

# absolute india

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Chennai Agencies

Indian space agency on Friday said it had successfully taken the country's moon lander closer to the Moon by reducing its orbit. The Moon lander or the lander is part of the Indian Space Research Organisation's (ISRO) Chandrayaan-3 spacecraft. The spacecraft comprises a propulsion module (weighing 2,148 kg), a lander (1,723.89 kg) and a rover (26 kg). "The Lander Module (LM) health is normal. LM successfully underwent a deboosting operation that reduced its orbit to 113 km x 157 km. The second deboosting operation is scheduled for August 20, 2023, around 0200 Hrs. IST," ISRO tweeted. On Thursday, the lander was detached from the propulsion module at an orbit of 153 km x 163 km around the Moon. The main purpose of India's third Moon mission costing about Rs 600 crore is to land the lander softly on the Moon. The Chandrayaan-2 mission failed as the lan-

der called 'Vikram' crashed on to the Moon. According to the ISRO, the lander is expected to make a soft-landing near the South Pole of the Moon on August 23 at 5.47 p.m. The lander will descend to the Moon from a height of about 100 km from the Moon's surface. The soft landing is a tricky issue as it involves a series of complex manoeuvres consisting of rough and fine braking. Imaging of the landing site region prior to landing will be done for finding safe and hazard-free zones. Subsequent to the soft landing, the six-wheeled rover will roll out and carry out experiments on the lunar surface for a period of one lunar day which is equal to 14 earth days. The Chandrayaan-3 was put into orbit on July 14 in a copybook style by India's heavy lift rocket LVM3. The spacecraft completed orbiting around the earth and headed towards the Moon on August 1. On that day a successful perigee-firing performed at ISTRAC, the ISRO had injected the spacecraft into the translunar orbit.

Hate speech cases of all sides to be dealt with as per law: SC

## STOP THE HATRED

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Supreme Court said on Friday that it does not need to reiterate that 'hate speech' cases be dealt with as per the law, irrespective of the community or religion of the offender. A bench comprising Justices Sanjiv Khanna and S.V.N. Bhatti was hearing pleas seeking action against calls for social and economic boycott of Muslims following the communal clashes that broke out in Haryana's Nuh on July 31. "We are very clear. Whether it be one side or the other side, they have to be treated alike. If anyone indulges in anything which we know as 'hate speech', they will be dealt with as per the law. This is something we have already expressed our opinion on," the bench said in a short hearing after a counsel said that a rally was organised in July by the Indian Union Muslim League in which slogans against Hindus were raised. The court adjourned hearing the matter to August 25 as the bench said that it will proceed to hear pleas challenging the validity of caste-based survey in Bihar. Last week, the Supreme Court had asked the petitioners to forward hate speech videos to the nodal officers appointed by the state governments pursuant to the judgment of the top court. It had also mooted the formation of a district-level committee by the Director General of Police (DGP)



of all states police to look into the hate speech cases. The top court had stressed that the issue of hate speech "has to be solved" and had asked Additional Solicitor General K.M. Nataraj, appearing for the Centre, to seek instructions by August 18. "There has to be harmony and comity between communities. Everyone is responsible. All communities are responsible. This is not acceptable," the bench had said during the hearing. The plea filed before the apex court said that more than 27 rallies have been organised across various states where blatant hate speeches calling for the "killing and social and economic boycott of Muslims" have been openly delivered. In April this year, the top court had stressed that the Constitution envisages India as a secular nation, while directing all states and Union Territories to take strict action in hate speech cases, and register criminal cases irrespective of religion against the culprits without waiting for a complaint to be filed.

### NOTICE TO MANIPUR GOVT

New Delhi: The Supreme Court on Friday sought response of the Manipur government in another shocking incident where a woman claimed that her clothes were torn by the mob and she was paraded but police did not come to her aid during the time of sectarian violence in the state. A bench comprising Chief Justice of India D.Y. Chandrachud, Justices J.B. Pardiwala and Manoj Misra issued notice to the Manipur government and listed the matter for hearing on October 13 along with the main matter. The petition, filed through advocate Amrita Sarkar, claimed that women, who were also part of the mob, hit the survivor's one-year-old baby and due to violence, she suffered fractures in her hands and grave injuries on her head. "Petitioner No.2's clothes were torn by the mob and she was made to parade till Deputy Commissioner's building in Imphal where the police were standing but nobody came to her aid," stated the plea. The petition also alleged inaction by the state police in another case where two persons, including one woman, were beaten to death by a "mob of Meitei Community." It said that petitioners, who are from the Kuki community, were brutally tortured, and their family members killed before their eyes.

## Violence in Manipur after 2 weeks of peace, 3 killed

Imphal Agencies

Fresh violence broke out following an attack in a Kuki village in Manipur's Ukhrul district this morning. Three people were killed in the attack on a makeshift bunker near village Thawai. They were guarding the village amid tensions following the Kuki-Meitei ethnic clashes in Manipur that started on May 3. Two of the three people have multiple bullet wounds, while the third's body was found mutilated after being shot dead, sources said. Some 50 families live in village Thawai, under Litan police station limits in Ukhrul, where the Tangkhul Nagas are the majority. Village Thawai is surrounded by other Kuki settlements like Sangkai, Mongkot and Zalenbung, and the Tangkhul Naga village of Sikbung. A Thawai resident said the bunker was set up about 1



km from their village. He said there were four volunteers on duty. They followed a roster system that decided the schedule of guard duties. The men who were killed were supposed to stay till 5 am. Reports said around the end of their guard duty time, one of the four men went to the village to look for replacements. "We heard gunfire just when he reached the village. We rushed towards the bunker," the Thawai resident said, asking not to be identified. He said the Kuki village defence volunteers retaliated, and the gunfight lasted for over an hour. The bodies of the men who were killed inside the bunker have been handed over to their families. Reports said suspected insurgents have fired grenades towards the Kuki village.

### SCINDIA LOYALIST DENIED TICKET FROM GOHAD

Bhopal: Union Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia loyalist and former MLA Ranveer Jatav has been denied ticket by the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) from the Gohad assembly seat in Madhya Pradesh. Jatav was one of the Congress MLAs who switched to the BJP to support Scindia in March 2020. Jatav had later contested a by poll on BJP ticket. However, he lost the elections to the Congress' Mevaram Jatav in November 2021. This time, the BJP has picked Lal Singh Arya as its nominee from Gohad assembly seat. Jatav, who was in Congress in 2018, had defeated BJP's Lal Singh Arya from Gohad assembly seat. Three-time former MLA Lal Singh Arya has been in Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan's cabinet in the previous tenure. Meanwhile, sources told that several other Scindia loyalists could be denied tickets by the BJP. If sources are to be believed, out of 11 Scindia loyalist ministers in Shivraj Singh Chouhan's cabinet, merely four-to-five of them are likely to get ticket this time.

## "SUDAMA MEETING KRISHNA": MAN WHO BROKE DOWN ON CAMERA MEETS RAHUL GANDHI

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi served lunch with his own hands as he hosted a vegetable vendor who had become the face of hardships due to rising food prices. Recently, Rameshwar had a breakdown on camera while talking about his hardships due to inflation. The context was the skyrocketing tomato prices. A video of the incident had gone viral with many underlining how rising food prices are having an adverse impact on a large section of the society. "I didn't want to live anymore in this society," said Rameshwar as Gandhi listened to him patiently. His daughter was sitting right beside. "Don't say that again. Speaking from your heart isn't a weakness, it's honesty. Don't think about what others say. You only adhere to the truth," Gandhi replied, showed a video from their meeting last Monday. The Congress leader shared the video of the "candid conversation" with him. Rameshwar ji is the voice of an India whose pains, issues and challenges are



far removed from the mainstream debate today. It is the moral responsibility of all of us to listen to the voice of that India and help in fighting those struggles," he said on X. The video captured some heart-warming moments from their meeting. At the lunch table, Rameshwar and his wife sat together while Mr Gandhi was serving them. "She's (my wife) fasting

today," Rameshwar informed. Gandhi quickly enquired if she's allowed to have fruits and said he will get some for her. Gandhi also refused to be addressed as "sir". "Why are you calling me sir? My name is Rahul, call me that," he told Rameshwar. Ahead of the meeting, Rameshwar compared it with "Sudama meeting Krishna", citing how lucky he was to have got this opportunity. Sudama and Krishna were childhood friends who grew up together and their emotional reunion is held as an example of true friendship, according to the legend. In the video, Gandhi asked him more about his struggles. Rameshwar said the Congress leader understands his pain and he was lucky to have been hosted by him. In a longer post accompanying his video on YouTube, Gandhi said he has been listening to people since he began his nationwide Bharat Jodo Yatra. One day, he said he came across the video of Rameshwar and wanted to him. The vegetable vendor was recently seen in a viral video saying he could not buy tomatoes as the prices were very high.

### LADAKH: 2 KILLED, 10 INJURED

Srinagar: Two people were killed and 10 others injured on Friday in a blast in Kargil's Drass town. Official sources said that a blast occurred at the scrap site in Kabadi Nallah area of Drass town on Friday evening in which two people were killed and 10 others were injured. "The injured have been shifted to sub-district hospital in Drass town for treatment. A case has been registered in the incident and investigation has been started to ascertain the actual cause of the explosion", sources said. Sources said that the blast mostly likely occurred when some scrap collectors/dealers fiddled with the scrap that could have resulted in some unexploded old shell going off.

## Centre refutes claims about dead availing treatment under Ayushman Bharat Scheme

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Media reports claiming that Ayushman Bharat PM-JAY beneficiaries who are already dead are still on the system getting treatment are misleading, the health ministry said on Thursday. The ministry also said that mobile numbers have no role in deciding beneficiary eligibility. The ministry's remarks came in response to media reports that claimed that the Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG) has flagged that treatments have been booked for AB PM-JAY beneficiaries who have been declared dead on the system. The reports also claim that the same beneficiary had been found to avail treatment at two hospitals at the same time. "These media reports are completely misleading and ill-informed," the ministry said. The CAG report which contains results of the Performance Audit on Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri - Jan Arogya Yojana (AB PM-JAY) covering the period September 2018-March 2021 was placed in parliament in the Monsoon Session of 2023, the ministry said in a statement. "It is clarified that under AB PM-JAY, hospitals are allowed to initiate requests for pre-



authorization up to three days post the date of admission in the hospital. This feature is enabled to avoid denial of treatment in case of limited connectivity, emergency situations, etc," the statement said. In some cases, the patients were admitted and before their pre-authorization was raised, they died. "In such cases, the date of death is the same as the admission date or earlier. Moreover, death has also been reported by the same hospital which raised the

pre-authorization request. Thus, had the hospital intended to defraud the system, it would not have shown any interest in declaring the patient dead on the IT system," the statement said. It is pertinent to note that more than 50 per cent of cases highlighted in the report have been booked by public hospitals, which have no incentive in committing fraud, as the money is reimbursed in the hospital account, it said. Further, in case of death during treatment, the hospital has to mandatorily submit a mortality report, it said. There are also many instances where the patients were admitted in the hospital as private patients (self-paid) but when they discovered the scheme, they requested the hospital to register them under the scheme for free treatment, the statement said. The feature that allows back-dated pre-authorization helps save people out-of-pocket expenditure. On the patient getting treatment in two hospitals at the same time, the statement said that under AB PM-JAY, children up to 5 years of age avail treatment on the Ayushman Card of their parents. Accordingly, Ayushman Cards can simultaneously be used for children and either of parents at two different hospitals, it said.

### Rahul Gandhi will contest from Amethi: UP Congress chief

Lucknow Agencies

Former Congress president Rahul Gandhi will contest the 2024 Lok Sabha elections from Amethi, newly appointed Uttar Pradesh Congress chief Ajay Rai on Friday said. Rahul, who had been representing the Amethi Lok Sabha seat since 2004, suffered a shocking defeat in the Gandhi bastion in 2019 when he lost to BJP's Smriti Irani. While Rahul polled 4,12,867 votes, Smriti Irani ended up with 4,67,598 votes. Rai also said that if Priyanka Gandhi decides to fight the polls from Varanasi, each and every Congress worker will work for her. Ajay Rai was the Congress candidate in Varanasi both during 2014 and 2019 election and lost to Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Rai was appointed Uttar Pradesh Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge on Thursday. Taking a dig at Smriti Irani, the UP Congress chief asked Smriti Irani what happened to her promise of providing sugar at the rate of Rs 13 to the people of Amethi.





Ashoka University row

# MORE ECONOMISTS EXTEND SOLIDARITY TO SABYASACHI DAS

Team Absolute | New Delhi

As many as 288 economists at over 81 institutions across the country have so far extended their support to assistant professor Sabyasachi Das after the Haryana-based Ashoka University accepted his resignation, urging the varsity to immediately reinstate him.

