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NATION

Maratha quotas: CM Shinde seeks to buy time till Feb 2024...



HOLYWOOD

absolutein

Jennifer Lopez, Jenifer Lewis sing together at her & Ben Affleck's...



SPORTS

IPL 2024 Auction: RR get Rovman Powell for Rs 7.4 crore, Travis...



49 MORE MPS SUSPENDED FOR REMAINDER OF WINTER SESSION

With the fresh suspension of 49 MPs from the Lok Sabha for the remainder of the Winter Session, the Opposition's Indian National Developmental Inclusive Alliance (INDIA) bloc has lost almost two-third of its strength in the House. The INDIA bloc MPs had been protesting in the House, demanding a statement from Union Home Minister Amit Shah, on the December 13 Parliament security breach. Tuesday's suspension of 49 MPs follows Monday's suspension of 33 MPs. Earlier on December 14 as many as 13 MPs were suspended from the Lok Sabha. Now, the total Lok Sabha MPs suspended stands at 95 out of 138 MPs of the INDIA bloc parties as only 43 MPs are left in the House. Now, only nine MPs of the Congress, including former party presidents Sonia Gandhi and Rahul Gandhi, are left in the House.



Team Absolute New Delhi

he Lok Sabha (LS) was on Tuesday adjourned amid uproar by opposition MPs and 49 opposition MPs were suspended for the remainder of Winter Session, including Congress MP Manish Tewari, Shashi Tharoor, NCP's Supriya Sule and NC MP Farooq Abdullah.

Other MPs suspended included Karti Chidambaram, Kinwar Danish Ali, Sudip Bandhopadhyay, Abdul Smad, Pradyut Bardoloi, Geeta Kora, SR Parthiban, A Ganeshmoorthy, Mala Rai, A Chellakumar, Dimple Yadav, Hasnain Masoodi, Rajiy Ranjan Singh, Santosh Kumar, Ravneet Bittu, Dinesh Yadav, K Sudhakaran, P P Mohammad Faizal, Amol Kole, Sushi Kumar Rinku, Sunil Kumar Singh, ST Hassan, Pratibha Singh, Chandreshwar Prasad. Adur Prakash and others were suspended for remainder of

Rajendra Agarwal, who was

name the MPs. Before moving the resolution, Parliamentary Affairs Minister Pralhad Joshi said that all of us had agreed that

we will not bring the placards.

unfortunate that I have to

Meanwhile, Law Minister Arjun Ram Meghwal moved the motion to suspend the MPs for remainder of the session for utter "disregard", raising slogans and bringing placards.

The house passed the resolution with a voice vote.

Following the suspension of 49 MPs, the House was adjourned till 2 p.m.

On Monday, 33 Lok Sabha MPs and 45 Rajya Sabha Mps were suspended. On December 14, 13 Lok Sabha MPs and one Rajya Sabha MP was also suspended.

The opposition bloc has been demanding for a statement by Home Minister Amit Shah over the December 13 Parliament security breach and revocation of suspension of MPs suspended on December 18 and 14

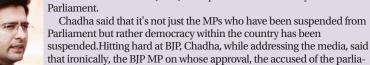
ALL PARTY PROTEST AGAINST SUSPENSION OF MPS ON DEC 22: KHARGE

New Delhi: Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge on Tuesday said that the Indian National Developmental Inclusive Alliance (INDIA) will start deliberating on the seat sharing process soon and also hold a joint protest on December 22 against the suspension of MPs.

Kharge said that the decision was taken at the fourth meeting of the INDIA bloc which met at the Ashoka Hotel in which 28 political parties participated. The meeting lasted for two to three hours."Today was the fourth meeting that took place in Delhi. In the meeting, 28 parties participated. All leaders presented their views and suggestions. Everyone unanimously decided to take forward the work of the INDIA bloc," Kharge said while talking to the media after the meeting."If all of us do not come together on a stage, then people will not identify the alliance and thus it was decided we will hold eight to ten meetings across the country," Kharge said. He said that the suspension of 141 MPs was also discussed in the meeting.

DEMOCRACY HAS BEEN SUSPENDED NOT MPS: RAGHAV CHADHA

New Delhi: The Aam Aadmi Party's (AAP) Rajya Sabha MP Raghav Chadha on Tuesday expressed anguish at the Central government for suspending opposition Members of Parliament (MPs) who questioned the security breach in



ment security breach entered the house, is still sitting in the parliament."It's ironic that with the signature of a BJP MP, two accused individuals obtained visitor passes and entered the Parliament to attack the house. Both those accused were, in a way, guests of the BJP MP. Despite this, this BJP MP is still sitting inside the house as an MP with no jeopardy to his membership," said Chadha.

ACT OF SOME LEADERS 'SHAMEFUL': RS CHAIRMAN

New Delhi: Rajya Sabha Chairman Jagdeep Dhankhar is unhappy after a Trinamool MP on Tuesday mocked him during an opposition protest in the Parliament premises.

Dhankhar said that Members of Parliament are mocking the institution of Chairman by taking him on. Dhankhar said in the House: "I have adjorned the House. You are not aware of the kind of response that is against this institution in the mind of the people and we had the occa-



Trinamool sets deadline of Dec 31 to finalise seat sharing talks of INDIA bloc

2023 | NEW DELHI

Team Absolute New Delhi

ven as the Indian National Developmental Inclusive Alliance (INDIA) bloc on Tuesday held the fourth meeting to devise a strategy to take on the BJP-led NDA in the 2024 Lok Sabha elections, the Trinamool Congress and many INDIA parties have set a December 31 deadline for finalising the seatsharing arrangement.

According to sources, the seat sharing talks will begin from Wednesday itself in many states and if the matter becomes complicated the issue would come to Delhi for final deliberations. This was the fourth meeting of the INDIA bloc, which was attended by Rahul Gandhi, Mamata Banerjee, Arvind Kejriwal, Farooq Abdullah, Nitish

Kumar, Rajiv Ranjan, Lalu Prasad Yadav, Tejashwi Yadav, Uddhav Thackeray, Sanjay Raut, MK Stalin, Sharad Pawar, Akhilesh Yadav and Ram Gonal Yaday. The source also

the opportunity to share their views and suggestions. The first meeting of the INDIA bloc took place in Patna

said that eight to ten joint pub-

lic meetings will be planned

from January onwards. During

the meeting, every leader got

on June 23 while the second meeting took place in Bengaluru on July 17 and 18.

The third meeting of the alliance was held in Mumbai on August 31 and September 1 and the 14-member coordination committee and 19-member election strategy committee were announced.

As many as 28 parties have come together to take on the BJP at the Centre in the 2024 Lok Sabha elections.

Delhi horror: Nine-year-old girl abducted, raped, killed; body dumped into canal



Team Absolute New Delhi

n a heart-rending incident, a nine-year-old girl in north Delhi was kidnapped, raped, and killed and her body dumped into a canal, police

the accused has been arrested. According to police, the kidnapping of a girl, a resident of Nangli Poona village, was

reported at Swaroop Nagar

police station on December 12

evening. An FIR under Section

363 of the Indian Penal Code

probe was initiated. The official said that the

(IPC) was registered and a

parents of the girl work in a factory as labourers and live in a rented accommodation.

"While the search for the girl was going on, police scanned the CCTV footage and traced the accused, identified as Sanjeev Rana, 52, a resident of Nangli Poona. However, when the police team reached to arrest him, it was revealed that the accused was admitted in a hospital at Rohini due to a serious traffic accident on December 15 and was unfit to make a statement," a senior police official said.

Meanwhile, during further investigation, it was found that the girl sat in the vehicle of the accused from a street near her home on December 12 at around 2 n m

88.78% active Covid cases in India found in Kerala

Thiruvananthapuram | Agencies

he number of active Covid cases in Kerala continues to remain at the top with 115 fresh cases getting reported in the past 24 hours, taking the number of active cases in the southern state to 1,749.

According to Centre's data, India reported 142 fresh cases on Monday, out of which 115 were reported from Kerala.

State Health Minister Veena George is closely monitoring the situation with the health authorities, who are of the opinion that the active caseload is high in Kerala because of increased testing of patients coming to the hospitals with fever and flu. At a meeting on Tuesday, George pointed out that no harsh restrictions will be put in place, adding that there is no reason to panic as the situation is under control.

Various types of fever, including dengue, leptospirosis and viral fever, have also been reported from across the state.

Masks have been recommended for all those visiting the hospitals and with Thiruvananthapuram and Kochi recording



higher number of cases, extra caution has been advised at these two places.

Authorities have been asked to ensure that all the facilities at the hospitals are kept ready.

Meanwhile, a meeting has been convened by Union Health Minister Mansukh Mandaviya on Wednesday, where all his state counterparts are expected to be present.

6.2-MAGNITUDE QUAKE IN CHINA KILLS 111 PEOPLE

Beijing: At least 111 people were killed after a massive earthquake measuring 6.2 on the Richter scale struck China's Gansu province, authorities said

on Tuesday. According to the China Earthquake Networks Center, the quake occurred at 11.59 p.m. on Monday night and had a focal depth of 10 km, reports Xinhua news agency.The epicentre Liugou Township is about 8 km from the county seat of Jishishan Bao'an, Dongxiang, Salar Autonomous County in Linxia Hui

Autonomous Prefecture, Gansu. The earthquake was also felt strongly in the cities of Xining and Haidong in Qinghai, where some houses collapsed and cracked. The fatalities were reported from Gansu and neighbouring Qinghai. The provincial fire and rescue department has sent 580 rescuers aided with 88 fire engines, 12 search and rescue dogs, more than 10,000 sets of equipment to the disaster area.The railway authority has suspended passenger and cargo trains passing through the quake zone and ordered a safety check of the tracks.

In the Dahejia Township where the temperature dropped to 16 degrees Celsius below zero at dawn, more than 140 medical staff at a local hospital were busy taking care of the injured people, some of whom also have loved ones out of contact in the quake.

President Xi Jinping has ordered full rescue efforts

Allahabad HC rejects Muslim plea against worship in Gyanvapi mosque

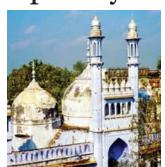
Prayagraj | Agencies

he Allahabad High Court on Tuesday rejected all petitions from the Muslim side, challenging the Hindus' plea to worship at the Gyanvapi mosque.

The petitions were filed by the Sunni Central Waqf Board and Anjuman Intezamia Masjid Committee regarding the ownership between the Gyanvapi Mosque and Kashi Vishwanath

Temple in Varanasi. The High Court rejected two petitions against the maintainability of a 1991 civil suit filed by Hindu worshippers and pending before a Varanasi District Court, and three against a 2021 Archaeological Survey of India

(ASI) survey order. The single-judge bench of Justice Rohit Ranjan Aggarwal also asked the lower court to complete the hearing on the matter within six months.



The High Court further said that if anything is left while conducting the survey, it can be done again, and that report could be submitted to the Varanasi District Court.The Muslim side had challenged the civil suit that sought the right to worship and also the Varanasi District Court's 2021 order of an ASI survey in the mosque complex. They had argued that the civil suit was barred under the 1991 Places of Worship Act.

The Hindu side, meanwhile, said in their civil suit that the Gyanvapi mosque is a part of the Kashi Vishwanath Temple.

During the hearing on Tuesday, the High Court said that the 1991 civil suit is maintainable and not barred by the 1991 Act, which prohibits the conversion of any place of worship and maintains the religious character of the site as it existed at the time of independence.

Justice Aggarwal had, on December 8, reserved the verdict after hearing arguments by the advocates of both petitioners and the respondent.

The verdict came a day after the ASI submitted its scientific survey report on the mosque complex before the Varanasi District Court in a sealed cover, which will be shared with the petitioners on December 21 and a copy of it will also be sent to the Supreme Court.

India Hits Out At IMF For Saying "Currency Intervention Excessive"

Team Absolute New Delhi

ndia pushed back against the International Monetary Fund for saying the Reserve Bank of India's intervention in the foreign-exchange market was excessive, implying that the country was trying to influence the level of the rupee.

The Washington-based lender said the currency moved within a very narrow range from December 2022 to October 2023, suggesting the central bank's intervention "likely exceeded levels necessary to address disorderly market conditions.

