

# absolute india



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**NATION** > 02  
Govt demands apology from Rahul as Congress objects ...



**HOLLYWOOD** > 06  
Oscars 2023: 'Everything Everywhere All at Once' picks 7 titles including ...



**SPORTS** > 07  
WPL 2023: Saika Ishaque has been a real find for this ...

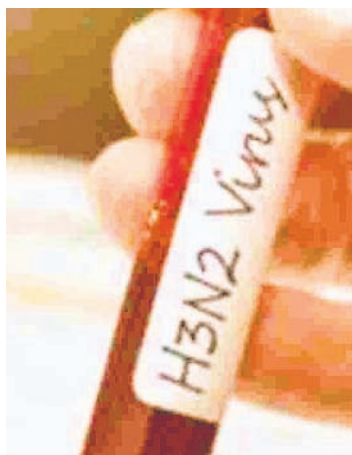
## H3N2 VIRUS: HEALTH EXPERTS CALL FOR MASKS, BETTER HYGIENE & FLU SHOT

# BE VIGILANT

▶ ACCORDING TO DATA FROM THE INDIAN COUNCIL OF MEDICAL RESEARCH (ICMR), THERE HAS BEEN A COMBINATION OF RESPIRATORY VIRUSES RANGING FROM COVID-19 VIRUS, SWINE FLU (H1N1), H3N2, AND THE SEASONAL VICTORIA AND YAMAGATA LINEAGES OF INFLUENZA B VIRUSES IN CIRCULATION.

▶ H3N2 AND H3NI ARE BOTH TYPES OF INFLUENZA A VIRUSES, COMMONLY KNOWN AS THE FLU.

▶ SOME OF THE MOST COMMON SYMPTOMS INCLUDE PROLONGED FEVER, COUGH, RUNNING NOSE, & BODY PAIN. BUT IN SEVERE CASES PEOPLE MAY ALSO EXPERIENCE BREATHLESSNESS AND/OR WHEEZING.



(Integrated Health Information Platform). This includes 1,245 cases in January, 1,307 in February, and 486 cases till March 9.

"In my opinion, for the time being the government can again make masks mandatory at least in highly vulnerable zones like public transports, hospitals, airports, railway stations and other public conveyances. People should avoid visiting crowded places, or wear a mask whenever in public," Dr. Sunil Sekri, Associate Consultant - Internal Medicine, Max hospital, Gurugram, told reporter.

Meanwhile, the Covid infection has also reported a spike after four months as 524 daily Covid cases were reported on Sunday.

"For the last three years we have learned how respiratory infections can be prevented. Because the infec-

Masking is important particularly for those who are both with comorbidities and the family members of those who are having such kind of people at their home.

Dr. Iswar Gilada, An infectious disease expert

tions go out and come in from the nose and mouth, you need to cover this area and that is masking. Proper masks are needed, particularly when you are in crowded places," said Dr. Iswar Gilada, an infectious disease expert. The experts also suggested people to wash their hands before eating or utilising any public transit with soap or sanitiser to minimise the risk of infection.

Another thing is flu shots, that need to be taken annually to help boost immunity. It is because, "a vaccine that you took last year might not necessarily cover the influenza virus that's going to come next year or the year after. It will give you some baseline protection but it may not give you the best protection", Dr. Jayadevan told reporter. Meanwhile the experts also stated that antibiotics should be

The respiratory virus "spreads through droplets, so which means that the secretions can spread from person to person, and most people touch their nose and mouth at some point, or those secretions can remain on the fingers and when they shake hands with other people."

Dr Rajeev Jayadevan, Co-Chairman, IMA's National Covid-19 Task Force

People should avoid visiting crowded places, or wear a mask whenever in public."

Dr. Sunil Sekri, Max hospital, Gurugram

avoided in treating the flu as it works only against bacteria and not viruses.

"Antibiotics are not effective against viral infections like influenza or Covid-19. Antibiotics are designed to target and kill bacteria, not viruses. In some cases, antibiotics may be prescribed if a bacterial infection is suspected or if there is a secondary bacterial infection, such as pneumonia, that develops as a result of a viral illness," Dr Laxman Jessani, Consultant, Infectious Diseases, Apollo Hospitals, Navi Mumbai, told reporter. "However, it is important to use antibiotics judiciously and only when they are truly necessary to help prevent the development of antibiotic-resistant bacteria," Jessani added.

## Oscars 2023: 'Naatu Naatu' wins Best Original Song



LOS ANGELES | Agencies

'Naatu Naatu' picturised on Ram Charan and NTR Jr from the film 'RRR' made India proud again as it won the Best Original Song at the 95th Academy Awards.

Leaving behind names such as Lady Gaga, Diane Warren and Rihanna, 'Naatu Naatu' made history after contending against songs such as 'Applause' from 'Tell It Like a Woman', 'Hold My Hand' from 'Top Gun: Maverick', 'Lift Me Up' from 'Black Panther: Wakanda Forever' and 'This Is a Life' from 'Everything Everywhere All at Once'.

Music composer M.M. Keeravaani said on receiving the honour: "Thank you Academy. I grew up listening to The Carpenters... and here I am at the Oscars. There was only one wish on my mind... So was Rajamouli's and my family... 'RRR', pride of every Indian. Thank you."

'Naatu Naatu' has already won a Golden Globe and a Critics Choice Award this year.

### 'The Elephant Whisperers': Best Documentary Short Film

Los Angeles: India's short documentary 'The Elephant Whisperers' has brought home an Oscar in the Best Documentary Short Film category at the 95th Oscar Awards. The award was presented by Pedro Pascal. 'The Elephant Whisperers' was competing in the category alongside 'Haulout', 'How Do You Measure a Year?', 'The Marsha Mitchell Effect' and 'Stranger at the Gate'.

The documentary was received by the director Kartiki Gonsalves and Guneet Monga. Kartiki talked about the film and said it is for coexistence and thanked the Academy Awards for recognising their work. 'The Elephant Whisperers' marks Kartiki Gonsalves' directorial debut. The documentary is about the bond that develops between a couple and an orphaned baby elephant, Raghu, who was entrusted to their care.

## Sixteen parties attend Kharge's meet on opposition strategy



Team Absolute | New Delhi

As many as 16 opposition parties on Monday attended the meeting convened by Leader of Opposition Mallikarjun Kharge at his chamber in Parliament building to devise a strategy ahead of the second part of the budget session on Monday. "Misuse" of central agencies against political leaders, MSP guarantee, inflation are some of the issues the opposition parties will be raising jointly in both the Houses. The opposition MPs in Lok Sabha have moved adjourn-

ment notice and in Rajya Sabha suspension of business notice have been moved. In the Lok Sabha, Congress MP Manish Tewari has moved an adjournment notice on the issue of LAC and Manickam Tagore on hike in LPG prices. The suspension notice in the Upper House has been given on post poll violence in Tripura by CPI MP Binoy Vishwam. Parties that attended the meeting at the LoP's chamber are: Congress, DMK, JD(U), AAP, CPI(M), KC, RLD, NCP, NC, CPI, IUML, SS (Uddhav), MDMK, RSP, RJD and JMM.

## 'Very seminal issue'

### SC REFERS PLEAS FOR SAME-SEX MARRIAGE TO A CONSTITUTION BENCH

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Supreme Court on Monday referred a batch of petitions seeking recognition of same sex marriage to a constitution bench for final hearing, noting it is a "very seminal issue" against the backdrop of interplay of various rights including of right to live with dignity.

A bench headed by Chief Justice D.Y. Chandrachud and comprising Justices P.S. Narasimha and J.B. Pardiwala said: "It is a very seminal issue", while scheduling the matter for consideration before a five-judge bench on April 18. The proceedings will be live streamed.

The bench said it will invoke Article 145 (3) of the Constitution and have this matter decided by a constitution bench, comprising five judges. Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, representing the Centre, contended that the right



to love or right to express one's love, irrespective of gender of other person, is completely different from what the court would find the mechanism to give recognition or to give a sanctionity by way of an institution called marriage.

Mehta further contended that if the marriage is recognised between same sex, then the question will be of adoption, then the Parliament, which represents the

will of the people, will have to examine the psychology of child, who has seen either two men or two women as parents, and has not been reared by a father and a mother, and clarified that he is not giving any judgement.

He added that Parliament will have to debate and take a call, in view of societal ethos and several other factors, whether same-sex marriage needs to be recognised.

## DELHI-DOHA PLANE DIVERTED TO KARACHI DUE TO MEDICAL EMERGENCY, PERSON DECLARED DEAD

New Delhi: An IndiGo flight was diverted to Karachi airport in Pakistan after one of its passengers fell sick. The plane was flying from Delhi to Doha.



The passenger reportedly passed away before the flight could land.

Officials said that a passenger on IndiGo Airline flight 9E1736 felt sick in the flight, after which the captain of the plane contacted the Karachi Air Traffic Control and relayed the information regarding a medical emergency.

"IndiGo flight 6E-1736, operating from Delhi to Doha was diverted to Karachi due to a medical emergency on board. Unfortunately, on arrival, the passenger was declared dead by the airport medical team," said the airline on Monday.

"We are deeply saddened by the news and our prayers and wishes are with his family and loved ones. We're currently making arrangements for transferring the other passengers of the flight, in coordination with the relevant authorities," added the airline spokesperson.

Officials said that the person has been identified as a Nigerian.

## WOMAN STRIPPED, ASSAULTED BY 11 MEN IN AGRA



Agra: A 30-year-old woman was allegedly beaten and stripped by a group of men after she resisted eve-teasing in Uttar Pradesh's Agra district. According to the FIR, the woman had objected to eve-teasing by two men last week.

Later, the two along with 11 others, armed with sticks, barged into her house and stripped her while her family members were also assaulted. The woman said that the accused also threatened to kill her family if they filed a police complaint. An FIR has been registered at the Tajganj police station against the 13 accused under various IPC sections including rioting, SHO Raj Kumar said, "The accused men are absconding. Efforts are being made to arrest them."

"India's engagement with China is complex. Chinese attempts to unilaterally alter the status quo along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in the Western Sector starting from April-May 2020 have disturbed the peace and tranquility along the LAC. These have been met with an appropriate response from the Indian armed forces," the report said.

On Pakistan, the annual report said that "India desires normal neighbourly relations with Pakistan. India's consistent position is that issues, if any, between India and Pakistan should be resolved bilaterally and peacefully, in an atmosphere free of terror and violence. The onus is on Pakistan to create such a conducive environment. However, Pakistan continues to sponsor cross border terrorism against India; restrict normal trade, connectivity, and people-to-people exchanges".

## RELATIONS WITH CHINA 'COMPLEX', PAKISTAN ENGAGES IN HOSTILE AGENDA TO VILIFY INDIA: MEA REPORT

India has admitted that its relationship with China is "complex" while criticising Pakistan for continuously sponsoring cross-border terrorism despite New Delhi's attempts to normalise ties with it.

Team Absolute | New Delhi

In its annual report for 2022, the Ministry of External Affairs has been critical of both its neighbouring countries for their efforts to disrupt peace along India's northern and western borders.

It further stated that "the External Affairs Minister has conveyed to his counterpart that restoration of normalcy will require a restoration of peace and tranquility in the border areas. It was also highlighted that India-China relationship is best served by observing the three mutuals - mutual respect, mutual sensi-

activity, and mutual interests. The two sides remain engaged through diplomatic (11 meetings of Working Mechanism for Consultation and Coordination (WMCC) since June 2020) and military channels (17 meetings of Senior Highest Military Commander (SHMC) since June 2020) to resolve the remaining issues along the LAC".

It also added that Pakistan continues to engage in hostile and fabricated propaganda to vilify India, and to divert attention from its domestic political and economic failures. India has completely and unequivocally rejected all actions and

statements by Pakistan on matters which are completely internal to India.

