

absolute india

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134 countries sign declaration to address global emissions, protect farmer lives

FOR BETTER LIFE

The 'COP28 UAE Declaration on Sustainable Agriculture, Resilient Food Systems, and Climate Action' (the Declaration) was announced at a special session of the World Climate Action Summit (WCAS), led by Joko Widodo, President of Indonesia, Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni, Fiame Naomi Mataafa, Prime Minister of Samoa and Anthony J. Blinken, Secretary of State for the US. The Declaration addresses both global emissions while protecting the lives and livelihoods of farmers who live on the frontlines of climate change.



Dubai | Agencies

The COP28 Presidency on Friday announced that 134 world leaders have signed up to its landmark agriculture, food and climate action declaration. Also announced was the mobilisation of more than \$2.5 billion in funding to support food security while combating climate change and a new partnership between the UAE and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation for food systems innovation in the face of climate change.

"There is no path to achieving the goals of the Paris Climate Agreement and keeping 1.5 degrees Celsius within reach, that does not urgently address the interactions between food systems, agriculture, and climate," Mariam Almhairi, UAE Minister of Climate Change and Environment and COP28 Food Systems Lead, said.

The 134 signatory countries to the Declaration are home to over 5.7 billion people and almost 500 million farmers, produce 70 per cent of the food, and are responsible for 76 per cent all emissions from global food systems or 25 per cent of total emissions globally.

Endorsement of the Declaration will help in strengthening food systems, building resilience to climate

change, reducing global emissions, and contributing to the global fight against hunger, aligned with the UN

INDIA ACHIEVED EMISSION INTENSITY-RELATED TARGET 11 YEARS AGO: PM MODI

Dubai: Firmly stating that climate action must be based on equality, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Friday that India achieved emission intensity-related targets 11 years ago.

Speaking at the inaugural session of a high-level segment of the United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP28) in Dubai, Modi said, "India aims to reduce the emissions intensity of its GDP by 45 per cent by 2030. We have decided to increase the share of non-fossil fuels to 50 per cent." "Today, India has presented an excellent example of the balance between ecology and economy before the world. Despite India being home to 17 per cent of the world's population, its contribution to global carbon emissions is less than 4 per cent. India is one of the few economies which is on the path to meet NDC (Nationally Determined Contribution) targets." "India is committed to the UN Framework for Climate Change process, and that is why, from this stage, I propose to host the COP33 summit in India in 2028," Modi said. Modi, who also participated in group photo session with other world leaders at the COP28 summit, in his address in Hindi expressed gratitude for the continuous support to issues like climate justice, climate finance and green credit raised by him.



Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The Declaration -- the first of its kind for the COP process -- stresses the need for common action on climate change, which adversely affects a large portion of the world's population, particularly those living in vulnerable countries and communities

While food systems are vital for meeting societal needs and enabling adaptation to climate impacts, they are also responsible for as much as a third of global greenhouse gas emissions. Many smallholder farmers in low- and middle-income countries are also facing heightened vulnerability to climate change.

Food security and climate change are interlinked and global agrifood systems are the climate solution, Director-General of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), QU Dongyu, told heads of state and government.

UAE PLEDGES \$200M FOR CLIMATE RESILIENCE AT COP28

Dubai: The UAE on Friday pledged \$200 million to help climate resilience in vulnerable countries.

The announcement, which came during the World Climate Action Summit (WCAS), follows up from a previous pledge of \$200 million to support development in low-income countries earlier this year in Marrakech.

The commitment comes in the form of Special Drawing Rights (SDRs), pledged to IMF's Resilience and Sustainability Trust (RST). The RST is a trust held by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and provides long-term concessional funding for climate resilience and pandemic preparedness. It supports climate resilience in low and middle-income economies and countries vulnerable to the impacts of climate change.

EC REVISES MIZORAM'S VOTE-COUNTING DATE TO DEC 4



New Delhi: Amid demands for rescheduling the date of counting of votes in Mizoram, the Election Commission (EC) on Friday announced that it has revised the date from December 3 to December 4. In a press release, the poll panel said that it received several representations from various quarters requesting for change in date of counting from December 3 (Sunday) to some other week day, on the ground that Sunday has a "special significance for the people of Mizoram".

"The Commission, having considered these representations, has decided to revise the date of counting for the General Election to the Legislative Assembly of Mizoram from December 3 to December 4," the poll panel said.

The EC had earlier fixed December 3 for counting of votes for Assembly elections of Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Mizoram, Rajasthan and Telangana.

Counting of votes in remaining states will be held as scheduled.

INDIA bloc seat sharing to talks to begin after Sunday

Team Absolute | New Delhi

With the Assembly elections over and the results expected on Sunday, the seat sharing talks of the Indian National Developmental Inclusive Alliance (INDIA) will gain pace even as the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) is bargaining hard with Congress for seats in north-eastern states and in Gujarat.

A senior Congress source said that the seat sharing talks will gain momentum once the Assembly election results of five states are declared. The sources said that the party will be in good condition of bargaining as it is expected that it will improve its tally of the MLAs in five states as compared to 2018.

On the talks with the Arvind Kejriwal-led Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), the party source said that they are ready to give it three seats in Delhi and also their present seats in Punjab.

"However, they are demanding seats in Assam, Haryana (Sonapat) and several other northeastern states and in Gujarat," the source said, adding that the party is not ready to accept the condition led by the AAP.

However, the source said that the discussion



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will be held in detail before coming to any conclusion as no decision has been taken yet.

After the third meeting of the INDIA bloc in Mumbai on August 31 and September 1, it announced to form a 14 member coordination committee and 19 member Election Strategy Committee to take on the BJP in crucial 2024 Lok Sabha elections. The coordination committee has Congress's KC Venugopal, NCP's Sharad Pawar, DMK's T.R. Baalu, JMM's Hemant Soren, Shiv Sena-UBT's Sanjay Raut, RJD's Tejashwi Yadav, Trinamool Congress' Abhishek Banerjee, AAP's Raghav Chaddha, Samajwadi Party's Javed Ali Khan, JD-U's Lallan Singh, CPI's D. Raja, National Conference's Omar Abdullah, and PDP's Mehbooba Mufti. The CPI-M is yet to select its nominee.

GST COLLECTION SURGES TO 8-MONTH HIGH IN NOVEMBER

Jaipur | Agencies

New Delhi: The country's gross GST revenue went up by 15 per cent to touch an 8-month high of Rs 1,67,929 crore mark in November, according to data released by the Finance Ministry on Friday.

This is the highest GST collected for any month year-on-year during 2023-24 so far. During the month, the revenues from domestic transactions (including import of services) are 20 per cent higher than the revenues from these sources during the same month last year.

This is the sixth time that the gross GST collection has crossed Rs 1.60 lakh crore mark in 2023-24. The gross GST collection for the FY 2023-24 ending November, 2023 works out to Rs 13,32,440 crore, averaging Rs 1.66 lakh per month. This is 11.9 per cent higher than the gross GST collection for the FY 2022-23 ending November, 2022.

Rajasthan: BJP, Cong rush to rebels, independents as exit polls hint split verdict

Jaipur | Agencies

As different exit polls for the Rajasthan Assembly elections are hinting to a split verdict in the state, Congress and BJP workers are rushing to rebel and independent candidates to play it safe in case they fall short of the majority mark.

Third front parties like the RLP, BSP, Bharatiya Adivasi Party and CPI(M) are claiming to jointly win 12 to 17 seats in the state. Besides them, about 10 independents are also certain about their victory. In case these claims turn out to be true, they will together have nearly 25 seats in their kitty and thus in case of hung assembly, these parties and independent candidates can play the role of king maker in the state.

While the BJP is claiming to win 130 seats, the party sources say that it would touch the base with support from the rebels.

The saffron party is in touch with its rebel candidate from Chittorgarh, Chandrabhan Singh Akya, who contested as a rebel after being denied ticket by the party. "Such people are our family members and we are sure that they will not go anywhere. We are very much in touch with them," said a party leader.



Similar is the case with the Congress, which is also in constant touch with rebels and independents. Head of BJP's state election management committee Narayan Pancharia said: "We are sure to win around 130 seats... we are confident of getting the majority, however, rebels, who have been a part of our family, are also in touch with us."

Meanwhile, sources said that both parties have plans of political camping.

"Political tourism is a new culture and this touring by both party MLAs will start soon and will continue for at least three to four days. Party leaders like Amit Shah, J.P. Nadda, B.L. Santhosh etc are keeping their

eyes on the development in the state and BJP state in charge Prahlad Joshi is appraising them of all the developments that are taking place in the state," party sources said. Congress would be camping its MLAs either in Karnataka or in Rajasthan itself, party sources said, adding that not the "Raaj" (rule) but the "Rivaaj" (tradition) of Rajasthan of transferring power to alternate hands every time "will change this time". While the Congress is planning to take their MLAs either to Bengaluru or somewhere in Rajasthan itself, the BJP will bank on neighbouring Gujarat to camp its MLAs, the idea is to "keep them together and safe".

15 B'luru schools get bomb threat emails, police say 'hoax'

Bengaluru | Agencies

Panic gripped parents here after an email threat was received by more than 15 private schools in the state capital on Friday. Bengaluru Police Commissioner B. Dayanand, however, called the threat a hoax.

He said that there was no need for the parents, students and teaching community to panic.

"The threats have turned out to be a hoax. The culprit will be caught soon. "We did send bomb detection and disposal squads. The police have undertaken search operations," he stated. Following the development tension prevailed in the premises of the schools. The threat was given on the official email ids of the schools and it came to light when the staff opened them in the morning. Deputy Chief Minister D.K.



Shivakumar visited the premises of one of the schools in Bengaluru and got the information about the development from the police department.

The schools located in Basaveshwaranagar, Yelahanka, Sadashivanagar have been given the bomb threats and most of them are reputed and international schools. Many schools sent back their children as parents rushed to the schools after coming to know about the development. Last year, a miscreant had sent a hoax bomb threat to 30 reputed schools in Bengaluru. The police had arrested a youth in this connection from Tamil Nadu.

BMC gets serious about Mumbai air pollution, invites EoI for artificial rains

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The BrihanMumbai Municipal Corporation on Friday invited expression of interest (EoI) from global companies for its planned "cloud seeding" programme intended for artificial rains to battle the severe air pollution in Mumbai.

The civic body has sought EoIs from companies, firms, and organisations having a legal status for initiating the "cloud seeding" programme using suitable technologies and with experience of similar nature in the past three years, till December 14.

The move came 10 days after Chief Minister Eknath Shinde woke up early in the morning and went on a pre-dawn review of the air pollu-



tion status and measures being taken by the BMC to control it.

At that time, he had assured that if required, the

state government will go in for a "cloud seeding" programme and sign an agreement with a Dubai-based company to control air and

dust pollution in Mumbai.

However, in the past few days, following unseasonal rains in parts of Mumbai and other regions of Maharashtra, the city's Air Quality Index (AQI) has considerably improved.

Besides, after a rap from the Bombay High Court, the BMC has initiated a series of measures to control the air pollution created by thousands of private and government construction sites, vehicles and other sources of pollutants.

Civic officials indicate that the process of appointing a "cloud seeding" company is likely to be completed in the next 3-4 months, depending on various parameters as a measure to control the air pollution in Mumbai.

J&K State Co-Operative Bank's ex-Chairman arrested in Rs 250 cr PMLA case

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Day after the Enforcement Directorate (ED) carried out searches at eight locations in Jammu and Kashmir in connection with the alleged fraudulent sanctioning of loan by J&K State Co-operative Bank to the tune of Rs 250 crore in 2019 to a fake cooperative society, the agency on Friday said that it has arrested two people, including the then chairman of the bank.

The ED in a statement said that it arrested Mohammad Shafi Dar, the then Chairman of the bank and Hilal Ahmad Mir, Chairman of River Jehlum Co-operative House Building Society under the provisions of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA).

The ED case is based on the FIR and consequent chargesheets filed by Law



Enforcement Agency (LEA), Srinagar invoking various sections of Ranbir Penal Code (RPC) and Jammu and Kashmir Prevention of Corruption Act (JK PC Act) Samvat 2006 (Corresponding to IPC and PCA) against five accused persons -- Hilal Ahmad Mir; Abdul Hamid Hajam, Secretary of River Jehlum Co-operative House Building Society; Mohammad Mujeeb Ur Rehman Ghassi, the then Registrar of Cooperative Societies, J&K; Syed Ashiq Hussain, the then Dy. Registrar of Co-operative Societies, J&K; and Mohammad Shafi Dar, the then Chairman of the bank.



