

absolute india

VOL. 9, ISSUE 14, BHOPAL | THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 23, 2023 | ₹5 | PAGE 08

PUBLISHED SIMULTANEOUSLY FROM BHOPAL, MUMBAI AND NEW DELHI

NATION > 02
'Whether LMV license holders can drive light transport...'



HOLLYWOOD > 06
"Never stop believing": Ariana DeBose's advice for those...



SPORTS > 07
ICC Rankings: Kohli rises to third, Gill remains on top in ODIs...



RBI Report: In MP, wages are not enough to feed, the condition of 'Model State' Gujarat is also bad

STRUGGLE FOR BREAD

According to the RBI data, in the case of male non-agricultural workers, the lowest wage was in MP with an average wage of Rs 246.3 while Gujarat workers got a daily wage of Rs 273.1 and Tripura Rs 280.6 - all below the national average of Rs 348. On the other hand, Kerala again leads in non-agricultural workers' daily wages with Rs 696.6 per person. Kerala was followed by J&K with Rs 517.9, Tamil Nadu Rs 481.5 and Haryana Rs 451 for the year ended March 2023.

■ According to data compiled by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), in MP, male agricultural workers in rural areas got a daily wage of just Rs 229.2 while in Gujarat, which claims to be a model state, it worked out to Rs 241.9 in the year ended March 2023. The national average for the year was Rs 345.7.

■ As per a calculation by rating firm Crisil, the cost of a vegetarian thali was Rs 27.9 and non-vegetarian thali Rs 61.4 as of September this year. This means a family of five will have to shell out Rs 140 for a veg thali meal or Rs 8,400 per month.

■ While the financial year 2021-22 was bad for the rural economy with the Covid pandemic hitting the jobs and income levels, high inflation and interest rates played havoc in the fiscal 2022-23, hitting the rural demand.



Team Absolute | Mumbai

Rural agricultural workers in Madhya Pradesh (MP), which had gone for Assembly polls on Friday, get the lowest daily wages in the country, much below the national average.

If a rural farm worker gets work for 25 days in a month in MP, his monthly earning will be around Rs 5,730 per month which may not be sufficient to meet the household expenses of a family of four or five. However, a rural farm worker in Kerala, which pays the highest wage of Rs 764.3 per person among states, gets an average of Rs 19,107 for 25 days of work in a month. In the case of Gujarat, the monthly wage for a farm worker would have been around Rs 6,047.

Among other poorly paid states, in Uttar Pradesh, rural farm workers got an average daily wage of Rs 309.3 and Odisha Rs 285.1 in 2021-22. Male farm workers in Maharashtra, which boasts

of being most industrialised state, got Rs 303.5 daily. The high wages in Kerala have attracted farm workers from other poorly paid states with around 25 lakh migrant workers reportedly living in the state. In Jammu & Kashmir (J&K), farm workers get an average wage of Rs 550.4, Himachal Pradesh Rs 473.3 and Tamil Nadu Rs 470 per person.

Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh are again below the national average of Rs 393.3 in the case of rural male construction workers. Gujarat rural construction workers got an average wage of Rs 323.2, MP Rs 278.7 and Tripura Rs 286.1 per day during the fiscal ended March 2023. However, daily wage for rural construction workers was Rs 852.5 in Kerala, Rs 534.5 in J&K, Rs 500.9 in Tamil Nadu and Rs 498.3 in Himachal Pradesh, as per the RBI data. According to a Crisil study, rural income prospects remain dependent on the vagaries of weather.

"Increasing frequency of extreme weather events, therefore, remain a key monitorable. While lowering of demand for MGNREGA jobs is an encouraging sign for the rural economy from a job perspective, depressed wages are a matter of concern for rural demand," it said. Rural jobs are dependent on agriculture which in turn is influenced by monsoon and rabi and kharif production. Real rural wage growth virtually stagnated in 2022-23 despite a visible uptick in economic activity. Although job demand under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS) declined on a year-on-year basis, it still prevailed above the pre-pandemic level in 2022-23, indicating that the recovery, especially in the unorganised segment of the economy is not yet complete, according to the RBI's Annual Report for 2022-23.

Shocker: 142 minor girls at Haryana Govt School allege sexual assault by principal over 6 years

Jind (Haryana) | Agencies

In a shocking revelation from Haryana, as many as 142 minor girls studying at a government school in Jind accused the principal of sexually assaulting them over a period of six years, officials said on Wednesday.

Speaking to a news agency on Wednesday, Mohammad Imran Raza, the deputy commissioner of Jind district, said, "A probe committee led by the sub-divisional magistrate (SDM) has recorded the statements of 390 girls in total and we have forwarded complaints of 142 instances of sexual assault on girls to higher officials of the Education department for further action. Of these 142 girls, the majority accused the principal of sexually assaulting them while the rest said they were witnesses to the horrific acts. The accused principal is currently behind bars."

Significantly, about 15 girls had earlier written to President Droupadi Murmu, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Chief Justice of India DY Chandrachud, the National Women's Commission, and the state women's commission, among others, on August 31, on the alleged horrific acts by the principal. On September 13, the Haryana Women's Commission finally took cog-



nisation of the letter and forwarded it to Jind Police for action the day after, on September 14.

However, it was alleged that the police dragged their feet in the matter and filed an FIR much later on October 30.

The accused was arrested on November 4 and produced before a court on November 7, which remanded the accused principal in judicial custody on November 7. The state women's commission stated earlier that 60 girls at the government school came forward

to record their statements against the principal.

However, the number has now risen to 142, officials informed.

The deputy commissioner told agency, "The principal was prima facie found guilty during an investigation conducted by a team of three (district) officials of the rank of sub-divisional magistrate (SDM). Now a chargesheet will be prepared against the accused for his dismissal and denial of perks that come with his job."

41-Bed Hospital prepared treat workers after being rescued from Uttarakhand tunnel

Uttarkashi | Agencies

A 41-bed hospital was readied on Wednesday at the Community Health Centre in Chinyalisaur in this district for the care of 41 trapped labourers after they are evacuated from the Silkyara tunnel.

Rescue efforts at the tunnel gained momentum on Wednesday with the American auger machine resuming drilling through the accumulated rubble at the collapsed site inside the tunnel and penetrating up to 45 metres by the afternoon to prepare an escape passage for the trapped labourers. Around 12 metres more have to be dug through the rubble to lay two more 800



mm diameter steel pipes of 6 metre length each for the stranded workers to crawl through. All the hospitals in the district as well as AIIMS, Rishikesh have been kept on high alert.

Officials said a team of 15 doctors has been deployed.

A makeshift hospital consisting of eight beds has also been set up at the site for the immediate medical care of the trapped workers if required.

3 SOLDIERS INCLUDING OFFICER KILLED IN J&K GUNFIGHT WITH TERRORISTS

Jammu | Agencies

Three Indian Army soldiers, including an officer, were killed in an ongoing gunfight between the security forces and the terrorists in Jammu and Kashmir's Rajouri district on Wednesday.

Officials said that three soldiers including a Captain were killed on Wednesday in the ongoing encounter in Kalakote area of Rajouri district.

"Two soldiers among the three injured succumbed to their injuries in the hospital while one was killed on the spot in the encounter in Baji area of Kalakote.

"Firing exchanges are going on at the encounter site.

Senior police and Indian Army officers have reached the area to supervise the operation against the terrorists", officials said.

Mossad Chief to travel to Qatar to finalise hostage deal

Tel Aviv | Agencies

David Barnea, the chief of Israel's intelligence agency Mossad, will travel to Qatar and meet Prime Minister Mohammad bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim Al Thani to discuss the intricacies of hostage release, which is scheduled to take place from Thursday onwards.

The trip, according to Israel sources, is meant for pushing more deals in favour of Israel during the ceasefire and release of Palestinian prisoners from Israeli jails.

It is to be noted that Israel has insisted that it would be releasing only women and children from its prisons and no murder accused would figure in the list of those released.

Hamas will release 50 hostages kidnapped from Southern Israel on October 7, while Israel will release 300 Palestinians who are in Israeli prisons. Barnea, according to sources, will insist that more hostages kidnapped from Israel be released.



According to information available, 80 people will be released in the next four days by Hamas after Barnea's visit to Qatar, which is mediating the intricacies of the deal with Hamas and Israel at the behest of the US.

"DEEPAKE A BIG CONCERN, AI MUST BE SAFE FOR SOCIETY": PM MODI

New Delhi: Prime Minister Narendra Modi called for a proper look into the lightning fast growth of artificial intelligence (AI) amid safety concerns and asked Group of 20 (G20) nations to work jointly on addressing this issue.

Addressing the virtual G20 Summit, PM Modi said today AI should be developed keeping people's needs in mind.

"AI should reach people, and it must be safe for the society," PM Modi said. "Deepfake is a big concern. AI has to be safe for the public," he said. Deepfake videos targeting some actors and social media influencers in recent weeks have led to concerns over the misuse of AI by criminals. AI has been consistently penetrating every sector and disrupting how businesses work.

RICHEST 5% INDIANS OWN OVER 60% OF INDIA'S WEALTH: OXFAM

The wealth of 5% richest Indians accounted for more than 60% of the country's wealth in the past two years, according to a report by Oxfam, an anti-poverty non-governmental organisation.

▶ According to the report, the wealth of the top 10 richest in India stood at Rs 27.52 lakh crore in 2022, which is a 32.8% rise from 2021. The report says that the combined wealth of India's 100 richest have touched Rs 54.12 lakh crore. In contrast to this, the report says that the country still has the highest number of poor at 22.9 crore.

▶ Emphasising corporate taxation, the report says that a reduction in the corporate tax slab from 30% to 22% in 2019, has resulted in a total loss of Rs 1.84 lakh crore in the last two years. Amidst a growing wealth inequality, the corporate organisations reported a 70% increase in their profits in 2021-22 as compared to the previous year, while 84% of Indian households saw a decline in their income, it adds.

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Titled 'Survival of the Richest: The India story,' the report was released on the first day of the World Economic Forum. As per the report, between April 2020 and November 2022, the wealth of billionaires in India surged by 121% or Rs 3,608 crore per day. The report says that in 2021-2022, the top 10% of Indians paid only 3% in the form of goods and services tax (GST). This is in contrast to the payment of 64% of GST worth Rs 14.83 lakh crore-which was the highest-by 50% of the country's, and 33% of GST by the middle 44% population.

The development comes at a time when the country's unemployment rate surged to a 12-month high at 8.3% in December last year, according to the data from the Centre for Monitoring the Indian Economy (CMIE).

According to the report, the total number of billionaires in India surged from 102 in 2020 to 166 billionaires in 2022. The top two industries crowded the most by Indian billionaires are healthcare and manufacturing, as per the report. While the healthcare industry has 32 billionaires, the manufacturing industry has 31 billionaires. In 2020, the healthcare and pharma industry added seven new billionaires with their combined wealth reaching Rs 4.3 lakh crore by early 2021. As per the report, the Adani group chairman,



Gautam Adani's wealth alone increased eight times during the pandemic and then nearly doubled to Rs 10.96 lakh crore in October 2022, making him the richest Indian. Cyrus Poonawala, chairman and managing director of Cyrus Poonawala group witnessed 91 per cent rise in his wealth from 2021. Amitabh Behar, the chief executive officer of Oxfam India says, "The number of hungry Indians increased to 350 million in 2022 from 190 million in 2018. The widespread hunger is resulting in 65% of the deaths among children under the age of five in 2022, according to the Union Government's submission to the Supreme Court."

