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## I'd rather die than ask for something for myself: Shivraj on last day as MP CM



Team Absolute | Bhopal

On the eve of the swearing-in ceremony of the Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister-designate Mohan Yadav and his two Deputy CMs Rajendra Shukla and Jagdish Devda, the outgoing CM Shivraj Singh Chouhan made his farewell speech on Wednesday. A large number of supporters, specifically women assembled at his official residence to bid a farewell to the longest-serving CM of the state. Emotional scenes were witnessed as many of the supporters could be seen wiping their tears. As many of the women told him that they had voted in order to make him the Chief Minister again, Chouhan tried to console them saying, "It's not the end." This remark created a buzz because the people present there took it as a signal that even though Chouhan did not get the top job he was not leaving politics and might be back at the helm again in future. Political observers also believe that Chouhan will bounce back soon enough. Before meeting his supporters, Chouhan addressed a press conference and was asked why he did not visit Delhi after the BJP registered a landslide victory on December 3.

Responding to that question Chouhan said, "One thing I say with great humility, that I would rather die than go and ask for something for myself. That's not my job. That's why I had said that I will not go to Delhi." The outgoing CM further termed questions about him contesting the Lok Sabha elections as a figment of people's imagination and added that he would abide by the party's decision and was committed to a larger mission. When asked if the BJP had done injustice with him by not giving him a fifth term as the CM, Chouhan replied that the party had entrusted him with the top job for 18 years. "The BJP kept an ordinary worker as a CM for 18 years. No one sees the other side. The BJP gave me everything, now the time has come to reciprocate and give back to the party. Why can't this be the thinking?" he added. Notably, the BJP on Monday picked the three-time MLA from Ujjain South Assembly seat for the Madhya Pradesh CM's post. Congratulating Mohan Yadav for getting the top job, Chouhan said, "I am confident that under the leadership of CM Mohan Yadav, the BJP Government will complete the ongoing projects in the state. In terms of progress and development, Madhya Pradesh will achieve new heights. I will keep supporting him."

## FIRST-TIME MLA BHAJAN LAL SHARMA NAMED RAJASTHAN CM

Fought the first election as a rebel from the BJP. The bail was confiscated; he won the second election and became the CM of Rajasthan. Diya Kumari, Prem Chand Bairwa picked as deputies



Jaipur: In another surprise move, the BJP on Tuesday named first-time MLA Bhajan Lal Sharma (56) as the next Chief Minister of Rajasthan. Sharma, who was elected from Sanganeer in Jaipur district in the November 25 Assembly elections, has been an office-bearer in the BJP state unit. There will be also two Deputy Chief Ministers in the state - former MP Diya Kumari and Prem Chand Bairwa, while Vasudev Devnani has been appointed as the Assembly Speaker. Diya Kumari, who was the MP from Rajsamand, contested the Assembly elections from Vidhyadhar Nagar, while Bairwa was elected as MLA from Dudu. The names were finalised at the legislative party meeting held

nine days after the election results were declared on December 3. Being a resident of Bharatpur, some people had branded Sharma as an 'outsider' in Sanganeer before the elections. However, he won by a huge margin, defeating Pushpendra Bhardwaj of the Congress by 48,081 votes. Sharma, who is considered close to both the party organisation and the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), has been the state general secretary under four BJP Presidnets - Ashok Parnami, Madan Lal Saini, Satish Poonia and C.P. Joshi. On Monday, the BJP had named a surprise pick as the new Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh - Mohan Yadav (58), a leader from the Yadav OBC community.



## Can't expect him of knowing history, Amit Shah keeps on rewriting history: Rahul Gandhi

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Former Congress president Rahul Gandhi on Tuesday hit back at Union Home Minister Amit Shah saying that he keeps on talking about India's first Prime Minister Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru to distract people from the real issues the country is facing. Gandhi also reiterated the demand for the caste-based census and accused the government of not discussing the same. Speaking to the media outside Parliament on the role of Nehru, Rahul Gandhi said, "He (Nehru) gave his life for India and spent many years in jail. Amit Shah is unaware of history. I cannot expect him to know history, he has the habit of rewriting it." "These all are distraction tactics. Basic issue is caste-based census and the involvement of people and in whose hands money is going? They do not want to discuss this issue, they run away from this." The Lok Sabha MP from Kerala's Wayanad said, "We will take this issue forward and make sure that

the poor get what they deserve." When it was pointed out that the BJP has announced an OBC leader as the Chief Minister of Chhattisgarh, he said, "Even our Chief Minister in Chhattisgarh was from the OBC, now they too have announced an OBC Chief Minister. But the question is what percentage of them are in the structure?" He also pointed out that even Prime Minister Narendra Modi is from the OBC category but the Union Government is run by 90 people and only three out of them are from the OBC category and their offices are in a corner. "My question is about the participation of OBCs, Dalits and tribals in the institutional system. They talk about Jawaharlal Nehru and others to distract us from this issue," Gandhi added. Rahul Gandhi has been demanding for caste-based census. During the Parliament's Special Session earlier this year, he had raised the issue of Caste-based census in Lok Sabha and raked up the issue in the recently concluded assembly polls.

## India's retail inflation rises to 5.55% in November

Team Absolute | New Delhi

India's retail inflation increased to 5.55 per cent in November after having slowed to a four-month low of 4.87 per cent in October, with higher food prices pushing up the cost of living and stretching household budgets. The increase in the inflation level above the RBI's 4 per cent target means that the central bank is not likely to go in for a rate cut to spur economic growth. Food inflation, which accounts for nearly half of the overall consumer price basket, rose by 8.7 per cent during November compared to 6.61 per cent in October as the prices of vegetables such as onion, fruit, and pulses went up sharply during the month, data released by the Ministry of Statistics on Tuesday showed. The prices of pulses, which



are the main source of proteins in the country's diet, shot up by a whopping 20.2 per cent during the month while vegetable prices increased by as much as 17.7 per cent and fruits turned costlier by 10.9 per cent. Cereal prices too rose by double digit figures while spices turned costlier by 21.55 per cent. However, there was some consolation in fuel prices showing a marginal dip compared to the same month last year as the government reduced the price of LPG and kept petrol and diesel prices on hold during the month.

## AMIT SHAH WITHDRAWS 3 BILLS TO REPLACE CRIMINAL BILLS

New Delhi: Union Home Minister Amit Shah

on Tuesday withdrew three Bills to replace criminal laws from the Lok Sabha and bring new legislations with suggestions of a Parliamentary panel. The previous Bills were withdrawn to introduce fresh Bills with new amendments, as per a regular process. Shah said that discussion on the three Bills would take place on December 14 and reply to the debate would be held on December 15.

## Kashmir Valley not happy with SC verdict on Article 370

New Delhi: Agencies

The results of an exclusive survey conducted by CVoter in Jammu & Kashmir reveal that a majority of the respondents in the Kashmir Valley do not agree with the Supreme Court verdict to uphold the abrogation of Article 370 that gave some special powers and privileges to the erstwhile state of Jammu & Kashmir. The response of the respondents in the Jammu region, however, is exactly the opposite. In the Valley, 51 per cent of the respondents stated that they do not agree with the Supreme Court verdict. The survey had a sample size of 4,056. In Jammu region, close to 56 per cent of the respondents stated that they agree with the top court's decision. Differences could also be seen in responses to other questions in the survey.



While about 52 per cent respondents in the Valley feel that the current regime is not treating them well, three out of every five respondents in Jammu region feel the other way. Similarly, while almost two-third of the respondents in the Valley say people from other states should not be allowed to buy property and settle down in J&K, close to 50 per cent feel the same in the

Jammu region. The results of the CVoter survey clearly indicate that winning the heart and mind of people living in the Valley is still a work in progress. Since 1952, Article 370 and Article 35 were operational in Jammu & Kashmir, giving the state a unique and special identity along with substantive powers to choose which laws passed by the Indian Parliament would be implemented in the state. On August 5, 2019, soon after winning a massive mandate in the Lok Sabha elections, the current regime passed a Bill in both the Houses of the Parliament abrogating Article 370. More than 20 petitions challenging the decision were filed in the Supreme Court, which clubbed them together. On Monday, a five-judge bench passed a unanimous verdict upholding the abrogation of Article 370.

## HOME GUARD TURNS OUT TO BE HISTORY-SHEETER DURING VERIFICATION DRIVE IN UP

Lucknow: A home guard jawan deployed as a driver in Uttar Pradesh's Deoria district, has turned out to be a history-sheeter criminal during a verification drive. Police sources said that Kamlesh Yadav was working as a driver in a police response vehicle attached to the Barhaj police station of UP 112. Deoria SP Sankalp Sharma has removed Kamlesh and ordered an inquiry against him. Kamlesh, in his early 40s, was recruited as a home guard in 2004 and the first case of an attempt to murder was registered against him in 2006. Five more cases, including that of kidnapping, were registered against him at different police stations of Deoria. Later, a history sheet was also opened against him. Sharma said that they recently carried out a verification drive of the history-sheeter criminals wherein they came across one home guard jawan who was deployed as a driver at Barhaj police station of the district.

## 80 per cent doctors unaware of damage to human body by air pollution: Experts

Team Absolute | Lucknow

It is common knowledge that air pollution adversely impacts one's lungs. Experts on 'air pollution and health', however, claim that not just lungs but air pollution could be impacting organs from head to toe. What is actually shocking is the fact that around 80 per cent of the medical professionals do not know the extent of the air pollution impact on the human body. Dr Rajiv Khurana, founder, Lung Care Foundation, said, "From one's hair to skin allergies, to diseases of the lungs, lifestyle disorders such as diabetes and brain stroke -- air pollution is harmful for all." "Even the unborn babies are not safe



as air pollution has been found to be linked to many congenital diseases," added Khurana. "Not just the people in general, even doctors are unaware about the negative impact of air pollution on various organs. One such assessment by our organisation revealed that around 80 per cent of the medical professionals do

not know much about air pollution's impact on the human body," said Dr Khurana. Former director general, Central Reserve Police Force, A.P. Maheshwari said, "Air pollution is the most significant cause behind many ailments as one breathes for 25,000 times in a day. One can live without water for three days, without food for three weeks but one would not survive for even three minutes if one is not able to breathe properly." Experts also underscored the need for spreading awareness on the issue and urged people to form a community to create awareness on it. "One may begin by reaching out to people in 20-50 meters radius of their homes," noted Maheshwari.

## India will launch AI mission to boost healthcare: PM Modi

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday said India will launch an AI mission to boost the healthcare, agriculture and education sectors. Addressing the Global Partnership on Artificial Intelligence (GPAI) Summit here, PM Modi said that India is working to transform the health sector using AI. He highlighted the key role that the path-breaking technology can play in sustainable development. "We will launch an AI mission to get AI compute power which will help startups and innovators. With this mission, agriculture, healthcare and education sectors will be promoted. Our National AI Portal will play a crucial role in supporting and promoting these AI initiatives," he added. PM Modi said that government's development mantra is, Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas. "We have prepared



government policies and programs inspired by the spirit of 'AI For All'. Our endeavour is to take full advantage of the capabilities of AI for social development and inclusive growth. India is fully committed to responsible and ethical use of AI," Modi said. He said AI has the potential to revolutionise India's tech landscape and AI skills will be taken to tier two and tier three cities in the country.



# Hyderabad pips Pune, B'loru among India's best cities in Mercer's quality of living index

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Hyderabad with a rank of 153, Pune at 154 and Bengaluru in the 156th position are the three highest placed among Indian cities in Mercer's worldwide quality of living ranking for 2023 which rates Vienna in Austria at the top of the list. Chennai is the fourth Indian city in the list at the 161 spot followed by Mumbai at 164. Kolkata (170) and New Delhi (172).

Mercer's Quality of Living data assesses the practicalities of daily life for expatriate employees and their families in assignment locations worldwide. Vienna retained its top position in the list, which was last published in pre-Covid 2019.

The survey describes the city as "known for its rich history, stunning architecture, and vibrant cultural scene, Vienna offers its residents a high standard of living in various aspects."

