

# absolute india

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## Rahul rides his bike from Leh to Pangong lake, remembers his late father's words



**Leh** | Agencies  
 Congress MP Rahul Gandhi, who is currently on a trip to Ladakh, rode his KTM 390 Duke motorbike from Leh city to the picturesque Pangong lake on Saturday. In an Instagram post, the senior Congress leader said: "On

our way to Pangong lake, which my father used to say, is one of the most beautiful places in the world." He also used the hashtags of Leh, Ladakh and PangongTso. Rahul arrived in Leh on Thursday afternoon to a rousing welcome. He will stay in Ladakh till August 25. On Friday, he interacted with youngsters in Leh and also

attended a football match. On Sunday, he will pay tribute to his later father and former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi on his birth anniversary at the Pangong lake. Later, he will also visit Kargil and address a public meeting there. During his visit to the Karol Bagh bike market in the

national capital earlier this year, Rahul had mentioned that he owns a Duke 390 bike but he hardly rides it in the city due to security concerns. Even a bike shop owner had shown him a photograph of his visit to the Pangong lake from his bike.

## INDIA'S DIGITAL PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE OFFERS SCALABLE, SECURE, INCLUSIVE SOLUTIONS FOR GLOBAL CHALLENGES: PM NARENDRA MODI

**Bengaluru** | Agencies

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday said that India's digital public infrastructure offers scalable, secure and inclusive solutions for global challenges. Addressing the G20 Digital Economy Ministers meeting in Bengaluru virtually, the Prime Minister said that India is an incredibly diverse country. "We can build an entire ecosystem for technology based solutions to challenges faced by humanity," he said. "We have dozens of languages and hundreds of dialects. It is home to every religion in the world and innumerable cultural practices. From ancient traditions to the latest technologies India has something for everyone. With such diversity, India is an ideal testing lab for solutions," he said. "We are building Bhashini, an AI powered language translation platform that will support digital inclusion in all the diverse languages of India," the Prime Minister said.



"The country's digital transformation over the last nine years is unprecedented. It all started with the launch of digital India initiative in 2015 and is powered by an unshakable belief in innovation. It is driven by our commitment to speedy implementation and motivated by our spirit of inclusion leaving no one behind," he said. The scale, speed and scope of this transformation is beyond imagination. Today India has over 850 million internet users enjoying some of the cheapest data costs in the world.

We have leveraged technology to transform governance to make it more appreciating, inclusive, faster and transparent, he added. "Our unique digital identity platform Aadhaar covers more than 1.3 billion of our people. We have used the power of 'JAN' Trinity. Jan Dhan bank account, Aadhar and mobile to revolutionise financial inclusion in India," he stated. Every month nearly 10 billion transactions are made via UPI, our instant payment system. More than 45 per cent of global real time payments happen in

India. Direct benefit transfer system of the government is plugging leakages and has saved over 33 billion dollars, Prime Minister Modi said. The CoWin portal supported the country's Covid vaccination drive and helped in delivery of 2 billion vaccine doses along with digitally verifiable certificates, he added. "The Gati Shakti platform uses technology and special planning to map infrastructure and logistics. It is assisting in planning, reducing cost and encouraging speed of delivery. Our online public procurement programme in the government e-market place has brought transparency and probity into the process," he said. The open network for Digital commerce is democratising e-commerce. Wholly-digitised taxation systems are promoting transparency and e-governance. Bengaluru is a city that is home to science, technology and spirit of entrepreneurship. There is no better place than Bengaluru to discuss the digital economy, he added.

## I-T Dept revises rules for valuing rent-free accommodation given by employers

**Team Absolute** | New Delhi

Employees having high grade salaries and also rent-free accommodation given by their employers, will be able to save more tax and take home a higher salary, as per amendments notified by the Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) in income tax rules. These shall come in effect from September 1, 2023. The Income Tax Department has revised norms for valuing such accommodations, which will lead to more tax saving by the above-mentioned category of employees, thus resulting in greater take home salary. As per the notification, where unfurnished accommodation is provided to employees other than the central or state government employees and such accommodation is owned by the



employer then the valuation shall be: (i) 10 per cent of salary (reduced from 15 per cent) in cities having population exceeding 40 lakh as per 2011 census (earlier, 25 lakh as per 2001 census), (ii) 7.5 per cent of salary (reduced from 10 per cent) in cities having population exceeding 15 lakh but not exceeding 40 lakh as per 2011 census (earlier, 10 lakhs but not exceeding 25 lakhs as per 2001 census).

## Google will delete accounts that remain inactive for 2 years from Dec 1

**Team Absolute** | New Delhi

Google on Saturday sent emails to its billions of users, saying the company updating the inactivity period for a Google Account to two years across all its products and services. This change starts rolling out now, and will apply to any Google Account that's been inactive, "meaning it has not been signed into or used within a two-year period". An inactive account and any content in it will be eligible for deletion from December 1, 2023, the tech giant said. These changes do not impact you unless you have been inactive in your Google Account for two years or have not used your account to sign in to any Google service for over two years. "While the changes go into effect today, the earliest we would enforce any account deletion would be December 2023," said Google. If the account is considered inactive, Google will send several reminder emails to both users and their recovery emails (if any

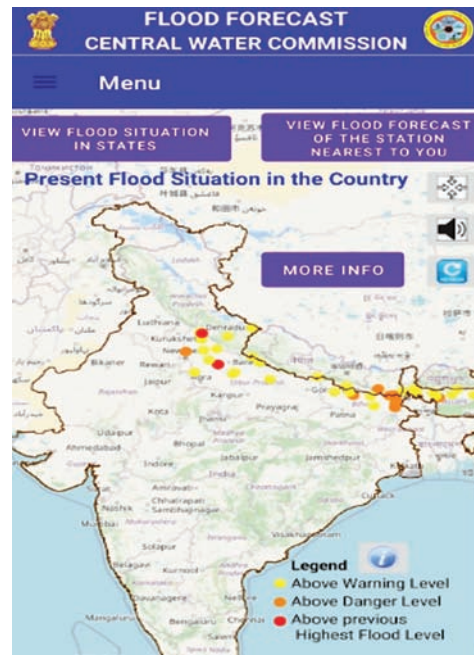


have been provided) before the company takes any action or delete any account content. "These reminder emails will go out at least 8 months before any action is taken on your account. After a Google Account is deleted, the Gmail address for the deleted account cannot be used again when creating a new Google Account," said the company. The simplest way to keep a Google Account active is to sign in to the account at least once every two years. If you have signed in to your Google Account recently in the past two years, your account is considered active and will not be deleted, said the company.

## GOVERNMENT LAUNCHES 'FLOODWATCH' APP TO DISSEMINATE INFORMATION ON ADVANCED FORECASTS

**Team Absolute** | New Delhi

Government on Thursday launched the mobile application 'FloodWatch' with the aim of using mobile phones to disseminate information related to the flood situation and forecasts up to seven days on a real-time basis to the public. The in-house developed user-friendly app has readable and audio broadcast and all the information is available in two languages, i.e. English and Hindi. Key feature of the app includes real-time flood monitoring where users can check up-to-date flood situation throughout the country. The app utilises near real-time river flow data from various sources. It also provides flood forecast at nearest location where users can check the flood advisory at the station nearest to them on the home page itself. Central Water Commission (CWC) Chairman Kushvinder Vohra after launching the app said that it is quite user-friendly and is available for download on Android devices, providing widespread accessibility to users globally.



"The app can be downloaded free of charge from the Google Play Store. The app will also be available on Apple iOS soon," he informed. 'FloodWatch' app utilises advanced technologies such as satellite data analysis, mathematical modelling, and real-time monitoring to deliver accurate and timely flood forecasts. With this app, users can access essential information regarding flood situation in the country. The user-friendly interface will make it easy for anyone to stay informed and minimise risk during flood events. It's other key features include forecast using an Interactive Map where users can check the CWC flood forecast (up to 24 hours) or flood advisory (up to seven days) either by directly selecting the station from map or the user can also search for the name of the station in the search box. The location will be zoomed in on the map when the name of the station will be selected from the dropdown. The app will also provide state-wise or basin-wise flood forecast (up to 24 hours) or flood advisory (up to seven days), which can be accessed by selecting specific stations, state wise or basin wise from the dropdown menu.

## Shabana Azmi wishes to sit on hot seat of 'KBC' someday

**Team Absolute** | New Delhi

Veteran actress Shabana Azmi has expressed her desire to sit on the hot seat of 'Kaun Banega Crorepati' someday, hosted by megastar Amitabh Bachchan. In the special episode, the star cast of 'Ghoomer' -- Abhishek Bachchan, Saiyami Kher and filmmaker R Balki, were present on the set of 'Kaun Banega Crorepati 15' (KBC). During the episode, a tune of the bugle was played. Big B says responding to the sound: "badlaav ke iss daur me, desh ke sath sath KBC me bhi ek badlaav ki pehel

shuru ho chuki hai, jisme desh ki janta hamare studio audience se sawal karti hai." "Let's see which citizen of India has asked the question today," he said. The location in the video played on the screen shows of Maharashtra. Veteran actress Shabana Azmi appears on screen and says, "Aadaab Amitabh ji. Tne saalon ke baad finally I am on KBC. Though this is for short duration, but I hope I will be able to sit on the hot seat someday." "I am so sorry that I am not present among you people," says Shabana. The actress wore a yellow top and paired it with a blue scarf.

## Jio launches prepaid plans with bundled Netflix subscription

**Team Absolute** | New Delhi

Reliance Jio on Friday announced the launch of Jio prepaid plans with a bundled Netflix subscription. A Netflix subscription is already available on select Jio Postpaid and Jio Fiber plans, but this is the first time that a Netflix subscription will be available on a prepaid plan, the company said. A Netflix mobile-only plan will come bundled with Jio's Rs 1,099 plan, whereas a Rs 1,499 plan will give subscribers access to Netflix Basic. Both plans have a validity of 84 days. With this launch, over 400 million Jio prepaid customers will get the option of availing a Netflix subscription through a Jio Prepaid bundled plan.



"The launch of Netflix bundles with our prepaid plan is yet another step to demonstrate our resolve. Our partnership with global partners like Netflix has grown in strength and together we are creating use cases for the rest of the world to follow," said Kiran Thomas, CEO, Jio Platforms Limited. Netflix India has built a distinct and diverse slate of films and series across a

variety of genres and innovative formats. Over recent years, Netflix has delivered several local hit series and films such as Delhi Crime, Rana Naidu, Class, Kohrra, Darlings, RRR, Gangubai Kathiawadi, Monica O My Darling, Shehzada, Lust Stories and many more. "Over the years, we have launched a variety of successful local shows, documentaries and films which have been loved by audiences across India. Our collection of must-watch stories is growing and our new prepaid bundle partnership with Jio will give more customers access to this exciting line-up of Indian content as well as some incredible stories from around the world," said Tony Zameczkowski, Vice President of APAC Partnerships for Netflix.

## ICC World Cup trophy tour lights up Kuwait and Bahrain

**Kuwait & Bahrain** | Agencies

The ICC Men's Cricket World Cup 2023 trophy tour continued its remarkable journey, spreading the thrill of cricket and uniting cricket enthusiasts in Kuwait and Bahrain. The tour's recent stops in these Middle Eastern nations were marked by grand unveilings, iconic locations, and exuberant fan activations, reflecting the universal appeal of cricket and the excitement building up to the ICC Men's Cricket World Cup 2023. The tour's first day witnessed an exclusive invite-only event at Al-Hashemi-II, the largest dhow ever built. The ICC Men's Cricket World Cup



Trophy was unveiled in the presence of Haider Farman, President of Kuwait Cricket Club (KCC), and Imran Khwaja, Deputy Chair of ICC. The unveiling was followed by captivating photo opportunities, symbolizing the start of an enchanting journey. The tour continued on a series of spectacular events across iconic Kuwait locations, including Kuwait Towers, Parliament, Al Hamra Tower, and the Mall - Kuwait's tallest building.





