

# absolute india

VOL. 11, ISSUE 71, MUMBAI | WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 24, 2024 | ₹5 | PAGE 08

PUBLISHED SIMULTANEOUSLY FROM MUMBAI, BHOPAL AND NEW DELHI

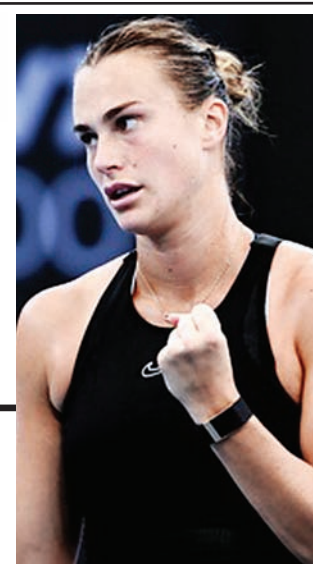
**NATION** > 02  
Cong high command not taking our suggestions on various...



**HOLYWOOD** > 06  
Padma Lakshmi dishes on her 'big issue' with 'Top Chef'...



**SPORTS** > 07  
Australian Open: Aryna Sabalenka marches to semis...



## Massive rush of devotees as Ram temple opens for public

# DEVOTION AT ITS BEST

A massive rush of devotees wanting to have 'darshan' of Ram Lalla at the newly constructed Ram temple was witnessed in Uttar Pradesh's Ayodhya on Tuesday. Devotees had lined up at the temple since 3 a.m. A majority of these are those who came for the Pran Pratishtha ceremony on Monday and stayed back to offer prayers at the temple. A large number of saints are among those who have lined up at the temple.

Ayodhya | Agencies

Around 2.5 lakh to 3 lakh devotees have offered prayers to Ram Lalla in Ayodhya's Ram Temple on Tuesday and a similar number of devotees are awaiting the darshan, state government officials said.

With the influx of a large number of devotees to Ayodhya's Ram Temple, senior officials of the Uttar Pradesh government were present inside the temple premises to monitor the orderly movement of devotees.

Uttar Pradesh Special DG (Law and Order) Prashant Kumar and Principal Secretary (Home) were present inside the 'Garbha Griha' to monitor the situation.

The Ram Temple was thrown open to the general public on Tuesday after the 'Pran Pratishtha' ceremony was performed on January 22.

According to officials, more than 8,000 security personnel are present to control the situation.

Since early morning, devotees have arrived at the temple to offer prayers.

"We are very pleased. We are touched even more to come to terms with the fact that we are going to have 'darshan' of the Ram Lalla," said Tejender Singh, a devotee from Chandigarh.



On the huge crowd gathered at the gates of the temple, he said, "Lakhs of people will have the darshan of Lord Ram. So it is bound to be crowded."

Another devotee said that he had come all the way from Odisha to have the darshan of Lord Ram at Ayodhya.

"I have come from Odisha's Puri to Ayodhya on bike to have darshan of Lord Ram Lalla. It was a journey of 1224 kilometres. I was very eager to have the 'darshan' of Lord Ram Lalla. When I

was asked on my way where I was going, I said that I was going to have darshan of Lord Ram at the temple, which was not built for over 500 years," he said.

The 'Pran Pratishtha' of Shri Ram Lalla in Ayodhya was held amid unbridled celebrations, with Prime Minister Narendra Modi performing the main rituals officiated by a select complement of priests. Celebrations were also held across the country to mark Lord Ram's return to this throne.

## UNPRECEDENTED RUSH AT HANUMAN TEMPLES IN UP

Lucknow: A day after the Pran Pratishtha ceremony in Ayodhya, Tuesday was witnessing huge crowds at various Hanuman temples.

Tuesday being the day of worship for Hanuman, his temples are now witnessing huge footfalls, despite chilly weather and dense fog.

Long queues of devotees lined at almost all Hanuman temples across the state on Tuesday and this is being directly linked to the opening of Ram temple in Ayodhya.

"There is a huge rush at Hanuman Garhi temple in Ayodhya and this is mainly because it is customary for devotees to visit this temple before visiting the Ram temple," said Ram Kumar, a regular visitor to this temple.

In Lucknow, despite bone-chilling cold, the Hanuman temples were jammed with devotees.

"We could not visit Ayodhya for the Pran Pratishtha ceremony so we decided to offer prayers at Hanuman temple. Because of the huge rush, we may not be able to go to Ayodhya for some time," said Meenu Sharma, a Ram devotee. In Prayagraj, according to sources, a massive turnout of devotees was seen since morning at the 'Bade Hanuman' temple near Sangam. The rush of devotees included those who are attending the Magh Mela and also those from the city.



## "Mamata Banerjee Close To Me": Rahul Gandhi Downplays Congress Leader's Jab



Team Absolute | New Delhi

Congress's Rahul Gandhi today declared that he is "very close" to Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee and state Congress chief Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury's sharp remarks against the Trinamool Congress chief on seat-sharing talks "won't matter". The seat negotiation with the Trinamool Congress is on track, he added.

"The negotiation's results will come out, I will not comment on it. But Mamata Banerjee is very close to me and our party," he told reporters in Assam, through which his Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra is currently passing.

"Yes, sometimes, Congress and Trinamool Congress leaders criticise each other's party. But they are natural things, it happens. But they are not going to disrupt the relations between the Congress and the TMC," he added.

While Mamata Banerjee is

known to pull no punches when it comes to Congress, as part of the Opposition's INDIA bloc the two parties are expected to pull together. Earlier this month, Bengal Congress chief Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury, who is against an alliance with the Trinamool Congress, target-

ed Mamata Banerjee again. Meanwhile, Just 48 hours before the entry of Rahul Gandhi's Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra into West Bengal, the Congress party's banners welcoming the leader's yatra were torn in different parts of Cooch Behar on Tuesday afternoon.

## RAHUL GANDHI UNVEILS "FIVE-POINT JUSTICE"

New Delhi: Congress's Rahul Gandhi -- leading his Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra through Assam -- promised what he called the "Five-point justice". This involves achieving "justice" for four key sections of the society -- young people, women, farmers and labourers -- and achieving equal representation in every field. He said he would provide a blueprint within two months. The rally is expected to bring justice to the four pillars which will empower the country. For women and it would involve everything starting with education and jobs. For farmers and labourers, it would mean loans, job security, Provident Fund, healthcare and other facilities that are not available in the unorganised sector.

"There is an idea of Nyay behind this Nyay Yatra. The five pillars are Justice for the youth, equal representation, justice for women, justice for farmers and justice for labourers. For these pillars we'll organise a program by the Congress in the coming month," he added.

## Lawyer hurls shoe at judge inside courtroom in MP

Team Absolute | Bhopal

A lawyer allegedly hurled a shoe targeting the judge inside a courtroom in Madhya Pradesh's Agar district. The judge, however, escaped by bending down in time.

The incident took place at a court in Agar district on Monday when the judge was hearing a case, the police said.

Meanwhile, the two advocates representing the two different parties got involved in a heated argument, which the judge objected to.

This enraged advocate Nitin Atal, who was already engaged in a verbal argument with his opponent, who all of a sudden took out his shoe and threw it towards the judge. The judge, however, bent down in time to save



himself. The judge later informed the local police about the incident and a case has been registered against Nitin Atal. The accused has been booked under Sections 332, 353, 294 and 504 of the IPC, a police officer said.

The accused lawyer, however, is yet to get arrested. The police said a search operation has been initiated to nab the accused.

Agar District Collector and SP had reached to court upon knowing the incident.

Nitin Atal, who practises at the Agar and Shajapur district court, had reportedly indulged in fights with lawyers and judges earlier too.

Sources aware of the matter told reporter that Nitin, who is connected to politicians, often misbehaved with court employees.