Das resigned from the university after his paper suggesting voter manipulation in 2019 elections sparked a controversy. Later, Professor Pulapre Balakrishnan resigned in protest over acceptance of resignation of Das.

"We, economists working in India, strongly believe that academic freedom is the cornerstone of a vibrant educational and research community, and that everyone must have the right to pursue knowledge, share their findings, and engage in open dialogue without the fear of censorship or retribution," the economists said in a joint statement.

"We stand in solidarity with Prof Sabyasachi Das and extend our support for the demands of the econom-



ics department at Ashoka University. We urge the Governing Body of Ashoka University to immediately reinstate Prof Das unconditionally."

Among the economists includes AJC Bose from Shri Ram College of Commerce, Delhi University, Abhiroop Mukhopadhyay from Indian Statistical Institute (Delhi), Archana Prasad from Jawaharlal University, Arpita Chatterjee from Indian Institute of Management

(Bangalore) and Debalina Chakravarty from St. Xavier's University (Kolkata).

Meanwhile, the Media Studies Department of the varsity while extending their support to Das and Balakrishnan in a statement said: "We stand with all our colleagues in the unanimous ask for professors Sabyasachi Das and Pulapre Balakrishnan to remain as Ashoka Faculty, without delay. Recent events have once again brought up the need

to create and ensure a functioning firewall between Ashoka University's Faculty and its founders/ governing body, on the protection of academic freedom and expression. This must now be a priority."

"Concrete suggestions on how to go about creating a secure space that allows free expression to flourish in academia have been made by several of our colleagues. We fully endorse the efforts to create institutional safeguards to protect academic freedoms to read, write, say and publish to rigorous standards, without fear of extreme institutional backlash." It added: "Our department, as a collective of diverse practitioners in the media space, is well aware of both the realities and perceptions of pressure on free expression in our digitally mediated, social media driven information landscape. We are firmly of the view that a consultative approach involving the faculty in dealing with such pressures, is the only way forward."

Earlier several departments including, Economics and Political Science of the Ashoka University expressed solidarity with Das.

## MOODY'S REITERATES INDIA'S BAA3 RATING BUT WARNS OF POLITICAL ISSUES

New Delhi: Moody's Investors Service on Friday maintained its stable outlook on India, while affirming its Baa3 rating.

Though at the same time, it has taken a cautious stand on political issues, citing Manipur's example. It said that curtailment of civil society and political dissent, compounded by rising sectarian tensions, support a weaker assessment of political risk and the quality of institutions.

It went on to add that though elevated political polarisation is unlikely to lead to a material destabilisation of government, the rising domestic political tensions suggest an ongoing risk of populist policies -- including at the regional and local government levels -- amid the prevalence of social risks such as poverty and income inequality. At the same time, the periodic flaring of border tensions with neighbouring countries was an outlier among sovereigns assessed as having a lower overall susceptibility to political risk, Moody's said.

## India will eradicate TB much before global deadline of 2030, says PM Modi



Team Absolute | New Delhi

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday said that India will eradicate Tuberculosis (TB) before the global deadline of 2030 through people's participation.

"We have urged people of the country to be Ni-kshay Mitra or Friends for Eradication of TB. Under this, nearly 1 million patients have been adopted by citizens.

Now we are on our way to achieve TB elimination well ahead of the global target of 2030," Modi said in his virtual address to G20 meet of health ministers in Gandhinagar. He said that India aims to bring

affordable healthcare to all as health is the very foundation of life. "Health is the ultimate wealth. With good health, every task can be accomplished," he said. During the Coronavirus pandemic, health was the centre of all decision making, and the pandemic reminded all that health should be at the core of all decision making process. Modi urged everyone to be ready to prevent, prepare and respond to the next health emergency.

"This is especially important in today's interconnected world. Digital solutions and innovations are useful means to make our efforts equitable and inclusive," he added.

## Nitish orders high-level inquiry into journalist's murder

Patna | Agencies

Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar on Friday ordered a high-level inquiry into the murder of a Hindi daily journalist in Araria district earlier in the day.

"It was an extremely unfortunate and painful incident. I have asked the officers to look after this matter and take action against the accused," the Chief Minister said.

Unidentified assailants gunned down Vimal Kumar in front of his house in the Prem Nagar area at around 5 a.m. on Friday morning. According to the police, the bike-borne assailants called the victim to come out of his house. As soon as he stepped out, one of the attackers shot him on the right side of the chest, killing him on the spot.

Following the incident, there was widespread outrage against the state government.

Bihar BJP president Samrat Chaudhary slammed Nitish Kumar government over the deteriorating law and order situation in the state.

"Murders are taking place every day in Bihar but Nitish Kumar is unable to see it. He needs a special spectacle to see the crime cases in Bihar. We are going to borrow a special spectacle for him. He is visiting Delhi and Mumbai and unable to see murders taking



place in Bihar," he said.

Also slamming the state government, LJPR president Chirag Paswan said that if police officers and journalists were not safe, how could the common people feel secure.

"Nitish Kumar, who is also the home minister of Bihar, is staying silent on these issues which is demoralising the police. He did not go to meet the kin of the victims. Why would police officers put their lives to fight with criminals?" he further queried.

On August 15, a sub-inspector rank officer named Nand Kishore Yadav was gunned down by cattle smugglers in Samastipur district.

## Honour killing: Parents, brother of 22-yr-old woman held in Gurugram

Gurugram | Agencies

The parents and brother of a 22-year-old woman have been arrested for allegedly strangling her to death and performing her last rites at their native village, police said on Friday.

According to police, the victim Anjali (22), a B.Sc student, who was a native of Surehti village in Jhajjar, was allegedly killed over her love marriage with one Sandeep Kumar from the same village.

While Anjali belonged to the Jat community, Sandeep hailed from the Brahmin community.

After their marriage in December 2022, the woman used to reside with her husband, brother Kunal, and sister-in-law in a rented flat in Aarav Society Sector-102 in Gurugram.

Police preliminary invention revealed that the woman had married the man despite opposition



from her family.

"The family was against the marriage and was hatching a plan to execute the crime for eight months.

On Thursday, when Anjali was alone with her brother Kunal, he informed his parents Kuldeep and Rinki who reached Gurugram. As

per the plan Kunal tied her legs while the mother Rinki tie her hands and Kuldeep, the father strangled her to death," Varun Dahiya, ACP (crime) said.

Thereafter, Kuldeep took her body and put it inside a borrowed vehicle and the trio performed her last rites in their native village to destroy the evidence, he said.

"It was a planned murder. Kuldeep carried the victim's body on his shoulder and came out of the society where the victim was residing. The act has been recorded in a CCTV camera installed in the society. The police have also recovered the bones of the victim from the cremation ground and sent them for an autopsy, the ACP said.

A case of murder and other relevant sections of the IPC has been registered against the suspects at Rajendra Park police station for further probe, police said.

## INDIA'S FIRST 3D-PRINTED POST OFFICE INAUGURATED IN B'LURU

Bengaluru | Agencies

The country's first 3D-printed post office was inaugurated in Bengaluru on Friday by Union Minister for Railways, Communications, Electronics and Information technology Ashwini Vaishnaw.

The Union Minister in his inaugural speech said that the opening of the 3D-printed post office indicated the spirit with which the country is progressing in the present day.

"No one ever thought that India would be developing its own 4G and 5G technology. Nobody ever thought that India would produce its own very complex telecom equipment. Actually one of the industry veterans mentioned that he was with the telecom industry for 35 years and never could have imagined that India could emerge as a manufacturer and developer of



telecom technology," Vaishnaw stated. "Nobody ever thought that India

would be able to design and manufacture a world class train on way to

making its own bullet train. Example after example, sector after sector, nobody could ever think that India would be exporting Howitzer guns," he stated.

The Union Minister while showering praises on Bengaluru city, said that he enjoys coming here as the city has so much of energy, positivity and forward-looking character. The city represents a new picture of India. "The new picture that you saw today in terms of this 3D-printed post office building is the spirit of India today," he said.

The 1000 square-ft area using 3D Concrete Printing Technology by Larsen and Toubro Construction and the structural design of the post office was approved by IIT Madras.

The office is located in Cambridge Layout in Halasuru locality. The building was built using 3D Concrete Printing Technology. The project was completed in 45 days.

## Rajasthan Police creative tweet on helmet awareness goes viral

Jaipur | Agencies

At a time when Bollywood actor Sunny Deol's film Gadar 2 is smashing all records across the nation, Rajasthan police have come up with a poster depicting a scene from the movie advocating the use of helmets while driving.

The poster, illustrating a scene from the song 'Main Nikla Gaddi LeKe', shows Utkarsh Sharma, playing the role of Sunny Deol's son in Gadar 2, sitting on a bike without a helmet. Through this poster, Churu Police have sent out a message to follow the traffic rules.

Not only has Utkarsh appreciated the tweet of Rajasthan Police, but has



talked about the need to follow traffic rules.

Taking to Twitter, the actor said that one should step out only after wearing a helmet.

In the scenes shot for the film, Teejay (Utkarsh) is on a bike with Tara Singh (Sunny

Deol) riding pillion. Utkarsh is

not wearing a helmet. Rajasthan Police has made a post of it. In this post, Utkarsh is saying that 'Main nikla Gaddi leke... On this, Sunny Deol explains to him that O Kake, before the gaddi, at least put on the helmet.

It is worth mentioning that Rajasthan Police have been raising issues like traffic rules, cyber crime awareness, and fake news in its unique way through social media.

Utkarsh is the son of the film's director Anil Sharma. Anil Sharma had made the film Gadar with Sunny and Ameesha 23 years back. Now, the second part of this film has also created a smashing record in Bollywood.

## UP panchayat asks girl to hit boy with slippers for leaking recordings of their talks

Hapur | Agencies

A village panchayat in Uttar Pradesh's Hapur district ordered a girl to hit a boy with her slippers in public for circulating the video of their chat.

The accused had recorded his conversation with a girl and then allegedly circulated it on social media.

A video of the 'punishment' has gone viral on social media in which the girl is seen hitting the boy with her slippers. A villager can even be heard instructing the boy not to hide his face and also tears his shirt.

Villagers are heard directing the accused to tender an apology to the girl.

Abhishek Sinha, circle officer, Garhmukteshwar area, said that the girl had lodged a complaint in Bahadurgarh police station on August 13 against the man.

He said that the girl and the boy were in a relationship. When the family came to know about the video circulating on social media, the girl lodged a complaint.

"A case has been lodged on the complaint of the girl and investigation is underway," said Abhishek Sinha, circle officer,



Garhmukteshwar area, in Hapur district. Sinha said.

"We cannot authenticate the video in which the girl is seen hitting him."

Meanwhile, netizens have opposed the decree and questioned the need of convening a panchayat when a case had already been lodged.

## RBI directs banks to clearly inform borrowers about rise in EMIs, loan duration due to floating interest rates

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Amid rising complaints by several borrowers that their loan duration and EMI amounts rise due to floating rate of loans owing to rising interest rates, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on Friday directed banks to clearly communicate such possibilities clearly to them at the time of issuing loans.

The central bank in a circular, has issued a set of instructions regarding floating interest rates of loans and their impact on EMIs.

It has directed banks to ensure that these instructions are conveyed to borrowers by December 31, 2023.

The directions were issued by the RBI as it had received several grievances from borrowers that owing to floating interest rates, banks hiked their loan tenure and even the EMI amount, without communicating them about the changes and also without their consent.

The RBI has said that in order to address these



concerns, banks are advised to put in place an appropriate policy framework, wherein at the time of sanction, banks shall clearly communicate to the borrowers about the possible impact of change in benchmark interest rate on the loan leading to changes in EMI and the tenure or both.

Subsequently, any increase in the EMI or tenure or both on account of the above shall be

communicated to the borrower immediately through appropriate channels, the RBI said.

At the time of reset of interest rates, banks shall provide the option to the borrowers to switch over to a fixed rate as per their board approved policy.

The policy may also specify the number of times a borrower will be allowed to switch during the tenure of the loan.

The borrowers will also be given the choice to opt for enhancement in EMI or elongation of tenure or for a combination of both options, and to prepay, either in part or in full, at any point during the tenure of the loan. Levy of loan foreclosure charges or pre-payment penalty shall be subject to extant instructions, the RBI said. All applicable charges for switching of loans from floating to fixed rate and any other service charges or administrative costs incidental to the exercise of the above options shall be transparently disclosed in the sanction letter and also at the time of revision of such charges or costs by banks from time to time.