# MANIPUR: TRIBALS PROTEST AGAINST KILLINGS, DEMANDING REIMPOSITION OF AFSPA

Imphal | Agencies

Thousands of tribal women on Saturday organised massive demonstrations in different districts of Manipur specially in Kangpokpi district to protest the killing of three Village Defence Volunteers (VDV) belonging to Kuki tribals in Ukhrul district on Friday.

Due to the protests movement of vehicles along the National Highway-2 (Imphal-Dimapur), the surface life-line of Manipur, remained disrupted for the entire day.

The protesters said that the three VDV were killed by the rival community barely two days after Chief Minister N. Biren Singh in his Independence Day speech called for 'forgive and forget' and to live peacefully.

The protests were organised by the Committee on Tribal Unity (CoTU), which also submitted a memorandum to Prime Minister Narendra Modi demanding to re-impose Armed Forces (Special Power) Act, 1958 (AFSPA) in all six valley districts inhabited by the non-tribals Meiteis.

"If the AFSPA reimposed in the valley districts, then the Army and Para military forces would be able to contain the violence in these areas," said the memorandum, submitted through the Deputy Commissioner of Kangpokpi district.

CoTU media cell coordinator Lun Kipgen said that as the Center was not imposing President's rule in Manipur, the government must re-impose AFSPA in the valley districts and redeployment of the Assam Rifles in those tribal areas from where they were withdrawn.



Right activist Irom Sharmila held a hunger strike for 16 long years demanding to repeal the AFSPA after 10 people were killed by the paramilitary forces at a bus stop at Malom Makha Leikai in Manipur's Imphal West District in November 2000.

The CoTU in its memorandum expressed discontentment against the Union Home Minister, Amit Shah's statement in the Lok Sabha recently.

"The Kuki-Zo people have been deeply hurt by the irresponsible statement made by the Union Home Minister on August 9 stating that the ethnic violence is caused by the influx of illegal immigrants from Myanmar."

He also named a non-existing outfit called Kuki Democratic Front based in Myanmar for causing violence in the state. "Such irresponsible statement of the Union Home Minister has deepened the wounds of the Kuki-Zo people who are the victims of the ethnic cleansing perpetrated by the majority Meitei community."

The tribal body also demanded to revoke FIRs against academics and intellectuals.

"The COTU is saddened to learn that a series of FIRs have been registered against academics and intellectuals belonging to the Kuki Zo tribal communities by various individuals and organisations of the majority community," the memorandum said urging the Prime Minister to look into the undemocratic filings of FIR so that critical thinking academicians and intellectuals are given space for constructive analysis of the current turmoil.

Sangwan used to teach law at Unacademy.

On Saturday he said: "I am not concerned about being expelled from Unacademy, my concern is I was not given a chance to explain. I wanted to talk with the top management but I was not allowed to discuss the issue."

"I am a professor of law, I teach law to students. The first lesson I gave to them is 'law is nothing but a collective

# 'There may be political pressure', says teacher expelled by Unacademy

Team Absolute | New Delhi

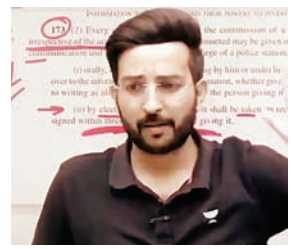
Karan Sangwan, the teacher who was sacked by Edtech platform Unacademy after he appealed to the students to vote for educated candidates, has said that he was misinterpreted and "there may be political pressure as well".

"I was misinterpreted and I know there may be political pressure, but I gave the statement on my YouTube channel, then why was I removed from Unacademy," Karan Sangwan, a former faculty member at Unacademy, said.

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On Saturday he said: "I am not concerned about being expelled from Unacademy, my concern is I was not given a chance to explain. I wanted to talk with the top management but I was not allowed to discuss the issue."

"I am a professor of law, I teach law to students. The first lesson I gave to them is 'law is nothing but a collective



Portrait of Karan Sangwan, a former faculty member at Unacademy.

opinions and views.

Meanwhile, Roman Saini, Co-founder, Unacademy Group said: "Our learners are at the centre of everything we do. The classroom is not a place to share personal opinions and views as they can wrongly influence them. In the current situation, we were forced to part ways with Karan Sangwan as he was in breach of the Code of Conduct. "We are an education platform that is deeply committed to imparting quality education. To do this, we have in place a strict Code of Conduct for all our educators with the intention of ensuring that our learners have access to unbiased knowledge," he added. Saini said that "there is a strict Code of Conduct for all our educators with the aim of providing unbiased knowledge to all our learners".

In a video, Sangwan said: "Elect someone who is educated, who understands things. Don't elect someone who only knows, changing, changing names."

# Video of girl on bike waving gun on Patna's 'Marine Drive' surfaces

Patna | Agencies

Despite all restrictions, the 'over-the-top' thrill and adventure seekers seem to be always looking for opportunities to perform stunts on Digha-Gaighat JP Ganga pathway -- also known as the 'marine drive' of Patna.

In a video that surfaced on Saturday, a biker can be seen riding his two-wheeler at a high speed while a girl riding a pillion is holding guns in both hands and waving them in the air.

The video has gone viral on social media.

Taking cognizance of the video, Patna Superintendent of Police, Vaibhav Sharma assured taking action against the offenders. "We are making



efforts to identify the registration number of the bike and reach out to the offenders. Action will be taken against them soon," Sharma said. A similar incident happened a few months ago when a girl was waving a gun on a bike in Patna's 'marine drive'. Patna Police later

arrested her from the Lohanipur area.

During the investigation, it was learnt that the girl was holding a lighter having the shape of a gun.

A fine of Rs 34,000 was imposed and the registration of her bike was also cancelled for a year.

# For Cong, winnability - not youth - sole criterion for ticket distribution in Raj

The first meeting of the state election committee of the Congress in Rajasthan was held on Saturday.

Jaipur | Agencies

When asked after the meeting if the party will give importance to the youth while distributing tickets for the Assembly elections scheduled later this year, Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot said that only winnable nominees will be given tickets, as winnability is the sole criterion for the party when it comes to selection of candidates.

The Chief Minister said: "You must have seen that in the recently-concluded Assembly elections in Karnataka, a 90-year-old candidate contested the polls and won. That's why tickets will be given to those who can win." Earlier, it was said that the



party will give more importance to the youth factor when it comes to distributing tickets for the Assembly polls, but Gehlot's latest remarks made it clear that for the Congress, winnability is going to be the sole criterion for the selection of nominees.

The Congress is in the process of finalising its candidates' list for the upcoming polls, with senior party leaders saying that most of the nominees will be finalised before the Model Code of Conduct comes into force. Besides Gehlot, Saturday's meeting was attended by the party's state in-charge Sukhjinder Singh Randhawa, former Deputy CM Sachin Pilot, and all the leaders involved with the election committee.

# 2024 LS POLLS: K'TAKA GOVT REVERSES ORDERS TO ENSURE HINDU SENTIMENTS ARE NOT HURT

Bengaluru | Agencies

Political pundits in Karnataka believe that the Congress government with an eye on 2024 Lok Sabha election, have reversed two important decision.

The recent decisions of Congress party to reverse the order of stoppage of funds to renovate Hindu temples and the statement on Soujanya rape and murder case that there is no proposal to reinvestigate the case before the government indicated the strategy, political pundits believe.

Government's decision to stop releasing funds for renovation and development work of temples had led to widespread condemnation by Hindu organisations and the BJP. An order was also passed by the state's Hindu Religious Institutions and Charitable Endowments Department and issued to all the District Commissioners.

The order said that funds will not be released if renovation work is not undertaken in temples, as well as if the administrative approval is given for releasing of 50 per cent of the funds, it should also be withheld. If there is any proposal for administrative approval, it should also be withheld.

However, the state's Hindu Religious Institutions and Charitable Endowments Department had withdrawn the order after backlash.



Transport and Muzrai Minister Ramalinga Reddy had stated that since there was confusion regarding the order among the public, it has been withdrawn.

"We will not stop the renovation and development work of temples. If necessary, the Congress government would give additional funds," he said.

Home Minister G. Parameashwara had said that there is no proposal before the government to order reinvestigation of sensational Soujanya rape and murder case.

The 17-year-old Soujanya was kidnapped on Oct 9, 2012 on way to her home in Ujire near Dharmasthala. She was studying in Sri Dharmasthala Manjunatheshwara College.

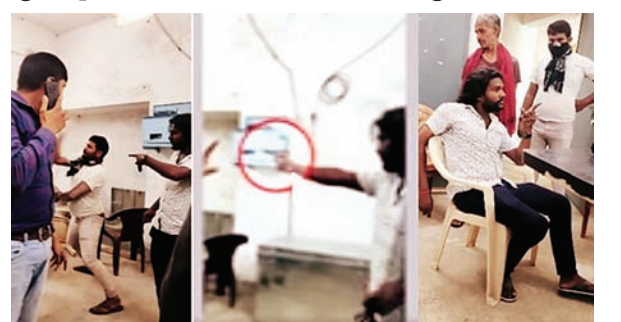
The next day her body was found near Nethravathi River, close to her house in the forests. The body was found half naked. One of her hands was tied with her dupatta to a tree. The police found that her genitals were soiled.

Series of protests were held following the release of the accused in the case after 11 years of imprisonment by the CBI Special Court. The order stated that the accused was implicated and recommended action on investigating officers and doctors who prepared reports. The allegations were made against the members of an influential family managing Hindu pilgrimage centre.

Following the mounting pressure on the ruling Congress government Chief Minister Siddaramaiah had stated that he would consider whether there is any provision to make an appeal for re-investigation of the case.

However, Home Minister Parameashwara maintained that the case has ended and there will be public debates in favor and opposite and the government can't help in this connection. Sources said that the Congress government does not want to stir any controversy as any step related to the case would anger Hindu organisations and the influential family revered by lakhs of devotees. However, a group of activists have come together and announced that they will wage a legal battle in this matter.

# Miscreants hold govt officials at gunpoint in Bihar; video goes viral



Patna | Agencies

Miscreants on Saturday entered a Revenue Inspector's office in Bihar's Jahanabad district and held the staff at gunpoint while also threatening them with dire consequences, the police said.

The incident happened in Kansuwa village.

A video of the incident went viral on social media wherein it can be seen that 3-4 persons were present inside the office, while one of them

held the employees at gunpoint. Another individual also assaulted the employees.

During the incident, one of the persons who was present inside the office shot a video and uploaded it on social media. The accused are said to be natives of Khairuchak village.

"We have received a video. Efforts are on to identify them. They will be put behind bars soon. An FIR has been registered as well," said Jahanabad Superintendent of Police, Dipak Ranjan.

# Opium worth over Rs 40 cr seized in Delhi, two held

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Delhi Police's Special Cell has arrested two members of an interstate drug cartel and recovered 56.055 kgs of opium worth over Rs 40 crore in the international market, an official said on Saturday.

The duo identified as Paramjeet Singh (53) and Raj Kumar (38), had brought opium from the North-Eastern states and which was meant for supply to different parts of the country.

According to police, on July 20, a specific information was received about Paramjeet and Raj Kumar, both residents of Jammu, who are indulged in drug trafficking activities on the directions of one Nirmal, a resident of Bokajan, Assam. "It was revealed that both of them, on the directions of



Nirmal, after procuring the supply of opium from Thangmai, a resident of Manipur, would come in truck at Mangolpuri Industrial Area," said the Special Commissioner of Police (special cell) HGS Dhaliwal.

"A trap was laid and Paramjeet and Raj apprehended," said the official.

On sustained interrogation, the duo revealed that they were part of an interstate narcotics syndicate.

"Paramjeet disclosed that

he had been involved in drug trafficking activities for the last two years. He further disclosed that he procured recovered opium from Thangmai, a resident of Manipur, on the directions of Nirmal, a resident of Bokajan, Assam. He further divulged that he worked as a carrier for Nirmal, and on his directions, he received supplies of opium and further supplied the same to various persons in Bihar, West Bengal, and Delhi/NCR," said the Special CP.

# Delhi HC directs MCD to ensure no illegal dumping of plastic, electrical, medical garbage

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Delhi High Court has directed the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) to put an end to the unlawful dumping of electrical, plastic and medical waste within the national capital.

