speedster said: "I am on track... still a couple of weeks and then probably meet the guys in Delhi... after... hopefully, a first Test match win... get myself into training over there."

The first Test is scheduled

to take place in Nagpur from February 9-13, and the second in New Delhi from February 17-21.

Besides Starc, Cameron Green is also carrying a finger problem since the Boxing Day Test victory over Proteas. However, Australian coach Andrew McDonald said Green would be given every chance to prove his fitness ahead of the series opener.

"He hasn't been ruled out," McDonald was quoted as saying. "We just want to make sure we set up all our players up for success and there isn't much time left from now to the four-week check-in around his finger to the start of that test match. We'll see how he goes in the build-up and make that decision when we get on the ground in India."

## Equally important for Arshdeep Singh to sort out his no balls: Gambhir

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Former India cricketer Gautam Gambhir believes that apart from variations in pace, it is equally important for left-arm fast-bowler Arshdeep Singh to sort out his issue of bowling no-balls.

He also stepped up admirably in Jasprit Bumrah's absence to pick ten wickets for India in the Men's T20 World Cup in Australia and even earned a nomination for ICC Emerging Men's Cricketer of the Year award.

But he has been leaking runs in his recent T20I appearances, with his economy rate in T20Is since the T20 World Cup ended standing at 10.24. "You gotta have something different up your sleeves whether it's a slower one or a slower bouncer. Some kind of variation. Unfortunately, he doesn't have the speed to actually rattle the batsmen. So he's got to develop some variation."

"He is not Umran Malik, he's not Mohammed Siraj. So one thing he needs to do is probably try and keep it very simple and sort his no balls out which is equally important," Gambhir said. "Just keep the basics right. See, World Cup condi-



tions are completely different from what you normally get back home. In Australia, it was swinging and it was still bouncing, decent carry as well with the new ball. But when you play at the sub-continent, these are flat wickets," added Gambhir.

## Squash: Abhay, Tanvi advance to semifinal of SRFI Indian Tour

Team Absolute | New Delhi

India's Abhay Singh and Tanvi Khanna have made it to the men's and women's semifinals of the HCL SRFI Indian Tour.

Abhay and Tanvi will be the sole Indian representatives in either draws in Tuesday's semifinal, after coming through their quarterfinal contests at the Dhyani Chand National Stadium in straight games.

Singh, the top seed in the men's draw, downed South Korea's Hoony Lee 11-6, 11-5, 11-3 in under half an hour to secure his semifinal spot, as he aims to continue the form that saw him win a Tour-leading six times last year.

The Indian will now face Hong Kong's Matthew Lai in the last four, while Egypt's Yassin Elshafei and Japan's Tomotaka Endo will do battle in the other semifinal. In the women's draw, Tanvi caused



one of the upsets on the day, as she defeated No.2 seed Nadeen Kotb in straight games to book her place in the last four. The Indian delighted the home crowd, winning 11-8, 11-5, and 11-9 in just under half an hour to advance. She will join an Egyptian trio in the semifinals. Tanvi will take on No.3 seed Nour Ramy, while top seed Amina Orfi, who has won on her previous two Challenger Tour appearances will do battle with compatriot and No.6 seed Menna Walid.





## Disha Patani explored Mumbai streets with K-popper Jackson Wang

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Disha Patani is known to be an ardent K-pop fan and follower. The actress time and again shares her love for Korean songs, anime and films on social media and otherwise. She was last seen enjoying the company of Jackson Wang, a member of the South Korean boy band Got7, who was in India for his performance at Lollapalooza 2023, and soaked in the atmosphere of the streets of Mumbai with Disha. Wang delivered a power-packed performance on the second day of the music festival. And the actress explored the streets of Mumbai with him on an open bus. Disha is no stranger to collaborating with international stars. She has earlier worked with Jackie Chan in 'Kung Fu Yoga'. Time and again the actress has left audiences impressed with her sizzling dance numbers on the national and international stage. On the work front, Disha will be next seen in Karan Johar's 'Yodha' with Sidharth Malhotra and in 'Project K' alongside Amitabh Bachchan, Prabhas and Deepika Padukone.



