

# absolute india

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## DEMAND FOR LITHIUM BATTERIES TO SURGE OVER 5-FOLD; EVS TO FUEL MORE CLEAN, GREEN ENERGY

- Called "White Gold", Lithium is a soft, silvery-white alkali metal that is highly reactive, incredibly light, and low in density.
- Though it had a diverse range of applications throughout history, in recent years, it has become a critical component of lithium-ion batteries due its reactivity, lightness and ability to be recharged.
- The global lithium market size was valued at \$6.83 billion in 2021 and is expected to expand at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 12 per cent from 2022 to 2030, according to Grand View Research.
- Electrification of vehicles is projected to attract a significant volume of lithium-ion batteries, thus anticipated to drive the market over the forecast period.



electronic gadgets and power tools, and their demand is only going to surge. Government subsidies for EVs, along with investments in this space, are acting as an additional booster to the growth of the market.

According to public-private alliance Li-Bridge, the global demand for lithium batteries is expected to surge more than five-fold by 2030.

Global lithium production totalled 100,000 tonnes (90.7 million kg) in 2021, while worldwide reserves stand at about 22 million tonnes (20 billion kg), according to the US Geological Survey.

In 2022, reserves of lithium in Chile amounted to an estimated 9.3 million metric tonnes, the largest worldwide. Australia comes in second, with reserves estimated at 6.2 million metric tonnes in 2022.

The US had total lithium reserves of approximately one million metric tonnes. India has now joined the Lithium superpower club, with the

discovery of 5.9 million tonnes of lithium at Salai village in the Reasi district of Jammu and Kashmir.

The US holds major significance in battery production after China, which makes it one of the key lithium-consuming countries in the world.

According to Grand View Research, the consumer electronics application segment is estimated to register the fastest CAGR of more than 15 per cent in terms of revenue, from 2022 to 2030. The segment is projected to grow owing to the increasing sales of electronic devices, such as mobile phones, laptops, cameras, portable radios, speakers, and MP3 players, which make use of Li-ion batteries.

Batteries account for the largest share of lithium end-usage. Propelled by the growth in the electric vehicle market, powered by rechargeable lithium batteries, global lithium demand is forecast to reach one million metric tonnes by 2025, and surpass two million tonnes by 2030,

according to statista.

However, the world could face lithium shortages by 2025, according to the International Energy Agency (IEA).

About 2 billion EVs need to be on the road by 2050 for the world to hit net zero, according to the IEA.

Global EV purchases jumped to 6.6 million in 2021 from 3 million a year earlier, meaning that EVs made up 9 per cent of the market.

"Sales of petrol and diesel cars are projected to slide even more quickly in the coming decade, as more countries pledge to phase them out. At last year's COP26 climate talks, 30 governments said they would stop sales of new petrol and diesel models by 2040," according to a recent World Economic Forum report.

In a move to boost the transition to electric vehicles (EVs), the European Parliament has approved the law to ban the sale of new gas and diesel cars in the EU, starting in 2035.

## Hundreds of species of wildlife worldwide contaminated with 'forever chemicals': Study

The study, released by the Environmental Working Group, an American non-profit environmental group, on Wednesday reveals the global extent of the PFAS pollution problem with a first-of-its-kind map using rigorous data to show the sheer scale of the threat PFAS pose to wildlife. Xinhua news agency reported. Pollution from the "forever chemicals" contaminates polar bears, tigers, monkeys, pandas, dolphins and fish and has been documented in more than 330 other species of wildlife around the world, some endangered or threatened, the study added.

LOS ANGELES | Agencies

Widespread pollution from the toxic "forever chemicals," known as Per- and Polyfluorinated Substances (PFAS), is contaminating and potentially harming hundreds of species of wildlife around the world, said a new study.



Researchers pointed out that hundreds of studies have found PFAS chemicals in a wide variety of other wildlife species globally, including many types of fish, birds, reptiles, frogs and other amphibians, large mammals, like horses, and small mammals, such as cats, otters and squirrels.

"From country to country, and across continents, PFAS pollution is everywhere. No matter the location, no matter the species, nearly every time that testing is done we find contamination from these toxic chemicals," said researchers in the study.

PFAS are known to cause health problems in humans, and very low doses of PFAS have been linked to suppression of the immune system, said the study, adding that research increasingly suggests wildlife could suffer similar harms when exposed to PFAS.

There may be more than 40,000 industrial polluters that may discharge PFAS in the US -- tens of thousands of

manufacturing facilities, municipal landfills and wastewater treatment plants, airports, and sites where PFAS-containing firefighting foam has been used are potential sources of PFAS discharges into surface water, according to the study.

Researchers noted that national and international regulatory action is urgently needed to protect wildlife from PFAS contamination.

Team Absolute | New Delhi

From smartphones to laptops, from medical equipment to electric cars, lithium-ion batteries are providing portable electricity across

## Spielberg hopes to break record of Portuguese helmer who made films till he was 106

BERLIN | Agencies

Steven Spielberg delivered a blockbuster speech accepting the Golden Bear for lifetime achievement at the Berlin Film Festival, reports 'Variety'.



to keep learning and discovering and scaring the shit out of myself, and sometimes the shit out of you," Spielberg said, according to 'Variety'.

The filmmaker said that despite directing for six decades, making 'Duel' and 'Jaws' felt like "last year". "I know a lot more about moviemaking than I did when I directed my first feature film at 25," Spielberg said, notes 'Variety'.

"But the anxieties and the uncertainties and the fears that tormented me as I began shooting 'Duel' have stayed vivid for 50 years, as if no time has passed. And luckily for me, the electric joy I feel on the first day of work as a director is as imperishable as my fears, because there's no place more like home for me than when I'm working on a set," the auteur added.

"I gotta get back to some of those earlier scariest movies, but that's another story for later on. As long as there's joy in it for me, and as long as my audience can find joy and other human values in my films, I'm reluctant to ever say that's a wrap."

"I also feel a little alarmed to be told I've lived a lifetime because I'm not finished, I want to keep working. I want

"I gotta get back to some of those earlier scariest movies, but that's another story for later on. As long as there's joy in it for me, and as long as my audience can find joy and other human values in my films, I'm reluctant to ever say that's a wrap."

Spielberg said he wanted to break the record of Portuguese filmmaker Manoel de Oliveira, who directed his last film at the age of 106, adding that he had genetics on his side as his father Arnold Spielberg lived till 103.

## Eat breakfast to ward off risk of cancer, heart disease

Not eating the first meal of the day could make you inefficient in fighting off infections that can make you prone to a range of diseases from heart disease to cancer, according to a new animal study.

NEW YORK | Agencies

Are you one of those busy bees often skipping breakfast? Here's why you should never miss out on the largest meal of the day.

The research, led by a team at the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai, showed that skipping meals triggers a response in the brain that negatively affects immune cells. It could also lead to a better understanding of how chronic fasting may affect the body long term.

"There is a growing awareness that fasting is healthy, and there is indeed abundant evidence for the benefits of fasting. Our study provides a word of caution as it suggests that there may



also be a cost to fasting that carries a health risk," said lead author Filip Swirski, Director of the Cardiovascular Research Institute at Icahn.

The study, published in the journal Immunity, analysed two groups of mice: one group ate breakfast right after waking up, and the other group had no breakfast. Researchers collected blood samples in both groups when mice woke up, then four hours later, and eight hours later. They found differences in monocytes -- white blood cells that are made in the bone marrow and travel

through the body, where they play many critical roles, from fighting infections, to heart disease, to cancer.

After four hours, 90 per cent of monocytes in mice from the fasting group disappeared from the bloodstream, and the number further declined at eight hours. Meanwhile monocytes in the non-fasting group were unaffected.

In fasting mice, researchers discovered the monocytes travelled back to the bone marrow to hibernate, affecting the production of new cells in the bone marrow.

## This man in UP has Sarus as pet

AMETHI (UP) | Agencies

Ever heard of a man having a sarus as a pet?



Well, Mohd Arif in Amethi does have one though it is not entirely by choice.

Arif (30), spotted a badly injured sarus in a field around the same time last year.

"The bird was bleeding profusely in its right leg and was in a lot of pain. I picked it up and brought the bird home. I put some medicine on its leg and applied a plaster by fixing a bamboo stick and covering it with a bandage. I have an outhouse, basically a shed with a tin roof where the bird was kept," Arif said.

The bird took some time to recover.

"During the day, when I left for my work, the crane would hop around and mingle with other birds. But when I came home in the evening, he would come to me, cuddle me and we ate dinner together," Arif said.

By April, the bird had fully recovered but it refused to leave his home.

Arif works as a harvester operator in Mandka village of

Amethi's Jamo development block.

"Life has not been the same since then. Now, wherever I go, the sarus, whom everyone calls 'Bachcha', accompanies me. The bird takes a stroll when I am working and then we both have lunch together before returning home in the evening," he adds.

He said, "People stare at us and take our photographs. Some even make reels but now I enjoy the stares."

During winter, other sarus cranes arrived in the area but Bachcha did not go back with them.

Asked about its diet, Arif said it eats anything that is given.

Strangely, the crane's love for Arif does not extend to his family members.

## Ex-UP minister with shoes on head, appeals for community unity

Muzaffarnagar | Agencies

In a bizarre incident, former Uttar Pradesh Minister, Sudhakar Kashyap carried a basket of shoes on his head and appealed to the Kashyap community to unite.



A video clip of the incident has now gone viral on the social media.

The purported video belongs to Lakadsandha village in Muzaffarnagar where an event of Kashyap Samaj was held.

The Samajwadi Party leader collected the shoes of the members of the Kashyap society and put them on his head.

while giving a speech on the stage, put the shoes on his head and made the appeal to stay united.

The former Minister said, "I want my community to get SC status. It should be noted that Kashyap at present has OBC status, but we want SC reservation."

## ONLY DHONI REACHED OUT TO ME DURING DIFFICULT TIMES: VIRAT KOHLI

Bengaluru | Agencies

When Virat Kohli was going through difficult times over a run drought last year, his former teammate and skipper M.S. Dhoni was the only person to reach out to him and express support -- not once but twice.

Dhoni's gesture and concern towards Kohli's well-being is an indicator of the bond the two players shared during their time as members of the national cricket team. Kohli has played 106 Tests, 271 ODIs and 115 T20Is for India in a career spanning 15 years scoring over 25,000 international runs.

"He (Dhoni) reached out to me and you can rarely get in touch with him. If I call him on any random day, 99 per cent he will not pick up (the phone), because he just does not look at the phone. So, for



him to reach out to me twice it has happened now and one of the things that he'd mentioned in the message while reaching out to me was that: 'when you are expected to be strong and looked at as a strong individual people forget to ask how are you doing?'

Kohli further added, "So, it (Dhoni's words) hit home for me because I have always been looked at as someone who is very confident, mentally very strong, who can endure any circumstances and find a way and show us the way. Sometimes, what you realise is that at any given point of time in life as a human being, you need to take a couple of steps backwards, understand how you are doing, and how your well-being is placed."

Kohli shared the dressing room with Dhoni for 11 years during their stint with Team India between 2008 and 2019.