INCREASE IN BSF'S JURISDICTION DOES NOT TAKE AWAY POWERS OF PUNJAB POLICE, SAYS SC

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Supreme Court on Friday remarked that the Centre's decision to expand the BSF's jurisdiction from existing 15 km from the border to 50 km does not take away powers of the Punjab Police.

A bench, headed by CJI D.Y. Chandrachud and comprising Justices J.B. Pardiwala and Manoj Misra, was hearing an original suit filed by the Punjab government under Article 131 of the Constitution against the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) notification issued in October 2021.

The bench asked Punjab's Additional Advocate General Shadan Farasat and Solicitor General Tushar Mehta to exchange issues to be framed in the suit as it said that it will take up the suit for hearing on January 16 next year.

During the hearing, Farasat, appearing for the state government, contended that the notification issued by the Centre goes against the spirit of federalism as public order and police falls under List II (State List) of Schedule VII of the Constitution. He said that Punjab's geography and concerns are strikingly different from other border areas like Jammu and Kashmir, Ladakh, Gujarat and Rajasthan, as the border area in the state is densely populated, whereas the



same in Gujarat and Rajasthan comprises saline marshes and desert land, respectively.

Farasat highlighted that BSF's jurisdiction in Punjab has remained 15 km from the border in all the previous notifications issued by the MHA since 1969.

Section 139 of the Border Security Force Act, 1968, empowers the Centre to notify the area and extent of the border force's operational mandate from time to time. The suit contended that the notification is ultra-vires the Constitution, as it defeats the purpose of

Entry 1 (public order) and 2 (police) of List-II of Schedule VII of the Constitution and encroaches upon plaintiff's plenary authority to legislate on issue which relate to or are necessary for the maintenance of public order and internal peace.

Despite exit polls, KCR confident of scoring a hat-trick

Hyderabad | Agencies

Telangana Chief Minister and Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS) President K. Chandrasekhar Rao is confident of retaining power, though most of the exit polls have given an edge to the opposition Congress.

As some BRS leaders called on him at Pragati Bhavan, his official residence, a day after the polling, he advised them not to get worried over the exit polls.

KCR, as Rao is popularly known, told the BRS leaders to wait for a couple of days as the actual result will be in favour of the party.

His decision to convene the state Cabinet meeting on December 4 is also being seen as an indication that he does not give much importance to the exit polls and that he is confident of scoring a hat-trick as the Chief Minister.

According to a statement from the Chief Minister's Office, KCR will preside over the Cabinet meeting to be held at 2 p.m. on December 4 at Dr. B.R. Ambedkar secretariat.

Telangana went to polls on Thursday and the counting of votes is scheduled to be taken up on Sunday.

Meanwhile, BRS Working President K. T. Rama Rao posted on 'X' that after a long time he had a peaceful sleep.

"Exit polls can take a hike. Exact polls will give us good news", he wrote with the hashtag TelanganaWithKCR.

Calling exit polls "nonsense" and "rubbish", KTR, as Rama Rao is called, had on Thursday



exuded confidence that his BRS will retain power, winning more than 70 seats in the 119-member Assembly to come to power for a third consecutive term.

He also slammed the Election Commission for allowing exit polls to be published when voters were still standing in queues to cast their votes.

Referring to 2018 exit polls, he said only one agency had got it right. TRS (now BRS) was given 48-66 seats by four others but it went on to bag 88 seats. "The real poll will come out on December 3. Those who are trying to confuse Telangana voters are in for a huge surprise. Exit polls are not new. I promise those who are fans of BRS and want KCR to come back and run the state that we will come back with 70 plus seats. Just wait and watch," he added.

Nabbed for slur on Maha CM, ex-Mumbai Mayor Datta Dalvi gets bail

Team Absolute | Mumbai

A Mumbai court on Friday granted bail to former city mayor Datta Dalvi who was arrested on November 28 for insulting Chief Minister Eknath Shinde recently.

A senior Shiv Sena (UBT) leader, Dalvi, 71, was nabbed for allegedly using abusive language against Shiv Sena's CM Shinde at an event last Sunday.

He was sent to 14 days' judicial custody and was lodged in Thane Central Jail before getting a bail of Rs 15,000 on Friday.

Soon after stepping out of the jail, Dalvi said that he would go to meet party president and former Maharashtra CM Uddhav Thackeray at his residence, since he had called him twice after the arrest and assured his full backing. Targeting the ruling Shiv Sena, he said "we are not the progeny of traitors" and said he was deliberately arrested as a vendetta by the government which was mis-using its powers.

One of the staunchest loyalists of the Thackerays, after the party split in June 2022, Dalvi opted to remain with the Shiv Sena (UBT). He was accorded a warm welcome by his family



and scores of his supporters at his Vikhroli home this afternoon. Top party leaders including MP Sanjay Raut, MLA Sunil Raut, deputy leader Sushma Andhare and others had flayed Dalvi's arrest terming it as unjustified and under political pressures.

Delhi: 'Prolonged' delay in SpiceJet flight departure leaves passengers frustrated

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Frustrated over prolonged delay in Patna-bound SpiceJet airline flight, a group of frustrated passengers created ruckus at Delhi's Indira Gandhi International (IGI) airport on Friday.

At around 3 p.m., a group of passengers, waiting at a domestic boarding gate of the IGI airport, expressed their frustration after it became apparent that the Patna-bound SpiceJet airline flight no. SG-8721 was delayed by hours "due to the late arrival of the incoming aircraft".

"SpiceJet Delhi-Patna flight SG 8721 has already landed at its destination. The flight's departure was revised last night and passengers were duly informed about the revised departure time at 12.40 a.m. last night itself so that they could accordingly plan their travel to the airport. Any inconvenience to



passengers is regretted," said the airline spokesperson.

Earlier, on November 29, in a social media post that quickly gained traction, comedian Kapil Sharma expressed frustration over the significant delay of IndiGo Flight 6E 5149. "Dear @IndiGo6E, first you made us wait in the bus for 50 minz, and now your team is saying the pilot is stuck in traffic, what? Really?" Sharma wrote on X.

"We were supposed to take off by 8 pm, and it's 9:20; still, there is no pilot in the cockpit. Do you think these 180 passengers will fly IndiGo again? Never #Indigo6E5149," he posted.

However, in a statement issued by the airline, it said IndiGo flight 6E 5149 from Chennai to Mumbai on November 29 was delayed due to operational reasons. "Passengers were kept informed about the delay. We sincerely regret the inconvenience caused," it said.

Over 97% of Rs 2,000 banknotes have been returned: RBI

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The total value of Rs 2,000 banknotes in circulation, has declined to Rs 9,760 crore at the close of business on November 30, 2023, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) announced on Friday.

Thus, 97.26 per cent of the Rs 2,000 banknotes in circulation as on May 19, 2023, have since been returned.

The total value of Rs 2,000 banknotes when the withdrawal was announced amounted to Rs 3.56 lakh crore. The facility for deposit or exchange of the Rs 2,000 banknotes was available at all bank branches in the country initially up to September 30, which was later extended up to October 7.

The facility for exchange of the Rs



2,000 banknotes was also available at the 19 Issue Offices of the RBI.

In addition to exchanging the Rs 2,000 denomination banknotes across the counters, RBI offices are also accepting Rs 2,000 banknotes from individuals/entities for deposit to their bank accounts.

Members of the public from within the country can also send Rs 2,000 banknotes through India Post from any post office in the country, to any of the RBI Issue Offices for credit to their bank accounts in India. The Rs 2,000 banknotes continue to be legal tender.

FOUR OF FAMILY FOUND DEAD INSIDE HOUSE IN KERALA

Thiruvananthapuram: In a tragic case, four members of a family, including two children, were found dead inside their home on Friday in Thalavady in Kerala's Alappuzha district.

The victims were identified as Sunu and Soumya and their two children, Adi and Adil.

The police have registered a case of unnatural death and have started a probe into the incident. While the couple was found hanging, the children were discovered on their bed, covered in a bed sheet.

According to locals, Soumya worked as a nurse and was under treatment for blood cancer. Meanwhile, Sunu had been suffering from spinal issues following an accident. Since the two were undergoing medical treatment and were short on funds, they found it difficult to make ends meet, the locals said.

On Thursday evening, the couple had called a friend who used to accompany Soumya for her blood transfusion, to come after 10 a.m. on Friday.

When Sumu's mother, who lived next door to the family, did not hear from any of them in the morning, she went to the house and found the bodies.

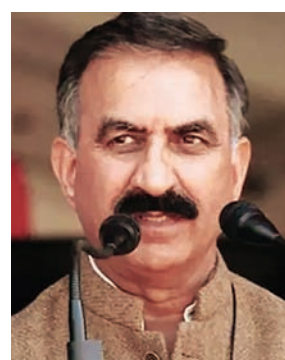
EXIT POLLS ARE 'NONSENSE', SAYS KTR

Shimla | Agencies

The Himachal Pradesh Cabinet on Friday decided to reserve 30 per cent posts of police constable for women and also revised approval for filling its 1,226 posts.

It also approved to insert some more provisions in the Mukhya Mantri Sukh Ashrya Yojana to benefit orphans and vulnerable sections of society. Under the new provisions, each orphan would be entitled to receive Rs 4,000 per month as pocket money till the age of 27. Furthermore, it was also decided to offer a one-time marriage grant of Rs 2 lakh to those orphans who have left the childcare institutions.

The Cabinet, presided over by Chief minister Sukhvinder



Singh Sukhu, also gave nod to the detailed project report (DPR) of Rs 486.47 crore to provide power to villages of the border area from Pooh to Kaza. It also approved a DPR of Rs 6.49 crore for enhancing electrical infrastructure in 32 villages of border areas of Kinnaur district and the Spiti

block of Lahaul-Spiti district, an official statement said. It approved 40 posts of Agriculture Development Officers in the Agriculture Department, 10 posts of Havildar Instructors in the Department of Home Guards and Civil Defence.

It was also decided to fill two posts of Assistant Professor in the Department of Nephrology at the Atal Institute of Medical Super Specialities in Shimla, one post of Assistant Professor in the Department of Orthopedics at the Indira Gandhi Medical College and Hospital in Shimla and one post of Assistant Professor in the Department of ENT at Shri Lal Bahadur Shastri Government Medical College and Hospital in Mandi.

Mobile tower stolen in UP's Kaushambi

Kaushambi | Agencies

In a bizarre incident, a 50-metre-high mobile tower, weighing over 10 tonnes, has been stolen at the Ujjaini village in Uttar Pradesh's Kaushambi district, the police said.

A technician reported the matter to police only on November 29 but his complaint states that the tower was found missing on March 31.

Police have lodged an FIR -- under IPC's Section 379 (theft) -- based on his complaint. Not just the tower, but a shelter, electrical fitting, and other equipment -- all part of the mobile tower assembly -- worth over Rs 8.5 lakh, were gone, the technician said in the complaint. The incident kept police busy on Thursday, as a team from Sandipan Ghat police station inspected the site and recorded statements of the



land owner and locals.

The technician, Rajesh Kumar Yadav, said in his complaint that his company installed a tower in the field of one Ubaid Ullah, at Ujjaini village in Kaushambi district, in

January this year.

Yadav said when he visited the spot for inspection on March 31, 2023, the entire tower, along with other paraphernalia, was gone without a trace.

Eight die in Odisha road accident, CM announces Rs 3 lakh compensation

Bhubaneswar | Agencies

In a tragic road incident, eight persons including three women died while 12 others sustained serious injuries on National Highway 20 near Ghatagaon in Keonjhar district of Odisha on Friday.

The deceased belonged to four villages -- Podamari, Batagada, Palajhadi and Dekhali -- of Ganjam district.

Inspector In-Charge of Ghatagaon police station said that at least 21 persons including several children from Ganjam were going to the Tarini Temple at Ghatagaon of Keonjhar district in a Tata Winger van.

"The vehicle rammed into a cement laden truck parked at a turning point around eight kilometers far from the shrine at 4.30 am on Friday. The accident was so severe that seven persons died on the spot. The driver of the TATA Winger fled from the spot after the incident. Rash and reckless driving by the accused driver might be the reason behind the tragic mishap," the police officer said.

Meanwhile, a 5-year-old child under-



going treatment at the Community Health Center at Ghatagaon succumbed to the injuries a few minutes

later. Around eight injured persons have been rushed to Keonjhar District

Headquarters Hospital while three critically injured persons have been shifted to SCB Medical College at Cuttack.

Sources said that the accused driver has reportedly surrendered before the police as well.

Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik has expressed grief over the tragic road accident and has announced compensation of Rs 3 lakh each for the relatives of deceased persons from the Chief Minister's relief fund.

The Chief Minister has directed the hospital authorities to provide adequate treatment to the injured persons.