## RAASHII SHARED HOW SHE BAGGED HER PART IN RAJ AND DK'S WEB SHOW

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Multi-lingual star Raashii Khanna has shared how she bagged her part in the Raj and DK show 'Farzi' starring Shahid Kapoor and Vijay Sethupati. Raashii signed 'Farzi' before her digital debut release 'Rudra: The Edge of Darkness', but also her audition for the Shahid Kapoor-Vijay Sethupati co-starred show was filmed years ago. She said: "Farzi' came to me based on an audition I did for Mukesh Chhabra's casting agency a few years back. It wasn't particularly for any project, however, it led me to 'Farzi'." "Apparently, Raj and DK saw the audition tape and had also seen clippings of my work in a few South Indian films, and visualised Megha in me. I guess destiny works in mysterious ways." Raashii also has Dharma Productions' 'Yodha' alongside Sidharth Malhotra in July, in addition to a few projects in South.



Vaani Kapoor to star in OTT crime thriller



Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actress Vaani Kapoor will be headlining Yash Raj Films' gritty crime thriller directed by Gopi Puthran of 'Mardaani' fame. The multi-season show will be part of Yash Raj Films' OTT slate, which is being housed under the YRF Entertainment banner. YRF also has 'The Railway Men', based on the horrific Bhopal Gas Tragedy.

A source said: "Vaani has only been looking for projects where she could deliver a performance to remember. She loves a challenge and she does land her acting perfectly. She did this brilliantly in 'Chandigarh Kare Aashiqui'."

"While she continues to give preference to theatricals, she isn't going to shut herself out of great digital projects, one which presented itself in Gopi Puthran's next. It is a gritty, edge of the seat crime thriller which YRF feels is a brilliant concept and is extremely bullish about. They will mount this project at a scale that will surprise people."

The source added: "Gopi was clear that he wanted to cast someone who will be fresh in the OTT landscape. He wanted a solid performer who can hold her own and deliver brilliant acting moments in this gritty thriller. Gopi needed a performer to headline this show well. He has always appreciated Vaani's work in her films."

"So, when he decided to make the show, he spoke to Vaani to check her intent. To his delight, Vaani jumped at the brilliant concept and immediately said yes to collaborate with Gopi, who has become a talent to watch out for after his brilliant directorial debut in 'Mardaani 2'."

"For Vaani, she is looking to work with the brightest of minds to become a better performer with each outing. So, this was a slam dunk for her," the source added.

## Varun, Janhvi's movie release deferred owing to VFX, technical requirements

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The release of the upcoming Varun Dhawan and Janhvi Kapoor-starrer film 'Bawaal' has been pushed to a later date. The reason behind it is said to be the VFX and other technical requirements of the film. The new release date of the film however, is something that the makers are still mulling over and will only divulge details once they get through the technical part. The film has been directed by Nitesh Tiwari, who is known for films such as 'Dangal', 'Chillar Party' and the Sushant Singh Rajput-starrer 'Chhichhore'. Commenting on the pushing of release date, Nitesh Tiwari said: "The visual finesse we want to achieve on these sequences will need more time than we expected. We don't want to cut short at anything because our purpose is to bring nothing but the best version of our vision to our viewers." The film's new release date hasn't been revealed yet but the makers are soon expected to make an announcement. The film, produced by Nadiadwala Grandson Entertainment, has been shot using a special technology in Poland and is ambitious in its on-screen presentation.



## PROUD THAT PEOPLE CALL ME ANUPAMA INSTEAD OF RUPALI: RUPALI GANGULY

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actress Rupali Ganguly, who came into spotlight with the hugely successful television show 'Anupamaa', is proud that people call her by her character's name instead of real name.

The show began in 2020, and is going on to achieve top TRP ratings week on week. To mark the occasion, the team had called for a celebration.

Talking about the show Rupali said: "Eternally thankful to you Rajan shahi you are a magician and thank you Star Plus for making us what we are. Wherever we go I feel happy that people call me Anupama instead of Rupali, I feel proud." "I am so excited to come back to work the next day and I hope this enthusiasm continues. We will keep going." She added: "I lost my dad in 2016 but when I walk on the sets I feel his presence. So, this is home to me. This is my home and I spend at least 12 hours on the sets and I love being here every day. Thank you each and every one of you."

'Anupamaa' is an Indian Hindi-language television drama series on Star Plus. Produced by Rajan Shahi and Deepa Shahi under the banner of Director's Kut Productions. The show telecasts on Star Plus.



## INSTAGRAM PIC OF THE DAY



Zoyaafroz