# EDUCATION SYSTEM LACKED FLEXIBILITY, OUR GOVT TRIED TO CHANGE IT: PM MODI

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday lamented the lack of flexibility in the education system over the years and mentioned the efforts of the Union government to bring about change. "Education and skilling have been reoriented according to the aptitude of the youth and the demands of the future," the Prime Minister said while addressing a post-budget webinar on 'Hemessing Youth Power - Skilling and Education'.



It is the third of a series of 12 post-budget webinars organised by the government to seek ideas and suggestions for the effective implementation of the initiatives announced in the Union Budget 2023. The Prime Minister said this year's budget strengthened the foundations of education system by making it more practical and industry oriented. He underlined that Skill and Education are the two principal tools during India's Amrit Kaal and it is the youth who are leading the nation's Amrit Yatra with the vision of a developed India. He further added that equal emphasis is being given to both education and skilling as part of the

New Educational Policy and expressed delight that this step has garnered the support of teachers. The Prime Minister stated that the move encourages the government to undertake further reforms in the education and skilling sectors while unburdening our students from the regulations of the past. Noting the experiences during the Covid pandemic, the Prime Minister underlined that new technology is helping create new types of classrooms. He noted that the government is focussing on tools that ensure anywhere access to knowledge' and gave the example of SWAYAM, an e-learning platform with 3 crore members. He pointed out the possibility of Virtual Labs and National Digital Library becoming a huge medium of knowledge. Throwing light on 'on-the-job learning', the Prime Minister noted the special emphasis by several countries and highlighted the efforts of the central government in providing

focused internships and apprenticeships to give a outside the classroom exposure' to its youth. "Today, there are about 75,000 employers on the National Internship Portal where requirements for 25 lakh internships have been posted so far," the Prime Minister informed. He urged the industry and educational institutions to make maximum use of this portal and further expand the culture of internship in the country. Underlining the need for a skilled workforce, the Prime Minister said that the world is looking at India as a manufacturing hub and noted the enthusiasm of the world about investing in the country. He also highlighted the focus on creating a skilled workforce for Industry 4.0 sectors like AI, Robotics, IoT, and Drones, thereby making it easier for international investors to scout talent without having to spend much energy and resources on re-skilling. Highlighting this year's budget, the Prime Minister mentioned the three centers of excellence for AI and said that it will strengthen the industry-academia partnership. He also stated that ICMR Labs will now be made available to medical colleges and private sector R&D teams.

# 50% reservation for backward, women and minority in Congress

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Congress has decided to give 50 percent reservation for Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, Other Backward Classes, Minorities, and Women. The Congress on Saturday amended the party's constitution to ensure 50 per cent reservation for Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, Other Backward Classes, women and minorities in all party posts, including representatives at the state level (PCC) and national level (AICC). Chairing a committee at the party's convention, senior party leader former Union Minister Ambika Soni proposed the amendment to this constitution. Congress General Secretary Randeep Surjewala termed the move as a 'beginning of social justice' and said that the Ambika Soni-led committee has taken measures



ranging from the Congress Working Committee for Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, Other Backward Classes, Minorities and Women. 50 per cent reservation in all party posts from PCC representatives to AICC representatives were proposed. Along with this, the committee has decided to increase the strength of the Congress Working Committee (CWC), the highest body of the party, from 23 to 35. It proposed to make party membership paperless and record,

mandatory introduction of mother's and wife's name in membership documents and automatic promotion of elected representatives of Panchayat Raj Institutions and Cooperative Societies as PCC representatives. He said that these proposals were accepted unanimously. Surjewala and Soni claimed that the amendments to include more people from across the board were inspired by Rahul Gandhi who saw the need for such a move during his Bharat Jodo Yatra.

# 3 held for duping people on pretext of providing escort services

Gurugram | Agencies

Gurugram Police arrested three people, including a woman, on Friday for cheating several youths on pretext of providing escort services online. The accused were identified as Pradeep alias Prince (22), Neeraj (21) and 21-year-old Isha alias Chinki, police said on Friday. According to the police, they received a complaint on February 22 that two men had entered a house in Kakru Colony located on Darbaripur Road and looted the complainant, who was residing in rented accommodation. The accused also accompanied a woman, the victim told the police. In this regard, a case under



various sections of the IPC including the Arms Act was registered at the Badshahpur police station. During interrogation, the accused disclosed that they ran an Escort service via the website and used to show girls' profiles and call the clients at their places or sometimes they visited the

client's location and looted them. "The accused, who used to run an organised gang to dupe people, have accepted their involvement in the crime. Cash and mobile phones have also been recovered from their possessions," Preet Pal Sangam, ACP (crime) said.

# B.V.R. SUBRAHMANYAM TAKES CHARGE AS NITI AAYOG CEO

New Delhi: B.V.R. Subrahmanyam joined as Chief Executive Officer of the NITI Aayog on Saturday, an official said. An Indian Administrative Service officer of the 1987 batch (Chhattisgarh cadre), Subrahmanyam has held important assignments over the last three decades in Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, and Jammu & Kashmir, along with a stint at the World Bank. He has been the Secretary in the Ministry of Commerce & Industry; Chief Secretary of Jammu & Kashmir; Principal Secretary of Chhattisgarh, and has held positions in the Prime Minister's Office.

# Delhi High Court stays MCD Mayor's notice for re-election of Standing Committee members

Team Absolute | New Delhi

In a special hearing on Saturday, the Delhi High Court stayed a notice issued by the newly-elected Mayor of the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD), Shelly Oberoi, directing re-election of the six members of the MCD Standing Committee. The court said no purpose will be served by conducting a fresh elections on February 27. Justice Gaurang Kanth said that prima facie, the notice is in violation of Regulation 51 of New Delhi Municipal Council (Procedure and Conduct of Business) Regulations, 1997, as the returning officer or Mayor is conducting re-elections without declaring the results of the elections conducted on February 24. The court observed that from a perusal of Regulation 51, it is nowhere reflected that the returning officer or Mayor has the authority to declare an election of Standing Committee as null and void. "It is not out of place to mention that admittedly, the counting of votes



and further duty casted upon the Mayor as in declaring the results of the elections held on February 24 shall culminate into final results," said the court. On Friday, BJP councillor Sharad Kapoor had moved the Delhi High Court, alleging that Mayor Shelly Oberoi did not stick to the rules of not using mobile phones and pens during voting to elect

the MCD Standing Committee members on Wednesday. Kapoor, in his petition, said that the Mayor "defied every constitutional and statutory norm" and "betrayed the mandate of the Constitution by allowing mobile phones and pens in the election proceedings". The petitioner also sought to declare the February 22 polls as null and void. The court listed the matter for next hearing on February 27. Following ruckus for the third straight day, the MCD House was on Friday adjourned till Monday morning with Oberoi announcing that re-election to pick the Standing Committee members will be held at 11 am on February 27.

# I will boycott PM Modi's programme, says Kannada Sahitya Parishat President

Bengaluru | Agencies

The Kannada Sahitya Parishat President, Mahesh Joshi stated on Saturday that he will be boycotting Prime Minister Narendra Modi's programme organised in the national capital by Delhi Karnataka Sangha. Modi is inaugurating a two-day event on February 25 to mark 75th anniversary of Delhi Karnataka Sangha. Mahesh Joshi has stated that he is not given appropriate respect and honour in the programme by the President of Delhi Karnataka Sangha, C.M. Nagaraju. The programme is organised on the basis of Prime Minister Modi's 'Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat' theme. The programme has been named as 'Baarisu Kannada Dimdimava' cultural fest to highlight culture, tradition and history of Karnataka. Union Minister for Culture G. Kishan Reddy, Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai, Nirmalananda Natha Swamiji of Adichunchanagiri Mutt, Shivarathri Deshikendra Swamiji from Suttur Mutt, Vishwapprasanna Theertha Swamiji of Pejavar Mutt, Nanjavadhoota Swamiji of Spatikapura Mutt and Royal scion from Mysuru Yaduveer Wadiyar will also participate in the programme.



The organisers are expecting 3,000 Kannadigas settled in New Delhi and north India to attend the programme. More than 1,000 artistes have been invited from all districts of Karnataka for the celebrations organised on February 25 and 26.

# MAHA: STAGE SET FOR ASSEMBLY BYPOLLS IN KASBA PETH, CHINCHWAD SEATS

Pune: The stage is set for the crucial and much bitterly contested by-elections to two Assembly constituencies -- Kasba Peth and Chinchwad -- in Pune, scheduled for Sunday, officials said here. Voting in Kasbapeth will be conducted in 270 polling stations manned by 1,250 polling officials and a police force of 683 deployed to maintain law and order. The voter strength of Kasba Peth is 2,75,679, besides 54 who shall vote through postal ballots, said Election Returning Officer Sneha K. Devkhate. In Chinchwad, voting will be done at 510 polling stations, manned by 3,000 polling officials and a police force of 3,707 policemen and 725 officers deployed here. The voter strength of Chinchwad is 5,68,954, besides 248 who will vote through postal ballots, said Election Returning Officer Sachin Dhole.

# Gujarat: Bodies of couple found from auto-rickshaw parked in hospital

Junagadh | Agencies

The bodies of a couple were found from an autorickshaw in the parking area of a government hospital in Gujarat's Junagadh district on Saturday. Deputy Superintendent of Police Hitesh Dhandheliya told media persons, "The police control room had received a call that bodies of a couple were spotted in an autorickshaw in a government hospital's parking area. Immediately, police reached the area and after doctor's confirmation of the couple's death, the bodies were sent for post-mortem. A poison bottle was found in the autorickshaw, giving reason to believe that both must have consumed poison and



ended their lives." From the autorickshaw, the police have also found clothes, a gas cylinder, a stove and groceries. The couple, who were in love, hailed from Bhidora village and were missing since December 31, 2022. Man's name is Rajesh Parghi while the woman's name is unknown. Fearing that their families would not accept their relationship, because Rajesh was married, and the woman was unmarried, they might have ended their lives, police sources suspected.

# 7 tourists hurt, 2 critical, after rhino attack in North Bengal



Seven tourists were injured at the Jaldapara National Park in Alipurduar district in North Bengal on Saturday after two rhinoceroses charged at the safari jeep they were in. Following the attack, the driver of the jeep tried to escape from the scene but the vehicle skidded and fell into a tunnel adjacent to the road passing through the jungle. According to eyewitnesses,

the two rhinoceroses got involved in a fight in the bushes adjacent to the road when the safari jeep reached the spot and stopped there. As a few tourists were clicking photographs and shooting videos of the fighting animals, the attention of the latter got shifted towards the jeep. All the injured tourists were immediately shifted to the local Madarihat health centre. The condition of two of them is reportedly serious and they have been shifted to

the Alipurduar district hospital. A forest department official said that rhinos charging towards tourist vehicles has never been reported before in the Jaldapara national park. The driver of the jeep, Kamal Gazi, who suffered minor injuries, said that he has been in this profession for a long time, but he has never come across such a situation. "Fortunately, no one has been killed. Things could have been worse," Gazi said.

# My innings could conclude with Bharat Jodo Yatra: Sonia Gandhi

In an address to the ongoing 85th Congress plenary session here, senior leader Sonia Gandhi said the party's victories in 2004 and 2009 along with the able leadership of Dr Manmohan Singh "gave me personal satisfaction but what gratifies me most is that my innings could conclude with the Bharat Jodo Yatra".