Two more persons have died in different road accidents in Bhadrak and Sambalpur districts of the state. Five persons from Bhadrak were going towards Dhamnagar when their car crashed into a truck stationed on National Highway 16 near Aradi Chowk of Bhadrak district late Thursday night.

In another incident, the driver of a container died after a head-on collision with a speeding truck coming from the opposite direction on National Highway 53 at Chinimahl village in Jamankira area of Sambalpur district.



JP Nadda held a meeting with Shivraj, Scindia and Narottam Mishra before the election results

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Even before the results of Madhya Pradesh Assembly elections, BJP National President JP Nadda reached Gwalior in Madhya Pradesh on Friday and met Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chauhan, senior leader of Gwalior region and Union Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia and State Home Minister Narottam Mishra. Met together and discussed future strategy. Shivraj Singh Chauhan is the current Chief Minister of the state. At the same time, Jyotiraditya Scindia and Narottam Mishra are also in the race for the post of CM



and that is why the meeting of these three leaders with JP Nadda in Gwalior is being considered very important. The election results of five states including Madhya Pradesh are to

be declared on December 3. On Sunday it will become clear whose government is going to be formed in Madhya Pradesh. However, going by the exit poll data, BJP is very excited about

Madhya Pradesh and with this, the stir for forming the government and becoming the Chief Minister in the state has also intensified. JP Nadda reached Gwalior on Friday before the election results came on Sunday. Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chauhan, Union Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia and State Home Minister Narottam Mishra welcomed him at Gwalior Airport. Later, Nadda held a meeting with the three leaders and discussed the future strategy. It is being told that Nadda has reached Madhya Pradesh on a two-day visit and he is also scheduled to visit and worship Pitambar Maa in Datia.

Opposition Congress gaining grounds in four out of six regions in MP



Team Absolute | New Delhi/Bhopal

In the crucial Assembly elections to the 230-member Madhya Pradesh Assembly, the opposition Congress is gaining grounds in four out of six regions of the state, as per the ABP-CVoter Exit Poll.

According to the Exit Poll, in the 56 seats in the Baghelkhand region where the Congress had won 16 seats in 2018, the party is likely to win 28 seats this time, while the BJP is expected to win 25 seats. The saffron party had won 38 seats in the region in 2018.

The vote share of the Congress is likely to increase from 33.6 per cent in 2018

to 41.6 per cent this time, while the vote share of the BJP is likely to increase marginally from 38.1 per cent in 2018 to 38.9 per cent this time. In Bhopal region, the Congress is likely to win 11 seats this time, up from 9 in 2018. The BJP is expected to win 14 seats, down from its 2018 tally of 16. However, the vote share of the Congress is likely to decline from 43.1 per cent in 2018 to 42.1 per cent this time, a dip of 1 per cent. The vote share of the BJP is likely to witness a dip, from 47 per cent in 2018 to 46.2 per cent this time. In the 34 seats in the Chambal region, where the Congress had won 26 seats in 2018, the party is likely to win 27 seats this time,

while the BJP is expected to win 6 seats, one less than the 7 it had won in 2018. In the 42 seats in Mahakaul region, the Congress won 24 seats in 2018 is likely to win 25 seats this time, while the BJP is expected to win 16 seats. The BJP had won 17 seats in the region in 2018. In the 45 seats in the Malwa region, the Congress won 21 seats in 2018 is likely to win 18 seats this time, whereas the BJP is expected to win 27 seats, four more than its 2018 tally of 23. In Nimar region, the Congress had won 18 of the 28 seats in 2018 and is likely to win 16 seats this time, while the BJP is expected to win 12 seats, up from its 2018 tally of 8.

62 marginal seats can be crucial in deciding MP's fate

Team Absolute | Bhopal

In the 230-member Madhya Pradesh Assembly, 62 marginal seats can turn out to be crucial for government formation, as per the ABP-CVoter Exit Poll.

Out of the 230 Assembly constituencies in the state, 62 are marginal seats where pro-incumbency and anti-incumbency factors give rise to two prospects.

In scenario one, if all marginal seats go anti-incumbent, the Congress is likely to get 153 to 165 seats, the BJP 60 to 72 seats, the BSP 0 to 4 seats, while others are projected to win 0 to 5 seats. In scenario two, if all marginal seats go pro-incumbent, the Congress is likely to win 96 to



108 seats, the BJP 117 to 129 seats, the BSP 0 to 4 seats, while others are projected to win 0 to 5 seats. As per the Exit Poll, out of the 62 mar-

ginal seats within the same vote share, the Congress is likely to win 23 seats, while the BJP is projected to win 34 seats, followed by others on 3

and BSP on 2 seats. Madhya Pradesh went to the polls on November 17, and the counting of votes will be taken up on December 3.

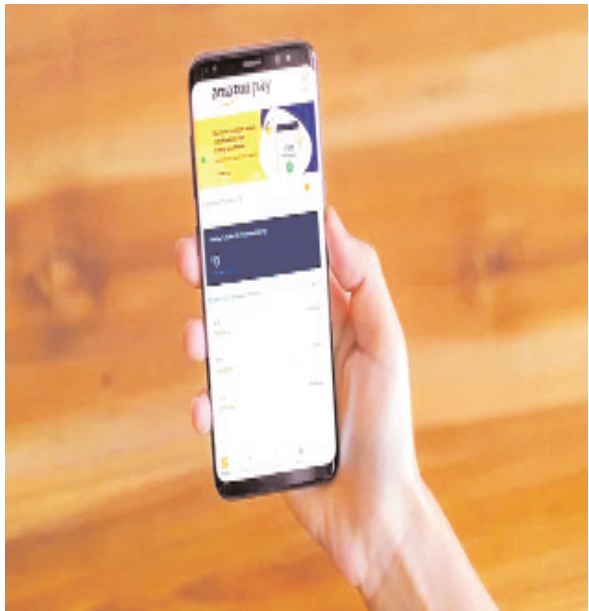
Amazon Pay launches sign language video KYC service for hearing and speech impaired customers

Team Absolute | Bhopal

In an endeavor towards inclusivity, Amazon Pay recently launched a video sign language Know Your Customer (KYC) service for hearing and speech impaired customers, which involves communication through sign languages, a pioneering initiative in the digital payments sector in India. The company has rolled out the initiative that enables two-way video communication in sign-language between Amazon Pay employees and customers. The goal is to make the KYC process effortless for those who rely on sign language, and making digital payments more inclusive.

The innovative initiative aligns with Amazon's commitment to Digital Bharat, ensuring that its services are inclusive and accessible to all, in line with the broader vision for a digitally empowered India.

Amazon Pay has provided Indian sign language training to over 120 employees that provide video-based KYC services to customers across India. The interactive training module, focused on equipping employees with



the ability to effectively communicate with hearing and speech-impaired customers, is developed by the in-house team.

In line with the on-going efforts to enhance the experience of customers with disabilities, Amazon has launched many such programs that benefit customers in India, such as 'Listen-Ins for Accessibility' where customer service teams listen to recordings of calls made by anonymized customers with

disabilities to learn about issues faced by them and their unique needs. Additionally, the Amazon Digital, Device and Alexa Support (D2AS) organization has set up accessibility support teams that offer customer service across eight marketplaces including United States, United Kingdom, Canada, India, France, Italy, Spain and Germany. A high volume of these accessibility associates are based out of India. They

undergo Accessibility training modules like Assistive Technologies, and Accessibility features on Amazon devices. The team replaced multiple touch points for the customer to reach Amazon with a dedicated Accessibility icon that allows customers with different kinds of disabilities to choose Phone, Chat or Email support as per their convenience and quickly get in touch with Technical Care associates with a single click.

Amazon remains committed to cultivating an inclusive culture that provides equal opportunities for all employees to unlock their full potential. The focus extends beyond gender diversity to encompass various cohorts, including women, the LGBTQIA+ community, military veterans, and the differently abled. At Amazon, a diverse workforce drives innovation, helps understand the diverse customer base, and enhances decision-making through diverse perspectives. The company's commitment to DE&I is reflected in its policies, programs, and initiatives aimed at promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion in the workplace.

Digvijaya confident of Congress' win in Madhya Pradesh

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Senior Congress leader Digvijaya Singh on Friday said exit poll predictions were far away from the reality, and exuded confidence that the grand-old party will form government in Madhya Pradesh.

Addressing media persons here, he said people of the state were fed up with BJP's "corruption" for the last two decades and have voted for a change.

"Exit poll results are very diverse. We cannot say anything about it. I can assure you that the Congress will get more than 130 seats and a clear majority in Madhya Pradesh," Singh said.

"People want transformation for which Congress will get votes. People are fed up with Shivraj Singh Chauhan and his fake promises," he added.

After the exit poll was released on



Thursday, Madhya Pradesh Congress president Kamal Nath said that the grand-old party will form the government with absolute majority in the state.

"The country is run by vision, not by television. Many exit polls have shown the Congress party forming the government while some exit polls are saying otherwise. You don't want to let all this distract you," Kamal Nath said in social media post. The exit polls gave varied predictions in the poll-bound states, giv-

ing an advantage to the BJP in Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan, a clear edge to Congress in Chhattisgarh and Telangana, and ruling MNF was ahead in power sweepstakes in Mizoram.

Most of the exit polls gave an edge to the Congress in Telangana, where polling concluded on Thursday, a few predicted a close contest in Rajasthan with Congress in the lead, and an exit poll gave an edge to the party in Madhya Pradesh too. A poll predicted that the Zoram People's Movement would win decisively in Mizoram.

The outcome of exit polls was released after the conclusion of polls in Telangana. If Congress can retain Rajasthan along with Chhattisgarh and oust the ruling BRS from Telangana, it will be a major morale booster for the party. The counting for the Assembly polls is scheduled on December 3.

High Court imposed a fine of Rs 25 thousand on Rewa Commissioner and Sidhi Collector

Team Absolute | Jabalpur

A big decision has come out from the Jabalpur bench of Madhya Pradesh High Court. The High Court has imposed a fine of Rs 25 thousand on the Rewa Divisional Commissioner and Sidhi Collector of

the state. This fine has been imposed due to the unilateral action of District Badar. The district administration had taken action against Shiv Sena city president Vivek Pandey, resident of Sidhi district. Victim Vivek Pandey had challenged the action of the district administration in the High Court. The

administration had taken district Badar action against him on September 18, before the last elections. The court has also ordered to pay the fine amount to the petitioner. This decision of the court proved that the district and police administration had taken wrong action against the victim.

Dead bodies of missing couple from Katni found in Bhopal hotel

Team Absolute | Bhopal

A sensational incident of finding dead bodies of a lover couple staying in Banjara Hotel located in Hanumanganj police station area of the capital Bhopal has come to light. Initial police investigation suggests murder and suicide. It is feared that after the couple reached an agreement, the girlfriend first strangled the boyfriend to death and then committed suicide by hanging himself.

According to the police station, while giving information on Wednesday, the manager of Banjara Hotel near Alpana Talkies located on Hamidia Road said that the young man and woman staying in the hotel room have not come out of the room for several hours, and despite calling a lot, there is no response from inside. As soon as the police team reached the news, they broke the door of the room and found the girl's body hanging inside, while the young man's body was lying on the bed. No suicide note was found during the investigation, after initial investigation the bodies of both were kept in the mortuary for PM.

Officials said that the police found the youth's mobile phone from the spot. On the basis of the number found in it, the youth's maternal uncle was contacted. When the uncle was informed about the accident, he told the police that the name of the deceased youth is Manish Chakraborty (23), resident of village Bilhari, district Katni and the name of the girl is Kiran Kevat (21), resident of



village Khitauli, district Katni. Manish had a dispute with his family over some issue and in anger, he left the house three days ago without informing.

After investigation, the officers have guessed that for some reason there might be some problem in his marriage, due to which he might have come to Bhopal to get married. After the conversation between them in the hotel, they might have taken a unanimous decision to commit suicide out of emotion and passion. Officials said that Kiran was physically quite healthy, while Manish seemed a little weak. Looking at their

dead bodies, it has been estimated that Kiran first strangled Manish with a muffler and put him to death. And then he committed suicide by hanging himself. When the police arrived, the body of the young man was lying on the bed in the hotel room, a pillow was placed over his mouth, and a muffler was tightened around his neck.

Currently the police is waiting for the PM report. The investigation team will record the statements of the family members of the deceased boy and girl, only after which the true reasons will be revealed.

Car jumps into air after hitting divider in Bhopal, 2 dead

Team Absolute | Bhopal

A major accident took place last night in Bhopal, the capital of Madhya Pradesh. The speeding car jumped in the air after hitting the divider and was badly damaged. Two people have died in this accident and three are injured whose treatment is ongoing. According to the information received from the police, a car first hit the divider on Link Road number 1 of the capital and then bounced in the air and landed on the footpath, overturning twice.