# 'EFFORTS WILL BE MADE TO BRING NARMADA WATER HERE': CM



Team Absolute | Bhopal

The Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan said that technical examination will be done to bring Narmada water to the Gunaur area of Panna district. Efforts will be made to provide Narmada water to the citizens of Panna district. Science classes will be introduced in Gunaur college and initiatives for the girls' school will also be upgraded. The Chief Minister was addressing the people of Gunaur in Panna district after Jan Darshan. He said that each municipal body in Panna district, namely Gunaur, Aman Ganj, and Devendra Nagar, will receive Rs one crore for development projects.

The Chief Minister said that the government will consider suggestions from citizens and recommendations. CM Chouhan said that the previous government had stopped implementation of welfare schemes. Madhya Pradesh is now progressing rapidly on the path of development. Prime Minister Narendra Modi is working hard for public welfare. The state government is actively working for the well-being of the common people. Initiatives like providing piped water to every household with a fund of Rs 600 crore have been undertaken. Scholarships will be provided to deserving students entering medical and engineering fields, as the state government would bear Rs 10

lakh. Measures have been taken to ensure water to farmers and to provide Rs 6,000 crore yearly with the PM-KISAN Samman Nidhi. CM Chouhan said that the Laadli Bahana Yojana is supporting women. The state government has allocated Rs 15,000 crore for implementation of the Laadli Bahana Yojana. Stringent punishments have been introduced for wrongdoers. The Chief Minister received a warm response from citizens. CM Chouhan inaugurated and performed the ground-breaking for development projects worth Rs 677.49 crore at Gunaur. This included the inauguration of nine development projects worth Rs 677 crore 49

lakh 46 thousand, with three projects costing 60 crore 17 lakh, and the ground-breaking for nine projects worth 617 crore 32 lakh 41 thousand rupees. The initiatives encompassed the construction of power distribution centers, road projects, and water supply systems, among others. The Chief Minister emphasized the significance of Raksha Bandhan and said that Laadli Bahana Yojana is enhancing the dignity of women. Efforts are being made to ensure monthly income of up to 10,000 rupees through various programs. The state government has also taken measures to ensure severe punishment for wrongdoers and to reintroduce funding for schemes that were discontinued by the previous government. The program was attended by the Minister for Minerals, Brijendra Pratap Singh, MP V.D. Sharma, and other representatives. The Chief Minister was warmly welcomed by the citizens of Gunaur during his public appearance. CM Chouhan inaugurated and performed the ground-breaking for development projects worth Rs 677.49 crore in the Gunaur. This included the inauguration of nine development projects worth Rs 677 crore 49 lakh 46 thousand, three projects costing Rs 60 crore 17 lakh, and the ground-breaking for nine projects worth Rs 617 crore 32 lakh 41 thousand. The initiatives encompassed the construction of power distribution centers, road projects, and water supply systems, among others.

# 'Shiv-raj' is now 'Thag-raj': Kamal Nath releases poster on 'corruption' of BJP govt in Madhya Pradesh



Team Absolute | Bhopal

Madhya Pradesh Congress president Kamal Nath on Friday termed Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan 'Thag-raj' and accused him of tainting the state's clean image. While briefing the press at party headquarters here, the veteran Congress politician asserted that he had great regard for CM Chouhan until he was a Lok Sabha MP. "This is not the Shivraj Singh Chouhan I used to know in Parliament in earlier days. He is 'Thag-raj', who has turned Madhya Pradesh into a state of corruption," he said. His (CM Shivraj) government has not spared anyone, including God (Mahakal Lok) and Gaushalas, when it comes to corruption.

"Be it senior citizens, youth, women, government employees, entrepreneurs or anyone, everybody has become a victim of cheating under the BJP government. Now that the people have realised that Congress is going to form the government, they have started exposing the corrupt BJP government," he added. The former chief minister further asserted that due to the 'image of corrupt state', Madhya Pradesh failed to attract investment. "I have repeatedly said that investment can't be demanded, it has to be brought in. For the last several years, the BJP government has been mired in corruption and 50 per cent commission, which is why no one is willing to invest in the state," the Congress leader said. He claimed during his

chief ministership which lasted for 15 months, business houses had complained that they hesitate to invest their money in Madhya Pradesh due to a bad image. "This is what the Shivraj Singh Chouhan government has done in the last 18 years. If the state economy does not pick up, things will worsen and people of the state should understand it," Kamal Nath said. Meanwhile, the MP Congress head along with party leaders and workers released a poster - 'Ghotala' (corruption). Kamal Nath said, "The people of Madhya Pradesh are either the victims of corruption or eyewitnesses. Am telling you today that more corruption of the BJP government will be exposed in the next three months."

# BJP leader joins Congress Rape accused's house razed in MP in Madhya Pradesh

Team Absolute | Bhopal

BJP leader Samandar Patel, said to be close to Union Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia, joined the Congress on Friday in the presence of former Madhya Pradesh chief minister Kamal Nath and ex-minister Jitu Patwari here. Patel, along with 5,000 supporters in a convoy of over 1,200 vehicles, reached the Congress headquarters in Bhopal from Neemuch district and joined the grand old party -- just three months ahead of the Assembly elections. Patel, hailing from the Javad area in Neemuch, embarked on a journey from



his hometown to Bhopal. Patel announced his return to Congress a week ago. He decided to join the Congress with a 'show of power' as he was accompanied by a convoy of his supporters.

The development came a day after the ruling BJP announced the first list of its 39 candidates for the assembly elections in Madhya Pradesh slated to be held later this year.

Team Absolute | Bhopal

A joint team of Madhya Pradesh administration and police on Friday demolished the house of a rape accused who committed the same crime after coming out on bail in Satna district. Rakesh Verma (35) had raped a five-year-old girl on Wednesday inflicting severe injuries on her private parts. The victim is undergoing treatment at Sanjay Gandhi Memorial Hospital, Rewa. Soon after learning about the incident, the police had arrested the accused on Thursday and sent him into jail. The accused was out on bail after serving 10 years in prison for raping another minor in Satna. "The minor -- who used to beg for alms with her grandmother -- was sitting in the temple during evening hours on Wednesday when Verma approached them and offered chocolates to the child. He then forcibly picked up the child who started to wail. Despite the woman's request to release her grandchild, Verma ran away (with the minor)," Satna superintendent of police Ashutosh Gupta said.



Along with a group of locals, the woman launched a search for the missing child only to find her unconscious and profusely bleeding in the same vicinity.

They also filed a complaint with the police. Verma was also found near a pond called "Jagat Dev Talab" at around 7 p.m and arrested.

# CM Chouhan plants saplings on death anniversary of Bade Gurudev Shri Bal Govind Shandilya of Karunadham Ashram

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Shri Shivraj Singh Chouhan planted saplings in the garden located at Shyamla Hills along with Peethadhishwar Gurudev Shri Sudesh Shandilya Ji Maharaj of Karunadham Ashram on the 38th death anniversary of Param Pujya Bade Gurudev Shri Bal Govind Shandilya Ji, the patriarch of Karunadham Ashram. Along with CM Shri Chouhan, Shri Laxminarayan Chouhan, Shrikant Chouhan and Ku. Pankhuri Chouhan of Baktra planted saplings on her birthday, Sushri Shlesha Shukla of Rewa's Bannison Helping Social Welfare Society and colleagues also plant-

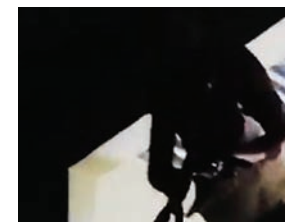


ed saplings. CM Shri Chouhan planted saplings of Gulmohar, Neem, Kadamba, Moulshri, and Sarika Indica. Sarvshri Rajendra Shandilya, Rakesh Shandilya, Sushri Mamta Shandilya, Usha Shandilya, Lipi Shandilya, Nitin Lalchandani, Ashwini Pagare, Sushil Billaure and people of Karunadham Ashram participated in plantation. Sarvshri Rohit Sharma, Saurabh Garg, Abhay Saxena and Pankaj Parashar of Gwalior District Karate Sports Association also planted saplings. Sushri Prachi Bajpai, Amit Vishwas, Pratima Shukla, Shridhar Pandey of Bannison Helping Social Welfare Society Rewa also took part in plantation.

# Two killed, 6 injured as man opens fire in Indore

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Two persons were killed and six others suffered injuries after a middle-aged man opened fire from his balcony in Madhya Pradesh's Indore, police said on Friday. The incident occurred in Krishna residential colony in Khajrana area of the city late on Thursday night following a scuffle between two men over a pet dog. In a viral video, the accused -- a security guard at a bank -- can be seen firing furiously from the balcony of his house.



As per police, the accused identified as Rajpal Singh Rajavat was walking his pet dog on Thursday evening. Meanwhile, his neighbour also came out with his pet. The dogs got into a fight, leading to a scuffle between the owners. Following a heated exchange from both sides, a

livid Rajavat rushed to his home, came out with his license gun and started firing on his neighbours, killing two persons on the spot. "A man was walking his dog who got into a fight with his neighbour's pet. This led to a scuffle between the owners, some people gathered there because of the fight. The man suddenly went to his house and brought a gun and fired. In this incident, 2 people died while six are undergoing treatment. The person who fired the shot has been arrested and further investigation is on," ADGP Amarendra Singh said.

# 'No Resentment After Release Of BJP's First List Of Candidates, Party Geared Up For Mega Meet On Sunday,' Says Tomar

Team Absolute | Gwalior

Union Minister and Madhya Pradesh BJP election management committee convenor Narendra Singh Tomar on Friday said there was no resentment after the party released its first list of 39 candidates for the year-end Assembly polls. Responding to queries on whether there is resentment among those who missed out, he said the Bharatiya Janata Party was a "worker-based party" where candidates are chosen as per "due procedure". On Thursday, the BJP had released its list of candidates for 39 Assembly seats it had lost in the 2018 state polls. Tomar said a mega meeting of the state working committee had been organised in Gwalior on Sunday and it would be addressed by Union Home Minister Amit Shah. It would be attended by office bearers of the party from across the state, Tomar said, adding that workers' conferences have also been organised in 200 out of 230 Assembly constituencies as part of poll preparations. He



brushed aside the Congress' move earlier in the day of releasing a "chargesheet" on alleged corruption and irregularities against the Shivraj Singh Chouhan government. "The Congress is devoid of issues. So it wants to fight elections on the basis of false propaganda. The BJP governments at the Centre and in MP have been carrying out amazing public welfare works," he asserted. The Congress on Friday released a "ghotala sheet" listing the scams that allegedly took place under the BJP government in Madhya Pradesh in the last 18 years.

# CONGRESS CLONES KARNATAKA PLAN TO TAKE DOWN BJP IN MADHYA PRADESH

Team Absolute | Bhopal

After its electoral success in Karnataka, the Congress is trying to use the same formula in Madhya Pradesh, be it offering freebies to alleged corruption charges against the ruling BJP. Congress leaders said the party is determined to make a comeback in Madhya Pradesh. The BJP has also changed its strategy to counter the Congress's new line of attack. "Today, I'm giving some guarantees that we will fulfil 100 per cent. We made this promise to the people of Karnataka. The government there passed the bill as soon as it came to power," Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi Vadra said at a rally in Jabalpur on June 12. "Every month, women will be given ? 1,500. Gas cylinder will be available for ? 500 and 100 units of electricity will be free. The cost of 200 units will be halved. The old pension scheme will be implemented in Madhya Pradesh and poor farmers in heavy debt will get complete loan waiver," she said, explaining the five guarantees that will be implemented in Madhya Pradesh should the Congress come to power. One of the first moves by the Congress on the Madhya Pradesh chess board was



to make Randeep Surjewala take charge of the state. Mr Surjewala was earlier the Congress's Karnataka in-charge. With the big mandate in Karnataka, the Congress strategist for the southern state, Sunil Kanugolu, has also been tasked to bring similar results in Madhya Pradesh. In Karnataka, the Congress campaign's line of attack was the charge of "40 per cent commission" on the then ruling party, while in Madhya Pradesh the party has raised the allegation by an extra 10 per cent to "50 per cent commission" charge. "There was corruption even inside the Kumbh

Mela; there was Simhastha Mela here. There was corruption in the construction of the temple of Mahakal," Congress leader Digvijay Singh said. Madhya Pradesh BJP chief VD Sharma said the Congress is trying to mislead the people and the BJP will respond strongly. "The Congress is trying to mislead the people with a fake letter. A strong reply will be given, each and every worker will reply to Priyanka Gandhi. You will have to answer. You have committed a crime of defamation," VD Sharma said. The BJP, catching up on this narrative, has been using new methods to attack the Congress in Madhya Pradesh. A day after a meeting of the BJP's central election committee, the party announced the names of 39 candidates in Madhya Pradesh. "Our preparations are going on in a war-footing. The Congress appears to be scared of announcing candidates' names. We have named our candidates. Our generals are in the field now," Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan said. The Congress is holding meetings at the divisional level in Madhya Pradesh. Some 230 MLAs will from Gujarat, Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh and Bihar and will meet people across the state for seven days.