Raipur | Agencies

She said that the yatra has come as a turning point for Congress and proved that the people of India overwhelmingly want harmony, tolerance and equality. "It (Yatra) has renewed the rich legacy of dialogue between our party and the public through mass contact program. It has shown us that the Congress stands with the people and is ready to fight for them," she said while congratulating party workers for making the mega walkathon a success. Sonia Gandhi thanked all leaders, and the people of the country for participation in the yatra as



well as for their love and the support. "I especially thank Rahul ji whose determination and leadership was crucial in the Yatra's success." The senior leader said that this was the particularly challenging time for Congress and the country as the whole. She asked party leaders to put aside personal expectations and make sacrifices and work with unity. "Today let us remind ourselves of the battle our party has won in the past and prepare ourselves for the battle to come. Let us remember that the victory for the party is victory for the country and for each one of us."

External nature is only internal nature writ large.



Swami Vivekananda

# absolute india

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## SCATTERED OPPOSITION AGAINST STRONG BJP

Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge at Raipur in his presidential address stressed the need of alliance saying it's time to revive UPA-like alliance to take on the BJP at the Centre. The clear indication is for the parties which have worked with Congress as part of UPA government but are unwilling to give Congress a lead role in the alliance now. Meanwhile, Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar on Saturday at Purnea asserted that the BJP will be restricted to under 100 seats if all the opposition parties, including the Congress, fight the 2024 Lok Sabha polls unitedly. Addressing a Mahagathbandhan (Grand Alliance) rally in Purnea, the JD(U) supremo said the Congress will have to take a quick decision in this regard.

### Third force emergence advantageous for BJP: Cong

Team Absolute | Raipur

The Congress in its draft resolution on Saturday stressed the need for national level alliance saying that emergence of third force will give advantage to the BJP. The resolution says, "Unity of secular forces will be the hallmark of the future of the Congress party."

It said that the party will go out identify, mobilise, and align like-minded secular forces. "We should include secular regional forces who agree to our ideology. There is an urgent need for a United opposition to take on the NDA on common ideological grounds."

Underlining the threat of third force which is being attempted by some parties, the Congress, without naming any party in its resolution, said, "Emergence of any third force will provide advantage to the BJP/NDA." The Congress, in its draft resolution, on Saturday pledged to bring in laws to prevent hate crimes in the country, if voted to power.

This comes against the backdrop of rising incidents of hate crimes and lynching, the latest being the burning alive of two people in Rajasthan.



The resolution said, "In the last eight-and-a-half years under the BJP Government, the politics of hate has assumed alarming proportions and religious polarisation has reached its peak. Hate crimes and atrocities have increased manifold."

During the course of the Bharat Jodo Yatra, it was clear that the majority of Indians yearn for love, peace and harmony, it added.

Former Congress President Sonia Gandhi on Saturday accused the BJP of fuelling the fire of fear among the people of the country. This is an extremely challenging time for the Congress as the Modi government has captured and subverted every institution, Gandhi said. She alleged, "The BJP is stoking fear and has viciously targeted minorities, Dalits, tribals, women and the deprived section of society."

### Will wipe out BJP in 2024 Lok sabha, 2025 Assembly polls: Lalu



Purnea: In his first major speech after recovering from a kidney transplant operation, RJD Supremo Lalu Prasad Saturday launched a frontal attack on his old rival the BJP, alleging the right-wing party was trying to divide the country on caste and religious lines.

The BJP and RSS are against the country's minorities, the former chief minister of Bihar claimed in a virtual speech relayed from his Delhi residence to the rally of the 'Mahagathbandhan' or Grand Alliance of which RJD in a constituent. "The BJP and RSS are against minorities and weaker sections of the society... We (the Grand alliance) will wipe out BJP in 2024 Lok Sabha and 2025 assembly polls," a frail-looking Prasad, who recently returned to

the country earlier this month after a successful kidney transplant surgery in Singapore, said.

Lalu Prasad's comments came on a day Union Home Minister Amit Shah speaking at a rally at Lauruia in West Champaran district held Chief Minister Nitish Kumar responsible for plunging Bihar into 'jungle raj' for which he used to blame the previous RJD-Congress rule in the state. He also likened JD(U)'s alliance with RJD to "attempts to mix oil with water".

The Chief Minister Nitish Kumar claimed, his only goal was to work for unifying the opposition to unseat the BJP from power.

"I will keep trying to make it a reality. The BJP needs to be wiped out from the entire country. If all the opposition parties, including the Congress, come together and fight the 2024 Lok Sabha polls unitedly, the BJP will be restricted to under 100 seats," he said.

"But the Congress will have to take a quick decision in this regard. If you (Congress) accept my suggestion, we can restrict the saffron party to under 100 seats. If you don't, you know what will happen." Kumar said.

## BJP HAS CLOSED ITS DOOR FOR NITISH KUMAR, SAYS AMIT SHAH

Team Absolute | Patna

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Saturday asserted that BJP has shut its door forever for Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar.

"Kumar is a person who dreams about the prime minister's chair every three years and resorts to 'paltimar' tactics. He did the same in August last year and went to those whom our NDA was opposed to right from the start. We have now decided never to open our doors for Nitish Kumar in BJP," Shah said while addressing the media persons in Loharia village of West Champaran district.

"During the 2020 Assembly elections, the people of the state had made BJP a single largest party in the state. But we honoured our promise and gave the chief minister's chair to Nitish Kumar but he has the habit of changing the goal post," Shah said.

Nitish Kumar, always vocal against Jungle Raj, is now sitting in the lap of its progenitor. BJP will form a full majority government in Bihar in 2025 and the process will start in 2024. I urge the people of the state to bring in BJP and throw out those who brought Jungle Raj," Shah said.



### BJP HAS ONLY TWO LEADERS - MODI AND SHAH : NITISH KUMAR

Patna: Targeting the BJP, Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar on Saturday said that the party has only two leaders - Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Home Minister Amit Shah. "We have formed the Mahagathbandhan government in Bihar, Narendra Modi and Amit Shah came from Delhi and said many things. One of them (Amit Shah) said here in Purnea today that the airport is almost completed. Where is the airport. The Bihar government has acquired land and handed over to the Centre, why the airport was not constructed. There is a big difference in their promises and execution," Kumar said while addressing a massive gathering at Purnea's Rangbhum ground on Saturday.

"They do not know the leaders of their own party. They have forgotten leaders like Atal Bihari Vajpayee, Lal Krishna Advani, Murli Manohar Joshi, Arun Jaitley. None in BJP is taking their names. They only tell lies every day. They also speak against me every day. I want to clarify to them that I will stay in Mahagathbandhan for my entire life and never go with BJP. I am working for the progress of Bihar and my efforts will continue in future," Kumar said.



### NIA COURT CONVICTS 8 IS OPERATIVES IN 2017 KANPUR CONSPIRACY CASE

New Delhi: A Special NIA court in Lucknow has convicted eight persons in the 2017 Kanpur conspiracy for planning terror attacks on behalf of the Islamic State (IS) militant group. They were booked under various sections of the IPC, UA(P), Arms Act and the Explosive Substances Act. The case against the eight accused was initially registered at the ATS Police Station, Lucknow. Later the investigation of the case was taken over by the NIA. The quantum of punishment in the case will be pronounced by the NIA court on February 27. NIA investigations earlier revealed that the accused had prepared and tested some IEDs and tried to plant them at various locations in Uttar Pradesh.



## Prime Ministe Modi, German Chancellor hold talks in Delhi

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Prime Minister Narendra Modi and German Chancellor Olaf Scholz held talks here on Saturday.

"The strong ties which India and Germany share are based on shared democratic values, and a deep understanding of each other's interests. The two countries also share a long history of cultural and economic exchanges between them. Along with being our largest trading partner in Europe, Germany is also an important source of investment in India," PM Modi said during the joint press meet.

He said "apart from being our largest trading partner in Europe", Germany is also an important source of investment in India.

Meanwhile, German Chancellor Olaf Scholz said: "India has undertaken an enormous rise and that is very good for the relations between both countries. The world is



suffering because of the consequences of Russia's aggression. Ensuring food and energy supplies right now."

"A lot has changed since I visited India last time. India is indeed developing. I and PM Modi have similar ideas. We have been cooperative; we have been discussing matters. I am pleased that India has the presidency of G20 this year," he added.

## WhatsApp may bring 'schedule group calls' to future update

SAN FRANCISCO | Agencies

Meta-owned WhatsApp is reportedly working on a new feature called "schedule group calls", which it may bring in a future update to Android and iOS users. According to WABetaInfo, the feature is under development, so it is not ready to be released to beta testers.

The feature will make it easier for users to plan a call with other members of the group.

The feature will include a new context menu that introduces a scheduling option when the feature is enabled for users' accounts in the future, according to the report.

Moreover, users can choose when the group call starts and assign a



name to the scheduled call.

The report further mentioned that the group call scheduling feature is compatible with both audio and video calls. Also, when the call starts, all group members will be notified so they can quickly join it.

Meanwhile, WhatsApp is reportedly working on a feature which will allow users to edit messages on the platform, on iOS beta.

The new feature will give users up to 15 minutes to edit their messages to fix any mistakes or include any additional information to the original message.

This feature is currently under development and is not ready to be released to beta testers.

## Planning to get weapons training in Pak, 2 youths land in Delhi Police net

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Special Cell of Delhi Police has arrested two radicalised youths, who were planning to cross the border and get weapons training in Pakistan, an officer said on Saturday.

The officer also said that the arrest of the two youths has exposed the sinister design of Pakistan-based terror operatives coaxing Indian youth for weapons training in that country.

The accused have been identified as Khalid Mubarak Khan (21), a resident of Thane, Maharashtra, and



Abdullah alias Abdur Rehman (26), a resident of Kaliakulla, Tamil Nadu. The officer said that both the accused persons were getting directions from a handler based in Pakistan and were planning to go to that country for weapons training by illegally crossing the border.

Two pistols along with 10 bullets, one knife and one wire cutter were recovered from the possession of the duo.

## Scientists discover new layer at Earth's inner core

SYDNEY | Agencies

A team of researchers has found evidence of a new layer to the planet sitting within the inner core.

According to seismologists from The Australian National University (ANU), data gathered from seismic waves caused by earthquakes has shed new light on the deepest parts of the Earth's inner core.

The researchers believe they have documented evidence of a distinct layer inside Earth known as the "innermost inner core", a solid "metallic ball" that sits within the centre of the inner core, by measuring the different speeds at which these waves penetrate and pass through the Earth's inner core.

Earlier, it was thought the Earth's structure comprised four distinct layers -- the crust, the mantle, the outer core and the inner core, but



the current findings confirm there is a fifth layer. "The existence of an internal metallic ball within the inner core, the innermost inner core, was hypothesised about 20 years ago. We now provide another line of evidence to prove the

hypothesis," said Thanh-Son Phaim, from the ANU Research School of Earth Sciences.

The scientists looked at seismic waves that travel directly through the Earth's core and 'spit out' on the opposite side of the globe from where the earthquake occurred, also known as the antipode.

The waves then return to the epicentre of the quake. The researchers from the ANU compare the process to a ping pong ball bouncing back and forth. "By developing a technique to boost the signals recorded by densely populated seismograph networks, we observed, for the first time, seismic waves that bounce back -- and forth up to five times along the Earth's diameter. Previous studies have documented only a single antipodal bounce," Phaim said.