It is followed by Zurich, Switzerland and Auckland, New Zealand in second and third place, respectively.

Places with lower quality of living include several African cities - N'Djamena (Chad), Bangui (Central African Republic) and Khartoum (Sudan), rank 236th, 239th and 241st, respectively.

Locations from Middle East also ranked low including Sana'a (Yemen), at 238, where its ranking signals the need for continued attention to humanitarian efforts and reconstruction initiatives.

Also, Baghdad (Iraq), ranked at 240,



who is seeking to rebuild its infrastructure. In addition to the seven European countries in the top 10, other notable cities with a high quality of living include Amsterdam, The Netherlands (14th); Oslo, Norway (24th); Stockholm, Sweden (26th); Paris, France (32nd); Helsinki, Finland (34th); and Dublin, Ireland (42nd).

In the UK, London secures the 45th position, followed by Aberdeen (49th), Edinburgh (51st), Glasgow (54th), Birmingham (60th), and Belfast (67th).

Eastern European cities such as Prague, Czech Republic (71st); Budapest, Hungary (80th); and Warsaw, Poland (84th), are experiencing a slight decrease in the quality of living in recent years. They have faced various challenges including economic instability, political unrest, and social inequality that have impacted the well-being of its residents. In Africa, Port

Louis, located in Mauritius, is ranked 88th globally with the best quality of living standards and safest in Africa.

It is followed by Victoria, the capital of Seychelles, which holds the 98th position in the ranking.

South Africa has several cities featured in the ranking, including Cape Town (102nd), Johannesburg (105th), and Durban (110th).

Other notable cities in Africa with a relatively high quality of living include Rabat, Morocco (127th); Tunis, Tunisia (131st); and Casablanca, Morocco (136th). In the Middle East, Dubai, ranked at 79th place, and Abu Dhabi, ranked at 84th place, are the two major cities in the United Arab Emirates.

These cities are renowned for their modern infrastructure and diverse expatriate communities. However, as Dubai experiences rapid construction and urbanization, it has encountered

some challenges such as traffic congestion, climate change concerns such as an increase in level of air pollution.

Ranked at 29th, and first among Asian cities, Singapore is known for its continuous high quality of living. The city-state offers a clean and safe environment combined with highly efficient infrastructure.

Several cities in Japan have also made it to the list. Yokohama is ranked at 47th, Tokyo at 50th, Osaka at 58th is a major economic and cultural hub in Japan. Seoul in South Korea is ranked at 81st, known for its fast-paced lifestyle and technological advancements.

Busan, the second-largest city in South Korea, is actively investing in enhancing its appeal and international offerings, and it shares the 95th position with Taichung, Taiwan.

Shanghai in China is ranked at 109th, followed by Beijing ranked at 126th, and Guangzhou which is ranked at 132nd. Vancouver, Canada, secures the eighth spot, providing residents with a unique blend of outdoor recreation and cosmopolitan living, contributing to its high-quality lifestyle.

Toronto, at the 17th place, is a global economic hub with a strong commitment to inclusivity and diversity.

In North America, San Francisco, takes 37th position and remains a global centre for technology and innovation. New York City, at 40th place, followed by Boston at 41st place, and Honolulu, at 42nd place.

In the Pacific region, Auckland in New Zealand claims the third spot in the world ranking, emphasizing its exceptional quality of living.

# Maha govt assures decision on old pension scheme before 2024 Assembly polls

Team Absolute | Nagpur

Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar, who holds the Finance portfolio, on Tuesday assured that the MahaYuti government will take a decision on the Old Pension Scheme before the 2024 Assembly elections.

He made the commitment in the legislature after a government-appointed 3-member panel submitted its report on the OPS to the state, while adding that the Centre is also considering the OPS.

Ajit Pawar said that in case the Central government takes a decision on the OPS then the state would follow suit, and meanwhile the government would study the report submitted by the panel comprising experts Subodh Kumar, K. P. Bakshi, and Sudhir Srivastava.

He assured the legislature that the government was positive on the OPS and expected to take the decision before the 2024 Assembly polls.

Meanwhile, Deputy CM Devendra Fadnis urged the pensioners to call off their agitation and give time to the government to consider the OPS report.

Opposition Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) allies Congress and Shiv Sena-UBT leaders addressed a protest march of



pensioners who are demanding the reinstatement of the OPS, and expressed solidarity to their cause.

Addressing the government pensioners who had converged here from all over the state, Congress state President Nana Patole and Shiv Sena-UBT President and ex-CM Uddhav Thackeray demanded that the state government should immediately concede the OPS issue of the pensioners.

Patole said that he had raised the issue in the legislature and the Congress supports the OPS as a constitutional right of the pensioners which they must get. He pointed out that Congress-ruled states have already implemented the OPS so there's no reason why it cannot be repli-

cated in Maharashtra and urged the MahaYuti regime to take cognisance of the pensioners' sentiments.

Thackeray said that if the MVA government headed by him was in power, "then this protest march would not have been needed" as he would have taken the decision to restore and implement the OPS, which was discontinued here in 2005.

"Do not stop your fight till you get a victory... The state government is not willing to help your cause... and they may try to misguide you with false promises. You must guard against them... The time has come to end the politics of treachery and falsehoods in Maharashtra and throw out the insensitive regime," he declared.

## KERALA PETROLEUM DEALERS DECIDE NOT TO SUPPLY FUEL TO GOVERNMENT VEHICLES ON CREDIT TILL DUES CLEARED

**Thiruvananthapuram:** With the Kerala government's dues to various petroleum dealers mounting as its financial position in dire straits, the dealers have decided that from January 1, no more fuel will be given to state government vehicles on credit.

The decision was taken at a meeting of the All Kerala Federation of Petroleum Traders as its members who have supplied fuel to state government vehicles on credit are finding it tough to move forward as the last payment that came from the state government was in June.

According to the procedures, all state government vehicles, including of state-run public sector organisations fill up fuel from the various retail private outlets on credit and the payment is made later.

With the state's financial position appallingly poor, numerous retail outlets have to receive from the state government ranging from Rs 5 to Rs 25 lakh and with the dealers getting no credit from the three public sector oil companies, the traders body comprising of around 2,000 members decided that they will not be giving any more fuel, till their outstanding dues are cleared.

## NOT OPPOSED TO CASTE CENSUS BUT SURVEY HAS TO BE SCIENTIFIC: KARNATAKA DYCM SHIVAKUMAR

Belagavi | Agencies

Karnataka Deputy Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar on Tuesday clarified that he has not opposed the caste census at any point and anywhere.

"My stand is that the caste census survey must be conducted scientifically and in an organised manner," he said in response to a question on Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge's statement in Rajya Sabha that BJP leaders and Shivakumar are opposed to the caste census implementation.

Shivakumar stated that many MLAs have objected that the caste survey has not been conducted appropriately.

"There are complaints that door to door visits were not conducted during caste census. All communities should get their rights as per their population. Minorities and scheduled castes and others will demand funds



and rights as per their population. We have sought clarification on whether the caste survey has been done scientifically," he said.

"We have faith in social and economic surveys. I support the stand of the Congress to provide social justice to all classes and communities. As per the Central government classification, I am also a leader from OBC communities. I have to see all classes of people equally as a state President of the party," he added.

Asked about missing documents from the caste census records, Shivakumar maintained he didn't know about this matter.

## INDIA'S CONSTRUCTION SECTOR RANKS THIRD LARGEST: GADKARI

Bengaluru | Agencies

Minister for Road Transport and Highways Nitin Gadkari on Tuesday said that the construction sector in India currently ranks third largest in the world.

"By fostering collaborative endeavors we have the potential to propel it to the top spot within the next five years," the minister said.

He was delivering his inaugural address at the 12th edition of CII EXCON 2023, South Asia's largest construction equipment trade fair organised by the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) in Bengaluru on Tuesday.

Gadkari said that the construction sector will have a significant contribution to the Prime Minister's vision to make India a carbon neutral economy.

"To achieve this goal, the government is embarking on major



infrastructure and industrial projects that implement sustainable fuels," he said.

He said that the construction and mining operations consume 400 crore liters of diesel, which is quite detrimental to the environment and the economy.

"By embracing alternative fuels such as ethanol, methanol,

and hydrogen, the construction and mining sectors can effectively reduce emissions," he said.

He said that the precast concrete emerges as a commendable substitute for traditional concrete.

"We advocate for industry collaboration to bolster the capabilities of construction through the

use of sustainable materials and alternative fuels," he said.

Chandrajit Banerjee, Director General, Confederation of Indian Industry, in the inaugural session said that currently, India's construction equipment industry is exporting to over 140 countries.

He said that to enhance sustainability and efficiency, private players in the construction sector should focus on automation, the adoption of advanced technologies, global best practices, the use of alternative fuels, and innovations in utilizing waste materials as raw materials for construction projects.

South Asia's Largest Construction Equipment Trade Fair (CII EXCON) held at the Bangalore International Exhibition Centre (BIEC) in Bengaluru. EXCON will have a participation of over 1,000 exhibitors including 100 from overseas.

## Delhi Police nabs arms maker, 2 associates; seizes 10 semi-automatic pistols

Team Absolute | New Delhi

With the arrest of three men, including a weapon manufacturer, the Delhi Police's Special Cell has busted an inter-state firearms syndicate that supplied semi-automatic guns to criminals and traffickers in Delhi-NCR, an officer said on Tuesday.

The accused were identified as Amarjeet Singh a.k.a Sardar (35) a resident of Khargone in Madhya Pradesh who is an arms manufacturer, Vimal Kumar (19), and Sumit Kumar (19), both residents of Prayagraj in Uttar Pradesh.

The officer said that they have also recovered 11 semi-automatic pistols of .32 bore



from their possession.

Deputy Commissioner of Police (Special Cell), Alok Kumar, said that they got information that gangsters and hardcore criminals in Delhi/NCR have been procuring sophisticated firearms from an MP-based arms manufacturer and supplier.

"After sustained efforts for

more than four months, some of the members of this inter-state firearm syndicate were identified," said the DCP.

On December 4, police received specific inputs that two members of this arms syndicate, Vimal and Sumit, had procured a consignment of pistols from Khargone and brought it to Delhi.

"They were to meet one Delhi-based arms trafficker near the Pul Prahladpur underpass, MB Road, in the afternoon to deliver the pistols," said the DCP.

A trap was laid and at about 01.30 pm, the two were spotted coming towards the Pul Prahladpur underpass, and they were overpowered by the police team.

"During the search, 10 semi-automatic pistols were recovered from the duo," said the DCP.

On interrogation, it was revealed that the pistols were to be supplied to the members of the Hashim Baba gang in Delhi.

"The accused further revealed that they would pro-

cure the firearms from Amarjeet for Rs. 8,000 per pistol and would sell them at Rs. 25,000 per pistol to the criminals in Delhi-NCR and other states," said the DCP.

The accused also told police that they had already supplied more than 50 firearms in the last two years. During further investigation, the supplier, Amarjeet Singh was also arrested from Nizamuddin railway station on December 5, and one semi-automatic pistol was recovered from his possession.

"On sustained interrogation, Amarjeet Singh revealed that he himself manufactures the illegal pistols and has been involved in this trade for the last ten years," said the DCP.

## UP police speeds up justice, files charge sheet in gang rape case within 96 hours

Barabanki | Agencies

In an example of speedy justice, the Barabanki Police, on Monday, filed a charge sheet in the gang rape case of a 22-year-old woman, barely 96 hours after the crime had taken place and appealed for speedy trial.

The woman was allegedly abducted and gang-raped in the district on December 6 and the two accused were arrested the next day and sent to jail. The police had filed a charge sheet against Rahul Kumar, 30, and Manoj Kumar, 28 and sent them to jail.

Barabanki Superintendent of Police Dinesh Singh said that the accused impersonated palmists and tantriks and exploited women/girls by promising to rid them of all problems.