As a result, the IMF reclassified India's foreignexchange regime to a "stabilized arrangement" from a "floating" system, it said in its annual Article IV country report released on Monday. India "strongly disagreed" with the assessment, calling it "unjusti-



fied." the IMF said. The Reserve Bank of India stated that the period was restricted to a short-term, and that the IMF's assessment would fail over a two to five-year horizon, the fund said."The RBI strongly believes that such a view is incorrect as, in their view, it uses data selectively," the IMF said in its report. A RBI spokesperson didn't immediately respond to text messages seeking further information. The rupee weakened about 2% against the dollar between

December 2022 and October 2023, after falling about 8% in the prior 12 months. The RBI is estimated to have intervened to the tune of \$78 billion dollars in those nine months, according to Bloomberg Economics. The country's FX reserves of \$604 billion is approaching the record high \$642.5 billion reached in 2021. In its Article IV report, the IMF gave a fairly optimistic outlook for India's economy, saying it has the potential to grow faster than the fund's forecast of 6.3% in the current and next fiscal years if the government undertakes key structural reforms.India needs "ambitious" fiscal consolidation over the medium term in order to curb its public debt, the IMF said in an accompanying statement to its report. The central bank's current neutral monetary policy stance was "appropriate," and should help bring inflation back to the 4% target, it said.

Finance Ministry allows states to borrow additional Rs 60,877 crore for pension scheme

Team Absolute New Delhi

he Finance Ministry on Tuesday approved an additional borrowing of Rs 60,876.8 crore to 22 States in 2023-24 for contribution to the National Pension Scheme (NPS).

This will be over and above the net borrowing ceiling for 2023-24. The normal ceiling for net borrowing by states has been fixed at 3 per cent of their gross state domestic product (GSDP). The GSDP currently stands at Rs 8.59 lakh crore. The ministry also issued approval for raising Rs 6.99 lakh crore for open market borrowing and Rs 69,370.81 crore for availing of negotiated



loans during 2023-24. The finance ministry said it has also allowed extra borrowing to states equivalent to employer and employee share of contribution of its employees, over and above the 3 per cent ceiling. Earlier in June, the Centre had approved additional financial incentives worth Rs

66,413 crore to 12 states for power sector reforms.

The Union Finance Minister announced the initiative in the Union Budget 2021-22. Under this initiative, an additional borrowing space of up to 0.5 per cent of the GSDP is available to the states annually for a four-year period from 2021-22 to 2024-25.

On Tuesday, the ministry said that it had allowed additional borrowing of Rs 39,175 crore to 12 States in 2021-22 and Rs 27,238 crore to 6 states in 2022-23, linked to perform-

ance in the power sector. For 2023-24, states are eligible to borrow Rs 1.43 lakh crore on the recommendation of the power ministry.

MARATHA QUOTAS: CM SHINDE SEEKS TO BUY TIME TILL FEB 2024, JARANGE-PATIL STICKS TO DEC 24 ULTIMATUM

Nagpur | Agencies

n a major announcement, Maharashtra Chief Minister Eknath Shinde on Tuesday said that a special session of the Legislature would be convened in February 2024 where the Maratha reservation will be announced without affecting the quotas of any other community and within the legal framework.

Replying to a 17-hour long debate in the Assembly on the Maratha quotas issue in which 74 legislators participated, Shinde said that the report of the Sandeep Shinde Committee is expected within a month and the proposed curative petition in the Supreme Court would also be a ray of hope.

The report of the Backward Classes Commission will be available after a month, the government will study it and then announce the quotas for the Marathas in a special session of the legislature," he declared as the Opposition protested and staged a walkout during his speech.

However, Shivba Sanghatana leader Manoj Jarange-Patil said he was not concerned about any commission report, and said he would stick to the December 24 deadline for Maratha quotas as announced last month, after his hunger strike.

"The government must announce the quotas by December 24, failing which crores of Marathas will launch a fresh agitation," warned Jarange-Patil in his initial reactions. The CM said that the Marathas have contributed immensely to the development of the



state and society and the natural right for their quotas cannot be ignored for the community's progress, and all the political parties were unanimous on this.

However, in recent times, he said - without taking names - that certain attempts were being made to create a societal rift, which was unbecoming for a progressive state like Maharashtra.

Shinde said for the government, all castes and religions are equal and all sections of the society are entitled to their equal share in the development, and reiterated that the government was committed to give the reservation. He gave a backgrounder of the entire quotas issue, the steps taken by his government and earlier the regime of ex-CM Devendra Fadnavis, the court hurdles, the 56 peaceful mega-processions taken out by the Marathas, the recent agitation by all the Maratha groups since August, the various commissions that examined the matter and related issues.

The CM said that many Maratha-Kunbi Caste documents have been found in the past month or so and they are being issued the Kunbi OBC Caste certificates to enable them get the OBC quotas.

However, he warned that anybody taking false advantage with false documents, including the officials, would face stringent legal action, including jail and penalties. Shinde also appealed to the Maratha youth not to resort to extreme measures like suicide, and called upon all parties to help maintain law and order, while the government works to settle the quo-

HC asks Delhi govt about safety measures for women, suggests cameras on DTC buses

Team Absolute New Delhi

he Delhi High Court on Tuesday directed the Delhi government to provide information on the feasibility of installing cameras on DTC buses and alert buttons on the driver and conductor's seats to enhance the safety of

The court, hearing a Public Interest Litigation (PIL) initiated by it in 2012, following the tragic gang-rape of a 23-year-old woman in a moving bus in December 2012, raised several questions about steps taken to improve women's safety in the national capital.

The bench of Justices Kameswar Rao and Anoop Kumar Mendiratta questioned the government's counsel about the presence of cameras in DTC buses, the installation of push-totalk buttons on CCTV poles, the preservation duration of CCTV footage, and whether any audit is conducted on the functionality of installed CCTVs. It asked the Delhi government to submit a status report detailing the feasibility of incorporating cameras and alert buttons in DTC buses, along with information on the preservation period of CCTV data and compliance with earlier orders, including the consideration of placing hoardings or posters in public transport to raise awareness against harassment of women. The court also sought information on safety measures in taxis for women passengers, noting concerns about the lack of functional panic buttons in a majority of such vehicles.

In October, the court had asked the AAP gov-

NO 'SUNBURN' ON DEC 31, SAYS GOA TOURISM MINISTER



ernment to provide its stance on placing posters or hoardings in buses and other public transport in the national capital to raise awareness against harassment of women and to enhance women's safety. Advocate Meera Bhatia, serving as Amicus Curiae, had suggested that the Delhi government should consider placing posters indicating that harassment is a serious and punishable offense, as it would act as a deterrent. The Delhi government's counsel had informed the court that the installation of "push-to-talk or panic buttons" on CCTV poles is under active consideration by Delhi Police's Technology Division. In August, the Delhi Police informed the court that a total of 6.630 CCTV cameras have been strategically placed in vulnerable areas across the national capital as part of efforts to enhance the safety of women. The court was told that these cameras are being monitored through 50 master

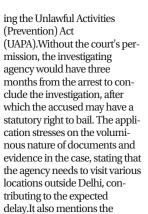
NewsClick row: Delhi Police seek more time for probe, court posts hearing for Dec 22

Team Absolute New Delhi

he Delhi Police on Tuesday moved an application before a court here seeking more time to complete the investigation in a case lodged under the provisions of the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act regarding allegations that the NewsClick portal received money to spread pro-China propaganda.

The application was moved before Special Judge Hardeep Kaur of the Patiala House Courts, who posted the matter for hearing on December 22, when the two accused --NewsClick founder-editor Prabir Purkayastha and Human Resources head Amit Chakravarty -- will be produced before the court on expiry of their judicial custody.

The application seeks an extension for the maximum period allowed under the law, which is 180 days from the day of the accused's arrest in cases filed under special acts, includ**NEWS** CLICK



necessity for judicial orders to

potential witnesses related to

Chakravarty Both Purkayastha and Chakravarty had moved the court seeking the release of their question certain individuals or electronic devices seized by the police and bail, respectively

the matter.

Recently, the court had dis-

missed an application moved

by Purkayastha seeking release

of his electronic devices seized

The judge had dismissed the

plea saying the ground was not

enough to allow the application

at this stage. On December 1,

December 22 the judicial cus-

the court had extended till

tody of Purkayastha and

for probe in the matter.

oa Tourism Minister Rohan Khaunte on Tuesday reiterated that 'Sunburn Music Festival' will take place from December 28 to 30 in North Goa and not on the last day of

"We have issued a provisional NOC to Sunburn for December 28 to 30 and have constituted a committee to see if the guidelines laid by the High Court are being adhered," Khaunte said.

He said that nobody should send the wrong message to the public about the dates of Sunburn.

"We will issue notice to newspapers who have published that it will also happen on December 31. We have clearly mentioned on a provisional NOC that Sunburn will take place from December 28 to 30. Those who send the wrong message will have to reply,'

Considering the opposition by locals, last week Goa Tourism Department had refused to grant permission to 'Sunburn Music Festival' on December 31. The Empowered Committee of the Goa Tourism Department, headed by



Khaunte has also refused to grant permission for the music to be played beyond 10 p.m."We have given provisional approval to organise Sunburn from December 28 to 30. They should stop taking us for granted. They should not expect that we will dance to their tunes," Khaunte said, adding Sunburn will be held only for three days.

Khaunte said that organisers had sought permission from 4 p.m. till midnight, but the committee has granted

the time from 4 p.m. to 10 p.m. He said that the issues have been also discussed with Chief Minister Pramod Sawant. Sawant had earlier said that if people don't want the 'Sunburn Music Festival' to be held on December 31.

India tops global remittances list for 2023 with \$125 bn inflow

Team Absolute New Delhi

he inward remittances to India in 2023 increased by 12.3 per cent to \$125 billion from 111.22 billion in 2022, according to the latest data released by the World Bank.

India's inward remittances now account for 3.4 per cent of the country's gross domestic product (GDP).The World Bank's "Migration and Development Brief", released on Monday, states that India continues to be the highest recipient of remittances globally, followed by Mexico (\$67 billion) and China (\$50 billion). India currently accounts for 66 per cent of all remittances to South Asia, high-

er than 63 per cent in 2022. According to the data, the growth rate of remittances was highest in Latin America and the Caribbean (8 per cent), followed by



South Asia (7.2 per cent) and East Asia and the Pacific (3 per cent). The main factor behind rising remittances to India was declining inflation and strong labour markets in high-income source countries, which boosted remittances from skilled Indians in the US, UK and Singapore.

These three countries account for as much as 36 per cent of total remittance flows to India. $Higher\,inflows\,from\,the\,Gulf$

cially the United Arab Emirates (UAE), which accounts for 18 per cent of India's total remittances, the second-largest after the US.

"Remittance flows to India ben-

efited particularly from its February 2023 agreement with the UAE for establishing a framework to promote the use of local currencies for cross-border transactions and cooperation for interlinking payment and messaging systems," the report said. "The use of dirhams and rupees in cross-border transactions would be instrumental in channelling more remittances through formal channels."

Another important factor was the low remittance cost in South Asia. At 4.3 per cent, the cost of sending \$200 to South Asia was 30 per cent lower than the global average of 6.2 per cent in the sec-

MINOR BOYS RAPE 10-YEAR-OLD GIRL AT KNIFE-POINT, RECORD ACT

Kalaburagi, (Karnataka): A disturbing incident of two minor boys raping a 10-year-old girl at knife-point

and making a video of the act, has been reported from Kalaburagi district

on Tuesday. The incident had taken place in the limits of Kalagi police station and according to the

police the girl was living with her relatives as her parents had gone to Mumbai for work

While she was on her way to school, two boys, aged 14 and 16 accosted her and took her to an isolated place. They threatened the girl with a knife and gang raped her. The accused even recorded the act on their mobile phones. Police registered a case under the provisions of the Pocso Act and are investigating the matter. More details are yet to emerge regarding the inci-

Excise policy case: ED issues second summon to Kejriwal for Dec 21

pelling more troubles for Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal ahead of his planned 10-day Vipassana session (December 19 to 30), the Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Monday asked him to appear before the agency on December 21 in

connection with the alleged excise policy scam. An ED source said the agency has asked the Delhi Chief Minister to appear before it on

The fresh summon came when Kejriwal is all set to leave for his 10-day annual Vipassana session starting December 19.According to some sources, Kejriwal is likely to go ahead with the Vipassana session as scheduled. Kejriwal had earlier skipped the ED summon on November 2 in connection with the case.