The court had initiated a suo motu PIL in 2020 over pollution in various villages across the city, stemming from the improper dumping of waste, as well as emissions from other polluting industrial units.

A division bench, comprising Chief Justice Satish Chandra Sharma and Justice Sanjeev Narula, has also directed the MCD to take decisive action against all defaulting units, in accordance with the Delhi Municipal Corporation Act, 1957.

"The MCD shall ensure that there is no illegal dumping of electrical, plastic and medical garbage in Delhi, contrary to the statutory provisions. The MCD shall take appropriate action against all the defaulting units



under Section 416 of the DMC Act and the other authorities shall also take appropriate action in accordance with law against all violating units in Delhi," the court said.

The court order says that the MCD must take proactive measures to prevent the unauthorised disposal of electronic, plastic, and medical waste, thereby adhering to established legal regulations.

The MCD has been directed to invoke Section 416 of the Delhi Municipal Corporation Act to take appropriate measures against the violating units. Additionally, other relevant authorities are also expected to take suitable action against units found in violation of regulations within the city.

Furthermore, the court has called for stringent adherence to statutory

provisions outlined in environmental laws.

It has set a timeline of four months for the MCD to conclude its actions against units found in violation of norms, particularly those operating in non-industrial zones.

The court took note of a status report submitted by the MCD, which indicated that no instances of illegal burning of plastic waste were identified in industrial areas where units were operational without a valid license.

The MCD clarified that there were no plastic/PVC wholesale markets in the areas under the jurisdiction of the former North DMC, which are usually associated with mass burning of plastic/PVC waste.

The court stated that given the information provided in the status reports, no further orders or directives were necessary. It reiterates the importance of strict compliance with environmental laws, particularly on the part of the MCD.





## FRESH CRACKS APPEAR ON RISHIKESH-BADRINATH HIGHWAY

## Govt imposes 40% duty on onion export



Gopeshwar | Agencies

A stretch about 50 metres long on the Rishikesh-Badrinath National Highway near Pursari village is showing signs of land subsidence with cracks appearing on it. The stretch located between Chamoli and Nandprayag is apparently sinking towards the Alaknanda River. Alarmed by the situation, authorities have warned vehicles coming from the mountainside to go slow. A police team has been deployed on the affected spot to alert the drivers.

The subsidence-sensitive spot has been demarcated with reflective tapes for the safety of vehicles and drivers are being asked to drive carefully, Traffic Inspector Praveen Alok said. Land subsidence near Pursari increased after the Kedarnath disaster in 2013. As a result, the government undertook a road stabilisation project roping in big companies and experts from the area and constructed concrete blocks along the banks of the Alaknanda at the cost of crores of rupees after which the subsidence stopped. However, the place is showing signs of erosion again.

The engineers of the National Highways Authority of India are making efforts to repair the cracks with soil and stones, a government official said. Heavy rain this monsoon has not only led to the emergence of fresh landslide points along the highway but has also activated old ones due to which the traffic is getting disrupted frequently, he said. National Highways and Infrastructure Development Corporation Limited (NHIDCL) General Manager Shailendra Kumar, who is involved in the construction of

the National Highway in the area, told PTI that to prevent landslides, concrete blocks had been constructed on the banks of the Alaknanda which had stopped the erosion of the river. The road had since been stable but the rise in the water level in the Alaknanda is making water flow over the concrete blocks which may have led to increased subsidence in the area, Kumar said. Itanagar: Landslides triggered by incessant rains in the past couple of days have snapped road links to several Arunachal Pradesh districts. Continuous landslides have blocked a portion of the Akajan-Likabali-Aalo road at Siji in Lower Siang district. Several vehicles have remained stranded for the past couple of days, a district official said. Though the MSV International Inc, the company constructing the Trans Arunachal Highway (TAH) portion of the road (package I&II), has deployed men and machinery to clear the blockade, continuous rain has hampered restoration work as landslides continued to occur, Lower Siang DC Marto Riba said. While small vehicles were allowed to move after frequent clearing of the blockade, heavy vehicles were not allowed due to continuous landslides and remained stranded for the past couple of days on both sides of the vital road. The road connects Leparada, West Siang, Upper Siang, Siang, Upper Subansiri and Shi-Yomi districts of the state.



Team Absolute | New Delhi

The government on Saturday imposed a 40 per cent export duty on onion exports till December 31. The announcement was made through a notification on Saturday. This notification shall come into force with immediate effect, and will remain in force up to and inclusive of the December 31, 2023. The prices of several vegetables including onion, potato and tomatoes have skyrocketed in last few weeks.

Following the soaring prices of tomatoes, the government decided that it will sell tomatoes at Rs 40 per kg from August 20 onwards with an aim to further cool down its prices. NAFED and NCCF have been directed by the consumer affairs department to sell tomatoes at Rs 40 per kg from August 20, in view of continued decline in tomato prices in wholesale and retail markets. The Consumer Affairs Ministry on Friday announced the decision, say-

ing that till date more than 15 lakh kg of tomatoes have been procured by NAFED and NCCF since July 14. Tomatoes have been sold by the two agencies at subsidised rates across the country in locations like Delhi-NCR, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and Bihar in the past one month. There was a spike in retail inflation also for July, as it had touched 7.44 per cent owing to high food prices, which took food inflation to 11.51 per cent for the same period.

## Current equity cycle to be analogous to 2003-2008 bull cycle, says report

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Equities are best positioned to benefit from India's structural growth, according to a report by Standard Chartered Bank. "We expect the current equity cycle to be analogous to the 2003-2008 bull cycle when output growth rose sharply, inflation stayed stable and improvements in productivity drove a rise in investments. "Fixed income to continue to offer a stable yield as domestic bond yields remain well-anchored given the focus on investment-led growth and containing inflation," the report said. Private markets to provide long-term alpha over listed assets supported by a positive economic outlook and structural enablers such as large consumption opportunity and best-in class digital infrastructure, it said. India's economy has



weathered the pandemic-era growth shock better than its peers and has the potential to successfully transition into an upper middle-income economy over the next two decades. Ongoing policy reforms, political stability, significant infrastructure investments and technological adoption are likely to aid improve-

ments in per-capita income, boost discretionary consumption demand and enhance corporate profitability, the report said. "We believe this superior macroeconomic backdrop sets up Indian financial market assets -- equities, fixed income and private markets -- to perform well on a multi-year horizon," it said.

## 8 SOLDIERS KILLED AFTER ARMY TRUCK FALLS INTO RIVER IN LADAKH

Srinagar: At least eight army soldiers were killed while two others were injured in a road accident in the Ladakh region on Saturday.

The accident reportedly took place at Kiyari in Nyoma area, 150 km from Leh, late on Saturday afternoon when an Army truck, carrying 10 soldiers, skidded off the road and fell into a river, officials said. "Eight soldiers died in the accident while two others were injured. A relief and rescue operation was launched immediately after receiving the news about the accident", officials said. The soldiers were going from Karu Garrison to Kiyari when the accident took place.

## Months ahead of Assembly polls, Congress forms secular alliance in Mizoram

Aizawl | Agencies

Months ahead of the elections to the 40-member Mizoram Assembly, Congress, the main opposition party in the state, has formed a 'Mizoram Secular Alliance' (MSA) with two local parties - People's Conference (PC) and Zoram Nationalist Party (ZNP). Mizoram Pradesh Congress Committee (MPCC) President Lalsawta said on Saturday that the MSA was formed on Friday to unitedly fight against the BJP. The Congress leader, referring to the resolution adopted by the MSA, urged the other political parties to join the alliance for the survival of the Mizos and their religion. "It is alleged that ever since the saffron party and its allies came to power at the Centre in 2014, there have been concerted efforts to demolish the minority communities, especially the tribals, and to usher in a Hindu kingdom by a



series of legislations, to which the Mizoram Secular Alliance does not want to remain a silent spectator. "India has become one of the top countries where Christians are not safe," the MSA resolution said. In the current Assembly, the Congress has five members while the PC and the ZNP don't have any representation. On the other hand,

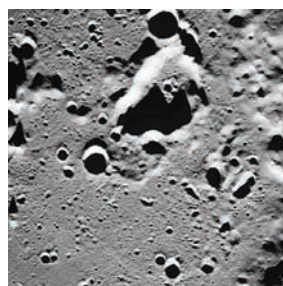
Mizoram Chief Minister and the President of the ruling Mizo National Front (MNF), Zoramthanga, claimed that his party will retain power in the next Assembly polls, expected to be held later this year. He said there are more than 10 seats where the MNF has a strong organisational base, while the party has substantial hold in the other seats.

The ruling MNF won 28 seats in the 2018 Assembly polls, while the Zoram People's Movement (ZPM) won six seats, the Congress five and the BJP one. Meanwhile, a 20-member team of the Election Commission is scheduled to visit Mizoram on August 29 to review the preparedness for the upcoming Assembly elections.

## Russia's Luna-25 faces "Emergency" during pre-Moon landing manoeuvre

Moscow | Agencies

An "emergency" was detected on Saturday during a manoeuvre by Russia's Luna-25 probe prior to its Moon landing. Russian space agency Roscosmos said. "Thrust was released to transfer the probe onto the pre-landing orbit," Roscosmos said in a statement. "During the operation, an emergency situation occurred on board the automatic station, which did not allow the carrying out of the manoeuvre within the specified conditions." The lander, Russia's first such mission in almost 50 years, was successfully placed in the Moon's orbit on Wednesday after being launched from the Vostochny cosmodrome in the country's Far East. Roscosmos did not say if the incident would delay the landing, due to take place on Monday, north of the Boguslawsky crater on the lunar south pole. In June, Roscosmos chief Yuri Borisov told President Vladimir Putin that such missions were "risky", with an



estimated success probability of around 70 percent. The probe is expected to stay on the Moon for a year, where it is tasked with collecting samples and analysing soil. Cameras installed on the lander have already taken distant shots of the Earth and Moon from space. Russia is seeking to restart and rebuild on the Soviet Union's pioneering space programme as the future of its long-running space cooperation with the West looks in doubt amid the offensive in Ukraine. Russia said it would go ahead with its own lunar plans, despite the European Space Agency announcing it would not cooperate with Moscow on future missions over its actions in Ukraine.

## CHATGPT IS POLITICALLY BIASED, FINDS STUDY

London | Agencies

OpenAI's artificial intelligence chatbot ChatGPT has a significant and systemic left-wing bias, according to a new study. Published in the journal 'Public Choice', the findings show that ChatGPT's responses favour the Democrats in the US, the Labour Party in the UK, and President Lula da Silva of the Workers' Party in Brazil. Concerns of an inbuilt political bias in ChatGPT have been raised previously but this is the first large scale study using a consistent, evidenced-based analysis. "With the growing use by the public of AI-powered systems to find out facts and create new content, it is important that the output of popular platforms such as ChatGPT is as impartial as possible," said lead author Fabio Motoki of Norwich Business School at the University of East Anglia in the UK. "The presence of political bias can influence user views and has potential implications for political and electoral processes. Our findings reinforce concerns that AI systems could replicate, or even amplify, the existing challenges posed by the Internet and social media," Motoki said. The researchers developed an



innovative new method to test ChatGPT's political neutrality. The platform was asked to impersonate individuals from across the political spectrum while answering a series of more than 60 ideological questions. The responses were then compared to the platform's default answers to the same set of questions -- allowing the researchers to measure the degree to which ChatGPT's responses were associated with a particular political stance. To overcome difficulties caused by the inherent randomness of 'large language models' that power AI platforms such as ChatGPT, each question was asked 100 times and the different responses were collected. These multiple responses were then put through a 1000-repetition 'bootstrap' (a method of re-sampling the original data) to further increase

the reliability of the inferences drawn from the generated text. "Due to the model's randomness, even when impersonating a Democrat, sometimes ChatGPT answers would lean towards the right of the political spectrum," said co-author Victor Rodrigues. A number of further tests were undertaken to ensure the method was as rigorous as possible. In a 'dose-response test' ChatGPT was asked to impersonate radical political positions. In a 'placebo test', it was asked politically-neutral questions. And in a 'profession-politics alignment test', it was asked to impersonate different types of professionals. In addition to political bias, the tool can be used to measure other types of biases in ChatGPT's responses. While the research project did not set out to determine the reasons for the political bias, the findings did point towards two potential sources. The first was the training dataset -- which may have biases within it, or added to it by the human developers, which the developers' 'cleaning' procedure had failed to remove. The second potential source was the algorithm itself, which may be amplifying existing biases in the training data.