EDITOR'S SPECS

## 27 billionaires among 225 Rajya Sabha MPs

Out of the 225 sitting Rajya Sabha MPs analysed, 27 are billionaires with six from the BJP, a report revealed on Friday, which also said that the average assets of the Rajya Sabha MPs were Rs 80.93 crore. In a report, the Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR) and National Election Watch (NEW) said that it has analyzed and updated the criminal background details of 225 out of 233 Rajya Sabha MPs. It further said that in the current Rajya Sabha, one seat is vacant while three MPs have not been analysed as their affidavits were unavailable and four seats of Jammu and Kashmir are undefined. The report said: Out of the 225 sitting Rajya Sabha MPs analysed, 27 (12 per cent) are billionaires. The report also said that the BJP has the maximum number of billionaires with assets worth more than Rs 100 crore followed by Congress and YSRCP. The report said that BJP has six (7 per cent) out of 85 Rajya Sabha MPs; four (13 per cent) out of 30 Congress Rajya Sabha MPs; four (44 per cent) out of nine RS MPs from YSRCP; three (30 per cent) out of 10 RS MPs from AAP; three (43 per cent) out of seven Rajya Sabha MPs from TRS; and two (33 per cent) out of six Rajya Sabha MPs from RJD; who have declared assets valued more than Rs 100 crore. The report also highlighted that the average assets of Rajya Sabha sitting MPs is Rs 80.93 crore.

# Change Needed in Thinking on Living in the Mountains

Lalit Garg

First the calamities of Uttarakhand, and now in Himachal Pradesh have raised many questions on the hill life, whether the hill life will become impossible, or we will have to adopt new ways to live safely on the fragile mountains. The destruction of life and property due to heavy rains and landslides in these mountains is highly disturbing. This is, however, not the first time when such devastation has taken place in the mountains. Even before this, many other such devastations have been taking place in the mountainous states of the country, when not only a large number of people have lost their lives, but private and government properties are also getting damaged. In such situations, the question arises: what lessons have we learned to minimize the devastation caused by frequent natural disasters?

Is it appropriate to make developmental plans, roads, undertake heavy constructions, tunnels, industrial undertakings, and allow tourism etc. in the mountains just like in the plains. It is necessary to investigate the reasons behind increasing incidents of landslides. Hydro-power projects on the mountains are the major reason for frequent landslides. During the hydro-power project, blasting is done to make the tunnel. The use of heavy machinery causes strong vibrations on the mountains. The ecosystem of Himachal Pradesh is still very sensitive. Due to the continuous cutting of trees in these states and the age of existing mountains also decreases, thereby the numbers of landslides increases. Apart from this, climate change can also be considered as one of the major reasons for the increasing cases of landslides.

In February last year, NASA released a report saying, climate change can increase landslides in Himalayan glacier lake areas from June to September. Also, it may have to face the disaster of flood. But why didn't our governments learn from such predictions? Today the Himalaya mountain has become the Himalaya of worries. Over the

decades, there has been indiscriminate exploitation of natural resources in the name of development, especially in the states of the Himalayan region. Not only this, such a construction is being erected against the scientific rules, which have brought in the destruction with cloud-bursts, floods and landslides. This question also persists: what should be the correct scale of development in hill states? If construction activities are necessary somewhere in the name of development, it should be capable of withstanding disasters along with the planning. It is generally seen that in the name of promoting tourism in these states, such huge buildings were erected which not only proved incapable of withstanding sudden floods and landslides, but were also harmful to the ecology and environment. In such a construction, the expectation of vigilance at the government level was ignored.

We have handed over the mountains to marketism, the kind of infrastructure from the past area to the residential area, hotels etc. have been constructed indiscriminately and have dug the mountains on one side, and on the other side by making concrete construction work on them. The burden has increased, due to which the appearance of these beautiful places created by nature is changing. Recently, we had seen the condition of Joshimath, the base town of Badrinath pilgrimage, how this city has started to crack. Earlier, I had also seen the destruction by sudden flash-flood in Shri Kedarnath Dham in June 2013. All this is the result of increasing the burden on the mountains and the result of cutting and digging the mountains in an unaccountable way. If landslides happen at ten places on Kalka-Shimla highway till Solan, then we have to think where the mistake has happened. If houses start collapsing on the hills of Shimla city itself, then we have to think what are the rules for construction of buildings in such places?

The incidents in Shimla have caused even more concern. Due to being the capital and more active, populous and tourist city, the scenes seen in Shimla were more



scary, worrisome and terrifying. On August 15 last, several houses collapsed due to a landslide in Krishna Nagar area of Shimla. Neighbors could not stop their screams after seeing the houses of the people living near them collapsing for decades, after the landslide, the whole country has witnessed an outcry. But when the ground subsides and everything is destroyed before your eyes, that helplessness questions criminality in government schemes, developmental neglect and callous thinking. Landslide occurred after the cloud-burst in Summer Hill area of Shimla itself. The Shiva temple of the area also came under the grip, where the crowd was bigger due to the day being a Monday of Sawan month. The ground sank so fast that no one could get a chance to do anything. A total of 25 bodies have been pulled out from the debris of the temple, so far. On August 14 itself, another landslide occurred at Fagli in Shimla, in which five persons died. There is news of the death of seven persons in Solan district also.

The manner in which the heavy rains have wrought destruction, question marks are being put on the various developmental activities being done for the hilly areas, and geologists are also giving warnings that the scale of development for the hilly areas should not be on par with the plains areas. According to

Chief Minister Sukhwinder Singh Sukhu, a gigantic loss of 10 thousand crore rupees and huge loss of life and property has been caused by the natural calamity. These painful and tragic incidents are the result of ignoring the fury of nature. This is the reason why the people of both the hill states have to be prepared to avoid the rush of indiscriminate development in future. Nature is giving us this signal and message with disasters that a lot needs to be done at different levels. It is the responsibility of the government and the people to maintain the dignity, restraint, simplicity and purity of the delicate hilly life. Everyone wants to achieve happiness and prosperity in life, but there is a need to control indiscriminate construction activities. There should be balanced development without disturbing the nature of the mountains.

According to environmental experts, mountains are being cut from above to widen the roads in Himachal Pradesh. Due to this, the incidents of landslides are continuously increasing. Human and tourism activities are continuously increasing in hilly areas. Because of this, the balance of the mountains is continuously deteriorating. In the rainy season or after the rains, the foundation

of the mountains becomes weak. Because of this, mountains start falling apart. Deforestation is also a major reason for landslides. Actually, the roots of the trees make a firm grip on the soil. Along with this, she also binds the stones of the mountains. This grip gets loosened by cutting trees. For this reason, when it rains, big stones start falling from the mountain. This is also the reason for the accidents happening in Shimla.

Man's greed and insensitivity has increased to the extent of tragedy in the mountains, which has become a major cause of imbalance and destruction of mountain life with its wildlife, birds, nature and environment. India will have to prepare a development policy for its mountains. Only geologists can have a major role in this work. The Chief Minister of Himachal Mr. Sukhu is himself admitting that he himself has invited this trouble by making indiscriminate constructions on the mountains in a completely non-scientific way, and by cutting the mountains indiscriminately in the temptation of widening the roads. It should be considered that what can be the result of exploiting nature without knowing it?

## international

# CANADIAN WOMAN JAILED FOR 22 YRS FOR SENDING POISON-LACED LETTERS TO TRUMP

Washington | Agencies

A US court has sentenced a Canadian woman to 22 years in jail for sending letters laced with ricin poison to former President Donald Trump when he was in office.

On Thursday, District Judge Dabney Friedrich sentenced 56-year-old Pascale Ferrier to 262 months in prison, the BBC reported.

She will be deported from the US after serving her sentence and faces supervision for life if she ever returns.

Judge Friedrich told Ferrier her actions were "potentially deadly" and "harmful to you, harmful to society, harmful to the potential victims".

Ferrier, a dual citizen of France and Canada, told the court that she regretted that her plan had failed and that she "couldn't stop Trump".

In her address, she also said



that she saw herself as an activist not a terrorist. "I want to find peaceful means to achieve my goals," Ferrier added.

The FBI found her fingerprints on the letter to Trump, which urged him to drop out of the presidential race, the BBC reported. "I found a new name for you: 'The Ugly Tyrant Clown,'" she

wrote in the letter, according to FBI charging documents.

Ferrier also admitted sending similarly tainted letters to eight Texas law enforcement officials.

In 2019, she was detained in the state for about 10 weeks for unlawfully carrying a weapon and driving without a valid licence, and she blamed those

officials for that detention, according to a US Justice Department.

Ferrier was arrested crossing the border into Buffalo, New York in September 2020. She was carrying a gun, knife and rounds of ammunition.

She later admitted to making the ricin -- a poison made from the waste material left over from castor beans processing -- at her Quebec home, and placing it into an envelope with the letter.

She had agreed to the sentence in January after pleading guilty to biological weapons charges, reports the BBC.

There is no known antidote to ricin. Depending on the dose, it can cause death within 36 to 72 hours, according to the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. In 2014, a Mississippi man was sentenced to 25 years in prison after sending ricin laced letters to then President Barack Obama and other officials.

## BELARUS NOT TO JOIN RUSSIA-UKRAINE WAR UNLESS ATTACKED: PREZ

Minsk: Belarus will not participate in the armed hostilities in Ukraine unless Ukrainians cross the state border, Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko has said.

"If Ukrainians do not cross our border, we will never participate in this war, in this full-scale war, but we will always help Russia," Lukashenko told the media in an interview on Thursday, Xinhua news agency reported.

The Belarusian President also denied reports that Moscow allegedly persuades Minsk to participate in its "special military operation" in Ukraine.

Meanwhile, Lukashenko said that the war could have been avoided, and it is still possible to end it.

Any peace negotiation should be preceded without pre-conditions, he added.

## 6.1-magnitude quake in Colombia kills 1, topples houses

Bogota | Agencies

At least one person was killed and several houses were damaged after an earthquake measuring 6.1 on the Richter scale struck central Colombia, authorities said.

In capital Bogota, where the earthquake was strongly felt on Thursday evening, Mayor Claudia Lopez said the city was spared serious damage but a woman died after jumping out the window of her 10th-floor apartment in the south of the city out of fear that the building would collapse, reports Xinhua news agency.

"We have a painful incident. A woman in the Madelena neighborhood in Ciudad Bolivar, apparently out of panic, jumped from a 10th floor and died. It is the only serious incident we had. Please, stay calm, stay calm," she said in a video message.

Lopez recommended residents to



check for damage to walls and roofs before returning to their homes or workplaces and immediately report any major cracks caused by the earthquake.

Also in Bogota, seven people trapped in an elevator wait to be rescued, some traffic lights were knocked out, and a piece of the dome fell off at the Elliptical Hall of the Congress of the Republic.

In Meta department, the epicentre of the earthquake, several homes were destroyed.

The department of Cundinamarca reported several landslides and damage to some houses.

## 146 quake-damaged schools renovated in Syria's Aleppo

Damascus | Agencies

At least 146 schools damaged by the massive February 6 earthquakes in Syria's northern province of Aleppo have been successfully renovated, state media reported citing a local official.

Mustafa Abdul-Ghani, the education director of Aleppo, also said that another 49 quake-damaged schools were under renovation, Xinhua news agency reported citing state media.

He said this progress has been made possible through cooperation with international and local organisations, referring to a comprehensive agreement signed with international groups on the renovation and maintenance of 347 schools.

Earlier this month, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies cautioned that six months on, the path back to a "normal life" remains elusive for the communities affected by the quakes.



It said survivors, particularly those who face steep economic challenges in Syria, are in dire need of necessary resources to rebuild their lives.

On February 6, two back-to-back earthquakes measuring 7.8 and 7.7 on the Richter scale struck Turkey and Syria.

The confirmed death toll stood at 59,259 -- 50,783 in Turkey and 8,476 in Syria.

It was the deadliest earthquakes in both the neighbouring nations in recent history.

## Hurricane Hillary intensifies, threatens flooding in US Southwest

Washington | Agencies

Hurricane Hilary is rapidly intensifying in the Pacific Ocean southwest of Mexico and is on track to deliver potentially significant rain and flooding to parts of the US Southwest starting this weekend, according to the National Hurricane Center (NHC).

In its latest update, the NHC said that as of Thursday night, Hilary had strengthened into a major Category 3 hurricane with sustained winds of 120 mph and even stronger gusts, CNN reported.