Some people from Harda had come to Bhopal with their friends to attend a function and were going towards New Market on Thursday night. Then his car, which was running at high speed near the Red Cross Hospital, collided with the divider. It is reported that a total of five people were traveling in the car at the time of this accident. By the time the youths injured in the accident were taken to the hospital, Abhiraj and Rhythm had died, while Rohit's condition remains critical. Apart from this, two other people have been injured.





EDITOR'S SPECS

500 HIV patients keen to get married in UP

In a welcome move, at least 500 people living with HIV/AIDS (PLHIV) in Uttar Pradesh, have shown an interest in getting married and have even begun the initial paperwork required for it. D Himanshu, in-charge of the Antiretroviral Therapy (ART) Centre at the King George's Medical University (KGMU), where the names of applicants desirous of marriage are noted, said, "Marriage among HIV positive people is not a very frequent event. Yet, we have got 65 marriages solemnised among otherwise healthy HIV positive patients." Vimlesh Kumar, state coordinator, Uttar Pradesh Welfare for People Living with HIV/AIDS Society (UPNPplus), the advocacy group working in the state, explained, "It goes stepwise. We circulate the biodata that is picked up by interested men or women. The family meets and then the discussion on age, height, income, education and such takes place. If everything goes well, the marriage is fixed." Before forwarding the biodata, the viral load and CD4 count test (used to check the health of the immune system if one is infected with HIV) of the candidate is called for by the UPNPplus to ascertain the health of the bride/groom-to-be. Once the marriage date is fixed, the couple-to-be is put through counselling for family planning and good behaviour in family life. At present, the state has 1,12,204 PLHIV on ART while the estimated number of people living with HIV is 1.94 lakh. This year, since April, 5,873 male, 3,142 female, 47 transgender, 264 male children and 187 female children have been registered for HIV care. Doctors said that marriage among PLHIV has twin benefits. First, the chance of spreading infection is reduced, secondly, even PLHIV can lead a normal family life. According to doctors, with guidance and medical support, a newborn from HIV-positive parents can remain HIV negative.

Climate concerns top list of challenges for Indians: EIB

Asad Mirza

Last week, veteran Dutch anti-Islam politician Geert Wilders vowed to be Prime Minister of the Netherlands eventually, following an election in which his party won the most seats. Wilders vowed on X: "I will be prime minister." In a long post on X, he expressed frustration at other parties for their apparent unwillingness to cooperate with his Freedom Party (PVV), Wilders said he would "continue to moderate"; his positions if necessary to gain power. Although Wilders' party finished well ahead of rivals in the November 22 vote on an anti-immigration platform, his party won only 37 seats in the Dutch parliament. That means he will have to cooperate with at least two more moderate parties in order to form a government. Earlier, the conservative VVD Party, of caretaker Prime Minister Mark Rutte, which shares many of Wilders' views on immigration, said it would not participate in a cabinet with him. However the VVD's new leader, Dilan Yesilgoz, did not rule out offering outside support to a Wilders-led government. Pieter Omtzigt, who leads the centrist reform NSC Party and is also seen as a likely partner in a Wilders' government, has said cooperation will be difficult due to extreme positions Wilders has voiced that appear to violate Dutch constitutional protections on freedom of religion. Wilders' stand on Islam Geert Wilders is known for his radical anti-immigration and Islamophobic politics and his staunch Euroscepticism. In 2007, Wilders sent a letter to the Dutch newspaper de Volkskrant calling the Quran a "fascist book" just like Mein Kampf. The newspaper put the letter on the front page but in an editorial suggested that the PVV leader had gone too far with the comparison, which was deeply hurtful and offensive to many. This letter and other comments led to Wilders being prosecuted for inciting hatred and discrimination. He denied any wrongdoing. In 2011, he was acquitted and his comments ruled acceptable within the context of public debate. In a 2008 interview with the Observer, Wilders said that Islam is not a religion; it's an ideology, the ideology of a retarded culture. The interview coincided with him creating a short film entitled Fitna, an Arabic word meaning "strife". In the film he again criticises the Holy Quran as a "fascist book" and intersperses images of the September 11 attacks with quotations from the Islamic holy book. It was screened on the internet and sparked violent protests in the Muslim world. In February 2009, Wilders was refused entry to Britain to screen the film on the grounds of it being a threat to public order. Wilders, who denied any wrongdoing, appealed, and a court later said the decision was wrong. The Dutch public prosecutor stated that statements made in it were "hurtful and offensive to a large number of Muslims" but not punishable by law. The episode subsequently became part of the 2011 case. Wilders coined the word "Head Rag" to describe the headscarves worn by Muslim women. In the Netherlands' annual political debates in September 2009, Wilders suggested an annual tax of 1,000 euros on headscarves, provoking a scandalised reaction. His position on headscarves, and talks on Turkish accession to Europe, had led him to break with the People's Party for Freedom and Democracy (VVD) and set up the PVV, or "Party for Freedom", in 2005. On immigration, Wilders stands for decreasing



and clubs it with Moroccans, whom he describes as "scum" migrating to Netherlands and delivered a speech at The Hague in 2014 condemning migration. In a lengthy prosecution, which he claimed was politically motivated; this speech was eventually ruled as unlawful discrimination in terms of insulting a group. It resulted in a criminal record for Wilders but he was acquitted of inciting discrimination and given no other penalty. From calling Moroccans "scum", to holding competitions for cartoons of the Prophet Mohammed, Wilders has built a career based on his self-appointed mission to stop an "Islamic invasion" of the West. Wilders also condemns the Dutch democracy and has stated that there is an enormous gap between this fake Dutch parliament and common people at large. Talking in the 2015 budget debates, Wilders argued for a closure of the borders and questioned Dutch democracy because MPs did not agree with him. He also wants The Netherlands to leave the EU, just like the UK. Moreover, Wilders pledges to close the Dutch representation in Ramallah, home to the "corrupt Palestinian Authority". He also describes Israel as the only true democracy in the Middle East and has stated that once in power he'll ensure Dutch relations with Israel are strengthened and will move the Dutch embassy to Jerusalem. **Dutch politics** The Netherlands is known for low corruption, press freedom and moderation, but for the past two decades it has witnessed a rising support for far-right parties. Prof Tom Louwse of Leiden University's Institute of Political Science, told the Guardian that the Dutch far right has polled on average 15 per cent to 20 per cent votes in the past decade.

Matthijs Rooduijn of Amsterdam University told a Dutch news website localnews.com that he sees the election as a "breeding ground for right-wing populism". Although Wilders is extremely right wing on immigration, he has populist policies on healthcare, pensions, the minimum wage and social housing. "The electorate of the PVV in general consists of people who experience more difficulties," said Rooduijn. "They feel they are being neglected. They have tough lives, economically but also culturally. And that is one of the reasons they vote for a party that promises radical change." But will this radical change happen? Wilders has won the most seats and been invited to try to form a coalition. But the Dutch representative democracy and the process of electing a coalition Prime Minister is very complicated. And it could take months for him to be chosen the Prime Minister. Overall, the Dutch elections may serve as an indication of the increasing right-wing sentiments in Western Europe. The far right has grown throughout much of Europe in the past decade. Giorgia Meloni of Brothers of Italy rode to power last year, the National Rally led by Marine Le Pen came second in the 2022 French presidential election, and the Alternative for Germany party is currently polling second. (Asad Mirza is a Delhi-based senior political and international affairs commentator.)

international

Israeli airstrikes kill 32 people in Gaza, says Hamas-controlled Health Ministry

Gaza | Agencies The Hamas-controlled Health Ministry in Gaza claimed that Israeli airstrikes that resumed on Friday after the collapse of the seven-day ceasefire, has killed 32 people in the besieged enclave so far. Earlier, the Ministry had said 14 people were killed, reports CNN. A Ministry official said the majority of those killed were women and children. In a separate statement, the Ministry of Interior confirmed that Israeli strikes had resumed across Gaza. The Hamas-controlled Government Media Office has blamed the US and the international community for the resumption of fighting in Gaza after the week-long truce during which 240 Palestinians, 86 Israelis, and 24 foreign nationals were released. The Office said that the US and the international community "bears responsibility for the crimes of the 'Israeli' occu-



ration and the continuation of the brutal war against civilians, children and women in the Gaza Strip", CNN reported. Palestinians had a right to defend themselves "by all means" and to establish a Palestinian state with Jerusalem as its capital, it added. The truce, which was only renewed at the last minute for the seventh day on Thursday, expired at 7 a.m. local time (about 10.30 a.m. IST) on Friday morning.

Thursday's extension was the second of the initial four-day truce that commenced on November 24. It was extended for two more days on Tuesday. Earlier in the day, the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) said that the military has resumed combat operations against the Hamas in Gaza, accusing the militant group of violating the truce agreement by firing towards the Jewish state, thus ending the seven-day ceasefire.

In a post on X, the IDF said: "Hamas violated the operational pause, and in addition, fired toward Israeli territory. The IDF has resumed combat against the Hamas terrorist organization in Gaza." Shortly before the ceasefire was due to expire, sirens sounded in southern Israel, and the Israeli army said it shot down a rocket fired from Gaza, reports the BBC. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Friday blamed the Hamas of breaking the truce by refusing to release "all of the women hostages today and launched rockets at Israeli citizens". The restart in hostilities is likely to worsen the humanitarian crisis in Gaza, amid shortages of essential supplies. Since Hamas launched its massive assault against Israel on October 7, more than 14,800 Palestinians have died. Israel has reported over 1,200 casualties, including foreign nationals.

India remains strategic partner, plot-to kill-charge serious: US

New York | Agencies The White House said that while it continues to strengthen strategic partnership with India, it takes the allegations that an Indian was involved in a foiled bid to kill a Sikh separatist leader on its soil "very seriously". The response came closely after New Delhi reacted to the US indictment of an Indian individual in a plot-to-kill charge, and said it is a "matter of concern" and also "contrary to the government policy". "I would just say two things. India remains a strategic partner and we're going to continue to work to improve and strengthen that strategic partnership with India. At the same time, we take this very seriously," John Kirby, Coordinator for Strategic Communications at the National



Security Council in the White House, said in response to a question at a news conference. Welcoming India's efforts to investigate the matter, Kirby also said that the recent developments will not impact the India-US relationship. "These allegations in this investigation,

(we) take it very seriously. And we're glad to see that the Indians are too by announcing their own efforts to investigate this. And we've been clear that we want to see anybody that's responsible for these alleged crimes to be held properly accountable," he said, adding that it will not impact India-US relationship. India constituted a high-level Enquiry Committee to look into all the relevant aspects of the matter, and said it will take necessary follow-up action based on the findings of Committee. While speaking to reporters travelling with him to Tel Aviv, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken called the Indian government's announcement of an investigation "good and appropriate" and said that they "look forward to seeing the results".

Missing Indian student found dead on riverbank in UK

London | Agencies A 23-year-old Indian student, who moved to the UK from India on September 19, was found dead on the bank of Thames river, four days after being reported missing by his family. Mitkumar Patel's body was found on the riverbank at Caledonian Wharf, on the Isle of Dogs, at roughly 10.45 a.m. on November 21 by a passerby. The Standard newspaper reported. Patel, who had been staying with a cousin in Plaistow, east London, was supposed to move to Sheffield on November 20, to start a degree at Sheffield Hallam University and a part-time job at Amazon. Patel's cousin grew worried



when he failed to return home from a daily walk on November 17 and filed a missing person complaint with the police next day. His other cousins began

contacting missing persons charities, and canvassing areas he frequented with posters and flyers, the news report said. One of the cousins said in the days before his death, Patel had sent a relative a series of voice messages in which he outlined a plan to end his life. Scotland Yard confirmed police, paramedics and the fire brigade responded to reports a man's body had been found on the riverbank at Caledonian Wharf. "Officers believe they know the identity of the deceased. The death is not believed to be suspicious," a spokesperson was quoted as saying in The Standard. Patel's cousins have launched a fundraiser to repatriate his body back to India. "He belonged to a farmer family and used to live in a village. So we decided our fundraising for helping out his family and to send his body to India," Patel's cousin wrote in the fundraiser.