Kejriwal had also dubbed his summon as illegal and politically motivated.

He had also said that the notice was sent at the behest of the BJP."The notice has been sent



to ensure that I am unable to go for election campaigning in four states. The ED should withdraw the notice immediately," the AAP leader

"Smart India Hackathon" at Poornima Institute, Jaipur

Jaipur | Agencies

n a momentous event for technology enthusiasts and aspiring innovators, Poornima Institute of Engineering and Technology (PIET), Jaipur is hosting two days' grand finale of the "Smart India Hackathon (SIH) 2023" in the software category. The event encompasses five problem statements of Government of Jharkhand, to be attempted and solved by around 180 participants from selected 30 teams from premier technical institutes across the nation like IIT's, NIT's, IIIT's, VIT and many

The inaugural ceremony of the SIH finale was held on Tuesday and it featured distinguished guests from IT Industry who have left an indelible mark in the world of technology. Manoj Pipersania, founder of Softserv INC., shared his wisdom as Chief Guest, reminding students of his "Four Phases for project success: Team Formation, Brainstorming, Norming, and Performance".Dr. Munish Jindal, founder & CEO of HoverRobotix, was the Guest of Honor.

The local Inaugural ceremony followed by Central Inauguration under the aegis of Ministry



of Education and immediately after the same 36 hours of ecstasy of technology will be showcased by youth travelling from various parts of the Nation. The event will culminate with five winner teams who shall be awarded Rs. one lakh each as prize money. It is noted that this SIH-2023, is organised by the Government of India in collaboration with the Ministry of Education; Ministry of Education's Innovation Cell; All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE), and I4C (Innovations for a Connected World). It is the largest of its kind in the country. It provides a platform for participants from 14 states and 26 cities to collaborate and address real-world challenges posed by various government departments.

Discover Christmas and Ring in the New Year in Grandeur at Jaipur Marriott Hotel

Lalit Sharma | Jaipur

his festive season, Jaipur Marriott Hotel invites you to immerse yourself in the spirit of Christmas and celebrate the dawn of the New Year in opulent style. From enchanting decorations to delectable dining experiences, the hotel is set to be a haven of festive joy for guests

Step into a world of festive wonder as Jaipur Marriott Hotel transforms into a magical Christmas haven. Revel in the holiday spirit with an array of offerings, including a delicious daily breakfast at the award-winning Okra Restaurant. On Christmas Eve, guests booking a room for the 24th of December 2023 can indulge in a sumptuous dinner and beverages from 19:00hrs to 23:00hrs. The celebrations continue on Christmas Day with a celebratory brunch and beverages (applicable when the room is booked for the 24th of December 2023) from 13:00hrs to 16:00hrs.Children are in for a treat with unlimited select soft beverages, while adults can savor the season with unlimited select alcohol. Live entertainment will further elevate the holiday experience, making it a memorable Christmas celebration for all. As the year comes to a close, Jaipur Marriott Hotel invites you to welcome the New Year in style. The package includes daily breakfast, a lavish New Year's Eve Gala Dinner, and beverages (applicable when



the room is booked for the 31st of December 2023) from 20:00hrs to 00:00hrs. On the 30th of December 2023 and the 1st of January 2024, guests can enjoy a buffet dinner at Okra. Dedicated to family fun, the hotel offers a special kids' section with their favorite food and games. Kids can relish unlimited select soft beverages, while adults can partake in unlimited select alcohol. Live entertainment will add a touch of glamour to the New Year festivities.

In addition to the enchanting staycation packages, Jaipur Marriott Hotel presents an array of Food and Beverage (FNB) offers for those seeking to elevate their New Year celebrations. This New Year's Eve, immerse yourself in joy, laughter, and culinary delights at the charming venues of Okra, Saffron, and Lounge 18.

STUDENTS STRIPPED, **BEATEN UP BY TEACHER AS PUNISHMENT IN** K'TAKA; ACCUSED **ARRESTED**

Bidar: The Karnataka police arrested a physical education teacher attached to a private school under the POCSO Act on Tuesday for allegedly making the students strip and then beating them.

The incident had taken place in the limits of the Humnabad police station in Bidar district. According to the police, the teacher engaged in this act as punishment for students causing

disturbance in the classroom. The accused teacher subjected the students in the 9th and 10th grades to this ordeal.

The students reported that the teacher not only abused them but also threatened them with consequences if they disclosed the incident to anyone. However, the parents noticed injury marks on their children's bodies and learned about the incident. Subsequently, the parents filed a complaint with the police, leading to the arrest of the teacher.

absoluteindia

CENTRE'S GUIDELINES ON NEW COVID-19 VARIANT IMPLEMENTED IN MADHYA PRADESH

Team Absolute Bhopal

adhya Pradesh Chief Minister Mohan Yadav has said his government has implemented guidelines issued by the Centre in connection with a new variant of COVID-19, amid an uptick in the viral infection cases in some

Yadav on Monday night visited Hamidia Hospital, the largest state government hospital in Bhopal, to take stock of the arrangements.

"The health department is working with full efficiency to deal with COVID-19 as well as all other diseases," Yadav told reporters after visiting the medical facility.

We have implemented guidelines issued by the Centre regarding a new variant of COVID-19 in the entire state," he said.

Yadav said the country got victory over the pandemic earlier also under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi.The Chief Minister also interacted with the attendants of patients during the visit to the hospi-

On Monday, the Centre asked states and Union Territories to maintain constant vigil amid the rise in



the first case of the new JN.1 variant in the country.

India's first case of COVID-19 subvariant JN.1 was detected in Kerala on December 8. Earlier, a traveller from Tamil Nadu's Tiruchirappalli district tested positive for the JN.1 variant in Singapore.In a letter to states and Union Territories, Union Health

Secretary Sudhansh Pant has underlined that "due to consistent and collaborative actions between the Centre and state governments, we have been able to sustain the (COVID-19) trajectory at sustainable low rates"

"However, as the COVID-19 virus continues to circulate and its epidemiology behaviour gets settled

with Indian weather conditions and circulation of other usual pathogens, it is important to keep the momentum going to effectively deal with the

challenges in public health," he said. Recently, a few states like Kerala have reported a slight increase in the number of COVID-19 cases, Mr Pant

In Madhya Pradesh Assembly, Nehru out, Ambedkar in, Congress protests

he new BJP government in Madhya Pradesh held its first Assembly session Monday and triggered a row after a portrait of former Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru was swapped out for one of the late Dr BR Ambedkar. It was one of two behind the Speaker's Chair; the other is of Mahatma

The change has prompted protests from the Congress. The opposition party said it had no objection to a photograph of Dr Ambedkar in the Assembly, but would not accept the removal of Nehru's portrait.

The Congress accused its rival of "working day and night to erase history". A spokesperson said the party "condemns the removal of Nehruji's photograph", and that it revealed the BJP's "mentality". The party demanded the portrait be re-installed "immediately... otherwise we will do it at the same place".

Assembly officials have said the swap took place in July, on the orders of then Speaker Girish Gautam; the four-time MLA from Deotalab noted the portrait needed repair and had it shifted to another room.

"The poster was in bad shape... so the then Speaker decided to replace it in July... we have a Gandhi-Nehru room in the assembly so the picture of the first Prime Minister was placed there," AP Singh, the Principal Secretary of the Madhya Pradesh Assembly, told NDTV in response to the row.

The picture was, therefore, changed earlier but this only came to light this week, after the new Assembly took its seat for the four-day



inaugural session, which includes swearing-in of MLAs. Nevertheless, the Congress' Umang Singhar has accused the BJP of playing "cheap politics". "The BJP wants the Congress to appear anti-Dalit... this is their thinking. They do not want to talk on the issues of the state, he said, "When the time comes, you will also see the picture of (Nathuram) Godse (the man who assassinated Mahatma Gandhi). There should not be such cheap politics...

The full-length photo on the right side of the Speaker's Chair is that of Gandhi.

The BJP has hit back through former education minister Inder Singh Parmar, who accused the Congress of spreading "misconceptions". "Congress cannot think of anything except Nehru family. We want to tell them Nehru's philosophy is different from that of the country," he declared.

"Ambedkar's contribution is many times more than Nehru's contribution."

The first session of the Assembly began with pro-tem Speaker Gopal Bhargava administering the oath to the new MLAs. The session also saw the Congress' Umang Singhar, who won the Gandhwani seat, elected Leader of the

BJP showed small mentality by removing Nehru's picture: Kamal Nath

Team Absolute Bhopal

ormer Chief Minister Kamal Nath has termed the removal of the picture of the country's first Prime Minister Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru along with Mahatma Gandhi behind the Speaker's chair in the Madhya Pradesh Assembly as a small mentality of the BJP.Kamal Nath wrote on Twitter, "Removing the portrait of the great freedom fighter, country's first Prime Minister and nation builder Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru from the Madhya Pradesh Assembly is extremely condemnable. I welcome the installation of the portrait of Constitution maker Baba Saheb Ambedkar in the Assembly. Baba Saheb's portrait could have been placed at a place of honor in the Assembly. But, Pandit Nehru's portrait was deliber-



ately removed."

Referring to what he had said earlier, he said, "I want to remind that I had announced that if the Congress government is formed in Madhya Pradesh, the biggest statue of Baba Saheb Ambedkar will be installed. If the BJP government is actually If she wanted to respect Dr. Ambedkar, she too would have taken the initiative to install the biggest statue of Baba Saheb in the state, and not show her small mentality by removing Pt. Nehru's picture.'

Kamal Nath demanded that the portrait of Pandit Nehru be installed with respect in the Madhya Pradesh Assembly and the construction of the tallest statue of Dr. Ambedkar in the state should be started.

Meat and fish markets will be built in urban areas in Madhya Pradesh

Team Absolute Bhopal

he government has banned the sale of meat and fish in the open market in Madhya Pradesh. The process of action against shops operating against rules is continuing. In such a situation, the Chief Minister of the state, Dr. Mohan Yadav has given instructions to create separate markets for the sale of meat and fish in urban bodies.

Chief Minister Dr. Mohan Yadav has told the Urban Development and Housing Department that the state government has imposed a ban on open sale of meat and fish. To ensure that their vendors do not face any problem, urban bodies should necessarily construct buildings for the meat-fish market. Until the buildings are constructed, a place for selling meat and fish should be earmarked and arrangements for temporary sheds should be ensured immediately. This facility should be made available in urban bodies as well as big rural pan-

Chief Minister Dr. Yadav said that necessary plants should be set up using latest technology to ensure that water from Kanh River reaches Kshipra River only after purification. In this regard, instructions were also given to immediately organize a



joint meeting of the Water Resources and Urban Development and Housing Departments. The Chief Minister has said that the rules and procedures of building permission and compounding should be simplified. The rules should be clear and simple, which the common man can easily understand and he should not face any problem. A common person builds a house once in his life, arrangements for building permission etc. should be made in such a way that he does not get troubled and the work is done within the stipulated time. Arrangements for quick passing of maps from urban bodies should be ensured. Assess the software related to building

permits and find out how many days, on an average, building permits are being issued at present.

The Chief Minister said that permission should also be obtained from urban bodies for the construction of government buildings. All the agencies involved in the construction of government buildings including Municipal Corporation, Public Works Department, Development Authority, Housing Board, Tourism, take building permission and take mandatory care of building line, open space, parking etc. during construction. Effective action should be ensured in the field of TDR and TOD so that residents get facilities and better planning of cities can also be ensured.

Principal Secretary of Urban Development and Housing Department, Neeraj Mandloi informed that Madhya Pradesh has been first in the country in Smart City Mission 1.0, Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana and PM Swanidhi Yojana.