"There is a greater understanding among countries that Jammu and Kashmir is an integral part of India and that the matters related to it are internal to India. Despite India's persistent urging that Pakistan respect its January 2004 commitment of not allowing its soil or territory under its control to be used for terrorism against India, there was no let-up in cross-border terrorism, infiltration and illegal smuggling of arms into India across the LoC and International Boundary," it

noted. "Pakistan is yet to show sincerity in delivering justice to the families of the 26/11 Mumbai terror attacks. India has consistently stressed the need for Pakistan to take credible, irreversible and verifiable action to end cross border terrorism. India consistently raises the issue of Pakistan's continued support to cross-border terrorism and terrorist infiltration in bilateral, regional and multilateral fora. In such outreach, credible inputs regarding the Pakistani-origins of the captured terrorists are also shared," the report said further.

## RETAIL INFLATION SEES MARGINAL FALL TO 6.44% IN FEBRUARY 2023

New Delhi: Retail inflation for February 2023 fell marginally to 6.44 per cent compared to 6.52 per cent in January 2023 as commodity prices witnessed a slight slide.

Food inflation also slid to 5.95 per cent in February 2023 compared to 6 per cent in January.

Consumer price index (CPI) based inflation touched 6.52 per cent in January 2023, which was a three-month high owing to higher food prices.

However retail inflation was 6.07 per cent in February 2022, and therefore CPI-based inflation in February 2023, at 6.44 per cent, was higher compared to the year-ago period. The marginal fall in retail inflation in February 2023 was mainly due to reduction in prices of meat and fish, egg, vegetables, pulses, and sugar. At the same time though, prices of fruits, clothing and footwear, education, transportation, health and household goods went up in February 2023 compared to January 2023.



# GOVT DEMANDS APOLOGY FROM RAHUL AS CONGRESS OBJECTS

**Team Absolute** | New Delhi  
**L**eaders of the House in Rajya Sabha Piyush Goyal on Monday demanded an apology from Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on his statement in the UK.

Goyal said that his statement has brought disrepute to the country and Rahul Gandhi should apologise.

He said, "A prominent Opposition leader goes abroad and attacks Indian democracy. He has levelled allegations against the press, judiciary and the institutions. He has insulted the people of India and Parliament. There is freedom of speech in India and MPs can speak in Parliament. Rahul Gandhi should apologise in Parliament."

The opposition, especially the Congress, objected to it and raised slogans. Leader of opposition Mallikarjun Kharge condemned the statement of Goyal amid sloganeering from treasury benches. The House was



adjourned till 2 p.m.

Kharge said Rahul is not the member of this House and Prime Minister himself has insulted the country in China.

Addressing the MBA students at the Cambridge Judge Business School on the topic of 'Learning to Listen in the 21st Century', Rahul Gandhi had said that the opposition parties are under 'constant pressure' as

numerous cases have been slapped on them by the BJP government.

"Indian democracy is under attack. The institutional framework which is required for a democracy -- Parliament, free press, the judiciary, just the idea of mobilisation -- these are all getting constrained. We are facing an attack on the basic structure of democracy," Rahul Gandhi had said.

## PARLIAMENT ADJOURNED TILL TUE AMID PROTESTS OVER RAHUL'S REMARKS

**New Delhi:** Both Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha were adjourned till Tuesday, amid vociferous protests by both treasury benches and opposition members over the issue of Congress MP Rahul Gandhi's speech in London. As soon as Lok Sabha convened at 2 p.m., Rajendra Agrawal, who was in the Chair, asked for papers to be laid in the House. However, Congress members came into the well of House, shouting slogans "We want JPC" while treasury benches were also seen shouting slogans "Rahul Gandhi Maafi Maango" (Rahul Gandhi apologise).

Agrawal urged protesting members to return to their seats, saying that they should allow some business to be transacted. "All issues would be discussed," he said. Agrawal also said that the Speaker has disallowed all adjournment motions given by various members.

As protests continued from both treasury benches and opposition members, he adjourned the House till Tuesday. Rajya Sabha too was adjourned by Chairman Jagdeep Dhankhar within minutes of the upper House convening at 2 p.m., amid protests



## Finish Modi and country will be saved, says Congress' R'sthan in-charge

**Jaipur** | Agencies

**L**aunching a scathing attack on Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Congress' Rajasthan in-charge Sukhjinder Singh Randhawa on Monday levelled allegations against PM Modi, questioning the Pulwama incident. He said that if Modi is finished the country will be saved, however, if Modi stays then the country will be ruined.

Randhawa said, "Our fight is not with Adani, but with the BJP. Kill BJP and Adani-Ambani will die automatically. When the Congress comes, Adani-Ambani should go to jail. Many of our leaders did not take them along. This has to be taken care of."

He added, "I tell all leaders to end their fighting and talk about ending Modi-BJP. If Modi is finished then the country will be saved. If Modi stays then the country will be ruined. Modi talks about patriotism. They don't even know what patriotism is."

Randhawa questioned the Pulwama incident and said



that Modi says "Pakistan mein ghuskar mareng". First of all, tell me, how did Pulwama happen? Get it checked. Wasn't it done keeping in mind the elections." He stated "All those who went to jail during the freedom struggle were from Congress families. Five generations of Congress families have gone to jail for the country. There is blood of every Congressman in Andaman's Cellular Jail. Modi says what has the Congress done. The Congress has given freedom to the country, it has given the country to a dishonest person like you," he com-

mented. Randhawa was speaking at the Raj Bhavan gherao programme organised by the Congress under the leadership of Rajasthan Pradesh Congress Committee president Govind Singh Dotasara on Monday in protest against the crony capitalism policy of the BJP central government in favour of Adani.

Randhawa said, "When the British came, they had brought the East India Company to do business. Modiji has brought a man like Adani by making him like the East India Company which looted the country for 200 years and took it over. The country is moving towards slavery again. Not Modi but Adani is deciding what will happen in the country," he said.

He added, "First take out Modi, if Modi goes out then Adani will automatically end. First kill BJP, Adani will end automatically. Narendra Modi is destroying the country and selling the country." He lashed out at factionalism and selfish leaders in the Congress and said, "We have to work for the Congress, not for any individual."

## No rule of law under Modi, country being run as dictatorship, says Kharge

**Team Absolute** | New Delhi

**C**ongress president and leader of opposition in the Rajya Sabha Mallikarjun Kharge on Monday said that there is no rule of law under Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Addressing a press conference at Vijay Chowk outside Parliament, soon after both Houses were adjourned over protests related to Congress MP Rahul Gandhi's remarks in London, Kharge said, "There is no rule of law and democracy under Modi ji. They are running the country like a dictatorship, and then they talk about democracy."

He added that those "crushing and destroying democracy" are talking of saving it. Over the Adani



issue, Kharge said, "We are demanding the constitution of a joint parliamentary committee (JPC) on the Adani stocks issue. When we raise this issue, then mikes are

switched off and a ruckus erupts in the House."

However, he added that the opposition is together and will continue to demand a JPC on the Adani issue.

## Delhi BJP observes 'maun vrat' at Raj Ghat demanding Kejriwal's resignation

**Team Absolute** | New Delhi

**D**elhi BJP, under the leadership of party's Working President Virendra Sachdeva, on Monday observed a 'maun vrat' (silent sit-in) opposite Rajghat demanding resignation of Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal for his alleged involvement in the liquor policy scam.

During the silent sit-in, a film was also played on the LED screen "exposing" the alleged lies and false promises of the Kejriwal government.

Leader of Opposition in the Assembly Ramveer Singh Bidhuri, MP Dr Harshvardhan and Ramesh Bidhuri, MLAs Om Prakash Sharma and Abhay Verma, State General Secretaries Kuljit Singh Chahal and Harsh Malhotra, co-incharge of



Jammu and Kashmir Ashish Sood, Co-incharge of Assam Pawan Sharma, former State President Vijay Goel, National Spokesperson Sardar R.P. Singh, State Vice President and others were among those present.

Interacting with reporters after the symbolic one hour 'maun vrat' Sachdeva said that Rajghat is a sacred

place and it is a matter of great regret that Arvind Kejriwal & his colleagues after committing corruption, come here and instead of accepting their mistakes they try to cover up their deeds. Sachdeva said that they observed a symbolic 'maun vrat' demanding resignation of Chief Minister Kejriwal and prayed for his

sanity. He said that the party workers will go to every street and neighbourhood of Delhi and expose this corruption of Kejriwal because the liquor scam happened with the consent of Kejriwal.

"Today, Kejriwal is ashamed to admit his relation with Vijay Nayyar whom he once used to hug. Kejriwal cannot run away from his responsibilities and it is certain that he will come under the probe agency's scanner for his involvement in the liquor scam."

He said that the Kejriwal Government is not only involved in the liquor scam but also in the classroom scam, the DTC scam, the health scam, the Jal Board scam. Delhi BJP will continue to fight to raise the voice of the people against corruption.

## SC AFFIRMS ORDER TO REMOVE MOSQUE FROM ALLAHABAD HC PREMISES

**Team Absolute** | New Delhi

**T**he Supreme Court on Monday affirmed the Allahabad High Court order passed in 2017, directing removal of a mosque from its premises.

A bench of Justices M.R. Shah and C.T. Ravikumar declined to interfere with the high court order and granted three months' time to the petitioner to remove the mosque from the high court premises. It noted that the high court can demolish the construction, if it is not cleared within three months and also allowed the petitioner, Waqf Masjid High Court to make a representation to the state government for an alternative land.

The bench said it does not see any reason to interfere with the impugned judgment and order of the high court. It added, however, it will be open to the petitioners to make a detailed representation to the state government seeking alternative land, which may be considered in accordance with law and on its own merits, and refused to entertain a petition challenging the high court order.

The bench noted that the mosque was situated on government lease



land and the grant was cancelled in 2002, and after cancellation of the lease, the land was resumed in favour of the high court in 2004 for its expansion.

Senior advocate Kapil Sibal, representing the Waqf Masjid High Court, narrated the history of the mosque and added that Muslims were offering namaz and there was an arrangement for wazu as well. He said that the mosque is situated across the road outside the high court and wrong to say it was on the high court

premises. Sibal added that in 2017, the government changed and a PIL was filed against the mosque after the new government was formed and added that the mosque was functioning as a public mosque for decades.

Senior advocate Indira Jaising, representing the UP Sunni Waqf Board, submitted that though the land belonged to the government but the board was in possession of the mosque meant for public use. She added that her client is willing to be

given an alternate site, and they are not insisting that namaz has to be offered there.

The counsel, representing the high court, argued that the petitioner is unnecessarily giving the matter a religious colour.

The top court told the mosque's counsel to try to understand that they have no right since it was a lease property. "Lease was terminated and land was resumed and confirmed by this court... You can't claim it as a matter of right to continue."

## Madras HC quashes govt orders empowering police to exercise powers of executive magistrates

**Chennai** | Agencies

**T**he Madras High Court has quashed two government orders issued in 2013 and 2014 empowering Deputy Commissioners of Police to exercise the powers of executive magistrates under Sections 107 to 110 of the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC).

A division bench of the Madras High Court comprising Justices N. Satish Kumar and N. Anand Venkatesh said that the government orders issued on September 12, 2013 and February 20, 2014 suffer from "manifest arbitrariness and violate the principle of separation of powers under the Constitution".

The court ordered status quo ante as it prevailed before the issuance of the two government orders, and held that such a status would be restored forthwith.

The court made it clear that violation of a bond exe-



cuted under Section 110 of CrPC could be dealt with only by judicial magistrates under Section 446 and not by the executive magistrates under Section 122(1) (b) of the Code.