"The findings are exciting because they provide a new way to probe the Earth's inner core and its centre-most region," he added.



### KARNATAKA GOVT EMPLOYEES TO GO ON INDEFINITE STRIKE FROM MARCH 1

Shivamogga: In a setback to the ruling BJP, Karnataka Government Employees Union has announced that the government employees will go on an indefinite strike from March 1 in the state if their demand of implementation of the seventh pay commission is not met.

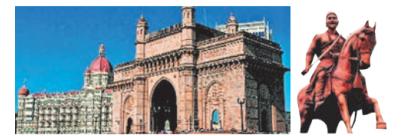
C. S. Shadakshari, the President of the Union, stated that all government employees have decided to not to attend duty and launch the protest across the state.

Speaking to reporters in Shivamogga, Shadakshari said, "Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai has turned a blind eye towards the government employees. The attitude of CM Bommai has saddened nine lakh government employees."

The protest will be observed by the government employees by remaining absent from work in schools, colleges, and hospitals and other institutions, he said.

The protest would be recalled only if the government passes interim orders for implementing recommendations of the seventh Pay Commission.

"If not, we will continue the agitation," Shadakshari added.



# THACKERAY-KEJRIWAL-MANN TRYST 'MEETING OF MINDS' - NO THOUGHT ON POLL TIE-UPS

Quaid Najmi | Mumbai

The morning after the late-evening rendezvous of two Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) Chief Ministers -- Arvind Kejriwal of Delhi and Bhagwant Mann of Punjab -- with the former Maharashtra Chief Minister and Shiv Sena (UBT) President Uddhav Thackeray, may at best be a "meeting of minds", with no poll tie-ups on the menu yet.

Both Kejriwal and Thackeray said they were keen on meeting each other personally for a long time and Mann harped on the century-old connections between Maharashtra and Punjab.

Kejriwal heaped praises on Thackeray for the good work done during the Covid-19 pandemic in Maharashtra and how they learnt a lot to replicate it in Delhi.

"Last night's meeting was intended to evolve a common platform for all parties willing to take the country forward since the demon called Bharatiya Janata Party is dragging the nation backward" and deviating from the real issues confronting the people," AAP Mumbai Working President Dwijendra Tiwari said on Saturday.

Interestingly, the conclave took place on the eve of the AAP State Executive meeting currently being



held in Mumbai to discuss various issues including the upcoming civic elections.

For AAP, the situation is awkward since it is fighting on multiple fronts in Maharashtra -- the Opposition Congress, Nationalist Congress Party, Shiv Sena (UBT) and the ruling alliance of Shiv Sena of Chief Minister Eknath Shinde-Bharatiya Janata Party -- as it tries to carve its own niche in the state.

Dwijendra Tiwari echoed Kejriwal's sentiments saying several issues like huge unemployment, spiralling inflation, crony capitalism and others need to be tackled through a common forum and the

AAP was ready to cooperate with any party on this count.

"There is only one party that thinks of elections 24x7, but we don't do that. We first think about the country. When the polls are announced, we shall discuss elections as well," Kejriwal said in his reply to queries on an electoral tie-up with the Sena (UBT) for the upcoming civic polls.

Sena (UBT)'s national spokesperson Kishore Tiwari said that the first meeting of Thackeray-Kejriwal-Mann will send very positive signals and goad the AAP state leadership to think of "ground realities" in Maharashtra.

"Similar to Thackeray, Kejriwal is raising very vital issues of national importance there are apprehensions among non-BJP ruled states that the BJP would attempt to dislodge other CM's as they did in Maharashtra. This must be countered unilaterally with all regional parties presenting a common front against the BJP," Kishore Tiwari urged.

Kejriwal noted how Thackeray's party was "stolen" including the original 'Shiv Sena' name and 'Bow-and-Arrow' symbol -- a week after the Election Commission of India allotted the name-symbol to the breakaway faction headed by

Shinde. Mann highlighted how the relations between Maharashtra-Punjab go back to the freedom struggles martyrs like Bhagat Singh and Sukhdev Thapar who were from Punjab while the third associate Shivram Hari Rajguru was from Maharashtra.

"We have secured this freedom after making many sacrifices. Its our duty to safeguard it and we must not lose it," said Mann. Dwijendra Tiwari feels that once all the parties are on the "same wavelength", other things like elections and alliances would be a natural outcome, and last night's meeting was a major step in this direction.

MUMBAI METRO:

## Three-tier Medetiya Nagar station nearly two-third complete



Team Absolute | Mumbai

The three-tier Medetiya Nagar Metro station on Line 9 is 64 per cent complete, while the works for all the stations on this line are more than 50 per cent complete, officials said here on Friday.

The Medetiya Nagar station will comprise a flyover for vehicles on level one, a concourse on the second tier and the Metro station on the third level, and will stand at a total height of 35 metres from the ground.

The elevated Line 9 section running from Dahisar East to Mira-Bhayander is 10.6 km long and will link the north-west Mumbai suburbs with Mira Road in Thane with eight stations enroute. All the cast in situ elements with all piers up to the second level are complete and now the pier cap erection work is in full swing at the Medetiya Nagar station.

This line will have two interchangeable Metro stations, first at Dahisar East with interchange for Line 7 and the second at Miragaon station with Line 10, all being constructed by the Mumbai Metropolitan Region Development Authority (MMRDA).

After the completion of these ongoing projects, the travel patterns in the MMR will be much more robust, connected and sustainable, he added.

## Shiv Sena (UBT) kickstarts Shivgarjana, Shivsamvad mass campaigns

Team Absolute | Mumbai

A week after losing the party name and symbol, the Uddhav Thackeray-led Shiv Sena (UBT) started a weeklong 'Shivgarjana' and 'Shivsamvad' campaigns in Maharashtra from Saturday to boost the morale of local activists and the masses.

Top leaders of the Shiv Sena (UBT) and other front organisations like Mahila Aghadi, Yuva Sena shall tour different parts of Maharashtra from Saturday to March 3, in small groups which will fan out in all the 35 districts divided among themselves. For the present, Maharashtra legislators are not joining the two campaigns in view of the Budget Session starting from February 27.

However, the Sena (UBT) MPs are part of the statewide political drive, billed as the "start of the 2024 polls campaign" by chief spokesperson Sanjay Raut and others.



This is the first direct contact with the masses and the party machinery at the lowest levels, after the Election Commission of India (ECI) awarded the original 'Shiv Sena' and 'Bow-and-Arrow' symbol on February 17 to the breakaway group led by Chief Minister Eknath Shinde.

The leaders touring over the next seven days will make efforts to strengthen the party organisation at the grassroots level, inform the people on the Sena (UT) Shikhas in the

state, the kind of vacancies, information on the local concerns, problems which can be highlighted as "issues" before the state government. Uddhav Thackeray, his son Aditya Thackeray and others are likely to tour in the second phase of the campaign later.

Teams of leaders started the dual campaigns in Raigad, Ratnagiri, Sindhudurg (led by Subhash Desai and others), Thane, Palghar (Rajan Vichare), Ahmednagar, Solapur, Pune (Vinod Ghosalkar), Sangli, Kolhapur, Satara (Sanjay Raut), Sambhajnagar, Jalna, Beed, Parbhani (Anil Kadam), Nanded, Latur, Dharsashiv, Hingoli (Anil Kadam), Nashik, Dhule, Jalgaon, Nandurbar (Anant Geete), Nagpur, Bhandara, Gondiya, Wardha (Arvind Sawant), Chandrapur, Gadchiroli, Yavatmal, Washim (Chandrakant Khaire) and Buldhana, Akola, Amravati (Omraje Nimbalkar).

## 63-year-old man dies at Thane police station, Court orders probe

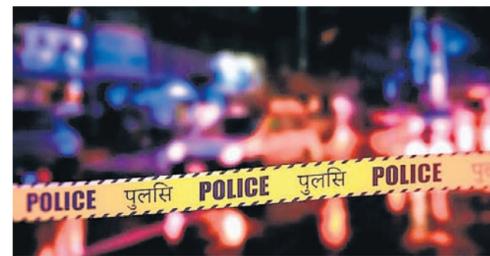
Team Absolute | Thane

A 63-year-old man died after collapsing at a police station in Kalyan, a town in Maharashtra's Thane district, where his son was brought by the police for questioning following a combing operation, an official said.

The incident occurred late Friday night at the Kolsewadi police station, he said.

The police said that the man collapsed following a seizure attack and the incident was captured on the CCTV cameras installed at the police station. However, the local court has ordered that an inquest panchnama of the incident and post-mortem of the deceased be carried out.

An inquest panchnama is



conducted after a person dies as a result of crime or under suspicious circumstances.

"During an 'all-out operation' conducted last night, the police picked up a 24-year-old man, who is a local resident, and took him to Kolsewadi police station for inquiry. His father Deepak Bhingardive, 63, followed him to

the police station to know why his son was brought there," Deputy Commissioner of Police (Zone III-Kalyan) Sachin Gunjal said in a release.

While the police were interrogating the man, his father videographed it on his mobile phone. As he was arguing with the police, he was made to sit

behind the station house officer's block at the police station, he said. "However, there he suffered a seizure attack and collapsed. He was rushed to the hospital, where doctors declared him brought dead," he added.

The entire sequence of events was recorded on CCTV cameras installed at the police station, he said. "The police station personnel themselves informed the Criminal Investigation Department (CID). Their officials arrived at the police station," Gunjal said, adding that the CCTV footage will be handed over to the probe agency.

Later, the Chief Judicial Magistrate ordered the Judicial Magistrate First Class (JMFC) to arrange the inquest panchnama and post-mortem reports of the deceased, he said.

## CENTRE NODS NAME CHANGE OF AURANGABAD AND OSMANABAD CITIES

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The Union government has approved the renaming of Maharashtra's Aurangabad city as 'Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar' and that of Osmanabad city as 'Dharashiv'.

Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnis shared the news on Twitter.

Aurangabad derives its name from Mughal emperor Aurangzeb, while Osmanabad was named for a 20th century ruler of the princely state of Hyderabad.

Chhatrapati Sambhaji, the eldest son of warrior king Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj, was the second ruler of the Maratha state founded by his father. Sambhaji Maharaj was executed on Aurangzeb's



orders in 1689. Dharashiv, the name of a cave complex near Osmanabad, dates back to the 8th century as per some scholars. Hindu right-wing organisations had been demanding renaming of the two cities for long. Fadnis tweeted two letters from the Ministry of Home Affairs to the deputy secretary of the

state General Administration Department dated February 24.

The letters stated that the Centre had no objection to the change in the names of these two central Maharashtra cities.

Fadnis thanked Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Home Minister Amit

Shah for the decision.

The state government headed by Chief Minister Eknath Shinde 'did what was promised', he said. Notably, to rename Aurangabad as Sambhajnagar and Osmanabad as Dharashiv was the last cabinet decision of the Shiv Sena-NCP-Congress government which collapsed last June following Shinde's rebellion against Uddhav Thackeray.

The new government headed by Shinde scrapped the cabinet decision and took a fresh decision.

Reacting to news, Aurangabad MP and All India Majlis-E-Ittehadul Muslimeen (AIMIM) leader Imtiaz Jaleel tweeted that they will show their strength for Aurangabad.