The storm will likely reach Category 4 hurricane strength on Friday with winds of at least 130 mph, the Center warned.

The hurricane was about 445 miles south of Cabo San Lucas, Mexico, as of Thursday evening. Hilary's rainfall could arrive as early as Saturday in parts of the Southwest, with the worst of its impacts set to arrive in California on August 21.

Shifts in the forecast track will also affect



which areas of northwestern Mexico will face the worst of Hilary's winds, which will be strong enough to snap trees, down power lines and cause significant damage to property.

According to the NHC, Hilary is expected to weaken significantly before it reaches Southern California and parts of the Southwest, but there was still an increasing chance of significant impacts to these areas in the form of heavy rain and flooding, CNN reported.

Southern California could receive some of Hilary's heaviest rainfall.

Widespread rainfall amounts of 2 to 4 inches may fall there and in southern Nevada from Saturday through August 21.

The heaviest rainfall is expected mainly August 20-21.

Rainfall is also likely in parts of Arizona, Central California and northern Nevada.

If the storm makes landfall in California as a tropical storm, it would be the first in nearly 84 years, and only the third tropical storm or stronger to do so on record, according to data from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

The most recent was an unnamed tropical storm in 1939, NOAA records show.

Before that, the San Diego Hurricane made landfall in October 1858 -- California's only hurricane landfall on record.

Nora in 1997 was the last and only other tropical storm to maintain its status after crossing into California.





# MUMBAI RANKED MOST EXPENSIVE CITY TO LIVE IN

# Our aim is to dethrone Modi govt, says Maharashtra Congress

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Mumbai, known for its bustling streets, diverse culture, and economic vibrancy, has earned a distinction as the most expensive city to live in, as per the recently released Knight Frank Affordability Index for 2023. Ahmedabad is ranked as India's most affordable city to live in.

The issue of housing affordability has taken centre stage as cities strike a balance between economic growth and the well-being of their inhabitants.

The demand for a skilled workforce to power economic engines often clashes with the inadequate supply of quality housing, leading to a surge in property prices that far outpaces income growth.

The government's focus on affordable housing, exemplified by the flagship "Housing for All by 2022" program, has played a pivotal role in reducing residential unit prices and increasing affordability.

To better comprehend the global affordability crisis, Knight Frank has pioneered the Global Affordability Monitor, evaluating 32 cities worldwide based on three critical parameters.

Mumbai finds itself positioned in the second-most affordable bracket among these cities, which ironically



places it as the least affordable city in India, making it the most expensive city to live in.

The Knight Frank India Affordability Benchmark further corroborates Mumbai's dire situation. With average house prices standing at around seven times the average household income, the financial burden of homeownership in Mumbai is the heaviest across all major Indian cities. India, boasting one of the world's fastest-growing economies, has witnessed remarkable urban expansion driven by employment and business prospects. This growth has attracted a

wave of individuals seeking upward mobility and a better quality of life. Acquiring a home symbolizes stability, achievement and social status, making residential real estate a prized possession. This fervour for property ownership has driven prices skyward. However, in the early 2010s, the market dynamics shifted. Spiralling prices coupled with larger apartment sizes led to demand contraction, leaving developers with unsold inventory.

Regulatory reforms, such as the Real Estate (Regulation and Development) Act 2016 (Real Estate Regulatory Authority) RERA and the

government's affordable housing initiatives, played a pivotal role in revitalizing the market.

Measures like the Credit Linked Subsidy Scheme (CLSS) and infrastructure status for affordable housing projects have contributed to this shift. The spectrum of affordability in India's top eight cities is intriguing, particularly when viewed from 2010 to 2018. While the average apartment in Mumbai now costs seven times the average household income, it's a notable improvement from 11 times in 2010. Other cities such as Kolkata, Ahmedabad and Pune stand out as exemplars of improved affordability, with apartment prices at just three times the average household income.

The Knight Frank Affordability Benchmark, set at 4.5 times the average annual household income, remains a goal for cities like Mumbai, NCR and Hyderabad.

As the global housing landscape shifts toward affordability, the Indian residential market is undergoing a transformation, aligning with this global trend. With regulatory interventions and a renewed focus on affordable housing, Indian cities are on a trajectory towards a more equitable housing landscape, one where residents can achieve the dream of owning a home without shouldering an exorbitant financial burden.

President of Maharashtra Congress Nana Patole on Thursday said that Congress only aims to dethrone Prime Minister Narendra Modi-led government at the Centre.

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Our aim is to dethrone Narendra Modi's government at the centre. This government only loots money of innocent people. From Mumbai, once Mahatma Gandhi gave a slogan against the British and now Rahul Gandhi will lead a fight against this government. We have done a meeting and worked on the agenda and strategies," the Congress Maha Chief said.

Mumbai will also host third and crucial meeting of the INDIA alliance in last week of August.

The preparations for the INDIA conclave are underway, with discussions at the core committee level of the Maharashtra Pradesh Congress Committee (MPCC) focusing on event arrangements.

Meanwhile, the meeting between Sharad Pawar and the rebellious Ajit Pawar on August 12 at the residence of businessman Atul Chordiya in Pune has ignited speculations within political circles.

The meeting, although shrouded in secrecy, stirred reactions, particularly from the Congress and the Shiv Sena faction led by former Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray.



As Maharashtra's political arena remains charged with intrigue, the INDIA alliance meeting is poised to shape the strategic landscape for the future.

## Stray dog suffers burn injuries, loses eye in acid attack by woman in Mumbai

Team Absolute | Mumbai

In a shocking incident, a stray dog suffered severe burn injuries and lost one of its eyes after a woman attacked him with acid in Malvani area of the city, sources said on Friday.

Thirty-five-year-old Sabista Ansari's reason for the attack was reportedly attributed to the dog (Brownie)'s interactions with the cats she used to feed in her building. The incident took place on August 17.

The incident was captured on CCTV within the housing society, shedding light on the shocking act. Upon learning of the incident, celebrity Jaya Bhattacharya,

a TV actor, and her team stepped in to rescue Brownie.

Brownie was then rushed to Thank You Earth, an NGO founded by Bhattacharya, which specialises in the rescue and treatment of animals in need.

Bhattacharya revealed that they promptly reported the incident to the police as requested, along with a doctor's certificate detailing Brownie's injuries.

"It is shocking that someone who feeds cats would attack another animal," Bhattacharya stated. The CCTV footage captured the moment when Ansari allegedly threw acid on Brownie, causing the dog to

run frantically in pain.

The Malvani police have registered an FIR against Ansari under various sections of the Indian Penal Code, the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, and the Maharashtra Police Act.

In his complaint, Balasaheb Tukaram Bhagat, a resident of the housing society, detailed Brownie's presence

within the community for five years and how Ansari often chased away the dog when interacting with the cats she fed.

Several animal welfare organisations also condemned the act and stressed on the need for addressing such matters responsibly.

## After baby rat found in dish, Mumbai restaurant gets notice to shut down

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Days after a customer found a baby rat in his chicken curry, the Mumbai restaurant that served the dish has been ordered to close down.

The Maharashtra Food and Drugs Administration (FDA) has issued a notice to temporarily close Papa Pancho Da Dhaba after it conducted an inspection at the eatery, following the customer's complaint over the horrifying discovery.

Several irregularities were found and the restaurant has been ordered to shut its doors till all the necessary guidelines have been complied with, the FDA said.



On Sunday night, Anurag Singh and his friend Amin had gone to the restaurant in Bandra for Punjabi food. The two men ordered two dishes, one mutton and one chicken-based curry. The dinner soon

turned into a nightmare when Anurag discovered that the meat in the chicken curry, which he said tasted a little strange, was actually a dead baby rat. Outraged, the two men confronted

the hotel manager, who "gave vague answers", Anurag later alleged in his complaint to the police.

On the basis of the complaint, the manager and chef of the restaurant were charged, the police had said on Wednesday. A case was registered against the hotel's chef, manager and the chicken supplier, police said.

They have been charged with offences like adulteration of food and endangering the life or personal safety of others, the police said.

One of the men also posted images of the purported meal on X, formerly Twitter, where it has gathered over 200,000 views with most user calling for strict actions against the restaurant.

## CBI arrests CGST official in Mumbai for Rs 15 lakh bribe demand

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The CBI has arrested a CGST official in Mumbai for allegedly demanding Rs 15 lakh as a bribe for settling tax issues related to a company based in China, officials said Friday.

It is alleged that Hemant Kumar, a Central Goods and Services Tax (CGST) superintendent, had demanded Rs 30 lakh from a tax consultant to settle issues related to Wellfull Inter-Trade Pvt Ltd based in Guangzhou, China, they said.

The company had refused to pay the bribe and asked the middleman to report the issue to the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) which conducted a verification of the allegation during which the tax consultant was asked to negotiate with Kumar, they said.

A meeting took place at Wadala Railway Station in Mumbai where Kumar allegedly



reduced the demand to Rs 15 lakh, a discussion which was tapped by the consultant, they said. With the allegations verified, the CBI conducted a trap operation where Kumar was arrested with Rs 5 lakh as part of payment, they said.

Meanwhile, an offence has been registered against a man for allegedly threatening a group of porters at gunpoint and preventing them from working at a construction site in Maharashtra's

Thane city, police said on Friday. The incident took place on Wednesday when the accused Yatish Murlidhar Bhoir accompanied by a few locals went to a construction site in Ghodbunder Road and threatened porters engaged in loading and unloading materials, an official said.

Also read: Karnataka Deputy CM Shivakumar announces state government's decision to cancel implementation of National Education Policy 2020. The accused allegedly wielded a revolver and threatened to shoot the porters if they did not stop working, he said. An offence under sections 352 (assault or use of criminal force) and 506 (criminal intimidation) of the Indian Penal Code and Arms Act has been registered against Bhoir, the official from Kapurbawdi police station said. The accused had also similarly threatened porters working at a construction site in May, as he wanted locals to be engaged for the work, he added.

## Pune-bound Vistara flight delayed at Delhi Airport after hoax bomb threat

Team Absolute | Mumbai

A GMR Group-run call centre in New Delhi received a bomb threat call for a Delhi-Pune Vistara flight, which was scheduled to take off from Delhi airport this morning.

Soon after, the aircraft was kept in isolation for proper inspection by security agencies and no suspicious item was found on board, an official said. The flight was scheduled for departure at 8:30 am.

"UK-971 Delhi to Pune flight received bomb threat at GMR call center in Gurugram," a security agency said.

There were more than 100



passengers in the aircraft and all the passengers' luggage were de-boarded.

The passengers are currently in the terminal building and they were served refreshments, the official said.

As per the Standard

Operating Procedure (SOP), the plane cannot be scheduled until the security agencies give clearance and go ahead with the flight. The flight will leave for the destination (Pune) as soon as the final clearance is received from the security agencies.

## Shiv Sena (UBT), NCP slam Mumbai University's decision to stay senate polls

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The Shiv Sena (UBT) and NCP on Friday criticised the Mumbai University's decision to stay its senate polls, claiming that the move reflected the Maharashtra government's dictatorial "attitude and its fear to hold any kind of election.

Addressing a press conference, Shiv Sena (UBT) leader Aadiya Thackeray sought to know the reason behind the university's decision to stay the elections scheduled on September 10, the PTI reported on Friday.

The chief minister is timid. They are not holding the Pune Lok Sabha bypolls and elections to the local self-governments. We thought at least the Mumbai



University polls will take place. The senate will not bring down your government, but we will. So why are you scared of the senate? Aadiya Thackeray said. Aadiya Thackeray further said when the Yuva Sena led by him contested 10 seats in 2010, it won eight and it went on to clinch all 10 seats in 2017. Terming the university's move as detrimental to democracy, Aadiya Thackeray said, The polls were to be held on September 10 and no reason was given for why they are

stalled. The Mumbai University on Thursday announced its decision to stay the elections to the senate. The senate is the institution's watchdog, with representatives of teachers, principals and the management.

The NCP's youth wing vice-president Amol Matele said the vice-chancellor will be ghaeroed till the time the election schedule is not announced.

The staying of the senate polls reflects the state government's dictatorial attitude, Matele said in a statement.

Maharashtra Navnirman Sena (MNS) leader Amit Thackeray also attacked the state government for the decision, alleging that it is evident that it wants to govern in a dictatorial manner.

## Eight Bangladeshi nationals arrested for illegal stay in Navi Mumbai

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The Navi Mumbai police in Maharashtra have arrested eight Bangladeshi nationals, three of them women, for allegedly staying in the country illegally without valid documents, an official said on Friday.

Based on a tip-off, officials of the police's anti-human trafficking cell (AHTC) raided a residential locality in Ulve on Thursday afternoon and nabbed the Bangladeshi nationals.