An executive magistrate cannot authorise imprisonment under Section 122(1) (b) of the code for violation of the bond under Section 107. "A person who has violated a

bond executed before an executive magistrate under the said provision would have to be prosecuted before a judicial magistrate for inquiry and punishment under Section 122(1)(b) of CrPC," the verdict said. The judges also stated: "The police, like the proverbial camel in the tent, occasionally got their noses into the canopy but were stopped in the tracks by the courts. Then in 2013, the camel in its entirety struggled and the revenue officials and executive magistrate were ousted from the canopy and left in the cold. Now we have ousted the camel and put the canopy of justice where it belongs."

The judges also praised the amicus curiae Sarath Chandran, the Additional Public prosecutor, and advocates Janarthanan, Vivekanandan, and M. Santhanaraman for assisting the court.

## Excise policy scam: Delhi court extends bizman Arun Pillai's ED custody by 3 days

**Team Absolute** | New Delhi

**A** Delhi court on Monday extended Hyderabad-based businessman Arun Ramchandra Pillai's Enforcement Directorate (ED) custody by three days in the excise policy case.

He was arrested on March 6 after hours of questioning in the case. Special judge M. K. Nagpal of the Rouse Avenue Courts sent Pillai to ED custody on March 7, which expired on Monday.

The judge, dealing with the matter, extended his custody on Monday. On March 10, Pillai moved an application before the same court seeking to retract his statements given to the probe agency in the case. This led to the court issuing a notice to the ED. His arrest makes up for the 11th

arrest made in the matter by the ED.

The ED has alleged that Pillai was involved in forming a cartel (now called South group) manufacturers, wholesalers and retailers which controlled more than 30 per cent of the liquor business in the national capital. The central agency named the said cartel, South group, which includes BRS leader K. Kavitha, Sarath Reddy, the promoter of Aurobindo Pharma, YSRCP MP from Ongole, Magunta Srinivasulu Reddy, his son Raghav Magunta and others. The South group was represented by Arun Pillai, Abhishek Boinpalli and Butchi Babu, the agency has claimed. Pillai is a partner in Indo Spirits with a 32.5 per cent stake and he represented K.

Kavitha's interest, said the ED.

Pillai and another person have revealed the same in their statements. Pillai on paper invested Rs 3.40 crore in Indo Spirits. As revealed in the investigation, of this amount, Rs 1 crore was given to Pillai on the instructions of Kavitha. In exchange for kickbacks given by the South Group to Vijay Nair and AAP, Indo Spirits was made the wholesaler of Pernod Ricard which made it one of the most profitable LI. Thus the fund of Rs 3.40 crore which used to show investment in Indo Spirits (a special purpose vehicle to recoup the kickbacks paid by the South Group and channel the illegal gains) is proceeds of crime, the ED added. Kavitha is a member of Telangana Legislative Council.

## NIA CONDUCTS SEARCH IN SRINAGAR IN ISIS KERALA MODULE CASE

**Team Absolute** | New Delhi

**T**he National Investigation Agency (NIA) on Monday conducted a search at Uzair Azhar Bhat's house in Karfali Mohalla of Srinagar and seized digital devices.

Bhat is suspected of spreading ISIS ideology, luring people to join the terrorist group and indulging in anti-national activities.

The NIA said that in 2021, they started investigating Mohammed Ameen alias Abu Yahya who had been running various ISIS propaganda channels on different social media platforms, such as Telegram, Hoop and Instagram.

"He was propagating the violent jihadi ideologies of the ISIS and was radicalizing and recruiting new members to this ISIS module. He and his associates had even identified certain individuals for targeted killings. They



had also made plans to undertake Hijrah to Jammu and Kashmir for engaging in terrorist acts and had raised funds from various sources for this trip," the NIA said.

The official said that during the probe, it was found that Mohammad

Ameen was in touch with Deepthi Marla of Kerala, a converted Muslim, married to Anas Abdul Rahiman of Mangalore. In 2015, she had gone to Dubai to pursue studies where she met Mizha Siddeeqe and both women developed an inclination

towards the ISIS. In 2019, they tried to do Hijrah to Khorasan and reached Tehran, Iran. After reaching Tehran, their contact with ISIS operatives based in Khorasan could not be established.

"They both returned to India, and Deepthi got in touch with Ameen, Obaid Hamid Matta, Madesh Shankar alias Abdullah and others and made plans to undertake Hijrah to ISIS administered territory. In January 2020, she went to Srinagar to meet Obaid to plan the Hijrah and stayed in Srinagar for one week," the NIA said. One of the common contacts between Deepthi and Obaid, Uzair Azhar Bhat, who is suspected to have been part of the conspiracy, was raided on Monday. The NIA conducted a search at Bhat's house in Srinagar. The seized digital devices are being examined and further investigations are in progress.



# ATTACK ON KERALA STUDENTS IN MP'S TRIBAL UNIVERSITY STIRS POLITICAL CONTROVERSY

Team Absolute | Bhopal

An alleged attack on four Malayali students at a tribal university in Madhya Pradesh has sparked a political controversy with Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan strongly denouncing the incident and seeking action against the guilty.

According to sources, the four students were allegedly attacked by security staff on the campus of Indira Gandhi National Tribal University (IGNTU) in Madhya Pradesh.

Terming the incident "appalling", the Kerala chief minister has condemned it and demanded prompt action against the guilty students. "The university must take strong action against the culprits and ensure the safety of all students," he wrote in his official twitter handle.

Some other politicians from Kerala, including Congress MP (Thiruvananthapuram) Shashi Tharoor also condemned the incident and demanded action in the matter. In the fresh development, Leader of Opposition (LoP) in Kerala Legislative Assembly -



V.D. Sathesnan has sent a letter to Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chauhan seeking his intervention in the matter. As per the reports, students who were allegedly attacked were identified as - K. T. Nasheel, R. Abhishek, Adnan, and Adil Rashif. The Public Relations Officer of the IGNTU, Vijay Dixit has in a tweet said, "An argument broke out between the students and security personnel over clicking photographs at a water tank near the main gate of the university on the night of March 10."

"The matter escalated into a fight, following which security personnel approached the Amarkantak police station with a complaint against the students, who in turn demanded that the university administration take action against the security staff."

As the incident occurred at the campus of Indira Gandhi National Tribal University located in Amarkantak in Anuppur district, the opposition has targeted the Shivraj Singh Chouhan-led BJP government on atrocities against tribals.

As the elections in Madhya Pradesh are scheduled later this year, both the ruling BJP and the opposition Congress have taken on each other over tribal issues.

Notably, Chief Minister Vijayan alleged that the students were attacked for their regional and linguistic reasons. "This latest vicious onslaught is another glaring episode of the organised series of hostile action against Kerala students who are being targeted for their regional, linguistic and ethnic backgrounds," he asserted.

## STALIN CONDEMNS ASSAULT ON KERALA STUDENTS IN MP, SEEKS CENTRAL INTERVENTION

Chennai: Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M.K. Stalin on Monday condemned the alleged assault on Kerala students at the Indira Gandhi National Tribal University in Madhya Pradesh (IGNTU) by the security staff of the institute.



He also urged the Centre to intervene in the matter and take necessary action. It is to be noted that four students from Kerala were manhandled and assaulted by the security staff at the IGNTU on March 10.

In a social media post, Chief Minister Stalin termed it an "outrageous" attack on students from Kerala at the IGNTU by the security staff. "I appeal to the Union Government to intervene and stop the growing tendency of discrimination and attacks against students in higher educational institutions," he tweeted.

## Cops arrest hundreds of Congress workers, fire water cannons on them to stop their Raj Bhawan march

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Thousands of Congress workers gathered in the state capital on Monday to lay siege to Raj Bhawan in protest against the policies of the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP).

The workers gathered at Jawahar Chowk to take part in the demonstration. As soon as they began to march towards Raj Bhawan, police forces charged water cannons at GTB Complex in TT Nagar, in an attempt to stop them.

However, the plan did not work as Congress workers refused to give up. As a result, the cops arrested hundreds of agitators.

Barricades were raised at all the vantage points in the main city including the areas adjacent to New Market and Raj Bhawan.

Initially, the party workers broke the barricades put up in front of the Rangmahal Talkies Square and marched towards GTB Complex. As the Congress workers tried to climb the barricades, the police stopped them. Immediately after that, the police used water cannon to disperse them, but the Congress men did not give in.

The state Congress organised the demonstration on the instructions of the AICC. The issues raised by the Congress included the financial problems the country is facing, crony capitalism and the Centre's silence over Adani Group, and crony capitalism. Apart from that, the state-related issues were



also raised. MP Congress Committee president Kamal Nath said, "Loyalty of the party leaders and workers will be put to test in the coming six months."

Nath said, "We will march towards Vidhan Sabha after the assembly election holding the party's flag." He further said the coming six months are not about the Congress candidates, but about the future of the state, so the party workers should roll up their sleeves to work together to build a stronger Madhya Pradesh. "Whosoever is standing here has come from all over the state, holding the party flag high, and they will get a prize for their work. Your legacy and your tenacity to fight for people's rights have brought you here," Nath concluded.

## Congress leaders clash with each other over civic election results in Dhar; cross-FIR registered

Team Absolute | Dhar

Two Congress leaders from Dhar town entered into a clash with each other on Sunday night. Both the leaders have accused each other of unnecessarily entering the house and creating a dispute.

Though the incident was reported at around 9.30 pm on Sunday, the dispute had already started at around 4.30 pm. There was an argument between Congress leader Pramod Senapati and Amit Soni, whose wife is former district Congress secretary. The matter seemingly ended then, but in the night both leaders entered each other's house and had a fight.

After the fight, both the Congress leaders and their supporters reached the Kotwali police station, where the police registered a case on behalf of both parties in other sections, including assault.

The wife of Amit Soni, who is the former District Congress Secretary, was a candidate for the post of corporator from the Congress during the municipal elections, although the Congress leader's wife was defeated by the BJP candidate in the election.

Since then, there has been a dispute between Soni and Senapati about the results. Before the brawl on Sunday, Senapati was going from Majhalali on his two-wheeler when Soni and his associates stopped him, and both had an altercation.

However, Soni said that upon reaching his house in Baniyawadi, others, including Senapati, threatened to kill him while abusing him regarding the election.

In this case, the Kotwali police have registered a case against five unidentified people, including Amit Soni, as per the events narrated by Pramod Senapati.

On the other hand, according to the events described by Amit Soni's wife, Madhuri Soni, a case has been registered against five unidentified people, including Pramod Senapati.

According to station in-charge Deepak Singh Chauhan, both parties had come to the police station, based on which the crime has been registered while taking legal action.

## Proposal to include 'Gair' in UNESCO Cultural Heritage list to be sent next year

Team Absolute | Indore

Indore's 'Gair' might be included in the list of UNESCO's cultural heritage in 2024. A proposal in this regard would be sent to UNESCO next year, said Indore MP Shankar Lalwani on Monday. The Gair, which is taken out every year on Rang Panchami in Indore is a procession where people play with colours and is famous all over the world. Efforts are now being made to include it in the list of cultural heritage of UNESCO. MP Shankar Lalwani met Dr. Sandhya Purecha, President of Sangeet Natak Akademi in New Delhi on Monday and explained in detail about Gair of Indore.



complete the necessary documentation. Along with this, Dr. Purecha

instructed the officials that necessary action should be taken immediately from the department as soon as the necessary documentation is completed so that 'Gair' can be included in the UNESCO list.

MP Shankar Lalwani informed that there has been a discussion with Dr. Sandhya Purecha about Indore's Rangpanchami 'Gair' and he also said that since the list for the year 2023 has already been sent to UNESCO, it will be sent in the list for the year 2024. "Necessary documentation for this will be done jointly by the Indore Municipal Corporation and the collector's office", he added.

UNESCO has recently recognized India's Durga Puja as a cultural heritage. Earlier, Ramliha, Vedpath, Navroz, Kumbhmela-Simhashta etc. have also got a place in the list.