Along with this, the state is included among the leading states of the country in AMRUT 1.0, Swachh Bharat Mission 1.0 and DE-NULM. In the presentation, the progress of the ongoing capital schemes for urban infrastructure development like Kayakalp, Master Plan Road, Smart City, Unity Mall

CELEBRATION OF 'WORLD AIDS FORTNIGHT' BY AIIMS BH

Team Absolute Bhopal

Torld AIDS Fortnight" was observed by AIIMS Bhopal from 1st to 15th December 2023. Under the dynamic leadership of Prof. (Dr.) Ajai Singh, Executive Director and able guidance of Dr. Debasis Biswas, Prof. and Head, Department of Microbiology, AIIMS Bhopal various programmes were organized during the fortnight. The theme for this year was 'Let Communities

Throughout fortnight, HIV awareness activities were conducted at AIIMS Bhopal and in the community. At AIIMS Bhopal, Nukkad Natak was performed by MBBS students, 2022 batch and Nursing students to raise awareness about HIV/AIDS among the general public and patients. Mrs. Sarojmani Nandey, Mr. Arun Vishwakarma, Mr. Jais Raj Bhargav [Integrated Counselling and Testing Centre (ICTC) staff] and Priyanka Waghmare, Ratna Bachley [Sampoorna Surksha Kendra (SSK) staff] conducted awareness drive for the patients and



their attendees who visited ICTC centre during the fortnight. Dr. Shashwati Nema, Additional Professor, Microbiology conducted an interactive session for MBBS students on prevention of blood and body fluid exposure and post-exposure prophylaxis. Community outreach activities were organ-

ized at Navin Public Higher Secondary Government School, AIIMS Bhopal construction site, Anganwadi, and Peripheral health centers by departmental faculties and ICTC/SSK staff. During HIV awareness camps at these sites students, migrants/laborers, pregnant women, patients and their attendees were educated about the transmission, prevention, and treatment of HIV/AIDS. Quiz, poster and slogan-making competitions were organized for students of the adolescent age group.

IEC material was distributed to all the attendees of the awareness camp. More than 2000 participants were benefited from the awareness activities organized by the Department of Microbiology during fortnight.

Shivraj met Nadda in Delhi, discussed new role

Team Absolute Bhopal New Delhi

ormer Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh Shivraj Singh Chauhan is in New Delhi on Tuesday on the call of the national leadership of BJP and he also met the party's national president JP Nadda. There is talk that Chauhan's role in the party may be decided.

Bharatiya Janata Party registered a big victory in the assembly elections held in the state and Mohan Yadav was given the responsibility of Chief Minister in place of Chauhan. While leaving the post, former Chief Minister Chauhan had said that I will not go to Delhi to ask for anything for myself, it would be better for me to die than this.

Former Chief Minister Chauhan, while discussing with reporters yesterday, had accepted that the National President had called him to Delhi. Later it was changed and Chauhan reached Delhi on Tuesday. He met National



President Nadda. This meeting is being considered very important politically. Cabinet expansion is proposed in the state in the coming days, and Lok Sabha elections are also in the coming time. There is a strong discussion in the political circles that a decision can be taken on the role of Chauhan in the coming times, and the party can hand over a big responsibility to him and a decision in this

Dr. Govind Singh announced not to contest elections

Team Absolute Bhopal

ormer MLA from Lahar Assembly seat of Madhya Pradesh and senior Congress leader Dr. Govind Singh has announced not to contest the assembly elections. He also blamed the alleged malfunction in EVMs for the defeat in the assembly elections. In the gratitude meeting organized at the Pharmacy College of Lahar yesterday, Singh said that the people of the area should not be disappointed. As long as we are there, we will stand at your service day and night.

I will never turn my back on the people of the area. Singh said that he will fight with all his might against the injustice being done to the public and will extend full support. The people of Lahar made me MLA for 33 years. Due to the love of the public, he was a minister of three departments and was also the leader of opposition in the Madhya Pradesh Assembly. I don't want anything more than this, now I will not even contest legislative elections. Dr. Govind Singh held EVMs responsible for his defeat.Dr. Singh said that now not by becoming an MLA but by becom-



ing Govind Singh of the year 1980, I will take to the streets and protest against the atrocities being committed on the people. Dr. Singh said that now I also believe that elections are being won by tampering with the machines. Because when everyone was saying that BJP has gone and Congress government will come, then Home Minister Amit Shah had said that more than 160 seats will come and 163 seats have come, which means clearly that elections are being won only by rigging the machines.Dr. Singh said that he will never let the workers get frustrated and disappointed. Dr. Singh said that we will also work with the leader whomever you people choose from

Team Absolute Lucknow/Bhopal

he King George's Medical University (KGMU) in Lucknow has approached AIIMS, Bhopal to start paediatric trauma section at

A knowledge sharing plan is being worked upon where resident doctors will visit Bhopal and learn how the paediatric trauma emergency works

Prof Ajai Singh, director of AIIMS, Bhopal, who was here recently, said, that up to 35 per cent of serious injuries among children remain overlooked, leading to greater trouble and even permanent disability later on.

"Internationally over 25 per cent paediatric injuries are missed, but in our country the ratio is 35 per cent. This is because we lack focus on injuries among children and often



to set up paediatric trauma section

lack of training to identify such injuries makes the job tough," said

"Paediatric trauma cases need a different kind of speciality/ability to diagnose the injury. Children are

unable to tell specifically and keep crying out of shock and pain, and here is the role of expert," he added.

Prof Singh who has established India's first paediatric trauma wing at the AIIMS, Bhopal added, "Injury in a child is different than an adult. The point of swelling might not be the same as injury is. Hence learning to make diagnosis for paediatric trauma helps in better and speedy treat-

According to Dr Singh, the solution to the issue is not separate centres for treating paediatric trauma but separate wards and separate and trained

"Available diagnostic such as X-ray, CT scan and pathology can be used. The only difference is upon reaching triage area adult and paediatric patients are to be handled by separate staff," he explained.

EDITOR'S SPECS

BJP 'unhappy' with K'taka leaders

he BJP high command is reportedly displeased with the Karnataka BJP unit for not addressing the issue of a horrifying incident in which a mother was paraded on the streets after being stripped naked, according to sources. This incident occurred following the elopement of her son with a local girl when the winter Assembly session was being held at the Suvarna Vidhana Soudha in Belagavi city. The incident had shocked the state and proved to be a significant embarrassment for the Congress government, as it happened in a place located close to the Suvarna Vidhana Soudha in Belagavi. The BJP high command criticized its state leadership for not raising the issue during the session and for not holding the Congress government accountable for the failure in law and order system and protection of women. Sources state that BJP national President J.P. Nadda criticized the state leadership for not effectively addressing the issue during the state Assembly session. The incident occurred on December 10 when Kamalavva, a resident of Vantamuri village, was dragged outside and stripped naked. She was paraded naked and tied to an electric pole and assaulted after her son eloped with a girl from the village. The family members of the girl, infuriated by this, unleashed terror on the boy's mother. The Karnataka High Court strongly criticized the Congress government for the failure of the police department to prevent the incident. The bench, headed by Chief Justice P.B. Varale and Justice Krishna S. Dixit, remarked on December 14, "What will be the fear among other women? She will feel unsafe in the country. It did not even happen in Mahabharata. Draupadi had Lord Krishna who came up to help her, but in the modern world, no one came to help her. Unfortunately, this is a world of

They Call It Marketing!

Vinod Mirani

hat we need in the film industry is writers who can turn out a decent script that appeals to all classes of the audience. That has not happened, so the makers have to keep devising new gimmicks to promote a film. Isn't the star power good enough?

Really speaking, films never needed marketing because they have a ready and keen viewership and, still, new-generation whizkids try to deviate from the traditional and foolproof promotion strategies and come up with complicated ideas to promote a film that serve no purpose.

The recent one is about how the promos or trailers are released on digital platforms before a

As if calling these trailers promos or trailers was not enough, now they are named in a manner that they coincide with a film's theme or title! Oh, yes, they were also called teasers for some

The trailers of 'Dunki' starring Shah Rukh Khan, for instance, are titled Drop 1, Drop 2 and so on! It seems the film is about illegal migration in countries such as the UK and the US and the activity is described as 'donkey flights' in the North. This is also known as 'kabutarbazi' in

'Dunki' is yet to release and the connection of naming or ranking the trailers as a series of 'Drops' with the film's story remains unclear so far. The tragedy is that those unaware of this bright idea but searching for promos of 'Dunki' on YouTube will still have to type in the keywords 'Dunki promo'!

I don't know who thought of this idea because you may publicise a film, but how will you tell people that when you look for 'Dunki' promos, kook for Drop 1 and so on!

'Dunki', though, is not the only one to have people with such grand ideas. There are quite a few other films being promoted this way. I have often mentioned 'bhed chaal' in the film industry. If one filmmaker does or tries to do something different, others follow him and make it a

The 'Jawan' trailer was launched as a Prevue. The 'Pathan' trailer as 'Pathan ka conversation' and Tiger 3 as 'Tiger ka message'; for the 'Dream Girl' trailer the name was 'Pooja ka kiss'. Films such as 'Kisi Ka Bhai Kisi Ki Jaan', 'Tu Jhoothi Main Makkar' and 'Rocky Aur Rani Ki Prem Kahani', all followed and dubbed their promos as something or the other. Did it help?

The thing is that the number of hits on promos released on YouTube are seen by many more people than those who watch the movie. So, hits on an online promo are not a measure of viewers attracted to the cinemas and, hence, nothing to



gloat about.

What worked when there was no Internet and no social media? They relied on street publicity. Posters of varied sizes -- 30"x40" or six sheeters (5'x10') and so on -- were plastered all over the cities. There were no radio jingles yet, forget television. The big attractions in those days, though, were trailers played in the cinemas. These promos were so exciting that people going for a movie made sure they reached in time so as not to miss the trailer of the forthcoming film. They just about summed up an upcoming film in three minutes with onscreen captions such as Drama, Romance, Music, Emotions, Comedy and Action. The prospective viewers instantly decided if they were going to catch that film.

The Internet and social media are not devised to spread lies or deceive. What good are these hits on an X post or YouTube promo because it is common knowledge that an army of bots are engaged to produce these hits.

What are the cinema chains doing in the name of marketing?

On Monday, the fourth day after the release of 'Animal', they took prospective spectators who came to the booking window by surprise when

the admission rates were hiked suddenly and arbitrarily from for Rs 150 to Rs 300 out of the blue in a matter of minutes.

By the way, the online booking site still claimed that Rs 150 was the rate and the booking chart showed an almost empty house. There were some unhappy people at the booking window and they made sure the video went viral. This was contrary to the normal practice of reducing admission rates on the Monday or Tuesday after a film's release.

Now, is this any way of attaining the set target, which nowadays is anything between Rs 500 crore to Rs 1,000 crore? I think it is easier to fake figures on social media like it is done with the figures of all the major films lately, instead of cheating people with ad hoc admission rate hikes.

Suppose a young lad had somehow put together Rs 300 for two tickets to take his girlfriend out on a movie date, but comes to the cinema to learn that he cannot afford the revised rates. It would be awkward for him and a real letdown!

Now, PVR's newly acquired property at the Jio World Plaza in BKC, Mumbai, boasts of being India's "first cinema with bar and lounge"

Multiplexes have food plazas and, if you order, the snacks are delivered to your seat. And they are located within the cinema lobby. As for the lounge and bar, it is not the same as a food plaza and can't serve alcohol at your seat. It is just another facility attached to the property.

Publicising it as a multiplex with a bar is misleading. Airports have bars and lounges, but you cannot carry your drink to the flight. At least not in India. BKC is a purely commercial area with few residential buildings. More residential properties are still in the development stage and the present population of the area would not be more than 80,000. The area gets so deserted post office hours that even transport is hard to find.

Being in a commercial area, lounges and bars may still attract patrons who wish to discuss business or unwind over an after-office drink or two! The same cannot be assured for this sixscreen multiplex.

international

Military offensive in Gaza to continue: Israeli leaders to US NSA

Tel Aviv Agencies

sraeli leaders have told US National Security Advisor continue its military offensive in the Palestinian enclave of Gaza Strip, despite the international calls for a ceasefire.