The eight accused, including three women, had been living in the locality since the last eight months and did not possess any valid documents, he said. An offence under relevant sections of the Indian Penal Code, Passport (Entry into India) Rules 1950 and The Foreigners Act of 1946 has been registered against them, the official from Navi Mumbai police said. Meanwhile, on Wednesday, the police arrested two Bangladeshi nationals in Thane for staying in India without valid documents.



According to the police, the arrest was made at Bhiwandi. "While one of the accused worked as a plumber, the other one was a labourer," the police official from Bhiwandi said.

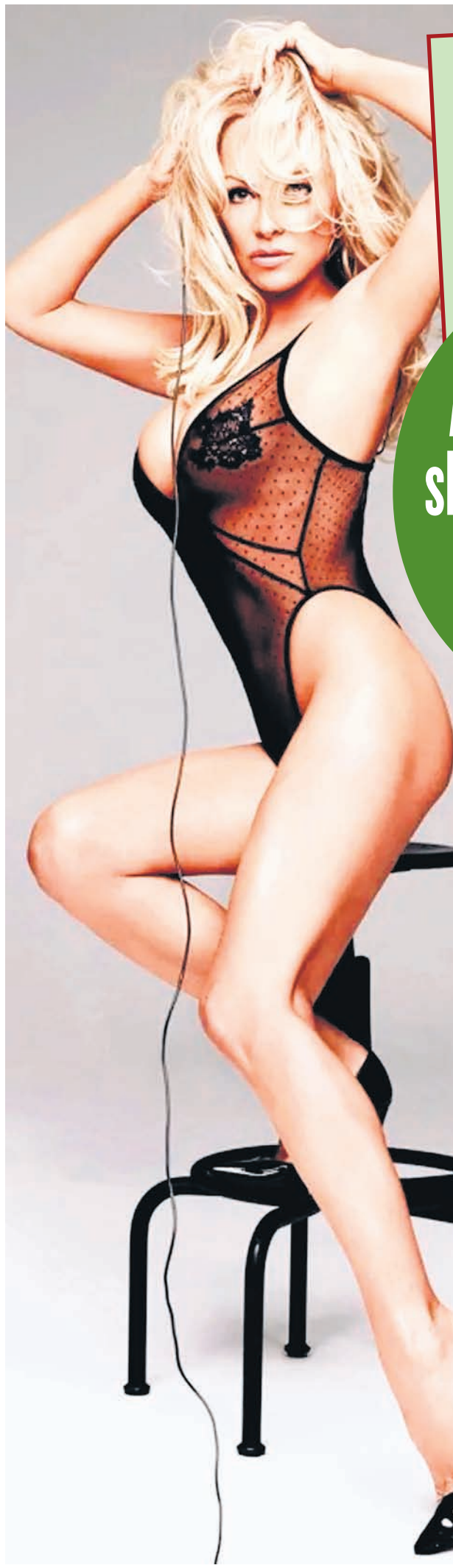
"Acting on a tip-off, the police conducted a raid in Vitthal Nagar locality and caught the two Bangladeshi nationals, and a probe revealed that they have been residing there since 2018 without

valid documents," the police official said. As per the police, an offence under various Indian Penal Code (IPC) sections, the Passport (Entry into India) Rules and the Foreigners Act was registered against the duo.

Earlier, on August 3, Maharashtra Anti-Terrorism Squad (ATS) had said that they had arrested nine Bangladeshi nationals who were staying illegally in the country in separate operations across Mumbai and Navi Mumbai, an official told news agency.

Among them, two Bangladeshi nationals were wanted in connection with a rape case registered at Navi Mumbai's Nerul police station in 2022, he said. The operations at multiple locations and spread over a week were part of a drive against Bangladeshi nationals staying in the country without valid documents. On July 26, a raid was conducted at Nerul village in Navi Mumbai where ATS officials nabbed a Bangladeshi woman. She was wanted in a case registered by the Mumbai Crime Branch in 2009, he said.





Los Angeles | Agencies

Actress Pamela Anderson has embraced a fresh-faced beauty style in recent years, and she has found it to be really "freeing". Speaking to ELLE about her style, she explained, "I think we all start looking a little funny when we get older. And I'm kind of laughing at myself when I

**Pamela Anderson says she looks 'a little funny' as she gets older**

look at the mirror. I go, "Wow, this is really ... what's happening to me? It's a journey." Despite this, Pamela said to being in a "good place" at the moment. The

'Baywatch' star, who became a global sex symbol in the 90s, shared, "I feel rooted for. I feel good. I'm in a good place."

Earlier this year, meanwhile, Pamela hit out at the makers of 'Pam & Tommy', reports aceshowbiz.com.

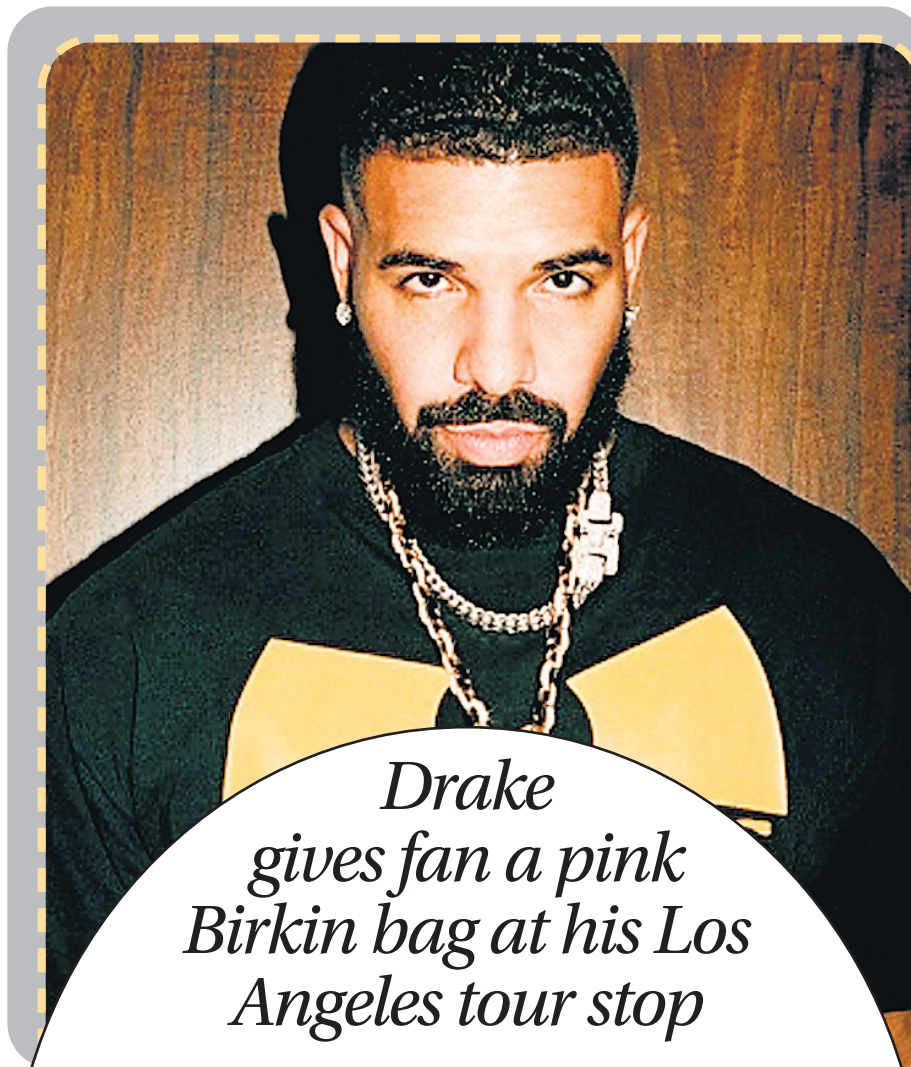
The biographical drama series explored Pamela's whirlwind romance with music star Tommy Lee, and the actress admitted to being frustrated by the Hulu show.

Speaking to The Guardian newspaper, Pamela asked, "How are they allowed to do that?" Lily James played Pamela on the show, but the blonde beauty doesn't blame the British actress for agreeing to star in the series.

Pamela, who was married to Tommy between 1995 and 1998, said, "I heard she'd been nominated for an Emmy, but maybe that was a joke. It's not her fault, it's a job. But whoever created it - well, it just feels like something else stolen."

Lily, 34, underwent a dramatic transformation in order to play Pamela on the TV series. The actress would spend up to four hours a day getting her hair and make-up done, but she still relished the experience.

Lily shared, "That's what's so cool about being an actor, is you get to do these polar opposites. Like I had brown frizzy hair and no make-up (in 'Yesterday'), and then all of a sudden I'm transformed after four hours of this incredible hair and make-up team. It was great, I'm so lucky. It's like playing make-believe the whole time."



**Drake gives fan a pink Birkin bag at his Los Angeles tour stop**

Los Angeles | Agencies

Rapper Drake during his performance at his 'It's All a Blur' tour stop in Los Angeles handed out a pink Hermes Birkin bag to a lucky concertgoer. The moment the 36-year-old rapper gave the expensive purse to his fan was filmed in a video making its rounds on TikTok, reports aceshowbiz.com. In the clip that later went viral, he could be seen carrying the medium-sized handbag with one of his hands as he approached the audience from the stage.

The clip further showed Drake searching for one fan who was lucky enough to be the recipient of his gift. In the meantime, he could be heard making a joke in front of a microphone which he held with his other hand, "Drake ain't cheap!" Once he found the lucky fan, the 'One Dance' rapper pointed to one of the concertgoers who were standing in the front row of the audience. "This girl right here. Yeah," he said. After giving the luxurious bag, he did not forget to give a suggestion for the fan's safety. "Make sure she has security on the way out," he stated. It did not take long for the video to be flooded with online responses. In the comments section, one TikTok user showered the hip-hop artist with praise by writing: "Can we talk about how he made sure the girl got security out the show to her car?! the consideration this man has!"

The comments did not end there. Another user exclaimed: "Omg can u imagine not only getting a free Birkin, but getting a free Birkin from Drake." Meanwhile, a third pointed out: "He is very smart, now more ticket sales b/c yall gonna think he gonna be handin these out." A fourth suggested: "That's not even something you can get at Hermes. More than just a birkin."



**SANDRA BULLOCK FEELS HEARTBROKEN AFTER 'THE BLIND SIDE' CONTROVERSY**

Los Angeles | Agencies

Things have not been going easy for Sandra Bullock this whole month. After her lover Bryan Randall died, the actress was already having it tough, but to make things worse now, the controversy regarding the film 'The Blind Side' has left her heartbroken as it is now being claimed that her Oscar winning role in the film is 'tainted by a lie'.

The controversy came when back on August 14, the real-life subject of the film, retired NFL star Michael Oher, filed a lawsuit claiming that his adoptive parents swindled him

by keeping the profits from the 2009 film.

Oher alleged that his adoptive parents, Sean and Leigh Anne Tuohy, the latter of whom was played by Bullock in the film, tricked Oher into signing a document that made them conservators, and not his adoptive parents, allowing them to profit off him by using his name while not paying him any royalties whatsoever.

According to the Daily Mail, Bullock is now feeling heartbroken after the 59-year old actress found out that all the hard work she put in for the 2008 film which gained her an Oscar was based on a lie.

The Daily Mirror added that she hates that such a wonderful story, a

spectacular movie, and a spectacular time in her life now has been tainted. Now people won't watch it and if they do, they will have a completely different reaction to its original intention.

There was so much hard work put into the film that they all thought was the truth and now that has been questioned, it just upsets Sandra to no end that a time in her life that was so special, is now shadowed with a completely different perspective.

The actress has been trying to put on a strong face ever since her partner died, and was spotted in public for the very first time on August 15. Now things have only become more difficult for her as she continues to grieve her great loss.



**TOM BLYTHE TO PORTRAY YOUNGER VERSION OF CORIOLANUS SNOW IN NEW 'HUNGER GAMES' MOVIE**

Los Angeles | Agencies

The story of Coriolanus Snow begins as 'Hunger Games' has unveiled its long-awaited fifth chapter 'The Hunger Games: The Ballad of Songbirds and Snakes'. A cult classic, the hype around the new film is very high. Tony Blythe will essay the role of a younger Coriolanus Snow, and has evidently managed to do great justice to the character.

Talking about casting Tom Blythe as a younger Coriolanus Snow, director Francis Lawrence said: "We didn't really know much about him, didn't know who he was. He came in, and we saw a reading of his with our casting director that was just great. I mean, he was magnetic, and he's so good at his craft. I mean, you know, he's an English actor; he's a Juilliard graduate. He really loves acting and really studies acting and really cares and really works."