11 killed by gunmen in Iraq

Baghdad | Agencies Up to 11 people were killed and nine others wounded as unknown gunmen attacked a civilian car in Iraq's eastern province of Diyala, a security official said. The car was hit by a roadside bomb and came under heavy gunfire by unknown gunmen in a village near the town of Wajhiya, nearly 90 km north-east of the Iraqi capital Baghdad, Alaa al-Saadi of the Diyala provincial command told Xinhua news agency on Thursday. Al-Saadi added that



the double attacks on the car led to the death of 11 people and the injury of nine others, five of whom are in critical con-

dition, Xinhua news agency reported. The ethnically mixed province of Diyala has suffered from unrest and sporadic violence among its Kurdish, Sunni, and Shia communities in the years following 2003. Some remnants of the militant group Islamic State (IS), who have regrouped in the rugged areas in the eastern part of Diyala and the Himreen mountainous area north of the province, have been carrying out attacks against civilians and Iraqi forces from time to time.

UK transport union accepts pay offer to end rail strikes

London | Agencies Members of the UK's largest transport union RMT announced that it has accepted a pay offer to pause their rail strikes while negotiations continue. The offer included a backdated pay rise of 5 per cent for the 2022-23 financial year, while talks over further deals will be pushed into next year, reports Xinhua news agency. "Our members have spoken in huge numbers to accept this unconditional pay



offer and no compulsory redundancies," said Mick Lynch, general secretary of the National Union of Rail, Maritime and

Transport Workers (RMT). "We will be negotiating further with the train operators over reforms they want to see. And we will never shy away from vigorously defending our members' terms and conditions, now or in the future," Lynch added. A spokesperson for the Rail Delivery Group, which represents train operators, welcomed the decision, saying that "agreements have now been reached with three out of the four unions involved in the recent industrial dispute".



Violence mars campus peace at Wardha Central varsity, dedicated to Gandhiji

Quaid Najmi | Wardha

Incidents of stray violence and protests involving students and staffers have marred the campus tranquility of the prestigious Central institution, the Mahatma Gandhi Antarashtriy Hindi Vishwavidyalaya (MGAHV) over the past few days.

The unrest started after some law course students raised apprehensions that the LLB court at MGAHV was not accredited with the Bar Council of India (BCI), and demanded to know the status from the university authorities.

The students sought the accreditation details from the university authorities in writing, but claimed they were not given any satisfactory replies and were instead hounded for raising the issue.

This led to heated arguments with the staffers, protests on the campus which the students claimed were sought to be crushed by the Proctor Dharvesh Katheria and Dr. Yogendra Babu Rathod.

The students accused the Katheria-Rathod duo of allegedly beating some of them and ordering the campus security guards to assault them for the protests, and Rathod even confiscated the mobile of one student and asked him to format it (delete all data) or he would destroy it.

However, when contacted by correspondent, Katheria and Rathod vehemently denied the students' allegations and said they were merely trying to enforce security on the campus that was breached by some ex-stu-



and certain anti-social elements - but they did not identify them.

Rathod categorically said he had not confiscated the student's cell-phone, and in turn blamed several students of "beating the teachers, including some lady teachers with chappals".

Strangely, Katheria alleged that "some of the students had reportedly indulged in life-threatening attacks on the teachers and they deployed the security for their defence and safety". The Katheria-Rathod duo claimed that "groups of students were prowling around the campus, instigating other students, threatening the assaulting the teachers and creating mayhem all around".

However, the students rubbished the same and countered by asking "why the CCTV cameras installed at key locations have been abruptly disconnected", including the spots where the security had attacked the students at the behest of the staffers,

and asked why the VC is being kept in the dark of the situation on the campus.

The Indian Institute of Management (IIM) Nagpur Director Bhimaraya Metri - who is holding Additional Charge as Vice-Chancellor of MGAHV - admitted he was concerned by the goings-on at the campus owing to "some erroneous information".

"Contrary to perceptions, the MGAHV's law course has been given BCI's due accreditation, and the university's name will also figure on their lists shortly. There is some wrong information spread by someone that has created the misunderstandings... I am looking into it," Metri told correspondent.

On the students' allegations of violence perpetrated by certain varsity bigwigs, Metri was apologetic and said he would speak with the concerned staffers (Katheria-Rathod) and try to restore normalcy on the campus - which has around 3000

Indian and international students studying over 40 different courses.

The student-staffers friction saw the local Wardha Police entering the campus with counter-complaints lodged, and now the varsity authorities are reportedly planning to clamp down by 'rusticating' some purported mischief-mongers.

On the sudden 'six-week break' from studies, and order to vacate the hostels given to the law students from Sunday (December 3), Dr Metri patiently said it was owing to certain staff shortages, "but interviews are going on and the process of new appointments will be completed very soon".

"After the staff are appointed, the regular courses will start, the students will not suffer in any manner for the lapses in the semester and they will not lose their academic year," assured Metri.

Following Metri's assurance, the students backtracked on the agitation and are now ready to accept the 45-days long "break" but said "they should not be evicted from their hostels" as ordered, plus the concerned student's mobile should be returned safely without damage to the instrument or the data.

They also demanded that the mess authorities should give the food coupons to some students who are sitting hungry since today morning, and the MGAHV should refrain from any punitive action like suspensions/rustications, etc. to restore the normal academic atmosphere on the tense campus.

Maharashtra's Stamp duty amnesty scheme may benefit housing societies



Team Absolute | Mumbai

The state government's Stamp Duty Amnesty Scheme starting from December 1 that has a provision to waive penalty up to 400 per cent on registered or unregistered documents will help cooperative housing societies complete the process of Deemed Conveyance.

The state cabinet had on November 29, decided to

implement the scheme in Maharashtra between December 1, 2023 to March 31, 2024, wherein a provision has been made for exemption on stamp duty and penalty for registration of deeds executed from 1980 to 2020. Inspector General of Registrations and Controller of Stamps (IGR) Hiralal Sonawane held a meeting with all the officials in the state to explain to them the modalities of

implementing the scheme. IGR Sonawane said, "As per the cabinet decision people who want to regularise their unpaid or underpaid stamp duty, can avail the benefit, by approaching the nearest stamp office, where a separate cell has been set up. The valuation of exact stamp duty will be calculated on receiving the application and on payment of the stamp duty, the documents would be stamped."

Case against man for duping 11 car owners of Rs 62 lakh in Navi Mumbai

Team Absolute | Thane

The Navi Mumbai police in Maharashtra have registered a case against the owner of a company for allegedly duping 11 car owners of nearly Rs 62 lakh after taking their vehicles with the promise of "attractive" monthly rent, an official said on Friday.

Accused Satyaprakash Varma, who claimed to run a financial services company, allegedly

cheated the car owners between April and August this year, the official said. Varma allegedly not only failed to pay the cumulative rent of Rs 10.97 lakh, but also did not give back the cars worth Rs 51 lakh to the respective owners, the official said. Acting on the car owners' complaints, the Rabale MIDC police on Thursday registered a cheating case against Varma, the official said, adding that no arrest has been made yet.

Man sentenced to 10 years for sexually assaulting six-year-old neighbour

Team Absolute | Thane

A special court in Maharashtra's Thane District has sentenced a man to 10 years of rigorous imprisonment for sexually assaulting a six-year-old girl.

Special judge D S Deshmukh on Thursday found the accused Terry Jofej Bhonkya (43) guilty of charges under relevant provisions of the Indian Penal Code and Protection of Children from Sexual

Offences (POCSO) Act. The court sentenced the accused, a resident of Bhayander, to 10 years of rigorous imprisonment and imposed a fine of Rs 6,000 on him. The amount will be provided as compensation to the victim. Special public prosecutor Sandhya H Mhatre told the court that the accused lived in the same neighbourhood as the victim, who was six years old at the time of the incident in 2018. On April 20, 2018, the

child's parents went out in the morning, leaving her playing outside their house. The accused took the girl inside the house and sexually assaulted her. The child later informed her mother about the assault and the neighbours also claimed to have seen the accused coming out of the house, the prosecutor said. As many as seven witnesses, including the victim and her mother, were examined during the trial, she said.

Bombay HC raps regulatory body for non-compliance of court order



Team Absolute | Mumbai

The Securities and Exchange Board of India is required to act in the public interest, the Bombay High Court said on Friday castigating the regulatory body for not complying with an order passed by the court in October.

A division bench of Justices G S Kulkarni and Jitendra Jain said such an approach by the SEBI would cause a dent in the confidence reposed in the public body by investors. The HC had in October directed the SEBI to provide certain probe documents to the minority shareholders of a company. The company and the SEBI challenged this order in the Supreme Court, which dismissed the appeals in November.

The petitioners are minority shareholders of Bharat Nidhi Limited and had made various complaints to SEBI accusing the company of violation of securities laws. The SEBI had then initiated investigations into the

same, issued a show cause notice to the company and later passed a settlement order, which has now been revoked. The petitioners' case is that neither the investigation report nor any relevant documents were supplied to them. The petitioners alleged that the investigation being done by the SEBI was a farce. The SEBI on Friday told HC that since the settlement order has been revoked, nothing survives in the present petitions. The bench, however, said there has been "persistent" non-compliance of the order passed by the court and said this was "too far to be imagined and totally unacceptable". "SEBI is a public body, it is required to act in public interest, it needs to comply with the orders passed by this Court," HC said. The court said it was constrained to make such remarks as it was quite "astounded" by the stand taken by the SEBI in the present case.

"Such approach of the SEBI, in our opinion, would cause a dent to the confidence the investors would repose in the SEBI, which needs to function solely to further the object and purpose, for which it is created by the Parliament," the bench said. The court added that to its mind, SEBI has resorted to all possible efforts to not comply with its order and "this does not appear to be meaningless". "However, it is quite intriguing to note the approach of the SEBI, as clearly seen from the events which had transpired, and from the obstinate stand taken by the SEBI in not furnishing the documents to the petitioners," HC said. The bench said now that the settlement order has been revoked, the SEBI would adjudicate the show cause notice issued to the company expeditiously. The bench said the petitioners need to be provided with the documents and directed the SEBI to forthwith comply with its order.

Maha Minister Chhagan Bhuajbal gets 12 death threats, cops probe

Team Absolute | Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar

Maharashtra Food and Civil Supplies Minister has received 12 consecutive death-threat messages on his phone, officials said here on Friday.

A prominent OBC leader, Bhuajbal has earned the wrath of the Maratha community for his strong opposition to giving them quotas from the existing OBC reservation.

NCP (Ajit Pawar) group leader Manoj Ghodake has lodged a complaint with the Pundalik Nagar Police Station in this city famed for the Ajanta-Ellora Cave temples.

An aide in Nashik said the police were investigating the matter, adding the Minister was going



ahead with his planned tour schedules. Officials said that a person named Saudagar Satnak has allegedly sent out the dozen messages one after the other from his mobile number, threatening to eliminate Bhuajbal for his recent utterances,

and efforts were on by police to track him. The Minister has been getting death threats regularly over the past few weeks after the Shivba Sanghatana leader Manoj Jarange-Patil and other Maratha groups launched their quota agitation in August. Considered as the 'messiah of the OBCs' Bhuajbal, 76, is currently on a tour of some areas ravaged by the recent unseasonal rains/hailstorms, and was facing massive protests in different villages for his anti-Maratha stance, his motorcade was blocked and locals carried out purification of roads with cow-urine after he departed. As a precaution, the Maharashtra and Mumbai Police have increased the personal security cover and beefed up the security outside Bhuajbal's home and offices in Mumbai and Nashik.

Mumbai Metro Line 3: Traffic to be affected around BKC, police issues diversions

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Mumbai Police on Friday issued a traffic advisory for motorists for the ongoing construction of Mumbai Metro Line 3 underground station work in BKC. In a traffic advisory, Mumbai Police said the work of Metro Line 3, Package C 5 under BKC Traffic Division Jurisdiction is underway to make an underground station of Vidyannagari Underground Metro, on the way to Swargdar Smashan Bhoomi, New Link Road and Sharda Devi Marg wherein both roads converge at Sant Tukaram Building, Hanuman Bhau Sridhar Bhole Chowk, whereas a temporary unpaved road was constructed on both the former roads to connect the above mentioned Metro underground station. For that, it is necessary to stop the traffic of both Sharda Devi Marg and New Link Road, which are used to reach the BKC area from the Western Highway. The police said, from 02/12/2023



time 00:01 to 03/12/2023 time 23.59 hours, the traffic system will be released from the said route as per requirement to regulate the traffic in the said area and to avoid inconvenience to the general public, the following changes are being made in the traffic management. It said, in order to facilitate smooth and fast flow of traffic on the said road and also in order to prevent obstruction, and inconvenience to the public the traffic notification was being issued. The notification was issued by Dr. Raju Bhuajbal, Deputy Commissioner of Police, (H.Q. & Central), Traffic, Mumbai. It said, the following order was being issued.