## Srinagar's Tulip Garden enters World Book of Records as Asia's largest

Srinagar: The exquisite Indira Gandhi Memorial Tulip Garden, nestled in the foothills of the Zabarwan mountain range in Srinagar on Saturday earned a prestigious spot in the World Book of Records (London). This coveted recognition hails the garden as Asia's largest tulip paradise, adorned with breath-taking array of 1.5 million tulip bulbs, representing a stunning ensemble of 68 distinctive tulip varieties. In a formal ceremony held today at the Tulip Garden, Commissioner Secretary Floriculture, Gardens & Parks, Sheikh Fayaz Ahmad was honoured with the certification by President and CEO of World Book of Records (London), Santosh Shukla. Commissioner Secretary expressed gratitude to the World Book of Records (London) team for acknowledging the magnificence of Indira Gandhi Memorial Tulip Garden. He deemed the recognition as a monumental achievement, one that would not only elevate the stature of Srinagar's floral treasure but

also contribute to the growth of the local economy in Kashmir. He said that the inclusion in the World Book of Records is not only a recognition of Srinagar's blossoming gem but also a celebration of the enchanting bond between humanity and nature. President and CEO of World Book of Records Santosh Shukla also extended his congratulations to the Central Working Committee of the organisation for the feat. He said that this recognition underscores the unparalleled beauty and magnificence of Indira Gandhi Memorial Tulip Garden, positioning it as a symbol of nature's splendour and human ingenuity. Indira Gandhi Memorial Tulip Garden, affectionately known for its breathtaking vista, not only boasts a splendid collection of tulips but also serves as a haven for a myriad of flower species. Delicate Daffodils, fragrant Hyacinths, resplendent Roses, charming Ranunculi, vibrant Muscaria, and enchanting Iris blooms flourish alongside the iconic tulips, creating an enchanting





## RATAN TATA RECEIVES 'UDYOG RATNA' AWARD FROM MAHARASHTRA GOVT

Team Absolute | Mumbai

India's top industrialist and philanthropist Ratan Tata was bestowed with the esteemed 'Udyog Ratna' award by the Maharashtra government in a noteworthy ceremony held at his residence here on Saturday.

This coveted recognition was personally presented by Chief Minister Eknath Shinde and Deputy Chief Ministers Devendra Fadnavis and Ajit Pawar.

Tata's prolific contributions across various sectors were acknowledged and celebrated during this prestigious event. In an unforeseen turn of events, Ratan Tata's health condition prevented him from attending the upcoming award ceremony.

In light of this, a unique presentation was orchestrated at his residence, where the



Udyog Ratna award was conferred upon him. This exceptional accolade is the latest addition to the pantheon of esteemed awards initiated by the Maharashtra government. It follows in the footsteps of the renowned Maharashtra Bhushan Award, an honor bestowed upon individuals of paramount distinction.

With the introduction of the Udyog Ratna Award, the state government aspires to laud exceptional individuals and groups whose indelible contributions have left an enduring impact on various sectors. These sectors span the realms of business, industry, education, real estate, tourism, financial services, fashion, electronics, agriculture, banking, information technology, food, healthcare, and more.

## Upset over police inaction in brother's suicide case, man chops off finger in Thane

Team Absolute | Thane

Protesting police inaction in the suicide case of his brother and sister-in-law in Thane, a man chopped off his index finger, a video of which has gone viral on social media.

Dhananjay Nanavare's shocking act was not only directed at Prime Minister Narendra Modi but also Maharashtra Chief Minister Eknath Shinde. The drastic action was fueled by his frustration over the police inaction in the suicide case of his brother Nandkumar Nanavare and sister-in-law Ujjawala Nanavare.

The heart-wrenching incident took place on August 1, when both Nandkumar and Ujjawala, residents of Ulhasnagar, ended their lives by jumping off from their terrace. Nandkumar, who worked as a personal assistant for Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) MLA Pappu Kalani and



also served under Shiv Sena MLA Balaji Kinikar, left a suicide note naming several individuals for the drastic step. Dhananjay Nanavare captured the grim episode of him severing his finger on camera and voiced his anguish.

Through the video, he delivered a stern message to the government and the police, declaring, "I would keep cutting off parts of my body and offer

them to the government if the police did not take any concrete action against my brother Nandkumar's murderers." Acting swiftly, the police detained four individuals mentioned in the suicide note.

Deputy Commissioner of Police (Crime Branch) for Thane, Shivtaj Patil, stated, "We are probing the case and during the probe we came across four names mentioned in the suicide note by the deceased. We have detained them and are currently questioning them."

The case's initial investigation suggests that Nandkumar had reached out to prominent individuals in Ambernath and even police officials before resorting to such drastic measures. A suicide note found in his trousers' pocket contained the names of those allegedly responsible for the torment he endured, which led to the fatal decision he and his wife undertook.

The case had initially led to the filing of an FIR against Sangram Nikalje and other unknown individuals for abetting of suicide, under sections 306 (abetting suicide) and 34 (common intention) of the Indian Penal Code (IPC).

However, despite the passage of 18 days, no substantial progress had been made. In response to the lack of headway, Nandkumar's family appealed to the higher echelons of the Thane police to transfer the investigation to the Crime Branch. The case was officially handed over to the Anti-Extortion Cell of Thane on August 11.

"My brother and sister-in-law committed suicide on August 1, and it has been 18 days without any police action. We are consistently being pressured not to pursue the matter. I will not stop until we get justice," Dhananjay Nanavare can be heard in the video.

## Priyanka Gandhi vs PM in Varanasi? Team Uddhav leader's 2024 prediction

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Shiv Sena (Uddhav Balasaheb Thackeray faction) MP Priyanka Chaturvedi on Saturday said that if Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi contests the upcoming Lok Sabha election from the Varanasi constituency against Prime Minister Narendra Modi, then she will win for sure.

"The INDIA alliance is on the front foot. The alliance will discuss who is best suited for a seat. If Priyanka Gandhi contests the Lok Sabha election from Varanasi, she will win," she said.

Priyanka Chaturvedi said that the public is aware of the current scenario in the country and said that this would be the last speech of PM Modi from the Red Fort as the next prime minister will be elected from the INDIA alliance in the upcoming 2024 Lok Sabha election.

"Whether it is inflation, unemployment, farmers' sorrows, or atrocities against



women, all have increased, and the public is seeing this and will ask them questions. This was their (BJP lead central government's) last speech from Red Fort, and next year the India Alliance's prime minister will come and take the country forward," she said.

Speaking on speculations over Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) chief Sharad Pawar joining the BJP, following a meeting between the NCP president and Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar in Pune, Priyanka Chaturvedi said, "Sharad Pawar has made it very clear that he is with the India alliance and will never join hands with the BJP."

## 'Devendra Fadnavis became intolerant since...': Shiv Sena (UBT); BJP reacts

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Shiv Sena (UBT) on Saturday alleged that senior BJP leader Devendra Fadnavis, who was earlier the chief minister of Maharashtra, has become intolerant and arrogant ever since he was made Deputy Chief Minister of the state.

Fadnavis was a tolerant person earlier, but his frustration after being made the Deputy Chief Minister resulted in him becoming intolerant and arrogant, the party claimed in an editorial in its mouthpiece 'Saamana'.

The ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), however, objected to the language used in the editorial piece in the Marathi daily, whose editor is Sena (UBT) chief Uddhav Thackeray, while the executive editor is party's Rajya Sabha member Sanjay Raut.

Maharashtra BJP chief Chandrashekhar Bawankule said one should maintain decorum while criticising political opponents. He also warned of filing a complaint against 'Saamana', and said its 'vitriol' needs to stop.

Fadnavis was the Chief Minister of the state between 2014 and 2019 when the BJP and Shiv Sena (undivided) shared power. After the 2019 assembly elections the two parties parted ways over sharing the Chief Minister's post.

Thackeray later joined hands with the Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) and the Congress to form the Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) government.

The Thackeray-led dispensation, however,



collapsed in June 2022 after his senior party leader Eknath Shinde rebelled along with 39 other MLAs and joined hands with the BJP. Shinde became the Chief Minister, while Fadnavis was made his deputy.

Last month, senior NCP leader Ajit Pawar and his party MLAs also joined the Shinde government with Pawar being made the Deputy Chief Minister.

The editorial said, "Devendra Fadnavis would have returned to power (post-2019 assembly elections) had he not betrayed the Shiv Sena. However, his party's top leaders in

Delhi sidelined him and made him deputy chief minister."

"Fadnavis was a tolerant person earlier, but his frustration after being made the deputy Chief Minister resulted in him becoming intolerant and arrogant... They made him share the Deputy Chief Minister's post with Ajit Pawar, adding to his woes," it said.

"It was Fadnavis who once said that he would send Ajit Pawar to jail and ensure that he would get rigorous imprisonment. But what is Fadnavis doing exactly now by sharing power with the same Ajit Pawar?" the party

asked. It also said that those having serious corruption charges and facing allegations of assault against women are now the colleagues of Fadnavis, it said adding that he should take care of himself.

Bawankule hit out at Sena (UBT) over the editorial targeting Fadnavis. He hit out at Uddhav Thackeray, saying that he was out of his senses after losing party and power.

Speaking to reporters today in Nagpur, Bawankule said, "Whenever Shiv Sena (UBT) chief Uddhav Thackeray wants to criticise someone, he either uses the 'Saamana' daily or asks Sanjay Raut to make a statement."

Thackeray is frustrated and bewildered, he alleged. "He even lost his party symbol. He is pained because he cannot return to power," Bawankule added.

The NCP has joined hands with the BJP and Thackeray has now realised that he made a mistake by backstabbing Fadnavis in 2019, he claimed.

Objecting to the language of the 'Saamana' editorial, he said, "There has to be a limit while criticising political opponents by a newspaper. Our leaders will soon take a decision on this... There could be some protest-like situation in Mumbai."

"We will take a closer look at the rights of this newspaper and how they are using it (against us). We will file a complaint against 'Saamana'. The kind of vitriol being spread by 'Saamana' needs to stop. We will make our stand clear," he said.

## Rs 12 crore fraud in online booking at Tiger reserve unearthed, case filed

Team Absolute | Chandrapur

A case has been filed against two brothers operating a firm that was given a contract for online booking of the Tadoba Andhari Tiger Reserve (TATR) in Maharashtra's Chandrapur district, after it came to light that they allegedly indulged in irregularities worth more than Rs 12 crore, police said.

The accused, Abhishek Vinodkumar Thakur and Rohit Vinodkumar Thakur, are residents of Chandrapur city, and a case of cheating was registered against them at Ramnagar police station on Friday, they said.

The complaint was lodged by Divisional Forest Officer Sachin Shinde against the duo, whose partnership firm - Chandrapur Wild Connectivity Solution - was given the



task of online booking, a statement issued by the district Superintendent of Police (SP) office said.

"The accused brothers have been operating online bookings at the

TATR since the past few years. However, recently it came to light that the accused allegedly did not pay Rs 12,15,50,831 to the tiger reserve's management," it said.

A senior forest department official said, "It was found that they did not pay the required amount to the TATR. Their irregularity came to light during a routine audit. When the authorities sought clarification from them, they failed to furnish details of payments. Also, they did not cooperate with the officials." After that, the TATR management last week terminated their firm's services and appointed a new agency for online booking, he said.

According to the police, a detailed audit was conducted for the years 2020-21 to 2023-24, in which it was found that the firm was supposed to pay Rs 22,80,67,749 to the tiger reserve management. However, it paid only Rs 10,65,16,918, but did not make the payment of Rs 12,15,50,831.

The accused violated the terms and conditions of the agreement and embezzled the amount, they said.

## Rajinikanth meets UP Governor Anandiben Patel ahead of 'Jailer' screening in Lucknow

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Ahead of the screening of his blockbuster film 'Jailer' in Lucknow, superstar Rajinikanth met the Governor of Uttar Pradesh Anandiben Patel.