"They have been booked under IPC Sections 376 D (gang rape) and 341 (punishment for wrongful restraint)," said the officer. "We have written to the district judge to fast-track the case and an officer has been assigned to personally monitor the day-to-day hearings in the case," said the SP. He added that all the exhibits recov-



ered from the spot of the crime were sent to the FSL while testimonies of eyewitnesses have been added to the charge sheet along with the medical report to make it a watertight case.

"The FSL has also been requested to complete the sampling and send a report at the earliest, which will help us in attaining conviction in record time," the SP said.

"In the past also, we have had convictions obtained in crimes against women cases in record time. One was in 54 days and another took 70 days," the officer added.

## An outlet that sells 'jail ka khana' in Kanpur

Kanpur | Agencies

The Kanpur district jail has launched a unique prisoner reform initiative under which food outlet will be run by its current and former inmates.

Jail superintendent B.N. Pandey said that the outlet has become functional from Monday.

While food will be prepared by the prisoners in the jail kitchen, former inmates will not only man the outlet but also act as home delivery executives as the jail aspires to take the initiative online.

On its first day, the outlet managed a sale of an impressive Rs 5,500 -- most of it coming from people visiting their kin lodged in the jail.

Tea, sold for Rs 10 per cup, and espresso, sold for Rs 20 per cup, made for the bulk of the revenue.

The idea was mooted by District Magistrate Vishak G. Iyer who was impressed by the culinary skills of inmates as they churned a variety of food items for the erstwhile jail canteen.

"We believe that the initiative will bring a change in the mindset of people behind bars. Also, it will send a message that the government is interested in their rehabilitation," said Iyer, who provided government funds for the project.



It was decided that 10 current and 10 former inmates be engaged in the initiative.

The inmates have decided to serve only vegetarian food with a high sale value.

The menu would be revised after the outlet makes its way to food aggregator platforms, Pandey said, adding talks with two major app-driven service providers were already in the final stages.

The project's nodal officer, Anil Kumar, said the rates had been kept rea-

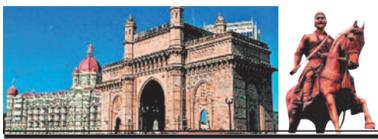
sonable.

"A thali (meal) of four rotis, two curries, dal, rice and salad is sold for Rs 70. This is the costliest item on the menu," said Kumar, adding samosa, noodles, rajma-rice, kadhi-rice, chole-rice and, puri-sabzi would also be sold.

"Chefs from reputed institutes and hotels will train inmates to better their skills and add new items to the menu," he said.

The food joint will be managed by a prisoner welfare and rehabilitation cooperative society.

A bank account has been opened in the name of the society, and earnings from the outlet would be credited to this account.



# Even at 83, Papa's first fight is for people: Supriya Sule's b'day greeting for Sharad Pawar

Team Absolute | Pune

Thousands greeted Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) President Sharad Pawar on his 83rd birthday on Tuesday, but the best message was from his daughter Supriya Sule -Pawar.

The NCP Working President, Supriya Sule-Pawar penned a brief but loving tribute to her 'Baba' (Papa), by saying that even at 83, his "first fight is in the public interest".

"Dear Dad, today is your birthday. In fact, it's a birthday just for us, for you it is like any other day... You are the peoples' comrade and they are your allies..." gushed Sule.

She said that Pawar is completing 83 years of age today (December 12) with the blessings and adulation of the masses, and the invaluable support of his medical team.

"This is indeed a matter of great joy and we are all sincerely grateful to them all... Even yesterday (December 11), you took to the streets for the Nashik onion farmers issue. I am also putting in my full strength to tackle issues of public concern here in Parliament," Sule said.

The Baramati MP added how several people asked whether she would be going to Nagpur on Tuesday for the NCP's Sangharsh Yatra, but adhering to Pawar's own advice, she would raise the issues of her constituency and people of



Maharashtra in the Lok Sabha. "We have committed our entire lives to public service as per the vow given by my grandfather Govindrao Pawar and grandmother Shardabai.

Fulfilment of public interest is your joy and passion," said Sule.

"For us to be with you and support your endeavours would be the best way of celebrating your birthday. In these difficult times, we all are confident that you will overcome all the difficult challenges and succeed. We will fight & Win! Wishing you a very Happy Birthday, Daddy!" concluded Sule.

Earlier, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla tweeted greetings while Shiv Sena (UBT) President and former Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray and his son Aditya along with Sanjay Raut, called on Sharad Pawar to meet and greet him on his 83rd birthday.

Top leaders across the national and state political spectrum have extended warm greetings to Sharad Pawar, including from the breakaway NCP faction led by Deputy CM Ajit Pawar.

Some of the prominent personalities include: Nana Patole, Digvijaya Singh, Rajeev Shukla, Praful Patel, Dayanidhi Maran, Zeeshan Siddiqui, Ritesh Vilasrao Deshmukh, among others, who called on him in Nagpur.

Several top leaders from the Centre and states, the partners of I.N.D.I.A. block, business and glamour personalities as well as commoners all over the country wished him with messages pouring on the social media.

# Shiv Sena (UBT) uneasy over buzz of SIT probe into Disha Salian case

Team Absolute | Nagpur

The state political circles are abuzz with speculation that the Maharashtra government is likely to form a Special Investigation Team (SIT) to probe the death of a celeb manager, Disha Salian, sparking worries in the Shiv Sena (UBT), here on Tuesday.

Among other things, the SIT is expected to probe the alleged involvement of Shiv Sena (UBT) MLA Aditya U.Thackeray into the 'accidental death' of Salian on June 8, 2020.

As per the probe so far, Salian was killed after falling from the 14th floor of a building in Malad -- just a week before the Bollywood actor Sushant Singh Rajput was found hanging from his Bandra flat -- which had sparked a huge political row.

Reacting to certain unconfirmed reports that the Mumbai Police are likely to announce its high-level SIT Tuesday, Shiv Sena (UBT) Deputy Leader and



MLA Sachin Ahir said the party is ready to face any probe "provided it is done in a fair and transparent manner". His colleague Sunil Prabhu has slammed the SIT as a 'political vendetta' intended to hound the Opposition leaders by the government.

Ruling allies, Shiv Sena's Minister Shambhuraj Desai and Bharatiya Janata Party MLA Nitesh Rane have termed the Salian case as serious and said the guilty must be punished.

Nitesh Rane countered by asking why the former Maha Vikas Aghadi government kept silent for two-and-half years and failed to order an SIT probe the Salian case.

Other Shiv Sena (UBT) leaders like Sanjay Raut, Arvind Sawant, Anil Parab and Bhaskar Jadhav, have also attacked the state government for selectively targeting the Opposition and attempting to crush them, but said they would not succeed as the Mumbai Police had already probed the case in detail then.

# Jolt as Maha BC panel chief quits on 'personal grounds'

Team Absolute | Nagpur

In a bolt, the Maharashtra State Backward Class Commission (MSBCC) Chairperson, Justice (retired) Anand Nirgude quit his post -- as the quota issue continues to rock the state polity and the government, here on Tuesday.

Justice Nirgude submitted his resignation to the government on December 4 and it was accepted on December 9 when the Maharashtra Legislature Winter Session was underway.

Congress' Leader of Opposition Vijay Wadettiwar first tweeted the developments and alleged that the state government "hid the information" from the Legislature about it.

On his part, Justice Nirgude -- who was appointed the Chairperson in March 2021 -- confirmed that he had resigned for 'personal reasons', he had done his best for the MSBCC but would not choose to speak about it before the media.

Terming the news as "shocking", Wadettiwar said that 9-member MSBCC Members are resigning one after the other and the "government hid the information that the President had accepted the resign-



nation (of Nirgude)".

Earlier two other Members -- Laxman Hake and Balaji Bhillariker -- had quit the panel alleging 'interference' by the state government into its functioning.

Now, after the MSBCC Chairperson and two

other members quitting, the panel is left with other -- Nilima Lakhade, Chandulal Meshram, Baban Taywade, Sanjiv Sonawane, Gajanan Kharate, Alka Rathod and Govind Kale.

"Why did the government not give any information about this in the House when the Winter Session is on? The government must explain in the House why a Member and now the Chairman of MSBCC has quit," demanded Wadettiwar.

The MSBCC had recently been looking into the status of backwardness of the Maratha community -- currently on a warpath for reservation -- and the spate of resignations have raised concerns among the various communities.

The MSBCC was directed by the state government to ascertain the existence of exceptional circumstances or extraordinary situations in the context of the Maratha community, justifying exceeding of the limit of 50 per cent quotas as laid down in the Supreme Court judgements.

Shivba Sanghatana President Manoj Jarange-Patil said Nirgude may have had his reasons for quitting but added that he had "no idea" of the development.

# Jarange-Patil feels 'uneasy' in Dharashiv public rally, stops speech midway

Team Absolute | Dharashiv (Maharashtra)

Shivba Sanghatana President and Maratha quota activist Manoj Jarange-Patil felt uneasy during a public rally here on Monday afternoon and was forced to discontinue his speech midway.

Jarange-Patil was speaking at a massive public meeting at Makni-Karajgaon around noon when he suddenly felt weak, and then sat down on the stage.

As some aides rushed to help him, he continued speaking feebly for a few minutes, before giving up and then was helped away from the stage.

A medico was summoned to examine him and said he had certain diabetes problems, was administered some medicines, and has been advised to take it easy for a couple of days.

However, an aide said that Jarange-Patil -- currently on a tour of some districts to drum up support for the



Maratha reservation - has reportedly decided against taking medical advice to take rest and will continue his schedules as planned.

Jarange-Patil has given an ultimatum of December 24 to the Maharashtra government to announce the Maratha quotas by including them in the OBC Kumbi Caste category, failing which he would lay a siege on Mumbai.

# Shiv Sena (UBT) demands SIT to probe judge Loya's death

Team Absolute | Nagpur

The Shiv Sena (UBT) Leader of Opposition (Council) Ambadas Danve has demanded a special investigation team (SIT) to probe the death of the late CBI judge B. H. Loya in which the name of Home Minister Amit Shah had cropped up, here on Tuesday.

Speaking to media-persons outside the legislature, Danve said that there is a clamour for a SIT into the death of celeb manager Disha Salian -- in which Shiv Sena (UBT) leader Aditya U. Thackeray's name figures -- though there is no such request from her family. He said that already there have been several probes into the Salian case but nothing was found, and even her family has expressed satisfaction at the outcome.

Targeting the BJP, Danve pointed out that judge Loya had died under mysterious circumstances in Nagpur (December 1, 2014), and even his family had no complaints in the matter, but the truth must be revealed by conducting a SIT probe into his death.

Reacting sharply to this, the ruling ally Bharatiya Janata Party MLA Nitesh Rane countered by asking why the erstwhile Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) government did not institute such a SIT probe while it was in power for two-and-half years.

Rane Jr. reiterated the demand for a SIT into the Salian death case (June 8, 2020) in Mumbai to unravel the truth in the matter,



and urged that even he himself should be summoned for the probe.

The ruling MahaYuti government of Shiv Sena-BJP-Nationalist Congress Party (Ajit P.) has reportedly given the green signal to Mumbai Police to form a high-level SIT and probe the Salian case in which Aditya Thackeray's name had come up.

Hitting back, Danve has sought a SIT investigation into judge Loya's death nine years ago in Nagpur, when the needle of suspicion was pointed at Shah who emerged unscathed from it later.

The MVA allies of Congress-NCP (Sharad P.) and Shiv Sena (UBT) have accused the state government of vendetta by hounding the Opposition leaders ahead of the upcoming civic, parliament and assembly elections due in 2024.

# Maharashtra government forms panel to probe BMC's financial transactions in last 25 years



Team Absolute | Mumbai

The Maharashtra government has formed a committee to conduct a thorough audit of the financial transactions undertaken by Mumbai's civic body, Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC), over the past 25 years, State Minister Uday Samant announced on Tuesday. Addressing reporters in Mumbai, Samant revealed that the decision to form the committee stemmed from concerns raised during a legislative assembly discussion on Monday focused on the functioning of civic bodies. Legislators expressed apprehensions about BMC's finances, prompting doubts and questions about its transactions spanning the last quarter-century.