Road Closure
1) All vehicles going from BKC area, Valmiki Nagar via New Link Road to Western Highway will be blocked from Valmiki Nagar, Mithi River Nala Bridge.
2) From Western Expressway to BKC Premises, Bharat Nagar, Valmiki Nagar via Sharda Devi Road entry of all vehicles will be restricted from Teachers Colony Bus Stop/UPL Tower.
Alternate Route
1) Valmiki Nagar Mithi River Nala Bridge Kanakia Paris Right Turn Ekvira Macchi Market Left Turn Cardinal Gracious School, Kherwadi Service Road Take Left Right Turn to Desired Destination.
2) Teachers Colony Bus Stop/UPL Tower- Cardinal Geshes School to take Left Turn to- Ekvira Macchi Market Right Turn Kanakia Paris will take a left turn proceed to the desired destination. "The above order will be in force from date 02/12/2023 till date 03/12/2023," the police said.

Navi Mumbai woman falls victim to 'task' scam, loses nearly Rs 10 lakh

Team Absolute | Navi Mumbai

A 29-year-old woman from Navi Mumbai fell prey to a fraudulent scheme and lost nearly Rs 10 lakh through a deceptive 'task' scam, police officials told PTI on Friday. The woman, according to the report, hailing from Kamothe area told the cops that she was contacted by two persons through phone and the messaging app Telegram in August this year. She said that these individuals offered her participation in various "online tasks". According to the media reports, the woman was given assurance through monetary rewards earned through the completion of simple tasks online. Following that, she willingly participated. However, she ended up losing Rs 9.85 lakh to these individuals, who continually found pretexts to extract money from her, all the while guaranteeing the pending payments, according to the woman's



account. After the promised payments failed to materialise for an extended period of time, the woman

decided to approach the police on Thursday, according to the station house officer of Kamothe police station. The police have opened a case of cheating under the Indian Penal Code and the IT Act, according to the officer, who also confirmed that the investigation is still ongoing. Navi Mumbai police have filed a case against a man for allegedly siphoning off Rs 62 lakhs from 11 car owners under fraudulent pretext. The accused had taken possession of the complainants' cars under the guise of offering "attractive" monthly rent. The accused, who purportedly runs a financial services company, is accused of defrauding car owners from April to August of this year, according to the official. He allegedly not only failed to make the promised rent payments of Rs 10.97 lakh, but also retained cars worth Rs 51 lakh belonging to their respective owners.



BEYONCE'S

MOM SHUTS DOWN TROLLS OVER BACKLASH TO SINGER'S DRAMATIC MAKEOVER

Los Angeles | Agencies

Singer-songwriter Beyoncé's mother Tina Knowles has slammed the trolls for accusing her of 'skin lightening' Beyoncé and her rapper husband Jay-Z also sent a defiant response to haters after the R&B singer faced cruel 'skin lightening' accusations after debuting a dramatic makeover. This week, online trolls took to social media slamming the superstar's new look as she debuted a long, platinum blonde wig during the Renaissance concert film premiere on Saturday, reports Mirror.co.uk. Others claimed the 42-year-old singer was copying Kim Kardashian and bashed her for looking like a "Kim K Cheri hybrid" now. As Beyoncé faced the cruel accusations, she and Jay-Z took to Instagram sharing a defiant post throwing up peace signs to her haters.

As per Mirror.co.uk, in the new post following the string of hate, followers took to the comments sharing their love for Queen Bey. One fan commented: "We know Black is Black... congrats on the movie!!!" And another wrote: "Beyoncé we love the platinum on you. You pull off anything. Forget the media, you're the queen". And a third added: "Stunning Queen love the platinum blonde hair on you!!!" The controversy comes after Beyoncé revealed the dramatic new transformation for her concert movie premiere. The mother of three was seen at the silver carpet event wearing a glamorous sparkling silver gown designed by Donatella Versace. As Beyoncé faced backlash for the look and accusations that she bleached her skin to achieve a lighter skin appearance, Beyoncé's mum Tina Knowles took great offence to the claims and passionately defended her daughter. The 69-year-old took to Instagram this week sharing a scathing message to Beyoncé's haters, explaining the only reason Beyoncé switched up her look was to match the event's silver theme. Tina wrote: "Came across this today and decided to post it after seeing all of the stupid ignorant self, hating racist statements about her, lightening her skin, and wearing platinum hair wanting to be white," she continued: "She does a film, called the 'Renaissance', where the whole theme is silver with silver hair, a silver carpet, and suggested silver attire and you bozos decide that she's trying to be a white woman and is bleaching her skin?"



JENNIFER LOPEZ SAYS 'WOMEN GET SEXIER AS THEY AGE'

Los Angeles | Agencies

Jennifer Lopez believes that there are a growing number of on-screen roles for older women in Hollywood, and the singer-actress is keen to continue working for many years to come. "It has changed a lot, and I think it's appropriate. As you get older and you have more experience, you become a richer human being and you have more to offer. The idea of, 'There's nothing really valuable about watching a woman over 30' is so ridiculous, it's the opposite of right. It just makes me laugh."

"People have realised that women just get sexier as they get older. They get more learned and more rich with character. All of that is very beautiful and attractive, and not just physically, but on the inside, the beauty that you gain as you get older, the wisdom you gain," she told ELLE's December/January 2023 Women in Hollywood issue.

Lopez hasn't made any retirement plans, and she doesn't plan to slow down anytime soon, either, reports femalefirst.co.uk.

The 'If You Had My Love' hitmaker, who is married to actor Ben Affleck, explained: "I see myself working (as long as) I want to. I don't know what that age is. It might be 70, it might be 80, it might be 90, I don't know. But I know that it's there for me if I want it and I want to create it."

"That has always been the mindset that I've had: to never let anybody put me in a box because of where I was born, where I'm from, what age I am, anything like that. Those boundaries don't exist for me."

Paris Hilton says 'surrogacy was a difficult decision to make'

Los Angeles | Agencies

Paris Hilton has opened up about what it took to grow her family. On the premiere episode of season 2 of 'Paris In Love', the multi-hyphenate mom, 43, explains how and why she came to the decision to use a surrogate to welcome son Phoenix Barron, now 10 months old.

"Surrogacy was a difficult decision to make," she admitted, reports People magazine. "I would have loved that experience of growing the baby in your tummy and feeling the kicks and all of those exciting moments, but my life has just been so public," she continued.

"So even though the baby is biologically mine and Carter's, we decided to have a surrogate carry him."

Paris's husband, Carter Reum, echoed those concerns for Paris and their son in a later confession where he talked about the vision for their family's future.

"Now having a family with Paris, we want our family to grow up and be normal and not always be known as Paris Hilton's children," he said, quoted by People.

"We have to think about safety," Carter continued. "When we go to the farmer's market, it's one thing if someone stops and asks Paris for a photo. It's a whole other thing with the baby in tow in a stroller."

"I don't think we know everything the journey's gonna throw at us, but we're just gonna tackle it as we go," he concluded.



Eva Longoria values politics over her popularity

Los Angeles | Agencies

Actress Eva Longoria has been outspoken about various political and social issues over the years, but isn't worried about losing fans because of her views.

"There are things that are a lot more important than box office and viewers. Women's rights are very important. The dismantling of human rights, of health care systems, of education systems."

"The banning of books. These are very dangerous things that need to be talked about, looked at, voted on, and advocated for. So it's not an 'Oooh, do I do it?' I have to do it. It is nonnegotiable," she told ELLE's December/January 2023 Women in Hollywood issue.

"I don't ever think, I'm going to alienate half an audience or I'm going to lose some Twitter fans. That doesn't matter to me if I'm saving democracy." Despite this, Longoria doesn't have any ambitions to run for the White House, reports femalefirst.co.uk.

The actress observed that individual citizens are actually the "most powerful" people in a democracy.

Asked if she'd ever run for political office, Eva replied: "No, no, no. No, and I think that's the myth, that you have to be a politician to be political. That's not true. The most powerful person in democracy is the citizen."

"Once you become a politician, your hands



get tied. You're beholden to special interests; you're beholden to certain industries."

She loves that she's able to speak her mind without having to worry about the potential consequences.

The 'Desperate Housewives' star, who has been outspoken on issues like immigration, said: "As a citizen, you can speak your mind as loudly as you want."

ABSOLUTE PIC OF THE DAY



Olivia Munn



TOM HOLLAND SETS CONDITIONS FOR 'SPIDER-MAN' RETURN

Los Angeles | Agencies

Hollywood star Tom Holland won't play Spider-Man again just "for the sake of making another one". The 27-year-old actor last played Peter Parker and his web-slinging alter ego in 2021's 'Spider-Man: No Way Home' and while he confirmed he had been "actively engaging in conversations" about making another movie, he feels "protective" over the character and will only reprise the role if the story is right, reports Female First UK.

Speaking during a Critics Choice Association press conference, he said: "All I can say is that we have been actively engaging in conversations about what it could potentially look like for a fourth rendition of my character. Whether or not we can find a way to do justice to the

character is another thing. I feel very protective over Spider-Man."

The actor said: "I feel very, very lucky that we were able to work on a franchise that got better with each movie, that got more successful with each movie, which I think is really rare, and I want to protect his legacy. So, I won't make another one for the sake of making another one. It will have to be worth the while of the character."

As per Female First UK, Tom admitted he'd be a "fool" not to say yes if another film in the franchise came along.

The actor added: "If we can figure that out, I would be a fool not to put the suit back on again because I owe everything to Spider-Man. I love the character and the people I get to work with. So, I would love to tell another story, but I'll only tell it if we can find the right one."



4TH T20I: AXAR'S 3-16 AFTER RINKU, JITESH'S KNOCKS HELP INDIA BEAT AUSTRALIA, TAKE UNBEATABLE 3-1

Raipur | Agencies

Spinners Axar Patel (3-16) and Ravi Bishnoi (1-17) stifled Australian batters in the middle overs as India won the fourth T20I by 20 runs to claim the five-match bilateral series 3-1 and win a record-breaking 136th T20I victory, the most by any team in international cricket.

After being restricted to 174/9 in 20 overs thanks to vital contributions by Rinku Singh (46), Jitesh Sharma (35), and Yashasvi Jaiswal (37), India looked on the rope as Australia looked on course as they reached 87/3 in the 12th over. But spinners Axar Patel, who is returning from an injury because of which he missed the ODI World Cup, and Ravi Bishnoi bowled well in tandem and claimed four wickets between them for just 33 runs in eight overs as Suryakumar Yadav's side came back strongly to restrict Australia to 154/7 in 20 overs to seal victory for India.

With this win India took an unassailable 3-1 lead in the five-match series with a match to spare, claiming their fifth successive T20I series at home. With this, India won their 136th T20I match and broke Pakistan's record for winning the most number of 20-over international matches. Travis Head, hero of Australia's triumph in the 50-



over World Cup a few couple of weeks back, contributed 31 while skipper Matthew Wade blasted an unbeaten 36 off 23 balls. However, the Australians found the Indian spinners difficult customers on a pitch that did not offer much assistance to the spinners. Trying

to raise as many runs as possible, India lost five wickets in the last two overs starting from the fourth ball of the 19th over. Jitesh Sharma (18.4), Axar Patel (18.5) and Rinku Singh (19.1) got out over three consecutive balls spread across two overs while Deepak Chahar

(19.3) and Ravi Bishnoi (19.6) also fell in the final over.

For Australia, Ben Dwarshuis claimed 3-40 while Jason Behrendorff (2-32) and Tanveer Sangha (2-30) claimed a couple of wickets apiece.

Brief scores

India 174/9 in 20 overs (Rinku Singh 45, Yashasvi Jaiswal (37), Jitesh Sharma 35, Ruturaj Gaikwad 32; Ben Dwarshuis 3-40, Jason Behrendorff 2-32, Tanveer Sangha 2-30) beat Australia 154/7 in 20 overs (Travis Head 31, Matthew Wade 36 not out; Axar Patel 3-16, Deepak Chahar 2-44) by 20 runs.

Jr World Boxing C'ships

India assured of 17 medals as eight more reach semis

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Reigning Asian Junior champions Nisha (52kg) and Akansha (70kg) put up a solid show to confirm medals along with six other Indian pugilists on the seventh day of the IBA Junior World Boxing Championships 2023 in Yerevan, Armenia.

Indian girls once again led the proceedings with their dominant show as all five boxers in action won their respective matches to enter the semis. Akansha (70kg) began the day on an aggressive note before her opponent Kurbonboeva Rayhona of Uzbekistan unsettled the Indian pugilist with her counterattack. However, Akansha ultimately won 4-1 on split decision verdict.