Duryodhanas and Dushyasanas."

Sullivan was in Israel on Thursday for meetings with officials as the US voiced its concerns about the rising civilian casualties in the continued Israeli strikes on Gaza.

Speaking to the press alongside Sullivan, Israeli Defence Minister Yoav Gallant said that the war against Hamas "will require a long period -- it will last more than several months", Xinhua news agency reported.



The two met in the Israeli Defence Ministry in Tel Aviv to discuss the Israeli offensive in Gaza, its border conflict with Lebanon, and dozens of

hostages remain kept in Gaza, according to a statement released by the Israeli Defense Ministry.Referring to the Yemeni Houthi forces' attacks

on Israeli-linked ships as well as Eilat, an Israeli resort city on the shore of the Red Sea, port "international efforts in countering naval threats and will defend itself against any

Later, Sullivan met with Prime Minister Israeli Benjamin Netanyahu, who thanked the US for its "support for Israel in the supply of munitions, in blocking the attempts at the UN to stop the fighting, and in the assistance in returning our hostages".

Sullivan said that Israel has "the support of the United States as you take on this terror-

Indian-origin hotel owners arrested in US for 'hiding' fugitives

New York | Agencies

Sanaa Agencies

October 7.

wo Indian-origin hotel owners have been arrested in the US state of **▲** Tennessee for allegedly lying to the police about the whereabouts of fugitives thom they hid inside their huil

Dakshaben Patel and Harshil Patel, who own the Super 8 and Mountain Inn in Monteagle, were each charged with felony on Wednesday for making false reports to police officers during an investigation on July 18. Fox News reported.

The Monteagle Police Department said their officers had been conducting surveil-

he Iran-backed Houthi

militia in Yemen has

claimed a drone attack

on an Israel-bound cargo ship in the Red Sea, amid increasing

tensions in the region since the

Israel-Hamas war erupted on

"The military operation

against the Mersik Gebrlater

container vessel that was head-

ing to Israel was precise and

caused damage to the ship,'

Xinhua news agency quoted

Houthi military spokesman

"The attack came after the

ship's crew refused to respond

to the call of our naval forces."

Yehya Sarea as saying in a state-

ment late Thursday.



lance on the rear of the hotel due to "high drug transition" in the area. They spotted two individuals on the bal-

Yemen's Houthi militia claims attack on

cony, and identified them as having felony warrants out of Franklin County.

Officers chased the wanted suspects on foot and quickly took them into custody. After interrogation, investigators found that ner of the building" and determined that was where the fugitives had been living,

"Both Patel subjects had been advised multiple times about the wanted suspects and had lied to officers about their residence at the hotel," the department said in

I don't think Trump is right person to be President right now: Haley

ndian-American

Haley, who has emerged as La strong contender in the Republican presidential primary race, doesn't think her rival Donald Trump is the right person to be President at the moment.

the fourth During debate Republican December 6, Haley, the former South Carolina Governor, did not answer whether Trump is fit to be Ppresident, but she told ABC News that it is not about fitness but rather Trump is just not the right person to be President right now.

"It's not about fitness. I think he's fit to be President. It's 'Should he be President?' I don't think he should be President. I thought he was the right President at the right time," Haley said in an inter-

view that was aired on Monday. "We've got to look at the issues that we're dealing with, coming forward with new solutions, not focusing on negativity and baggage of the past. So it's not about being fit. It's just I don't think he's the right per-



son to be President," she said. Trump maintains an unprecedented lead over his rivals in both early state and national polls, with 61 per cent of self-identified Republicans saving they would vote for the former President in the stateby-state nominating contest, according to a recent

Reuters/Ipsos opinion poll. Haley, who served as Trump's UN ambassador for

the first two years of his administration, has urged the country to move past him in recent

In an interview with CNN this week, Haley said that though she recognises the strong voter support Trump has, "chaos" continues to follow

"I think President Trump was the right President at the right time. I agree with a lot of

him. Rightly or wrongly, chaos follows him. We can't afford four more years of chaos and survive it," Haley told CNN.

However, at the first Republican debate, Haley had indicated that she would support her former boss as their party's nominee for the 2024 race even if he was convicted of

"I'm not going to be 100 per cent with him. I'm not going to be 100 per cent against him. It's not personal for me. This is about what's right for the country," she told ABC.

"This is about how we're going to lead. This is about the direction we should go. It's not about the personal thoughts of an individual. It's about the fact that we have a country to save."

Haley recently got a big edge in the presidential race with an endorsement from New Hampshire Governor Chris Sununu.

He called her "the candidate with the momentum to win and get our party back on track to delivering conservative victories across the country"



The spokesman claimed that Houthis had successfully prevented the passage of several other Israel-bound foreign ships during the past 48 hours.

"Our forces will continue to prevent all ships heading to Israeli ports from navigating in the Arab Sea and the Red Sea unless food and medicine aid

be allowed to enter into Gaza

Strip," Sarea added.

This was the latest in a series of anti-Israel attacks claimed by the Houthis since October 7 On Tuesday, the militia

group said they launched a missile at a Norwegian ship loaded with oil that was heading to Israel in the Red Sea. On November 19, the

Houthi fighters hijacked a commercial ship, Galaxy Leader, in the Red Sea and brought it to the port city of Hodeidah.

The Houthis have been in control of much of northern Yemen, including the capital Sanaa and the strategic Red Sea port city of Hodeidah since the Yemeni civil war broke out in

Finland closes border crossing points with Russia again

Helsinki Agencies

he Finnish government announced that it will close the crossing points at its land border with Russia once again, from Friday

Following an earlier twocomplete closure, Finland on Thursday had opened two southeasterly crossings, reports Xinhua news

According to Minister of the Interior Mari Rantanen, the



arrival of asylum seekers resumed immediately, and the phenomenon was accelerating. She told reporters that the situation on the eastern border creates a national security risk. The two crossings that opened on Thursday, Vaalimaa and Niirala, will close on Friday evening at 8 p.m. All land border crossings to Russia will remain closed until January 14, 2024. Finland shares a 1,340 km border with Russia, Europe's

Maha babu's son mows down girlfriend in predawn murderous attack, Thane cops probing

Quaid Najmi Thane

n a chilling incident, Ashwajit Gaikwad, the son of a top Maharashtra bureaucrat, allegedly mowed down his girlfriend with his SUV in Thane recently, seriously injuring her.

The victim, Priya Umendra Singh, 26, a professional beautician, has narrated her shocking ordeal of the murderous attempt on her life in a social media post on the incident and her injuries.

"Need justice... Culprit Ashwajit Anilkumar Gaikwad, son of Anilkumar Gaikwad, Joint Managing Director of Maharashtra State Road Development Corporation," said Singh on her post.

She also named Ashwajit's friends, Romil Patil, Prasad Patil and Sagar Shelke, all Thane residents, in her post, plus her boyfriend's driver-cum-bodyguard, Shiva.

Singh has tagged Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Chief Minister Eknath Shinde, Deputy CM Devendra Fadnavis, Union Minister Smriti Irani, Shiv Sena-UBT's Aditya Thackeray, in her post with an emotional header: "My boyfriend rammed his car over me and left me dying in pain on the street.'

Despite several attempts by IANS, Anilkumar Gaikwad - who was recently elevated as the



MSRDC Vice-Chairman & Managing Director - was not available for comments on the serious allegations against his 34-year-old son, or the incident that happened in the CM's home district.

The alleged incident occurred on Ovala Road in the Ghodbunder area of the district, and Singh has suffered grievous injuries in the stomach, back, arms and her right leg is broken and in a cast.

Singh also detailed how she was allegedly abused by Ashwajit and his friends, how he invited her to the Courtyard Hotel around 3 a.m. on December 11. There, a bitter fight ensued, when Ashwajit assaulted her, and then his friends Romil, Prasad and Shelke also joined in the attack.

As the situation appeared to worsen, she went to take her bag and mobile from the SUV but the youths allegedly attempted to cause her grave harm by first bulldozing the SUV into her back near a divider, then returned and drove it over her right leg, before speeding away in the darkness.

Surprisingly, Shiva, the SUV driver, turned out to be a Good Samaritan, he left them and rushed to help the bleeding and crying Singh, and also informed her family about the assault. Later they alerted the Thane Police on the entire sordid

The prime accused Ashwajit and his friends reportedly warned the woman against involving the police and even boasted that they would use the political clout of the Gaikwad family.

Meanwhile, based on the complaint of Singh who is in the ICU of Titan Medicity Hospital - the Kasarvadavali police have lodged a complaint against Ashwajit, Shelke, and the Patil duo (said to be linked to a retired police official), but no arrests have been made so far, even as the victim's post went viral on social media.

Given the sensitive nature of the case, top Thane police officials remained incommunicado despite

Drugs worth Rs 50,000 crore seized in Maharashtra in recent past: Minister

Team Absolute Nagpur

¬he Maharashtra police have seized drugs worth about Rs 50,000 crore in the state in the recent past, said Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis in the legislative assembly on Friday. He was replying to a question by Shiv Sena (UBT) legislator Ravindra Waikar, who represents the Jogeshwari East constituency in Mumbai.

In a major haul, the Mumbai police recently seized 151 kg of mephedrone worth Rs 300 crore and arrested more than a dozen persons from several cities in an



in a factory in MIDC Shinde Gaon in Nashik district. "The police have seized drugs worth Rs 50,000 crore

The police discretely tracked 2,200 small shops (selling drugs) in

Mumbai and removed them to curb the menace of drugs," said Fadnavis.

The deputy Chief Minister, however, did not specify the exact period during which the drugs were

"The state government is keep ing a watch on chemicals being imported which could be used to make drugs. We have also found that closed factory sites are being used for drug production," Fadnavis added.

Following the Rs 300-crore drug bust by the Mumbai police, the opposition and ruling dispensation have targeted each other over

Sonia, Rahul, Kharge to address rally in Nagpur on Dec 28



Team Absolute | Mumbai

ormer Congress presidents Sonia Gandhi and Rahul Gandhi along with incumbent party chief Mallikarjun Kharge will address a rally in Maharashtra's Nagpur city on December 28, on the occasion of the grand old party's foundation day, a

senior leader said on Friday. A meeting of senior Congress leaders in Maharashtra is currently underway here in the presence of All India Congress Committee (AICC) general secretary (organisation) K C Venugopal and senior leader Mukul Wasnik.

The meeting is being attended by Maharashtra Congress chief Nana Patole, former state minister Balasaheb Thorat, Leader of Opposition in the assembly Vijay Wadettiwar, former chief ministers Ashok Chavan and Prithrviraj Chavan among others.

Talking to reporters, Venugopal said, "On the occasion of Congress's foundation day on December 28, party president Mallikarjun Kharge and its former chiefs Sonia Gandhi and Rahul Gandhi will address a huge

rally in Nagpur.' The winter session of the Maharashtra legislature is currently underway in Nagpur.

Meanwhile, opposition INDIA alliance leaders staged a protest near the Gandhi statue in the Parliament complex on Friday, a day after 14 MPs were suspended.

While Derek O'Brien of the Trinamool Congress (TMC) was suspended from the Rajya Sabha on Thursday, 13 opposition MPs, including nine from the Congress and the DMK's Kanimozhi, were suspended from the Lok Sabha.

O'Brien joined the opposition MPs wearing a T-shirt saying he was on a 'silent protest'.

Former Congress presijoined the protesters in their demonstration.

The suspended MPs held

placards saying they were suspended for speaking up, while the "culprit BJP MP" roamed free. The Congress has been demanding strict action against BJP MP Pratap Simha who provided the visitor passes to the intruders. The protesting MPs also demanded that their suspensions be revoked. "Suspension and expulsion is nothing new for this government, last week Mahua Moitra got expelled. This week, the BJP MP from Mysore who issued the passes for the intruders is moving freely, and I and my colleagues have been suspended for raising the voice of the people of India, a very genuine demand that the home minister and the prime minister should speak in Parliament," said Hibi Eden, one of the MPs who was sus-

pended from the Lok Sabha. Both the Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha were adjourned for the day amid opposition protests.