## CM Chouhan greets on the song "Naatu-Naatu" and the film "The Elephant Whispers" winning Oscars

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has said that today the whole country is filled with pride. The song "Naatu Naatu" from the film RRR has won an Oscar in the Best Original Song category. Also, the Indian short film "The Elephant Whispers" by Kartiki Gonsalves and Guneet Monga has also been conferred the Oscar Award. First getting the Golden Globe and now the Oscar Award shows that the popularity of Indian music and films has spread all over the world. The Chief Minister has congratulated the director of RRR film Raja Moli, music

composer MM Keeravani, film's artist Ramcharanand Junior NTR for this unprecedented achievement. He also congratulated and extended best wishes to the entire team of the film "The Elephant Whispers". Chief Minister Chouhan was discussing with media representatives in the assembly premises.

It is noteworthy that "The Elephant Whispers" won the Best Documentary Short Category Oscar at the 95th Academy Awards ceremony in Beverly Hills, California. In this, a family takes care of orphaned elephants. The film depicts the sensitive relationship between humans and wild animals.

## CM Chouhan plants saplings along with public representatives and social workers



Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan planted Banyan, Amla and Champa saplings in the garden located at Shyamla Hills.

Along with Chief Minister Chouhan, social workers Laxminarayan Gaur and Jeet Thakur planted saplings on their birthday. Along with Chief Minister Chouhan, Dr. Rajesh Sharma of Narmada

Hospital Group planted a sapling. During this public representatives Lilendra Maran, Satish Rajoria, Gabbar Singh Maran, Chetan Singh Rawat, Pramod Rajoria and Vivek Sharma participated.

## Bhupendra Singh inaugurated coach manufacturing

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Urban Administration Department Minister Bhupendra Singh inaugurated the manufacturing process of coaches of Madhya Pradesh Metro Rail at Savali plant unit of Alstom Transport India in Vadodra in Gujarat on Monday. By August 31, one metro train of three coaches will arrive in Bhopal and Indore.



The first phase of the project will commence in December 2026 in both the cities. Under this, Bhopal will have 30.95-km metro route while Indore will have 31.46-km metro route.

The length of metro train will be 22 metres and breadth will be of 2.9 metres. Their operation speed will be 90

km per hour. The electricity supply will be based on 750 V DC (3rd Rail) technique. Bhopal and Indore Metro will be based on modern signalling technique GoA-4 (Grade of Automation-4) and Unattended Train Operation Mode (driverless).

In the beginning, Metro train in Bhopal and Indore will be run by operator and after two to three years, trains will be operated in unattended train operation mode. Across India, this technique is used only in one line of Delhi Metro.

## BJP LEADER SHOT DEAD AFTER HIS SARPANCH SON FREES 52 ACRES OF LAND FROM MAFIA

Team Absolute | Jabalpur

A BJP leader was shot dead in Radha Lohari village of Majhauhi police station area of Jabalpur on Sunday. Nearly 10 people, travelling along with him including his son, were injured. It is said that the BJP leader's sarpanch son, along with the district administration, freed about 52 acres of land worth crores of rupees from land mafia and the accused were waiting for a chance to attack them.

spot while others sustained injuries and are under treatment at a private hospital.

The accused have been identified as residents of Radha Lohari village-- Sanand Singh, Anand Singh, Sarvesh Singh and Ayush Singh.

Raghuraj Yadav, who took the injured to the hospital, said that a few days ago, the Lohari sarpanch, along with the district administration, freed about 52 acres of land worth crores of rupees from the possession of the land mafia. And, Sanand Singh and Anand Singh were desperately looking for a chance to attack them, he added.

As soon as the information about the same incident came, senior police officers reached the spot. Further investigation is underway. There is a lot of resentment in Lohari village, due to which heavy police force has been deployed.

As per information, BJP leader Kanchan Yadav, along with some supporters reached Radha Lohari to attend Rang Panchami on Sunday. After attending the program, he, along with his Sarpanch son Rahul Yadav and some supporters, were on their way back. Suddenly, a group of men attacked them and started firing. The BJP leader died on

## Tigress electrocuted in Sanjay Tiger Reserve in Sidhi

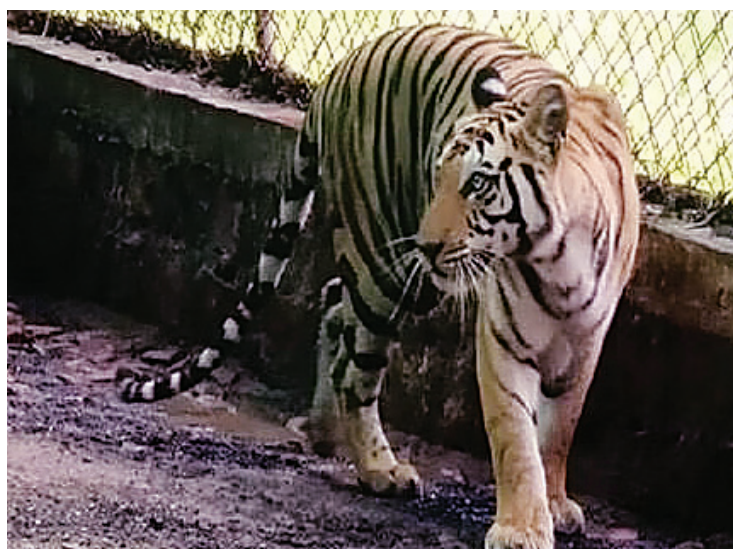
A tigress allegedly died of electrocution in a buffer zone of Sanjay Tiger Reserve in Madhya Pradesh's Sidhi district, a forest official said on Monday.

Team Absolute | Sidhi

The big cat, identified as T-32, had allegedly stepped into a trap laid by poachers and got electrocuted in Tamsar buffer zone, the reserve's field director Amit Kumar said. Five suspects were being interrogated about the death, he said.

The location of the tigress could not be tracked through her collar-id since March 9. On the basis of her last whereabouts, a dog squad was pressed into service to look for the feline, the official said.

The carcass was found buried in the sand near Gopad River on Sunday, he said adding that veterinarians from Panna Tiger Reserve were called in to perform the autopsy.



## Two, travelling in sleeper coach on general class ticket, assault TC in Howrah-Mumbai Express



Team Absolute | Jabalpur

ATC was assaulted in a moving train in Howrah to Mumbai Express on Monday, after he objected to a group of five people for travelling in a sleeper coach on general class ticket. A case of assault in a moving train with a railway TC has come to light.

The incident took place in Howrah Mumbai Mail train running from Howrah to Mumbai. Ticket collector Vinay Kumar Rajak was checking the tickets of the passengers in the sleeper coach of the train, when the

train cut off. When the train reached MP's Katni station, TC Vinay Rajak was checking the tickets in coach number S5, where he found two people Lalji Patel and Sumit Patel travelling in the sleeper coach of the train on a general ticket. When TC Rajak asked the passengers to pay the fine, the passengers got angry and started arguing and allegedly punched him. The passengers intervened and saved TC Vinay. As soon as the train reached Jabalpur, TC Vinay Rajak complained about the assault incident to GRP, before that the accused ran away.



EDITOR'S SPECS

JD(U) READY FOR ALLIANCE WITH SP IN UP FOR 2024 POLLS

National president Rajeev Ranjan Singh 'Lalan Singh' has said that if his party forms an alliance in Uttar Pradesh for next year's Lok Sabha polls, it will be with the Samajwadi Party (SP). "If there will be an alliance in Uttar Pradesh, it will be with the SP," he said in an informal interaction with reporters. The JD(U), which is in power in Bihar in alliance with the Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD), has no elected representative in the Uttar Pradesh assembly. Interestingly, the party's state president Anoop Patel resigned in front of Singh, citing personal reasons. The JD(U) president announced that no new chief of the party's state unit would be announced. Satyendra Patel has been appointed as the state convenor, Singh said. He said the party and its working committee in Uttar Pradesh would be strengthened throughout this year for the 2024 Lok Sabha elections. The JD(U) will start a membership campaign in Uttar Pradesh with a target of adding five lakh members, Singh said. On the caste-based census, Singh said: "We asked the Central government about it. Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar met Prime Minister Narendra Modi for the caste-based census but got no response. With the support of regional parties, we started the caste-based survey (in Bihar) which will continue till May 31."

# ANTI-WOMEN TALIBAN

Asad Mirza

The slew of anti-women measures adopted by the Taliban government in Afghanistan has essentially gone against them, further isolating them globally and making them a pariah. Reportedly, a handful of Afghan women courageously held a demonstration in the Afghan capital, Kabul, on 8 March, calling on the international community to protect Afghan women.

This was the second International Women's Day observed under the Taliban-led government in Afghanistan, which swept back to power in August 2021, and more or less marked a year-and-a-half of increasing misery for Afghan women.

In a statement to mark the International Women's Day, the head of the UN mission in Afghanistan, Roza Otunbayeva said it has been distressing to witness the Taliban's methodical, deliberate, and systematic efforts to push Afghan women and girls out of the public sphere.

The UN mission said the crackdown was a "colossal act of national self-harm" at a time when Afghanistan faces some of the world's largest humanitarian and economic crises.

The anti-women Taliban decisions have faced international condemnation, including by some Muslim countries even. The State of Qatar, earlier this week expressed deep concern over the Afghan caretaker government's decisions which negatively affect Afghan women and girls' rights, especially suspending their studies in secondary schools and universities and banning their work in non-governmental organisations.

The Qatari condemnation was conveyed in a statement delivered by the Permanent Representative of the State of Qatar to the United Nations Office in Geneva, HE Dr. Hind Abdul Rahman Al Muftah dur-



ing an interactive dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Afghanistan, within the framework of the 52nd regular session of the Human Rights Council.

The deputy foreign minister of Turkey, Mehmet Kemal Bozay, has said that the international community must not allow the situation in Afghanistan to deteriorate "even further." The Secretary General of the Organisation of the Islamic Cooperation (OIC), Hissein Brahim Taha, spoke in Geneva and reiterated the OIC's condemnation of Kabul's edicts banning women from education and work, saying: "It is against our religion."

Anti-women diktats

The biggest crackdown on teenage girls and university students came just days before Women's Day, when earlier this week the authorities banned them from secondary schools and higher educational institutions. No country has officially recognised the Taliban government as Afghanistan's legitimate ruler, with the right to education for women a sticking point in negotiations over aid and recognition.

ing the status of women in society. The authors of the open letter, including international lawyers, argue that the legal definition of apartheid as a crime against humanity, adopted by the UN in 1973 and supported by the 1998 Rome Statute, does not fit the case of Afghanistan and Iran, even if the descriptive term does.

According to UNESCO, currently, 80 percent of school-aged Afghan girls and young women - totalling 2.5 million people - are out of school. The Taliban's decision to keep girls' schools shuttered has reversed significant gains in female education during the past 20 years.

In another anti-women diktat, Taliban government has annulled divorce in Afghanistan, forcing divorced women to go back to abusive husbands. Lawyers say that several women have reported being dragged back into abusive marriages after Taliban commanders annulled their divorces.

UN deputy spokesman Farhan Haq said last Friday that a delegation headed by UN Deputy Secretary General Amina Mohammed to Afghanistan recently, found that some Taliban officials were more open to restoring women's rights, but others were clearly opposed.

Mohammed, a former Nigerian Cabinet minister is the UN's highest-ranking woman, she was joined on the trip by Sima Bahous, execu-

utive director of UN Women, which promotes gender equality and women's rights, and Assistant Secretary General for political affairs Khaled Khari. The UN team met with the Taliban administration in the capital Kabul and talks focused on the restrictive measures the Taliban government has imposed on women and girls since they re-took power.

The UN has stressed that Afghan women are crucial to delivering humanitarian help to civilians, the majority of them women and children.

The Taliban government adheres to an austere interpretation of Islam and has imposed severe restrictions on women's lives that the United Nations called "gender-based apartheid".