Watch: Rahul Gandhi Compares PM Modi, Adani With Pickpockets In Rajasthan

Jaipur | Agencies

Congress leader and Lok Sabha MP Rahul Gandhi compared Prime Minister Narendra Modi and businessman Gautam Adani with pickpocket. Addressing a rally in Rajasthan, the Congress leader said that pickpocket never come alone, they come in a group of three, while one diverts the victim's attention, second cuts the pocket from behind. He then went on to say that PM Modi comes on television from the front to divert people's attention and then Adani comes from behind and takes the money.

from the front, one from the back and one from the distance. The one coming from the front will divert your attention and as soon your mind is diverted, the number 2 comes from behind and cuts your pocket using a blade. The third one watches people to alert the two in case there is any threat," said Rahul Gandhi.

He then went on to add, "Prime Minister Narendra Modi's job is to divert your attention. He comes on TV from the front and distracts the public by raising topics of Hindu-Muslim, demonetization or GST. Meanwhile, Adani comes from behind and takes the money while Amit Shah watches from the distance that if someone comes in between, he will beat them using sticks."

INDIA RESUMES E-VISA SERVICE FOR CANADIAN NATIONALS

New Delhi: Two months after suspending visa facility following a diplomatic spat with Canada triggered by Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's claim that his government has intelligence linking New Delhi with the killing of Khalistani terrorist Hardeep Singh Nijjar, India on Wednesday said that it has resumed e-visa service for Canadian nationals.

External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar said, "Regarding e-visa, first of all it has nothing to do with the G20 meeting. What had happened was we had temporarily suspended visa issuance because the situation in Canada made it difficult for our diplomats... like going to office and doing the necessary work for processing visas." As the situation there has become more secure or relatively improved, I think we have found it possible for the visa services to progressively resume and you know, physical visas had started in many categories," the minister said.



'WHETHER LMV LICENSE HOLDERS CAN DRIVE LIGHT TRANSPORT VEHICLES?' SC SEEKS UNION'S ROADMAP BY JAN 17

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Supreme Court on Wednesday asked the Union government to provide a clear roadmap by January 17 next year on the question whether Light Motor Vehicle (LMV) licence holders require a separate endorsement to drive a transport vehicle of LMV class.

A Constitution Bench headed by Chief Justice of India (CJI) D.Y. Chandrachud and comprising Justices Hrishikesh Roy, P.S. Narasimha, Pankaj Mishra, and Manoj Misra, said that it would not adjourn the proceedings sine die (indefinitely) as the issue needs to be resolved at some point of time.

"This court is seized of the reference where the correctness of decision of a 3-judge bench in Mukund Dewangan judgment has been doubted. An element of certainty must be brought on the aspects which are contained in the reference," noted the five-judge bench as it asked the Centre to review its policy with "utmost expedition".

In a brief hearing, Attorney General (AG) R. Venkataramani, appearing for the Centre, said that many provisions of the Motor Vehicles Act, 1988 require a relook and the Union government is undertaking a wider consultation with all state governments on amending law in question. "In fact, I have impressed upon the (Union Road Transport and Highways) Ministry to conclude this before the next budget session of Parliament in February," AG Venkataramani said.

At this, Justice Hrishikesh Roy said: "If the Union government pushes, I am sure responses (by state governments) will come quicker and if the governments are conscious of the fact that the matter is going to come in a little while, then perhaps it may move a little



quicker."

In its order, the Constitution Bench directed that during the consultative process, all state governments should adhere with the timelines envisaged by the Union government.

It clarified that during the pendency of proceedings before the five-judge bench, cases pending before different tribunals and courts across the country will be determined in accordance with the 2017 Mukund Dewangan judgment. The matter is likely to be taken up for hearing on January 17, 2024.

The 2017 Mukund Dewangan judgment had held that the need of transport licence would arise in case of medium/heavy goods and passenger vehicles only, adding that no other vehicle will require any separate endorsement, even if they are used for commercial purposes. In other words, a holder of an LMV license would not require any separate endorsement for commercial

usage of light motor vehicles (LMV) like e-rickshaws, cars, vans, etc.

The Centre issued notifications and brought amendments in the Motor Vehicles Rules to bring them in conformity with the above judgment of the Supreme Court.

The 2017 judgment gave rise to various disputes over payment of claims by insurance companies in accident cases involving transport vehicles being driven by those having licences to drive LMVs and the matter was re-agitated at the instance of insurance companies.

In March last year, a bench headed by Justice U.U. Lalit (now retired) in March 2022 held that certain provisions of Motor Vehicles Act were not noticed by the top court in its 2017 Mukund Dewangan's decision and the issue needs to be re-visited by a five-judge Constitution Bench.

In an earlier hearing, CJI Chandrachud had remarked that the issue in question is not plainly "about interpreting law" but involves "social impact of law" as well.

The Constitution Bench had asked the Union government to consider the impact on lakhs of people across the country who are engaged in driving commercial vehicles on the basis of the judgement in Dewangan case as they will be "completely put out of their livelihood".

The Supreme Court had made repeated emphasis that the Union government should review the entirety of the position and then take an appropriate call. It gave Centre a period of two months to assess the position of law where a person holding a LMV driving license is legally entitled to drive a transport vehicle of light motor vehicle class having unladen weight not exceeding 7,500 kg.

After protests, Maha CM spares Mumbai of BMC's proposed hike in water charges

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Amid fire from the Congress and other parties, Maharashtra Chief Minister Eknath Shinde instructed the BrihanMumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) to not implement its steep 8 per cent hike in water charges for Mumbai, here on Wednesday.

Accordingly, the BMC announced that there will be no hike in water charges, spelling relief for Mumbaiers in the election year when civic, Lok Sabha and Assembly elections are scheduled.

The BMC said that a proposal by the Hydraulic Department to increase the water supply charges this year has been yanked off after the CM's directives.

Mumbai Congress President Varsha Gaikwad, who had strongly protested the BMC's proposal when it was coming without the presence of elected representatives in the civic body, welcomed the CM's decision.

Explaining the rationale behind the upward revision in the water charges, the civic body said that the seven reservoirs -- Tansa, Upper Vaitarna, Middle Vaitarna, Modak Sagar,



Bhatsa, Vihar and Tulsi -- supply around 3,950 million litres water daily to quench the thirst of Mumbai.

However, barring Vihar and Tulsi, the other reservoirs are located at a distance of around 150 km from the city, the water undergoes purification treatment and then transported to all parts of Mumbai before reaching individual households through pipelines.

It said that the annual water

charges are determined by calculating infrastructure costs, maintenance and repairs, royalty fees, water purification and disinfection processes, electricity costs, installation, etc.

Around 11 years ago, the BMC Standing Committee had passed a resolution to increase the water charges by maximum 8 per cent annually, and the current proposed hike for 2023-2024 was in tune with that decision.

WHO team visits Bihar to find out about mysterious disease

Patna | Agencies

A team of World Health Organisation (WHO) on Wednesday visited Gaya city in Bihar to check about the mysterious disease in the area.

More than 300 people of Patwa Toli village in Gaya have fallen sick in the last few weeks while doctors have failed to detect the nature of disease.

The people have claimed that the patients are suffering from fever and joint-pain, which remains for a long time. The locals have named the disease as "Langda fever" as the patients do recover from fever but are not able to walk properly due to the pain in joints.

A medical team under Dr Ranjan Kumar Singh has also been formed to keep an eye on the disease however they have failed to come up with any medication so far.

The WHO team is trying to find out the virus of the disease which mixes with the blood of the patients.



The doctors in the area have said that the symptom of the disease is similar to dengue and chikungunya and the blood samples of the patients have been taken and sent to the laboratory in Patna for CBC test.

"After the test, the nature of disease will be ascertained," the doctors have said.

Excise policy case: Delhi court extends Manish Sisodia's judicial custody in CBI case till Dec 22

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Delhi court on Wednesday extended the judicial custody of former Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia till December 22 in connection with the Central Bureau of Investigation's (CBI) case related to the alleged excise policy scam.

Special Judge M.K. Nagpal of the Rouse Avenue Court also granted Sisodia's application requesting access to his bank statement for a specific period.

Sisodia apprised the court that the statement was withheld by the Enforcement Directorate (ED), which is also probing the case, due to the attachment of his savings account.

The judge allowed the request, directing the branch manager of the bank to



provide a copy of the bank statement to any of Sisodia's authorised counsels.

In a separate development, the court also addressed the application of Vijay

Nair, an accused in the case, seeking the supply of woolen clothes and twelve books. The court approved Nair's request. Sisodia was arrested by the CBI on February 26 for his alleged involvement in corruption concerning the formulation and implementation of the now-scrapped Delhi Excise Policy 2021-22. The ED had then arrested him on March 9 in connection with a money laundering case stemming from the excise policy matter. On Tuesday, the court extended Sisodia's judicial custody in connection with the ED case till December 11.

Besides, the court had also said that the trial in the matter should start as soon as possible.

In July, the Delhi High Court had denied bail to Sisodia in the excise policy case being probed by the ED.

Bihar govt passes 40 proposals, including special status for state from Centre

Patna | Agencies

The Nitish Kumar government passed 40 proposals including the demand for a special status for Bihar by the Centre during a cabinet meeting on Wednesday.

The state government has also demanded a fund of Rs 2,50,000 crore from the Centre for the implementations of various projects.

Following the cabinet meeting, Nitish Kumar on his official social media handle X said: "During the meeting of a cabinet, we have passed a proposal to give special status to Bihar and requested the Centre to meet the same."

"This is the first time that the Bihar government has conducted a caste based survey in the state. On that basis, we have enhanced the reservation for the people of Bihar who come under Extremely Backward Caste (EBC), Other Backward Castes (OBC), Scheduled Caste (SC) and Scheduled Tribes (ST), they will get the benefit of reservation up to 65%. Earlier, the reservation in Bihar was 50%. Ten percent reservation was given to economically weaker sections in upper castes. This will



help candidates in the admission to various educational institutions as well as in government jobs," Kumar posted.

"People coming under EBC had 18% reservation in the past. After this bill, the Bihar government has

enhanced the reservation to 25%. Similarly, the OBC category with 12% reservation will get 18%. The SC had 16% reservation in the past and will get 20% now and the ST having 1% reservation will get 2%," he said.

Additional chief secretary in the cabinet secretariat S. Shidhartha, said: "We have sent two proposals to the Centre including special status for Bihar and reservation up to 65% under Article 9. It will help us as no one would challenge this in court."

"As per the caste based survey, 94 lakh families are in the poor category and hence the state government has passed a proposal to provide Rs 2 lakh in instalments to one person of such families below the poverty line; 63,850 families are houseless and landless in Bihar and the state government has decided to give Rs 1 lakh to each of the families to purchase land. Earlier, the state government was giving only Rs 60,000. Besides, 39 lakh families are living in huts and the state government will provide Rs 1.20 lakh to each of them for the construction of concrete houses," Shidhartha said. "The expenses are expected to go up and hence we have been demanding from the Centre to provide Rs 2, 50,000 crores to complete these projects," he said.

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Defence Ministry official on Wednesday said that the Indian Coast Guard has apprehended a Pakistani fishing boat -- Naz-Re-Karam -- in Arabian Sea, inside the Indian waters.

The official said that the Coast Guard has also apprehended the crew members of the boat. "A joint interrogation will be done of the crew," the official said.

He said that the Indian Coast Guard Ship Arinjay while patrolling in Arabian Sea observed one Pakistani fishing boat, fishing about 15 kms inside Indian waters near the International Maritime Boundary Line on November 21. "It was established that the Pakistani fishing boat Naz-Re-Karam (Reg no. 15653-B) left from Karachi on November 19 with 13 crew members," the official said.

"They could not explain or justify the fishing by the boat in the area and the boat has been brought to Okha harbour for thorough rummag-



ing and joint interrogation by all agencies," the official said. He said that on being challenged, the boat started to flee towards Pakistan side. However, the Indian Coast Guard ship intercepted the boat and stopped them in Indian waters.