'CID' actress accuses mom and brother of assault, lodges complaint with Thane police

Team Absolute Thane

elevision actress Vaishnavi Dhanraj has approached the Kashimira Police Station in Thane, accusing her close family members of allegedly abusing and assaulting her badly at home this morning, officials said on Friday.

She posted a video on social media from outside the police station showing several of her injury marks on the face, lips, right hand and wrist, and desperately appealing for help.

Himaanshu Shuklaa. I really need help right now. I am in Kashimira Police Station... And I have been abused by my family, I have been hit really badly. Please... I need everybody's help, right from the media, to the news channels and everybody in the



industry. Please come and support me," she said in her video post.

An official from the Kashimira Police Station confirmed to reporter that the actress has lodged a non-cognisable complaint against her family members this afternoon.

"We have summoned her mother and brother and warned them against indulging in such behaviour at home. Since it's purely a family dispute, we have filed a NC and allowed them to go," said the official.

ing to social media. Shuklaa expressed his gratitude to the Thane Police, for helping her out in the crisis. Dhanraj, a divorcee, living with her parental family, is noted for her role in the long-running serial "CID" in which she played a cop, and "Laado" among other assignments.

Have we developed a 'reporting mechanism', asks Aaditya Thackeray on data leak

Team Absolute Mumbai

hiv Sena (UBT) leader Aaditya Thackeray on Friday raised the issue of Aadhaar data leak in the ongoing winter session of the Maharashtra Assembly.

Speaking in the Vidhan Bhavan in Nagpur, Aaditya Thackeray asked whether the government has developed any 'reporting mechanism' to take action against the culprits.

"There were reports suggesting that details of over 80 crore Aadhaar cards were leaked. People download many apps nowadays and their personal data can be breached from that. I want to ask the state government that is state government in co-ordination with the Central government developing a 'reporting mechanism' to take action against such apps

Earlier, a report by US-based cybersecurity firm Resecurity has claimed that personal identifiable information of about 815 million which is 81.5 crore Indians has been leaked on the dark web.

The United States-based global cybersecurity solutions provider, published a report claiming "millions of personally identifiable



information (PII) records, including Aadhaar cards, belonging to Indian residents, (are) being offered for sale on the Dark Web."

In a blog post published on October 15, Resecurity said a "threat actor" (identified as m0001') was brokering access to the records, and that these were available for sale for USD 80,000.

As per the report, data including names, phone numbers, addresses, Aadhaar, passport information are for sale online.

The data allegedly on sale also included age, gender and addresses of millions of

Shreyas Talpade suffers heart attack, undergoes angioplasty

Team Absolute | Mumbai

₹ilm actor Shreyas Talpade, who underwent an angioplasty late last night is in a stable condition and will be also and tion and will be discharged in a few days, his wife Deepti said here on Friday.

"I want to express my heartfelt gratitude for the overwhelming concern and well-wishes following the recent health scare my husband experienced. I'm relieved to update everyone that he is now in stable condition and will be discharged in a few days," said Deepti.

She expressed gratitude to the medical team's expertise, exceptional care and timely response have been instrumental during this time of medical

She said: "The medical team's exceptional care and timely response have been instrumental during this time, and we are grateful for their expertise.



We kindly request respect for our privacy as he continues his recovery. Your unwavering support has

been a tremendous source of strength for both of

"We kindly request respect for our privacy as he continues his recovery. Your unwavering support has been a tremendous source of strength for both of us," Deepti concluded. Talpade, 47, noted for his roles in films like 'Igbal', the 'Golmaal' franchise and 'Poster Boys' among many others, had a major health scare when he suffered a heart attack after a grueling shoot. Talpade had been shooting throughout the day, was joking around with the crew on the sets, shot some sequences which had a bit of action, but after going home, he told his wife he was feeling uneasy. She rushed him to the city's Bellevue Hospital in Andheri West, but he collapsed en route but upon reaching the hospital, the medicos took charge. After various tests, Talpade underwent an angioplasty around 10 p.m., and the morning after was on the way to recovery.

SC grants a 10-day extension, asks Maha Speaker to decide defection pleas in Shiv Sena split by Jan 10

Team Absolute | New Delhi

he Supreme Court on Friday granted a 10day extension to Maharashtra Assembly Speaker Rahul Narwekar for deciding the pending defection petitions in the Shiv Sena split case.

Earlier, the top court had ordered the Speaker to announce his decision by December 31 on disqualification petitions filed by the two rival factions of the Shiv Sena led by Uddhav Thackeray and CM Eknath Shinde against each other.

During the hearing, a bench, headed by CJI D.Y. Chandrachud was apprised by Solicitor General Tushar Mehta that the Speaker would conclude the proceedings on December 20 and considering the voluminous documents involved in the case, and thus, the deadline may be extended by three weeks. Opposing this, senior advocate Kapil Sibal, appearing for Shiv Sena-UBT leader Sunil Prabhu, submitted that similar requests seeking extension of time have been raised by the Speaker in the past.

Thereafter, the bench, also comprising Justices J.B. Pardiwala and Manoj Misra, ordered: "The Speaker has indicated that the proceed-



ings will be closed on December 20 and has sought a reasonable extension of time. Bearing in mind the time limit laid out earlier, we grant extension of time till January 10, 2024 for the Speaker to deliver judgment."

Following the split in the party, both the factions of Shiv Sena filed petitions against each other under the anti-defection law. Later, the Uddhav Thackeray faction of the Shiv Sena moved the apex court against delay by

the Speaker in deciding the disqualification proceedings filed against Chief Minister Shinde and his camp. Jayant Patil of the NCP-

Sharad Pawar faction also filed a petition in the Supreme Court against the delay by the Speaker in hearing the defection pleas following a split in the NCP.

The top court in October this year directed the Speaker to conclude the hearing in NCP defection petitions by January 31 next

Earlier in May, a Constitution Bench of the Supreme Court had directed that the Maharashtra Speaker "must decide disqualification petitions in a reasonable time" against 16 Shiv Sena MLAs, including Shinde, who were accused of anti-party activities.

Maharashtra govt announces SIT probe into violence in Beed district during Maratha quota stir

Team Absolute Mumbai

aharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis Friday announced that a Special Investigation Team (SIT) would be set up in the next two days to probe arson during the Maratha quota stir in Beed.

He was speaking during in the assembly during the Winter Session of the Maharashtra Legislative

During the Maratha Quota agitation homes of two Nationalist Congress Party MLAs were torched in Beed district. Fadnavis vowed the government will not spare anyone involved in the violence.

The agitation seeking reservation for the Maratha community in jobs and education had turned violent as protesters torched the homes of Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) MLAs Sandeep Kshirsagar



and Prakash Solanke in Beed, central Maharashtra, in October-end. Solanke's home was also van-

Fadnavis, who is also the home minister, said

people involved in the incident will be prosecuted. He was responding to the calling attention raised by Kshirsagar whose house in Beed city was torched during the agitation.

Fadnavis said, "Actionable evidence is available

to prosecute suspects. Although the investigation (launched after the incident) has progressed, I will set up an SIT with the approval of the house." NCP (Sharad Pawar group) MLA Jayant Patil, a former state home minister, said police could have

fired in the air to stop arsonists. "An accused person's name is Pappu Shinde. Why did the local police not arrest people who have criminal background? At least firing in the air (by the local police) could have deterred some of them

(violent protesters)," Patil said. Fadnavis said no one involved in the unlawful act will be spared.



Jennifer Lopez, Jenifer Lewis sing together at her & Ben Affleck's holiday party

Los Angeles | Agencies

ctress-singer Jennifer Lopez treated her holiday party guests with a sweet serenade. The Grammy winner, 54, was joined by party guest Jenifer Lewis for a special rendition of 'Have Yourself a Merry Little

JLo and her husband, Ben Affleck, threw a star-studded Christmas bash at their home in Los Angeles, with Lewis, 66, Margot Robbie, Michael B. Jordan and Lily Rabe among the many guests in attendance, reports.

During the celebration, Jennifer sang the Christmas classic alongside the 'Hustlers' star. "There was so much love in the room," Lewis wrote on X (formerly known as Twitter) after a video of the performance circulated. "Great party baby girl. Happy Holidays Everybody". As per People, in the video, the two can be seen embracing behind a grand piano and a smaller keyboard. Lopez kept her arms wrapped around the Sister Act actress as the two sang together. "They threw a really fun party," a source said. The insider shared that JLo led the partygoers into singing Christmas carols late into the night. While Lopez and Affleck were meeting with friends separately while also hosting, the source went on to say: "They were both in such good spirits."The house was decorated in holiday decor with a huge Christmas tree at the entrance. "The kids were all there dancing and having a great time, especially the twins and Violet," added the source. This is Affleck and Lopez's second holiday season together after marrying in 2022. They were engaged in 2003 and 2004, and reconnected romantically in 2021.





Los Angeles

inger-songwriter Mariah Carey and Bryan Tanaka seem to have called it quits. Since kicking off her Merry Christmas One and All! tour in mid-November, Tanaka has been absent from Carey's shows, sparking fan speculation that the pop icon has split from her longtime boyfriend.Mariah Carey, who's mom to 12-year-old twins Moroccan and Monroe (who she shares with ex-husband Nick Cannon), is also celebrating the holidays in Aspen without Tanaka, 40, who has traditionally accompanied her to the snowy getaway, reports. This marks the first time the Songbird Supreme and creative director, who have had a professional relationship since 2006, have not travelled together for the holidays in years. As per People, the couple was last publicly seen spending time together back in March when the hitmaker celebrated her birthday, which she prefers to refer to as her "anniversary." At the time, Tanaka shared a photo of himself and Carey smiling and embracing one another on Instagram and shared a sweet message in the caption. He wrote: "This is one of my favourite pictures. Ever. Happy Anniversary my Beautiful Queen".

The couple first connected in 2006 when Tanaka joined the superstar out on the road on her Adventures of Mimi tour. Then after working together for a decade, the 'All I Want For Christmas Is You' singer and the choreographer became romantically involved in 2016."The 'Obsessed' singer and the dancer, who briefly broke up for a period in spring 2017 before reuniting, have toured and celebrated Christmas together in some capacity since they started dating.In 2017, Tanaka took the stage with the star during her All I Want for Christmas Is You shows and spent the December holiday with her and her children on their annual Aspen trip. Between hitting the slopes, Carey even took to Instagram to share adorable photos from their festivities together.





CHRISTOPHER NOLAN: 'OPPENHEIMER' IS LITERALLY THE MOST SUCCESSFUL FILM I'VE EVER MADE

Los Angeles | Agencies

ilmmaker Christopher Nolan explains why the Cillian Murphy-starrer 'Oppenheimer' is his most successful film to date.

He also talked about the movie business. The filmmaker struck box office gold with 'Oppenheimer' this rear Nolan is now looking back at the year and giving his take on the cinema landscape as of now.

"I've just made a three-hour film about Robert Oppenheimer, which is R-rated and half in black-andwhite - and it made a billion dollars. Of course I think films are doing great," Nola said in an interview with

Empire."The crazy thing is that it's literally the most successful film I've ever made."He continued: "I've been doing this for 20 years and in the United Kingdom, it's my highest-grossing film. So, I feel great about the state of the movie business based on my own experience. But also based on seeing other movies break out, seeing audiences come back."Nolan is frequently asked to give his opinion on the Hollywood industry Having directed supe movies in the past with The Dark Knight trilogy, he is often queried about the reliance on this genre in more recent years versus other types of films. Nolan feels the industry needs a good balance of all types of movies to keep it moving.

JONATHAN MAJORS DROPPED BY MARVEL AFTER FOUND GUILTY IN ASSAULT CASE

Los Angeles | Agencies

ctor Jonathan Majors is said to have been fired by Marvel after he was found guilty of harassing and assaulting his ex-girlfriend Grace Jabbari.

The 'Creed III' star, was being lined up as one of the future leading faces of the superhero movie studio, but has reportedly been dropped by bosses after a jury delivered the verdicts on Monday, December 18, reports. It was reported that just after the finding was reached in court that a "source close to the studio" said it had "parted ways with Jonathan Majors," as per

The actor had been cast to play Kang, the central antagonist in the Multiverse Saga of the Marvel Cinematic Universe.