Samant, designated to handle queries related to the urban development department, informed the media that he had appointed a three-member committee to delve into the financial

transactions of BMC dating back 25 years. The committee's findings are expected to be presented in due course, after which the government intends to publish a comprehensive white paper on the matter.

Responding to inquiries about the possibility of similar probes into the financial dealings of civic bodies in Pune, Nagpur, and Kalyan-Dombivili, as demanded by the opposition, Minister Samant asserted that such investigations would be conducted when deemed necessary. He clarified that there was currently no compelling reason to initiate similar probes for other municipal bodies.

Meanwhile, leaders of the opposition parties staged an agitation against the Maharashtra government on Tuesday, alleging that "the health services in the state were on ventilator support".

Leaders of the Maha Vikas Aghadi alliance, constituting the Shiv Sena (UBT), Nationalist Congress Party's Sharad Pawar faction

and Congress, raised slogans against Maharashtra Health Minister Tanaji Sawant and his department.

Leader of Opposition in the legislative assembly Vijay Wadettiwar, Leader of Opposition in legislative council Ambadas Danve, Congress leaders Ashok Chavan and Balasaheb Thorat gathered on the steps outside the Vidhan Bhavan wearing white coats, carrying stethoscopes and a stretcher. Speaking to reporters, Danve said the health services in the state have deteriorated, with several deaths reported in the government hospitals of Nagpur, Nanded, Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar and Kalwa in Thane district.

"The health services in Maharashtra are on ventilator support," the Shiv Sena (UBT) leader said. He further claimed that there was a shortage of medicines in state-run hospitals and accused the government of being unable to provide proper healthcare to patients.

# Adani Ports to raise Rs 5,000 crore via non-convertible debentures

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Adani Ports and Special Economic Zone said on Tuesday that it will raise Rs 5000 crore by issuing non-convertible debentures and another Rs 250 crore through redeemable preference shares. The Gautam Adani-led company said most of the funds raised would be used for refinancing its existing debt. The proposal has been cleared at a board of directors meeting. The move forms part of the company's strategy to reduce its debt burden.

# Shiv Sena leader Anil Parab accuses minister Kesarkar of speaking false things about Bal Thackeray

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Shiv Sena (UBT) leader Anil Parab Tuesday hit out at Maharashtra minister Deepak Kesarkar for speaking "false things" about Bal Thackeray during this cross-examination in the disqualification pleas of Shiv Sena factions.

He claimed that Kesarkar, who belongs to the Eknath Shinde-led Shiv Sena, said during his cross-examination that Bal Thackeray did not respect democracy and that he did not allow any election process in the party.

Speaking to reporters in the premises of the Vidhan Bhavan, the state legislature complex in Nagpur, Parab said, "During his cross-examination in the disqualification pleas, Deepak Kesarkar said that Balasaheb Thackeray did not allow any election process in the party and did not respect democracy. People who followed Balasaheb's ideology are using such language and saying that no election process was held (in the party) from 1999 till today."

Before saying all this, Kesarkar should have studied and collected information. He should have known how Balasaheb was and how he worked, he said.

"Balasaheb used to say that he does not accept 'faltu Lokshahi' (useless democracy), but the election process has been taking place in Shiv Sena since the beginning. Hence, Kesarkar has spoken wrong things about Balasaheb during his cross examination," he said.

The former minister accused Kesarkar of having double standards and saying one thing in the court and something else outside it.

"They do not have any love for Balasaheb and this shows what is in their heart



towards Balasaheb," he alleged.

Meanwhile, the Yavatmal police have registered an FIR against Shiv Sena (UBT) MP Sanjay Raut on charge of sedition and other offences for writing an alleged objectionable article against Prime Minister Narendra Modi in the party mouthpiece 'Saamana', a senior official said on Tuesday.

The case is based on a complaint filed by BJP's Yavatmal district coordinator Nitin Bhutada against Rajya Sabha member Raut, who is the executive editor of Saamana, the official said.

In the complaint, Bhutada claimed Raut wrote an objectionable article against PM Modi on December 10.

The case was registered on Monday at Umarkhed police station against Raut under IPC sections 124 (A) (sedition), 153 (A) (promoting enmity between different groups on grounds of religion, race, place of birth, residence, language, etc) and 505 (2) (statements creating or promoting enmity, hatred or ill-will between classes), the official said. "We have registered the case as per the complaint and will conduct a probe into it," he said.



EDITOR'S SPECS

Internal feud in Trinamool Congress over upper age limit intensifies

An internal feud within the Trinamool Congress over the party's national general secretary Abhishek Banerjee's proposed theory for fixing the upper age limit for all political posts, is intensifying. A torrid debate between Trinamool Congress's three-time Lok Sabha member Saugata Roy and the party's state spokesman Kunal Ghosh regarding the matter has taken centre-stage. Roy's comments virtually challenging the upper-age limit theory that in Trinamool Congress only Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee is the ultimate decision-maker on nominations has invited scathing retaliation from Ghosh. "Such comments are unwarranted and breed the roots of division. There is no need to remind anyone that Mamata Banerjee is the final decision-making authority. Roy was not with Trinamool Congress since the party's inception in 1998, as in the Lok Sabha elections in the same year he contested as a Congress candidate against Mamata Banerjee from Kolkata-South constituency. Now such comments from him appear to be like excessive blandishment," Ghosh said. Ghosh also drew a subtle reference to BSP chief Mayawati's recent announcement naming her nephew Akash Ananda as her successor in the party. "Although it is an internal matter of BSP, the BSP leader's initiative to bring ahead the new leadership really deserves accolades. I am hopeful that the new generation of leadership will work together with progressive, secular and democratic forces," he said. Political observers feel that such altercations among leaders within the party gives a subtle signal that such internal differences might take nastier shapes at the time of nomination of candidates for the Lok Sabha polls for 2024. They also said that a further aggravation of this internal feud is inevitable unless Mamata Banerjee intervenes in ending the ongoing statement and counter-statements in the matter.

Cong can no longer behave like Big Brother in INDIA

Deepika Bhan

Congress' 3-1 defeat in the recent Assembly elections has put the INDIA bloc back on the drawing board and this time it won't be easy for the party to dominate. Having kept the bloc activities on hold during the five-state polls, the grand old party is now seeking its 27 partners and wants all to converge again to prepare for the 2024 Lok Sabha polls. However, post-election results, the bloc partners are seeking a new drawing board with each one of them wanting to redraw the lines on their terms. The three-state results have changed everything for the Congress and its partners in the INDIA bloc. The five-state Assembly elections were projected as a semi-final to the 2024 general elections and the first test of the INDIA bloc. The Congress failed miserably in the three big states and also failed the bloc, which has clearly antagonised its partners. This has been made clear by other major stakeholders in the INDIA bloc by staying away from the December 6 meeting called by Congress President Mallikarajun Kharge at his residence in Delhi. This meeting was called after nearly three months since the last meeting of the bloc as the Congress had turned its focus on the five state elections. But, a day before the scheduled meeting, the Congress was forced to call off the planned gathering after many of the bloc top leaders stayed away. The meeting has now been scheduled in the third week of December. The rescheduling was an indication of the inner rumblings among the constituents of the opposition bloc. Many leaders are alleging that the grand old party ignored them, and itself was unable to win elections on its own. With the storm in the INDIA bloc tea cup, will the power-shar-



ing dynamics change within the alliance. That is the question now after the Congress' disastrous loss in the Assembly Elections. The partners have been openly expressing their disappointments. Whether it is the Janata Dal(U), AAP, Samajwadi Party, or even the Left, the bloc partners are blaming the Congress' approach to the state elections, saying that the grand old party lacked inclusivity as it did not actively involve the alliance members in the campaign process. The INDIA bloc did no joint rallies in any of the five states that went to polls in November, and there was no seat sharing. Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar took a jibe at the Congress, saying it was clear that the party couldn't win the elections alone. JD(U) leader K.C. Tyagi even expressed his concerns about the Congress' poll performance and suggested the party focus on its survival. The Samajwadi Party, upset with the Congress attitude in Madhya Pradesh, has openly expressed its discontent. And SP chief Akhilesh Yadav has made it clear that it is not going to be easy

for the Congress in Uttar Pradesh. Trinamool Congress has said the Congress' losses were "more of a Congress failure than a BJP success story". Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan did not mince words in attacking the Congress, and said its decision to go solo and not form alliances with other INDIA parties played a significant role in the unfavourable election results. With unhappy 27 partners, Congress has landed itself in a very difficult situation today. Its bargaining power is not the same as it was when it won the state elections in Karnataka and Himachal Pradesh. The INDIA bloc's drawing board will be redrawn. The loss in Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh will weigh the Congress down. In fact, the wipeout in the Hindi heartland states has rather made it one of the weakest links in the bloc. Three months ago, the Congress deliberately postponed seat-sharing negotiations in the bloc assuming that it would win the Hindi heartland states which could increase its bargaining position. Now that the BJP has massively beaten the Congress in three big states, its aftereffect will be very hard for the grand old party. The Congress, which considers itself the principal opposition party, has only three states -- Himachal Pradesh, Telangana and Karnataka. It is now just one another party in the bloc. With this, the party is now left with perhaps its worst-ever footprint in north India. Despite aggressive campaigning on ground and in social media, the Congress failed miserably before Modi's BJP. It lost even as it promised free doles, pinched cash senses, appeased minorities and demonised Prime Minister Narendra Modi. And it also lost because it shunned its INDIA bloc partners in the elections. The same bloc partners will now make counter moves and the Congress will be forced to compromise.

Why Arab nations are being measured in their response to Israeli aggression

Kavya Dubey

The world may be feeling for Gaza in the wake of the war Israel announced against Hamas for attacking it on October 7, but the silence of the Arab nations over Israel's relentless retaliation against Hamas is rather audible. Although the recent Arab-OIC summit did not justify the Gaza war and demanded that aid be allowed to enter the war-torn region, they called for cessation of arms exports to Israel. According to sources, Israel has expressed its intent to carve out a buffer zone on the Palestinian side of the Gaza border to prevent future attacks. Regional sources also reveal that Israel shared its plans with Egypt and Jordan, other than the UAE. It is further reported that Saudi Arabia, which halted a US-mediated normalisation process after the Gaza war broke out two months back, is in the loop. Even Turkey has been informed of Israel's intent. This clearly means that Israel is going beyond its usual Arab mediators in order to shape a post-war Gaza. So far, no Arab state has displayed any inclination to administer Gaza in the times to come, but have condemned Israel's offensive that has claimed more than 15,000 lives and razed a major part of Gaza to the ground. A US-brokered deal between Israel and Saudi Arabia in the light of these developments, however, points to potential historic



ground breaking as that would bring Saudi Arabia into America's security fold. It is believed that apprehensions regarding an Israeli-Saudi rapprochement might have been a factor behind Hamas' October 7 attack. This certainly puts Saudi Arabia in a tight spot given that Riyadh had earlier indicated that Israel must do something substantial about the Palestinian issue as a prerequisite for normalisation. For Saudi Arabia to achieve its ambitious economic goals, a sta-

ble Middle East with cordial relations with the US is indispensable. This long-run agenda is a decisive factor for Saudi Arabia to pave its path ahead in the ongoing conflict. Further, there lies a possibility that Saudi Arabia might have a financial role to play in a UN-approved transitional administration that returns the control of the Palestinian Authority to Gaza. But such a role is expected to be more akin to cash dumps on select clients. This, however, would not be favoured by Saudi Arabia as the Gulf nation now seeks investment opportunities over cash dumps, as it clarified in negotiations with Egypt recently. After the 1973 Arab-Israeli War (also known as the Yom Kippur War), Saudi Arabia and other Arab oil-producing nations imposed an oil embargo on the United States to punish Washington for its support for Israel. The embargo and accompanying cuts in oil production by the Gulf nations caused oil prices to quadruple in the US. But as times have changed and the tables appear to have turned, the resumption of Israeli-Saudi discussions could also mean revamped and crucial Saudi-US ties. But so long as the conflict in Gaza persists, the Israeli-Saudi deal will remain on ice.

international

New Zealand researchers assess tsunami hazards by new modelling technique

Wellington | Agencies  
A new research published on Tuesday suggested that tsunamis could reach up to 28 meters, and that the northern and eastern coasts of New Zealand's North Island are most at risk of being impacted by the largest waves. The research team has developed an innovative new method to carry out tsunami hazard assessments, using New Zealand as a case study, reports Xinhua news agency. Researchers looked at 30,000 years of a synthetic earthquake catalogue, and modelled the tsunamis generated from more than 2,500 earthquakes of magnitude 7 or greater.