Rajinikanth visited the Rajbhavan on Saturday to pay a visit to her, the pictures of which have been shared on the official handle of Governor Of Uttar Pradesh on X, formerly called Twitter.

The caption in Hindi read: "Pradesh ki Rajyapal shrimati Anandiben Patel se aaj Raj Bhavan main prasidh abhineta va nirdeshak shree Rajinikanth ne shishtachar bhent ki."

In the first picture, the superstar, dressed in a blue T-shirt and black pants, can be seen gifting flowers to the Governor. The second image features the two having a conversation.

After Lucknow, Rajinikanth will reportedly visit Ayodhya. Prior to this, the actor was seen in Ranchi as he visited the Rajrappa temple and even met the Governor of Jharkhand.

His latest film 'Jailer' is creating waves at the box-office.



On August 17, the film's eight-day total collection stood at Rs 235.65 crore in India. It earned Rs 9 crore on Day 9. The India collection of 'Jailer' now stands at Rs 244.85 crore.

Jailer is an action thriller film directed by Nelson Dilipkumar. It also stars Vinayakan, Ramya Krishnan, Vasanth Ravi, Sunil, Mirnaa Menon and Yogi Babu in supporting roles.

## THIEVES PLAN 2 AM ROBBERY, BREAK OPEN ATM ONLY TO FIND NO CASH INSIDE

Palghar, Maharashtra: Burglars broke open an automated teller machine (ATM) of a nationalised bank near Maharashtra's Palghar town in the early hours of the morning, but had to return empty-handed as there was no cash inside, police said.

The incident occurred at Maswan village in Palghar taluka, they said.

"Some robbers entered an ATM kiosk of a nationalised bank around 2 am. They not only broke open the ATM box, but also damaged the CCTV camera installed inside the room," an official of Manor police station said.

"However, they could not take anything from the ATM as there was no cash kept inside it as the machine was undergoing some repair work," he said.

A case has been registered against the accused, who are yet to be identified, he added.

## TWO HELD FOR OPERATING SEX RACKET; THREE WOMEN RESCUED

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The Mumbai Police have arrested two persons for allegedly operating a sex racket and rescued three women in the western suburbs here, an official said on Friday, according to the news agency.

The crime branch had received information about a sex racket being operated through WhatsApp in the western suburb of Borivali, he said.

Acting on a tip-off, the police on Thursday laid a trap near Sanjay Gandhi National Park and intercepted a car, which was being used to transport the women to their clients, the official said.

Two men were arrested and three women were rescued by the team, he said, adding that three mobile phones and the car were seized.

The accused allegedly sent photos of women and their rates to customers on WhatsApp, the official said.

A case under section 370 (3) (trafficking) and other relevant provisions of the Indian Penal Code and Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act has been registered, he said.

In another incident last month, two persons had been arrested from a village near Bhiwandi in Thane district of Maharashtra for allegedly pushing women into flesh trade, police said on Wednesday, a news agency reported.



The duo - an autorickshaw driver and a woman pimp - was arrested on Tuesday after police raided a lodge in Ranjoli village and rescued two women.

Police have registered a case under various sections of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) and the Immoral Trafficking Prevention Act.

Meanwhile, in another incident in May, the MIDC police in Andheri east area of Mumbai had conducted a raid at a residential building and allegedly busted a sex racket which was run by a 35-year-old woman inside a flat. The police arrested the woman and a customer and rescued a 17-year-old minor girl. The police sources had then said that the sex racket was allegedly running inside one BHK flat of a SRA building located in the MIDC Kanakia locality area.

Police sources further said that during the inquiry, it was revealed that the accused woman was living on rent in this flat for the last 6 months and was running this sex racket for the last six months.

She used to take only one woman in a day and used to keep her in her house for the whole day, which the people of the neighborhood did not even doubt, police said.

The police said that they have sent the rescued girl to the rescue center and booked the woman and the customer under various sections of IPC including the POCSO Act.





## RESOLVE TO ENSURE WATER-SUPPLY IN EVERY VILLAGE AND FARM OF THE STATE: CM CHOUHAN

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has said that it is our resolve to provide water in every village and farm of the state. Simultaneously, we strive to economically empower everyone in the state. We endeavour to increase the income of sisters to at least Rs 10 thousand. Pucca houses will be made and given to eligible persons under the Mukhyamantri Jan Awas Yojana after conducting a survey. Scooters and scooties will be given to meritorious boys and girls of class-12th respectively in their schools.

Chief Minister Chouhan was addressing the bhoomi-pujan of Khajuri Micro Lift Irrigation Project worth Rs 1533.64 lakh in Bhilai village of Sehore district and the Barela Samaj Sammelan.

Chief Minister Chouhan said that earlier there was dearth of basic facilities in this area. When I became the Chief Minister, I promptly ensured potable water, irrigation, electricity and laid a network of roads. The work to supply Narmada water in homes is in progress. Under the Mukhyamantri Ladli Bahna Yojana, an amount of Rs one thousand is being deposited in the accounts of the sisters every month. It will be gradually increased to Rs 3,000. Chief Minister Chouhan said that many schemes are operated including Ladli Laxmi Yojana, Mukhya Mantri Kanya Vivah Yojana and scheme to provide free cycle to the students who migrate for studies



from their villages.

Chief Minister Chouhan said that people from Scheduled Tribes were subjected to atrocities and injustice. Our government has not only stopped the atrocities on Scheduled Tribes, but has also set new standards of development. Chief Minister

Chouhan said that by taking out a yatra on foot, he created awareness among the Scheduled Tribes and made them aware of getting their rights. Land encroachments under mafias were removed in the state and pattas were given to the poor. Chief Minister Chouhan said that

there will be no hindrance in the education of children. Loans are being given to the youth for self-employment. Today, work is being done to transform the lives of people through several schemes like free ration distribution to the poor, kanya vivah and Rs one thousand to Ladli Behnas.

## Amit Shah to release 'report card' of BJP govt in MP on Sunday

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Union Home Minister Amit Shah will on Sunday release a detailed 'report card' of over 18 years of BJP rule in poll-bound Madhya Pradesh.

While the 'report card' will highlight the progress witnessed in the last two decades, the opposition Congress apparently has played a master stroke by releasing a charge-sheet against the ruling side.

The BJP's report card will narrate the story of progressive Madhya Pradesh after it formed the government in 2003 and remained in power till today (barring December 2018 to March 2020), of which or more than 16 years, the government has been headed by current Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan. Elaborating on Shah's August 20 visit to Bhopal and Gwalior, state BJP chief V. D. Sharma said that the Union Minister Shah will present in Bhopal the Garib Kalyan (poor sections welfare) centric Report Card of over 18 years of BJP rule in the state. He will subsequently travel to Gwalior to grace the party's expanded state executive/working committee meeting at the Atal Bihari Vajpayee Auditorium. Notably, Gwalior is the home district of three powerful BJP leaders -- Union



Ministers Narendra Singh Tomar and Jyotiraditya Scindia and state home minister Narottam Mishra. It would be Shah's fourth visit to the poll-bound BJP ruled state in less than 40 days, to guide the party prepare for the coming Assembly polls.

Earlier, Shah had visited Bhopal on July 11 and July 25 and Indore on July 30. His visit to Gwalior assumes particular significance, as the BJP's internal surveys are believed to have painted a bleak picture for the party's prospects in the 34 Assembly seats-strong Gwalior-Chambal region.

As the state BJP unit has already started comparing its report card with 10 years' rule of former chief minister Digvijaya Singh-led Congress government (1993-2003), possibility of the ruling side highlighting the conditions of the state three decades back to prove it's own claimed 'golden era' of Madhya Pradesh cannot be ruled out.

The BJP's IT cell's operation to highlight subjects like - economy, governance, roads, electricity, poverty rate and a lot more has been in process

for the last couple of months in social media with a tag of "bantadhar" for ex-CM Digvijaya Singh.

However, the Congress led by Kamal Nath played a master stroke and issued a so-called chargesheet against CM Chouhan's nearly two decades of rule in Madhya Pradesh. State Congress president along with leader of opposition (LoP) Govind Singh released a new poster titled "Ghotala" on Friday.

Its chargesheet, the Congress has accused the BJP government of Rs 15,000 crore nutrition meal scam, Rs 12,000 crore mid-day meal scam, Rs 9,500 crore Anganwadi nal-jal scam, Rs 2,000 crore Vyapam scam and Rs 800 crore Patwari recruitment scam.

Over all, the Congress released a list of 254 scams during broke out during the 18 years rule of the BJP in Madhya Pradesh, which also includes - mining scams of worth Rs 50,000 crore, liquor scam of worth Rs 86,000 crore, electricity scam of Rs 94,000 crore and Mahakal Lok scam of Rs 100 crore.

After releasing the poster "Ghotala" to corner the ruling BJP, state Congress head Kamal Nath termed CM Shivraj Singh Chouhan as "Thag-Raj" and asserted that some more scams would be exposed in the next three months.

## Fire in two trains passing through MP, no casualty

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Fire broke out in two trains passing through Madhya Pradesh on Saturday.

In first incident, Hyderabad to New Delhi route - Telangana Express train (12724) caught fire at Pandhurna railway station in Chhindwara district.

The fire broke out in pantry of Telangana Express train, triggering panic among passengers. However, as per the information, railway officials swung into action and brought the fire under control.

The second fire incident was reported in Khajuraho-Udaipur (Rajasthan) intercity train at Gwalior district later in the day.

Seeing the smog emanating from train's engine, loco pilot halted the train at



Sithouli station in Gwalior district.

Railway officials rushed to the spot and doused the fire and managed to control the situation.

A senior railway official said, "Fire incident was reported in Udaipur - Khajuraho intercity, which was brought under control soon. No casualty was reported."

## NGT flagging state govt's inaction in removing encroachments sparks controversy in MP

Team Absolute | Bhopal

The National Green Tribunal (NGT) flagging state government's inaction in removing encroachment from prohibited areas around Kaliyasot and Kerwa dam site here has sparked a political controversy in poll-bound Madhya Pradesh.

Senior Congress MLA Govind Singh, who is also the Leader of Opposition (LoP) in the state Assembly, citing the tribunal's observation, launched a scathing attack on Madhya Pradesh Chief Secretary Iqbal Singh Bains. On Saturday, Singh wrote to the Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) of India demanding Iqbal Singh's removal from the post.

In his letter to CEC, MLA from Lahar Assembly constituency from Bhind district - Govind Singh raised his apprehension over "transparency" during the upcoming Assembly elections in Madhya Pradesh.

"Despite the retirement of MP's chief secretary Iqbal Singh Bains, his tenure was being extended after every six months. Will the Assembly elections in Madhya Pradesh be held in full transparency under the tenure of Iqbal Singh Bains. I have opposed the extension of Iqbal Singh Bains as chief secretary earlier as well and had conveyed to you (CEC)," Singh's letter read.



Further, Singh urged CEC to direct the state government to remove 1985-batch IAS officer Iqbal Singh Bains from his post and to appoint a new chief secretary. Bains was to retire in November last year, but his tenure was further extended by another six months starting June 1. His extension in service was cleared by the Union government.

The fresh controversy comes a day after the NGT expressed strong displeasure over inaction on behalf of the state govern-

ment to remove encroachment from prohibited areas around Kaliyasot and Kerwa dam site in Bhopal. The Tribunal also imposed a fine of Rs. five lakh on the state government.

As per the reports, chief secretary Bains had also joined the hearing virtually on the direction of the tribunal. During the hearing of the petition filed by environmentalist Subhash Pandey on Friday, the NGT sought to know action taken in compliance to its order of July 27, 2023.

Upon receiving a reply from chief secretary through state government's counsel Sachin Verma, that "there was no major encroachment in the area", the NGT asked the chief secretary whether he had read the order? The tribunal further observed that "there is lack of coordination among the departments concerned in initiating action against the encroachers."

The NGT also pointed out that the entire system of the Madhya Pradesh government seems incompetent, as counsel representing the case willing to extend the date instead of arguing properly during the hearing. Several multi-stories have been constructed on the bank of Kaliyasot and Kerwa dam in Bhopal, which has been questioned in the petition. The NGT's order for demarcation of illegal constructions within 33.3 meters from Kaliyasot River bed will affect around 40,000-50,000 people and nearly 30 residential colonies in Kolar satellite township.