## DOCU 'TO KILL A TIGER' NOMINATED FOR BEST DOCUMENTARY FEATURE AT OSCARS

Mumbai: The documentary film 'To Kill a Tiger', directed by Indian-born Canadian filmmaker Nisha Pahuja, has been nominated for the upcoming edition of the Oscar awards. The film has been nominated in the Documentary Feature Film category. The fellow nominees are 'Bobi Wine: The People's President', 'The Eternal Memory', 'Four Daughters', and '20 Days in Mariupol'. 'To Kill a Tiger' follows the story of a family in Jharkhand, India, who are campaigning for justice after their teenage daughter was brutally raped. The film premiered at the Toronto International Film Festival on September 10, 2022. It had its American premiere at the Lighthouse International Film Festival in June 2023. The film's official website states about the story, "Ranjit goes to the police, and the men are arrested. But Ranjit's relief is short-lived, as the villagers and their leaders launch a sustained campaign to force the family to drop the charges. A cinematic documentary, 'To Kill a Tiger' follows Ranjit's uphill battle to find justice for his child". The film is produced by Cornelia Principe and David Oppenheim. The 2024 Oscars will be held on Sunday, March 10 at 4:00 pm (Pacific Standard Time) at the Dolby Theatre at Ovation Hollywood in Los Angeles.

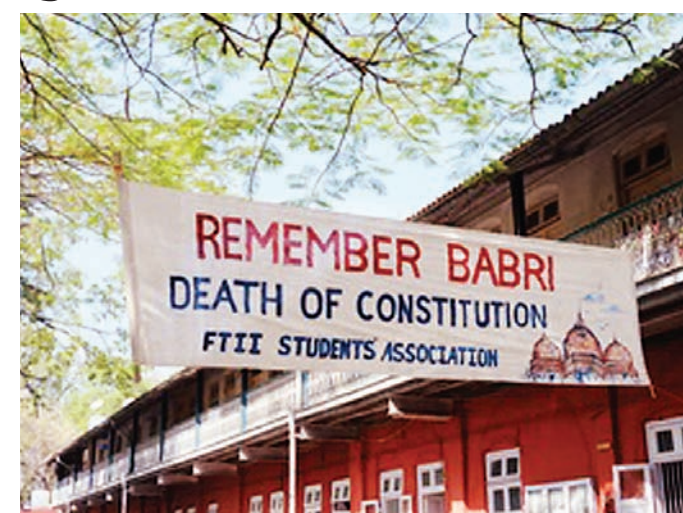
## Clashes erupt between Pune FTII students, Right-wingers over Babri banner

Pune | Agencies

A few people were injured after a clash erupted between some students of the Pune-based Film and Television Institute of India (FTII) and members of certain Right-wing groups here on Tuesday, after a banner was put up proclaiming, 'Remember Babri, Death of Constitution.'

The banner, referring to the disputed mosque's demolition at Ayodhya in 1992, was allegedly put up by FTII-Students Association (FTII-SA), leading to bouts of anxiety on the campus at around 2 pm on Tuesday.

Taking strong objection to the banner, some Right-wingers barged into the campus raising slogans, yanked it off and set it on fire, leading to skirmishes between them and some students. A police team from the Deccan Gymkhana Police Station rushed to the campus and promptly brought the matter under control, though tensions



continued to simmer in the vicinity. The incident, in which an undisclosed number of students and activists are reportedly injured, came a day after the consecration of the Lord Ram temple in Ayodhya on January 22.

The Deputy Commissioner of Police (I), SS Gill, told mediaper-

sons that the situation was under control and the police were taking action against all those involved in the fracas.

Meanwhile, a strong posse of police personnel including riot police has been deployed outside the FTII campus to thwart any untoward incidents.

## Ex Bihar Chief Minister Karpooori Thakur Awarded Bharat Ratna Posthumously

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Former Chief Minister of Bihar Karpooori Thakur was conferred the nation's highest honour, Bharat Ratna, posthumously by the President of India Droupadi Murmu this evening. The award comes 35 years after his death -- Karpooori Thakur died on February 17, 1988.

"I am delighted that the Government of India has decided to confer the Bharat Ratna on the beacon of social justice, the great Jan Nayak Karpooori Thakur Ji and that too at a time when we are marking his birth centenary. This prestigious recognition is a testament to his enduring efforts as a



champion for the marginalized and a stalwart of equality and empowerment," tweeted Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Dubbed "Jan Nayak" by many in the state, Karpooori Thakur served as the Chief Minister of Bihar for a short while -- from December 1970 to June 1971 and from December 1977 to April 1979.

## SCIENTISTS CAPTURE PLANTS "TALKING" TO EACH OTHER FOR THE FIRST TIME

Team Absolute | New Delhi

To capture the communication, these scientists used an air pump connected to a container of leaves and caterpillars, and another box with Arabidopsis thaliana, a common weed from the mustard family.

Science Alert said that caterpillars were allowed to feed on leaves cut from tomato plants and Arabidopsis thaliana, and the researchers captured the responses of a second, intact, insect-free Arabidopsis plant to those danger cues.

The researchers had added a biosensor that glowed green and calcium ions were detected. Calcium signalling is something human cells also use to communicate.

As seen in the video, the undamaged plants received the messages of their injured neighbours, and responded with bursts of calcium signalling that rippled across their outstretched leaves.

A team of scientists from Japan has made an incredible discovery, capturing real-time footage of plants "talking" to each other. According to Science Alert, plants are surrounded by fine mist of airborne compounds that they use to communicate. These compounds are like smells and warn plants of danger nearby. The video recorded by the Japanese scientists has revealed how plants receive and respond to these aerial alarms. This significant achievement, led by molecular biologist Masatsugu Toyota from Saitama University, was published in the journal Nature Communications.

Other members of the team included Yuri Aratani, a PhD student, and



Takuya Uemura, a postdoctoral researcher. The team observed how an undamaged plant responded to volatile organic compounds (VOCs) released by plants damaged by insects or otherwise. "Plants perceive VOCs released by mechanically or herbivore-damaged neighbouring plants and induce various defence responses. Such interplant communication protects plants from environmental

threats," the authors said in the study. "We have finally unveiled the intricate story of when, where, and how plants respond to airborne 'warning messages' from their threatened neighbours," Toyota said.

Analysing the airborne compounds, researchers found that two compounds called Z-3-HAL and E-2-HAL induced calcium signals in Arabidopsis. "This ethereal communication network, hidden from our view, plays a pivotal role in safeguarding neighbouring plants from imminent threats in a timely manner," the researcher added. The team used a similar technique to measure calcium signals released by Mimosa pudica (touch-me-not) plants, which quickly move their leaves in response to touch, to avoid predators.



# COLD DAY CONDITIONS TO CONTINUE OVER NORTH INDIA FOR NEXT TWO DAYS: IMD

Delhi on Tuesday recorded 6.1 degrees Celsius minimum temperature, one notch below the seasonal average, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) said. According to IMD's forecast, the maximum temperature in the national capital is likely to hover around 18 degrees Celsius.

Team Absolute | New Delhi



As North India continues to reel under chilling weather conditions, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) on Tuesday said that "cold day to severe cold day" conditions are likely to continue in the region during the next two days and will decrease in intensity thereafter.

The IMD also warned that dense to very dense fog conditions are likely to continue to prevail over North India during the next five days.

In its daily bulletin, the weather forecast agency said that "minimum temperatures" are in the range of 3-5 degree Celsius over some parts of east Uttar Pradesh and northwest Uttar Pradesh, 6-10 degree Celsius over many parts of Punjab, Haryana, Uttar

Pradesh on Tuesday and Wednesday, in some parts on Thursday and cold day conditions in isolated pockets on Friday and Saturday.

Similar conditions are very likely to continue in isolated pockets of West Rajasthan on Tuesday and Wednesday. "Cold day to severe cold day conditions are very likely to continue in isolated pockets of Uttarakhnad, east Rajasthan on Tuesday and cold day conditions in isolated pockets on Wednesday. Cold day to severe cold day conditions are also very likely to continue in isolated pockets of Bihar on Tuesday and cold day conditions in isolated pockets for subsequent four days," said the IMD.

The IMD further predicted that cold day to severe cold day conditions are very likely to continue in many parts of Punjab, Haryana, Uttar

Pradesh on Tuesday and Wednesday, in some parts on Thursday and cold day conditions in isolated pockets on Friday and Saturday.

Similar conditions are very likely to continue in isolated pockets of West Rajasthan on Tuesday and Wednesday.