"Tsunamis are a deadly but infrequent hazard, which makes them hard to study," said Laura Hughes of Victoria University of Wellington, adding this is the first use of a physics-based earthquake catalogue to investigate tsunami

hazard, and it overcomes many of the challenges with previous methods. Hughes' research indicates that modelled earthquakes on the Hikurangi and Tonga-Kermadec subduction zones pose the greatest hazard along many parts of New Zealand's coastline. The modelling technique has already been used as the basis for estimating tsunami impacts and losses around New Zealand, according to the study published in the Journal of Geophysical Research: Solid Earth. This new method could also be used to estimate risk from earthquake-induced perils such as tsunamis, ground-shaking, landslides and liquefaction, said program co-leader Bill Fry of GNS Science. "This is about keeping New Zealanders safer. The more knowledge we have about our hazards and risks, the better we can plan and prepare," Fry said.

23 Pak soldiers killed in attack on army checkpoint

Islamabad | Agencies  
Twenty-three Pakistan Army soldiers were killed in an attack on a checkpoint in Dera Ismail Khan's Daraban area on Tuesday. Six terrorists attacked the security post in the early hours of December 12, Pakistani media outlet Dawn reported, citing the military's media affairs wing. "The attempt to enter the post was effectively thwarted which forced the terrorists to ram an explosive laden vehicle into the post, followed by a suicide bombing attack. The resulting blasts led to the collapse of the building, causing multiple casualties;



23 brave soldiers embraced shahadat, while all six terrorists were effectively engaged and sent to hell," the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) said.

Tehreek-e-Jihad Pakistan, a new group affiliated with the Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), claimed responsibility for the attack. This is the military's highest single-day death toll from terrorist attacks reported this year. Before this, 12 soldiers were martyred in separate military operations in the Zhoab and Sui areas of Balochistan in July, the media reported. In a post on X (formerly Twitter), caretaker Interior Minister Sarfaraz Bugti condemned the "terrorist attack on the police station" and expressed deep sorrow over the loss of lives.

US records over 1,600 deaths from flu so far this season: CDC

Washington | Agencies  
There have been at least 1,600 deaths, 2.6 million illnesses and 26,000 hospitalisations from flu so far this season in the US, according to the latest estimates of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Seasonal influenza activity continued to increase in most parts of the country, with the southeast and south-central areas of the country reporting the highest levels of activity, according to the CDC weekly review.



The number of weekly flu hospital admissions continued to increase, reports

Xinhua news agency. Four influenza-associated paediatric deaths were reported during the week ending December 2, bringing the 2023-2024 season total to 12 paediatric deaths, according to CDC. CDC recommends that everyone 6 months and older get an annual flu vaccine. In the US, flu season usually occurs in the fall and winter. While influenza viruses spread year-round, most of the time flu activity peaks between December and February.

Health risks surge in UK due to climate change: Report

London | Agencies  
Adverse impacts on health due to extreme weather and vector-borne disease risks could increase in the UK under a warming climate, according to a report published by the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA). The report, written by 90 experts, is based on climate projections using a high-end warming scenario or a "worst-case scenario" of approximately 4.3 degrees Celsius of warming by 2100. "Our changing climate poses one of the greatest health security and societal challenges, impacting everything from the air we breathe to the quality and availability of our food and water," Xinhua news agency quoted Isabel Oliver, chief scientific officer at UKHSA, as saying in a statement. The report estimates that there will be up to 10,000 deaths in the country by the 2050s as a result of extreme heat. Based on a high-end warming scenario, the report anticipates a substantial surge in heat-related deaths, with an increase of over 1.5 times by the 2030s and an over 12-fold rise by the 2070s. It also states that vector-borne diseases, such as chikungunya, dengue and Zika viruses, could become transmissible in London and other parts of the UK due to Aedes albopictus (Asian tiger mosquitoes) and Culex mosquitoes. According to the report, under a high-



warming scenario, the UK will become suitable for new domestic mosquitoes by the 2040s and 2050s, while most of Wales, Northern Ireland, and parts of the Scottish Lowlands may see potential establishment by the 2060s or 2070s. The report also warns that more people will be at high risk of flooding in the future due to changing rainfall patterns. It is projected that the UK's dependence on food from highly climate-vulnerable countries will increase, potentially affecting the stability of food supplies, particularly for fresh fruit and vegetables. "Action is needed now to adapt our policies, environments and our behaviors to

secure health, well-being and livelihoods," Oliver said, adding that much can be done to "avert and prevent" the impacts of climate change on health. UKHSA, an executive agency sponsored by the Department of Health and Social Care, is responsible for planning, preventing and responding to external health threats. This year is set to be the hottest year on record in human history, according to a report published by the World Meteorological Organization at the 28th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change.

Tropical cyclone Jasper may bring life-threatening floods to Australia

Canberra | Agencies  
The north tropical coast of Australia's Queensland could be hit with life-threatening flash flooding and destructive wind gusts as category 2 tropical cyclone Jasper was expected to make landfall on Wednesday, the country's Bureau of Meteorology said on Tuesday. Tropical Cyclone Jasper with category 2 strength was expected to impact the Far North Queensland coast on Wednesday morning, Xinhua news agency quoted the Bureau as saying. "Locally intensive rainfall



which may lead to dangerous and life-threatening flash flooding is likely about the coast and ranges between

Cape Flattery and Port Douglas as well as areas near the center of tropical cyclone Jasper. "Destructive wind gusts of up to 140 km/h may develop between Wujal Wujal and Innisfail, including Cairns from early Wednesday morning," it added. Tropical cyclone Jasper, currently a category 2 system, may intensify slightly more as it moves towards the coast. It was forecast to cross the coast as a category 2 system on Wednesday and would weaken as it moves inland on Thursday towards the Gulf of Carpentaria.





## I'm leaving after forming BJP Govt in MP: Shivraj Singh Chouhan

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Outgoing Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan on Tuesday expressed his gratitude to the people of Madhya Pradesh for their support in the last two decades. Delivering a farewell speech at the party headquarters in Bhopal, four-time CM Chouhan expressed satisfaction that he was bidding farewell at a time when the BJP had retained power with absolute majority.

"While bidding farewell, I am satisfied that the BJP is going to form the government with an overwhelming majority. I am leaving after forming a majority government," Chouhan added.

This was Chouhan's first statement after tendering his resignation from the post on Monday.

After addressing a Press conference at the party headquarters, Chouhan also met the large gathering of people at his residence.

Chouhan, who was made the Chief Minister for the first time in 2005 after replacing Babulal Gaur, had retained power until 2018 when the



BJP lost the election against the Congress. However, the tenure of the Kamal Nath-led Congress Government ended within 15 months due to a political crisis within its top leadership in March 2020.

The then Congress leader Jyotiraditya Scindia shifted to the BJP with his loyalists and the saffron party came back to power again.

Even though, the BJP had lost the election under the leadership Chouhan, he took oath as the Chief Minister for the fourth term and became the longest-serving CM of the state.

The BJP contested the

Assembly election 2023 under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and registered a landslide victory by securing 163 seats.

The Opposition Congress, which was looking to come back to power, was reduced to 66 seats against its 114 in 2018.

On Monday, the BJP's legislative party meeting unanimously declared Mohan Yadav as Chief Minister-designated. Beside him, two senior BJP leaders Rajendra Shukla and Jagdish Devda were made Deputy Chief Ministers.

## Mohan Yadav will take oath as Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister today

Team Absolute | Bhopal

### PM MODI TO ATTEND EVENT

New Delhi: Prime Minister Narendra Modi will attend the swearing-in ceremonies of the newly elected Chief Ministers of Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh tomorrow. PM Modi's itinerary for this week also includes inaugurating key infrastructure projects and addressing public gatherings.

On Wednesday morning, at 11:30 am, the Prime Minister will be present in Bhopal to witness Chief Minister Mohan Yadav and his cabinet ministers take their oaths of office. Later that day, PM Modi will travel to Raipur where he will attend the swearing-in ceremony of Chief Minister Vishnu Dev Sai and his team. This ceremony will take place at 4:00 pm.

Mohan Yadav will take oath as the Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh here on Wednesday, and elaborate arrangements are being made for the event, sources close to him said.

"Elaborate arrangements are being made for the function, where a large number of Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) workers, especially from Mohan Yadav's hometown Ujjain, will gather," a source said.

Ending days of suspense, the BJP on Monday picked Mohan Yadav as the new chief minister of the state and denied party stalwart Shivraj Singh Chouhan a record fifth term in office.

Mohan Yadav (58), a minister in the Chouhan government, was elected unanimously as the BJP legislative party leader during a meeting on Monday.

The state will also have two deputy chief ministers - Rajendra Shukla and Jagdish Devda. Senior BJP



leader and newly-elected MLA Narendra Singh Tomar, who was among contenders for the CM's post, will be the new assembly speaker.

Mohan Yadav, who was not being seen as a contender for the top post, is considered to be close to the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS)

and hails from the Other Backward Classes (OBC) community, which accounts for more than 48 per cent of the state's population. After he was named as the chief minister-designate on Monday, Mohan Yadav met Governor Mangubhai Patel and staked a claim to form the next government.

Mohan Yadav was elected as an MLA from the Ujjain South seat for the first time in 2013. He retained the assembly seat in 2018 and again in 2023.

In the last month's assembly elections, the BJP won 163 of the 230 assembly seats in the state, relegating the Congress to a distant second at 66.

## Accused of attempt to murder arrested

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Hanumanganj police station in-charge in the capital Bhopal, Hanumanganj inspector Awadhesh Singh Bhaduria has succeeded in arresting the accused of attempt to murder by forming a team and developing an informer system.

Complainant Mohd. Tariq, s/o Mohd. Laiq, age 38 years, resident of 257, New Kabadakhana, Hand Cart Market, reported that on the night of 7 December 23, I heard the sound of a fight. When I came out of the house, I saw Raj in front of the grocery store. On Kabadakhana Road, Zaib alias Zaid and other associates were abusing my brother Md. Khalid Khan. When my brother refused to abuse, Zaib alias Zaid, with the intention of killing my brother, took out a pistol and placed it on brother Khalid's waist. Shot in the stomach on the left side. Due to which bleeding started and my brother



fell on the road. When I shouted, Zaib alias Zaid and his companions ran away from there. Then I along with my younger brother Sarik took Khalid to Hamidia Hospital for treatment, where he is undergoing treatment.

I came to report that on the report, crime number 857/23 section 294,326,307,34 of IPC was found against accused Jaib alias Zaid and others, the crime was registered and taken up for investigation.

According to the information from the police, police teams were deployed at identified places to search for the accused in property-related and body-related crimes and to keep a constant watch on the suspects. During the search, the accused Jaib alias Zaid was standing near the scrapyard culvert, who after seeing the police, tried to run away, who was caught by cordoning off with the help of our companion staff and witnesses.

When asked about his name and address, he told his name as Zaib alias Zaid Khan, father Pappu Khan, age 26 years, resident of street number 1, Babul, in front of the wedding hall, Fatma Nagar, New Scrapyard, Hanumanganj Bhopal Hall, a rented house near the mosque, Rambha Nagar Police Station, Gautam Nagar Bhopal, due to which the crime is Sadar. He was interrogated who confessed to committing the crime.