He added, "But also, there's the resemblance to Donald Sutherland. And so, you know, all those factors combined kind of made him the guy."

Donald Sutherland's face is synonymous with Coriolanus Snow, who served as the primary antagonist of the film series and was much beloved character, as Sutherland delivered such a powerful performance, that audiences felt his menace through the screen.

To re-imagine the arrogant, malicious and evil villain as a younger, more innocent person was a difficult task, because despite his malice, Coriolanus Snow is a dynamic and multi-faceted character. This prompted the makers to dig deeper into the novels as well as re-examine Sutherland's character, leading them to find Tom Blythe who took up center stage as the younger version of the popular antagonist.

Further talking about his resemblance to Donald Sutherland, Lawrence added, "I'd also say that there's an element of him that is very controlled, which Snow is, and Donald is, that I liked very much for the role."



**Crystal Finn attacked by otters, says their bites 'really hurt'**

Los Angeles | Agencies

Actress Crystal Finn, who appeared in the show 'Succession', has said she had a frightening encounter with an otter during a trip to Northern California recently.

The actress shared that she was attacked by otters while taking a dip in the Feather River in Plumas National Forest, about 75 miles northwest of Lake Tahoe, reports 'People' magazine.

Crystal, who appeared in the 'Succession' season 4 episode 'America Decides', told the San Francisco Chronicle, "I felt something on my backside and on my leg. I started looking around and yelling out and [the otters] popped up right in front of me. Then they dove down and started going at me again."

She further mentioned, "I could see the bites on my legs and knew I had been bitten on my butt - that one was the worst, but I couldn't see it. The bites really hurt".

While Finn wasn't sure what motivated the otters to attack, she believed it might have been down to the mothering instincts of the parent protecting her young, she told the San Francisco Chronicle.

As per 'People', she was glad she hadn't brought along her daughter for the swim, otherwise, "It would have been a lot worse," she told the outlet. The actress, who has appeared on Broadway alongside actress Debra Messing in the play 'Birthday Candles', said she was treated for her injuries at Tahoe Forest Hospital in Truckee, California.

Finn's comments come after a group of Montana women was also attacked by otters. Earlier this week, Jen Royce, of Bozeman, Montana, shared the details of an otter attack she survived in a Facebook post. On August 2, she was enjoying an evening float on inner tubes down the Jefferson River with some friends when two otters attacked.

"I saw one otter right behind my friend before it attacked," Royce wrote in her post. "I didn't even have a chance to get the words 'there is an otter behind you' out of me before it attacked her."

**ABSOLUTE PIC OF THE DAY**



**Hailey Bieber**





## India Vs Ireland 1st T20

# INDIA BEAT IRELAND IN RAIN-HIT GAME

Dublin | Agencies

India beat Ireland by two runs (DLS method) in the first T20I of the three-match series after the game was called off due to incessant rains here at Malahide Cricket Club Ground on Friday. Bumrah, who made a comeback after being sidelined for 11 months due to a recurring back injury, won his first match as captain as India went 1-0 up in the series.

The star pacer shone on his much-awaited return, picking 2 wickets and delivering a fine death over. Debutant Prasidh Krishna and spinner Ravi Bishnoi also chipped in with 2 wickets each. After suffering an early fall of wickets, Barry McCarthy scored maiden fifty (33-ball 51 not out) and built a crucial partnership with Curtis Campher (39 off 33), providing some stability after the early wobble. With the help of three



massive overs, the hosts finished with a respectable total of 139/7 in 20 overs.

In response, India got off to a good start as the young opening duo Yashasvi Jaiswal and Ruturaj Gaikwad took the powerplay score to 40 for no loss. The very next over, Craig Young struck twice to send Jaiswal and Tilak Verma back to the pavilion. Jaiswal sliced the pull after getting in a poor position, ball went high up and Paul Stirling ran in from mid-wicket to complete the deed. The next delivery, he made it two in two, remov-

ing Tilak Verma for duck.

When India were 47/2, the game underwent a delay as the rain got heavier to force the players to go off the field with India two runs ahead on the DLS as the par score at the end of 6.5 overs was 45.

With covers firmly in place as it was still raining, the two umpires had a chat with Bumrah and Paul Stirling and decided to call it a match.

Earlier, opting to bowl first after winning the toss, India got off to a flier as Bumrah's double strike in the very first over reduced the hosts Ireland to 4/2. The visitors continued with their sustained bowling attack to keep Ireland on the back foot, taking down their top order within the powerplay.

The next over, Prasidh claimed his second in the form of George Dockrell, leading half of the Irish side heading back to the pavilion.

## Durand Cup 2023

# Chennaiyin beat Delhi FC to finish on top of Group E

Guwahati | Agencies

Chennaiyin FC extended their impressive unbeaten run in the Durand Cup 2023 after a 2-1 win over Delhi FC in their last Group E match, here on Friday.

Chennaiyin will be the only team to get nine out of nine points, winning all their group matches. Rafael Crivellaro (38th minute) and Vincny Barretto (51st) found the net for the Marina Machans.

Chennaiyin were already through to the quarter-finals and the match was all about maintaining the winning momentum as the tournament moves towards the business-end.

After a quiet start, the two teams tested each others' defence but struggled to



score in the early part of the first half. Crivellaro finally broke the deadlock in the 38th minute when he received a pass from Sangwan and dribbled two defenders to tap the ball low towards the left of the Delhi custodian.

Barretto also got on the scoresheet soon after the start of the second half. He received the ball from Sachu Siby and beat the keeper with his low strike.

Gassama scored three minutes after Barretto's strike to put Delhi FC on the board.

Chennaiyin had almost scored the third goal when Romario Jesuraj received a pass from Crivellaro but his shot on target was saved by the keeper.

The win also consolidated Chennaiyin's top spot in Group E.

## Archery World Cup

# Indian men, and women's recurve teams win bronze in Paris

Paris | Agencies

The Indian men's and women's recurve teams won bronze medals in their respective sections in the Archery World Cup 2023 Stage 4 at the Olympic Games venue in Paris, France.

The recurve men's team of Dhiraj Bommadevara, Atanu Das, and Tushar Prabhakar Shelke were the first to seal their place on the podium as they came from behind to beat Spanish trio Pablo Acha, Yun Sanchez, and Andres Ternino 6-2 on Thursday.

Spain had defeated fourth seeds USA en route to the last four, but the Indian team ultimately proved a step too far in Paris conditions. The recurve women's team of Bhajan Kaur, Ankita Bhakat, and Simranjeet Kaur then repeated the feat with a bronze of its own, as it beat Mexico's Alejandra Valencia, Angela Ruiz, and Aida Roman in a shoot-off after the teams were locked at 4-4.

The Mexico trio had raced into a 4-0 lead but were reeled back in by India who levelled the scores before an X from Bhajan Kaur sealed the victory in the shoot-off.

The bronze medal bagged by the men's team in Paris is India's third medal in Archery World Cup this year, and the archers hailed the influence of coach Sergio Pagni in their post-match interview with World Archery's official website. "He's the finest coach, I have seen,"



said the seasoned Atanu Das. "[He's teaching us] how the mindset works, how archers should shoot in tournaments and practice, how can we train and get better day by day." "It's a perfect example of a good archer because he was an archer too. Our government is supporting us very well at the grassroots level, until the elite level all the way." "The government support is very important for us, and we have received so many sponsors and opportunities to train abroad," Das added. The Indian women's team fed on the success of the male counterparts to bag bronze. "The men's team won one bronze before us, so we were very motivated to see them, and we just followed their footsteps," Simranjeet Kaur was quoted as saying by the official website.

Amman City (Jordan) | Agencies

# Priya Malik wins gold in U20 World Championship; 2nd Indian to do so in Amman

India's Priya Malik made history in women's wrestling by emerging as world champion in the 2023 U20 World Championships.

Former World Cadet champion Priya improved on the silver medal she won in the 2022 U20 World Championships, winning the gold medal in the women's 76kg category, becoming only the second Indian women wrestler to win gold at the Junior World championships.

In the women's 76 kg final in Amman, Priya Malik defeated Laura Celine Kuehn of Germany 6-0 on points in another dominant display by the 18-year-old from Nidani village of Jind district of Haryana.

Priya, the two-time U17 world champion, was clearly a better version of her 2022 self with solid defense and diverse attacks. Unlike her final against Ayano Moro of Japan last year, Malik had more attacking options and scored early as Kuehn failed to get to Malik's legs most of the time.

"I was much better prepared for



this final than last year," Malik said. "I worked on my power and even defense so I can take this world champion belt home," Priya Malik was quoted as saying by United World Wrestling (UWW) on its website. Daughter of an Indian Army veteran, Priya Malik won India's second gold of the tournament, adding to the gold that male wrestler Mohit Kumar

won by defeating Eldar Akhmadudinov of Russia 9-0 in the final, becoming the first Indian wrestler after Deepak Punia in 2019 to be crowned the U20 World Champion.

Minister of Youth Affairs and Sports, Anurag Thakur congratulated Priya Malik on her success. The 18-year-old wrestler had earlier won the

gold medal in the 2021 World Cadet Wrestling Championship in Women's 73 kg and had also won a bronze medal in the Asian wrestling championship held earlier this year in Astana.

"Congratulations to #TOPScheme wrestler Priya Malik on being crowned World Champion in the Women's 76kg, scripting history to become only the 2nd Indian Women Wrestler to win GOLD at the Junior Worlds," Thakur said in a tweet on Friday. "Hats off to her incredible skills and indomitable spirit. Without dropping a single point throughout the tournament, brilliantly pinning her ??? counterpart in the semifinal bout and claiming victory in style and confidence, she magnificently converted her SILVER to a GOLD this time." "Fantastic effort, Champ! Wishing you continued success in the future," the minister said in his tweet.

In the semifinals, Priya Malik defeated Alexis Blades Kennedy of the United States 10-0 in a dominant performance. She had also blanked Aliaksandra Kazalova of Russia 11-0 by points in the quarterfinals.

# Lionel Messi feeling Inter Miami love ahead of Leagues Cup final

Washington | Agencies

Lionel Messi has lavished praise on his Inter Miami colleagues and head coach Gerardo Martino as the team prepares for Saturday's Leagues Cup final against Nashville SC.

Messi has scored nine goals from six outings in the Leagues Cup -- an annual competition featuring teams from the United States, Canada and Mexico -- since joining the Florida outfit on a free transfer last month.

"We always saw ourselves as being capable of competing and getting this title," the 36-year-old told a news conference at Inter Miami's Fort



Lauderdale headquarters on Thursday. Despite sitting last in Major League

Soccer's eastern conference, Inter Miami have won all of their six matches since Messi arrived along

with Martino in mid-July, reports Xinhua. The Argentine World Cup winner also cited the support of Inter Miami's fans as a major reason for the side's radical improvement.

"The team has grown a lot since his [Martino's] arrival," Messi said. "I arrived at the club with great enthusiasm and with the desire to continue to get results as I have throughout my career." "Although it's a great surprise to be playing in a final, we've been preparing ourselves for this. The team has grown a lot."

Messi compared his Inter Miami move favourably to the one which saw him arrive at Paris Saint-Germain in 2021 after 17 years at Barcelona.

## UEFA Conference League

# Maccabi Tel Aviv advance to playoffs after home win over AEK Larnaca

Jerusalem (Israel) | Agencies

Maccabi Tel Aviv from Israel progressed to the UEFA Conference League playoffs following a 1-0 home victory against AEK Larnaca of Cyprus in the third qualifying round second-leg match.

Having secured an aggregate win over the Cypriot side after last week's 1-1 draw in Larnaca, Maccabi is set to compete against Slovenia's NK Celje in the playoffs.

In front of 26,000 spectators at Bloomfield Stadium in Tel Aviv-Yafo on Thursday evening, Maccabi captain Eran Zahavi missed opportunities to score in the fourth and 24th minutes. Adam Gyurcsko managed to find the net in the 42nd minute, only for the goal to be disallowed by Croatian referee Fran Jovic for an offside violation, reports Xinhua.

Zahavi came close to scoring again in the 72nd minute, but his roughly 16-meter shot hit the post. Nine minutes later, an offside call



once again negated a goal for Larnaca, this one by Hrvoje Milicevic.

In the 86th minute, Zahavi successfully converted a penalty after substitute midfielder Milson was fouled in the penalty area by Milicevic.

# Mahika Gaur, Bess Heath earn maiden England call-ups for white-ball series against Sri Lanka

London | Agencies

Uncapped left-arm fast-bowler Mahika Gaur and wicketkeeper-batter Bess Heath have earned maiden call-ups to England's squads for the white-ball series against Sri Lanka starting later this month.