"Cold day to severe cold day conditions are very likely to continue in isolated pockets of Uttarakhnad, east Rajasthan on Tuesday and cold day conditions in isolated pockets on Wednesday. Cold day to severe cold day conditions are also very likely to continue in isolated pockets of Bihar on Tuesday and cold day conditions in isolated pockets for subsequent four days," said the IMD.

The IMD said that cold wave con-

ditions are very likely in isolated pockets of north Rajasthan during Tuesday and Thursday and over Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Punjab, Haryana, Chandigarh, Uttar Pradesh on Tuesday and Wednesday.

"Ground frost conditions are very likely at isolated places over Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand and west Uttar Pradesh on Tuesday and Wednesday," said the IMD.

## Just 7 days for 'Chillai Kalan' to end as snow hopes start fading in Kashmir

Srinagar: Extreme dry cold tightened its grip on Kashmir and in Jammu also fog and cold affected life on Tuesday.

Snow continued evading Kashmir even as the 40-day long 'Chillai Kalan' is just seven days away from its end.

Dry cold intensified further as Srinagar recorded minus 5, Gulmarg minus 4.5 and Pahalgam minus 6.2 as the minimum temperature. Leh town in Ladakh region recorded minus 15 and Kargil minus 11.8 as the minimum temperature. Jammu city recorded 5, Katra 4.1, Batote 1.6, Bhaderwah minus 0.4 and Banihal minus 1.8 as the minimum temperature.

# Cong high command not taking our suggestions on various appointments: K'taka Home Min

Bengaluru | Agencies

Karnataka Home Minister G. Parameashwara on Tuesday expressed his dismay against the party high command for not taking his suggestions into consideration over appointments of presidents and vice-presidents for boards and corporations.

"No one has sought our opinion with regards to the appointments of presidents and vice-presidents for the boards and corporations. I was asked to provide a few names and I gave it to the party high command but no meeting has been called or opinions sought when the list was finalised," Parameashwara told media persons. The Home Minister also targeted Congress General Secretaries Randeep Singh Surjewala and K.C. Venugopal.

"We better ideas of district level leaders and their contributions. The selection has to be made by the Chief Minister and Deputy Chief Minister. They must prepare the list after consulting the district level leaders. But the



list is being prepared by the general secretary," he said.

He said that the list is getting delayed unnecessarily. "I was also the state president for eight years. I know the leaders and their contributions to the party. There are leaders who have worked for decades and they should be given power. If the position is given to those who have no contributors, it hurts the loyal members," he said.

He said that the opinions and suggestions of the lead-

ers and district presidents will have to be considered and is must before taking any decision regarding the list.

Meanwhile, Chief Minister Siddaramaiah said that the names for the appointments to the boards and corporations have been cleared.

He said that the list was signed by the General Secretary K.C. Venugopal.

On the Home Minister's remarks, the Chief Minister said that it will be difficult to get the opinion of everyone.

# Govt to invest Rs 1.25 lakh crore to build 200 ropeway projects: Gadkari

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Union Minister for Road Transport and Highways, Nitin

Gadkari, said on Tuesday that the government has identified more than 200 projects at a cost of Rs 1.25 lakh crore to be taken up in the next five years under the National Ropeways Development Programme, 'Parvatmala Pariyojana'. Addressing the 'Ropeway: Symposium-Cum-Exhibition' here, the minister said, "Our foremost priority should be to make ropeways economically viable by bringing down the overall project cost and encourage public private partnership to develop the ropeway network in the country."

He said apart from facilitating tourism in the hilly areas, ropeways offer huge potential in urban public transport as well. The focus should be on developing



indigenous and cost-efficient solutions without compromising safety.

The highlights of the day were the award of two ropeway projects -- Bijli Mahadev Ropeway Project in Himachal Pradesh, and Dhosi Hill Ropeway Project in Haryana.

An MoU was also signed at the event by NHLML and IIT Roorkee for creating a centre of excellence for ropeways and other innovative alternative mobility systems.

Gadkari said the priority is to bring standardisation of

existing policies and codes and transform the ropeway industry by encouraging the manufacturing of ropeway components under the 'Make in India' initiative.

The minister said 60 per cent construction support is provided under Hybrid Annuity Mode (HAM) for ropeways as compared to 40 per cent support provided under National Highways to attract more private players for development of ropeways under 'Parvatmala Pariyojana'.

# K'TAKA: KALABURAGI CITY TENSE AFTER AMBEDKAR STATUE VANDALISED

Bengaluru | Agencies

Kalaburagi city in Karnataka remained tense after the statue of B.R. Ambedkar was vandalised on Tuesday.

The violence broke out in the city after the statue of Ambedkar at D Kotanura was garlanded with chapals, triggering huge protests.

The protesters vandalised a petrol bunk which is owned by the BJP MLC while stone pelting incidents were also reported from the Jagath Circle.

The shops and commercial establishments have allegedly also been forcefully closed by the protesters.

Police said that the situation is under control but tense and a case has also been registered at the Station Bazar police station.

BJP State General Secretary P. Rajeev has demanded that those who insulted the statue should be arrested immediately.

"The government should take measures to ensure the statues are not desecrated. The incidents of tearing down posters of Sri Ram are also increasing. From such incidents, the mind set of Congress gets



exposed," Rajeev said.

He alleged that the law and order system in the state has collapsed.

Kalaburagi district is regarded as the fortress of AICC President Mallikarjun Kharge and his son

Priyank Kharge, Minister for RDPR, IT and BT in Karnataka government.

# Myanmar military aircraft overshoots runway in Mizoram, 8 crew injured, flight operations suspended

Aizawl | Agencies

At least eight crew members of a Myanmar Air Force aircraft were injured after the plane skidded off the tabletop runway of the Lengpui airport in here on Tuesday, officials said.

The aircraft had come to Lengpui airport to take back the remaining 92 Myanmar soldiers to their country.

Officials said that out of the 14 people who were on board the medium size aircraft along with the pilot, eight were injured.

The injured were immediately rushed to Lengpui hospital and subsequently they were discharged.

Due to the faulty landing and the overshoot from the runway, the plane was partially damaged.

Mizoram disaster management officials, along with the district administration and police officials, rushed to the Lengpui airport, 30 km



from Aizawl, and rescued the injured crew.

Aviation regulator Directorate

General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) ordered a probe into the accident in the Mizoram government-run airport.

After the accident, all Lengpui airport-bound flights were either cancelled or diverted.

Normal flight operations would resume on Wednesday, officials said. According to officials, as many as 184 of the 276 Myanmar soldiers, who fled to Mizoram on January 17 after their camps were captured by armed pro-democracy ethnic groups, were flown back home on a Myanmar military aircraft on Monday.

"A Myanmar Air Force transport plane from Mandalay (Myanmar) landed at Lengpui airport on Monday and evacuated 184 Myanmar soldiers to Sittwe (Akyab) in two sorties. Before the departure of the Myanmar soldiers, the Indian authorities have completed all necessary formalities," a senior official told to reporter.

The remaining 92 Myanmar soldiers were supposed to be airlifted on Tuesday.

# FOUR BRS MLAS MEET REVANTH REDDY

Hyderabad | Agencies

Four MLAs of the opposition Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS) on Tuesday called on Telangana Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy. According to the Chief Minister's Office, the BRS MLAs paid a courtesy call.

Sunitha Laxma Reddy (Narsapur), K. Prabhakar Reddy (Dubbaka), G. Mahipal Reddy (Patancheru), and Manik Rao (Zaheerabad) met the Chief Minister at his residence.

Meanwhile, Revanth Reddy, who is also the President of state Congress unit, along with Working President Mahesh Kumar Goud reviewed the arrangements for a meeting of booth-level agents of the party to be held at L. B. Stadium on January 25.



Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge will address the meeting.

Kharge will give directions to booth level agents with regard to the forthcoming Lok Sabha elections. He will make important suggestions to convey to people the steps taken for implementation of

the promises made in Assembly elections.

Revanth Reddy has asked the party cadres to attend the meeting in large numbers, noting that booth level agents worked actively in Assembly elections and played an active role in the party's victory.