## Obscene video then blackmailing, became the reason for double murder

Team Absolute | Indore

The police caught the killers of the sensational double murder that took place in the Aerodrome police station area within 24 hours and told that the victim husband and wife were involved in these murders in the case of blackmailing by making obscene videos. The deceased Ravi Thakur, who was murdered, used to blackmail women by making obscene videos. He had illicit relations with many women, while the deceased woman Sarita Narwaria, who was murdered, was helpful to him in such success.

The murderers were also suffering from his blackmailing which was the reason for



the murder. According to the police, Mamta alias Pinky and her husband Nitin have committed this double murder. After making a plan, they first reached Sarita's house and found her alone and murdered her. After this, Ravi Thakur was called and they attacked him with knife and

sword and killed him. Deceased Sarita used to help in introducing women to deceased Ravi Thakur. Sarita had also introduced Mamta to Ravi. Ravi had also made obscene videos of Mamta alias Pinky. Due to this, they conspired to murder and killed both of them.

## KAMAL NATH MET MOHAN YADAV AND CONGRATULATED HIM

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Former Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh and State Congress Committee President Kamal Nath has met the next Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh Mohan Yadav and congratulated him. On this occasion, Congress leader Kamal Nath has assured Dr Yadav of providing all possible help for the development of the state.

He further said that now we have to ensure that as the opposition, we work for the better future of Madhya Pradesh. It is noteworthy



that after being elected CM in the BJP Legislature Party meeting on Monday, Dr. Yadav met Governor Mangubhai Patel and staked claim to form the next government. During

this time, outgoing Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chauhan, BJP State President VD Sharma and the team of central observers also reached Raj Bhavan.

## AIIMS Bhopal Achieves Unprecedented Success in Treating Aluminium Phosphide Poisoning

Team Absolute | Bhopal

The Medical Intensive Care Unit (MICU) at the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) Bhopal has triumphed over the lethal poison Aluminium Phosphide, traditionally associated with almost 100% mortality. Over the last month, the dedicated team of doctors, nurses, and paramedical staff at AIIMS Bhopal MICU has defied the odds by successfully saving the lives of three out of five patients affected by Aluminium Phosphide Poisoning. The key to this remarkable success lies in the early initiation of Continuous Renal Replacement Therapy (CRRT), a groundbreaking approach that has proven to be the linchpin in the battle against this deadly poison. The doctors at AIIMS



MICU emphasize that the timely administration of CRRT has been a crucial factor contributing to the unprecedented success in treating Aluminium Phosphide Among the survivors are a 17-year-old female, a 20-year-old male, and a 44-year-old male, all of whom sought medical

attention at AIIMS within 12 hours of ingesting the poison. These patients presented with severe metabolic acidosis, marked by a pH level below 7.0 and the serum lactate levels in the range of 20mmol/L. The comprehensive treatment protocol employed by the AIIMS Bhopal MICU team includ-

ed CRRT, high-dose vasopressors, inotropes, anti-arrhythmic drugs, and vigilant monitoring of serum electrolytes. This holistic and multi-disciplinary approach underscores the commitment of the medical professionals at AIIMS Bhopal to ensuring the best possible outcomes for their patients. Professor (Dr.) Ajai Singh, Executive Director of AIIMS Bhopal, extended his heartfelt congratulations to the tireless team for their hard work and unwavering efforts. Dr. Singh emphasized the significance of this accomplishment, stating, "The success in treating Aluminium Phosphide poisoning is a testament to the dedication and expertise of our medical team. This breakthrough highlights the importance of innovative medical interventions in critical situations."

## SHIVRAJ SHIFTING FROM CM HOUSE TO B-8

Team Absolute | Bhopal

After the meeting of the Bharatiya Janata Party Legislative Party, Madhya Pradesh has got a new Chief Minister in the form of Dr. Mohan Yadav. After this, on Monday itself, Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chauhan also submitted his resignation to Governor Mangubhai Patel. Along with this, Dr. Yadav met the Governor and staked claim to form the government and now the oath taking ceremony is going to be held at Lal Parade Ground on Wednesday.

Retiring Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chauhan started shifting from the Chief Minister's residence. Now his new residential address will be 74 Bungalow B-8.

Earlier in 2018, when BJP had to face defeat, Shivraj Singh Chauhan had left the



luxurious government bungalow located in Shyamala Hills on the banks of Bade Pond and moved to bungalow number B-8 of 74 bungalow located on Link Road No. 1. What happened after this is not hidden from anyone, because within just 15 months, BJP formed the government again and after becoming the Chief Minister, Shivraj again returned from

this bungalow to the CM House. Shivraj Singh Chauhan was allotted B-8 bungalow located at 74 bungalow after becoming MP in 2005. After this Shivraj became the Chief Minister and shifted to the Chief Minister's residence. After this, he remained living in Shyamala Hills till 2018. Meanwhile, Congress government was formed and he

again shifted to his B-8 bungalow. Became the Chief Minister again in 2020 and then returned to the CM House. Now after Mohan Yadav became the CM, Shivraj Singh Chauhan has once again moved to bungalow number B-8.

The process of vacating the Chief Minister's residence in Shyamala Hills started from Tuesday 12th December. Along with this, shifting of valuable paintings, mementos and similar items has been started. It is being told that the entire house shifting work can be completed in the next three days. It is noteworthy that along with B-8 bungalow, B-7 bungalow has also been merged by breaking the wall. If sources are to be believed, demolition as well as construction and interior work was going on in this bungalow for the last one and a half years.

## MP Congress Legislature Party leader will be selected after December 15

Team Absolute | Bhopal

The leader of Madhya Pradesh Congress Legislature Party will be selected after December 15. For this, a meeting of the legislature party will be called, in which the central observer will be present. The names of former leader of opposition Ajay Singh, former chief whip of the legislature party Ramniwas Rawat, former ministers Bala Bachchan and Umang Singhar have emerged prominently among the contenders.

66 Congress candidates have reached the 230-member assembly after winning the elections. The party leader will be chosen by the MLA. There will be a meeting of the legislative party for this. Senior party officials say that the central organization has been requested to send observers to select the leader of the legislature party.

Actually, the party leaders want the message to be sent among the workers



that everyone is united, hence emphasis is being laid on taking decisions on the basis of consensus. The name of former Leader of Opposition Ajay Singh is being considered prominently for the Leader of the Legislative Party and Leader of the Opposition. Anyway, the party's position is weak in the Vindhya region. This time the party could win only five seats. On the other hand, according to caste equations, names of

Ramniwas Rawat from OBC category and Bala Bachchan and Umang Singhar from tribal category are also among the contenders.

On the other hand, in view of the Lok Sabha elections, Kamal Nath will remain the state president but there will be changes in his team i.e. the state Congress organization. In fact, there are complaints of many officials remaining inactive in the assembly elections. The party president is authorized to decide the composition and future direction of the organization.

At the same time, the state Congress has sought organization reports from all the candidates who won and lost the elections. In fact, some candidates have complained about not getting support from the organization and being harassed. Apart from this, information has also been sought from the district in-charge, organization minister and observers regarding the role of organization officials in the elections.



## Bradley Cooper feels he is a 'control freak'

Los Angeles | Agencies

Actor-filmmaker Bradley Cooper says he is a "bit of a control freak." The 48-year-old actor said he felt "freedom" in knowing that if anything was wrong about his latest movie 'Maestro', which he wrote and directed, as well as portraying late musical legend Leonard Bernstein, it was all down to him, even though it was also a "huge burden". Speaking to Emma Stone for Variety's Actors on Actors series, after the 'Poor Things' star noted it was "scary" to spend so much time preparing for a role, he replied: "I have felt that before in projects, and maybe that's because ... I've just recently realised that maybe I'm a bit of a control freak." "But I knew that if 'Maestro' was going to mess up, it was all on me. I was not beholden to anybody else. There was a freedom in that, as well as a huge burden." The 'Hangover' star said making the movie has completely "changed" him and the experience will always stay with him. He added: "But that's why this kind of thing to me feels completely different. I'll carry it with me the rest of my life. It has changed who I am as an artist." Cooper felt "completely naked" in the role because he was so "vulnerable" reports femalefirst.co.uk.

"Even though I'm not physically naked, I was completely naked putting on this prosthetic and being him and the way he talked. I would direct the movie that way, just because it was easier. But I felt so vulnerable. Singing at the Oscars, playing at Glastonbury, didn't even compare to what that experience was". 'A Star Is Born' actor-and-director has been fascinated by conducting since he was a child and he said it meant he already had "years and years" of rehearsal within him.

## Rebecca Ferguson had huge crush on Tom Cruise

Los Angeles | Agencies

Actress Rebecca Ferguson shared that she had a "big" crush on Hollywood star Tom Cruise. The actress was infatuated with her 'Mission: Impossible' co-star after seeing him in his 1994 horror movie 'Interview with the Vampire'. "I had a crush on him by the time I saw him star in 'Interview with the Vampire'. It's certainly a weird film, and I told him when we worked together that I had a big crush. I'm sure he was delighted! Who wouldn't be?" Rebecca told Sunday Times Culture magazine. "Tom is a huge movie star, but I've been fortunate to work with so many great people. When I worked with Meryl Streep on 'Florence Foster Jenkins', I would go to the set, even when we weren't filming, just to see her act. She's spectacular." Rebecca has never felt comfortable on the red carpet and has been studying her co-star Zendaya Coleman tips for posing, reports aceshowbiz.com.

The actress said: "I was nominated for my first Golden Globe award in 2013 with 'The White Queen', with other nominees including Helena Bonham Carter and Helen Mirren". "I just rocked up on the red carpet. I was winging it. I had no make-up artists or stylists. I was smiling for photos and then Cate Blanchett's team started nudging me to ask, 'Is it all right if Cate takes this?' She glided effortlessly, while I walked like a lumberjack." "I'm not great at red carpets. Zendaya, who I worked with on 'Dune', can just play on set, wearing socks and no make-up, crazy hair, and then just put it on for the red carpet and become like a cat. I study how she does it, even though I'm older." She had never even acted at school before she landed her first role, in Swedish soap opera 'Nya Tider' when she was just 16.



Taylor Swift donates \$1 million to Tennessee tornadoes victims

Los Angeles | Agencies

Singer-songwriter Taylor Swift has donated \$1 million to help victims of the tornadoes in Tennessee. The 33-year-old pop megastar, who recently became a billionaire and has been generous with donations in the past, pledged the huge sum to the Community Foundation of Middle Tennessee to help those whose homes and livelihoods have been ravaged by the storms and tornadoes, reports Female First UK.

Several people in the state have been confirmed to have died and 50 were left injured as multiple tornadoes swept the state. Taylor, 33, is from Pennsylvania originally but she moved to Nashville as a teen to pursue music. The money will go towards food, temporary housing, the clean-up, and more.

As per Female First UK, the Grammy-winning artiste has also donated to food poverty charities in cities on her 'Eras Tour'. Taylor donated enough money to make 125,000 meals for food bank users in Tampa Bay, Florida. The musician kicked off 'The Eras' trek in Glendale, Arizona, on March 17, and it was revealed that she made a surprise donation to the Arizona Food Bank Network as part of a commitment to make a positive impact in the communities during her tour.

Terri Shoemaker, Vice President of External Relations at the Arizona Food Bank Network, told Azcentral.com: "It's not every day that you get a call from someone who works in PR for Taylor Swift, so we were dubious at first, but happily, it turned out to be absolutely real. Donations like this from very high-profile people like Taylor Swift help denote that hunger is still a problem in the US it's here and it's a problem across the country."

## Cardi B confirms split from Offset

Los Angeles | Agencies

Rapper Cardi B has confirmed her single status in the wake of rumours about her relationship with Offset. The rapper, 31, got candid on Instagram Live over the weekend as she admitted, "I've been single for a minute now," as per a recording of the livestream shared on X (formerly Twitter), reports People magazine.

She continued, "But I have been afraid... Not afraid, I just don't know how to tell the world. But I feel like today has been, like, a sign."

Cardi B said she wants to start the new year "fresh" and "open," as she admitted, "I'm curious for a new life, for a new beginning. And yeah... I'm excited."