He has been convicted of two misdemeanor counts of harassment and assault of his ex-partner Grace. Majors was also found not guilty of one count of intentional assault in the third degree and one count of aggravated harassment in the second degree. The actor was arrested on March 25 on assault and harassment charges, after Grace accused him of assaulting her in the backseat of a private car after she took his phone to read a text message he had received from another woman. She reported the star forcefully took his phone back from her, causing an "excruciating" injury to her right middle finger. And she said when she got out of the car Majors hit her on the back of her head and then tried to force her back into the car, causing a



cut behind her right ear. Majors denied he assaulted Grace and his defense team alleged she was the aggressor when she took his phone. During the actor's nearly two-week trial, the Manhattan District Attorney's Office released a series of texts between him and Grace, as well as an audio recording that was used evidence.It included messages in which Majors seemingly attempted to persuade Grace not to go to hospital following a head injury and another in which the actor threatened suicide.In the audio, Majors tells Grace she needs to act like Corretta Scott King and Michelle Obama, because he's "a great man" who is "doing great things, not just for me, but for my culture and the world.'

Julia Roberts talks about her idea for

Los Angeles | Agencies

ctress Julia Roberts believes her 'Pretty Woman' co-star Richard Gere's character Edward died after the end of the film.Roberts in the 1990 film played a prostitute named Vivienne opposite Gere, who essayed a businessman called Edward. He falls in love with her and helps her get off the street." I think he (Edward) passed away peacefully in his sleep from a heart attack, smiling. And now she runs his business," she said on CBS Mornings.

The actors reunited almost a decade later

to film 1999's 'Runaway Bride' and Roberts said the couple in that movie get a happier ending, reports aceshowbiz.com. The host asked: "(Your character) Maggie literally rides off into the sunset

with Richard Gere after leaving four other men at the altar. What happens to ner?"The actress then replied: "They stay together. He doesn't die in this one. They're going to stay together."Asked about her movie star character from 'Notting Hill',' who fell for a bookstore owner played by Hugh Grant, Roberts said: "She's retired. She has six children and has maintained her waist size amazingly. Anna has also traded glamorous film sets for quiet days behind a shop counter.""(William) runs the bookshop still and now there's a little knitting annex next to the bookshop that (Anna) runs.'

Taylor Swift booed by US football fans as she cheers on boyfriend

Los Angeles

inger Taylor Swift was booed by American football fans as she cheered on boyfriend Travis Kelce. Swift was

booed by New England fans at Sunday's Chiefs vs. Patriots game as she cheered on boyfriend Travis Kelce and she handled the sit-

uation ."'Gillette Stadium is the most joyful place on Earth' - Taylor Swift," a message on the Jumbotron read, before a wave of boos poured out around the stadium,

In response, Swift, 34, kept it cool by smiling, waving and blowing a kiss to the audience, according to a video shared on X, formerly known as Twitter.

In her Time 2023 Person of the Year interview earlier this month, Swift opened up about the impact she's made on the NFL and the newfound attention as she cheers on Kelce, also 34, at his games.

"I don't know how they know what suite I'm in. There's a camera, like, a half-mile away, and you don't know where it is, and you have no idea when the camera is putting you in the broadcast, so I don't know if I'm being shown 17 times or once," she said.But "I'm just there to support Travis," the 'Blank Space' hitmaker added. "I have no awareness of if I'm being shown too much and pissing off a few dads, Brads and Chads."Her appreciation for the game itself has also evolved since she and Kelce began dating. "Football is awesome, it turns out," Swift said. 'I've been missing out my whole life.'

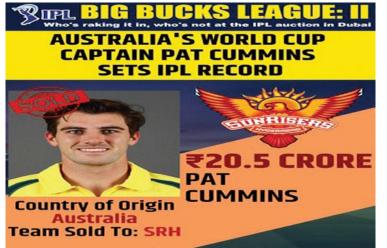


Australia World Cup-winning captain Pat Cummins became the most expensive player in Indian Premier League (IPL) history after Sunrisers Hyderabad (SRH) secured his services for whooping Rs 20.5 crore during the second round of the IPL 2024 mini-auction, here on Tuesday.

Dubai | Agencies

Pollowing an intense bidding battle involving Chennai Super Kings and Royal Challengers Bangalore, Sunrisers Hyderabad eventually secured the Australian captain for a record-breaking amount.

Starting with a base price of Rs. 2.00 crore, Cummins became the center of a bidding war between IPL heavyweights CSK and Mumbai Indians. The fierce battle escalated the bid to 4.8 crore, led by CSK. Soon after, Royal Challengers Bangalore entered the fray with a bid of Rs. 5.00 Cr, joining Chennai and Mumbai in the pursuit. Sunrisers also stepped up, placing a bid at Rs. 8.00 Cr, marking Cummins as the day's first millionaire.



The bidding war intensified between SRH and RCB, with both pushing the bids to Rs. 12.00 Cr.

As the bids surpassed the 15-crore mark, the competition heated up, prompting SRH to elevate their offer to 17 crore. Crossing the Rs 18.5 crore mark, Cummins claimed the title of the IPL's priciest player in history, surpassing Sam Curran's record sale of Rs 18.50 crore in the 2023 auction.

Yet, the competition remained tight with RCB pushing the bid to Rs. 19.25 Cr. Eventually, SRH surged ahead, reaching Rs. 20 Cr.

The bidding war escalated further to Rs. 20.50 Cr, securing Pat Cummins for the team. This marked the inaugural breach of the 20-crore barrier in an IPL auction.

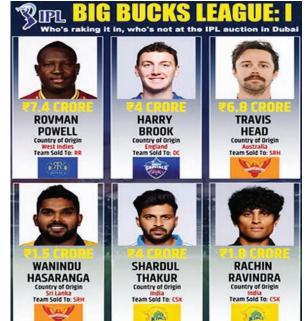
IPL Auction 2024: Rachin Ravindra, Shardul Thakur sold to CSK, Hasaranga joins SRH

Dubai | Agencies

hennai Super Kings bought New Zealand all-rounder Rachin Ravindra for Rs 1.8 Cr as Shardul Thakur comes back to CSK for Rs 4 Cr in the second round of the Indian Premier League (IPL) 2024 mini-auction, here on Tuesday.

The Kiwi youngster had a base price of Rs. 50 Lakh. CSK initiated the bidding, with Delhi Capitals stepping in, pushing the price beyond Rs. 1 Crore. Punjab Kings entered at Rs. 1.10 Cr. Eventually, CSK, leading the bid, secured Ravindra for Rs 1.8 crore.

The India all-rounder Shardul Thakur came entered the auction with a base price of Rs 2 Crore. Chennai started the bidding, and Sunrisers Hyderabad later joined. Initially, SRH backed out at Rs 3.20 Cr but later re-entered the bid.



Chennai persisted and secured the player for Rs 4.00 Crore.

Sri Lanka all-rounder Wanindu Hasaranga, who was released by Royal Challengers Bangalore (RCB) this year got signed by Sunrisers Hyderabad for Rs

AAI 3-0 with impressive displays from

Shruti Mundada, Alisha Naik and the

doubles pair of Simran Singhi and

Mundada started the day for

23-21, 23-25, 21-18 over Tanya

Hemanth in the opening singles

Maharashtra with a hard-fought win

match that lasted for an hour and 23

minutes. The second match also saw

an intense battle but Naik recovered well in time after losing the second

set to secure a 21-18, 12-21, 21-19 vic-

minutes to ensure Maharashtra's

Singhi and Thaker then took just 42

Ritika Thaker.

Messi's Inter Miami to meet Newell's in friendly

Washington | Agencies

Inter Miami and Newell's Old Boys will meet in a pre-season soccer friendly in Fort Lauderdale in February, a match that will pit Lionel Messi and Gerardo Martino against their former club.

The game will be played at Inter Miami's DRV PNK Stadium in Fort Lauderdale on February 15, both clubs said late on Monday, reports

"I'm delighted to be able to welcome my beloved Newell's to our home in Miami," said Inter Miami manager Martino, who made a club record 505 first-team appearances with the Argentine outfit in the 1980s and 90s.

He added: "It will be a special game because of everything that Newell's Old Boys means to me. It will also be a good opportunity to prepare for what is sure to be an exciting season." Inter Miami said tickets for the match would go on sale on Tuesday.

In a separate statement, Newell's described the fixture as "unique" and "full of history", adding that it would connect to the football roots of Messi and Martino.Messi joined Inter Miami on a free transfer in July after parting ways with Paris Saint-Germain.He scored 11



goals in 14 games during his first season with the Herons, helping them win the 2023 Leagues Cup, the club's first ever trophy.

Maharashtra, AAI crown champions at Badminton Senior National Team Championships

Guwahati | Agencies

aharashtra and Airport
Authority of India (AAI)
stamped their authority with
power-packed performances to
clinch the women's and men's team
titles respectively in the 75th Inter
State-Inter Zonal Badminton
Championships 2023 at the RG
Baruah Sports Complex, here on
Tuesday.

The prestigious national championships, organised by the Badminton Association of India (BAI), are being held in Assam after four years. The dominant AAI team appeared in both the men's and women's team finals and managed to clinch the title in the former category as they outclassed Karnataka 3-0.

Tharun Mannepalli started AAI's challenge aggressively in the final when he thrashed Bhargav Somasundara 21-18, 21-18 in the opening singles match. Maisnam Meiraba then doubled the lead with a 22-20, 16-21, 21-11 win against Raghu Mariswamy in the second singles



contest which lasted nearly an hour. Later, the men's doubles duo of Alap Mishra-Ravikrishna finished defeated Prakash Raj-Ashith Surya

Meanwhile, in the women's team

event final. Maharashtra dominated

position on top of the podium when the duo beat Tanya Hemanth and Priya Devi Konjengbam comfortably with scores of 21-14, 21-18. The individual events will kick off

tory against Mansi Singh.

on Wednesday with star shuttlers like BWF World championships bronze medallist Lakshya Sen, experienced Sameer Verma, Aakarshi Kashyap, and home favourite Ashmita Chaliha among many more vying for the coveted titles. Finals will be played on Sunday.

National shooting: Ramita, Swapnil, Anish win in national rifle/pistol trials

Team Absolute New Delhi

India's international shooters
Ramita Jindal, Swapnil Kusale and
Anish Bhanwala, emerged triumphant on day two of the national
rifle/pistol selection trials 1, currently
underway at the Karni Singh Shooting

Ramita won the women's 10m air rifle trial 1 in a close encounter with Haryana state-mate Nancy. Paris quota-winner Anish, was a class apart in the men's 25m rapid-fire pistol (RFP), while over at the only final to be played at the 50m range, Swapnil, yet another Paris quota-winner, halted a Haryana sweep, registering a facile win in the men's 50m rifle 3 positions event. Ramita was behind in the qualifications to both Nancy, who topped with a sizzling 634.9 and third-placed Swarnali Roy of West Bengal. Her 630.4 placed her fourth, but she



was solid throughout the final, only losing the lead by 0.1 once to a late surge from Nancy after the 20th shot. That extended to 0.3 after the 22nd, but two solid 10.8 and 10.6 to close out, meant she clinched it by 0.5 in the end. There was no stopping Anish

in the men's RFP however. After shooting a solid 588 over two days of qualifications to top it, he began Tuesday's final with four hits in the first of eight series of five rapid-fire shots in the final.That put him in joint lead with Uttar Pradesh's Ankur Goel.

None of the other five finalists including Olympian Gurpreet Singh, was able to match his consistency though as the ISSF World Cup Final bronze medallist, rolled out a couple more fours and two perfect fives to take the match with a score of 31. Gurmeet of the Army, was way behind with 25, while Ankur was third with 21 hits.

In the men's 50m rifle 3 positions, Swapnil representing the Railways, made light work of a finals field which included Olympian Deepak Kumar, India international Niraj Kumar and Khelo India Youth Games Champion Adriyan Karmakar, among others.

His final score of 463.0, was a huge 3.5 ahead of second-placed Nikhil Tanwar of Gujarat. Niraj of the Navy came third while Adriyan was fourth. Swapnil had earlier also topped the qualifications with a huge margin of four points, posting a score of 593.