Targeted killings in Punjab: Three ISI-controlled module members held

Chandigarh | Agencies

In a major blow to organised crime in Punjab, the police have averted targeted killings with the arrest of three members linked to an ISI-controlled Pakistan-based terror module, Director General of Police (DGP) Punjab, Gaurav Yadav, said here on Wednesday.

Those arrested have been identified as Rajbhupinder Singh, alias Bhinda, of Dikh Village in Bathinda, Raman Kumar of Guru Harsahai Village in Fazilka District and Jagjit Singh of Dhilwa Kalan in Kotkapura.

Police teams have recovered eight pistols, including three .30 bore pistols and five .32 bore pistols, besides nine magazines and 30 cartridges from their possession.

Also a stolen Auto car, in which they were travelling, was impounded.

DGP Yadav said following inputs police teams from Counter Intelligence of



Bathinda laid a special check-point near the bridge at Gobindpura Village in Bathinda and arrested the accused.

Preliminary investigations have revealed that the arrested persons were in contact with some persons currently lodged in the Sangrur Jail under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, he added. Sharing more details, AIG

(Counter Intelligence) Avneet Kaur Sidhu said the probe revealed the accused had brought weapons from Madhya Pradesh and were tasked to carry out targeted killings in the state to create panic.

Further investigations are on to unveil forward and backward linkages and recovery of more weapons is expected, she said.

EC bans advertising of 7 guarantees by Congress in Rajasthan

Jaipur | Agencies

The Election Commission in Rajasthan has banned the advertisement of the seven guarantees issued by the Congress for which the party workers are contacting the public and informing them about their seven guarantees through voice calls and advertising to get the people registered.

The state election commission has considered it as a violation of the election code of conduct. Along with this, the commission in its notice has mentioned about releasing the advertisement without getting it approved by the state level Advertisement Certification Committee.

The Election Commission of India in a directive dated 24 March 2014 directed all political parties and candidates that any advertisement, which is proposed to be broadcast on the electronic media, is required to undergo prior authentication. But now voters are being wooed through these messages without following those instructions.



"This is not permissible under the Model Code of Conduct and thus broadcasting audio messages as political advertisements without getting authentication is in clear violation of the

Election Commission of India guidelines. You are ordered to stop the broadcast of both the above audio messages with immediate effect and explain the reasons why you violated the provisions

of the Model Code of Conduct by broadcasting the above advertisement message without authentication," said the notice.

In fact, for the last few days, people in the state have been continuously receiving recorded calls from mobile numbers. One amongst these calls was the voice of Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot and information is being given about the 7 guarantees of the Congress and people are being asked to register to avail their benefits. This registration is done during the call only.

Recently, a complaint was lodged by the BJP regarding this advertisement. After the complaint, when the Election Commission got it investigated, it came to light that this advertisement had not been approved by the Advertisement Certification Committee formed by the election panel. According to the rules, if any political party or candidate releases its advertisement in the media for campaigning, it has to be approved by the Advertisement Certification Committee.



"Anti-National": Shivraj Chouhan on Rahul Gandhi's "Panuati" remark against PM

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan on Wednesday accused Congress leader Rahul Gandhi of being "anti-national" for referring to Prime Minister Narendra Modi as "panuati" and said the people of the country will not forgive this. At a rally in poll-bound Rajasthan on Tuesday, Rahul Gandhi said, "PM means Panauti Modi", insinuating the prime minister's presence at the Ahmedabad stadium during the India-Australia Cricket World Cup final brought bad luck to the home side, which lost the decider.

Speaking at a press conference here, Chouhan said, "The entire country was full of patriotic passion and wanted India to win the cricket (World Cup) final because sport is also a symbol of patriotism."

"If Prime Minister Modi goes there, then it is a matter



of pride for us. But the people of Congress are so afraid of Prime Minister Modi and have so much hatred for him that they celebrate when India loses a match," he charged.

"I believe that this act (of Rahul Gandhi) is anti-national," he said, adding there is no bigger example of "mindlessness" than this and people of the country will not forgive this.

Chouhan said when the country got independence, Mahatma Gandhi had said that the Congress should be abolished but former prime minister Jawaharlal Nehru did not agree.

policy of "appeasement" for the killing of tailor Kanhaiya Lal.

"Appeasement has been the basic mantra of the Congress government in Rajasthan. These people banned processions of Hindu festivals and even imposed Section 144 (of the CrPC). Kanhaiya Lal was beheaded in Udaipur and the reason for this is the Congress government's policy of appeasement," he said.

Lal was hacked to death last year at his shop in the busy Hathipole area of Udaipur by two clever-wielding men for allegedly supporting a social media post against Islam, an incident that sent shockwaves across the country.

Chouhan claimed land of over 19,000 farmers was auctioned during the tenure of the Gehlot government.

Assembly elections in Rajasthan will be held on November 25 and the votes will be counted on December 3.

"Now, Rahul Gandhi is moving towards fulfilling what Mahatma Gandhi said," he said.

The BJP leader dubbed Rahul Gandhi and Priyanka Gandhi Vadra a "machine of lies".

Citing central government schemes like Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana, Jal Jeevan Mission, Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana and PM-Kisan Samman Nidhi, Chouhan said Modi has changed the lives of crores of people.

He also targeted the Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot-led Rajasthan government over a range of issues, including law and order, and blamed its

The new government will inherit a loan of Rs 3.85 lakh crore

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Assembly elections have been completed in Madhya Pradesh. A new government will be formed after the election results are declared on December 3. But before this, concerns regarding the debt of the state government have increased. In such a situation, the new government will inherit a loan of Rs 3.85 crore. Rs 3.85 crore means that every citizen of the state has a debt of Rs 47 thousand. About 35 percent of the budget is being spent on freebies schemes. And now, whichever new government is formed, not only will these schemes become a problem, but the arrangement of budget to run the government will be a big challenge.

According to the current budget, the income of the state government is Rs 2.25 lakh crore and the expenditure is Rs 54 thousand crore more than this. That means there are more expenses than income. In such a situation, more money than the current budget will be required to run the new government. Not only this, the government is also paying interest of more than Rs 20 thousand crores every year.

ADR has raised questions on this. ADR member Chandrakant Naidu said that it cannot be said with what responsibility this is being said. There is going to be a loan of Rs 4 lakh crore. Money will be spent on the announcement of both the parties. Both parties are mak-



ing claims, but it cannot be said with what responsibility they are being made. Kamal Nath's media advisor Piyush Babele said that we have done it. We have fulfilled many of the promises made in the promissory note in other states. Old pension has been implemented in three states. Farmers were just waiving their loans. They are giving cylinders in other states for Rs 500. All the promises in the promissory note will be fulfilled.

BJP spokesperson Pankaj Chaturvedi has also given a statement on this matter. Pankaj Chaturvedi says that he will complete the resolution letter with guarantee. BJP will complete the manifesto with guarantees. There is no short-

age of money for public work in the BJP government. BJP did what it said. Has played announcements ranging from Ladli Lakshmi to Ladli Bahna.

It is noteworthy that the state's budget for 2023-24 is Rs 3.14 lakh crore. About 26.2 percent of this goes towards payment of salaries, allowances and interest. If we look at salaries and allowances alone, by the end of the financial year, more than Rs 56314 thousand crore will be spent on it. This is 18.64% of the budget. Whereas 6.17% of the budget will be spent on pension and 7.56% on interest, 13.73% will be spent on interest payment. About 35 percent of the budget is being spent on freebies schemes.

Doubt about Chief Secretary of Madhya Pradesh

Team Absolute | Bhopal

There is doubt regarding the Chief Secretary of Madhya Pradesh. The tenure of the second extension of the present Chief Secretary Iqbal Singh Bais is going to be completed on November 30 and the counting of votes for the assembly elections in the state is on December 3. There are also discussions whether Bais will get an extension or there will be a new Chief Secretary.

State Chief Secretary Iqbal Singh Bais has received extension twice so far. Now his second extension is going to end on November 30. A proposal for granting extension for the third time has already been sent by the state government. But, it has not been approved yet.

If Bais does not get extension for the third time, then a new Chief Secretary will be made and his appointment may be based on seniority. According to seniority, four officers of the state are in this queue. One is Veena Rana, who is of the year 1988 batch.

Whereas, Mohammad Suleman and Anurag Jain are from 1989 batch. Apart from this, there is Vinod Kumar of 1989 batch. These names are being seen as possible Chief Secretary.



Now the ball is completely in the court of the Election Commission and any decision will be taken only with its permission. If Bais gets an extension, he will remain the head of the bureaucrats till the formation of the new government or someone new may also be there.

Collector's unique initiative to improve the air quality of the capital, PUC will be free on getting full tank done

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Collector Ashish Singh has taken a unique initiative to clean the deteriorating air of the capital. On filling full tank of petrol in four wheelers, PUC (pollution test) will be done for free. The pump operator will have to do this test for free. For this he has given instructions to all the petrol pumps of the capital. Collector Ashish Singh has taken several steps to improve the deteriorating AQI level of Bhopal city. In



this regard, on Tuesday he has given instructions to the administration, RTO, pollution control and police to check the pollution level of vehicles. Challenging action should also be taken against

vehicles which do not have PUC. The Collector has given instructions to provide PUC facility at all petrol pumps. Earlier, Bhopal Division Commissioner Pawan

Sharma had also expressed concern about the AQI level. He has also given instructions to take necessary steps by holding a meeting. Let us tell you, the air of Bhopal is continuously getting worse. An increase in AQI is being recorded here. Due to this, people are facing breathing related diseases. Such situations are being created in Bhopal and many cities of the state since Diwali. Along with this, AQI level is also increasing due to dust on roads and pollution from vehicles.

Accident during Kartik bath in Datia, two died due to drowning in the river

Team Absolute | Datia

The accident took place during Kartik bath in Datia district of Madhya Pradesh. Four other women jumped in to try to save the girl who had fallen into deep water while bathing. Apart from the teenager, a

woman also died.

According to the information, the women of Bhogar village of Chirula police station had gone to Angoori river to take Kartik bath.

A large number of women were taking bath when a teenage girl Sakshi went into deep water and started

drowning. Hearing his call, four other women present there also jumped into the water to save him.

Another woman, Komesh, also died while trying to save the girl. Whereas, three other women were taken out safely, whose condition also deteriorated. It should be known that there is

special importance of bathing in water sources before sunrise in the month of Kartik. This is the reason why a large number of women from rural areas come to rivers and other water sources to take bath before sunrise. This happened in Datia on Wednesday also and this accident happened.

AIIMS Bhopal not only provides treatment but also serves humanity

Team Absolute | Bhopal

AIIMS Bhopal not only provides treatment but also serves humanity. A similar incident happened recently in the Trauma and Emergency Department. At around 4:45 in the morning, a vehicle left a 33-year-old pregnant woman at the emergency gate. The woman was having labor pains. Senior Nursing Officer Mr. Sohan and Nursing Officers Ms. Divya, Lavina and Kamal saw the woman groaning due to labor pain and immediately picked up the patient from



the gate and admitted her to the Trauma and Emergency Department. The entire team of Trauma and Emergency Department, under the leadership of Dr. Ankita, Dr. Aakriti, Dr. Sonu and Dr. Kamna, delivered a safe delivery at 4:55 with an interval of only 10 minutes. After delivery, both the baby and the mother were med-

ically examined. Later both were shifted to the labor ward and when the mother completely recovered, she was discharged from the hospital. The Trauma and Emergency Department of AIIMS Bhopal is always ready to serve humanity. Executive Director of AIIMS Bhopal, Professor Dr. Ajai Singh, while congratulating the Trauma and Emergency Department for their commendable work, expressed hope that they will continue to work with the same spirit of dedication in the future also.

Special DG Vipin Maheshwari is retiring this month, who will be the new STF Chief?