## Late Banerjee left a mark, take a pledge to build the nation of his dreams: Chief Minister Chouhan

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan today unveiled the statue of nationalist thinker Late Subhash Chandra Banerjee in Jabalpur. Many public representatives were present on this occasion. CM Shri Chouhan said that we should take a pledge to make efforts in the direction of building the nation as late Banerjee had dreamed of. He was a man who did not follow in the footsteps of others, but created his own footprints.

Addressing the Late Banerjee Memorial Seminar after the unveiling of the statue, Chief Minister Chouhan said that the life of Late Subhash Chandra Banerjee was devoted to the motherland. Everyone lives for themselves but there are some who live for the country and the society. They don't have anything of their own. Late Banerjee was also such a dedicated national worker. Along with Jabalpur, he was continuously active in the interest of the society in Mahakaushal area. During the Emergency, 6 people of this family remained in prison. He also worked for women empower-



ment. His wife Smt. Jayashree Banerjee served the people of the state with all her abilities. Chief Minister Chouhan said that the personality and work of Late Banerjee itself tells about his devotion to service. In the history of any organisation, the active workers of the early period are important. These workers are the foundation stones. Such foundation stones become the basis for the construction of a huge building. CM Chouhan said that the life of Late Banerjee provides inspiration. According to the verses of the Gita, such a person who is free from material attachment and jealousy, does not have ego, is patient and full of enthusiasm, remains unperturbed if he gets success, does not get discouraged even after failure, is considered a Satvik (virtuous) worker. Late Banerjee was such a virtuous worker. Chief Minister Chouhan paid floral tributes to Late Banerjee on behalf of the people of the state. Addressing the seminar, Prahlad Patel, Minister of State for Jal Shakti and Food Processing Industries, described Late Banerjee as an ideal in the social and political sphere and said that he lived his life selflessly and faced adverse situations like emergency as a warrior.

## ARE YOU THE NEXT INDIAN IDOL?

The hunt for the next singing superstar is now on; come Audition at GVN-The Global School, Bhopal on 22nd August

Sony Entertainment Television's much loved singing reality show Indian Idol is back for a fresh season and is looking for superlative talent to feature in the upcoming edition. Giving aspiring singers a national platform to showcase their talent, the makers are on the hunt for the next singing superstar in the city of lakes, Bhopal.

If you are passionate about music and have been waiting for an opportunity to showcase your vocal prowess - then come audition for Indian Idol on the 22nd of August 2023, at GVN-The Global School, Sector-C Govindpur, BHBL, Bhopal-462023.

This season of Indian Idol promises to be a remarkable journey headlining the best singing talent of the nation and hopeful contenders are encouraged to seize this chance to fulfill their dreams and potentially become the nation's next beloved singing sensation.

## BJP woos MP with over half-a-dozen visits by PM Modi, poll-eve largesse

Praveen Dwivedi | Bhopal

Addressing the nation on the occasion of the 77th Independence Day Prime Minister Narendra Modi said he would return to the Red Fort next year, apparently sounding the BJP's poll bugle for the Lok Sabha elections slated for 2024.

However, before it he made a statement during a visit to Sagar district of poll-bound Madhya Pradesh on July 12 when he stated that "Sant Ravidas will bless me to inaugurate his temple, today I am laying the foundation stone."

In Madhya Pradesh where the assembly elections are not more than three months away, the central leadership of the BJP led by PM Modi and Union Home Minister Amit Shah has taken full command while appointing two Union Ministers Bhupendra Singh Yadav and Ashwini Vaishnav as election in-charge and making the senior-most state party leader and Union Minister Narendra Singh Tomar the election convener.

The BJP's preparations for the Lok Sabha elections in Madhya Pradesh are going along with those for the assem-



bly elections. Political observers believe that the intense exercise of the BJP at the district, block and booth level are for the LS polls. "Besides, the RSS and the BJP's organizational leaders have also started their operations for the Lok Sabha. The BJP has high hopes from Madhya Pradesh because it won 28 out of 29 seats in 2019," a political observer said.

Other political observers pointed out that PM Modi has made over half-a-dozen visits to Madhya Pradesh since September last year and every time he has made big announcements beside highlighting the welfare schemes introduced by his government since 2014.

More importantly, in every visit to Madhya Pradesh, PM Modi has gifted something big to the people of the state. It began with releasing eight Namibian Cheetahs at Kuno National Park (KNP) on his birthday on September 17, 2022. One month later, he dedicated 'Mahakal Lok' to the people during his visit to Ujjain on October 11.

This year, PM Modi made his first visit to Indore on January 9 when he took part in the three-day Pravasi Bharatiya Divas, that was held after a four-year hiatus due

to the Covid-19 pandemic.

On April 1, 2023, he flagged off the Bhopal-Delhi Vande Bharat Express train at Rani Kamalapati railway station. On April 24, he visited Rewa (centre of Vindhya region) to address the Gram Sabha and Panchayati Raj members. He also laid the foundation stone of Rewa airport.

On June 27, he visited Bhopal and addressed a large gathering of booth workers of the BJP and also announced two more Vande Bharat Express trains - Bhopla to Indore and Bhopal to Jabalpur. Modi visited Shahdol district on July 1 to take part in various programmes, including the culmination of the 'Rani Durgavati Gaurav Yatra' and launch the National Sickle Cell Anemia Elimination Mission. During his visit to Shahdol, he interacted with tribals at 'khat sabha'.

The last time he visited poll-bound MP was on August 12 when he laid the foundation stone for a Rs. 100-crore temple dedicated to the 14th-century mystic poet and social reformer Sant Ravidas in Sagar district. During his address he said, "Sant Ravidas would bless him to inaugurate the temple when it would be completed in the next one-and-a-half years."





# Taylor Swift spotted at a bar, fans block major road in New Jersey

Los Angeles | Agencies

Taylor Swift is not taking any signs of slowing down, let alone dying out as the singer had to flee a bar-restaurant from Long Beach Island in New Jersey, after leading to a major roadblock as hundreds of hardcore Swifties flocked in to see her.

According to The Daily Mail, Hundreds of the Swifties made their way to the Black Whale corner bar just for a chance to get a glimpse of the music icon leading to a whole intersection in a major city road being blocked, forcing her to move out of the place.

The 33-year old hitmaker was seen with her fellow pop compatriot and friend Ed Sheeran the previous day, who had come to celebrate her old time collaborator's nuptials with actress Margaret Qualley.

The country-pop star arrived at the star studded batch with Channing Tatum and Zoe Kravitz to an uproarious ovation from her passionate fans.

Taylor, Zoe, and Channing were not the only stars at the gathering as Lana Del Rey, who has also often collaborated with Antonoff, was also there in addition to mother-of-the-bride Andie MacDowell.

When the reports broke out about Taylor's arrival, several videos of Taylor's presence in the neighborhood bar were made available all over social media including a TikTok of her arrival with her fellow stars from inside of the restaurant.

The scene grew even more chaotic as hundreds of fans could be heard chanting 'Taylor! Taylor!' as the wedding rehearsal was in full swing.

Other video footage showed the massive crowds who had lined the street in hopes that they would be able to catch a glimpse of the 'Bad Blood' hitmaker.

Police authorities in the area were forced into action, making way for massive crowd control operations and resuming the ongoing traffick, with a security detail escorting Swift to her car.



Charlize Theron debunks rumours about her 'different' look

Los Angeles | Agencies

Hollywood Actor Charlize Theron has shut down allegations about plastic surgery.

Being rumoured to have had a facelift due to her different look, the actress of 'The Addams Family' set the record straight on the matter, reports aceshowbiz.com.

In an interview published on Friday, August 18, the 48-year-old opened up about receiving comments from the public who think that going under the knife was the reason why her appearance changed, reports aceshowbiz.com.

Speaking to Allure, she revealed: "People think I had a facelift. They're like, 'What did she do to her face?'"

The 'Fast X' actress went on to reveal: "I'm like, 'B\*\*\*h, I'm just aging!' It doesn't mean I got bad plastic surgery. This is just what hap-

pens." Still, she embraced it by saying, "My face is changing, and I love that my face is changing and aging."

In addition to her different look, the 'Murder Mystery' actress spilled that aging affected her metabolism. "I will never, ever do a movie again and say, 'Yeah, I'll gain 40 pounds.' I will never do it again because you can't take it off," she shared.

"When I was 27, I did 'Monster'. I lost 30 pounds, like, overnight. I missed three meals and I was back to my normal weight." "Then I did it at 43 for 'Tully'," Charlize recalled. "And I remember a year into trying to lose the weight, I called my doctor and I said, 'I think I'm dying because I cannot lose this weight.' And he was like, 'You're over 40. Calm down. Your metabolism is not what it was.' Nobody wants to hear that."

"The thing that really bums me out is that I make action movies now and if I hurt myself, I take way longer to heal than I did in my 20s," she additionally admitted.

"More than my face, I wish I had my 25-year-old body that I can just throw against the wall and not even hurt tomorrow. Now, if I don't work out for three days and I go back to the gym, I can't walk. I can't sit down on the toilet. It's all those very real moments."

# MADONNA SHARES GLIMPSE OF HER 65TH B'DAY FESTIVITIES, SAYS 'IT'S GREAT TO BE ALIVE'

Los Angeles | Agencies

Queen of Pop Madonna, who turned 65 on August 16, posted a video on Instagram sharing the festivities from her birthday in Lisbon, Portugal, and said "It's great to be alive."

On Friday, two days after the 'Hung Up' singer blew out the candles, she shared a compilation of photos and videos of the vacation on the social media platform.

"It's great to be Alive..... and Amazing to Be able to put on my dancing shoes and Celebrate my Birthday! I'm So Grateful. Thank you Lisbon and to all who made it possible!" she wrote.

The video featured her donning jewels, going through outfit changes, spending time with friends on a boat, riding horses on the beach, having dinner with friends and dancing the night away.

The video was set to her hit song, 'Vogue'. All six of her children - including her eldest Lourdes Leon, who she shares with ex Carlos Leon; Rocco, whom she shares with ex-husband Guy Ritchie; David, Mercy, and twins Stella and Estere - can be seen enjoying themselves throughout the clips. One brief shot even shows Lourdes, 26, serenading the group with a song, People magazine reported.

The music icon, who can be seen wearing various gowns and bejeweled garments throughout the clip, jokes at one point, "I'm gonna wreck the place with my jewels."

While giving a speech, Madonna also said, "It's great to be alive," to applause by her guests.

Madonna's birthday post comes eight weeks after she was hospitalized on June 24 for a "serious bacterial infection", according to her manager, Guy Oseary. At the time, it was announced that her Celebration Tour, which was originally set to kick off July 15 in Vancouver, would be postponed.

Madonna took to Instagram a little over a week after her initial hospitalization to say she was "on the road to recovery and incredibly grateful for all the blessings in my life".

On July 30, she posted another update on Instagram, writing that she was "one month out of the hospital" and "lucky to be alive".

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Demi Lovato goes out full hard rock in new version of 'Confident' from her 'Revamped' LP

Los Angeles | Agencies

Demi Lovato is indeed sounding more confident than ever and rocking it out hard as she has released the new rock version of her song 'Confident' from her upcoming album 'Revamped' album.

This version is the latest re-imagined rock version from Lovato ahead of the release of her new album which will take the pop singer back to her rock roots and feature 10 of her career-defining songs as rock versions.

'Confident' 'Revamped' version actually revamps the whole thing as it sees Lovato in a new avatar, and embraced her whole rock side once again.

The new version sees upgraded raw production, making the sound space more constrained to give off the song's edgy attitude.

More of an attitude infused song this time rather than a messaging one, 'Confident' rock version features hard edged rock riffs, strong thumping bass lines, electronic music, a bit of her signature pop style as well as the attitude of her old pop-rock days.

Demi Lovato's vocals are soaring high in this as this time she is all about the passion, giving one of her best performances yet, going out full on hard rock, as if she ended up mixing the Lizzy Hale fronted hard rock band Halestorm with the old 2000's punk rock style, with a very raw edge.