# ICICI Prudential Life launches industry's first annuity plan with Zero Surrender Charges

Team Absolute | Mumbai

ICICI Prudential Life Insurance has launched ICICI Pru Guaranteed Pension Plan Flexi with Benefit Enhancer, the industry's first annuity plan which offers a 100% refund of premiums at any time from the date of purchase.

An annuity product provides customers with a guaranteed income for life enabling them to lead a financially independent retired life. Customers can choose the Joint Life with Waiver of Premium in ICICI Pru Guaranteed Pension Plan, which waives off all future premiums in the event

of the demise of the customer. Importantly, the product benefit of guaranteed regular life-long income will be paid out to the second annuitant or joint holder.

Depending on the choice made by the customer the second annuitant can be the spouse, parents, children etc.

Recently, the IRDAI proposed regulations around providing customers with appropriate and fair surrender value, ICICI Pru Guaranteed Pension Plan Flexi with Benefit Enhancer has been designed in line with the proposed regulations which are aimed at increasing demand for life insurance products.

# JLF 2024: 550 writers, speakers, performers to represent 16 Indian, 8 foreign languages

Jaipur | Agencies

Jaipur Literature Festival 2024, the literary extravaganza, will see over 550 writers, speakers, and performers representing 16 Indian and 8 international languages.

The Indian languages include Assamese, Awadhi, Bengali, Hindi, Kannada, Kashmiri, Kurukh, Malayalam, Odia, Punjabi, Rajasthani, Sanskrit, Tamil, Toda, Urdu, and the Banjara language - Lamani (Lambada). The Festival will feature some of the greatest literary minds this season, including Aarathi Prasad, National Geographic's Regional Manager for Europe and Western Asia, an Honorary Research Fellow in Genetics, Evolution and Environment at University College



London, and author of Silk: A History in Three Metamorphoses; Ajay Jadeja, former India cricketer and commentator; Anand Neelakantan, author of the blockbuster 'Bahubali' trilogy; 'Asura: Tale of the Vanquished', and the Ajaya series among others; Anjan Sundaram, award-winning author of 'Bad News: Last Journalists in a Dictatorship' and 'Stringer: A Reporter's Journey in the Congo'; journalist and television presenter; Ben Macintyre, author of

14 non-fiction history books, including 'Operation Mincemeat', 'A Spy Amongst Friends', 'SAS: Rogue Heroes', and most recently, 'Colditz: Prisoners of the Castle', all of which have been Sunday Times bestsellers; Bonnie Garmus, novelist, copywriter, and creative director; Jan Michalski Prize for Literature-winning author Georgi Gospodinov; Gopal Krishna Gandhi, former Governor of West Bengal, author of the latest 'I Am an Ordinary Man: India's Struggle for Freedom' (1914-1948) and grandson of Mahatma Gandhi; Hernan Diaz, Pulitzer Prize-winning and New York Times best-selling author of 'Trust and In the Distance'; Jonathan Freedland, columnist, Orwell Prize-winning journalist, and author of 12 books, including .

# 30 universities participated in the 'Management Fest-2024'

Lalit Sharma | Jaipur

'Management Fest-2024' was organized by Hitech Services and Solutions at Hotel Royal Orchid. In this, career counseling of students was done by delegates of 30 leading universities from across the country. Ramratan Maheshwari, CEO of Hitech Services and Solutions, said that many students of the city visited the fest with enthusiasm and satiated their curiosities related to MBA, PGDM and other management courses by talking to the experts. Experts explain which courses can prove beneficial after graduation and what to keep in mind while choosing the best one from the leading B-schools across the country.

Maheshwari informed that the youth showed special enthusiasm towards MBA and PGDM courses in the fest. During counseling, experts told the students that while selecting a better management institute, they should also look at its infrastructure and academics as well as placement records and academic collaborations. 30 universities including ISMR-Pune, Chitkara University-Chandigarh, Mahindra University-Hyderabad, PBS-Pune, Chanakya University-Bagaluru, Parul University-Vadodara, SRM University-Ghaziabad, SRM University-Sonapat, SGT University-Gurgaon and IIMR, Manipal, JNU, Taxila and Amity University- Jaipur participated in the Management Fest.



# Lord Ram Temple task is over, now talk of work: Uddhav Thackeray to PM Modi

Quaid Najmi | Nashik

Opening the election war front with the Bharatiya Janata Party and Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Shiv Sena (UBT) President Uddhav Thackeray said here on Tuesday that "now the Lord Ram Temple task over, the PM should talk work".

In a scathing attack, Thackeray said that he and his party had campaigned vigorously for Modi in the last two Parliament elections, and the late Balasaheb Thackeray had tied up with BJP for the cause of Hindutva.

"At that time, we were not dishonest... Now, suddenly we are branded as corrupt... So many of my party leaders like Kishori Pednekar, Rajan Salvi, Suraj Chavan, Ravindra Waikar, Anil Parab are facing allegations, Sanjay Raut was even jailed on false charges. We are being hounded and defamed by the central investigation agencies," said Thackeray, addressing a party convention.

Taking objections to the Ayodhya Temple Trust treasurer Govindgiriji Maharaj drawing parallels between Modi and Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj in his speech after the Pran Pratistha of Lord Ram Temple, Thackeray said that "there can be absolutely no comparisons".

"It was because of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj and Balasaheb Thackeray that the temple issue came to the fore... It was due to Balasaheb Thackeray that Maharashtra and the country were saved on several occasions from enemies, terror attacks and riots, when my Shiv Sainiks took police caning and bullets. But today some blind followers (andh-bhaktas) are saying such things. Now we are



repenting for the tie-up with BJP," Thackeray rued.

He added that Lord Ram is not the private property of any leader or any party, but the BJP has even tried to hijack Lord Ram, and declared how "now the time has come to 'free Lord Ram from the BJP' clutches", on the occasion of Balasaheb Thackeray's 98th birth anniversary on Tuesday.

Sharpening his attack, Thackeray said the BJP keeps asking "what the Congress did in 75 years", but now they have to reply "what has Modi done in 10 years", advising the PM not to just keep mouthing 'Jai Shri Ram' but also live up to Lord Ram's ideals.

He said that when the Congress fought for India's Independence, neither the RSS nor the Jan Sangh were there, and they did not join the Freedom struggle, but on the contrary, the Jan Sangh attempted to sabotage the Samyukta Maharashtra Movement in the 1960s.

Referring to the series of probes in BrihanMumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC), Thackeray said "why single out only BMC, probe the civic bodies of Thane, Pune, Nagpur and others

also".

He questioned the corruption in the BJP, the 'ambulance scandal of Rs 8,000-crore', and alleged that the PM Care Fund had started all the big scams in the country.

"The PM Care Fund must be probed... where has all the money gone, why no details are given... When we come to power, we shall investigate all these things and put those who are guilty behind bars," thundered Thackeray, as the crowds cheered and clapped.

Training guns on the ruling ally Shiv Sena headed by Chief Minister Eknath Shinde, the Shiv Sena (UBT) chief warned that "we will not rest till we defeat all the traitors in the next elections" in the state.

"They say that I am running a dynastic party... Yes... But I have inherited everything including my Shiv Sainiks... I have not stolen anything like you did..." said Thackeray in a swipe at Shinde, who split from the original Shiv Sena in June 2022.

Referring to, but without naming the recent defection of Milind M. Deora from the Congress, he slammed the BJP and Shiv Sena for "taking away leaders of other parties as they do not have any idols in their own parties", and accused the BJP of indulging in the British era strategy of 'divide-and-rule' with the opponents.

Thackeray, accompanied by his wife Rashmi and son Aditya, kick-started his party's 2024 poll campaign from the pilgrim destination of Nashik, in the presence of top leaders and a large number of activists, performed a 'maha-aarti' at the famed Kalaram Mandir, organised a procession and other activities to rejuvenate the party cadres.

## Bulldozer Action In Mumbai Where Clashes Took Place After Ram Temple Rally

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Bulldozers - escorted by a large force of police and security personnel - have torn down "illegal" constructions in Mumbai's Mira Road suburb, which saw violence before and after the Prime Minister Narendra Modi-led 'pran pratistha' of the Ram Mandir in Ayodhya on Monday.

Police said the "illegal" encroachments by the accused are being bulldozed - an experiment initiated by the Uttar Pradesh government and then followed by several other BJP-led states against criminals even as various detractors question the authority and legality of such action.