IPL 2024 Auction: RR get Rovman Powell for Rs 7.4 crore, Travis Head bags 6.8 Cr deal with SRH

Dubai | Agencies

The Indian Premier League (IPL) 2024 2024 mini-auction began a bidding war between Rajasthan Royal (RR) and Kolkata Knight Riders (KKR), acquiring the services of West Indies batter Royman Powell here on Tuesday.

In the first set of the auction that features capped batters, first player up for grabs is West Indies T20I captain Rovman Powell with a base price of 1 crore.

KKR opened the bidding for Powell as RR jumped in the fray and both the franchises engaged in a paddle war before the former bagged the services of the Windies batter for Rs 7.4 crore in the opening round.

Powell, who also captains Barbados Royals in the CPL was later sold to by Rajasthan for Rs 7.4 crore, spending almost spent half of the pure money left for auction, out of 14.50 cr.

ICC Men's ODI World Cup final hero Australian batter Travis Head, who entered the auction with a base price of Rs 2 crore sold to Sunrisers Hyderabad for Rs 6.80 crore after an intense bidding war with Chennai Super Kings (CSK).Head has been part of DC and RCB in the pastOn the other hand, England



batter Harry Brook with base price of Rs 2 crore sold to Delhi Capitals for 4 crore. South Africa Rilee Rossouw, India's Karun Nair and Manish Pandey along with former Australian captain Steve Smith remained

2nd ODI: India stumble to 211 despite Sudharsan, KL Rahul fifties against South Africa

Gqeberha (South Africa)

Sai Sudharsan struck his second successive half-century and skipper KL Rahul scored a fifty but India lost steam in the middle and were bowled out a poor 211 in 46.2 overs against South Africa in the second One-day International here on Tuesday.Sai Sudharsan scored 62 off 83 balls, hitting seven fours and a six, while Rahul contributed 56, coming off 64 deliveries and studded with seven boundaries, the rest of the batters failed to stay at the crease for long after South Africa won the

toss and elected to field first. Ruturaj Gaikwad (4) was the first to go, getting out off



the second delivery of the match, trapped lbw as the ball swung in past the inside edge to hit the pad in line. Gaikwad reviewed the decision but could not reverse the decision.From 4/1, India were down to 46/2 as Tilak Varma fell to a superb Nandre Burger bouncer, that cramped the batter and was caught at fine leg.Sai Sudharsan and KL Rahul

raised 68 runs for the third

wicket, with the former completing his half-century off 65 balls, hitting six fours and a six, in the process.

For South Africa, left-arm pacer Nandre Burger 3-30 while another leftie Beuran Hendricks claimed 2-34. Spinner Keshav Maharaj claimed 2-50 as South Africa came up with a fine bowling display after their batters had failed to fire in a massive eight-wicket defeat to India in the opening ODI of the three-match series.

Brief scores

India 211 all out in 46.2 overs (B Sai Sudharsan 62, K.L Rahul 56; Nandre Burger 3-30, Beuran Hendricks 2-34, Keshav Maharaj 2-51) against South Africa.

Rakshith Dave bags creditable second in Malaysian SBK Championship debut

Sepang | Agencies

Indian teenager Rakshith Dave bagged two podium places in the third and final round to clinch a creditable runners-up spot, in his debut season, in the Malaysian Superbike Championship 2023, which concluded here at the Sepang International Circuit.

Rakshith, who made his international debut in Round 1 with a stunning double victory in his class went on to bag the second place in the highly-competitive Championship in Malaysia.

In Round 3, Rakshith won two podiums, a second and a third place in the MSBK 250 B Race category but had to be content with the second in the overall standings of his class for



the championship. In the in the 8-lap Race 1, he timed 20min, 53.558sec and later clocked 20:41.903 for a second place in Race 2. Earlier, astride a Honda CBR250RR, Rakshith won both the Round 1 races in his class in the Malaysia SBK 250cc category (B

category), at the famed MotoGP circuit, the Sepang International Circuit, Kuala Lumpur. Rakshith bagged the 'Week-end Warrior Trophy' in the first round. Chennai's Rakshith, 15, a Class X student of Lady Andal, said: "I am very happy to take a second place

in the prestigious Malaysian Super Bike Championship. I am really elated and this gives me a push to continue my dreams. I thank my family, my team and crew who have worked really hard for this season and I hope to launch a new and better season soon."Rakshith made his debut at the Madras International circuit in 2020 after he was selected for the Honda India Talent Cup and took a podium in his very first race. In the next two years, he scored many victories and podiums and graduated to NSF 250 class and went on to take part in the inaugural MiniGP India series in 2022. In 2023, he not only won the second place in the Idemitsu Honda 2023 Championship but also won the overall title in the teenage class of the MMSC Sprint Rally.

entertainment

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BIG B JOINS ISPL AS THE OWNER OF **MUMBAI TEAM**

Team Absolute Mumbai

Teteran Bollywood megastar Amitabh Bachchan, who was most recently seen in the Tiger Shroff and Kriti Sanon-starrer 'Ganapath: A Hero is Born', has now become the owner of Mumbai team in the first edition of the Indian Street Premier League (ISPL).

The senior actor took to his social media to announce his association with the league. Sharing a picture of himself alongside Mumbai's Wankhede Stadium, he wrote in the caption, "What courage and care, concept, the initiation of the ISPL - the Street Premier league."

"An opportunity for them that exhibited their capacity on the streets, gullies and make shift home made pitches to play cricket, now to get selected for a team professionally and exhibit their talent in formal setups before the millions the world over. For me an honour and a privilege to be with Mumbai as Team Owner, and to be privy to the surge of talent erupt, for a grand visionary future (sic)," he added. The ISPL is India's first tennis ball T10 cricket tournament that will be played inside a stadium. It will

teams - Hyderabad, Mumbai, Kumar owns the Srinagar team in the



SONAM KAPOOR: BELIEVES WHATEV-ER IS MADE IN INDIA HAS GREAT VALUE

Mumbai: Actress Sonam Kapoor said that the West has finally realised how India can now contribute to fashion globally and she is proud to represent our country and its craftsmanship to the world.

Sonam, who was also the only Indian actor at the coronation ceremony of King Charles III, said: "I think the West didn't understand the power of our impact in this part of the world before."

"We are developing nations, but that is slowly changing, and we, as people here, have our voices as individuals and spending power as clients, making it difficult to be ignored anymore. Whenever I am at an international event, I make sure to wear from an Indian or South Asian designer.

She added: "Whenever represent India, I represent the diversity, resilience, and coexistence that the country enjoys." Sonam strongly believes whatever is made in India has great value.

"The fact that we have such a strong cultural heritage and ancient civilisation means that whatever is made in India has great value. It's a multicultural place where people from many faiths live together in harmony, and representing that is of utmost importance."

She said: "Besides being the land of yoga and spiritualism, for which India is renowned in other parts of the world, it is also celebrated for its music and artisanal craftsmanship, the realms of jewellery and embroidery."Most notably, numerous haute couture and luxury houses have their clothing intricately embroidered in India."



Randeep Hooda hilarious birthday wish for wife Lin Laishram: 'Didn't have to run away'

Team Absolute Mumbai

ctor Randeep Hooda, who recently tied the huptial knot with Lin Laishram, shared a sweet message for his wife on the occasion of her birthday on

The actor took to his Instagram and shared heartwarming pictures of himself in the company of his wife.

In the 1st picture, he can be een sitting on a bike with his wife. The second picture is from their reception. He wrote

have to run away. From the highway to this way.. Happy Birthday. On a serious note, Didn't know then that life will change so much and that too for the better. I'm just grateful to you being in my life and giving it the steadiness and calmness it needed. Love always."The couple got married in a traditional Meitei ceremony in the presence of family members and a few friends on November 29 at

Meanwhile, on the work front both Randeep and Lin are busy with their professional commit-



KJo was 'traumatised' by Amrish Puri on the sets of 'Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge'



Team Absolute | Mumbai

ollywood producer-director Karan Johar, who hosts the streaming chat show 'Koffee With Karan', shared that he was "traumatised" by the late actor Amrish Puri while working on the iconic film 'Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge'.

KJo worked as an assistant director on the Shah Rukh Khan and Kajolstarrer 'Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge', and he was intimidated by Amrish Puri as the latter was very particular about detailing of the scenes.

The upcoming episode of the streaming show will see Bollywood superstar Ajay Devgn and director Rohit Shetty gracing the couch.

During the course of the episode, Karan reminisced about the old times, as he said: "I have to tell you, my father and Amrish ji (Amrish Puri) come from the same village, so the first per-

son my father told me whose feet I had to touch was Amrish ji's.

Ajay Devgn said: "The only person whose feet I have touched is also Amrish ji because the first shot I took with him, I touched his feet.' Karan added: "So I used to be very

scared of him. When I was an AD on 'Dilwale Dulhania Le Javenge', he was particular about detailing, he would come and say ki time kya hai? I gave the time of what the time was, I thought he was asking me the time. He said, London mein time kya hai? scene ka time kya hai? Taaki mein ghadi ko uss time mein set karu. About the continuity, he said, shawl kis tarah mein drape karun, I used to be traumatised by him. He was such a wonderful man."Talking about Amrish Puri, Ajay Devgn said: "They used to say, and it is a fact, that kisi ke ghar pe shaadi ho, kisi ke ghar pe koi death ho jaaye, he was the first man to be there.'

ARSHAD WARSI CELEBRATES 20 YEARS OF 'MUNNABHAI MBBS', SHARES INCIDENT FROM **RECENT SHOOT WITH SANJU BABA**

Team Absolute Mumbai

ctor Arshad Warsi, who recently narrated the streaming series 'Choona', is celebrating 20 years of his iconic film 'Munnabhai MBBS'. The actor shared a recent incident when he and Sanjay Dutt shot for a project and the whole unit was just in awe of them as they donned their iconic costumes of Munna and Circuit.

Arshad's character of Circuit has become a cult over the years and sets the biggest example of friendship goals as his chemistry with Munna is the stuff of legends. One could even feel a void when Munna and Circuit have a misunderstanding in 'Lage Raho Munna Bhai', and the scene where Munna reluctantly says sorry to Circuit brings tears in everyone's eyes.

Walking down the memory lane, Arshad said: "I cannot believe it has been 2 decades. Circuit is a very special character for me, it is very close to my heart."The actor also took to his Instagram to share an image from 'Munnabhai MBBS' as he wrote in the caption, "20 years, wow, seems like yesterday... I thank you all for loving Munna & Circuit so much."

He even shared an incident: "After many years we went back on the sets of a project and it was shocking, the whole unit could not believe it, they wanted to take pictures with us because we were in our costumes as Munna and Circuit.'

"It was flattering to see the new young generation and the old ones identify with us and take pictures. Guess, that's the magic this movie has



Sonal Chauhan

AKSHAY KUMAR'S 'MISSION RANIGANJ' GETS NUMBER ONE SPOT AS MOST WATCHED FILM GLOBALLY THIS WEEK



Mumbai: Bollywood star Akshay Kumar's disasterthriller film 'Mission Raniganj: The Great Bharat Rescue', directed by Tinu Suresh Desai, has got the global top position on Netflix.

The film is produced by Pooja Entertainment known for their commercial blockbusters at the box-office . It has claimed the number one spot in the globally most

watched films segment on Netflix With an astonishing 5,700,000 hours viewed and a whopping 2,500,000 views. Talking about the same, actor Jackky Bhagnani said: "This film is a celebration of real-life heroism. Jaswant Singh Gill's courageous rescue mission story was waiting to be told. We at Pooja Entertainment, put all our creative might behind it to make this story come to life."The film is the retelling of the Raniganj coalfields collapse of 1989 in West Bengal, the film also stars Parineeti Chopra. The film is based on Jaswant Singh Gill, a brave and diligent mining engineer from IIT Dhanbad who rescued 65 trapped miners at the Raniganj Coalfields in 1989. Jackky added: "We are thrilled that the film continues to conquer the hearts and screens of audiences across the world. Its magnetic pull is a reminder that a great tale about heroism told well has universal appeal."

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