The track originally appeared on her 2015 album of the same name and topped the charts at the time, making its way to Billboard 200. It has since been certified 4x Platinum.

'Confident' (Rock version) is the latest of the singer's new releases following the release of her previous 'Sorry Not Sorry (Rock Version)', which featured rock icon Slash, which was released in July, following the announcement of the album.



# JUNGKOOK RANKS 24TH FOR FIFTH WEEK ON BRITISH CHARTS WITH 'SEVEN'

Los Angeles | Agencies

Seoul: K-Pop superband BTS member Jungkook's debut solo song, 'Seven', remained a strong presence on the British Official Singles Chart Top 100 for the fifth consecutive week.

According to the latest chart unveiled Friday, the track secured 24th place this week, rising a place from the previous week, reports Yonhap.

Released July 14, the summery pop song, featuring American female rapper Latto, debuted at No. 3 on the chart later that month.

It had dropped to 13th and 29th before climbing back to No. 25 and 24 this time.

K-pop girl group NewJeans' latest hit 'Super Shy' ranked 77th in its sixth consecutive week, slipping 14 spots from the previous week.

Another K-pop girl group Fifty Fifty extended its stay on the chart with 'Cupid' to 21 consecutive weeks, ranking 95th this week.

Meanwhile, 'Seven' topped global music streaming giant Spotify's Weekly Top Songs Global chart for the fifth week in a row.

BTS, also known as the Bangtan Boys, is a South Korean boy band formed in 2010. The band consists of Jin, Suga, J-Hope, RM, Jimin, V, and Jungkook.



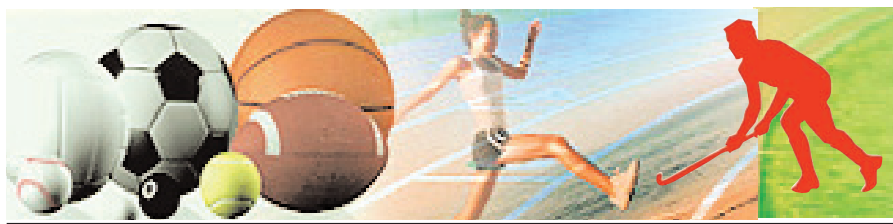
# ABSOLUTE PIC OF THE DAY



Blanca Blanco







## 132nd Durand Cup

# BODOLAND FC END CAMPAIGN WITH HISTORIC WIN OVER ODISHA FC



Kokrajhar (Assam) | Agencies

Bodoland FC ended their maiden campaign in the Durand Cup campaign with a historic 2-1 win over Odisha FC, their first win in the 132nd edition of the prestigious tournament here on Saturday.

Playing their final Group F fixture of the 132nd Durand Cup at Kokrajhar's SAI Stadium, the home side rode on second-half strikes by Maneshwar Mushahary and Cameroonian Zacharie Mbenda to come from behind and register a famous and memorable win.

Pungte Lapung had scored first to give Odisha the lead but things did not go their way for the ISL club after that. As things stand in Group F, both Bodoland and Odisha finished with three points, whereas the Indian Army are sitting pretty at the top with

six points and a game in hand against Rajasthan United FC who are also currently on three points.

The winner came in the final minute of regulation time when two more substitutes combined for Bodoland. Ghanaian Joe Aidoo put the ball through inside the box for Irakadu Khakhlari, who drove in and cut back for Cameroonian striker Zacharie Mbenda to finish.

## MUMBAI CITY IN QUARTERS WITH DOMINANT WIN OVER INDIAN NAVY

Kolkata: The reigning Indian Super League (ISL) League winner Mumbai City FC stormed into the quarter-finals of the 132nd Durand Cup, finishing their Group B campaign with a dominating 4-0 victory over Indian Navy Football Team. Jorge Pereyra Diaz, Greg Stewart, Gurkirat Singh and Nathan Asher Rodrigues scored for Mumbai at the Vivekananda Yuba Bharati Krirangan here as the ISL club topped Group B with nine points from three matches.



Mumbai City FC head coach Des Buckingham named a very strong starting lineup making just one change by bringing in Lallinzuala Chhange in place of Hmingthamawia. He started with just two defenders in the lineup with defensive midfielder Yoell Van Nieff playing as the third centre back. Indian Navy head coach VS Abhilash Nair also named his strongest lineup against the current runners-up. Mumbai went on the offensive from the go, creating chances as the attackers were troubling the Navy defence continuously. Greg Stewart, L. Chhange, Bipin Singh, Pereyra Diaz, Alberto Noguera and Vikram Partap Singh laid siege of the opponents' defence. Navy goalkeeper Vishnu V.K. made some excellent saves and one of the defenders cleared off the line to deny Mumbai their first goal.

## FIFA Women's World Cup

# Sweden brush aside Australia to claim third place

Brisbane (Australia): | Agencies

Star forward Fridolina Rolfo continued to torment Australia as she scored one and set up the other as Sweden secured third place with a well-deserved 2-0 win over Australia here on Saturday.

Rolfo scored in the 30th minute via a penalty and then set up the goal by Kosovare Asllani as Sweden won the third-place play-off. Rolfo scored twice in the group stage of the 2020 Women's Olympic Football Tournament and once again in that competition's semi-final. She was the thorn in the flesh for Australia once again on Saturday.

The victory, sealed by Asllani's superb second-half strike, maintains the Scandinavians' remarkable 100 per cent record in four FIFA Women's World Cup bronze-medal playoffs and earns them a fifth podium finish -- second only to the USA (8).

It also provides a sad end to a memorable campaign for the Matildas, who had been hoping to enhance



## FIFA WOMEN'S WORLD CUP 2023

their best-ever performance at the global finals and finish on a high in Brisbane.

The tone of the match, though, was set inside the opening minute when Sweden carved through the leaden-footed Australia defence to set up Stina Blackstenius for a right-foot shot that forced an excellent save from Mackenzie Arnold. It was the first of many opportunities for a team that looked fresher and faster throughout, and it was no surprise when the Swedes moved in front on the half-hour mark.

Clare Hunt clipped the heels of Stina Blackstenius inside the box -- it was identified following a VAR review

-- earned Sweden a penalty and, despite Australia's best efforts at gamesmanship, Rolfo dispatched a textbook left-foot penalty low and hard into the right-hand corner.

The Matildas did have their moments, and Zecira Musovic was twice called upon to keep out powerful efforts from Hayley Raso and, later, Sam Kerr.

Sweden, though, remained the game's most potent attacking force, and they made sure of another Women's World Cup bronze on 62 minutes when Rolfo teed up Asllani for a wonderful first-time shot that flashed low beyond the helpless Arnold.

## Shooting World Championship

# Mehuli Ghosh wins bronze and Paris Olympic quota in Women's 10m Air Rifle

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Mehuli Ghosh bagged a bronze in the Women's 10m Air Rifle and in the process claimed Olympic quota for India with a fine performance in the International Shooting Sport Federation (ISSF) World Championship (All Events) in Baku, Azerbaijan, on Saturday.

India, however, won gold in the Women's 10m Air Rifle Team Competition, the National Rifle Association of India (NRAI) informed in a release on Saturday.

Thanks to the efforts by the Air Rifle Women shooters, India finished the day with two gold and two bronze medals and in third place on



the medal tally behind leaders China and second-placed USA, who have two gold and one silver medal. Mehuli, the Indian shooter

from Kolkata, who had earlier in the day topped qualifying with a sizzling 634.5, shot 229.8 in the 24-shot eight-woman final to bow out in third place at the end of 22-shots. This score was enough for her to claim the Olympic quota place.

China won gold and silver with Han Jiayu finishing with 251.4 and Wang Zhilin ending with 250.2. The 15-year-old Tilottama Sen of India won hearts with a brilliant fourth-place finish.

India however, teamed up with Tilottama and Ramita to win the 10m Air Rifle Women Team competition with a combined total of 1895.9, ahead of China who totalled 1893.7. Germany won bronze.

## Archery World Cup

# Grand double for India, bag men's and women's team compound gold medals

Paris | Agencies

On a historic day for archery in the country, India claimed a grand double with the men's and women's compound teams winning gold medals in Stage 4 of the Archery World Cup Paris, on Saturday.

It was the women's compound team that started the day on a bright note it won gold in the team competition as Parneet Kaur, Aditi Gopuchand Swami and Jyothi Surekha Vennam defeated Mexico in a rematch of their World Championship final, prevailing 234-233.

India's memorable day then continued in the compound men's team gold medal match as Ojas Pravin Deotale, Prathamesh Samadhan Jawkar and Abhishek Verma surprised favourites USA, 236-232 in the final.

In the women's compound team final, the Indian trio of Parneet, Aditi and Jyothi was a point behind



Mexico going into the final end but shot 59 to overhaul Andrea Becerra, Ana Sofia Hernandez Jeon and Dafne Quintero.

The Mexicans were searching for their second World Cup gold of the season but were forced to settle for silver, just as they were in Berlin earlier this month.

In the men's compound team final, there was nothing to separate India and USA as they headed into the final end, which began at 176-176.

At this juncture Deotale, Jawkar and Verma peaked, combining for a perfect end of 60. USA's trio of Kris Schaff, James Lutz and Sawyer Sullivan could only respond with a 56 to see India take the top spot.

Saturday's results mean that eight different nations have won gold in as many events across the compound men's and women's team competitions across the Archery World Cup season so far.

# Indian jr women's hockey team goes down against Germany 1-3 in 4-Nations Tournament

Düsseldorf (Germany) | Agencies

The Indian junior women's hockey team started its campaign in the 4 Nations Tournament-Düsseldorf 2023 with a 1-3 loss to hosts Germany on Saturday.

Young forward Mumtaz Khan (60') was the lone goal-scorer for India while Marie Hahn (9'), Carolin Seidel (37') and Lena Keller (58') scored a goal each for Germany in the well-contested match.

Germany began the match on a strong note with Hahn Marie (9') scoring a goal in the ninth minute of the game after successfully converting a penalty corner and putting India on the back foot.

Following that, India upped the ante in search of an equaliser, testing Germany's defence but were unable to find the back of the net as the first half ended with Germany leading 1-0.



India increased the frequency of their attacks in an attempt to level the score, but Germany doubled their lead with Seidel Carolin (37') scoring a field goal. At the end of the third quarter, Germany were leading by 2-0. While the third quarter remained goalless, Germany held on to the lead with some solid defending that kept them in control of the match. In the fourth quarter, the Indian team came out with a well-structured plan. The team remained determined to equalise and switched their style of playing to a counter-attacking strategy. However, Lena Keller (58') scored a field goal in the dying minutes of the game to take the game away from India. Mumtaz Khan (60') successfully converted a PC to pull one back for India, but it was too late as Germany won the game 3-1.

The Indian junior women's hockey team will next face England on August 20.

# Neymar returns to Brazil squad for World Cup qualifiers

Rio De Janeiro | Agencies

Neymar has been recalled to Brazil's national squad for the team's opening 2026 FIFA World Cup qualifiers against Bolivia and Peru, the Brazilian football confederation said.

The 31-year-old, who left Paris Saint-Germain this week to join Saudi Arabia's Al Hilal, has not represented his country since last year's World Cup in Qatar because of an ankle injury, reports Xinhua.

"He (Neymar) deserves the chance to write the most



beautiful chapter in his

career, which I think has not yet been written," Brazil manager Fernando Diniz told a news conference.

As expected, Neymar will be joined in attack by Real Madrid duo Rodrygo and Vinicius Junior, as well as Tottenham's Richarlison, Manchester United's Antony and Arsenal's Gabriel Martinelli.

Brazil will meet Bolivia in Belem on September 8 and Peru in Lima four days later.

The 2026 World Cup in the United States, Canada and Mexico will be the first to feature an expanded 48-team format.

# Bayern thrash Werder Bremen in Bundesliga season opener

Berlin | Agencies

A brace from Leroy Sane and a goal from new arrival Harry Kane paved the way for Bayern Munich's 4-0 victory over Werder Bremen at the curtain raiser of the 2023-2024 Bundesliga campaign on Saturday.