Notably, the Ministry of Women's Affairs and the Human Rights Commission in Afghanistan have been erased under the Taliban regime.

According to the UN Mission in the country, nine out of 10 women in Afghanistan experience physical, sexual or psychological violence from their partner. Divorce, however, is far greater a taboo than the abuse itself and women who part with their husbands sustain many atrocities at the hands of society.

The United Nations' special representative for women in Afghanistan, Alison Davidian said the implications of the government's policies "impact all Afghans and will resonate throughout generations".

Meanwhile, a prominent group of Afghan and Iranian women are backing a campaign calling for gender apartheid to be recognised as a crime under international law.

The campaign, launched on International Women's Day, reflects a belief that the current laws covering discrimination against women do not capture the systematic nature of the policies imposed in Afghanistan and Iran to downgrade

Taliban Mindset

Initially, when the Taliban 2.0 took over power in Afghanistan in August 2021, there was some euphoria that now they might be a changed Taliban, looking forward to mend their earlier ways and chart a new course of development for their country.

However, starting with their first diktat in September 2021, urging for segregated classrooms for boys and girls at schools, the caretaker Taliban government has followed it up with a slew of anti-women measures.

What perplexes one is that though the Taliban describe most of these decisions as Islamic, in fact they are completely un-Islamic. Islam gives equal rights to men and women in all spheres of life, including, education, inheritance, right to work, say in marriage. Yet, in action Taliban goes completely against the spirit and teachings of Islam.

Instead, if they had adopted a new pragmatic and forward looking approach towards reorganising the Afghan society, it would have gone in their favour and would have helped them to consolidate their power in the country. As currently there seems to be no political force in the country, which could counter the Taliban. In addition, it would have provided them legitimacy and support from the so-called Islamic countries, if only they would have chosen to uphold the Islamic teachings, which in reality, they have failed to do.

international

## UK CUTS DIPLOMATIC JOBS IN COUNTRIES LIKE INDIA, PAKISTAN, CHINA: REPORT

London | Agencies

British-based diplomatic posts for key Indo-Pacific countries like India, Pakistan and China have been cut by up to 50 per cent in recent years, according to new government figures.

Despite being identified as key places to deepen ties with over the coming decade, staff members of embassies and consulates in Pakistan, China and India have all been diminishing over the last seven years, the Guardian reported.

According to the report, the number of British-based Foreign Office staff was between 110 and 119 in the Pakistan embassy and consulate.

This fell to 50-59, a cut equivalent to about 50 per cent.

Over the same timeframe, the number of British-based Foreign Office staff was cut from 70-79 to 40-49 in the past seven years in India.



The figures shared by the Guardian came from the Foreign Office minister David Rutley, in response to written parliamentary questions by the Labour frontbencher Catherine West.

The figures also showed a reduction in the number of trips by ministers to these countries.

The Foreign Office and international development department conduct-

ed 37 ministerial trips to the Indo-Pacific region in 2018, with some countries being visited more than once a year.

However, by 2022, the number of ministerial trips conducted was less than a third of that, with just 12 recorded, the Guardian reported.

A Foreign Office spokesperson told the Guardian that these numbers do not give an "accurate picture" of Britain's presence in the Indo-Pacific region.

The reduction in headcount of UK-based staff in China and India is partly due to Covid and how the UK spends its overseas development budget, the Guardian was told.

Citing evidence of the UK's growing influence in the region, the spokesperson told the Guardian that there was a boost of 16.4 per cent in trade with the Indo-Pacific year-on-year from autumn 2021 to 2022.

## N.Korea fired 2 'strategic cruise missiles' from submarine

Seoul | Agencies

North Korea fired two "strategic cruise missiles" from a submarine in waters off its east coast over the weekend, the country's state media said on Monday.

The North's first known firing of cruise missiles from a submarine is widely viewed as an apparent show of force against a major South Korea-US combined military exercise, reports Yonhap News Agency.

The missiles were fired from the 8.24 Yongung in waters off Kyongpho Bay in the East Sea in an underwater launching drill held at dawn on Sunday, according to the North's official Korean Central News Agency (KCNA).

"The drill confirmed the reliability of the weapon system and examined the underwater-to-surface offensive operations of submarine units that constitute one of other major forces of the DPRK nuclear deterrent," the KCNA said in a report, using the acronym of the North's official name.

The missiles precisely hit preset targets in the East Sea after "travelling the 1,500 km-long eight-shaped flight orbits for 7,563 to



7,575 seconds".

The latest launch came on the eve of the start of the allies' 11-day Freedom Shield exercise, which the North calls "preparations for a war of aggression" against it.

North Korea said its latest underwater launching drill "verified the current operation posture of the nuclear war deterrence means in different spaces".

Earlier in the day, South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) said it detected an unspecified missile launched from a submarine in waters off the North's eastern coastal city of Sinpo on Sunday morning. It did not immediately provide other details.

## 22 KILLED AFTER MIGRANT BOAT CAPSIZES OFF MADAGASCAR

Antananarivo: At least 22 people have been killed after a boat carrying migrants capsized off the coast of Madagascar, the East Africa nation's port authority said.

The boat carrying a total of 47 people capsized on Saturday due to an accident in the seas off the coast of Madagascar, the Maritime and River Port Agency said in a statement late Sunday.

Twenty-three of them on board were saved, and operations to rescue the missing were still ongoing, Xinhua news agency quoted the authorities as saying.

The boat was on its way to the French overseas island of Mayotte, according to the statement.

## Flood water inundates Australian state with crocodiles lurking underneath

Brisbane | Agencies

With major flooding still occurring in Burketown and the Gregory River, the police force in the Australian state of Queensland on Monday reminded residents to limit movement in floodwaters due to unseen hazards and recent crocodile sightings.

"Police rescued a baby kangaroo from floodwaters behind a residential community in Burketown yesterday. A helicopter pilot flew over at the time and spotted two very large crocs nearby, a timely reminder to stay out of floodwaters as you never know what is lurking beneath," Queensland Police Service warned on social media.

In an update on the severe weather event affecting northwestern Queensland, the state police said sewage and water treatment plants in Burketown are now offline, with residents instructed to conserve water usage and continue to monitor advice



from local councils.

As significant flooding is surging downstream of Urundangi to Roxborough Downs, police are closely monitoring the situation in Urundangi, with 16 people so far evacuated from the town in preparation for rising floodwaters.

According to the police, air assets are stationed nearby and on standby for emergency rescues and transport of food, water and medical supplies.

Days of heavy rainfall led to major to record-breaking floodings through parts of northwestern Queensland. "No observations are available for

the Burketown Airstrip manual gauge. Based on anecdotal information from Burketown, the river level is expected to have peaked above the 2011 record flood level of 6.78 meters on Sunday," said the Australian Bureau of Meteorology (BOM).

"Major flooding is expected to be easing slowly on Monday. The river level along the Albert River at Burketown Airstrip is expected to continue easing slowly over the next few days, but is likely to remain above the major flood level (6.00 m) during Monday and Tuesday, possibly longer," the BOM added.

Burke Shire Mayor Ernie Camp told Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) on Monday morning that up to 100 people had been evacuated from Burketown, with another 120 across the shire.

Camp noted that the water levels dropped about 400 mm.

"So hopefully, there won't be no any further rises and we'll keep it positive."

## 22 IS militants killed in operation in Iraq

Baghdad | Agencies

A total of 22 Islamic State militants, including some of the group's leaders, were killed in an operation in Iraq's western province of Anbar, the Iraqi military said.

Lieutenant General Abdul Wahab al-Saadi, Head of the Iraqi Counter-Terrorism Service, said on Sunday at a press conference that the operation was carried out in two phases by an airborne force on a rugged area north of the town of Rutba, nearly 400 km west of the Iraqi capital Baghdad.

All the killed militants were wearing explosive belts, and senior leaders were among the dead, said al-Saadi without revealing the exact date for the beginning of the operation, confirming



that the operation is still underway, Xinhua news agency reported.

Over the past months, Iraqi security forces have conducted operations against extremist militants to crack down on their intensified activities.

The security situation in Iraq has been improving since the defeat of the IS in 2017. However, its remnants have since sneaked into urban centers, deserts, and rugged areas, carrying out frequent guerilla attacks against security forces and civilians.



MAHA FARMERS SPURN CM'S DOLE, START NASHIK-MUMBAI 'LONG MARCH'

Team Absolute | Nashik/Mumbai

Not impressed by the government's announcement of a Rs 300/quintal subsidy for distressed onion cultivators, thousands of farmers started their footmarch from Nashik to Mumbai on Monday afternoon in support of their various demands.

The All India Kisan Sabha leader and seven-time ex-CPI(M) MLA Jiva Pandu Gavit said that after discussions with the various farmers groups, it was concluded that the Chief Minister Eknath Shinde's proposal is "not acceptable" and the 'long march' will continue as scheduled.

"We have asked for Rs 600/quintal as immediate relief when onions are being sold at one or two rupees, and Rs 2000/quintal MSP from the next season. The government has offered only Rs 300/quintal now and no word on the MSP," Gavit told IANS during the walkathon.

CPI(M) spokesperson P.S. Prasad said that the government's assurance of Rs 300/quintal is "no relief" to the crisis-hit farmers who are now throwing away or burning their produce.

For the third time in five years, thousands of farmers are again on the road to Mumbai for their various demands that remain pending since long, braving the intense summer heat. It has come after similar marches in 2018 and 2019 - and will traverse around 175 kms - attracting farmers from all over the state who converged in Nashik on Sunday.



Among the demands are an immediate subsidy of Rs 600/quintal and MSP of Rs 2000/quintal from next season for onion growers, writing off of farmers' loans, suitable remuneration for all agriculture produce, power bills waivers, quick compensation for crop losses due to unseasonal rains-hail, forest land rights, etc.

Led by Gavit, the participants include ASHA workers, and representatives of the unorganised sectors, who wend their way waving the party flags and placards with slogans 'Give MSP to Onion', etc.

"Besides the subsidy and MSP, we demand that there should be bulk export of onion, it should be procured in bulk from NAFED at the MSP," Gavit and other farmers leaders said.

The farmers have sought regularisation of encroachers on forest lands up to four hectares with names in the 7/12 documents, waiver of power bills and making electricity available 12 hours daily for farmlands, clear the 7/12 of farmers by waiving off their entire agriculture loans.

They have also demanded NDRF amount of compensation for all crop damages due to unseasonal rains and other natural calamities that hit the agriculturists round the year, quick compensation and curb the "loot" by crop insurance companies, create an independent system for regular inspection of milk meters and weighing forks for milk and a minimum price of Rs 47 for cow milk and Rs 67 for buffalo milk and stop the conspiracy to slash prices of soybean, cotton, tur and grams, re-start selling grain along with free rations on ration cards every month.

Ahead of civic polls, MVA to hold joint rallies in Maharashtra

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Ahead of the upcoming local bodies elections, Maharashtra's Opposition Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) plans to hold a series of rallies in major poll-bound cities, party leaders said here on Monday.

Top leaders of Congress, Nationalist Congress Party, and Shiv Sena-UBT will unitedly reach out to the masses to speak on burning issues like inflation, joblessness, woes of farmers, how Eknath Shinde connived with Bharatiya Janata Party to topple the MVA regime in June 2022, and others.

The move comes after hectic deliberations among the top brass of the MVA which notched a major success in the recently-held Kasba Peth by-elections in Pune where it jointly trounced the BJP in its 3-decades old bastion.

The first of the proposed rallies shall be held on April 2 in Chhatrapati Sambhaji Nagar followed by Nagpur on April 16.