Videos of the incidents from Sunday evening and Monday afternoon, the latter hours after the contentious consecration of the temple - many of which were widely shared on social media - showed two groups throwing stones at each other.

By Monday night police had arrested over a dozen people in connection with the clashes, which erupted as a Shri Ram Shobha Yatra was passing through Mira Road's Naya Nagar area. The procession, which had cars and bikes with saffron flags, was attacked by a mob with stones, police said, adding some people were injured in the incident.

The police said the "illegal" encroachments by the accused are being bulldozed - an experiment initiated by



the Uttar Pradesh government and then followed by several other BJP-led states against criminals.

The mob also vandalised the cars with stones and sticks, they said.

Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnis posted on X Monday night that "anyone trying to disrupt law and order" in the state would be punished severely.

"The complete details of the incident in the Naya Nagar area of Mira-Bhander were taken last night only. I was in constant touch with the Mira-Bhander Police Commissioner till 3.30 am Monday."

"Police have been instructed to take strict action against the accused. In this case, 13 accused have been detained so far and the process of identifying the

other accused is underway by checking the CCTV footage. Anyone trying to disrupt law and order in Maharashtra will not be tolerated," he said.

Deputy Commissioner of Police Jayant Bajbale told reporters the conflict broke out 11 pm on Sunday "when some people of the Hindu community were raising slogans in three-four vehicles..."

"Shortly after, an argument broke out between the Hindu community and some people belonging to the Muslim community. Seeing the deteriorating situation, the police vehicle immediately reached the spot and took some people into custody," he was quoted by news agency.

Bajbale later said the situation had been brought under control and a flag march conducted.

## Three WR signal staff run over by Mumbai local train in Palghar

Team Absolute | Palghar (Maharashtra)

In a shocker, three Western Railway (WR) signalling department staffers were run over by a suburban local train near Vasai Station during the peak hours, an official said here on Tuesday.

According to WR chief spokesperson Sumit Thakur, the three deceased persons were identified as: Vasu Mitra, Chief Signalling Inspector at Bhayander, Somnath U. Lambutre Electrical Signal Maintainer at Vasai and an assistant Sachin Wankhede, all from the WR's Mumbai Division.

Late on Monday, the trio had gone to attend some signalling point issues which had failed dur-



ing the evening. Around 8.55 p.m., the three officials were run over by a passing suburban local train between Vasai Road and Naigaon station on the UP slow line, and were killed instantly.

On hearing of the incident, the WR Divisional

Railway Manager and other seniors rushed to spot and extended all help to the families of the deceased, while ordering a full probe into the tragedy. The WR has paid an amount of Rs 55,000 per family as immediate relief, and further ex-gratia and other payments/dues will be disbursed to the families of all the deceased staffers within 15 days. While Mitra's family was entitled to around Rs 1.24 crore, the families of Lambutre and Wankhede will be receiving around Rs 40 lakh each, said Thakur. Besides, the three staffers' other official settlement dues will also be paid to the family members and the same is under process, said the official.

# Two brothers killed as two godowns burn in Pune, several vehicles gutted

Team Absolute | Pune

Two brothers were asphyxiated to death in their sleep and several vehicles were gutted in a massive fire which engulfed two adjacent warehouses at Pimpri-Chinchwad here early on Tuesday, officials said.

The blaze was reported around 2.30 a.m. from the congested Walhekarwadi area of the twin city, sparking panic in the locality, as locals summoned help.

At least five fire-tenders rushed to the spot and battled the blaze which had spread through the godown of Ganesh Packaging Ltd., where a large quantity of wood was stored that is



believed to have first caught fire. The flames quickly spread to the adjoining warehouse of Vinayak

Aluminium Profile company where the two brothers were fast asleep on a mezzanine floor, unaware of the rag-

ing inferno around them.

The fire has completely gutted the two warehouses besides a four-wheeler and three two-wheelers parked in the vicinity which were also burnt as the flames spread and caught them.

After reaching inside, the fire-fighters found bodies of two brothers who succumbed due to suffocation by the toxic smoke and fumes of the burning materials. They are identified as: Kamlesh A. Chaudhary, 23 and his younger sibling Lalit A. Chaudhary, 21. The cause of the blaze is not known, and the police and fire brigade are continuing further investigations.

## Shiv Sena urges Mumbai Police to help unfreeze investors' funds in 'scam-couple' fraud



Team Absolute | Mumbai

Shiv Sena spokesperson Krishna Hegde on Tuesday urged the Mumbai Police to move the courts and secure the release of the frozen funds belonging to the investors who were allegedly cheated by a scamster couple arrested on December 30.

The scamsters - Ashesh Shailesh Mehta and his wife Shivangi Lad-Mehta, wanted in multiple states - were nabbed by the Mumbai Police Economic Offences Wing (EOW) from Surat and brought to Mumbai for probe.

After the Mehta couple went 'missing' in June 2023, the EOW had ordered freezing of around Rs 170 crore in the bank accounts belonging to Bliss Consultants Trading Co. Ltd. and Zerodha Trading, which is said to be a part of the over Rs 1,000 crore cheated from gullible investors from all over India.

Hegde said that after the EOW gets court's

permission, the funds as well as the proceeds of the properties that are attached, can be distributed among the investors who had lost money in the scams allegedly perpetrated by the Mehtas.

Among the victims of the Mehta scams were many senior citizens, pensioners, single-parents and small investors, who were left high and dry after the Mehtas duped them of their hard-earned monies, Hegde said.

The case first started around June 2023 with the Madhya Pradesh Police, but seemed to have lost steam, till Hegde raised the issue with Chief Minister Eknath Shinde, who ordered a detailed police probe into the matter in July.

An FIR was lodged on June 26, later transferred to the EOW, with 151 complainants, alleging that over 6,000 investors from the country were cheated of their monies by the Mehtas.

## "Taunting not mental cruelty": Court on In-Laws of woman who died by suicide

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Mere taunting does not amount to harassment or mental cruelty, the Aurangabad bench of the Bombay High Court observed on Tuesday while acquitting three persons for harassing a woman and abetting her suicide.

A single bench of Justice Abhay Waghvase cancelled a 2001 order passed by a sessions court at Nandurbar convicting a woman's husband, mother-in-law and brother-in-law on charges of abetting her suicide, harassment and cruelty.

According to the prosecution, the couple got married in May 1993, and while everything was fine in the beginning, the three accused eventually started taunting the woman for not cooking properly and doing household work, among other things.

"In the considered opinion of this court, mere taunting would not amount to harassment or mental cruelty," the court said.

The prosecution also claimed that the accused persons had asked the victim to get Rs 10,000 from her father.

In April 1994, the woman allegedly died by suicide by self-immolation.

## Girl killed in Chawl, accused found dead on tracks

Team Absolute | Thane

A 13-year-old girl was found murdered in an unoccupied room of a chawl, while the body of the alleged accused was found on the railway tracks in Maharashtra's Thane district, police said on Tuesday. The highly decomposed body of the girl was found in a chawl in Kalyan taluka on Sunday after some residents complained to the police about a foul smell emanating from the room, an official said. The Class 8 student was reported missing by her parents on January 13, and a case of kidnapping had been registered with the Kalyan police, he said.

The girl's body bore burn wounds, and two mobile phones were recovered from the scene, the official said. A probe revealed that one of the mobile phones belonged to a 22-year-old man whose body was found on the railway tracks at Shahad by the Government Railway Police (GRP) on Monday, he said. It is suspected that the man, who hails from Jalna district, allegedly killed the girl and committed suicide on the railway track, the official said, adding that further probe is underway.

## Mesmerizing performance at Kala Ghoda art celebration

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The esteemed Reetanjali Dance Co. was given the unique chance to perform their ballet on Draupadi Vastraharan at the Kala Ghoda art celebration on January 20, 2024. This captivating composition had previously mesmerized audiences when it was originally performed at a cultural festival run by BSA. The group, which is renowned for its artistic brilliance, did not let the audience down this time either, entrancing them with their mesmerizing performance.