The German record champions had a fairytale start as Kane's chipped-through ball allowed Sane to finish off a counterattack in the fourth minute clinically, reports Xinhua.

The Green Whites remained unfazed and thought they had restored parity five minutes later, but Niclas Fullkrug's header following a free-kick from

Marvin Ducksch was ruled offside.

Bayern controlled possession and should have added another goal to its lead, but neither Jamal Musiala's nor Noussair Mazraoui's promising long-range effort found the back of the net.

Bremen goalkeeper Jiri Pavlenka had his hands full of work, as he had to defuse Leon Goretzka's hammer from the distance and Kim Min-jae's dangerous header from close range before half-time. Bremen pushed forward after the restart, but it was the visitors who created clear-cut opportunities as Kingsley Coman rattled the woodwork with a turn shot from the edge of the box at the hour mark.

## World Athletics Championships

# Avinash Sable, male race walkers disappoint on first day

Budapest (Hungary) | Agencies

India's campaign in the World Athletics Championships got off to a poor start with star steeplechaser Avinash Sabnis failing to reach the final of the Men's 3000m Steeplechase competition and the male race walkers unable to finish in the top bracket in 20km race Walk in the morning session of the first day on Saturday. Woman long jumper Shailli Singh had a best jump of 6.40m in the preliminary round but that wasn't good enough for the final.

Sable, the Commonwealth Games silver medalist in Birmingham last year, finished a disappointing 7th in his heat and failed to advance to the final.

Sable, the national record holder in the event, could manage to finish the race in 8 minutes and 22.24 seconds, thus finishing seventh while the top-five



qualified for the final.

In the 20km race walk, Vikash Singh was the best-placed Indian at 27th with a timing of 1 hour 21.58 minutes. With the start of the Men's 20km Race Walk delayed due to bad weather conditions in the morning, the Indians failed to excel, with Paramjeet Singh Bisht placed 35th overall in 1:21.02 while national champion Akashdeep Singh, who holds

the record of 1:19.55 set in February this year, got the 47th and last placing with timing of 1:31.12.

Sable, who has trained abroad for the last few months, thanks to funding from the government, and was exempted from participating in domestic competitions, holds the national record of 8:11.20 that he set in the Birmingham Commonwealth Games in 2022.

# Rinku Singh can end up being a brilliant finisher like MS Dhoni and Yuvraj Singh: Kiran More

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Former India wicket-keeper-batter Kiran More believes uncapped left-handed batter Rinku Singh has the potential to become a brilliant finisher, just like legendary batters MS Dhoni and Yuvraj Singh.

Rinku excelled as a finisher for the Kolkata Knight Riders (KKR) in IPL 2023, with the most notable moment being him smacking Gujarat Titans pacer Yash Dayal for five sixes on the last five balls of the match in Ahmedabad to seal an improbable victory.

Overall, Rinku scored 474 runs in 14 matches at a strike rate of 149.53 in the tournament, where he was the designated finisher for KKR. His strike-rate while batting in last five overs of the tourna-



ment shot up to 186.66, the best-ever for an Indian batter in the competition.

"I have been waiting for his opportunity in the Indian team. And that batting position, of No.5 and 6, he will perform well in that spot and can end up being a brilliant finisher. We all have seen MS Dhoni and Yuvraj Singh. After that we haven't got a player like them," said More in a conversation with Jio Cinema. On Friday, Rinku debuted for India in T20Is in the series opener against Ireland, but didn't get to bat as rain meant the visitors won by two runs via DLS method.





## GEETA KAPUR TO AYUSHMANN: 'I'M A FAN OF YOUR VOICE, YOU ARE GIFTED'

Team Absolute | New Delhi

**A**ce choreographer and judge of dance reality show 'India's Best Dancer 3', Geeta Kapur has praised the actor Ayushmann Khurrana, saying she is a fan of his voice, and his talent has found a place in people's hearts. The star cast of 'Dream Girl 2'- Ayushmann and Ananya Panday will grace the stage of the dance reality show's upcoming episode. One of the highlights of the episode will be the beautiful tribute to the incredibly talented Ayushmann. The contestants will showcase Ayushmann's remarkable contribution to the world of

cinema through a series of amazing dance performances.

The stage will resonate with the magic of Ayushmann's filmography as the contestants groove to iconic tracks like 'Moh Moh Ke Dhaage', 'Dard Karaara', 'Pani Da Rang', and 'Naina Da Kya Kasoor'.

Judge Geeta Kapur couldn't contain her admiration for Ayushmann's journey and will share: "Ayushmann deserves the applause - from being a reality show winner to a versatile singer and now an actor; I have been following his journey and I must admit, among all his films, 'Andhadhun' is my favourite."

"I'm a fan of your voice, your talent has found a place in people's hearts. This isn't easily attainable - you are gifted, you

are blessed," she added.

Overwhelmed by the touching tribute act, Ayushmann's eyes welled up with tears, and he said: "You guys took me back in time with your performance. We often get caught up in the race of life and forget to look back, but tonight, I've been reminded of the incredible journey I've had."

Geeta assisted Farah Khan in many films, including 'Kuch Kuch Hota Hai', 'Dil Toh Pagal Hai', 'Kabhi Khushi Kabhi Gham', 'Mohabbatein', 'Kal Ho Na Ho', 'Main Hoon Na', and 'Om Shanti Om'.

She also led choreography in many Bollywood films, like Fiza, Asoka, Saathiya, Heyy Babyy, Tees Maar Khan's Sheila Ki Jawani among others.

Team Absolute | New Delhi

**A**ctress Shraddha Kapoor on Saturday took to social media, and gave her fans a glimpse into her weekend by sharing a sneak peek of her song playlist.

Taking to Instagram Stories, the actress shared a snapshot of her playlist, which was the popular track by Zubeen Garg 'Ya Ali'.

The song is from the 2006 romantic thriller film 'Gangster: A love story', starring Emraan Hashmi, Kangana Ranaut and Shiney Ahuja in the lead.

The flick was directed by Anurag Basu, and produced by Mahesh Bhatt and Mukesh Bhatt.

Sharing the photo of the song, Shraddha wrote: "Some songs just have a different kind of magic!!," followed with red heart emojis.

On the work front, Shraddha will be next seen in the highly-anticipated 'Stree 2' starring Rajkumar Rao, which is the sequel to the sleeper hit 'Stree'.

The first instalment 'Stree' had garnered critical acclaim and became a surprise box-office success, leaving audiences eagerly anticipating the next chapter in the franchise.

Directed by Amar Kaushik, produced by Jio Studios and Dinesh Vijan, it also stars Pankaj Tripathi, Aparshakti Khurrana and Abhishek Banerjee.

Shraddha was last seen in romantic comedy 'Tu Jhoothi Main Makkaar', opposite Ranbir Kapoor.

Shraddha Kapoor's weekend playlist includes 'Ya Ali'; calls it 'magic'



## Aparshakti takes social media by storm with clip of new music single 'Midnight Jam'

Team Absolute | Mumbai

**M**usician, radio jockey and actor Aparshakti Khurana has proven his multiple talents throughout his career. Taking the centre stage in the studio recently, Khurana released a clip for his hip hop track 'Midnight Jam', giving a glimpse during the song's recording session.

A charismatic person known for his versatile skills, Khurana who is known for his roles in 'Stree', 'Jubilee', 'Dangal' and 'Lukka Chuppi' has generated excitement and praise among his fans for his foray into the world of music. Posting a video of his interesting recording session of the track on his social media handle, he captioned: "Midnight jam fit my absolute favs @musicwaala @ghuggss."

The track showcases a soothing electronic rhythm with a laidback and catchy groove that is sure to be a foot tapper while he unleashes a spoken word session mixed with clear desi rap, combining hip hop and EDM.

Aparshakti Khurana's midnight RAP recording session is a testament to his creative spirit, versatility, and commitment to artistic exploration as well his desire to experiment.

Apart from making his inroads into the world of music, the multi-talented artist is also gearing up to act in his upcoming film 'Stree 2', where he will be reprising the much-loved character Bittu sharing the screen with Bollywood A-listers, Shraddha Kapoor, Rajkumar Rao, Varun Dhawan and Pankaj Tripathi. Prior to this, the actor was seen starring as Bittu in 'Stree' and Varun Dhawan's 'Bhediya' and in both projects his role and acting were praised.

He also has an array of other interesting and diverse projects in the pipeline, like 'Berlin', written and directed by the writer of 'Jubilee', Atul Sabarwal, and a documentary produced by Applause Entertainment called 'Finding Ram'.

## Shilpa Shetty drops quirky dance video, says 'This Barbie is South Indian'

Team Absolute | New Delhi

**A**ctress Shilpa Shetty Kundra is an ardent social media user, and she keeps on entertaining her fans by giving sneak peek into her daily life routine.

On Saturday, the diva took to Instagram and shared a Reel video, wherein she can be seen performing classical dance steps, in different ethnic outfits.

Shilpa is seen wearing a beautiful pinkish red coloured Anarkali suit with a matching dupatta, paired it with a golden heels and her hair let open.

In another glimpse, we can see the actress wearing a gorgeous royal blue coloured Anarkali suit, a matching floral dupatta, and golden heels. The location of the video is same throughout, which seems to be a set of a project. We also see Shilpa's stylist, giving final touches to her outfit.

The behind-the-scene (BTS) video shows Shilpa laughing her heart out. Then, we can see Shilpa wearing a yellow suit and a matching floral dupatta.

Another glimpse shows her in an emerald green coloured Anarkali suit. She is also performing some Bhangra steps in the video. Shilpa captioned the video as: "This Barbie... is South Indian! #BehindTheScenes #BTS #setlife #workmodeon #grateful #blessed." The video has garnered 104K views in just 15 minutes.

Fans took to the comment section and wrote: "If they made a Shilpa Barbie, every girl would want one!", "Barbie of all the Barbies", "You're such a fun person!!", "Beautiful Prettiest Barbie I've ever seen".

On the work front, the actress is currently seen as the judge in the reality show 'India's Got Talent 10'.

On the film front, she was last seen in 'Nikamma', and has 'KD' and 'Sukhee' in the pipeline. Shilpa also has web series 'Indian Police Force', which is created and directed by Rohit Shetty. It will star Sidharth Malhotra in the lead.



## 'I PRAY FOR A PARTNER AS WONDERFUL AS LORD SHIVA': NIKKI SHARMA

Team Absolute | New Delhi

**A**ctress Nikki Sharma, who is essaying the role of 'Shakti' in the show 'Pyaar Ka Pehla Adhyaya ShivShakti', said she prays for a partner as wonderful as Lord Shiva. Nikki is celebrating the Hariyali Teej on Saturday. It honours the divine union of Lord Shiva and Goddess Parvati. Devotees celebrate the festival by fasting and performing rituals. Talking about the same, Nikki said: "Feeling the essence of Hariyali Teej, I'm inspired by Goddess Parvati's strong love for Lord Shiva. Like her, I am also following fasting on Mondays in the Sawan month. Even though I'm not married yet, I pray for a partner as wonderful as Lord Shiva." "May this special day bring love, happiness, and togetherness in everyone's life. Sending my best wishes to all my lovely fans on this joyful Hariyali Teej celebration," she added. Nikki plays the character of Shakti, who is a young and passionate girl from Varanasi. The show explores the healing power of love in a contemporary take on the Shiv-Shakti dynamic. Produced by Studio LSD Productions, it stars Arjun Bijlani as Shiv and Nikki as Shakti. In the previous episodes, the audience witnessed how Shiv is in jail and Mandira (Parineeta Borthakur) trying to ensure that Shakti doesn't reach the police station to save him. Manipulated by Keertan (Gaurav Taneja), Manorama (Nimisha Vakharia) stopped Shakti from going, but somehow she managed to reach the police station in time and help Shakti from getting out of the jail. However, she learnt about Mandira's true intentions. In the upcoming episodes, viewers will witness Shakti's endeavour to unveil Mandira's true intentions. As the plot unfolds, viewers will be intrigued to witness how Mandira tries to safeguard herself and ascertain whether she can convince Shiv of her innocence.

## INSTAGRAM PIC OF THE DAY



Niharika Gandhi