Nisha (52kg), on the other hand, proved too strong for Grace Conway of Ireland as she was declared the winner by a unanimous 5-0 decision. Shrushti recorded a comfortable win in 63kg after the referee stopped the contest in round two against Mariia Kazaova of Russia. Kritika (75kg) put up an



equally dominant show and didn't allow her opponent Melendez Sanchez of Mexico to settle down before winning the bout by referee stopping the contest in round one.

Vini (57kg) entered the semis after the opponent Nunez Naomi of Trinidad and Tobago gave her a walkover.

Meanwhile, it was a mixed day in the boys' section for the country as three of the five competing boxers made it to the final four. Hemant Sangwan (80+kg) and Sikandar (48kg) outperformed their opponents Bachevski Roselin of Bulgaria and Urmanov Ramziddin of Kyrgyzstan respectively to win the bout

with an identical 5-0 decision.

In the 75kg quarterfinals, Sahil had to work hard against Ruslan Esanov of Uzbekistan, but the Indian grabbed a 3-2 split decision win, showcasing impressive quick movements and better decision-making.

M. Kabiraj Singh (63kg) and Rahul Kundu (70kg) suffered defeats in the quarterfinals.

With the addition of eight more medals, India's total medal count now stands at 17 as Megha (80kg) had already confirmed the medal after getting bye in the initial two rounds.

In all, 17 Indian boxers, including 12 girls will be in action in the semifinals.

Serie A

Gremio beat Goias to keep title dream alive

Rio de Janeiro | Agencies

Ademir Ferreira and Franco Cristaldo scored second-half goals as Gremio recovered from a goal down to secure a 2-1 home win over Goias in Brazil's Serie A championship on Thursday.

Everton Morelli gave the visitors the lead just before the half hour at Gremio Arena by bursting away from his marker and slotting a cool finish past goalkeeper Caique Santos, reports Xinhua.

Ferreira equalized just after halftime when he deftly controlled Luis Suarez's pass with his chest before cutting inside to fire a right-footed shot into the far corner.

Franco Cristaldo completed the turnaround six minutes later as he capitalized on an



errant defensive header to smash a volley past Goias goalkeeper Tadeu Ferreira.

The result leaves Gremio fifth, four points behind leaders Palmeiras with two matchdays remaining. Goias are 18th in the 20-team standings and need to win their final two

games by hefty margins to have any chance of avoiding relegation.

In other Brazilian Serie A fixtures on Thursday, Cruzeiro were held to a 1-1 home draw by Athletico Paranaense and Fortaleza won 2-1 at Bragantino.

Mitchell Marsh defends himself over resting feet on World Cup trophy

Perth | Agencies

Australia's fast-bowling all-rounder Mitchell Marsh insisted on Friday that him resting his feet over the ODI World Cup trophy was not disrespectful and added that he won't mind doing that again.

Shortly after Australia defeated hosts India by six wickets in the title clash to claim an unprecedented sixth Men's ODI World Cup title in Ahmedabad, a picture of Marsh with his feet on the trophy were shared by captains Pat Cummins on his Instagram account, which created a huge furore on social media.

"There was obviously no disrespect meant in that photo at all. I haven't given it too much thought, I haven't seen a lot on social media even though everyone tells me it's gone off. There's nothing in that," said Marsh on SEN Radio.

Marsh came under criticism from Indian fans, especially with fast-bowler Mohammed Shami later saying he was "hurt" by his gesture in the photo. Asked if he would do it again, Marsh said, "Yeah probably, to be honest." Four days after 2023 Men's ODI World Cup was played, Australia



and India squared off in a five-match T20I series, with its fourth game to be held in Raipur on Friday. Marsh stated that things like scheduling a bilateral tournament shortly after a global event is played should be avoided in the future.

"Yeah it was pretty outrageous for the guys that had to stay behind. It's a fine line because we've got to respect the fact we're playing for Australia and it's a series against India which is always really big."

"But there's also the human side of it, the boys have just won a World Cup and probably deserve to celebrate for a while and get home to their families. It's an interesting one. You'd hope there's not too many of those series put on after big tournaments again."

Steve Smith, Adam Zampa, Glenn Maxwell, Marcus Stoinis, Josh Inglis and Sean Abbott have since flown home after taking part in first three T20I games, with Australia trailing 2-1 in the series and Travis Head the only member from World Cup winning team in India now. "I celebrated for the six guys who stayed behind, I celebrated for them," signed off Marsh.

PAOK BEAT EINTRACHT FRANKFURT IN EUROPA CONFERENCE LEAGUE

Berlin | Agencies

PAOK sealed top spot in UEFA Conference League Group G after second-half goals from Tomasz Kedziora and Andrija Zivkovic saw them edge Eintracht Frankfurt 2-1 on Thursday.

Eintracht controlled possession from the start and came close through Omar Marmoush and Fares Chaibi, who couldn't beat PAOK goalkeeper Dominik Kotarski.

Kotarski remained with his hands full as Frankfurt's Niels Nkoukou created another presentable opportunity with 25 minutes played.

Four minutes later, defensively-minded PAOK showed signs of life after Frankfurt goalkeeper Kevin Trapp had to save from Thomas Murg with his foot at the half-hour mark, reports Xinhua.

As the match progressed, both defences were able to keep the action away from their goal for the remainder of the first half.

The visitors from Greece made a bright start into the second half as Murg rattled the side netting with a dangerous free kick in the 51st minute, before Kedziora collected a loose ball inside the box and tapped home four minutes later to stun the hosts.

PAOK's joy was short-lived, as Eintracht responded well and



restored parity after Marmoush nodded home Chaibi's pinpoint cross at the near post three minutes later.

The Eagles piled on the pressure and thought they had taken the lead at the hour mark, but Hugo Larsson's goal was ruled offside.

However, it was PAOK who scored at the other end against the flow of the game as Trapp parried an effort into the path of Zivkovic, who made no mistake and clinically poked home in the 73rd minute.

Eintracht responded with furious attacks but couldn't overcome PAOK's defence a second time as Marmoush and Chaibi lacked in accuracy. Things went from bad to worse in the closing stages as Kristijan Jakic was sent off for a second bookable offence in the closing stages.

With the win, PAOK are assured of top spot in Group G with one game to spare, while Eintracht sit second, followed by Aberdeen and Helsinki.

"We started well into the clash and dominated the first half. After the restart we conceded a goal. We answered and even had the chance to take the lead, but at the end of the day we made too many mistakes at the back and weren't efficient enough in front of goal," said Eintracht coach Dino Toppmoller.

Morocco, Portugal, Spain submit bidding agreement for 2030 WC

Geneva | Agencies

FIFA announced Thursday that it has received bidding agreement from Morocco, Portugal and Spain for the 2030 FIFA World Cup.

Uruguay, Argentina and Paraguay also confirmed as bidders to host the centenary celebration with one 2030 World Cup match in each country, FIFA said, reports Xinhua.

Saudi Arabia's bidding submission for the 2034 FIFA World Cup was also received by FIFA, and the hosts will be appointed by the FIFA Congress.

In January 2024, FIFA will



conduct a targeted dialogue with all bidders and will publish its evaluation reports after a thorough evaluation process, FIFA said.

ARGENTINA STAYS ON TOP OF LATEST FIFA RANKINGS

Geneva: Three-time World Cup champion Argentina remains at the top of the latest FIFA rankings while England moved into the top three, FIFA announced on Thursday.

Argentina keeps its top position with 1855.20 points, followed by France while back-to-back defeats to Colombia and Argentina forced Brazil, previously third, to slide down to fifth, reports Xinhua. England climbed to third and Belgium to fourth. The Netherlands moves up to sixth, while Portugal, Spain, Italy and Croatia round out the top ten. A total of 188 international matches were played all over the world in November 2023, with 2026 FIFA World Cup qualifiers taking place in Africa, Asia and South America.

Jr Women's World Cup

INDIA GO DOWN 3-4 AGAINST GERMANY IN THRILLING CLASH

Santiago | Agencies

The Indian junior women's hockey team put up a solid show in its second game of the FIH Hockey Women's Junior World Cup 2023 but runners-up of the last edition of the elite tournament, Germany, came from behind to register a 4-3 victory in a thrilling match played on Friday.

For India, Annu (11'), Ropni Kumari (14'), and Mumtaz Khan (24') were the goalscorers, while Sophia Schwabe (17'), Laura Pluth (21', 36'), and Carolin Seidel's (38') netted goals for Germany.

India quickly settled into a passing rhythm, dominating the game in the opening quarter by controlling possession and continuously testing Germany's defensive line. Despite their early efforts, India were thwarted by Germany's sturdy defense, preventing them from scoring until the closing minutes of the quarter.

It was during this period of sustained pressure that the Indian team secured consecutive penalty corners, and Annu (11') capitalized on the second opportunity



with a powerful shot, finally putting her team in the lead. Shortly after breaking the deadlock, India further solidified their position as Ropni Kumari (14') elegantly found the net with a well-executed shot from another penalty corner. The first quarter concluded with India leading 2-0, marking a successful start for the team. Germany, determined to turn the tide, approached the second quarter with renewed zeal. Their efforts bore fruit as Sophia Schwabe (17') scored an impressive field goal, reducing the deficit for

Germany. Building on this momentum, Laura Pluth (21') fired a powerful strike to level the score.

However, India swiftly responded as Mumtaz Khan (24') skillfully put the ball past the opposition's goalkeeper, shifting the momentum back in India's favour and putting them in front again as they went into the half-time break with a 3-2 lead.

Determined to maintain their lead, India prioritized ball possession in the third quarter, yet Germany managed to level the score. Laura Pluth (36') struck for the second time, equalizing the game. Motivated by their resurgence, Germany intensified their attacks, sealing the lead with Carolin Seidel's (38') goal from a penalty corner. India, eager to retaliate, increased their frequency of attacks. But, despite their efforts, the score remained 4-3 in favour of Germany by the close of the third quarter. The final quarter witnessed an aggressive display from both sides, with Germany coming close to extending their lead. However, Indian goalkeeper Madhuri Kindo's exceptional save in a one-on-one situation denied Germany a chance to extend their lead.

ITF Kalaburagi Open

Ramkumar lone Indian in fray, reaches singles semis

Kalaburagi (Karnataka): Ramkumar Ramanathan was the lone Indian left in the fray in the last-four stage in the men's singles section at the ITF Kalaburagi Open here on Friday. In the quarterfinals played at the Chandrashekhara Patil Stadium in Kalaburagi on Friday, the fifth seed quelled the challenge of giant-killer Manish Sureshkumar 7-5, 6-0 to make it to the semifinals.

In the other quarterfinal matches of the day, Aryan Shah went down fighting to Ryotaro Taguchi of Japan 3-6, 2-6 while sixth seed Rishab Agarwal succumbed to second seed Matsuda Ryuki of Japan 0-6, 4-6. In a one-sided affair seventh seed David Pichler of Austria



saw the back of Japanese Seita Watanabe with a 6-0, 6-0 win in the last quarterfinal tie. A little later Matsuda and Taguchi advanced to the finals in the doubles after defeating the Indian pair of Rishab Agarwal and Bharath Nishok Kumaran 7-6 (4), 6-2. In the final, they will clash with the Austrian-Indian pair of David Pichler and Nitin Kumar Sinha who brushed past the duo of Adil Kalyanpur and Sidharth Rawat 6-3, 6-2.



Deepika Padukone drops glimpse of her day out with BFFs in London

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Bollywood actress Deepika Padukone gave a sneak peek into her day out with her girlfriends in London, giving her fans best friend's goals.

Taking to Instagram, Deepika,

who enjoys a massive fan following of 77.6 million followers, shared some photos with her friends Sneha Ramchander and Divya Narayan.

In the photos, we can see the 'Piku' actress flashing her bright smile for the selfie.

The next picture shows the girls standing against a floral backdrop and posing for the lens.

Deepika is wearing a white hoodie, matching joggers and layered the outfit with a long brown coat. Her hair is tied in a neat bun. She captioned the photo with an infinity symbol.

Her friend shared a picture of them together sitting in a fine dining restaurant. The geotag location is Jamavar London.

Fans took to the comment section and dropped heart emojis for the actress.

Meanwhile, on the work front, Deepika will be next seen in 'Kalki 2898 AD', 'Fighter', and 'Singham Again'.



Vicky Kaushal says he gets a kick out of playing a real hero on screen

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Be it 'Uri: The Surgical Strike', 'Raazi', 'Sardar Udham' or his latest release 'Sam Bahadur', something happens to Vicky Kaushal as he ends up upping his own success game when he dons the uniform on screen.

The star says it comes from a point where there is genuine regard for the Indian Army and that he gets a kick out of playing a real hero.

What happens to him as he stuns every time when he dons the uniform for a performance onscreen?