The ballet showcases Draupadi Vastraharan's dramatic and emotional intensity, offering an outstanding depiction of the legendary Mahabharata incident. The portrayal by Reetanjali Dance



Co. demonstrated their skill at fusing ancient dance techniques with modern narrative, bringing the story to life.

The performance was dramatic and strong, and it clearly affected the crowd.

Notably impressed was the director of the Kala Ghoda Festival, who was in atten-

dance.

They sent their sincere greetings to Snehal Sunil, the choreographer and guru, as well as the whole team. Their work was a tribute to the changing face of classical dance in the modern era as well as a showcase of cultural legacy.

## Samsung brings live Galaxy AI experiences to India



Team Absolute | Mumbai

Samsung on Tuesday inaugurated its first Online-to-Offline (O2O) lifestyle store in India at the Jio World Plaza Mall in Mumbai. Customers will be able to experience and pre-book the latest Galaxy S24 series at Samsung BKC (Bandra Kurla Complex) here, starting January 23. The new store will offer Samsung's latest AI experiences -- from 'AI for All' for consumer electronics products to 'Galaxy AI' for mobile devices. "We have curated never seen before experiences in eight unique zones

that include all our AI experiences to excite people across segments. Here, customers will get a feel of our expansive connected devices ecosystem and our cutting-edge technology," J.B. Park, President & CEO, Samsung Southwest Asia, said in a statement.

Moreover, the company said that the store will offer not only Galaxy S24 special edition colour options, but also free first-of-its-kind gen AI-enabled personalisation of their latest Galaxy AI smartphone. Samsung BKC is divided into eight unique lifestyle zones that showcase to customers how Samsung

products, individually and as part of Samsung's connected multi-device ecosystem (SmartThings), can offer convenience to them.

To bring together all the experiences across the eight zones, Samsung will also host various events and workshops around consumer passion points such as digital art, photography, videography, fitness, and baking, cooking, music, among others as part of its Learn@Samsung programme.

The premium customers visiting the store will also have the opportunity to preview global products that are yet to be launched in India.



EDITOR'S SPECS

## The Interim Budget

An Interim Budget is presented by a government in its last year in office ahead of the Lok Sabha elections. The need for an interim budget arises because a fresh approval is required from the Parliament to withdraw money from the Consolidated Fund of India to run the government as the existing 2023-24 Budget is valid only till March 31 this year. Since the Lok Sabha elections will be held in April-May this year, funds will be required to run the country till the new government takes over after the elections. The interim budget is a practical arrangement that enables the government to fill this gap. The full Union Budget is presented by the newly-elected government after the Lok Sabha polls. An Interim Budget is similar to a Union Budget in that the ruling government tables in Parliament the estimates of its expenditure, revenue, fiscal deficit, and financial performance and projections for the upcoming financial year. Although major tax proposals are not made, the ruling government can tweak some taxes. This had happened in the interim budget ahead of the 2019 Lok Sabha elections, when the income tax deduction limit was raised by the government to give salaried professionals some relief. The government, however, does not make any major policy announcements during the Interim Budget which could financially burden the next government that will present the full Union Budget. According to the Election Commission's Code of Conduct, the ruling government cannot include any major scheme in the Interim Budget as it could influence voters. The government also does not present the Economic Survey along with the Interim Budget which is done a day before the presentation of the main budget.

# Male spells a geo-political trend

D.C. Pathak

The anti-India remarks made by Maldives President Mohamed Muizzu on returning home from a five-day high-profile state visit to China on January 13, go beyond what could be considered as the consequence merely of India's known political support for his predecessor Ibu Solih in the recently held presidential poll in Maldives. They reflect a global trend of the rise of radicals in the Muslim world on one hand and the impact of US-China polarisation - indicating a new Cold War on the horizon - on the Islamic world, on the other. The spread of 'radicalisation' was accentuating the divide between the forces fiercely hostile to the US-led West and those Muslim countries who chose to be friendly with the US. The 'war on terror' that followed 9/11 proved to be a direct combat between the Islamic radical forces and the US-led West and helped the former to spread their hold on the Indian sub-continent, West Africa and the Middle East. The US-China polarisation is pushing radicalised Muslim entities closer to China for political reasons. The developments in Maldives are a part of the current geopolitics marked by the ascendancy of India as a major power which is friendly with the US, the deepening conflict between the US on the one hand and an ambitious China aspiring to become the second superpower, on the other and the anti-India narratives built by lobbies in India and abroad about the treatment of Muslim minority in the country. Significantly, some of the ministerial colleagues of Muizzu had earlier described India as a 'puppet of Israel' injecting a communal bias against secular democratic India and confirming their own 'radicalised' approach. It is likely that Maldives would add to the group of countries like Pakistan, Turkey and Malaysia in the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC) accentuating the divide between pro-US and 'radicalised' Muslim countries. Mohamed Muizzu had contested the Presidential election in Maldives on an 'India out' platform opposing the 'India First' call of Ibu Solih and emerged victorious. On return from China, President Muizzu - who broke the tradition of a newly elected Maldivian President making his first foreign visit to India - in an apparent jibe against India declared that "we may be small but we are not in any country's backyard - nor does it give any country license to bully us". Asserting that the Indian Ocean does not belong to any single country, he claimed that China-Maldives relations were based on respect for sovereignty, equality and non-interference in internal affairs. Muizzu announced a slew of measures aimed at curtailing the dependence of Maldives on India in key sectors including health care, food security and tourism. China's Indian Ocean footprint was visibly enhanced by the elevation of ties between Maldives and China to the level of 'strategic partnership' during Muizzu's visit to Beijing. On January 14, Muizzu stepped up his anti-India rhetoric by asking India to withdraw all Indian military personnel deployed in the Indian Ocean archipelago by March 15. He reportedly directed the Maldivian delegation participating in the talks on the issue to inform Indian officials that the troops must be withdrawn by that date. There are around 70 military personnel and a dozen medical hands assisting in flying and managing helicopters and also in disaster management. Muizzu has taken a strange stance - apparently attributable to Chinese influence - considering the fact that India looked upon the Maldives as a key maritime neighbour in the Indian Ocean Rim (IOR) and gave it a special place in an initiative like SAGAR (security and growth for all in the region). India will certainly find ways and means of countering any Chinese designs in the Indian Ocean - particularly any hostile



activity pursued through China's new-found friendship with Maldives.

The impact of radicalisation on the Muslim world should not be underestimated.

Just as the 'war on terror' in Afghanistan led to the growth of Al Qaeda and Taliban, the US action in Iraq in 2003 enabled the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) to strike roots in the Iraq-Syria region.

ISIS had its origins in Al Qaeda in Iraq (AQI) and while 'competing' with Al Qaeda in furthering the cause of radical Islam, it attracted notice more for its hostility to the Shiites in the region on sectarian lines. This explains the intensity of ISIS opposition to the Alawite regime of Bashar al-Assad in Syria as well.

All Islamic radical outfits consider the US-led West as their prime enemy and for political reasons alone, may be inclined to be on the side of China in the latter's rift with the US.

China is taking full advantage of this geopolitical environment to expand its influence. Its adjustment with the Taliban Emirate in Kabul - with the helping hand of Pakistan - enabled it to extend its Belt & Road Initiative (BRI) to Afghanistan.

The new level of friendship struck by China with Maldives during Muizzu's visit to Beijing saw the Maldivian President recording his appreciation for BRI and China extending a grant of MVR 2 billion to Maldives. Islamic radicals are 'revivalists' who demand going back to the Puritan Islam of the period of the four 'Pious Caliphs' that brooked no compromises and who advocate recourse to Jihad to restore the political hold and glory of the faith.

Western culture with its 'corrupting' influence and the Shiite 'deviants' are the prime targets of radicalised Sunnis. Interestingly, the Shiite regime of Ayatollahs in Iran is ideologically against Capitalism and is hence fundamentally against the US too.

Iran shares the antipathy that radicalised Hamas had towards Israel and this pretty much explains the active support extended by Hizbollah and Houthis to the former in the current Israel-Hamas confrontation.

It is a matter of concern that the post-Cold War era is witnessing a proliferation of proxy wars and cross-border offensives and an increasing trend of misuse of cyberspace for combat and destruction.