"Aurangabad is, was and

will always be our city. Now wait for our show of strength for Aurangabad. A massive morcha for our beloved city! Get ready Aurangabadis to defeat these forces (BJP) playing politics in the name of our city. We condemn & we will fight," he tweeted.

Shiv Sena (UBT) leader Ambadas Danve said the renaming was a victory of Shiv Sena founder late Bal Thackeray's stand.

Danve, leader of opposition in the Maharashtra Legislative Council, tweeted that Thackeray had "renamed" the city of Aurangabad as Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar way back on May 9, 1988.

"The name of the person (Aurangzeb) who broke the temple of Kashi Vishweshwar has been erased," he wrote.

## ON CAMERA, A STREAK OF TIGERS CROSSING A ROAD IN MAHARASHTRA

Team Absolute | Gadchiroli

A video has been shared on the Internet which shows several tigers crossing a forest road at night in the Gadchiroli district of Maharashtra.

In the undated clip, uploaded by Indian Forest Service (IFS) officer Parveen Kaswan on Twitter, an adult tiger is seen emerging from the forest and crossing over to the other side. At least four tigers, who appear younger, appear in the video soon after and hurriedly cross the road.

Wild animals often get captured on camera while crossing roads that pass through forest areas. Earlier



this year, another video had surfaced where a Maharashtra forest official stops commuters at a highway signal to let a tiger and a cub cross the road at Tadoba National Park.

The official signals the motorists on both sides of the road to stop and keep calm.

An adult tiger then appears from behind the trees and gently walks to the other side. A cub also follows it as people wait for them to pass.

While these tigers safely crossed the road, there are several other wild animals that get run over or hit by vehicles. In January this year, a leopard was killed in one such incident when it was hit by a speeding car on the Delhi-Meerut Expressway in Ghaziabad. According to police, the incident took place at night near the Kalcheena village.

An FIR was later registered against the owner of the car while the police scanned CCTV footage to ascertain details of the vehicle.

## CHENNAI FIRM CHEATS MAHARASHTRA DOCTOR ON PROMISE OF RS 10 CRORE LOAN

Mumbai: A doctor and his three associates from a village in Maharashtra's Thane district were allegedly duped of more than Rs one crore by a Chennai-based company on the promise of giving a loan of Rs 10 crore, police said.

The victims are from Sonarpada village near Dombivli, they said.

Based on the complaint lodged by Dr Harshvardhan Thakur, a case was registered under Indian Penal Code (IPC) section 420 (cheating) and 406 (criminal breach of trust) against the company and its director and others linked to the firm, a police official said.

In the complaint, the victim said that in December 2020, the company and other accused promised to arrange a loan of Rs 10 crore. They took Rs 82.50 lakh from the victim in several instalments, but never arranged any loan. After the victim confronted the company, it returned Rs 30.30 lakh to him, but the remaining amount remained unpaid.

The company also cheated three others in a similar manner and the amount collectively involved is Rs 1,08,60,000, the complaint said.

## On Savarkar's 57 death anniv, Maha to launch 'Savarkar tourism circuit'

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The Maharashtra government will inaugurate a tourism circuit dedicated to the Hindutva ideologue Vinayak Damodar Savarkar, famous as Swatantrayaveer Savarkar on February 26, marking his 57th death anniversary, officials said here on Saturday.

The Savarkar Circuit will comprise of five significant places linked with Savarkar in the state and will be launched at a grand event on Sunday at his birth place Bhagur in Nashik, Tourism Minister Mangal Prabhat Lodha said.

The circuit will take the tourists to Bhagur, the memorial of his

brother Ganesh Savarkar in Sangli, his hostel room in Fergusson College in Pune, the Ratnagiri Jail where he was once lodged and the Patit Pawan Temple he built there, and the Savarkar National Memorial in Mumbai.

The announcement came barely days after the ruling alliance Shiv Sena's Chief and Chief Minister Eknath Shinde announced that his party would demand the Centre to confer the Bharat Ratna posthumously on Swatantrayaveer Savarkar.

The government will also develop a Savarkar theme park with a memorial and a museum in one year, and collaborate with tour operators to add the Savarkar circuit in their tour packages, Lodha



said. The archaeological state has already started a revamp of

Savarkar's birthplace, Savarkarwada in Nashik, and will create all tourism related infrastructure and facilities on the circuit.

In recent times, Savarkar has been targeted for his mercy petition to the British government seeking release from the Cellular Jail in Andaman & Nicobar Islands, besides his alleged involvement in the assassination of Mahatma Gandhi.

During the Bharat Jodo Yatra (BJY) march in Maharashtra in November 2022, Congress MP Rahul Gandhi had taken potshots at Savarkar which almost created a rift in the Maha Vikas Aghadi alliance here. Lodha said that from February

28, the government will start a sound-and-laser light show at the Gateway of India in Mumbai to commemorate the departure of the last of the British troops after Independence, from here.

He said initially the show will be on weekends and later it would be a daily affair for domestic and international tourists who throng the Gateway of India.

Earlier, on November 26, 2022 - on the occasion of the Constitution Day - the state government had launched an Ambedkar circuit in the state in memory of B. R. Ambedkar, the Chief Architect of the Indian Constitution, covering historical places linked with him in Mumbai, Konkan, Pune, Nashik, Aurangabad and Nagpur.



# LADLI BAHNA YOJANA IS FOR THE EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN

The process of submitting the forms of the scheme will be simplified. Chief Minister Chouhan congratulated the sisters for the historic scheme and best wishes.

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has said that Mukhyamantri Ladli Bahna Yojana will empower women at all levels. Taking a historic decision for women empowerment, the cabinet has approved the Mukhyamantri Ladli Bahna Yojana. Chief Minister said that if sisters and women are strong then the society will be strong, if the society is strong then the state will be strong and if the state is strong then the country will also be strong. The country cannot be strong without the empowerment of half the population. That's why a provision has been made in the Mukhyamantri Ladli Bahna Yojana that one thousand rupees per month will come into the account of sisters of each category, whose age is more than 23 years. Chouhan said that old age pension scheme is applicable for those above 60 years of age. Out of this, women now get Rs.600 per month. In this scheme also, the minimum amount



will be made one thousand rupees by including more amount. In this way, sisters above 60 years will also get one thousand rupees every month. Chouhan said that our aim is that the way sisters have been empowered politically and socially, Now they should also be empowered financially. Chief Minister expressed confidence that the sisters will use this amount for the strengthening and betterment of the family. Chief Minister Chouhan said that Mukhyamantri Ladli Bahna Yojana will be launched on March 5 and applications for it will be started from

this day itself. Applications will be filled from March 15 after Holi and Rangpachami. The applications are very simple. The sisters will not have to go anywhere. The team will come to fill the application in his village itself. Social workers will also be present along with the administrative officer to assist in this work. The work of filling the application will be completed in March and April. Camps will also be organized in the wards of the cities. If the wards are small in the Nagar Panchayat, then only one camp will be organized and if the wards are large in the metropolitan cities, then

the camps will be organized by dividing the wards. Elaborate arrangements will be made for the sisters to submit their applications with ease and ease. After filling the forms in March-April, they will be scrutinized in May. This scheme is for the sisters of the family having annual income up to Rs 2.5 lakh. Family means husband and wife and their children. It is a family unit. The money will go to the account of the head of the family, the sister. Chief Minister Chouhan said that the farmer families who have less than five acres of agricultural land are also eligible for this scheme. Will be This is a historic scheme in itself. In the scheme, money will start being deposited in the bank account of the sister from June 10 and then money will be deposited on this fixed date of every month. With this, the sisters will know that on this date the money of the scheme will come into the account. Chief Minister Chouhan expressed confidence that Mukhyamantri Ladli Bahna Yojana will be helpful in changing their lives.

## Sidhi bus accident

# Death mounts to 15, Chief Minister announces Rs 10 L compensation

Team Absolute | Bhopal

With more people succumbing, the death toll in Madhya Pradesh's Sidhi bus accident touched 15 on Saturday, sources said.

Of the 39 injured undergoing treatment at the Sanjay Gandhi Memorial Hospital in Rewa, condition of six are stated to be critical, they added.

According to official reports, the tragedy occurred late on Friday when people of Kol community, who had assembled to attend 'Kol Mahakumbh' in Satna, were returning in three buses after the event.

Organised by the state government, the 'Mahakumbh' was attended by Union Home Minister Amit Shah and Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan. The buses were parked along the roadside at local 'dhaba', when a speeding truck rammed into them near a tunnel in Sidhi.

On hearing about the accident, Chief Minister Shivraj Chouhan, along with state BJP president V. D. Sharma rushed to the spot around 1:30 a.m on Friday.



He also visited Sanjay Gandhi Memorial Hospital in Rewa, where injured passengers have been admitted.

Upon reaching there, Chief Minister Chouhan told the media persons that 39 people were still undergoing treatment at the hospital. While the condition of most is stated to be out of danger, five to six were in ICU ward were critically injured.

The chief minister said kin of every deceased will be granted a compensation of Rs

10 lakh each. Those critically injured will be given Rs two lakh and victims with minor injuries Rs one lakh.

"Kin of those who died in the accident will be given government jobs (as per their eligibility) and the government will also bear all expenses of treatment. I have directed the medical superintendent of Sanjay Gandhi Memorial Hospital that the government will provide all possible help," chief minister Chouhan added.

# Situation more challenging for the youth today: Kamal Nath

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Former Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister and state Congress President Kamal Nath said on Saturday that the situation of the youth at present is far more challenging than what it was 50 years back.

Presenting an economic proposal during the ongoing 85th Congress plenary session in Raipur, Chhattisgarh, Kamal Nath said, "The expectations and needs of today's youth are much more than what they were five decades back. The situation today is much more challenging as the country is reeling under unemployment, which is at



its highest." "I stand in support of the economic proposal. There are various issues mentioned in the economic proposal, but the key subjects are - unemployment, and threat to the country's culture and Constitution."

Stating that he took part in the Congress plenary for the first time in 1972 in Kolkata, Kamal Nath said, "Fifty years have passed since then and

things are not the same any more. If the future of the youth who are going to take India forward is in danger, what kind of development are we talking about?"

Claiming that bringing foreign investments into the country has become a big challenge now, the veteran Congress leader said, "A large number of educated youth are jobless today. Job opportunities will not be created by visiting temples or mosques, but with investments." A 99-member delegation from Madhya Pradesh Congress led by Kamal Nath and Digvijaya Singh is attending the Congress plenary in Raipur.

## CHIEF MINISTER CHOUHAN PLANTED SAPLINGS



Bhopal : Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan planted saplings with public representatives during his stay in Satna. Chief Minister Chouhan has been planting saplings regularly every day for the last two years. Chief Minister Chouhan planted a mango sapling at Om Resort, Satna campus.

# Indore college principal set ablaze by ex-student passes away

Team Absolute | Bhopal

A principal of a private pharmacy college in Indore, who was set ablaze by a former student on February 20 and had been battling for life after having suffered 80 per cent burn injuries, passed away at a hospital on Saturday.

According to reports, a team of doctors who had been monitoring Vimukta Sharma's health conditions, declared her dead at around 4 a.m.