Team Absolute | Bhopal

Special Task Force Chief Vipin Maheshwari is going to retire at the end of this month. Police Headquarters has started the exercise regarding who will be appointed in his place on this important post. Police Headquarters is going to make a panel of three names for this post, which will soon be sent to the Home Department. Vipin Maheshwari is going to retire on 30th November. As soon as he retires, ADG Grievances Ashok Awasthi will be promoted to the rank of senior. Awasthi is a 1990 batch IPS officer. Vipin Maheshwari is also a 1990 batch officer. It is believed that for the time being, Awasthi can be kept posted as Special DG in the complaint branch only. Here, the Police Headquarters wants to appoint only an ADG level officer for the Chief of STF. Therefore, Awasthi will be promoted and kept posted in his current branch. At the same time, a panel of Police Headquarters ADG is going to be formed for STF Chief and sent to the government. In this, ADG Narcotics Jaideep Prasad, ADG Fire Ashutosh Rai and other ADG rank officers can be considered. Jaideep Prasad has returned to Madhya Pradesh from deputation only a few months ago. There are five IPS officers in the year 1990 batch. Of these, only Vipin Maheshwari has reached the rank of Special DG. After his retirement, Ashok Awasthi will become Special DG this year. After these two officers, three officers of this batch will now be promoted next year. After the retirement of DG Jail Rajesh Chawla in February 2024, 1990 batch ADG Administration Vijay Kataria will be promoted to become Special DG. After this, Special DG Purushottam Sharma will retire in April 2024. As soon as he retires, ADG Administration Anuradha Shankar Singh will be promoted to the post of Special DG.

Students conveyed road safety messages while taking a road walk and forming human chain



Team Absolute | Bhopal

National Center for Human Settlements and Environment, Bhopal and Consumer Voice, New Delhi in collaboration with Ankur Higher Secondary School, T T Nagar, Bhopal organized a road walk and human chain to mark the "World Day of Remembrance for Road Traffic victims" on 22nd November 2023 to encourage vehicle drivers to follow traffic rules to avoid accidents and casualties on roads. The World Day of Remembrance for Road Traffic Victims was started by RoadPeace in 1993. In 2005, the United Nations endorsed it as a global day to be observed every third Sunday in November each year, as the "appropriate acknowledgement for victims of road traffic injuries and their families". The programme was started at the premises of Ankur Higher Secondary School,

where M.P. Traffic Police officer Narendra Chaudhary addressed the students, their parents, teachers and persons providing their voluntary services to make them aware about the need to follow traffic rules. He said that in India more than 1.5 lakh people dies every year due to road accidents and explained the basic traffic rules to avoid traffic accidents, injury and death of people. Avinash Shrivastava while welcoming all to the programme talked about the significance of the World Day of Remembrance for Road Traffic Victims. Thereafter, students holding play cards having road safety messages walked along the footpath of Link Road Number 1 towards TT Nagar main road and then formed a human chain extending from trisection at TT Nagar towards mata mandir. During the entire activity, teachers and volunteers helped students to follow discipline. Police personnel ensured the safety of the walkers. The stu-

dents loudly chanted the road safety messages as uttered by Chaudhary. The participants of the programme walked back to the school holding play cards. This programme is also become significant as this programme is being organised during the month long state wide special drive by the Madhya Pradesh Police to ensure use of helmets by the two-wheel driver and seat belt by 4 wheel drivers. During the event pamphlets and road safety signage charts were distributed to the participants and the vehicle drivers. Police stopped the vehicle drivers without helmets and informed them about the safety rules. More than 100 students and teachers and volunteers participated in the event. During this event, Dr Pradip Nandi, DG, NCHSE, Vishakha Sharma, Principal of Ankur HS School, other teachers and parents of students, were also present.

Election offices should get postal votes from employees deprived of voting

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Due to being busy in election duty and other reasons, lakhs of government employees, police employees, guest teachers have been deprived of voting. Madhya Pradesh Employees Forum has written a letter to the Election Commission demanding that the employees who were deprived of voting should be given the opportunity to vote through postal vote. For postal ballot, a center should be set up at one place in every district of the state and voting should be done by giving information to the employees. By using a type of experiment, the district administration in Khandwa



district has made the employees who were deprived of voting, vote on the basis of postal ballot on 20th November. State President of Madhya Pradesh Employees Forum, Ashok Pandey has said in the press release that the Employees Forum had already informed the Election Commissioner that the government employees, police employees of other districts of the state including Rewa, Satna, Sidhi, Shahdol, Khandwa, Morena, Bhind, Shivpuri, Sehore, Rajgarh, Guest teacher

engaged in election duty and have not been able to vote due to transfer to another district, posting at another place, lack of polling center in the district where the employee is engaged on election duty and lack of proper arrangement by election officers. According to the decision of the Khandwa District Administration, the Election Commission should provide an opportunity to the employees deprived of voting in other districts of the state to vote on the basis of postal vote, therefore the Election Commissioner should encourage lakhs of employees deprived of voting to vote through postal vote before 3 December 2023. Broadcast the order.



EDITOR'S SPECS

226 MLA candidates in Telangana face criminal cases

As many as 226 candidates belonging to four major political parties in Telangana Assembly elections have criminal cases against them. According to a report by the Forum for Good Governance, for 119 Assembly seats there are 360 candidates of parties like BRS, Congress, BJP, MIM. The Congress party tops the list with 84 candidates with criminal record. The BJP stands second with 78 candidates. The BRS has 58 candidates with cases pending against them. The NGO took up analysis of candidates having criminal records. A committee analysed the affidavits filed by the candidates and prepared a report. Some candidates are having cases registered during Telangana agitation and some have criminal cases and few others have cases of both the types. Out of 118 candidates of the Congress party, 84 candidates have criminal cases against them. Telangana Pradesh Congress Committee (TPCC) chief A. Revanth Reddy tops the list with 89 cases. Out of 111 candidates of BJP, 78 have criminal cases against them while there are 89 cases against BJP MLA T. Raja Singh, who is seeking re-election. He is notorious for delivering hate speeches and has been booked many times for hurting religious sentiments of other communities. BJP general secretary and MP Bandi Sanjay Kumar, who is contesting from Karimnagar Assembly constituency, has 59 cases. There are 27 cases against BJP MLA M. Raghunandan Rao, who is seeking re-election from Dubbak constituency. Out of 119 candidates of BRS, 58 have cases against them. There are nine cases against Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhar Rao, who is seeking re-election from Gajwel and is also contesting from Kamareddy constituency. BRS working president K.T. Rama Rao, who is contesting again from Siricilla, has eight cases. Six out of nine candidates of MIM have cases against them.

Resurgent Cong bets big on BRS and BJP turncoats in Telangana

Mohammed Shafeeq

Defectors are dominating the election scene in Telangana with the Congress party fielding the maximum number of turncoats from the Bharat Rashtira Samithi (BRS) and the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). Nearly one-third of the Congress candidates are those who crossed over to the party from the BRS and the BJP since May, when the Congress' victory in Karnataka elections appeared to have given a new lease of life to the grand old party in Telangana. Several leaders from the BRS and the BJP moved to the Congress on the condition that they would be fielded for the November 30 Assembly elections. Some were even invited by the party to join its camp and contest the elections on its tickets. Some defectors were rewarded with tickets a few days and even a few hours after they switched loyalties. Even with just a few days left for the November 30 elections, party-hopping is continuing with those denied tickets switching loyalties in the hope of either getting nominations for next year's Lok Sabha polls or getting some plum positions in the future. Interestingly, the saga of defections had started soon after the 2018 elections with about a dozen MLAs from the Congress switching loyalties to the TRS (now BRS) after it retained power. The BRS, which had won 88 seats in 119-member Assembly, succeeded in making a dozen Congress MLAs join its camp. It lured four more MLAs including both MLAs of the Telugu Desam Party (TDP) to take its tally to 104. Aiming for a hat-trick in power, the BRS has fielded almost all sitting MLAs and its list was released more than two months before the poll process began. Ticket aspirants, whose hopes were dashed, started making a beeline to the Congress party. As BJP lost the momentum after the drubbing in Karnataka, several of its leaders, too, started looking at the Congress whose leaders were ready to welcome turncoats with open arms. Many of those who left the BRS and the BJP were in fact making a comeback to the Congress after a long gap. The grand old party and the TDP had lost their senior leaders, including former ministers to the BRS after the latter formed its first government in the new state in 2014. The spree to lure leaders started in June with former minister Jupally Krishna Rao and former Khammam MP Ponguleti Srinivas Reddy, who were suspended by the BRS for anti-party activities a few months ago. Both were invited by the



BJP but after the Karnataka polls they preferred to join Congress. Krishna Rao, has been rewarded, with a ticket from Kollapur in the undivided Mahabubnagar district. He had resigned from the Congress to join the BRS in 2011 and was elected from Kollapur constituency in 2014 on a BRS ticket. He felt sidelined in the BRS after Harshvardhan Reddy, who had defeated him in the 2018 elections, switched loyalties from the Congress to the BRS after winning the election. Congress leaders expect Krishna Rao not only to win Kollapur for the party but also have an impact on the outcome in other constituencies in the district. Similarly, Srinivasa Reddy secured the ticket from Palair in Khammam district. Elected to the Lok Sabha from Khammam on an YSR Congress Party ticket in 2014, he later switched loyalties to the BRS. He was unhappy after KCR denied him a party ticket for both 2018 Assembly and 2019 Lok Sabha elections. A leader with a good support base, Srinivasa Reddy is expected to boost the prospects of the Congress in undivided Khammam district, where the BRS has never done well but managed to lure most of the MLAs elected on Congress and TDP tickets in 2018. The defection of former minister and senior leader Tummala Nageswara Rao from BRS came as another boost to the Congress in Khammam district. The party rewarded him with a ticket from Khammam constituency, where he is locked in a tight contest against Transport Minister P Ajay Kumar. Political analysts say these defections helped Congress gain momentum and it subsequently made many others switch loyalties. The Congress also did not lose the opportunity to lure the sitting BRS MLA from Malkajgiri, Mynampally Hanumanth Rao to its camp after he had raised the banner of revolt against KCR for refusing a ticket to his son Mynampally Rohit Rao from Medak. Though Hanumanth Rao was fielded again by BRS from Malkajgiri (in Greater Hyderabad), he insisted on a ticket for his son. The Congress was quick to assure tickets to both father and son and their names were included in the first list of candidates, despite the revolt the party had to face from some loyalists in both the constituencies. As Hanumanth Rao is considered an influential leader, both in Medak and Malkajgiri, the Congress accommodated the father-son duo, despite criticism from some quarters for ignoring the Udaipur resolution of one family, one ticket. The most interesting case is that of Komatireddy Rajagopal Reddy. He was named the Congress candidate from Munugode (in Nalgonda district) a few hours after he quit the BJP to return to the Congress camp. He had resigned from the party and also as MLA last year to join the BJP. Union Home Minister Amit Shah had personally visited Munugode to address a public

meeting and welcome Rajagopal, one of the richest politicians of Telangana, into the saffron party. However, he lost the by-election to the BRS candidate. The brother of Congress MP Komatireddy Venkat Reddy, Rajagopal Reddy succeeded in getting the Congress ticket once again from Munugode. Though bitter critics of state Congress chief A Revanth Reddy, the brothers are considered key to the party's prospects in undivided Nalgonda district. Former MP G Vivekanand, who was chairman of the BJP's manifesto committee, stunned the saffron party by switching loyalties to the Congress. He joined the party in the presence of Congress leader Rahul Gandhi. The party has fielded him from Chennai constituency in undivided Mancheril district. Son of former Union Minister G Venkatswamy, Vivek is the richest candidate in the party's prospects in undivided Nalgonda district. K Rajesh Reddy, son of BRS MLC Damodar Reddy, defected to the Congress in August. The party has fielded K Rajesh Reddy from Nagarkurnool constituency, which led to the resignation of former minister and senior leader N Janardhan Reddy. TPCC secretary K Ajay Kumar also raised a banner of revolt after he was denied a ticket from Gadwal. The party fielded Sarita Thirupathiah, a former chairperson of the Gadwal Zilla Parishad, who quit the BRS to join the Congress in July. A MLC from BRS is also among the turncoats. Kasireddy Narayan Reddy quit BRS to join the Congress party last month and he was swiftly rewarded with a ticket from Kalvakurthy. The MLC defected after the BRS leadership denied him a ticket. Interestingly, while the Congress lured BRS leaders who were aspiring for tickets but were not fielded, the BRS during the last few days poached Congress leaders who raised a banner of revolt after defectors were given tickets. BRS working president KT Rama Rao and another key leader Harish Rao personally visited the houses of the disgruntled Congress leaders to invite them to join the BRS. They were promised suitable positions if BRS retained power. Less than two weeks before polling, party hopping is continuing in the state. November 30 will decide which set of turncoats will have the last laugh.