Mahika, born in Reading, United Kingdom, plays cricket in England as a local player. She has represented UAE in this year's ICC U19 Women's T20 World Cup, apart from playing 19 T20Is for the senior side. She was part of her domestic side Thunder's run to Charlotte Edwards Cup Finals Day and played a key role in their Rachael Heyhoe Flint Trophy matches earlier this year.

Mahika also made her debut in the 2023 edition of The Hundred for Manchester Originals, apart from playing for England A against Australia A in the recent time.

On the other hand, Bess was part of Northern Diamonds' Rachael Heyhoe Flint Trophy-winning side of 2022 and has been in England A set-up for the last 14 months. She has featured in all of Northern Superchargers' 2023 Hundred matches to date.

All-rounder Freya Kemp returns to the 20-



over format squad after recovering from a stress fracture in her back while seamer Lauren Filer receives her first T20I call-up after debuting for England in the Test match at this summer's Ashes.

But there was no T20I call-up for opener Tammy Beaumont, despite hitting 118 from 61 balls for Welsh Fire against Trent Rockets, the first century in the Women's Hundred competition, though she's named in the ODI squad.

# Young guns put up stellar show in chess World Cup, on the prowl for more

Chennai | Agencies

Chess players and others will be looking at the match between 18-year-old Indian Grandmaster R. Praggnanandhaa (ELO 2707) and American GM Fabiano Caruana (2782) at the ongoing FIDE World Cup at Baku, Azerbaijan.

Whether Praggnanandhaa makes it to the Candidates Tournament - where the winner would challenge the world champion for the world title - is the question that occupies the mind of this mind game players and followers.

As per the International Chess Federation or FIDE's rule, the top three players in the World Cup will qualify for the Candidates Tournament.

And Caruana should be careful because for Praggnanandhaa, giant



slaying is not new and he has done that in this tournament as well by defeating far more higher-rated players, including US GM Hikaru Nakamura, world No. 2 by rating.

The other semifinal match is between world No. 1 and former world champion Norwegian GM Magnus Carlsen (2835) and Azerbaijan GM Nijat Abasov (2646).

For Carlsen, the semifinal is expected to be a cake walk as his opponent is far more lower rated, unless there is a great upset. India has never performed so well

in the World Cup Open Category in the past, though former world champion GM Viswanathan Anand had won the tournament earlier when it was held under a different format.

At Baku this time around, four Indian GMs -- Praggnanandhaa, D. Gukesh, Arjun Erigaisi and Vidit Santosh Gujrathi -- made it to the quarterfinals in a field of over 250 players.

When queried about the performance of the Indian players, GM Emil Sutovsky, CEO, FIDE, said an expected breakthrough has happened.

Apart from Praggnanandhaa, there was one more giant slayer from the Indian side. And that was Gujrathi. The Indian youngster defeated world No. 5 GM Ian Nepomniachtchi (2779) of Russia.

However, the winning streak of the three young Indians came to an end in the quarterfinals with Gukesh going down to Carlsen, Gujrathi to Abasov, and Erigaisi to Praggnanandhaa.

According to Thipsay, the 44th Chess Olympiad held in Chennai last year played an important role for the youngsters in more than one way.

The India A team had secured fourth place in the Olympiad.

Thipsay added that the young players realised that they were not worse than the players supposed to be strong. Team bronze medal apart, the young Indian GMs also won medals for their individual performance.





## Abhishek shares what happens when Big B sits for family movie night

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actor Abhishek Bachchan has revealed a funny anecdote about his megastar father Amitabh Bachchan on the quiz-based reality show 'Kaun Banega Crorepati' Season 15. A clip shared on Instagram from the channel Sony Entertainment, Abhishek shared what happens in a Bachchan household during a movie night.

Abhishek, who wore a blue suit with blue tie paired with chunky glasses, was heard saying: "Humare parivaar mein sabse favourite hai ki mil baith ke film dekhte hai...Dad every night says, 'Ya...picture dekhte hain...lets watch a film', action film lagao kuch achi si, halfay interval mein aap dekhne..."

The actor then does the action of sleeping. Intending to say that his father dozes off while watching the film. This leads the to audience to break into laughter. Abhishek was promoting 'Ghoomer' along with Saiyami Kher and R. Balki on the sets of the quiz-based show.

Prior to this conversation, Abhishek had made a smooth transition from the contestant's hotseat to the host's seat, orchestrating a unique role reversal with Amitabh. Abhishek takes charge of the host's seat, but he will also step into his father's shoes. Ditching the customary formal footwear, Abhishek will embrace his father's unique fashion sense as he dons sneakers just like him.

## DULQUER HAD 'OM SHANTI OM' MOMENT WHEN HE FIRST SAW DEEPIKA

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actor Dulquer Salmaan says he has been a huge fan of Deepika Padukone and even had an 'Om Shanti Om' moment where his heart skipped a beat seeing the actress for the first time in Dubai.

During a chat session on Rosopo, Dulquer had to either give a Gulaab (rose) or a Gun to a particular star in line with his upcoming release on Netflix 'Guns & Gulaabs'.

Asked what he would give to Deepika, he revealed, "Gulaab, as she is like a Gulaab (rose) for me. I have been a huge fan of Deepika since 'Om Shanti Om' and I remember, back when I was working in Dubai, she was coming there for the premiere of 'Karthik Calling Karthik' (2010)."

"I somehow managed to get tickets for the premiere and I was standing on the sides of the red carpet, where I saw her for the first time in-person. It was an (Om Shanti Om) moment for me!"

While he spoke about his love for Deepika, he also gave a Gulaab to stars such as Shah Rukh Khan, Salman Khan, Amitabh Bachchan, Allu Arjun, while he gave a Gun to Rajnikanth.

During the live show, he was also asked if he ever had a crazy fan moment, to which he revealed, "I love all my fans, however I always get anxious when I get followed by young fans on their bikes. It's very scary and not safe for them."



## Pratik Sehajpal shares how Tamannaah Bhatia was impressed by his acting

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Pratik Sehajpal, who is known for 'Bigg Boss 15' and 'Khatron Ke Khiladi 12', recently shared his experience working with actress Tamannaah Bhatia in 'Aakhri Sach'.

Pratik shares how Tamannaah was impressed by his performance and his acting, he said: "I was really glad when Tamannaah told me that she was happy to work with me. She was glad

that I was her co-actor in that particular scene. She was impressed by my performance."

"She told me that you are really prepared for the scenes. It was a big deal for me as she has worked with so many actors and if she appreciates me and likes my work it is really very big for me."

Ask Pratik about the experience of working with the producers of the show Preeti-Neeti, he said: "Preeti-Neeti are amazing and super friendly. We did a lot of fun and they are very cool. They treat their artist so well. Even though they are the producers of the show we just felt like we are having fun with our friends while we were talking to

them." Discussing the feedback he has been getting from his close ones after the trailer release, Pratik said: "Everyone is very excited to know what kind of character I am playing as the trailer doesn't have my scenes more. They are supporting that whatever is my character, they are super excited."

"They are happy that I will be sharing the screen with big actors and I am very grateful for this." He concludes: "I don't expect anything from any show. I just believe that I should do good work and the outcome will be good."

## Avika Gor: I love horror genre and how it has evolved over years

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actress Avika Gor has revealed that she loves the horror genre and said that she was aware of that would come by working in '1920 - Horrors of the Heart' as it has been a popular franchise.

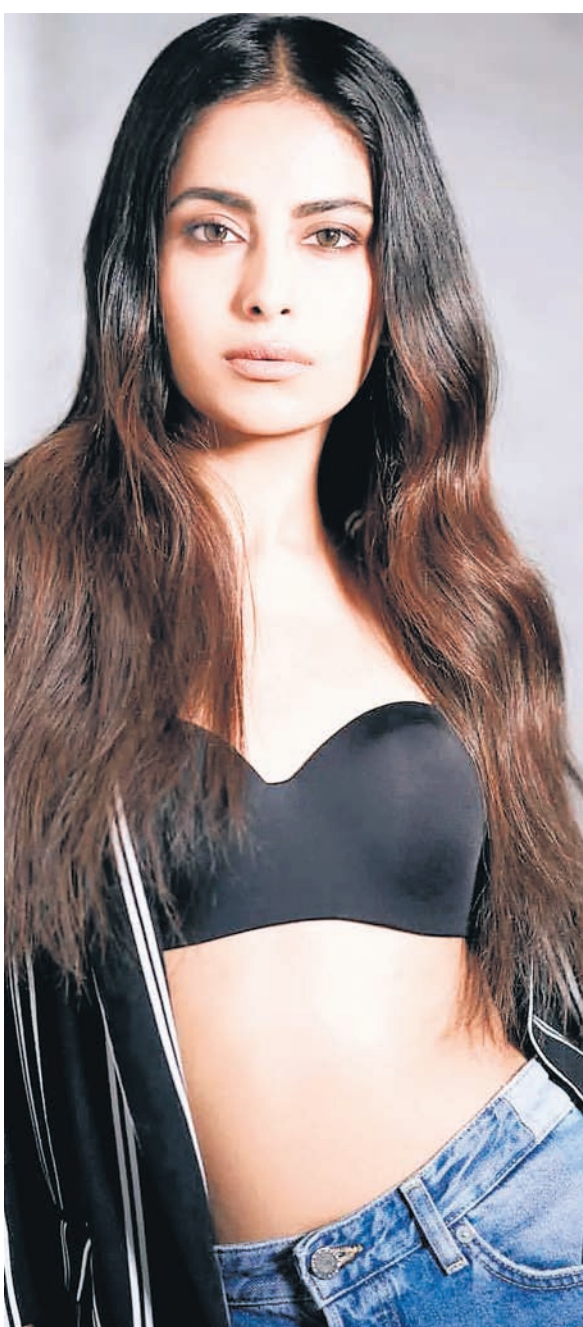
Along with Avika, the film stars Barkha Bisht, Rahul Dev, Ketki Kulkarni, Danish Pandor, Rupam Bhag, Amit Behl among others in pivotal roles.

Talking about her film, director Krishna Bhatt said: "The 1920 franchise has been the first fan favourite horror film franchise and with this newest edition '1920 - Horrors of the Heart', we have tried to take it up a notch. While it felt like a big responsibility to live up to the expectations, we had a great cast and crew that eased the process for us."

"Avika has been a loved face on Television, with this film, we have tried to show her in a completely different light. Now that film is streaming on Disney+ Hotstar, a much wider audience will be able to watch it," he added.

Talking about her film, Avika said: "Playing Meghna was like diving into the unknown, a role that pushed my boundaries. I love the horror genre and how it has evolved over the years. I was aware of the fan following the 1920 franchise had and I knew the kind of pressure that would come with it but I was ready to take that challenge head-on."

"I am so grateful to get an opportunity to work with Mahesh Bhatt, Vikram Bhatt and Krishna Bhatt."



## NUSHRRATT RECOLLECTS BEING TAUGHT DANCE ROUTINE BY CONTESTANT

Mumbai | Agencies

Actress Nushratt Bharuccha, who is set to grace the dance reality show 'India's Best Dancer 3', will be seen sharing an interesting memory about the time she worked with contestant Vipul Khandpal. The upcoming episode will take one and all down memory lane with its 'Bachpan Special' for which the contestants and choreographers will recreate the childhood memories through their acts.

Gracing the 'Bachpan Special' will be the charming Nushratt Bharuccha, who will be promoting her film 'Akelli' along with the star cast of the blockbuster Marathi film 'Baipan Bhaari Deva' featuring Vandana Gupte, Sukanya Kulkarni, Shilpa Navalkar, Suchitra Bandekar, Deepa Parab, and Director Kedar Shinde.

The performance of contestant Vipul Khandpal and choreographer Pankaj Thapa to the soul-stirring melody 'Give Me Some Sunshine' will receive a standing ovation given the novel concept and the duo's unwavering dedication.

Nushratt Bharuccha will be seen applauding Vipul's versatility and his growth as a dancer. She will say: "As artistes, we tend to forget the immense power we possess to bring certain issues to the forefront. It underscores the potency of cinema and its impact on society at large. Stage shows like these, with acts that convey such messages in just a few minutes, deserve applause. I would like to commend the platform and the artists who wield this power."

She will further mention: "While watching the act, I realised it wasn't just about the dance; it was about the strength, grip, and power exhibited. Vipul, I remember you from a while back when we danced together. During a shoot in Jaipur, for the song 'Saiyaa Ji', you were part of the group and taught me the routine. You were a skilled dancer then, and now seeing your growth, you've become incredibly versatile. Sometimes, in set choreographies, we're unaware that there are talented individuals behind us with the potential to achieve much more. Vipul, all your acts showcase your versatility."



## INSTAGRAM PIC OF THE DAY



Rukshar Dhillon