The relationship status update comes after the couple attended the same event on Sunday night -- TikTok in the Mix music festival in Mesa, Arizona -- but were not photographed together.

As per People, during the Live, she also acknowledged that her recent social media activity has been full of "clues" about her relationship status.

Last week, fans noticed that she and Offset, who she wed privately in 2017 -- had both unfollowed each other on Instagram.

"I don't know if you guys have been getting clues from me, from my Lives, or from my Stories, when I put some certain music, or find my unfollowings (sic)", she said during the Live.

On December 4, the 'Bongos' rapper shared some cryptic messages that hinted at possible relationship trouble on her Instagram stories, including, "You know when you just out grow relationships."

She added to the statement, "I'm tired of protecting peoples feelings...I GOTTA PUT MYSELF FIRST."



## Jennifer Aniston was texting with Matthew Perry the day he died

Los Angeles | Agencies

Actress Jennifer Aniston said that her 'Friends' co-star Matthew Perry was "happy" and "healthy" in the days ahead of his untimely death in late October. "He had quit smoking. He was getting in shape. He was happy -- that's all I know," Jennifer told Variety in an interview published Monday as her 'The Morning Show' co-star Reese Witherspoon held her hand.

"I was literally texting with him that morning, funny Matty. He was not in pain. He wasn't struggling. He was happy", she said.

The 54-year-old actress said that her beloved 'Friends' co-star hadn't relapsed despite what some might believe in light of his years-long struggle with drug and alcohol addiction, reports pagesix.com.

"I want people to know he was really healthy, and getting healthy. He was on a pursuit. He worked so hard. He really was dealt a tough one. I miss him dearly. We all do. Boy, he made us laugh really hard," she shared.

The 'Murder Mystery' actress also credited Matthew for giving his character, Chandler Bing, a specific manner of speaking that would go on to define the role. "His way of speaking created a whole different world," she told the trade publication.

"We went with his lead, in a way. It just added something to our joy."

Matthew died on October 28 in an apparent drowning in his hot tub. He was 54. The official cause of death has not been released as the coroner is still awaiting toxicology results.



### ABSOLUTE PIC OF THE DAY



Lauren Goodger



## AFC CUP 2023-24

# Odisha FC see off Bashundhara Kings to reach inter-zonal semifinal play-off

**Team Absolute** | Bhubaneswar

Odisha FC beat ten-man Bashundhara Kings 1-0 at the Kalinga stadium to advance to the Inter-Zone Semi-Final Play-off for the first time in their history.

Mourtada Fall's 61st minute header secured victory for Odisha after Asror Gafurov's sending off in first half injury time, with the win taking Odisha onto 12 points to see them leapfrog the side from Bangladesh and finish the group phase in pole position.

It was end-to-end stuff as Odisha FC started the game on a positive note, creating numerous chances throughout the right flank with Cy Goddard, Amey Ranawade, and Diego Mauricio.

Carlos Delgado missed the first real goal-scoring opportunity in the 28th minute when he missed the free header inside the box. The visitors also got their chance in the first half, but Miguel Figueira failed to use the dangerous set-piece just behind Odisha FC's box when his left-footed shot went far away from Amrinder Singh.

The decisive moment took place when Asror Gafurov made a nasty challenge on Jahouh's ankle in the additional minutes of the first half, which showed him a direct red card, causing his side to



play with a man short.

The scoreline was at the level at halftime, but Odisha FC managed to break the deadlock in the 61st minute, edging past Bashundhara Kings' 18-year-old goalkeeper Mehedi Hasan Srabon.

Ahmed Jahouh was pivotal again with his cre-

ative spark and sheer control of the game, which helped the hosts dominate the game. He was brilliant in corners, making numerous crossings that rattled the opponent's defense several times.

Jahouh got a chance in the 92nd minute of the game, where he could easily seal the game in Odisha FC's favor, but his attempt missed the target by inches.

In the second half, the biggest chance for the visitor came in the 55th minute, when their Brazilian striker Dori wasted an open chance as he failed to beat Amrinder in a one-on-one situation.

The Bangladeshi side got their final chance in the dying moments of the game, just before the final whistle, when Robinho's free-kick went far away from the goalpost.

Odisha FC have showcased their character in every possible way, as they made a remarkable comeback in the group stage matches by winning the last four consecutive matches that amended their two opening match defeats.

Monday night's result has been the biggest success for Odisha FC in continental events. The Juggernauts will now proceed to the AFC Cup Inter-Zone Semi-Final Play-off, being the only Indian team to be qualified.

# Double blow for Pakistan women's team as Daina Baig, Nida Dar sustain injuries during NZ tour

**Team Absolute** | Queenstown

Pakistan women's team suffered injuries to a pair of experienced players -- pacer Diana Baig and skipper Nida Dar as New Zealand cruised to victory in the opening match of their ODI series on Tuesday.

Pakistan lost key pacer Baig to a finger injury during a practice session before Tuesday's match and that was further compounded when skipper Dar was struck in the face while bowling in the 44th over of the New Zealand innings and ruled out for the remainder of the match. She was replaced by Sadaf Shamas.

The 28-year-old Baig, while fielding in a practice session, suffered an injury to the index finger of her bowling arm. She was taken to a local hospital immediately after the incident for a thorough examination, including an X-ray.

The medical reports have confirmed a horizontal frac-



ture in Baig's index finger, making her unavailable for the ODI series against the White Ferns.

The loss of the key players overshadowed an impressive performance from New Zealand, as veteran opener Suzie Bates scored her 13th ODI century to lead the home side to an easy 131-run triumph over Pakistan at John Davies Oval.

Pakistan were never really in the hunt in reply as they were dismissed in the final over for 234 despite a brilliant century from opener Sidra Ameen. While Dar still has some chance of recovering in time to play in the final two matches of the series, Pakistan have already revealed Baig will miss the remainder of the series due to her injury.

## IND v ENG

# Need more red-ball cricket internationally to change domestic structure: Smriti Mandhana

**Team Absolute** | Mumbai

For players accustomed to turning out for T20 and One-day cricket, playing Test cricket is a big change mentally and physically. Smriti Mandhana, vice-captain of the Indian women's cricket team said the domestic structure is more focused on white-ball cricket because of the demands of International cricket.

"Women's cricket in India, I wouldn't say is lacking here (in this aspect). To be fair, we have played a lot of T20s and one-day cricket in the last 4 or 5 years. That's why the domestic cricket structure was formed in terms of getting us the T20s and one-day experience because we had T20 and one-day World Cups more," Mandhana told a press conference two days before the Indian women's cricket team take on England in a four-day one-off Test at the DY Patil Stadium here. So, the domestic structure could be changed only if there is more red-ball cricket played internationally. At present, only India, England, Australia and South Africa play a bit of women's Test cricket while women's teams from countries like New Zealand, West Indies, Sri Lanka and Pakistan have rarely played the longer version of the game. "So definitely the structure was designed according to the international demand. And we didn't play as many re-ball matches -- of course, I've just played 4 in 10 years. So definitely the more amount of Test matches internationally increases, we can see maybe a new tournament in domestic which will be focused on two days or four-day matches or whatever long-form they decide



on. But I think it's always the international demands, the domestic structure is always designed according to the way the international demands are going to be. So if the test match is increased internationally, for sure, maybe we can see that change in domestic cricket too," said Mandhana.

With only a few players in the current women's squad having previous experience in Test match cricket, the Indian women's team vice-captain Smriti Mandhana said they are picking on the brain of Head Coach Amol Muzumdar, who has vast experience of playing the longer version of the game at the domestic level, ahead of the one-off Test against England. Muzumdar is a legend of Ranji Trophy cricket -- one of the most successful batters in First-Class cricket having scored 9208 runs in 171 matches. He has recently taken over the reins of the women's team and will be guiding the team in his first Test match.

# Jr men's hockey WC India dispatch Netherlands 4-3 in thrilling quarterfinal encounter

**Team Absolute** | Kuala Lumpur

The Indian junior men's hockey team produced a spectacular display of grit and character to beat the Netherlands 4-3 after trailing 0-2 at half-time and 2-3 in the third quarter in a thrilling quarterfinal of the FIH Men's Junior World Cup, here on Tuesday. In a match that lived up to the billing of a quarterfinal encounter between world no.3 India and world no.4 Netherlands, India exhibited immense resilience to qualify for the Semi-Finals where they will take on Germany on December 14. The Netherlands set the ball rolling early in the first quarter with a penalty corner conversion from Timo Boers (5'). Despite the Indian side playing a solid defence, Pepijn van der Heijden (16') scored for the Dutch side in the second quarter through another penalty corner conversion taking their lead to 2-0 at half-time. India came back



strongly in the third quarter with a goal from Aditya Lalage (34') assisted by Arajjeet Singh Hundal. Two minutes later, Arajjeet scored the equalizer for India with a penalty stroke. India kept the pressure on the Dutch but they managed yet another penalty corner that was converted by Olivier Hortensius

(44') late in the third quarter as the Dutch snatched a narrow lead of one goal at the end of the third quarter. With less than ten minutes remaining, the Indians raised the tempo of the game and it proved fruitful as Sourabh Anand Kushwaha (52') found the back of the net off a rebound following a brilliant attack to get the score reading 3-3. Another opportunity for a penalty corner conversion was created, this time in favour of India and they made full use of it with captain Uttam Singh (57') scoring to put India ahead with three minutes left. India's victory was backed by a grand show of character to hold off pressure from the Dutch side, and the cynosure of India's defence was Rohit, who was hard to breach - as he blocked away six successive PCs in the final quarter ensuring India emerge victorious. He was awarded player of the match for his efforts.

## 2023 National Billiards & Snooker

# Amee, Umadevi storm into women's snooker quarters

**Team Absolute** | Chennai

Defending champion Ameer Kamani of Madhya Pradesh moved into the quarterfinals of the 15 Red women's snooker on Tuesday, two days after regaining the women's 6-Red snooker crown in the ongoing 90th National Billiards & Snooker Championships.

Ameer beat Senthra Babu of Tamil Nadu 2-0 (65-12, 55-44) in the pre-quarterfinals, as she set her eyes on repeating the treble - 6-Red snooker, 15-



Red snooker and billiards in the same year - a feat she achieved in 2017. Meanwhile, the experienced R Umadevi led a Karnataka trio that includes Vidya Pillai and last year's runner-up Keerthana Pandian into the quarters, while Tamil Nadu's Anupama Ramachandran and RT Mohita also advanced to the last-8 stage. In the men's snooker round-robin league, Abdul Khader (TN) edged out Shoaib Khan (RSPB) and Anuj Uppal (Delhi) beat Shahbaz Adil Khan (PSPB) by an identical margin.

# Rafael Nadal trains in Kuwait ahead of comeback

**Team Absolute** | New Delhi

Rafael Nadal's imminent return to the ATP Tour is getting closer, with his journey towards making a comeback at the 2024 Brisbane International involving a detour through Kuwait before the tournament, scheduled from December 31 to January 7.

The Spaniard travelled to the Rafa Nadal Academy in Kuwait, which opened in 2020 at the Sheikh Jaber Al-Abdullah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah International Tennis Complex. There, he shared a training session with Arthur Fils, the 19-year-old Frenchman, who recently reached the title match at the Next Gen ATP Finals. "It's great to be here in Kuwait to train for a few days. Everyone has been so



welcoming. Thank you for everything," Nadal wrote in his official social media post.

The 22-year-old travelled to Kuwait in search of temperatures and conditions similar to those he will find in a few weeks in the Australian summer, ATP reports. The Spaniard, who recently posted a message of cautious excitement about his return, is preparing to compete for the first time since he took to the court on January 18 this year, in the second round of the Australian Open against Mackenzie McDonald.

"I still think what I said in the last press conference, that I do not deserve to end my sports career in a press room," he said. "I would like to finish in a different way, and I have fought and kept the illusion for that to happen, with doubts, with bad moments, very bad or better moments."