On May 1, a major public rally is planned in Mumbai coinciding with the Maharashtra Day festivities, May 14 in Pune, May 28 in Kolhapur and June 3 in



Nashik. The three parties shall galvanise their workers and leaders to work together with mutual respect and display strength to uproot the Shiv Sena led by Chief Minister Eknath Shinde and the ruling ally BJP in various civic bodies going to the polls, MVA leaders said.

NCP President Sharad Pawar, Sena-UBT President Uddhav Thackeray and Congress state President Nana Patole and others have cited the win in Pune as an example of how the BJP and its allies can be vanquished if the Opposition works in unison.

After these upcoming rallies in the regional headquarters, the three parties will fan out to hold similar meetings at district levels and in the remotest parts of the state from mid-2023, serving to kickstart the election process for Lok Sabha and Assembly polls in 2024.

MVA leaders like Thackeray, Pawar Sr., Leader of Opposition in Assembly Ajit Pawar, Leader of Opposition in Council Ambadas Danve, NCP state chief Jayant Patil, Patole, Chhagan Bhujaal, ex-CMs Prithviraj Chavan, Ashok Chavan and others have held deliberations on these aspects in the past few days.

Major fire sweeps Malad slum in Mumbai, no casualties

Team Absolute | Mumbai

A major fire swept through several hutments in Appapada area of Anand Nagar in Mumbai's Malad east suburb on Monday evening, the BMC Disaster Control said.

The fire was followed by some loud explosions, according to locals, and thick black smoke was seen billowing from the site that was visible several kms away in the north and south.

The BMC rushed at least 3 fire tenders and other teams to battle the conflagration and no casualties have been reported so far.

This is the second major fire in the north-west suburbs of the city today that kept the authorities on toes since morning. Around 11 a.m., a massive blaze engulfed a furniture warehouse and adjoining shops in the Jogeshwari furniture market and was only finally doused after a six-hour operation.

In both cases, there are no human injuries and the causes of the blaze are not known, officials said.

FIRE ENGULFS MUMBAI'S FAMED JOGESHWARI FURNITURE MARKET, NO CASUALTIES



Mumbai: A massive fire broke out in a godown at the famed Jogeshwari furniture market engulfing at least half a dozen adjoining shops near SV. Road, here on Monday, the BMC Disaster Control said.

The Mumbai Fire Brigade, Mumbai Police, and other agencies rushed and started battling the blaze in which no casualties were reported so far. The market, which sells, old, new, wooden and metal, refurbished or custom-made furniture, is a popular destination for residential or commercial consumers wanting to decorate their homes or offices, with even foreigners occasionally dropping in for antique pieces available here.

The cause of the blaze or the damage caused is not known and the fire-fighting operations are underway, said the BMC Disaster Control.

AMAZING THAILAND FESTIVAL 2023 TO BE HELD IN MUMBAI

Mumbai: With India being one of the top source markets for Thailand, 'Amazing Thailand Festival 2023' is poised to spotlight Thailand as the "first-choice" destination for Mumbaikars and significantly boost its brand awareness.

Scheduled from March 24-26 2023 at Jio World Drive - BKC, Mumbai, the Festival organised by the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) Mumbai Office is strongly aimed towards increasing the brand awareness of Thailand in India and upscaling its tourist arrivals.

The three-day event will largely promote the 5 F's of Thailand, that is food, film, fashion, fight, and festivals. It will invite discerning tourists and potential trade partners from the length and breadth of Mumbai to get closely acquainted with its wide cultural variety, including its unique fashion, cuisine, artistry, and a whole lot more.

Isada Saovaras, Director of Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) - Mumbai Office said: "The people of India (Mumbai) have a special place for Thailand in their hearts. Thousands of Mumbaikars travel to Thailand every year to witness its unique culture, indulge themselves in the local cuisine, and explore its scenic wonders. We are elated to bring true 'Thainess' to them in Mumbai through the Amazing Thailand Festival 2023. We hope that this festival will help in demonstrating the abounding diversity and innate essence of the Thai culture and convince people to travel and experience Thailand in the coming months."

BRIGHT OUTDOOR MEDIA LIMITED prospectus. Includes company details, promoters (Yogesh Jiwantlal Lakhani and Jagruti Yogesh Lakhani), issue details (38,00,000 equity shares at ₹10/- each), and application information. Issued on Tuesday, March 14, 2023.



Oscars 2023

# 'Everything Everywhere All at Once' picks 7 titles including Best Picture



Los Angeles | Agencies

'Everything Everywhere All at Once' was named best picture at the 95th Academy Awards, capping off an improbable awards season run by winning the movie business's highest honour.

Malaysian actress Michelle Yeoh has become the first Asian actress to walk home with the Best Actress honour at the 95th Academy Awards. Yeoh was awarded for her stellar work in 'Everything Everywhere All at Once'.

She raced ahead of her fellow nominees like Cate Blanchett, Michelle Williams, Ana de Armas and Andrea Riseborough.

'Everything Everywhere All at Once' seems to be unstoppable as it has collected five awards at the ongoing Oscar Awards, the latest one being Best Director award for the film's director duo, the Daniels -- Daniel Kwan and Daniel Scheinert.

Daniel Kwan and Daniel Scheinert won the honour for Best Original Screenplay for their film 'Everything Everywhere All at Once' at the 95th Academy Awards.

The honour was presented by Florence Pugh and Andrew Garfield. They were up against 'The Banshees of Inisherin', 'The Fabelmans',



'Tr' and 'Triangle of Sadness'.

Scheinert credited his win to his public school teachers.

Actress and producer Jamie Lee Curtis just won an Oscar as she was named as the Best Supporting Actress for her work in 'Everything Everywhere All at Once'.

Jamie was nominated alongside names such as Angela Bassett ('Black Panther: Wakanda Forever'), Hong Chau ('The Whale'), Kerry Condon ('The Banshees of Inisherin') and Stephanie Hsu ('Everything Everywhere All at Once').

While taking the prestigious statuette, Lee Curtis dedicated the honour to everyone from her family to her fans. The Oscar for the Best Supporting Actor was conferred upon Vietnamese-American actor Ke Huy Quan.

He edged out fellow nominees like Brendan Gleeson ('The Banshees of Inisherin'), Brian Tyree Henry ('Causeway'), Judd Hirsch ('The Fabelmans') and Barry Keoghan ('The Banshees of Inisherin').

The actor bagged the honour for his comeback role in the film 'Everything Everywhere All at Once'. The actor made history as the first Vietnam-born actor to win an Oscar.

## 'ALL QUIET ON THE WESTERN FRONT' WIN BEST INTERNATIONAL FEATURE FILM AWARD

Los Angeles | Agencies

The German anti-war film 'All Quiet on the Western Front' is leading the Oscars as it has won four awards so far at the ongoing 95th edition of the Academy Awards. The film, directed by Edward Berger, was feted with the Best International Feature Film honour in addition to Best Cinematography, Best Original Score and Best Production Design.

It defeated films like 'Argentina, 1985', 'EO', 'The Quiet Girl' and 'Close'.

The Oscar for Achievement in Cinematography was awarded to James Friend for his outstanding work in 'All Quiet on the Western Front'.

The award was presented by 'Creed 3' actor-director Michael B. Jordan and Jonathan Majors.

Other nominees in the category included Darius Khondji ('Bardo, False Chronicle of a Handful of Truths') Mandy Walker ('Elvis'), Roger Deakins ('Empire of Light') and Florian Hoffmeister ('Tar').



## RIPPED JEANS, NO MAKE-UP, LADY GAGA SURPRISES ALL

Los Angeles | Agencies

Singer-actress Lady Gaga took everyone by surprise on the stage during the ongoing 95th edition of the

Academy Awards. The singer appeared in a no make-up look donning a casual avatar with ripped jeans and a black t-shirt. She performed her song 'Hold My Hand' from the Tom Cruise-starrer cinematic extravaganza 'Top Gun: Maverick'.

The decision seemed to be a last-minute back-and-forth effort as Gaga was initially reported to be skipping the awards show due to demands on filming 'Joker: Folie a Deux'.

## BRENDAN FRASER NAMED BEST LEAD ACTOR FOR 'THE WHALE'

Los Angeles | Agencies

It was an emotional moment for Hollywood star Brendan Fraser, who was all in tears after hearing his name at the 95th Oscars Awards, where he won the Best Lead Actor for his acclaimed film 'The Whale'.

The award was given to him by Jessica Chastain and Halle Berry.

His name was in the category along with Austin Butler 'Elvis', Colin Farrell 'The Banshees of Inisherin', Paul Mescal 'Aftersun' and Bill Nighy 'Living'.

All in tears of happiness, Fraser said: "So this is what the multiverse looks like. I thank the Academy for this. And my studio for making this bold film."

He then told all the other contenders that it's an "honour to be named alongside you in this category".

"I wanted to tell you that Whales can swim in the depth. I started 30 years ago and things didn't come easy to me. But I want to thank you for this acknowledgment."

## 'WOMEN TALKING' BAGS BEST ADAPTED SCREENPLAY TROPHY

Los Angeles | Agencies

The Oscar for the Best Adapted Screenplay was awarded to Sarah Polley for her work in 'Women Talking'. The film is based on the 2018 eponymous novel by Miriam Toews, and is inspired by real-life events that occurred at the Manitoba Colony, a remote and isolated Mennonite community in Bolivia. In 2009, the insular Mennonite colony in eastern Bolivia became international news when nine male members of the sect were accused, and eventually convicted, of systematically drugging and raping at least 130 girls and women from their own community between the ages of 8 and 60. 'Women Talking' won over films like, 'All Quiet on the Western Front', 'Living', 'Top Gun: Maverick' and 'Glass Onion: A Knives Out Mystery'.

## 'ALL THAT BREATHES' LOSES BEST DOCUMENTARY AWARD TO 'NAVALNY'

Los Angeles | Agencies

Indian documentary 'All That Breathes', directed by Shaunak Sen, lost out the Best Documentary feature award to 'Navalny'.

Other nominees in the list included 'Navalny', 'All The Beauty And The Bloodshed' and 'A House Made of Splinters'.

While accepting the award, director Daniel Roher made a political statement as he said that as Alexei Navalny languishes in prison, he calls out the unjust invasion of Ukraine by Russia and Vladimir Putin.



## RUTH CARTER BECOMES FIRST BLACK WOMAN TO WIN TWO OSCARS

Los Angeles | Agencies

Ruth E. Carter is the first Black woman to win two Oscars. In 2019, she became the first Black person to win the Oscar for costume design for her work on Marvel's 'Black Panther'. At the 95th Academy Awards, she was once again recognised for the film's sequel, 'Wakanda Forever', reports 'Variety'.

Carter, according to 'Variety', beat out Catherine Martin, who won the BAFTA and Costume Designers Guild awards for her work on Baz Luhrmann's 'Elvis'.

She also beat Mary Zophres for 'Babylon', Jenny Beaven for 'Mrs Harris Goes to Paris' and Shirley Kurata for 'Everything Everywhere All at Once', which was the surprise winner of the Sci-Fi Fantasy award at the CDGA.



## 'AVATAR: THE WAY OF WATER' WALKS AWAY WITH BEST SPECIAL EFFECTS HONOURS

Los Angeles | Agencies

The epic science fiction film, 'Avatar: The Way of Water', directed by James Cameron, clinched the trophy for Best Visual Effects at the ongoing 95th edition of the Academy Awards in Los Angeles and it doesn't come as a surprise even one bit given its stunning visuals.

The film comfortably defeated its fellow contenders in the form of the German anti-war film 'All Quiet on the Western Front', 'Top Gun: Maverick', 'Black Panther: Wakanda Forever' and 'The Batman'. 'Avatar: The Way of Water' is the long-awaited sequel to the 2009 film 'Avatar'. The film has so far collected \$674.6 million at the US domestic box-office.