Technology can be used for both development and destabilisation and rogue nations and non-state actors cannot be easily prevented from misusing technology.

India has in the follow-up on the G20 Summit already taken the initiative of calling an international conference to examine the issue of regulating the operations of Artificial Intelligence.

The phenomenon of proxy wars has been further complicated by the new trend of terrorists attacking the strategic and economic lifelines of the targeted country to economically weaken the opponent.

Further, 'information warfare' has become another new form of combat in which social media is used for peddling misinformation or building false narratives to bring down a legitimate regime or influence the outcome of a democratic election in a country.

Instigating separatism or an insurgency from outside is also a kind of external threat countries face today - India has seen this happening in both Kashmir and the North East. ITBP is a matter of great satisfaction that measures have been taken by the present Union Home Minister to curb Naxalism, terrorism and separatist movements, with good results.

Developments in the Maldives reflect the current geopolitics that features the US-China clash of interests, the Ukraine-Russia military confrontation, the Hamas-Israel conflict, the rise of Islamic radicals in the Muslim world and a Sino-Pak axis that was active against India. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has, by taking an independent stand on the Ukraine-Russia military confrontation and getting India to abstain from voting in UNGA on a US-sponsored resolution against Russia - while at the same time clearly messaging the two warring sides that "this is not an era of war", helped India to become an important voice in the world on issues of war and peace. What is more, India has been able to establish that its relationship with the US would remain deep and irreversible despite its continuing bonds of friendship with Russia. India has a clear sight of which side to be on, in the emerging polarisation between the US and China and has decided to take on the latter on LAC, on the marine front and on international platforms - it has already stepped up its role in Quad. On the threat from Islamic radicalisation and faith-based terrorism, India again is firmly with the US in dealing with the shared danger. India has unequivocally condemned the terror attack of Hamas on Israel but has favoured a 'two-state' solution in Palestine and restraint in the use of military power to avoid civilian loss of life.

As regards the Sino-Pak axis, India is prepared to deal with the two adversaries and foil their attempts to carry out covert operations against this country's internal security. On the whole, there is clarity in Prime Minister Modi's policy of getting the two largest democracies of the world - India and the US - to lead the democratic order against the perils of dictatorial and fundamentalist regimes. Indo-US cooperation is touching new heights in the spheres of both security and economic development and is at the forefront in regard to the application of new technologies including Artificial Intelligence (AI) to the same. In a multipolar world order, India is rightly opting for bilateral and multilateral friendships designed to serve the mutual interests of the partners while preserving the cause of global peace. (The writer is a former Director of the Intelligence Bureau. Views are personal)

## international

## Storm Isha causes mass power cuts, travel disruption in UK

London | Agencies

Tens of thousands of homes were left in blackouts and trains were cancelled on Monday as Storm Isha brought gusts and heavy rainfall across the UK.

An unusual wind warning for almost the entire country issued by the UK's Met Office ahead of the storm is still in force and expected to last until Wednesday, Xinhua news agency reported.

According to the National Meteorological Service, strong gusts of 99 miles per hour (159 km per hour) were recorded at Brizlee Wood, Northumberland. About 45,000 people in Northern Ireland, along with thousands more in England and Wales, were left without power overnight.

On Monday morning, Northern Ireland Electricity Networks said that "the severity and prolonged duration of Storm Isha has caused widespread damage to the electricity network" across the region and they were still working to restore power. All passenger and freight train services



in Scotland were suspended for safety reasons following the storm.

Network Rail, which owns and maintains the UK's train infrastructure, said reopening Scotland's Railway would be "a challenge" due to damages, including fallen trees and overhead wire damage in "at least 20 separate locations". Several rail operators also warned of

delays and changes on Monday, advising travellers to check their journey in advance.

Storm Isha also impacted Ireland, causing power cuts in at least 230,000 properties and flight cancellations at Dublin Airport.

The Met Office said the winds were expected to "gradually ease through the day on Monday".

## 25,000 civilian fatalities reported in Gaza conflict amid mounting humanitarian demands

United Nations | Agencies

"Intense" Israeli strikes in Gaza and Palestinian rocket fire into Israel persisted on Monday, with UN humanitarian reports stating more than 25,000 deaths in the enclave since the war's onset on October 7.

Referencing information from Gaza's health authorities, the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) reported that 62,681 Palestinians have suffered injuries due to Israeli strikes. These strikes were in response to Hamas-led attacks in Israel, which resulted in about 1,200 fatalities and around 250 hostages.

Two Israeli soldiers had been killed in Gaza since Friday, OCHA said, which brought the total to 193 since the start of the ground operation, and 1,203 soldiers were injured, according to the Israeli military as quoted by Xinhua news agency report.

The same period saw 343 Palestinians killed and another 573 people injured, the UN aid coordination office said.

Addressing a summit of the Group of 77 countries and China (G77) in the Ugandan capital Kampala on Sunday, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres described the Middle East as "a tinderbox," before issuing an appeal to "do all we can to prevent conflict from igniting across the region".

"Israel's military operations have spread mass destruction and killed civilians on a scale unprecedented during my time as Secretary-General," Guterres said, having earlier reiterated his support for a two-state solution for Israelis and Palestinians.

Highlighting the scale of need among Gazans after more than three months of "intense" bombardment, OCHA said that only 15 bakeries were now operational in Gaza -- "six in Rafah and nine in Deir al Balah" -- and none is open north of Wadi Gaza.

Almost all of these functioning bakeries have continued to



receive support from the UN World Food Programme which has provided flour, salt, yeast and sugar.

"Through this initiative, about 250,000 people were able to purchase bread at a subsidised price," OCHA noted in its latest update on the emergency on Sunday.

The UN agency for Palestinian refugees UNRWA, meanwhile, reported on Monday that telecommunications shutdowns had entered a seventh day.

In its most recent update, UNRWA disclosed that the number of internally displaced people within Gaza has reached 1.7 million. Of these, at least 335 have been killed while taking refuge in the agency's facilities, and 1,161 have been injured. Additionally, since October 7, 151 UNRWA staff members have been killed and 141 of its installations have suffered damage.

## South Korea: Nearly 350 flights at Jeju airport canceled due to snow, winds

Seoul | Agencies

Nearly 350 flights set to land or take off at Jeju International Airport in South Korea have been canceled on Tuesday due to heavy snow and gusty winds. Around 347 flights -- 176 outbound flights and 171 inbound flights -- were cancelled at the Jeju airport, affecting about 20,000 outbound passengers, a Korea Airports Corp. (KAC) official said over the phone, Yonhap news agency reported. Two flights on international routes --



one bound for Macao and the other bound for Taipei -- scheduled to leave the airport

at 10:40 p.m. have yet to be cancelled, the official said, adding there remain no planned domestic flights this evening.

On Monday, some flights were also cancelled or delayed at the resort island's airport due to heavy snow and strong winds.

"Passengers need to check their flight schedules in advance as some of the planned flights at Jeju airport are expected to suffer cancellations or delays until Wednesday morning due to heavy snow and winds," the official said.

## 21 Israeli soldiers killed in single attack in Gaza

Tel Aviv | Agencies

At least 21 Israeli soldiers were killed in Gaza while fighting Hamas, the Israel Defense Forces said on Tuesday. Addressing a press briefing, IDF spokesman Daniel Hagari said soldiers were preparing explosives to demolish two buildings when militants launched a rocket-propelled grenade at a nearby tank on Monday, triggering a premature explosion that resulted in the collapse of the build-



ings while the soldiers were either inside or

nearby, Xinhua news agency reported.

Offering condolences to the families of the soldiers who died, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu posted on X: "I wish to strengthen the dear families of our heroic warriors who fell on the battlefield. I know that for these families, their lives will be changed forever."

Prime Minister Netanyahu said the military has launched an investigation into the incident.

## Five killed as Russia shells Ukraine



Kiev | Agencies

At least five people were killed in Russia's strikes on Ukraine's Kharkiv and Kiev, local authorities said.

Regional Military Administration head Oleh Syniehubov said Russia struck the Kyivskiy and Saltivskiy districts of Kharkiv with Kh-22 missiles in which four people were killed, Ukrainska Pravda reported.