international

Israel agrees to 4-day ceasefire, Hamas to release 50 hostages

Tel Aviv | Agencies The Israeli Cabinet has agreed to a four-day ceasefire and a deal with the Hamas to secure the release of 50 hostages, including women and children, being held in Gaza since the war erupted on October 7. However, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu told the Cabinet meeting late Tuesday night that the country will not stop the war. In a statement, the Israeli Prime Minister's Office said under the deal, the release of every additional 10 hostages will extend the pause in fighting by a day. On Wednesday morning, the Hamas said that 150 Palestinian prisoners held in Israeli jails will be released as part of the deal. The prisoners are women and children, the statement said. The deal also involves the entry of hundreds of trucks carrying aid relief, medical supplies and fuel to all parts of Gaza, the Hamas statement added. According to an earlier IANS report, the release of first group of hostages will take place soon. Qatar and the US have been involved in active mediatory talks with both Israel and Hamas for a ceasefire. Those opposed to the truce warned the Israeli Cabinet that this partial hostage deal would derail the process of securing all those in captivity and that it would complicate the military offensive against the militant group in Gaza. Netanyahu however dismissed the scepticism and said: "



We are at war and continue to be at war until our objectives are met including destroy Hamas and all our captives are released." Wednesday's development comes more than a week after a major breakthrough was reached on November 12 when the Hamas -- after refusing for days -- had relented in offering identifying information about several dozen hostages, such as their age, gender and nationalities. The information confirmed that numerous children and toddlers had been taken captive on October 7. Israeli authorities have said that there are at least 236 hostages being held in Gaza.

N.Korea's claimed success in spy satellite launch raises possibility of Russian assistance

Seoul | Agencies North Korea's claimed success in placing its first military reconnaissance satellite into orbit on its third attempt has raised the possibility it could have received technological assistance from Russia. A media report said on Wednesday. North Korea said a new type of Chollima-1 space rocket successfully put the Mallygyong-1 satellite into orbit on Tuesday night, just months after two botched attempts in May and August, respectively, Yonhap News Agency reported. The latest launch came amid growing speculation that Russia might have provided the North with military technology in return for the North's supply of military equipment and munitions for use in Russia's ongoing war in Ukraine. South Korea earlier



retrieved wreckage from the first attempt, which the North claimed to have experienced an "abnormal" startup of the second-stage engine, and concluded it had no military use as a reconnaissance satellite. Pyongyang blamed booster malfunctions at the third-stage level on its second attempt. But in just three months, North Korea came back declaring the successful launch of its first spy satellite

and vowed to launch several more "in a short span of time" to secure its reconnaissance capabilities against South Korea. South Korean military officials and intelligence said that Russia is likely to have provided technical support to the North. In September, North Korean leader Kim Jong-un traveled to Russia and held a rare summit meeting with Russian President Vladimir Putin. When asked whether Russia would help the North build the satellites, Putin told reporters that was the reason "why we came here". Defence Minister Shin Won-sik said during Sunday's media interview that North Korea is believed to have overcome its engine problems in its satellite with Russia's assistance. Earlier this week, a military official told reporters an 80-tonne liquid fuel engine was transferred from Russia to the North even before the September summit, and said evidence suggests that Russian engineers entered the North after the summit. Pending a detailed analysis of the launch, South Korea and the US did not confirm whether it was a success. Observers say a successful launch could significantly enhance the North's monitoring of the South.

India absent at voting on UNGA resolution on 'better world through sports'

Arul Louis | United Nations Two days after the Cricket World Cup final, India has absented itself from voting on a General Assembly resolution on sports promoting "understanding among peoples and nations". Being absent during the voting on Tuesday does not amount to a formal abstention as it is not put on record. The resolution, "Building a Peaceful and Better World through Sport and the Olympic Ideal", was adopted with 118 votes while only Russia and Syria formally abstained. India's UN Mission did not respond to an IANS query about the absence. The Assembly session was sparsely attended and 73 countries had stayed away. The resolution said, "Sports can contribute to an atmosphere of tolerance and understanding among peo-



ples and nations." Sponsored by France, it tied the resolution to the Paris Olympics next year and called for an international truce for the event in a tradition going back to 776 BCE when the ancient Greeks stopped fighting during the games. The truce is "to ensure the safe passage, access and participation of athletes, officials and all other accredi-

ed persons" attending the "Olympics and the Paralympic Games," the resolution said. It also called for ensuring the safety of the Games. "Sports can play to prevent and counter-terrorism and violent extremism" and build "resilience against radicalisation to violence and terror recruitment," it added. Introducing the resolution on behalf of France, Tony Estanguet, the President of the Paris 2024 Olympic Organising Committee, said, "The games are the best incarnation of the powers of sport because they bring together tolerance, respect and sharing as values throughout the world." The Olympics show that "it is possible to live in harmony and in respect of other people," said Estanguet, a former Olympic athlete. However, ran- cour and politics crept in.

17 Filipino seafarers among hostages in Yemen

Manila | Agencies The Philippines' Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) on Wednesday confirmed that 17 Filipino seafarers were among the crew members of a cargo vessel taken hostage by Yemen's Houthi rebels in the Red Sea. In a television interview, Foreign Affairs Undersecretary Eduardo de Vega expressed alarm over the ongoing hostage crisis involving the Filipinos and other nationalities working on the hijacked ship, reports Xinhua news agency.



"We are alarmed. It is not the first time Filipino seafarers were held hostage," de Vega said. DFA Spokesperson Teresita Daza said the Philippine government was working

for the release of the Filipino hostages. "We have been making diplomatic representations with governments," she said in a brief statement. Daza added that "various government agencies are meeting and working to get back our seafarers back safely." The Iran-backed Houthi rebels on Sunday confirmed that they have hijacked an "Israeli cargo ship" in the Red Sea. Local media reported that a total of 25 people were on board, including those from Bulgaria, Ukraine, the Philippines, Mexico and Romania.

Germany announces fresh military aid for Ukraine

Kiev | Agencies Visiting German Minister of Defence Boris Pistorius announced a fresh military support package for Ukraine worth 1.3 billion euros. "This package includes four further IRIS-T SLM systems, 155mm shells, and anti-tank mines," Pistorius said during a joint press conference with Ukrainian Defence Minister Rustem Umerov. In 2024-2025, Germany will provide a total of 160,000 rounds of ammunition to Ukraine, Pistorius said, also pledging



to support Kiev with air defence means. However, he gave no information about whether Ukraine could receive Taurus long-range cruise missiles from Germany. On his part, Umerov said he

was "grateful for all the military assistance that Germany provides for training our soldiers, as well as for all the diplomatic and political support". Since Russia launched its ongoing war against Ukraine in February 2022 and until July 2023, Germany has provided more than 17 billion euros worth of military aid for Kiev, becoming the second-largest defence support contributor after the US, according to media reports. Pistorius arrived in Kiev on Tuesday for his second visit in his capacity as the Defence Minister.





In Maha CM's backyard, minor boy stripped nude, beaten in public for 'Rs 300-loan'

Team Absolute |Thane

In a chilling incident, a 17-year old boy was stripped naked, forced to go on a road and assaulted with belts by two persons for not repaying a Rs 300 loan and accusing him of allegedly 'flicking' a Bluetooth headphone, police said here on Wednesday.

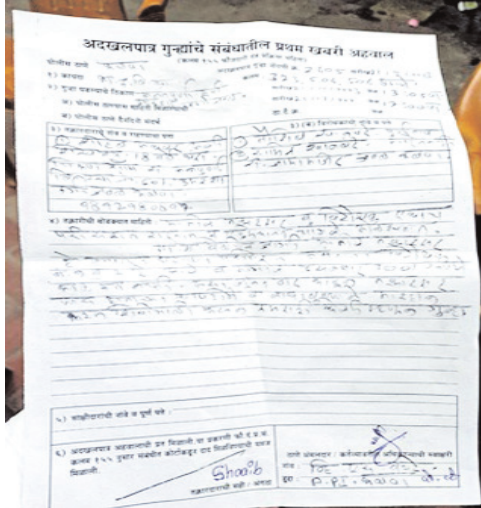
The incident happened on Tuesday afternoon in full public view near the Jama Masjid in Kalwa suburb of Thane, which happens to be the home-town of Chief Minister Eknath Shinde.

Two persons identified as Tausif Khanbande and Samil Khanbande, barged into the home of the minor boy at Annapurna Building nearby.

The duo confronted the minor boy charging him with the alleged 'theft' of the Bluetooth device and also demanded that he should return a purported loan of Rs 300 taken from them.

The boy denied the charges and also refused to give the purported loan from them but they were adamant and forced him to 'accompany' them towards the nearby mosque.

There, the Khanbande duo slapped the boy, kicked him on the legs, Tausif pulled out the belt from the boy's trousers and started whipping the boy on the back as he screamed for help, while



Station to lodge a complaint, but the police only filed an ordinary NC (Non-Cognisable) offence in the matter. Late on Tuesday night, the video of the incident went viral on social media and caught the attention of a social activist Dr. Binu Varghese. Taking strong umbrage, he forwarded the video to the top brass of Thane Police and finally Deputy Commissioner of Police (Zone-I) Ganesh N. Gawade directed that a FIR should be lodged in the matter immediately. Early today, the Kalwa Police swung into action and filed a FIR based on the teenaged boy's complaint, invoking stringent sections of the POCSO and Indian Penal Code, said Varghese, and further investigations are on. On the delay of more than 20 hours in lodging the FIR, it was stated that the minor victim, belonging to a minority community, was first taken for a medical check-up and treatment before being brought to the police station which resulted in the late filing of the plea. A police official said that the prime accused Tausif was arrested this afternoon, while police teams are on the lookout for the absconder Samil, who has reportedly gone into hiding since last night. Later, the boy approached the Kalwa Police

Station to lodge a complaint, but the police only filed an ordinary NC (Non-Cognisable) offence in the matter.

Late on Tuesday night, the video of the incident went viral on social media and caught the attention of a social activist Dr. Binu Varghese.

Taking strong umbrage, he forwarded the video to the top brass of Thane Police and finally Deputy Commissioner of Police (Zone-I) Ganesh N. Gawade directed that a FIR should be lodged in the matter immediately.

Early today, the Kalwa Police swung into action and filed a FIR based on the teenaged boy's complaint, invoking stringent sections of the POCSO and Indian Penal Code, said Varghese, and further investigations are on.

On the delay of more than 20 hours in lodging the FIR, it was stated that the minor victim, belonging to a minority community, was first taken for a medical check-up and treatment before being brought to the police station which resulted in the late filing of the plea.

A police official said that the prime accused Tausif was arrested this afternoon, while police teams are on the lookout for the absconder Samil, who has reportedly gone into hiding since last night.