The incident took place in the premises of the BM Pharmacy College when the 54-year-old principal leaving for home.

In the meantime, the accused



Ashutosh Srivastava (24) approached her and after a short argument over delay in issuance of his mark-sheet, poured petrol on her and set her ablaze with a cigarette lighter. Srivastava was arrested

just hours after the incident.

"The principal has succumbed to her injuries during treatment. We found that the student had failed in the 7th semester. We have already arrested the accused," Bhagwat Singh Virde, Police superintendent (Indore rural) said.

Srivastava has been slapped with the stringent National Security Act (NSA) as per an order issued by Indore District Collector Ilayaraja T. "During probe, we found two to three complaints were made against Srivastava by the pharmacy college authorities, the woman principal and other staff, who claimed the accused was threatening suicide," he told reporters on Friday.

## Special training on CPR for 200 police officers and staff delivered by AIIMS Bhopal



Team Absolute | Bhopal

CPR is an emergency procedure that can help maintain blood flow and oxygenation in a person whose heart has stopped or is not beating effectively. It involves chest compressions and rescue breaths, and can greatly improve the person's chances of survival if administered early.

Dr. Naseema Shafiqat and Dr. Ranjana Verma, Assistant Professors Nursing College

AIIMS Bhopal conducted a special training on CPR for 200 police officers and staff at 25th Battalion MP Police Radio headquarters on 25/02/23.

They took practical session and demonstrations on CPR Procedure along with return demonstrations among volunteers and pressed on the importance of CPR in saving lives. DSP police Ranjeet Singh Rathore ji and Yogendra Singh Sisodiya were present along with other officials.

## IT Department detects Rs 2,500 cr default at MP mining centres

Team Absolute | Bhopal

The Income Tax (I-T) Department on Friday conducted surprise inspections at mining offices in four districts of Madhya Pradesh and detected defaults aggregating to over Rs 2,500 crore, sources said.

During the inspections, various issues of non-compliances of provisions of tax collections at source (TCS) under Section 206 of Income Tax Act, 1961, were detected, official sources privy to the development told reporter. The officials found that no TCS was collected on royalty amount of Rs 1,600 crore, which was collected from a private firm by the district mining office. Similarly, no TCS was collected on the amount paid by the lessee towards the district mineral foundation (DMF) and national mineral exploration test (NMET), amounting to around Rs 552 crore.

Further, it also found that no TCS was collected on the penalty levied in the cases of illegal mining transportation and storage.



The officials also found that district mineral foundation trusts were not filing income returns and audit reports as per the mandatory procedure.

"A total TCS/TDS default of Rs 2,500 crore were detected during the inspections at four districts, and further investigation was underway," a source said.

## Vyapam scam: Two handed 4 years' rigorous imprisonment

Team Absolute | New Delhi/Bhopal

A special CBI court dealing with the Vyapam cases has awarded four years' rigorous imprisonment (RI) to two persons including a candidate and an impersonator in connection with irregularities in the police constable recruitment exam in Madhya Pradesh, an official said on Friday.

Special Judge, CBI (Vyapam cases) handed RI to Ajay Pratap Singh (impersonator) and Narottam Singh Dhakar (candidate) while also imposing a fine of Rs 8,100 on both.

The CBI had registered the case on December 15, 2015 in compliance with the orders of the Supreme Court and had taken over the investigation of a case earlier registered at a police station in Gwalior's Purani Chawani.

The FIR was lodged against Ajay Pratap Singh and Narottam Dhakar on allegations of impersonation in connection with the Police Constable Recruitment Test 2012.

"On questioning, Singh accepted that instead of Dhakar, he had appeared in the



examination. During the investigation, it was revealed that the impersonator was arranged by two middlemen to appear in the exam in place of Dhakar. Expert opinion on handwriting and thumb impression also established that Singh had appeared in place of the actual Dhakar," the CBI said.

Later, a court convicted the two accused but acquitted the two middlemen.

## Sardana International School is committed to instilling valuable lessons and offering exceptional education

Team Absolute | Bhopal

India has been a major part of the world's history since ancient times. Schools that were once known as Vidya Mandirs have transformed into corporate establishments, says Lalit Sardana, founder and teacher at Sardana International School, Dewas, Madhya Pradesh. For over 26 years, students have been consistently achieving the best results in competitive exams such as Engineering and Medical under his guidance.

At a press event in Bhopal, renowned Physics, Chemistry and Maths tutor Sardana Sir - who achieved the All India Rank 243 and is an IIT Delhi pass out expressed his desire to bring dramatic improvements in India's education system. Sardana International School, under the guidance of Sardana Sir, is encouraging students to maximize their participation in sports. The students of Sardana School have demonstrated remarkable success in both their academic and athletic endeavors. Furthermore, they offer many financial aids to the disadvantaged pupils, so that money isn't a hindrance to their education or personal growth.

For the parents of children taking admis-



sion in Sardana International School, this school is like a Gurukul. Sardana School has one of the most unique approaches - they have a total ban on mobiles and TVs. Doing so helps eliminate any potential distractions that can interfere with learning. Apart from academics, this school also has extracurricular activities like sports, music, dance and yoga to provide entertainment for their students.

Answering the media, Sardana made said that all necessary information about the school, from its educational framework to living conditions and atmosphere, is communi-

## Khajuraho alive with the color of art

# Tourism Board's art gallery becomes center of attraction

## TOURISTS GETTING THRILLED BY ADVENTURE ACTIVITIES

Team Absolute | Bhopal

The temples of Khajuraho, a world heritage site, are echoing with the tinkling of the ghungroos of the dance artists. In the 49th Khajuraho Dance Festival, on one hand renowned artists from India and abroad are enthralling the visitors with their mesmerizing performances, while on the other hand art gallery and adventure activities remain the center of attraction for the tourists. Madhya Pradesh Tourism Board is promoting the state's cultural and artistic heritage through art gallery for the representatives of G-20 countries and other visitors who came to the festival.

Artists are fascinated by their live painting  
Renowned artists of the state are



making visitors aware of our culture, history and traditional life through art gallery in the fair premises. Exhibition of paintings by artists, live painting demonstrations, pencil portraits, print demonstrations, color portraits, terracotta crafts, Gond art, various forms of art being displayed are major attractions.

Enjoying adventure activities  
Khajuraho, the land of music and art, offers a host of adventure activities to provide an enthralling experience to the visitors. Sitting in the hot air balloon, the view of Khajuraho is being created from the height. The beauty of Khajuraho is seen to be even more enhanced from 'bird's eye view'. Tourists are also actively participating in activities like E-Bike Tour, Segway Ride, Rural Excursion, Glamping, Walk with Pardi and Heritage Walk.



## Paris Hilton says Weinstein followed her to bathroom and yelled at her

Los Angeles | Agencies

Socialite Paris Hilton shared that she had an unsavoury incident with disgraced producer Harvey Weinstein at the 2000 Cannes Film Festival when she was only 19 years old. Hilton was at the festival to attend the annual amfAR gala for AIDS research, which Weinstein was hosting that year. She said she met Weinstein the day before the gala, reports 'Variety'. "I was at lunch with my girlfriend and he came up to the table and was like, 'Oh, you want to be an actress?' And I said, 'Yeah, I really want to be in a movie,'" Hilton said. "I was a teenager, so I was impressed by him. I was like, 'Oh my god, Harvey Weinstein is so cool!' and he said, 'Well, we should have a meeting. You can come up to my room and read scripts' and I just didn't want to go, so I never went." Hilton said Weinstein got aggressive with her at the gala the next evening. She said that Weinstein followed her to the ladies bathroom and yelled at her, "Ya wanna be a star?" "I went into the bathroom and then he followed me," Hilton said. "He tried to open the door; he was hammering on the door, banging on it. And I wouldn't open it, because I was like, 'I'm in a stall, why do you want to come in here?' And I just wouldn't open it. And security came and literally carried him away and he was like (shouting), 'This is my party'. going nuts. It scared me and freaked me out." When asked by Glamour UK if she had heard rumours about Weinstein's behaviour before meeting him at Cannes, Hilton replied: "Yeah and it was just someone so powerful in Hollywood who everyone was terrified of. I didn't even want to say anything about it because I was like, 'I don't want people getting mad at me for saying anything', because it was just a known thing. He was just like that and people were like, 'OK, just turn a blind eye.'" Hilton's interview with Glamour UK published on the same day Weinstein was sentenced to 16 years in prison after being convicted in Los Angeles on three counts of rape and sexual assault.



## DICAPRIO & GIGI HADID "GET ALONG WELL" BUT THEY'RE NOT DATING

Los Angeles | Agencies

Leonardo DiCaprio, Gigi Hadid are not romantically engaged. The model and Leonardo were recently spotted together in Milan. It is said that they are merely friends, reports Female First UK. A source told Entertainment Tonight: "The two get along well and were enjoying time together with friends. Gigi's priority is her daughter and her business and that's what she's focusing on right now."

Gigi - who has Khai, two, with former One Direction star Zayn Malik - and Leonardo love spending time together. However, they're not involved romantically. The source added: "Gigi and Leo spent time together in Milan but they are just friends and are not dating." As per Female First UK, earlier this month, another insider claimed that Gigi and Leonardo's rumoured romance just "fizzled" out. The source said at the time: "She hasn't seen him for a while. She just decided that she was done with him. They are at very different places in life. She prioritises being a mom." Meanwhile, Gigi recently claimed that the COVID-19 lockdown changed the course of her career. She explained that lockdown and the birth of her daughter forced her to reevaluate her lifestyle.



## MAISIE WILLIAMS ENDS RELATIONSHIP WITH REUBEN SELBY

Los Angeles | Agencies

'Games of Thrones' actress Maisie Williams and Reuben Selby have ended their relationship. Announcing the breakup on her Instagram Story, the actress shared a selfie of the couple with a red overlay.

She then noted that it was "the end of an era" alongside a broken heart emoji, reports People magazine. "reubenselby\_ and I decided to end our relationship," Williams continued. "Since we met 5 years ago, our connection always extended deeply into our shared, and separate, creative careers ... and it will continue to do so."

"This decision is something we are so grateful for so as we can protect the magic that we can't help but emit, whenever we put our brains together," she added.

Concluding the statement, Williams requested "no further questions" for the time being and added that they "must protect our children" (a reference to her dog).

As per People, Selby shared Williams' post to his Instagram Story alongside a red heart emoji. Also posting a photo of the pair in cohesive Christian Dior outfits in a separate Story, he added: "Please don't be sad for us - just appreciate the fits."

Williams and Selby largely kept their love life private throughout their time together. But the former couple publicised their relationship in March 2019, with Selby sharing a selfie of the pair on Instagram.



## I've done some damage to my voice, through playing Wolverine: Hugh Jackman

Los Angeles | Agencies

Hollywood star Hugh Jackman, who plays the mutant Wolverine in the 'X-Men' and 'Wolverine' films, has said that the roles required growls that have affected his vocal range.

Jackman, who also has a strong song and dance segment to his career on stage and in films, added that his roaring is to blame for taking something away from his skills, reports Deadline.

The actor said to BBC Radio 4's Front Row: "My falsetto is not as strong as it used to be, and I put that down directly to some of the growling and yelling I did. My teacher at drama school would have been horrified by some of the things I did in Wolverine," he said.