# Ronaldo scores as Al Nassr beat Al Shabab to enter King Cup semifinal

**Team Absolute** | Riyadh

Al Nassr team defeated the Al Shabab 5-2 in the quarterfinals of the King Cup, the domestic tournament of Saudi Arabia, here at Al Shabab Club Stadium, securing a place in the semi-finals of the competition.

Ivorian midfielder Seko Fofana opened the scoring for Al Nassr in the 17th minute. Senegalese forward Sadio Mane doubled the lead in the 28th minute, and Abdurrahman Ghareeb scored the third goal for the team in the 45+3rd minute.

In the 74th minute, captain Cristiano Ronaldo scored the fourth goal with Mohammed Marran adding the fifth in



90+7th minute to seal the comfortable victory on Monday night.

# 'May get absolutely destroyed': Michael Vaughan's big 'Bazball' warning to England ahead of India Tests

**Team Absolute** | New Delhi

Former captain Michael Vaughan issued a dire warning to England ahead of their tour of India, saying that he is unsure their aggressive approach, often dubbed as 'Bazball', may come down crumbling against a world-class Indian spin attack that includes Ravichandran Ashwin and Ravindra Jadeja.

England is set to tour India, naming their squad on Monday night which notably includes an impressive count of four specialist spinners, gearing up for the challenging conditions on the turning subcontinent.

Pointing to Australian spinner Nathan Lyon's success on English turf during the Ashes, where he claimed 9 wickets in conditions typically considered unfavorable for spinners, Vaughan said England may get blown away when they face formidable Indian spin attack which includes Ashwin, Jadeja, and Axar Patel.

"Ultimately the hardest place to play in the world is India and if you actually go back to the Ashes when Nathan Lyon was fit and bowling nicely, Australia were 2-0 up in the series," Vaughan told to Fox sports.

"That was just one innings and a few overs in the first innings at Lords... Nathan came out with a lovely line the other week where he said he's 2-nil up against Bazball. Now that's just one spinner, if you look at that five-for he got at Edgbaston and the field was spread and England got out to him by



playing ridiculous shots at times.

"If you add in Ashwin, Jadeja and Axar Patel on spinning wickets in India, they may get blown away, they may get absolutely destroyed. They will go out and play exactly the same way, we've already spoken about the impact they are going to try and achieve in India with the way they play," he said. "It will be great watching, but you will have to

fancy three quality spinners might do a job on England when one quality spinner in Nathan Lyon did the job in English conditions. It's going to be very tough for them to win in India," Vaughan added. England will play 5 Tests from January 25 to March 11 and the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) announced a 16-member squad for the series on Monday.

# Bangladesh beat India to win inaugural SCG Multicultural Cup

**Sydney** | Agencies

Bangladesh won the inaugural SCG Multicultural Cup 2023, held at the iconic Sydney Cricket Ground, defeating India in the final.

SCG witnessed a dazzling showcase of multicultural cricket talent at the event with eight community teams, representing diverse cultures, converging at the iconic venue for a tournament that transcended borders and celebrated unity through sports.

The event was graced by the presence of distinguished guests, including Nick Hockley, CEO of Cricket Australia, adding to the grandeur of the occasion, cricket legends Brett Lee and Russel Arnold were present, offering their support and adding to the excitement of the tournament.

Reflecting on the significance of this amazing com-



munity cricket tournament, Lee expressed, "This event provides players with the incredible opportunity to fulfill a dream by playing at the iconic Sydney Cricket Ground. It brings communities together and celebrates

diversity, showcasing the power of cricket to unite."

Nick Hockley remarked, "What a fantastic event organized by Kamil Khan, this event will bring the community together and promote diversity, fostering a spirit of unity through the love of cricket."

Kamil Khan, the force behind the event, said: "The SCG Multicultural Cup shows how cricket brings diverse communities together. It reflects our shared love for the sport, and events like these play a big role in creating a sense of belonging and togetherness."

The SCG Multicultural Cup 2023 concluded with a grand award ceremony, honoring the participating teams and celebrating the success of an event that not only showcased cricketing excellence but also championed the values of diversity, inclusivity, and unity.



## Triptii Dimri: I am definitely enjoying my villain era

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Actress Triptii Dimri is definitely enjoying her villain era courtesy her impactful role in 'Animal' and added she has always been on the good side of things, and for the first time, she was playing a character that was negative.

After playing a good girl for years, Triptii gave a smashing performance in shades of grey in 'Animal'.

Is she enjoying her shift towards the villainous era, Triptii told IANS: "I am definitely enjoying it. As an actor, I've always wanted to do different roles. I've always wanted to play characters or be a part of films that are challenging and are out of my comfort zone, and this was exactly like that."

"I've always been on the good side of things, and for the first time, I was playing a character that was negative, and it was beautiful to explore her world and explore Zoya," she added.

The actress recalled the conversation between her and director Sandeep Reddy Vanga to bring the character Zoya to life. "I had a chat with my director once when we were just signing the project, and he said, 'I know it's a negative character, but I don't want to see negativity in her eyes'. You have a certain pattern when you look at negative characters, when you think of negative characters, or when you think of portraying negative characters on screen," said the 29-year-old actress.

Triptii said: "Because of the way we've always seen negative characters, there's a certain way they do things, a certain way they say things, and he said, 'I want to keep everything out of it, and I want you to have that intention of killing this person or coming here with a plan, all of it inside, but in your eyes, I only want to see love for him; I only want people to see innocence.'"

She agrees it was a bit challenging.



## Katrina Kaif: Always checking & cross-checking myself

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Actress Katrina Kaif shared that her approach to work is that she always believes that she has to give more and she is constantly cross-checking herself that whatever she is doing is excellent.

Katrina made her acting debut in 2005 with the Amitabh Bachchan-starrer 'Sarkar'.

Having an 18 year long journey in Hindi cinema have there been moments, where the actress felt that she could have given something more?

"I think my approach to my work is that I always believe that I have to give more. I always believe that I'm not giving enough in every moment. And I'm always checking and cross-checking myself that am I doing everything I can to be excellent, to be the best that I can be. You know, for me, my belief system is really, am I better than I was yesterday?" Katrina told reporter. The actress, whose latest release is 'Tiger 3', added that competition is healthy but her key focus is bettering herself. The 'Ek Tha Tiger' actress said: "It's not about looking over my shoulder to see who's doing what around me. Of course, that's important. And of course, competition is healthy. But really, am I bettering myself? If I'm bettering myself and evolving as an artiste and as an actor, then I'm on the right path."

The actress gives her heart to every film that she does. Katrina said: "I always say that if you don't have something to give, that is when you should pause as an actor."



## RGV on Vidyut's nude pics: 'You're truly looking like a Greek god'

Team Absolute | Mumbai

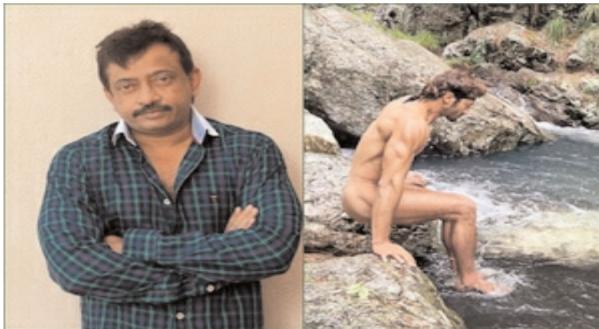
Filmmaker Ram Gopal Varma (RGV) has called actor Vidyut Jammwal a Greek god, after the latter shared his nude pictures on the social media, and said that he has brought out the 'Animal' in him.

On the occasion of his birthday on December 10, Vidyut took the internet by storm by dropping his nude photos from his recent Himalayan getaway.

Giving a glimpse into his life in the mountains, we can see Vidyut sitting by a river side with his legs in the water-body.

Faunting his chiseled physique, the string of photos shows the 'IB 71' actor exercising in the river. The last picture shows Vidyut cooking.

Now, reacting to these photographs, the 'Rangeela' director took to X (formerly Twitter) and reshared Vidyut's post. Along with that, RGV wrote: "Hey



@VidyutJammwal I think it's so timely that you have brought out the ANIMAL in you... you are truly looking like a GREEK GOD... A million salutes to you."

The tweet was made in a reference to the recently released action movie 'Animal' starring Ranbir Kapoor in the

lead. Meanwhile, Vidyut has also announced that his upcoming film 'Crakk - Jeethegaa Toh Jiyegaa!' is all set to release on February 23. It also stars Arjun Rampal, Nora Fatehi and Amy Jackson. RGV last directed the Telugu political crime thriller 'Konda'.

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Actor Vicky Kaushal, who has often created a stir with his videos on social media, says that the platform helps in building a conversation and is for day to day fun.

Talking about how social media helps in shaping an actor's stardom today, Vicky told IANS: "Social media helps you in building conversations. But there is a difference between being in a conversation and creating a legacy. Social media helps because there is direct access with the audience."

The actor, whose video on the song 'Obsession' became a rage, agrees that due to social media the attention span has become small.

"The attention span has become small too because of social media as so much content is coming and new content is coming," he said.

The only thing that leaves a permanent mark is a film, Vicky believes.

"It's good that you're a part of a conversation, but you have to go deeper than that. For that, the permanency that films have which is our profession, passion and love which is always paramount. But social media is for day to day fun," said the actor, whose latest release is 'Sam Bahadur'.



# ADIVI SESH, SHRUTI HAASAN TO STAR IN PAN-INDIAN ACTION DRAMA

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actors Adivi Sesh and Shruti Haasan are set to star in an upcoming pan-India action drama, makers announced on Tuesday.

The title of the feature film, which has been kept under wraps for now, will mark Adivi's second straight Hindi film outing after his 2022 blockbuster biopic 'Major', which featured him as Major Sandeep Unnikrishnan.

"Every frame, dialogue and scene of the film is being shot separately in Hindi as well as in Telugu. It is being treated differently according to the cultural nuances of each language," the makers confirmed in a statement.

The makers plan to drop several assets of the film including character posters and title reveal in the coming days to introduce the audience to the world of the much-awaited film.

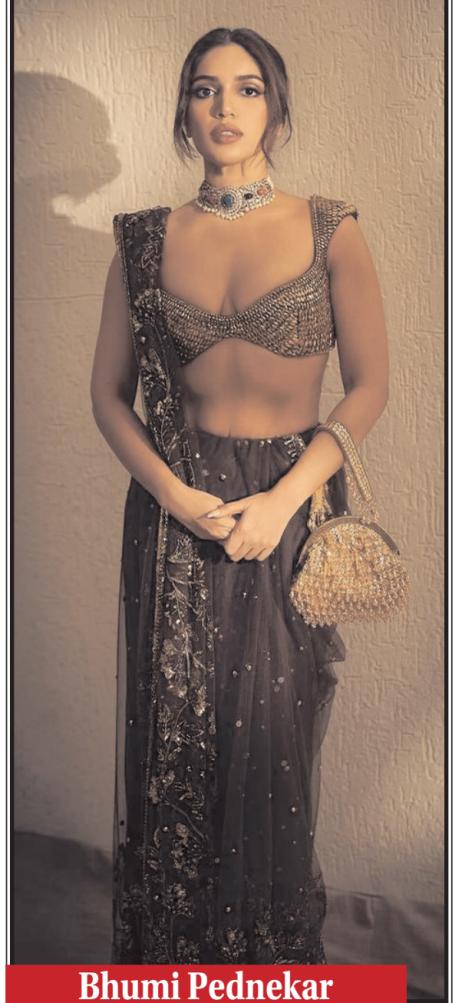
The mega project is produced by Supriya Yarlagadda, presented by Annapurna Studios and directed by Shaneil Deo, who was born and raised in the US.

The film will mark the feature directorial debut of Shaneil, who has previously served as the Director of Photography for several Telugu blockbusters including 'Kshanam' and 'Goodachari', which were headlined by Adivi. He also directed the acclaimed coming of age short, 'Layla', that was officially selected for the Cannes Film Festival.

The film is co-produced by Suniel Narang, with Adivi and Shaneil Deo also sharing story and screenplay credits.



INSTAGRAM PIC OF THE DAY



Bhumi Pednekar