Bombay HC says pension is fundamental right, slams state for withholding payment of retired employee

Team Absolute |Mumbai

In addition to criticising the Maharashtra government for delaying a man's pension for more than two years after his retirement, the Bombay High Court highlighted the essential nature of pensions and declared them to be a basic entitlement for retired employees, calling such actions "unconscionable".

At a hearing on November 21, a division bench made up of Justices GS Kulkarni and Jitendra Jain denounced the state's position, calling the circumstances intolerable. In the case, Jayram More, a former "hamal" (coolie) at the Savitribai Phule Pune University from 1983, was requesting the release of his pension from the Maharashtra government, the report added.

The High Court praised More's excellent and flawless service and expressed dismay that, even though he gave the relevant government department all the required documentation, technical issues have prevented the pension from being released for two years since his retirement in May 2021.

"From the beginning of the present proceedings, we were wondering as to whether any person who superannuates after a long unblemished service should at all suffer such a plight, after having rendered a long service of about 30 years and be deprived of basic



entitlement of pension, being the very source of livelihood," the bench said.

The bench highlighted the outdated idea that pensions are optional by citing a Supreme Court decision from four decades ago. The ruling stated that pensions are, in fact, rights and not gratuitous payments that are dependent on an employer's goodwill.

"In such a decision, the Supreme Court had authoritatively ruled that pension is a right and payment of it does not depend on the discretion of the government and would be governed by the rules," the high court said. The High Court bemoaned the disregard for the Supreme Court's ruling, pointing to the increase in pension-related cases that have come before the court as evidence of carelessness in the application of pension rights.

The government was told to release More's pension and arrears within four

weeks after the court received previous orders directing it to do so.

The bench acknowledged that the case had been resolved, but stressed that More needed regular monthly pension payments, and they urged the government to make sure there would be no more delays.

The High Court emphasised that administrative disputes such as these ought to be settled internally within departments, necessitating quick action from public servants to avoid needless legal involvement. The case highlights the necessity of a prompt departmental resolution in order to prevent unnecessary grievances from reaching the courts.

"We may observe that many of such issues, in fact, do not require adjudication and can stand resolved at the level of the department, providing there is a willingness to do so, by the officers of the state government," the bench said.

After furore, Bageshwar Baba apologises for slur on Sant Tukaram

Team Absolute |Pune

Religious preacher Acharya Dharendra Shastri, popular as Bageshwar Baba, on Wednesday tendered an unconditional apology for his purported remarks on Sant Tukaram which had angered large sections of the Warkari community in Maharashtra.

Bageshwar Baba's apology came a day after his volunteers and followers of Sant Tukaram clashed at his ongoing three-day religious discourse in Sangamwadi, scheduled to end on Wednesday.

"I have the deepest respect for Sant Tukaram. I regret my past comments on him if they have unintentionally caused hurt to anyone," said Bageshwar Baba, after a video with his state-



ments went viral recently. He added that he would pay obeisance at the historic samadhi of Sant Tukaram in Dehu Road, who lived and preached there around 400 years ago.

The preacher's comments were greeted with black flags, slogan shouting and protests by the Bhim Army and other organisations at his 'Divya Darbar' and 'Hanuman Katha', while the rationalist organisation, Maharashtra Andhashraddha Nirmooolan Samiti (MANS), challenged his superstitious claims.

The MANS also shot off a letter to Pune Police Commissioner demanding action against Bageshwar Baba if he indulged in propagating statements without scientific basis that are intended to misguide the people.

AFTER ROW, MUMBAI'S DELISLE ROAD BRIDGE TO FINALLY OPEN ON TODAY

Team Absolute |Mumbai

Marred by delays and controversies, the crucial road link - Delisle Road bridge -- will be fully inaugurated for traffic on Today, a civic official said here on Wednesday. State ministers Deepak Kesarkar and Mangal Prabhat Lodha, Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation Commissioner I.S. Chahal, Shiv Sena (UBT) MP Arvind Sawant and MLAs Aditya Thackeray and Sunil Shinde, BJP MLAs Ashish Shelar and Rajhans Singh, plus other top BMC officials shall be present on the occasion. The bridge, which was closed in 2017, will provide much-needed connections towards Lower Parel and Ganpatrao Kadam Marg in both directions, speeding up traffic towards south Mumbai and easing congestion on the route.



Multiple lanes in both directions, plus an additional lane on the new bridge is expected to significantly smoothen the flow of traffic, and the additional space below will also help quicken pedestrian movement.

The BMC also plans to construct four new staircases and add two esca-

lators for the bridge soon, said an official. Last week, the bridge ran into a political fracas after Shiv Sena (UBT) MLA Aditya Thackeray, MLAs Sachin Ahir and Shinde, plus two former

Mayors, Kishori Pednekar and Snehal Ambekar, were booked by the Mumbai Police for allegedly performing an 'illegal inauguration' of the bridge. On Tuesday, Thackeray pleaded with the civic authorities to throw

Team Absolute |Mumbai

Mumbai police's Wadala Unit, have arrested three people including a girl child on November 20. The plot to sell the child for Rs 2 lakhs failed when the money was not received. The three arrested have been identified as Sanika Waghmare, Pawan Pokharkar and Sarthak Bongale. Mumbai police said, "Wadala police arrested three people, including a woman, in the kidnapping case of a 3-year-old child. The accused had a plan to sell the child for Rs 2 lakh. The accused woman claimed that she was paid Rs 2 lakh for handing over any minor child below 10 years of age to the other accused." Shivadi resident Suman Chaurasia said that her child playing outside the house suddenly disappeared. After searching, when he was not found, Suman lodged a complaint. The police have registered a case. Some people informed her that her son was seen with a woman named Sanika. Suman immediately called Sanika but she said that she was in college and she had no information on this. When the police searched the CCTV installed in the area, it was seen that Sanika was with the child. Police took Sanika into custody and interrogated her strictly. She confessed to her crime and narrated the entire incident. "Sanika kidnapped Chaurasia's son, she reached Ghatkopar with the boy and met Pawan and Sarthak there, all of them reached



Kalyan in the same taxi to sell the child. Sanika demanded Rs 2 lakh from him in exchange for the child, but Pawan refused to give her the money immediately, Wadala police said. When money was not received, Sanika returned with the boy to Mumbai and handed over the child to an acquaintance, and claimed that the boy was found as destitute. "The acquaintance reached Wadala police station with the child. The police interrogated the boy, he told the name of Sanika, the police first detained Sanika, and she confessed to kidnapping the three-year-old child at the behest of Pawan. The police after investigation arrested both Pawan and Sarthak, living in Ghatkopar area," Wadala police added. Sanika, a student stated that her father lived in the village and her mother had taken a loan of Rs 3.50 lakh, so she committed this to free her mother from the debt.

The police further said, "The girl met the other accused a month ago. The accused girl claimed that she was to get Rs 2 lakh for handing over any minor child below 10 years of age to the other accused."

Mumbai police register fraud case against couple on complaint of businessman

Team Absolute |Mumbai

Mumbai police registered a complaint filed by actress Karishma Tanna's husband Varun Bangera and actor Sameer Kochhar on a housing fraud case, said Andheri Police. Actress Karishma Tanna's husband Varun Bangera and actor Sameer Kochhar have filed a complaint of fraud at the Andheri police station against two people who are owners of a real estate development firm, alleging that they committed fraud in the

name of selling flats in Bandra. Police said that Proneet Prem Nath and his wife Ameesha are accused of defrauding the complainant's family of Rs 1.03 crore in the name of selling a flat at their construction site in Bandra in 2022. According to the complaint, Kochhar and Karishma Tanna's husband Varun Bangera had decided to buy two flats after their marriages in 2020 from Proneet Nath and his wife Ameesha in the Pali area of Bandra West. Kochhar bought the flat for Rs 1

crore 95 lakh and Bangera for Rs 90 lakh. For this Kochhar paid Rs 58 lakh 50 thousand and Bangera paid Rs 44 lakh 66 thousand, after this in June 2023, the accused said that they did not want to sell the flat, but it was revealed that the concerned flat was already sold. Andheri Police of Mumbai has registered a case against the accused husband and wife under sections 409 and 420 of IPC and started an investigation. Further investigation is underway. More information is awaited.

Mahindra Blues Festival to return in Feb at Mumbai's Mehboob Studio

Team Absolute |Mumbai

Blues music festival Mahindra Blues Festival is set to be held in Mumbai on February 10 and February 11. The festival which started in 2011 brought along significant developments in the Blues culture of the country. Regular attendees have been treated to performances by greats such as Buddy Guy, John Mayall, Taj Mahal, Charlie Musselwhite, Jimmie Vaughan, Billy Gibbons, Tedeschi Trucks Band, Johnny Lang, Beth Hart, Ana Popovic, Matt Schofield, Shemekia Copeland, along with a diverse roster of artists including Charlie "Kingfish" Ingram, Arinojoy Sarkar, Ivan Singh, and many more. Adding to its global appeal, the festival is also held biannually in Chicago at Buddy Guy's Legends Club.

This time around, the festival will amp up the experience for the attendees with specially styled food and beverages, a comfortable den with a viewing screen for a more relaxed experience, and exclusive merchandise and record stalls.

Jay Shah, Vice President - Cultural Outreach, Mahindra Group, said in a statement: "Mahindra is a name synonymous with nurturing arts, culture, and community, and continues to fuel India's blues passion. The Mahindra Blues Festival is more than a conver-



gence of musical talent; it's a cultural odyssey that pays homage to the rich tapestry of blues music worldwide. As we step into our twelfth year, we're honoured to continue fostering this deep-rooted connection among blues enthusiasts worldwide." Celebrating its 12th year, the Mahindra Blues Festival (MBF), a cornerstone of Asia's blues scene and the very home of India's blues movement, promises an electrifying blend of legendary and fresh blues talent from across the globe. The

line-up for the festival, which will be announced soon, will feature a mix of international stars and hometown artists. Echoing the reverence for the genre's icons, the festival's stages, including the 'Polka Dot Parlour' and the 'Soul Strut Saloon', will pay homage to legends and honour the contributions of Indian blues-rock stalwarts. The festival will be held on February 10 and 11 at Mehboob Studio in Bandra area of Mumbai. Attendees can visit BookMyShow.

Drunk kills brother, injures father during cricket final

Team Absolute |Amravati

A 32-year-old man has been arrested for allegedly killing his younger brother and injuring their father under the influence of alcohol in Amravati district of Maharashtra while watching the World Cup cricket final match, police said on Wednesday.

The incident occurred in

Anjangaon Bari village on Sunday when Pravin Ingole was watching the cricket final between India and Australia on television and consuming liquor. A police officer said Pravin attacked his father Ramesh Ingole, 65, with an iron rod after the latter snatched his mobile phone. He also hit his younger brother, Ankit, aged 28, with the rod,

resulting in the latter's death. The officer stressed that India's defeat in the final game was not the trigger for the incident. "It happened in a fit of rage and under the influence of alcohol though Pankaj had blamed his father and brother for consuming meat before the match," he said. Police have registered a case of murder and further investigation is underway.





Sylvester Stallone shares how he was ashamed in front of his daughters when he had no work

Washington | Agencies

American actor and filmmaker Sylvester Stallone is reflecting on a painful period in his life. During an appearance on Unwaxed, the podcast his daughters Sophia, 27, and Sistine, 25, host, the actor revealed there was a time when he felt ashamed to be their dad because he couldn't find work, reported People.

"I was embarrassed to be your father," he recalled of a time in the early 2000s when he struggled to secure acting work. "I felt so worthless. You didn't even really know what I did for a living," he added. "He just wanders around looking depressed." Stallone, now 77, achieved enormous commercial success in the 1970s and 1980s with the Rocky movies, the Rambo franchise, and other big-screen smashes. However, there was a period in his career when roles were



few. Sophia and Sistine recalled on Unwaxed that their father would watch movies "all day" during that time. "When the good times go away, that's when you find out your family is so important," he told his daughters. "The ship sailed on me, it was pretty bad. And I realized that people you thought were your friends are not your friends," according to People. He added, "I thought I was definitely done. The phone wasn't ringing." The Tulsa King star has since bounced back with starring roles in the Expendables films, Creed spinoffs and Guardians of the Galaxy. A documentary about his career, titled Sly, recently debuted on Netflix.