"I've done some damage to my voice, through playing Wolverine."

Despite the damage, Jackman will return as Wolverine in the superhero film 'Deadpool 3'. The film is currently in pre-production and is scheduled for a November 8, 2024 theatrical debut. Jackman will join the titular character played by Ryan Reynolds in the film. They first teamed as Wolverine and Deadpool in 2009's 'X-Men Origins: Wolverine'.

## SOFIA CARSON, DIANE WARREN TO PERFORM NOMINATED SONG 'APPLAUSE' AT OSCARS

Los Angeles | Agencies

Actor and singer Sofia Carson and songwriter Diane Warren will perform the Oscar-nominated song 'Applause' from 'Tell It Like a Woman' at next month's Academy Awards ceremony. This is the second nominated song announced after Rihanna was confirmed to perform her track from 'Black Panther: Wakanda Forever', reports Variety.

'Applause' marks Warren's 14th career Oscar nomination, which comes after chart-topping hits such as 'I Don't Wanna Miss a Thing' from 'Armageddon' (1998) and 'Because You Loved Me' from 'Up Close and Personal' (1996), reports Variety.

However, she has yet to win. Oscar-winner Cher was tapped to present Warren with an Honorary Oscar at the 2022 Governors Awards.

Carson is a multiplatinum recording artist and released her self-titled debut album in 2022.

Warren triumphed recently over fellow nominees Rihanna and Lady Gaga at the Society of Composers and Lyricists Awards, winning outstanding original song.

The other song nominees are: 'Hold My Hand' from 'Top Gun: Maverick' (Lady Gaga and Bloodpop), 'Naatu Naatu' from 'RRR' (Kala Bhairava, M. M. Keeravani, Rahul Sipligun) and 'This Is a Life' from 'Everything Everywhere All at Once' (David Byrne, Ryan Lott and Mitski).

Hosted by Jimmy Kimmel, the 95th annual Oscars will be held on Sunday, March 12, at the Dolby Theatre at Ovation Hollywood.



## ABSOLUTE PIC OF THE DAY



Leni Olumi Klum



## Women's T20 World Cup

# RICHA GHOSH LONE INDIAN AMONG 9 IN PLAYER OF TOURNAMENT SHORTLIST

Cape Town | Agencies

All-rounder Richa Ghosh is the lone Indian among the nine players shortlisted by the International Cricket Council (ICC) to decide the Player of the Tournament for the Women's T20 World Cup.

The right-handed batter Ghosh had scored 136 runs at an average of 68 as India reached the semifinals before losing to defending champions Australia.

The India teenager shone in her role as a finisher in South Africa, smashing two scores in the 40s including an unbeaten 47 against England that took her side to within sight of victory.

Ghosh was only dismissed twice from five innings at the tournament and scored at a strike rate greater than 130 that further displayed her attacking prowess.

The others on the shortlist include



three from Australia, who dominate the shortlist, two players each from

England and South Africa and one from West Indies.

Cricket fans from around the world now get a chance to vote and decide the winner.

The three Australians on the list are Meg Lanning (139 runs with average of 69.50), Alyssa Healy (171 runs, 57) and Ash Gardner (81 runs, 40.50, nine wickets, 11.66).

Nat Sciver-Brunt (216 runs, average of 72, three catches) and Sophie Ecclestone (11 wickets, 7.54) are the two players from England to make the shortlist while top batter Laura Wolvaardt (169 runs, 42.25) and Tazmin Brits (176 runs, 44, six catches) are the two Proteas players to be nominated for the award.

West Indies skipper Hayley Matthews (130 runs, 43.33, four wickets, 22.25, four catches) is the ninth player on the shortlist.

The Women's T20 World Cup will conclude with hosts South Africa taking on defending champions Australia in the final.

# Indian junior women's hockey team holds South Africa 'A' 4-4

Johannesburg | Agencies

The Indian junior women's hockey team remained undefeated on their South Africa tour thus far, recording a 4-4 draw against South Africa team in their first match of the tour against the A team.

Prior to this, the Indian team defeated South Africa's U-21 team in all three matches.

The ongoing South Africa tour is part of the team's preparations for the crucial Asia Cup U21, which serves as a qualifier for the upcoming FIH Women's Hockey Junior World Cup.

The match began with Quanita Bobbs (1', 31') and Biamca Wood (6') giving hosts South Africa an early lead. But quick responses from Neelam (7') and Deepika Sr. (8', 30+) restored parity before Taranpreet Kaur (25') and Deepika scored to



put the Indian junior women's hockey team in a commanding position. The lead was squandered

in the second half by goals from Quanita Bobbs and Taryn Lombard (47'), and the game ended in a draw.

# Bhagat, Kadam reach semifinals of Spanish Para-Badminton Level 2

Vitoria (Spain) | Agencies

Ace shuttlers Pramod Bhagat and Sukant Kadam made a good start in the Spanish Para-Badminton International 2023 Level 2 tournament here, scoring convincing wins to reach the semifinals of the singles tournament.

The Padma Shri-winner defeated Thailand's Mongkhon Bunsun in three sets to set up a clash with Japan's Daisuke Fujihara for a place in the final.

Kadam will face compatriot Suhas Lalnakere Yathiraj in the men's SL4 Semifinals.

Bhagat started slowly in the quarterfinals against Bunsun by losing the first set but came back strongly to take the next two. The match lasted 58 minutes and the final score-line read 16-21, 21-12 and 21-18.



In men's doubles, Bhagat and his doubles Partner Sukant Kadam secured their quarter-final berths and will now face India's Deep Ranjan Bisoyee and Manoj Sarkar. In mixed doubles, Bhagat and his partner Manisha Ramdass went down fighting to Indonesia's Fredy Setiawan and Khalimatus Sadiyah.

# ANDERSON, LEACH STRIKE AS ENGLAND DOMINATE AGAINST NEW ZEALAND

Wellington | Agencies

Veteran pacer James Anderson (3-37) and left-arm spinner Jack Leach (3-45) shared six wickets as England reduced hosts New Zealand to 138/7 in their first innings in the second Test.

After England rode on brilliant centuries by Harry Brook (186) and Joe Root (153 not out) to declare their innings at 435/8, Anderson and Leach got into action to strangle the New Zealand innings, leaving the hosts trailing by 297 runs at stumps on the second day of the second and final Test.

The visitors have taken a dominant position in the match and are looking at the prospect of sweeping the series 2-0.

New Zealand was reduced to 21/31 in the ninth over. They were soon down to 60/4 when Tom Latham (35) was sent back by Jack Leach. Latham attempted a reverse sweep off the left-arm spinner but the ball came off the glove and popped to Joe



Root in slips.

Harry Nicholls (30), Tom Blundell (25 not out) and Tim Southee (23 not out) as New Zealand managed to cross the three-figure mark. In between they lost D'Arby Mitchell (13) and Michael Bracewell (6), caught and bowled by Stuart Broad (1/12), besides Nicholls, as New Zealand were left staring at the prospect of conceding a big lead.

Earlier, England resumed at the overnight score of 315/3 in 65 overs but lost Harry Brook in the third over of the day when he smacked an uppish straight drive off Matt Henry -- the ball first hit the bowler on his forearm before popping up for a catch. Joe Root continued in the same manner in which he batted on Friday as he reached 150 off 224 balls as England crossed 400 runs mark in 80.6 overs. Skipper Ben Stokes contributed 27 runs but New Zealand cleaned up the lower order as England declared their first innings at 435/8, once again scoring runs at a fast pace. Root remained not out with 153.

### Brief scores

England 435/8d in 87.1 overs (Joe Root 153 not out, Harry Brook 186; Matt Henry 4-100, Michael Bracewell 2-54) lead New Zealand 138/7 in 42 overs (Tom Latham 35; James Anderson 3-37, Jack Leach 3-45) by 297 runs.

## Indian Open

# Ahlawat, Cheema, Baisoya in top-10 leading the home challenge

Gurugram | Agencies

Home golfers have been working as a relay unit to keep their challenge going at the US 2 million dollar Indian Open 2023. The moving day, it was Veer Ahlawats turn to pick up the baton at the DLF Golf and Country Club.

The lanky golfer for whom this is his home venue brought in a solid four under par 68 to share fourth place, six shots behind Germany's Yannik Paul (71) and five behind another German Marcel Siem (67). Paul (11-under) and Siem (10-under) were separated by just one shot.

Overall though, it was a strong display by Indian golfers with three of them in the Top-10. Ahlawat was tied fourth while Angad Cheema (4-under 212) was tied seventh and Honey Baisoya (3-under 213) was tied 10th.

At various points during the day, Indians made a move on the leaderboard, including Angad Cheema, Honey Baisoya and most particularly Yashas Chandra, only to fall away. Mysore-based Chandra in particular was most impressive on the front nine where he picked up five shots to move within four of the top despite a late bogey.

The back nine though was a disaster as he drove into the bushes on 10 for a triple



bogey and then into the hazard on 17 to drop a further two shots, playing near-faultless golf otherwise, especially on the greens, where he turned in a putting master-class. Ahlawat (73-70-68) was the steadiest of the lot, his third-day card marred by just one blemish even as others around him dropped shots in a bunch. Ahlawat had five birdies in his first 10 holes and then had just one bogey and no birdies in the remaining eight.

Ahlawat was tied fourth with last week's winner in Thailand, Denmark's Thorbjorn Olesen (six-under 66) and Jorge Campillo (67). "It's important to play it shot by shot over here and that's what I did well today," the long-hitting Ahlawat said. "The fact that I'm playing at my home course obviously adds to my confidence. A decent run of form on the Asian Tour and PGTI last year have also contributed to the good mental space that I'm in at the moment.

# UP Warriorz announce Deepti Sharma as vice-captain for WPL

New Delhi | Ace India all-rounder Deepti Sharma on Saturday was announced as the vice-captain of UP Warriorz ahead of the inaugural edition of the Women's Premier League (WPL).

Hailing from Agra in Uttar Pradesh, Deepti was among the most wanted Indian players at the inaugural player auction. Deepti, 25, a crucial part of the Indian women's team set-up, bagged six wickets in five matches as India reached the semifinals of the 2023 Women's T20 World Cup in South Africa.

"As someone from Uttar Pradesh, I am not only extremely happy to be part of the UP Warriorz team but also delighted to be named the vice-captain for the team. Along with captain Alyssa Healy, and the other senior players, we hope we can make the team function well and play some fantastic cricket."

"We hope our performances in the WPL can become a source of inspiration for the young women athletes in UP and we are keenly awaiting the start of the tourna-



ment," Deepti said in an official statement.

Deepti had been a part of various teams in the women's franchise cricket circuit, like turning out for Western Storm (Kia Super League), Sydney Thunder (WBBL), Birmingham Phoenix, and London Spirit (both The Hundred).

In the 80 games that Deepti has played in franchise cricket abroad, she has picked 32 wickets, scoring 394 runs as well. In India, during the now-defunct Women's T20 Challenge, she has turned out for the Trailblazers and Velocity as well.

# I was considered a failed captain, but I never judged myself: Kohli

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Talismanic India batter Virat Kohli has said that he was considered a 'failed captain' for India due to not winning any ICC trophy during his leadership tenure. But at the same time, he stated that he will not judge himself from that point of view.