## GUILLERMO DEL TORO'S 'PINOCCHIO' WINS BEST ANIMATED FEATURE FILM

Los Angeles | Agencies

The Academy had the right nose to smell out the Best Animated feature film nominated at the 95th Academy awards as acclaimed filmmaker Guillermo del Toro's movie 'Pinocchio' has taken home the Best Animated Feature Film honour.

The award was presented by Emily Blunt and Dwayne Johnson at the prestigious event.

Guillermo del Toro's 'Pinocchio' was contending against animated movies such as 'Marcel the Shell With Shoes On', 'Puss in Boots: The Last Wish', 'The Sea Beast' and 'Turning Red'.

After winning the award, Del Toro on stage said that Animation should be kept in the conversation. He said: "Animation is cinema, it is not a genre and ready to be taken for the next level. Keep animation in the conversation. I want to dedicate to my wife, kids and parents who are not there with me."

Elizabeth Banks trips on stage, blames it on bear from 'Cocaine Bear'

Los Angeles | Agencies

Actress Elizabeth Banks slightly tripped while making her way on the stage to announce the Best Visual Effects category at the 95th Academy Awards. Elizabeth was followed by a "bear" on stage and she blamed tripping because of him. When she came on stage, she said: "He (pointing at the bear) tripped me, I recently directed 'Cocaine Bear' and without visual effects, this is what the bear looks like. Terrifying." Talking to the "bear", Elizabeth said in a joke: "The coke is not real, it's visual effects. Avatar is visual effects Batman flying around is not real but Tom Cruise flying is real a Wakanda is real!" She concluded with a joke: "Without visual effects Vivian's bear would have been a man in a bear suit with cocaine." 'Cocaine Bear' is a 2023 American horror comedy film directed by Elizabeth Banks.



## ABSOLUTE PIC OF THE DAY



Kylie Jenner



## IND vs AUS 4th Test Day 5

# FOURTH TEST DREW; INDIA RETAINS BORDER-GAVASKAR TROPHY BY 2-1

Ahmedabad | Agencies

The fourth Test between India and Australia has ended in a draw at the Narendra Modi Stadium, with the hosts winning the Border-Gavaskar Trophy series 2-1 and retaining the trophy at home.

With more than an hour left on the clock for the game to end, both teams called for the match to end, as it reached the inevitable result of draw, as India pocketed their 16th consecutive series win at home. Also, it is the fourth straight series between India and Australia that has ended at 2-1 scoreline.



India and Australia will meet again in the World Test Championship final at the Oval in England from June 7-11. India's spot was sealed after New Zealand beat Sri Lanka by two wickets in a thrilling last-ball finish at Hagley Oval. It was a Test match in Ahmedabad where the batters were dominant on a slow, flat pitch, completely opposite of the spin-friendly pitches in the first three Tests, which all ended in three days.

Despite that, ace off-spinner Ravichandran Ashwin took a six-wicket haul. Usman Khawaja, and Cameron Green notched up centuries for Australia, while Shubman Gill made a sparkling 128 and Virat Kohli made a magnificent 186 for India.

Travis Head and Marnus Labuschagne notched up fifties as Australia reached 175/2 before the end arrived as hopes for an unlikely win for both teams terminated.

Post lunch, Head reached his fifty when he guided a delivery from Axar Patel for four to take Australia towards safety. Opener Travis Head fell ten runs short of his Test century while left-arm spin all-rounder Axar Patel claimed his 50th Test wicket as Australia reached 158/2 in 64 overs.

After tea, Smith slammed a boundary each off Ashwin and Jadeja.

### Brief scores

Australia 480 in 167.2 overs and 175/2 in 78.1 overs (Travis Head 90, Marnus Labuschagne 63 not out; Axar Patel 1/36, Ravichandran Ashwin 1/58) draw with India 571 in 178.5 overs.

## IT'S QUITE DIFFICULT TO SCORE RUNS OFF LYON: SHUBMAN GILL

Ahmedabad| India opener Shubman Gill, who notched up a sparkling 128 in the fourth Test of Border-Gavaskar Trophy here, admitted that the hosts batting line-up tried to put veteran off-spinner Nathan Lyon under pressure as they found it quite difficult to get runs off him.

"(Lyon) is always on his mark. He tests your patience so much. Especially when I was batting against him on day three and the first session was quite challenging for me and Rohit. Just the areas that he bowls."

"He doesn't give much to the batter for someone who is consistently bowling outside off stump; he doesn't give half volleys or short balls. That's quite amazing. As a batter it's quite difficult to score runs off him," said Gill after the game ended.



## Bangladesh clinch historic series victory over England

Dhaka | Agencies

Bangladesh has registered a landmark series victory over England in any format, beating the reigning Men's T20 World Cup champions by four wickets in the second T20 of the three-match series at Shere Bangla National Stadium.

Mehidy Hasan Miraz's impressive all-round show set up the stirring victory with 4/12 from four overs that helped dismiss England for 117, then added 20 valuable runs in the chase in Sunday's win.

Najmul Hossain Shanto scored an unbeaten 46\* and Taskin Ahmed hit the winning runs with two fours in the penultimate over to steer Bangladesh to their target with four wickets and seven balls in hand, ending England's long run of success in this format, having won the T20 World Cup, and bilateral series against Australia and Pakistan last year.

The T20I series in Bangladesh is the first between the teams, with England coming out on top in their only other meeting in the format by eight wickets at the T20 World Cup 2021.

England has triumphed in all five ODI series against Bangladesh, including with two wins from the three 50-



over clashes between the teams earlier this month.

Bangladesh won their fifth-ever ODI against England in 25 attempts in their most recent meeting after half-centuries to Shanto, Mushfiqur Rahim and Shakib Al Hasan.

England has been even more dominant in red-ball matches, with victories in their first eight Tests against Bangladesh to open with a streak of four 2-0 series victories. Bangladesh won the first T20I in the series by six wickets and will be aiming for a clean sweep in the third and final clash in Mirpur on March 14. Miraz and Shanto were two of five players in the Bangladesh team to have played fewer than 20 T20Is, as they look to build a new group to compete at the highest level.

## OUR COMEBACK IN DELHI TEST SHOWED A LOT OF CHARACTER AND FIGHT: ROHIT



Ahmedabad| India captain Rohit Sharma said his team's fightback in the second Test at New Delhi is something he would cherish, citing the character and fight shown to retain the trophy.

"With the result 2-1, the first two Tests, we knew how important it was to start the series. I think the Delhi Test match was something I'm really proud of because we were very much behind the game and to come back from the situation that we did shows a lot of character and a lot of fight," he said.

"It was fantastic. Right from the word goes. It was exciting, all the Test matches there was something in it for everyone to watch. We understand the importance of the series and definitely understand the importance of the opposition."

"After playing good cricket for 40-odd days we stand here with a result we are quite happy with. There were challenges thrown up but we responded to them," added Rohit.

## Ashleigh Gardner, Brook seal ICC Player of the Month awards for Feb 2023

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Australia's off-spin all-rounder Ashleigh Gardner was named the ICC Women's Player of the Month for February 2023, while England's young batter Harry Brook clinched the ICC Men's Player of the Month for the same duration.

Both Ashleigh and Brook seal their second Player of the Month awards after winning the honours back in December 2022. While Ashleigh beat competition from Nat Sciver, and Laura Wolvaardt, Harry defeated challenges from fellow nominees Ravindra Jadeja and Gudakesh Motie.

In the opening match of Women's T20 World Cup against New Zealand, she produced a dazzling bowling performance; taking 5/12



runs to restrict them to a modest 76 all out in pursuit of Australia's 173. With a total of 10 wickets during the tournament at an average of 12.50, she was named Player of the Tournament in Australia's sixth time of winning the tournament.

"Thank you to everyone who voted me the ICC Women's Player of the Month. The past month has been ground-breaking for women's cricket and it's an

exciting time for our sport. The T20 World Cup was a brilliant tournament, and playing the hosts South Africa in the Final in front of a packed crowd at Newlands was an incredible experience." "Our Australian team are fortunate to have a number of world-class players, I'm happy I was able to contribute to our team success over the course of the World Cup," said Ashleigh on receiving the honour.

On the other hand, Brook continued where he left off when arriving in New Zealand in February. He started the series with a fluid 89 in 81 balls, and followed it up with another half-century in the second innings to claim the Player of the Match award as England secured a thumping 267-run victory at Mount Maunganui.

## ARSENAL, MAN CITY KEEP UP PRESSURE IN PREMIER LEAGUE

London | Agencies

Arsenal retained their five-point lead at the top of the Premier League this weekend after a comfortable 3-0 win away to Fulham.

The pressure was on Mikel Arteta's side after Manchester City took three points, but goals from Gabriel after 21 minutes and Gabriel Martinelli five minutes later got them on their way, reports Xinhua.

Martin Odegaard scored Arsenal's third goal of an assured display in first-half injury time, and Arteta's men have now won their last five league matches.

Manchester City remains second after a 1-0 win away to Crystal Palace thanks to Erling Haaland's 78th-minute penalty.

Manchester United midfielder Casemiro was sent off for a studs-up challenge in the 34th minute of his side's 0-0 draw at home to Southampton. The red card was Casemiro's second in 19 games.



Both sides hit the woodwork, but Southampton will be disappointed not to have come away with a surprise win that would have lifted them off the bottom of the table.

Chelsea continues to improve with

a 3-1 win away to Leicester City, who have now lost four games in a row.

Ben Chilwell, Kai Havertz and Mateo Kovacic scored for Chelsea, while Patson Daka netted for the home side.

Harry Kane scored twice and Son Heung-min also got on the score-sheet as Tottenham recovered from a bad 10 days which saw them knocked out of the Champions League and FA Cup with a 3-1 win at home to Nottingham Forest.

Leeds United twice came back from a goal down to take a 2-2 draw at home to Brighton. Alexis Mac Allister and a Jack Harrison own goal twice put Brighton ahead, but they were pegged back by Patrick Bamford and Harrison, who netted at the right end 12 minutes from time.

Dwight McNeil scored in the first minute to give Everton a 1-0 win at home to Brentford. The win ended Brentford's unbeaten run which stretched back to October, and lifted Everton out of the bottom three.

## PUNJAB END SEASON IN STYLE, HIT HALF-CENTURY OF POINTS

Panchkula | Agencies

Already crowned champions a week ago, RoundGlass Punjab ended the I-League season in style with yet another convincing 2-0 victory over TRAU FC here at the Tau Devi Lal Stadium.

Staikos Vergetis's men finished with 52 points from 22 matches, becoming the first champion side to cross the 50-point mark since Churchill Brothers in 2012-13.

AIFF president Kalyan Chaubey presented the prizes in a simple ceremony. AIFF Executive Committee Member and AIFF Futsal Committee chairman Vijay Bali was also present.

The icing on the cake for RoundGlass Punjab was Slovenian forward Luka Majcen's brace on the



night, which allowed him to surpass David Castaneda's tally and win the Golden Boot with 16 goals.

Tiddim Road Athletic Union (TRAU) knew before kick-off that

they would finish fourth even if they manage to beat this season's I-League champions, as Gokulam Kerala cemented third place by beating Sreenidi Deccan earlier in

the day. It is difficult to say whether that led to a lack of motivation, but Leimapokpam Nandakumar Singh's boys did not look the pugnacious lot they have been this season.

Luka Majcen, however, was his usual self around the opponents' penalty area. He scored his 15th goal of the season and the first of the match in the 35th minute with a dipping right-footer from well outside the box.

Majcen's hot pursuit of becoming the league's top-scorer finally came to an end just after the break with a coolly-placed header. Freddy Lallawmawma made a sharp turn on the right edge of the TRAU box and sent a perfect cross to the Slovenian waiting in the middle between two defenders. He headed it into the left corner to make it 2-0.

## Shadab to lead Pakistan in Afghanistan T20Is

Team Absolute | New Delhi

All-rounder Shadab Khan will captain Pakistan in the three-match T20I series against Afghanistan as the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) on Monday named a 15-man squad for the three-match T20I series in Sharjah, which is set to commence on March 24.