"Never stop believing": Ariana DeBose's advice for those chasing a dream

Los Angeles | Agencies

American actor Ariana DeBose attended the UK premiere of her Disney movie 'Wish' and gave some advice to anyone who's chasing a dream, reported People. "Never stop believing," DeBose, 32, told People at the Odeon Luxe in London's Leicester Square. "You know, your dreams don't work unless you do." "It's hard in the world that we live in, but your dreams have the possibility; they always do; never give up on them," the Oscar winner said. DeBose, who was dressed in a sheer purple gown with silver platforms and hanging earrings, opened up about her personal journey, saying that it's "never the path that's obvious."

"Sometimes, in order to be re-inspired, you have to choose a different path and you never know where it's going to take you," she says. "But it's always led me to really interesting places." DeBose, who voices the character of Asha in the Disney movie, was all smiles on Monday's blue carpet as her hair was styled into two braids on either side of her head. In a reposted video on her Instagram Story, DeBose explained that her gown was inspired by her Wish character, Asha, who also wears a purple dress. "I thought, while she's not a princess, she did deserve a ballgown this evening," DeBose told Oh My Disney UK. DeBose also posed with Julia Michaels, who co-wrote the songs for 'Wish', and British singer and presenter Rochelle Humes, who portrays the character Rochelle, at Monday's event.



HAILEY BIEBER SHOWS HER 'GO TO VIBE' MAKEUP IN NEW VIDEO

Los Angeles | Agencies

Model Hailey Bieber has declared it's time for "sugar plum fairy" winter. The model unveiled her "go to vibe" when she does her makeup during the winter season. Hailey shared a video of her getting ready via TikTok on Tuesday, reports 'People' magazine. "When I was 16, I was the Sugar Plum Fairy in the Nutcracker. This is my 2023 version of that makeup. My go to vibe for the holiday season", Hailey wrote in the clip's caption. The Nutcracker track 'Dance of the Sugar Plum Fairy' played over the video as the clip played of Hailey applying her "Sugar Plum Fairy"-inspired makeup look. Throughout the video, Hailey is seen applying concealer under her eyes, a light pink blush on the apples of her cheeks, a subtle shimmering highlighter, and a light bronzer across her cheeks and her brow bone. As per People, she then layered a light pink shimmering eye shadow that she topped with a gloss to add more shimmer. The model showed off how she created a laminated effect on her eyebrows. Hailey then applied a bit more shimmer and added highlights to the tops of her cheekbones and the tip of her nose. Next, she added some finishing touches, including drawn-on freckles across her nose, and applied a deep mauve lip liner.

to reach out to her. Sudeikis has not confirmed his supposed role in their romance, but he was thankful that she made a stop in his hometown. "I was thankful to Taylor, just hanging out, coming to do two nights of shows here," he told The Hollywood Reporter. "All my friends, people with kids, people without kids, just had a blast. And she was like, 'Oh, it was an amazing run.'" Jokingly calling Taylor Kansas City's "adopted daughter," the 48-year-old comedian added that he is in full support of her relationship with Travis. "I don't blame her for wanting to hang out here more, I don't blame her for wanting to hang out with Travis," he said, before quipping, "He's a good egg." Jason's comments prompted many Swifties to think that he was the one who set Taylor up with Travis. "y'all say thank you jason sudeikis for playing cupid for taylor and travis," one person wrote on X, formerly Twitter.

Jason Sudeikis suspected to play 'cupid' for Taylor Swift, Travis Kelce

Los Angeles | Agencies

Actor Jason Sudeikis may have helped in setting up the romance between singer Taylor Swift and player Travis Kelce. After the NFL star detailed how his romantic relationship with the pop superstar began, fans have speculated that the actor was the one who played "cupid" for the couple. The 'Ted Lasso' star was revealed to have attended one of Swift's concerts in Kansas City at the same time as Kelce, who tried to give his phone number to the Grammy winner at the time, reports aceshowbiz.com. The former 'Saturday Night Live' cast member was then photographed hanging out with the 33-year-old singer/songwriter just one week later, giving him the perfect opportunity to mention Travis' failed attempt



Melissa Barrera dropped from next 'Scream' sequel after social media posts on Israel-Hamas war

Washington | Agencies

Mexican actor Melissa Barrera won't be back for the next 'Scream' sequel, reported People. According to Variety and The Hollywood Reporter, the actress, 33, will no longer appear in the horror franchise's upcoming seventh film after being removed from the cast owing to her social media remarks about the Israel-Hamas war. Variety reported that insiders viewed Barrera's comments as antisemitic. "Spyglass' stance is unequivocally clear: We have zero tolerance for antisemitism or the incitement of hate in any form, including false references to genocide, ethnic cleansing, Holocaust distortion or anything that flagrantly crosses the line into hate speech," Spyglass, the studio behind Scream VII, said in a statement to People. Barrera's representatives did not respond to People's inquiries for comment.

As per People, in one written message from her Instagram Story quoted in the report and circulating social media after the news, Barrera allegedly wrote, "I have been actively looking for videos and information about the Palestinian side for the last 2 weeks or so, following accounts etc. Why? Because Western media only shows the other side. Why they do that, I will let you deduce for yourself." Barrera played Sam Carpenter in both Scream 2022 and Scream VI this year. Her character was introduced as the daughter of Scream villain Billy Loomis (Skeet Ulrich). As the new franchise lead, the character was supposed to follow in the footsteps of Neve Campbell's Sidney Prescott. Barrera's Sam is older sister to Tera, played by Jenna Ortega.



ABSOLUTE PIC OF THE DAY



Ashley Roberts



IPL

DELHI CAPITALS TO RELEASE SARFARAZ KHAN AND MANISH PANDEY; REPORT

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Delhi Capitals is all set to release Sarfaraz Khan and Manish Pandey ahead of the IPL 2024 auction, according to reports.

Prithvi Shaw's future with the franchise is also in doubt and along with Sarfaraz Khan and Manish Pandey, he might also be released ahead of the auction.

Sarfaraz scored 53 runs in four matches while Manish Pandey ended his season with 160 runs in 10 games. Reports suggest that CSK



GAMBHIR RETURNS TO KOLKATA KNIGHT RIDERS AS TEAM MENTOR

Kolkata: Gautam Gambhir, who led Kolkata Knight Riders to two IPL titles in 2012 and 2014, will return to the franchise as the team's mentor and join hands with head coach Chandrakant Pandit, starting with the upcoming season in 2024, the Indian Premier League franchise announced on Wednesday.

Gambhir joined Knight Riders in 2011 and was with the team till 2017. During the period, KKR qualified for the IPL playoffs five times (including the two years they won the tournament) and also reached the final of the now-defunct Champions League T20 in 2014. Speaking on his return, Gambhir said: "I am not an emotional person and not many things move me. But this is different. This is back to where it all started. Today, there is a lump in my throat and fire in my heart as I think about slipping into that purple and gold jersey once again. I am not only coming back to KKR but I am coming back to the city of joy. I am back. I am hungry. I am number 23. Ami KKR."

might trade in Manish Pandey who has scored 3808 runs in his illustrious IPL career.

Delhi Capitals finished ninth on the points table in the 2023 IPL and were without their regular skipper Rishabh Pant in the 2023 season. Though stand-in skipper, David Warner performed quite well, the batting unit as a whole failed miserably. Rishabh Pant might make his comeback to the cricketing action through IPL 2024 after surviving a car accident.

The IPL auction for the 2024 season is scheduled to take place on December 19 and it would be interesting to see how all teams shape up ahead of another IPL season.

10 CRICKETERS FROM J&K SHORTLISTED FOR IPL AUCTION

Srinagar: A total of 10 cricketers from Jammu and Kashmir have been shortlisted for the IPL auction, which will be held in Dubai on December 19.

The main franchisees have shown interest in these 10 players, who have a fair chance to play in next year's IPL. A total of 590 players have been shortlisted for the IPL auction this time. Those from J&K include Mujtaba Yousuf, Rasikh Salam, Parvez Rasool, Qamran Iqbal, Fazil Rashid, Henan Malik, Abid Mushtaq, Nasir Lone, Auqib Nabi, and Vivrant Sharma. Mujtaba had been a net bowler with Kolkata Knight Riders and Royal Challengers Bangalore, and there is a fair chance that he may this time get a permanent place one of the teams. Rasikh Salam, before getting banned for age fudging, trained regularly at the Mumbai Indians academy. Parvez Rasool, after getting unsold in the previous three auctions, has once again put his name for auction on the base price of Rs 50 lakh. Abid Mushtaq, Auqib Nabi and Nasir Lone have all been called for trials by various franchisees. Two J&K cricketers -- Abdul Salad and Umran Malik -- have been retained by Sunrisers Hyderabad for Rs 4 crore each in the squad.

England stunned by Uzbekistan in U17 FIFA World Cup round of 16



Jakarta | Agencies

Uzbekistan stunned England 2-1 here at the Jakarta International Stadium (JIS) on Wednesday to enter the Under-17 FIFA World Cup quarterfinals, thanks to goals from Amirbek Saidov and

Lazizbek Mirzaev.

It was a disappointing exit for England as the Young Lions dominated possession with a total of 20 shots at goal against the central Asian country's 12 shots, reports Xinhua.

In Saturday's quarterfinal, Uzbekistan will play France,

which secured a hard-fought victory against Senegal, winning 5-3 in the penalty shootout.

The game, held at JIS stadium also on Wednesday, ended 0-0 after 90 minutes with France making eight shots, as compared to Senegal's nine.

ICC RANKINGS: KOHLI RISES TO THIRD, GILL REMAINS ON TOP IN ODIS

Dubai | Agencies

Following an impressive display at the ODI World Cup, India batter Virat Kohli gained ground in the latest update to the ODI Player Rankings, moving up one spot to third. Meanwhile, his teammate Shubman Gill maintained his position at the top.

Kohli scored a tournament-best 765 runs during the recent ICC Men's Cricket World Cup and that helped the right-hander jump to third and within just 35 rating points of Gill, who remained on top of the batting chart.

Gill maintains a grip on the top spot with 826 rating points, narrowly ahead of Pakistan's skipper, Babar Azam, who holds onto second place with 824 points. However, Kohli (791 points) and India's skipper, Rohit Sharma (now in fourth place with 769 points, climbing one spot), are closing in after impressive displays in the World Cup.

Kohli reached triple figures on three occasions at the World Cup to break the record of former teammate Sachin Tendulkar for most ODI centuries, while Rohit smashed 597 runs as the India duo finished the tournament as the two leading run scorers.

Kohli famously held the No.1 ranking for a total of 1258 consecutive days during a reign of almost four years between 2017 and 2021, with Babar spending the majority of time in the premier position in recent years



until Gill claimed top billing during the World Cup.

The rise of the India duo means South Africa opener Quinton de Kock drops two spots to fifth on the ODI batter rankings, with New Zealand right-hander Daryl Mitchell rising five spots to sixth on the back of his 552 runs at the World Cup.

The most notable mover is Australian opener Travis Head, who surged an impressive 28 places to reach 15th overall following his outstanding century and Player of the Match display in the World Cup final. In the bowling chart, South Africa spinner Keshav Maharaj remains on top, with India pair Mohammed Siraj (third) and Jasprit Bumrah (fourth) remain firmly nestled within the top 10 for ODI bowlers, while teammate Kuldeep Yadav drops one spot to equal sixth. A host of Australia players making some good ground after their successful World Cup campaign.