Kohli is India's most successful Test captain, leading the side to 40 victories, including holding on to the top-ranked spot in the rankings for 42 months. Apart from winning 65 ODIs and 30 T20Is as captain, what has been absent from Kohli's achievement as an Indian skipper has been a global trophy.

"You play to win tournaments, but a lot was made of it, to be honest. I captained in the Champions Trophy 2017, I captained the 2019 World Cup, I captained Test Championship 2021, so after



three ICC tournaments already I was."

"I mean we lost the last T20 World Cup (2021), we didn't qualify (for the semifinals). We reached the finals of the 2017 Champions Trophy, semis of (the 2019) World Cup and final of the (2021) World Test Championship and I was considered a failed captain."

"Look, I never judged myself from that point of

view. What we ended up achieving as a team and as a cultural change for me will always be a matter of pride. A tournament happens for a certain period of time, but a culture happens over a long period of time. For that, you need consistency, for that you need more character than just winning tournaments," said Kohli in the latest episode of the RCB Podcast.

## 24th Open Sprint National

# ROWERS SALMAN, DATTU ENTER FINALS

Pune | Agencies

Upcoming Salman Khan (Army) and comeback-man Dattu Bhokanal (Maharashtra) pulled away the general focus of the 'Services-Army battle' with brilliant performances to reach the finals of the men's single Sculls event in the 24th Open Sprint National at the Army Rowing Node, CME.

As a result, both the 2022 National champion Salman and 2018 Rio Olympian Dattu ended up proving that they too can be the best on a given day.

Haryana-born Salman, standing tall at 6 feet 5 inches, pushed out a 1 minute 36.8 seconds effort to cut short Satnam Singh's (1:40.8s) run over the 500-meter sprint in the first semifinal.

In the second semifinal, Dattu registered the best timing of the two semifinals



clocking 1:31.7s to give Maharashtra hope on the morrow. Dattu pushed aside the challenge of Tokyo Olympian Arvind Singh (Services) who managed 1:32.7s to set up an interesting final that will determine the fate of the meet.

With the event pushing late into the evening and races still to be completed, powerhouses Services made it to 4 finals, namely the Single Sculls (MIX), Coxless

Fours (M4-), Double Sculls (M2X) and will have the Army to challenge them.

The other events where Services ensured their presence in the finals were the LightWeight Double Sculls (LM2X) wherein the Arjun Lal Jat and Ajay Tyagi pair clocked 1:29.1s.

In the women's section, Kerala, Manipur and Haryana occupied places in three finals each to make it an open section.

## Rio Open

# Alcaraz, Norrie reach semis, remain on course for a rematch of Buenos Aires final

Rio de Janeiro (Brazil) | Agencies

Defending champion Carlos Alcaraz continued his perfect record in 2023 with a fighting 6-4, 7-6(0) win over Serbian Dusan Lajovic and advanced to the semifinals of the Rio Open here.

The 19-year-old Spaniard, the former World No. 1 who has recently returned from an injury break, rallied from 2-4 down in both the first and second sets before putting away the World No. 80 for the second time in as many weeks, having beaten the 29-year-old 6-4, 6-2 in the Buenos Aires quarterfinals.

Second seed Cameron Norrie kept alive the possibility of a final showdown with Alcaraz for the second consecutive week after he rallied from a set down to defeat Bolivia's Hugo Dellien 4-6, 6-1, 6-4.

But Norrie will be looking for a good start on Saturday against Spaniard Bernabe Zapata Miralles, who reached



his second consecutive semifinal after taking out countryman Albert Ramos-Vinolas 6-4, 2-6, 6-4.

Despite hitting 32 winners to Lajovic's 13 and winning 16 of 17 net approaches, Alcaraz will not be entirely happy with his performance after forcing himself to work harder than perhaps needed for victory. In addition to going down breaks in both sets and making 25 unforced errors, the Spaniard was broken at 5-all in the second despite holding a 40/0 lead in the game.

The former World No. 1 was forced to save a set point with some inspired play at the net in the following game before running away with the win in the tie-break. Should he win his eighth tour-level title Sunday, Alcaraz will join World No. 1 Novak Djokovic with 7,070 points in the ATP Rankings. But the 10-time Australian Open champion will remain atop the rankings because he has earned more points at mandatory events during the past 52 weeks.



# 'RRR' BAGGED 4 AWARDS AT THE HOLLYWOOD CRITICS ASSOCIATION AWARDS

Los Angeles | Agencies

As the Oscar race gets intense, filmmaker S.S. Rajamouli's magnum opus continues to make waves on the global canvas as 'RRR' bagged 4 awards at the Hollywood Critics Association (HCA) Awards.

The film won Best International Film, Best Action Film, Best Stunts, and Best Original Song for the Oscar-nominated track 'Naatu Naatu'. The film managed to beat the Tom Cruise-starrer 'Top Gun:

Maverick'.

As Rajamouli took to the stage, he was joined by actor, Ram Charan to accept the Best International Film award.

The actor said: "I didn't expect to come up on stage. I was just told by my director to accompany him. Thank you so much for giving us all this love. It's a great response, so we are going to come back with better films and entertain you all. Thank you so much." With the current momentum and having bagged honours at the Critics Choice Awards and Golden Globe Awards in Los Angeles this year, all eyes are now set on the film's run at the Oscars which are set to be held on March 12 the Dolby Theatre in Los Angeles.



## ALIA BHATT & SHANTANU CELEBRATES ONE YEAR OF GANGUBAI KATHIAWADI

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Alia Bhatt is one of Bollywood's most popular actresses. She had a fantastic year in both her career and personal life last year. Alia has had it all, from delivering a hit to marrying and welcoming her first child with her husband, Ranbir Kapoor. The one-year anniversary of her blockbuster film, Gangubai Kathiawadi, has arrived. In celebration of the day, the actress posted a lovely photo of herself with the film's director, Sanjay Leela Bhansali.

Taking to her Instagram account, Alia Bhatt posted a photo with Gangubai Kathiawadi director Sanjay Leela Bhansali. The actor-director combo can be seen twinning in white in the photo. Alia is wearing a white satin jacket, which she looks stunning in. She wore her hair down and accessorized with a white pearl earring.

Sanjay, on the other hand, wears a white kurta and stands near the actress, holding her. Alia wrote beside this photo, "One year of our Gangu." Actor Shantanu Maheshwari made his big screen debut with Sanjay Leela Bhansali's 'Gangubai Kathiawadi', which celebrates its first anniversary on Saturday. The dancer-turned actor credits his success to the filmmaker.

Talking about the film completing one year the actor said: "Wherever I am today and the recognition and love I have received till date from the fans and even in the industry, all the credit goes to Sanjay Leela Bhansali sir." He added: "It is an experience that you can't describe in words. As an artist he makes you explore places when you are performing which are not easy to explore and once you can explore those areas within you and where the whole performance is coming from, it is a different high altogether."

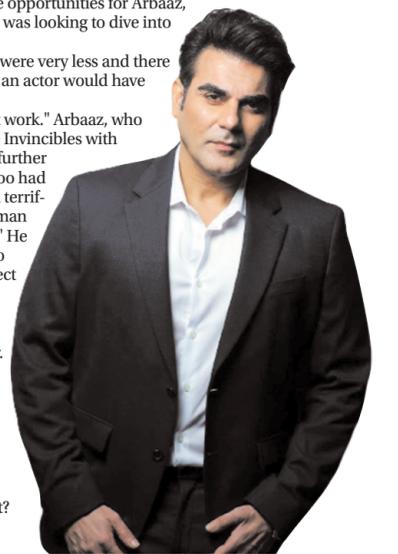
## ARBAAZ KHAN REVEALS WHY HE STARTED HIS CAREER WITH A NEGATIVE ROLE

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Bollywood actor-producer Arbaaz Khan, who was recently seen in the streaming series 'Tanaav', started his career with a negative role in 'Daraar'. One would wonder as to why the son of a legendary screenwriter (Salim Khan of Salim-Javed) and the brother of one of the biggest superstars of India -- Salman Khan, would make such an unconventional choice. Well, it was because the opportunities for Arbaaz, as he admitted, were very few and he was looking to dive into showbiz as early as possible.

The actor told: "The opportunities were very less and there were only a few directors with whom an actor would have wanted to work then."

Honestly, I was just waiting to start work." Arbaaz, who hosts the long-format talk show, 'The Invincibles with Arbaaz Khan' on Bollywood Bubble, further mentioned: "At the end of the day, I too had responsibilities, my father had such a terrific body of work, and my brother (Salman Khan) was already a big star by then." He added, "So, it was important for me to take the plunge. In showbiz, you expect your break at the age of 21 or 22 but, once you're in your mid 20s and you haven't started working, there's pressure on you to work, earn and deliver. So, I thought the film was good and the negative shade of my character did not matter to me." "So, it was more of a work calls, I got the award in my very first film. I agree that for a long time I was typecast as an actor after that film but that also gave me work. To work is all that matters, right? And, I changed that particular image over a period of time", he concluded.



Kangana calls Akshay's movie a "flop", compared first day collections to her film

## 'Dhaakad'

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Kangana Ranaut has once again targeted filmmaker Karan Johar but this time it's a film he has backed with his Dharma Productions - 'Selfie'. The Bollywood actress called the movie a "flop" and even compared the first day collections to her film 'Dhaakad'.

Kangana slammed filmmaker Karan's co-produced film 'Selfie' starring Akshay Kumar and Emraan Hashmi on the day it hit screens. Kangana wrote on her story: "Karan Johar movie Selfie has hardly made 10 lakhs on the first day I don't see even one trade or media person talk about it forget mocking or bullying him the way they harass me."

In her next post, Kangana re-shared an article, the headline of which read: "Male version of Kangana Ranaut," Netizens react as Akshay's 'Selfie' fails to impress viewers, may be his 6th flop film in a row." She captioned it: "I was looking for news about selfie flop I found all the news is about me. Yeh bhi meri hi galti hai (This is also my fault). Wah bhai Karan Johar wah."

'Selfie' is the official Hindi remake of the Malayalam film 'Driving License'. It's backed by Karan Johar's Dharma Production along with Magic Frames, Prithviraj Productions, Cape of Good Films and Star Studios.

## Vishal Bhardwaj is impressed with Wamiqa Gabbi's efforts in short film

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Filmmaker-writer-music director Vishal Bhardwaj was in for a surprise when actress Wamiqa Gabbi put up a seamless dance performance for the short film 'Fursat'. The film uses the Broadway style of narrative. The director was earlier apprehensive to see how Wamiqa would adapt to the short film, but when he first saw her at the rehearsal, he was assured of his choice. He said: "I was always sure of Wamiqa's acting capabilities; however, knowing that she

isn't a trained dancer, I had my doubts and had even discussed simplifying the choreography if required. But she impressed us all after the first rehearsal itself. It's her dedication towards her craft that she chose this challenge and I am really proud of her." About working on the unique format,

Wamiqa said: "I like experimenting with various formats of storytelling. But the key point of this experiment with the format is execution. If it's not executed well, it can completely go south."

She added: "I am happy to have got a chance to try out this format with Vishal Sir. As they say, the devil lies in details, sir just goes for that. He points out those small nuances and which makes his work a class apart." The 30-minute short film has been shot entirely on an iPhone.



Ruhii Singh