The board also named Mohammad Yousuf as the interim head and batting coach.

Key players like regular skipper Babar Azam along with along with Fakhar Zaman, Haris Rauf, Mohammad Rizwan and Shaheen Shah Afridi have been rested, while Asif Ali, Haider Ali, Mohammad Hasnain and Khushdil Shah failed to find a place in the squad. These nine players were part of the Pakistan squad that reached the final of the ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2022 in Australia. Shadab will lead the side that includes four



uncapped players -- Ihsanullah, Saim Ayub, Tayyab Tahir and Zaman Khan -- while Abdullah Shafique, Azam Khan, Faheem Ashraf and Imad Wasim have been recalled in the squad.

Apart from the Shadab, players retained from the last T20I series are Iftikhar Ahmed, Mohammad Harris, Mohammad Nawaz, Mohammad Wasim Junior, Naseem Shah and Shan Masood.

## Indian Wells

# Medvedev downs Ivashka for 16th straight win of the season



Indian Wells (USA) | Agencies

The four-time ATP Masters 1000 champion, Daniil Medvedev secured a 6-2, 3-6, 6-1 win over Ilya Ivashka, scoring his 16th straight victory to advance to the fourth round of the Indian Wells Masters.

This win is Medvedev's best Indian Wells result from 2021. He finished with eight aces and six double faults to enter the round-of-16, where he will meet Alexander Zverev.

Medvedev broke the opening game of a straightforward first set. He broke again to open the second set, only for Ivashka to break back from 40/15 to spark a run of eight straight points and flip the feeling on the stadium court.

Strong serving kept Medvedev in the set, but Ivashka was on top in the many long rallies as his opponent grew frustrated with what he felt were slow conditions in the desert night. A loose service game handed a break to Ivashka, who served out the set to love to force a decider. Medvedev rediscovered the form in the final set and raced to a 5-0 lead, locking in from the baseline to blunt Ivashka's power game, and served out the win after Ivashka avoided a bagel with a 0/40 escape, completing the job on his fifth match point.

The matchup against Zverev, the pair's first ATP Head-to-Head meeting since Zverev's victory in the 2021 Nitto ATP Finals, will break a 6-6 tie in the series

## PEGULA JUMPS TO FOURTH ROUND WITH A WIN OVER ANASTASIA POTAPOVA

Indian Wells (USA) | The No.3 seed American, Jessica Pegula came from a set down to beat No.27 seed Anastasia Potapova to reach the fourth round of the Indian Wells Masters.

Pegula rallied for a 3-6, 6-4, 7-5 win over Potapova in 2 hours and 17 minutes on Sunday to enter the last 16 in the California desert for the second time in her career. She previously came from a set down to beat Italy's Camila Giorgi in her first match.

In addition to coming from a set down against Potapova, Pegula was 3-1 down in the decider. She also saved a breakpoint at 4-4 in the second set and won seven of the last eight points to extend the match.





## DEEPIKA PADUKONE PICKS CLASSIC HOLLYWOOD LOOK FOR RED CARPET

Los Angeles | Agencies

Actress Deepika Padukone, who is among the presenters at the Oscars alongside Dwayne Johnson, Emily Blunt, Riz Ahmed, Glenn Close, Samuel L. Jackson, Michael B. Jordan and Jonathan Majors, walked the coveted red carpet as she picked a classic Hollywood look for the event with an all-black attire.

The actress took to her Instagram and shared her look from the red carpet. She can be seen dressed in an off-the-shoulder jet-black gown, serving old-Hollywood glamour.

Her gown featured an off-the-shoulder neckline with a plunging design, drapings on the arms, full-length sleeves with attached Opera gloves, a fitted bust, corseted bodice, cinched torso, figure-hugging fitting, and a mermaid-style pleated skirt grazing the floor.

Deepika Padukone is making her Oscars debut this year after making her debut in Hollywood with 2017's 'XXX: Return of Xander Cage'.

The actress has represented Indian cinema on a lot of international platforms. In 2022, Deepika was one of the jury members at the prestigious Cannes Film Festival.

## 'The Elephant Whisperers' director dedicates honour to 'motherland India'

Los Angeles | Agencies

A short documentary 'The Elephant Whisperers' brought home an Oscar, its director Kartiki Gonsalves credited her "motherland India" for the win.

"The Elephant Whisperers" was competing in the category alongside

'Haulout', 'How Do You Measure a Year?', 'The Martha Mitchell Effect' and 'Stranger at the Gate'.

After being presented the honour, Kartiki, who was accompanied with producer Guneet Monga, said: "I stand here to speak today about the sacred bond

between us and the natural world for the respect of indigenous communities and empathy towards other living beings we share our space with and finally for coexistence. Thank you to the academy for recognising our film, highlighting indigenous people and animals."

She concluded by saying: "To my motherland India."

The documentary is about the bond that develops between a couple and an orphaned baby elephant called Raghu, who was entrusted to their care.

(Box)

'My heart is racing with joy': Guneet Monga reacts to Oscar

Mumbai | India created history at the just concluded 95th edition of the Academy Awards as 'The Elephant Whisperers' clinched the Oscar for the Best Documentary Short Film. The film's producer Guneet Monga has reacted to her film's big win.

The 'Elephant Whisperers' marks Kartiki Gonsalves' directorial debut.

Lauding the film's director, she said: "This is an incredibly powerful and historical moment. We, as two women from India, stood on that global stage making this historical win. I'm so proud of this film, this moment and proud of my amazing team at Sikhya Entertainment, that an independent production house from India has made the history to be the first ever Indian film by an Indian production to win an Oscar. My heart is racing with all the joy, love, and excitement in the moment. I'm so grateful to Kartiki, the wonderful visionary that she is."



## 'An unforgettable day for Indians'

### TOLLYWOOD & BOLLYWOOD CELEBRATES OSCAR FOR 'RRR'



Team Absolute | Hyderabad

Tollywood is celebrating the historic achievement of Rajamouli's epic movie 'RRR' at the 95th Academy Awards. Several Telugu film stars and celebrities conveyed their compliments to the 'RRR' team Monday after the award for Best Original Song category was announced.

"Congratulations to the entire team of 'RRR' movie on bringing Indian cinema glory," tweeted veteran Tollywood director K. Raghavendra Rao under whose tutelage Rajamouli had begun his movie career.

"And there you go... NAATU NAATU!! Crossing all boundaries!! Congratulations to mnkeeraavani garu, boselyricist and the entire team of RRR on their phenomenal win at the Oscars!! A jubilant moment for Indian cinema," stated Tollywood star Mahesh Babu. He also praised 'The Elephant Whisperers' team.

"Congratulations to the entire team of The Elephant Whisperers on winning the Best Documentary Short...a fantastic film and another phenomenal win," Mahesh Babu noted.

"We've created history. An unforget-

table day for Indians," stated Tollywood's Mass Maharaja, Ravi Teja. Ajay Devgn wrote: "As it is often said, cinema speaks a universal language. Congratulations to the teams of RRR and The Elephant Whisperers for their Oscar win. It's a proud (Indian flag emoji) moment."

Tollywood Megastar and actor Ram Charan's father, Chiranjeevi was among the first to react to the historic moment when the song 'Naatu Naatu' from 'RRR'

clinched the Oscar in the Best Original Song category.

Taking to his social media almost immediately after the magic moment of the announcement in Los Angeles, Chiranjeevi tweeted, "Oscars-a-a would have still been a dream for India but for One Man's vision, courage & conviction ssrajamouli!"

A Billion Hearts filled with Pride & Gratitude! Kudos to every member of the Brilliant Team of RRR Movie".

### This is just the beginning: NTR Jr on 'Naatu Naatu' win

Hyderabad | With 'Naatu Naatu' notching up India's first entertainment win at the Oscars, good wishes are pouring in. NTR Jr who is also attending the Awards event at Los Angeles reacted happily to the 'RRR' feat at the Oscars. "I cannot find the words to express my elation right now. This is not just a win for RRR but for India as a country. I believe this is just the beginning. Showing us how far Indian cinema can go. Congratulations to Keeravaani garu and Chandrabose garu. Of course none of this would have been possible without a master storyteller called Rajamouli and the audiences who showered us with all the love."

NTR Jr also complimented the 'The Elephant Whisperers' team, also from India, winning in the Short Documentary category. "I would also like to congratulate the team of 'The Elephant Whisperers' on their win today bringing another Oscar to India." NTR Jr, along with actor Ram Charan had featured in the iconic 'Naatu Naatu' number from the Rajamouli directorial.

## IIFA - COUNTDOWN TO THE BIGGEST CELEBRATION OF INDIAN CINEMA

The countdown to the biggest celebration of Indian cinema had begun. With the International Indian Film Academy and Awards (IIFA) scheduled to take place at Yas Island, Abu Dhabi, on May 26th and 27th.

Team Absolute | Mumbai

At the dawn of the new millennium in the year 2000 in the heart of London at the iconic Millennium Dome, one of the greatest and biggest entertainment IP's of the 21st century was born - IIFA.

Dedicated to building bridges across cinemas, businesses, communities and nations, creating everyone's dream. One People One World", 21 years ago, the dream to take Indian cinema to the world had come true and a celebration was brought to life that connected people, countries, cultures and nations with the platform of cinema.

Bringing alive the magical and unforgettable memories from over the years as IIFA journeyed the world. Proud to be leaders of the

Industry, IIFA has always put the environmental agenda at the realm of IIFA Weekend & Awards in 2007 when they launched the concept 'Greening The IIFA's' and came up with the idea of symbolizing this idea with Bright Green Carpets instead of traditional red ones.

With stars from Sienna Miller, Colin Firth, Amitabh Bachchan to Priyanka Chopra IIFA has done proud to make a difference and continue to thrive doing so in advocating that we can all make a difference to our home, our world. IIFA has always helped create clever messaging on the environment that the stars and celebrities involved would convey to the audiences and fans globally and today with the power of celebrity following, it's worked.

The awards reflect the commitment of fashion houses to sustainability,

## ALL-INDIA FASHION WEEK CUM BEAUTY PAGEANT IN JAIPUR

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Vogue Star, an inclusive platform of the women and by the women supporting them creates their distinctive identities, will organize an all-India fashion week cum beauty pageant in Jaipur. The upcoming extravaganza of fashion and beauty will be curated by Alison Woodham, a renowned fashion show choreographer based out of Mumbai. Another celebrity trainer Kavita Kharayat will groom the beauty pageant participants for the grand finale.

The event which will be hosted at Le Meridian Hotel on 14th to 16th April 2023 is set to spread a message around unity in diversity. Alison and Kavita are working day and night to ensure a magnificent and memorable grand finale.

Conceptualized by Alison, the grand finale of the VogueStar beauty pageant and

Fashion Week will witness state level winners trained by Kavita, walk the ramp donning designer masterpieces crafted by emerging designers from across the country. With over 20 year of experience, Alison Woodham is a business woman who has taken her career from a single show to a multi-city operation. She has organised big-city shows like The Chivas Fashion Tour, Launch of Belvedere, Lakme fashion week, Vogue, Sabyasachi, Manish Malhotra, Anamika Khanna, Shantanu & Nikhil, Tarun Tahiliani, Christian Dior, Ayesha Depala and many more.

A well-known face of the fashion industry, Kavita has worked with pioneer designers such as Manish Malhotra, Sabyasachi, Abu Jani and Sandeep Khosla among others.

Divided into two categories, the pageant will crown three national winners under Miss VogueStar India and Mrs Vogue Star India. The Mrs Vogue Star India is further categorized into two groups where in the group will be for married women from the age group of 18-35 while group 2 will be for women who are between 36-50 years.



## INSTAGRAM PIC OF THE DAY



Harshita Gaur