Experienced seamer Josh Hazlewood rises four places to second overall, fellow quick Mitchell Starc jumps eight spots to 12th, while skipper Pat Cummins improves seven rungs to 27th.

There isn't much change inside the top 10 of the ODI rankings for all-rounders at the completion of the World Cup, with Bangladesh veteran Shakib Al Hasan maintaining a healthy lead at the head of proceedings. New Zealand's Mitchell Santner drops two spots to seventh and Bangladesh's Mehidy Hasan Miraz rises two places to ninth.

Argentina secure historic win against Brazil in FIFA World Cup South American Qualifiers

Rio de Janeiro (Brazil) | Agencies

Brazil's distinction of having never lost a home FIFA World Cup qualifier was abolished by their fiercest rivals Argentina as Lionel Scaloni's side defeated Brazil 1-0 in the FIFA 2026 World Cup South American Qualifiers at the legendary Maracana stadium.

Nicolas Otamendi's thumping header proved the difference in an ill-tempered clash in which Joelinton was sent off. It kept Argentina in pole position and dropped the Brazil, with just one point from their last four outings, to sixth.

Brazil began the match with the intention of being the owner of the ball, but the home team permanently interrupted the game with infractions and high pressure. Dangerous situations did not appear and the approaches faded quickly during the first half hour.

A Raphinha free kick sent Emiliano



Martinez flying for the first time in the 38th minute, although the shot went over the crossbar. With De Paul and Lo Celso as drivers,

Argentina tried to break Brazil's defensive block, but without achieving enough depth to worry Alisson.

At the end of the first half, Martinelli was able to break the deadlock with a shot from the edge of the area, but Cristian Romero saved the Argentine goal on the line. Therefore, both teams went into halftime without a goal.

In the second half, the match started favourably for the Brazilian team. During the first few minutes they advanced lines and had a clear action on Martinelli's feet that Dibu Martinez managed to contain.

But the big blow was going to come in the 63rd minute of play with a corner from the left: Lo Celso executed the cross and Otamendi won perfectly from above and, with an accurate header, made things 1-0.

With the result in their favor, Argentina managed to neutralize the rival's game and did not experience any major upsets.

'Amazed and honoured': Hardik Singh reacts to his FIH Player of the Year Award 2023 nomination

Bengaluru | Agencies

From getting ruled out of the FIH Odisha Hockey Men's World Cup 2023 Bhubaneswar-Rourkela midway due to an injury, to winning the Asian Games Gold, 2023 has turned out to be a roller coaster year for the Indian Men's Hockey Team midfielder Hardik Singh.

He has been nominated for the FIH Player of the Year Award 2023, making this year even more special for him.

"I'm both amazed and honoured to have been nominated for the FIH Player of the Year Award 2023. Receiving such recognition on an international stage is one of your dreams as a sportsperson. It certainly motivates you to do even better," said an elated Hardik.



He did, however, admit that this was not his best year and that he could have done better. "I'm ecstatic, but I wouldn't say it was my best year. I could have done much better, especially during the World Cup, where an injury at such a

crucial stage was heartbreaking. But, overall, I'm happy with how the year has gone for me, with the FIH Pro League campaign, the Asian Champions Trophy title and the Gold medal at the Asian Games," he said.

Cummins feels Australia 'created their own legacy' after World Cup triumph

Sydney | Agencies

Australia captain Pat Cummins believes his team have created a career-defining legacy with their 2023 ODI World Cup win, after a long six months on the road in India and England.

Cummins and other Australian players began landing back home on Wednesday morning, after days of celebrations in India.

"I think they have created their own legacy. A World Cup, you only get one chance every four years and especially playing somewhere like India, it's hard," Cummins said of his side



as he touched down at Sydney Airport. Cummins, hailed for his leadership in the semi-final and final, confessed that after Australia's initial defeats to India and South Africa, he believed their tournament was nearly finished. "To be honest (I did think we were long odds). It

almost became sudden death really. We thought we pretty much had to be flawless from there on in just to make the semis. And we pretty much were. We started to find ways to win, even when we weren't having our best days," Cummins said.

Indian football on the brink of history, agree AIFF president and Arsene Wenger

Mumbai | Agencies

The All India Football Federation President Kalyan Chaubey, and FIFA's Chief of Global Football Development, Arsene Wenger on Wednesday addressed the media in the city the day after India's FIFA World Cup Qualifier Round 2 against Qatar, to discuss the paths to develop Indian Football, and to enhance its youth development system.

[9:13 PM, 11/22/2023] : AIFF Vice President NA Harris, Treasurer Kipa Ajay and Acting Secretary General Satyanarayan M were present on the occasion.

While Wenger said that most people want to win the next match, though that is something that needs huge preparation, Chaubey conveyed that he was not here to sell a dream but to ensure Indian football moved in the right direction in the next few years and reached its



desired goal. AIFF President who was present at the Kalanga Stadium in Bhubaneswar on Tuesday, said that football in India is on the brink of history. They were also present for the opening of the first-ever AIFF-FIFA Talent Academy, in the Odisha capital.

"We are operating at a time that will eventually go down in history. Perhaps we do not realise it right now, but one day, these steps will be talked about," said

Kalyan.

"We feel honoured that FIFA considers our federation as one that has a huge potential for further development, and I welcome all to be a part of it. Let us all share knowledge, exchange ideas, and listen to what Mr. Wenger says," implored Kalyan. "FIFA has not given us a magic button to develop football or qualify for the World Cup. Rather, they are here to guide and support us."

Wenger believes that India has a massive potential in football, though he says that the country needs to play to its strengths in order to climb the ladder.

"I am very happy to be in India, and I have seen huge potential here. We can all do better together. The one thing I am certain of is that, be it in football or any other field, we can only progress through educating young people," said Wenger.



MRUNAL THAKUR SAYS THE DIFFICULT TIME IS BUT THE MOST WONDERFUL PHASE

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actress Mrunal Thakur has been multi-tasking between the sets of her upcoming projects, completing the final touches to 'Hi Nanna' and also completing the shoot for 'Family Star' with

Vijay Devarakonda.

Currently, she is engrossed in the shooting of a film alongside Vijay Devarakonda in Hyderabad and Delhi. Simultaneously, Mrunal has recently begun promotions for the highly anticipated 'Hi Nanna' starring superstar Nani.

Mrunal has not taken a single day off in the past ten months, showcasing an unparalleled dedication to her craft. Whatever time she gets off from her shoots in Hyderabad, she flies to Mumbai to complete her commitments to her projects in Hindi cinema, her commitments for her brand work and also promotions of her other films. The actress has been shuttling between Hyderabad and Mumbai, seamlessly transitioning from film promotions in the bustling city of Mumbai to the film sets in the vibrant film hub of Hyderabad.

"It's been an incredible journey. Juggling between projects and promotions has been challenging, but the love and response from the audience make it all worthwhile," said Mrunal.

She added: "Sita Ramam catapulted work in south and work here in Hindi film has been happening non stop. This combined with existing commitments of brands, meetings."

"I literally fly to Mumbai sometimes only for 4-5 hours and take off again. I haven't taken a single day off. But I'm not complaining. There are exciting things coming up and I want put in this effort."

Salman Khan: 'Important to create characters that stay with audience forever'

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Bollywood superstar Salman Khan, who is receiving a lot of positive response to his recently released film 'Tiger 3', said that while milestones may be special but the feeling of creating characters that stay in the hearts of audiences forever is truly unparalleled.

The film, which takes the spy-universe arc further, also stars Katrina Kaif, and Emraan Hashmi as the antagonistic force to Salman's titular character of 'Tiger 3'.

The film has so far collected Rs 400 crore at the global box-office, as per the makers.

Reacting to the appreciation by the audience for the film, Salman said in a statement: "It is quite amazing that two of my most loved characters Prem and Tiger have entertained people so much on Diwali. As an actor, I have only looked to create memories for people through my brand of cinema and I'm fortunate that they have loved me back."

The actor added: "Milestones are always special but what's even more amazing is creating characters that stay in the hearts of audiences forever. I'm hoping people will always cherish Prem and Tiger equally because for me both these characters have given me unanimous appreciation. So, I can't choose one over the other. I'm glad Prem and Tiger have made Diwali special for families and audiences across all age groups."

'Tiger 3' is produced by Aditya Chopra of YRF and directed by Maneesh Sharma.

The film is currently playing in cinemas.



Shahid Kapoor's fashion sense is 'so underrated': Kriti Sanon

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Kriti Sanon, who will soon be seen alongside Shahid Kapoor in a yet to be titled film, insists that the latter's fashion sense is underrated.

Shahid is one of the best-dressed men today, said Kriti, who won the National Award this year for her performance in 'Mimi'.

The actress has a list of films in her kitty and in a candid conversation she spoke about working with Kajol, how she has changed over the years, and who according to her is the most well-dressed man in the Industry. Talking about whose fashion sense she likes the most, she said, "Hrithik is someone whom I have loved always. I also love Tiger's fashion sense. But I feel Shahid Kapoor's fashion sense is so underrated."

"I think he is so well-dressed. He is one of the best dressed men today. He puts everything so effortlessly, and I have told this to him as well. I love that he wears colours. I am very excited for our film to release. We share great chemistry in the film. I am really fond of him." Sharing her experience of working with Kajol once again in 'Do Patti', she said, "When I worked with Kajol mam in 'Dilwale', I was very naive. We hardly shot together. This time we broke the ice and we have a lot more powerful scenes together. I had a great time working with her." The actress will also be seen in 'The Crew'.

Sidharth Malhotra first person to sleep at his own birthday party, reveals Alia Bhatt

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Bollywood star Alia Bhatt, who was recently seen in 'Rocky Aur Rani Kii Prem Kahaani', shared that her 'Student of the Year' co-star Sidharth Malhotra is the first person to fall asleep at his own birthday party.

The upcoming episode of the streaming chat show 'Koffee With Karan' will see actors Varun Dhawan and Sidharth Malhotra gracing the controversial couch. During the course of the episode, Alia makes a visual appearance and says that Sid is so hilarious that he goes off to sleep at his own birthday party.

Alia Bhatt has all things fun and nice to say about Sidharth Malhotra, as she said, "Sid is actually a really good singer. He is a very healthy person, so he doesn't party at all, but he is the best person to get a party started, so this is the inherent punjabi in him. He just knows how to get people going, he's really good. Also, he is really hilarious, he is the first person to fall asleep at his own birthday party."

She added, "Sid takes a while to open up, so there is a distance, says hi hello, very chivalrous, very well-mannered, that's generally how he is. The basic thing is that he



has got very warm and kind eyes. That is also why he has such a massive fan following. I am very thankful to Sid, because he has given me the first love of my life, Edward."

"Koffee with Karan" season 8 streams on Disney+ Hotstar.

Vicky Kaushal: 'I get drawn to films which depict stories of real heroes from our motherland'

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actor Vicky Kaushal will soon be seen donning the uniform for the film 'Sam Bahadur', where he is essaying the role of Sam Manekshaw.

The actor said he gets drawn to films which depict stories of "real heroes from our motherland and history."

Talking about what draws him to stories based on army or real heroes, the 'Uri: The Surgical Strike' star said: "There is always a sense of pride and immense responsibility when you wear the uniform on screen. I do get drawn to films which depict stories of real heroes of our motherland and our history."

The actor said: "It is very important to educate along with entertainment to the youth of today's generation of the heroes who worked for the country and how their contributions are helping us to reap benefits now. Those stories draw me as an audience as well as an artist."

Vicky added: "Any films based on true heroes made with the right integrity will always drive me as an actor."

On the work front, after 'Sam Bahadur', Vicky will be seen in 'Chhava', based on Chhatrapati Sambhaji Maharaj. It also stars Rashmika Mandanna.



INSTAGRAM PIC OF THE DAY



Anushka Sen