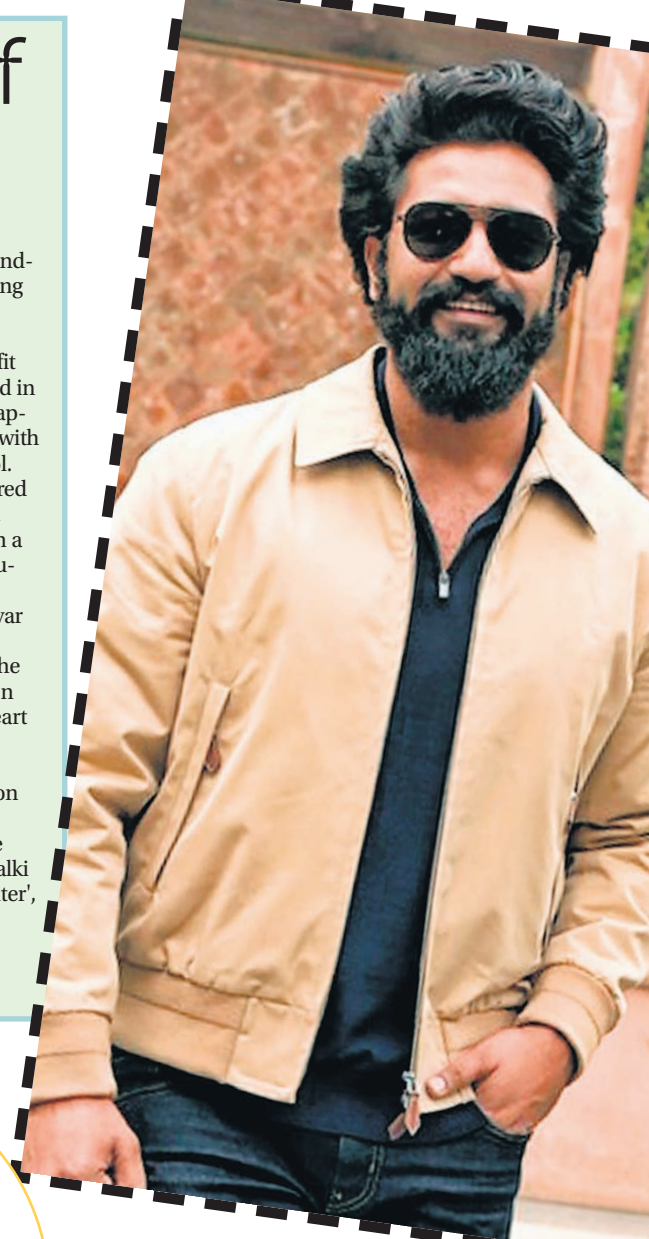
Vicky told IANS: "I think it comes from a point where there is genuine regard for the Indian Army and also inherently I get kicked about playing a real hero. I find that great."

"Whenever I get to interact with real army personnel, I am just speechless and inspired by them that whenever I get an opportunity to play them there is this subconscious sense of that isme jaan phookni hai... I can't take this lightly and out do myself."

"That plays subconsciously so much that it shows in my work. We put in work and effort in all our films and that sense of responsibility just brings out something out of me."

Asked if he agrees that there is something special about the uniform, the national crush said: "Of course."

Vicky's latest release is 'Sam Bahadur', a biographical war drama film based on the life of India's first field marshal, Sam Manekshaw. It is directed by Meghna Gulzar. Set against the backdrop of the 1971 Indo-Pakistan War, Field Marshal Sam Manekshaw led the Indian Army from the front leading to Bangladesh's liberation. Talking about playing Manekshaw in the film, Vicky agrees that there was something unique about his aura.



'GAUTAM GAMBHIR GAVE ME MISSED CALLS, ANURAG KASHYAP RAPED ME,' CLAIMS PAYAL GHOSH

Mumbai: Known for her work in 'Prayanam' and 'Oosaravelli' actress Payal Ghosh has made shocking claims that parliamentarian Gautam Gambhir used to regularly call to her, and that former cricketer Irfan Pathan is the only person she loved. Taking to X (formerly Twitter), Payal wrote in a series of tweets: "Gautam Gambhir mujhe regularly miscall dete the, yeh Irfan ko bohut achhi ta rah pata tha, woh mera sab calls check karta tha... woh yeh baat mere Samna Yusuf bhaji, Hardik Aur Krunal Pandya ko bhi bataya tha jab main Irfan ko Pune mein Milne gayi thi.. Domestic match tha Baroda ka." In another tweet, she wrote: "Mere pichhe #gautamgambhir #AkshayKumar sab pade hue lekin main pyar sirf Irfan Pathan se karti thi, mujhe uske ilaba koi aur dikhta hi nahi tha aur main Irfan ko sab ke ware bolti bhi thi, sab ka miscall dikhati bhi thi... Maine bas Irfan se pyar kiya aur kisise bhi nahi...!!!"

Payal went on to write: "After we broke up... I fell ill... I couldn't work for years... but he was the only guy whom I loved... after that I never loved anybody."

"Areee @IrfanPathan kab tak muh pe dahi jamake rakhoge... kabhi toh mere kaam aao," she said.

"Irfan mera boyfriend pehle tha... we were dating since 2011 Aur isme shaadi 2016 mein kiya....," Payal wrote.

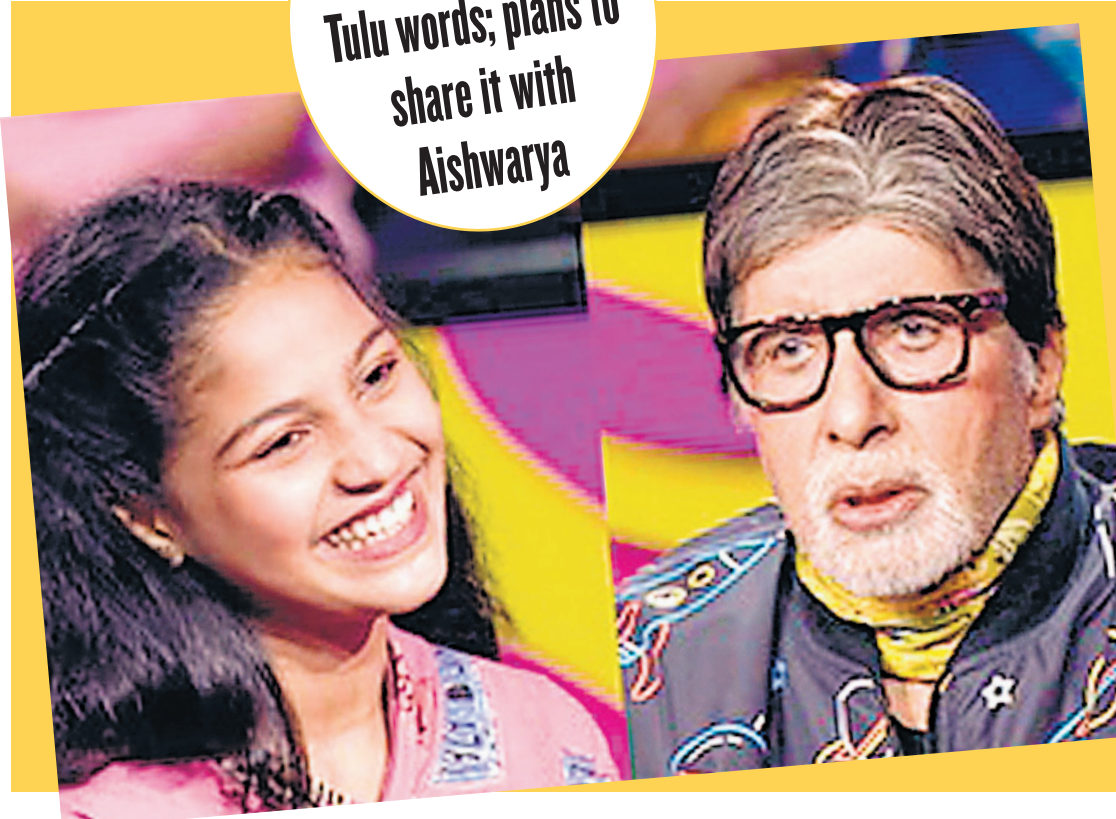
In 2020, Payal had spoken about alleged sexual harassment against filmmaker Anurag Kashyap. She had claimed that Anurag had stripped in front of her and tried to molest in 2014. However, Kashyap rubbished all allegations of sexual misconduct levelled against him by Payal.

She once again spoke against Kashyap: "Lekin ek baat aur bhi hai.... #anuragkashyap raped me lekin Aur koi matlab

#AkshayKumar ki jooti bhi nahi hai Anurag... but Akshay kumar ne mere saath koi bad-tameezi nahi ki, itna bada star hai... I will always respect him for that."



Amitabh Bachchan learns Tulu words; plans to share it with Aishwarya



Team Absolute | New Delhi

Megastar Amitabh Bachchan, who is a host on the quiz based reality show 'Kaun Banega Crorepati 15' learnt 'Tulu' words from a junior contestant, and shared how he will boast it in front of his daughter-in-law, and actress Aishwarya Rai Bachchan.

In the 79th episode, Big B welcomed Pratishta Shetty from Vapi, Gujarat, to the hot seat. Before the start, the contestant's father said: "All the best, 'kudre'."

Amitabh replied to her father, saying, "What does 'kudre' mean?" to which the contestant said: "Guess what 'kudre' means."

Big B asked Pratishta's father: "Is it her pet name?"

She replied to the actor, saying, "'Kudre' means horse in Kannada."

The 'Piku' actor then said: "Her pet name! Why do you call her that, sir?"

To which, her father said: "She runs around." Pratishta continued saying, "They call me 'kudre' and 'katthe, sir.'"

The actor curiously asked: "What's 'katthe'?"

To which she replied: "It means Donkey."

Amitabh said: "This is Tulu, correct?" Pratishta shared: "Yes. My mom speaks Tulu, sir."

The 'Brahmastra' actor then said: "I can go home and say at least two words now. Tell it to Aishwarya. My daughter-in-law speaks Tulu."

Contestant said: "She's from Mangalore."

The 81-year-old actor said: "I can't tell her this though. But will tell her that I have learnt two words."

"All right, sir, but don't call her that. She's beautiful. Why call her those names? Does she have any other pet name," asked Big B.

Pratishta added: "They call me Prati.", to which Big B replied: "Yes! This is nice."

'Kaun Banega Crorepati 15' airs on Sony.

Randeep Hooda, wife Lin Laishram make 1st public appearance in Mumbai after wedding

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Bollywood actor Randeep Hooda and Lin Laishram, who tied the nuptial knot in Imphal, Manipur on November 29, returned to Mumbai and made their first public appearance at the Mumbai airport.

While Randeep wore a simple all-white outfit, his wife, Lin looked beautiful in a red traditional salwar suit. They held hands as they posed for the paparazzi at Mumbai airport and walked towards their car.

The couple looked happy and all smiles as they posed for the cameras. The two got married in an intimate cere-

mony as per the Meitei traditions in the presence of family members and a few friends. Ahead of the wedding, Randeep had expressed his excitement at getting married in Laishram's Meitei traditions.

The couple took their wedding vows in the Shannapung resort. Randeep performed the rituals wearing a white kurta-pyjama as his wife Lin looked dazzling pretty in a white and pink saree paired with a black blouse. She completed her look with gorgeous gold jewellery. Randeep and Lin were in a relationship for a long time.

Lin has been a part of films such as 'Mary Kom', 'Rangoon' and recently in 'Jaane Jaan'. Randeep was last seen in

'Sergeant'. His upcoming film is 'Swatantrya Veer Savarkar', which also marks his directorial debut.

Earlier, Randeep and Lin had announced their marriage on Instagram, saying: "Taking a leaf out of the Mahabharata where Arjuna married Manipuri Warrior Princess Chitrangada, we are getting married with the blessings of our families and friends. As we embark on this journey, we seek your blessings and love for this union of cultures, for which we are forever indebted and grateful."

Randeep had also shared that a reception will take place at a later date in Mumbai.

Sandeep Reddy Vanga has proved ANIMAL is a violent movie

FILM REVIEW
BY YOGENDRA CHATURVEDI
(Running in Theatres)
Ratings: 4.5 / 5 (Four and half stars)

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Ranbir Kapoor and Bobby Deol's acting in the movie is one of their unforgettable work.

Anil Kapoor as always has been the best of him in each and every role and no one would have pulled up his character the way he did.

The movie is filled with action and emotions.

Each and Every actor in the movie has played their role in the best way possible.

absolute india

★★★★★

ANIMAL

Filled with ACTION and EMOTIONS

absolute india

INSTAGRAM PIC OF THE DAY

Masoom Shankar