He said the Russian missile strike destroyed an apartment block.

"People are under the rub-

ble. Rescuers and other emergency services are working at the scene," he added.

According to a local power operator, Kharkivoblenergo, energy companies are already working to restore electricity supply to the residential quarters.

In Kiev, one person was killed and four others injured.

At least eight explosions were reported in Kharkiv.

However, the Russian military said that it does not target civilians when it hit objects in Ukraine.

## New York-bound flight cancelled after passenger spots missing screws on plane's wing



London | Agencies

Moments before take-off, a New-York bound Virgin Atlantic flight from Manchester was cancelled after an alert passenger spotted missing bolts on plane's wing, the media reported. The incident occurred on January 15, when Phil Hardy, 41, who was onboard the flight at Manchester Airport in the UK, noticed four missing fasteners and informed the cabin crew. Engineers were promptly called out to carry out maintenance checks on the Airbus

A330 aircraft before its scheduled takeoff to John F. Kennedy International Airport in New York City, New York Post reported quoting a Virgin Atlantic representative. In a video shared on social media, an engineer can be seen climbing on to the plane's wing and fixing the issue. Though Hardy was repeatedly assured by the airline staff that there was no safety issue, he was panicked as the incident comes days after one of the doors of an Alaska Airlines Boeing 737 9 MAX blew open mid-air.



## Decision of Cabinet

# HEALTH AND MEDICAL EDUCATION DEPARTMENTS MERGED, PRIME MINISTER EXCELLENCE COLLEGE WILL OPEN IN EVERY DISTRICT

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Public Health and Family Welfare Department and Medical Education Department will be merged in Madhya Pradesh. Dr. Mohan Yadav's cabinet has given green signal to this proposal on Tuesday. Besides, on the basis of the new education policy, the cabinet has also decided to open Prime Minister Excellence College in every district. Nursing and paramedical courses will now be included in Ayurveda University.

Urban Development and Housing Minister Kailash Vijayvargiya informed about the decisions of the cabinet. He said that both medical education and public health and family welfare departments have been integrated. This will increase the working capacity of the department. In this, the situation of coordination which



was not there till now between the district hospital and medical college, will now be possible. Mohan government had already indicated this and that

is why Deputy Chief Minister Rajendra Kumar Shukla has been made the minister of both the departments.

### THE ISSUE OF 'AKHAND BHARAT' WILL NOT END DUE TO ANYONE'S OBJECTION: MOHAN YADAV

**Bhopal:** Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Dr. Mohan Yadav has said that even if Pakistan registers many objections to the statement of united India, but before the arrival of displaced refugees, there was united India. The issue of united India will not end due to anyone's objection.

Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Dr. Mohan Yadav has lodged an objection to a statement of Pakistan's Foreign Ministry after the consecration of Ram Lalla in the Ram temple in Ayodhya.

On Pakistan's objection, Dr. Mohan Yadav said that Pakistan may register lakhs of objections, but before the arrival of displaced refugees, there was united India. Even today, Punjab, Sindh, Gujarat, Maratha are part of our united India's past, including Nankana Sahib, which are part of our united India's past, in our national anthem. Punjab, Sindh, Gujarat and Marathas cannot be removed. He further said that Ram Lalla's life has been consecrated in the Ram temple, on that occasion our dream of a culturally united India has been there for thousands of years. The matter will not end if someone objects, it will remain stable in its place.

# In Madhya Pradesh, babies born on Ram temple day named after Lord Ram, Sita

Team Absolute | Damoh

To mark the auspicious occasion of the Pran Pratishtha ceremony of Ram Lalla's idol in Ayodhya, several children born on Monday in Madhya Pradesh's Damoh district were named after Lord Ram and Mata Sita, a doctor said.

The mothers and their family members were quite happy that their babies were born on the special day, the doctor added. Dr Vishal Shukla, Resident Medical Officer (RMO) of Damoh District Hospital, said, "There were no demands regarding special muhurat since it is a government hospital and people across the district visit here. But according to our culture, the family members came along with women patients started to name their children like Ram, Siya, Janki, Ayodhya Prasad."

"It was a special occasion, the mothers were very proud and quite happy that their babies were born on the day of consecration in Ayodhya and their family members were happy too. Around 80 deliveries, including private hospitals, took place across the district on Monday," Dr Shukla added.



He further said that a total of 28 children were born on January 22 till 12 o'clock in the night. Of these, there were 10 girls and 18 boys.

The Pran Pratishtha of Ram Lalla at Ram Temple in Ayodhya was held on Monday. The Ram Lalla idol was unveiled at the Pran Pratishtha ceremony after the hour-long rituals in the presence of Prime Minister Narendra Modi who led the ceremony.

The event saw the participation of about 8,000 invitees, including 1,500-1,600 eminent guests.

The Shri Ram Jambhoomi Mandir is constructed in traditional Nagara style. Its length (east-west) is 380 feet; width is 250 feet and height is 161 feet; and is supported by a total of 392 pillars and 44 doors. The pillars and walls of the temple showcase intricately sculpted depictions of Hindu deities, Gods, and Goddesses.

In the main sanctum sanctorum on the ground floor, the childhood form of Bhagwan Shri Ram (the idol of Shri Ram Lalla) has been placed.

## SOME OTHER DECISIONS

- The Cabinet has approved extension of the time period of the Goods and Services Tax Ordinance. Will be brought in the assembly in the budget session. The bill could not be introduced due to delay in elections and cabinet formation.
- Now courses for nursing and para medical staff will also be included in Ayurveda University. This will increase the number of paramedical staff. Their need has increased after Corona.
- Lift irrigation project has been approved at Malhargarh in Mungaoli tehsil of

- Ashoknagar. With this, 7500 hectares in 26 villages can be irrigated. The cost of the project is Rs 87 crore.
- Tap water scheme for drinking water has been approved for Majhudia group in Mahi Water Supply Group Scheme in Ratlam district. This will provide pure water to tribal families. It will cost Rs 204 crore.
- Amendment to the Water Pollution Act has been approved. In small cases of water pollution one has to go to court. It has been agreed to resolve this issue with the authorities. Will send the proposal to the Government of India.

- After this the final decision will be taken.
- Establishment of Prime Minister's College of Excellence has been approved. By removing the shortcomings of the already existing college in every district, the needs under the new education policy will be met and it will be given the form of PM Excellence College. The state government will bear its expenses.
- Subsidized non-government teachers of Tribal Affairs Department will be given the benefit of sixth pay scale.

# Namibian cheetah 'Jwala' gives birth to three cubs in Kuno

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Madhya Pradesh's Kuno National Park (KNP) got three new guests as Namibian cheetah 'Jwala' gave birth to three cubs.

Union Environment Minister Bhupendra Yadav shared this information on his social media account with a video of the newborn cubs on Tuesday.

It's the second cheetah which gave birth to cubs at Kuno in the new year, after 'Aasha' - another Namibian cheetah delivered three cubs in the first week of this month. 'Siyaya' was the first to deliver four cubs last year, but unfortunately three cubs died and only one survived.

The video capturing this joyous moment was shared by Minister Yadav on 'X'.

In a post, Yadav wrote, "Kuno's new cubs! Namibian Cheetah named Jwala has given birth to three cubs. This



comes just weeks after Namibian Cheetah Aasha gave birth to her cubs. Congratulations to all wildlife frontline warriors and wildlife lovers across the country. May Bharat's wildlife thrive." On January 16, Namibian cheetah 'Shaurya' died in suspicious circumstances. 'Shaurya' was the 10th cheetah which died after 20 felines were introduced here at Kuno. The cheetahs were translocated to the Kuno from South Africa and Namibia as part of the central government's

ambitious initiative to revive their population in India. The Cheetah Reintroduction Project involved releasing eight big cats from Namibia, comprising five females and three males, into enclosures at Kuno on September 17, 2022. Subsequently, in February 2023, an additional 12 cheetahs were transported to the park from South Africa. In December, 2023, four cheetahs were set free into the wild, but two of them were later captured and moved to enclosures.

# SDM SUSPENDED AFTER TWO YOUTHS BEATEN UP IN HIS PRESENCE IN UMARIA

Team Absolute | Bhopal

In a disturbing incident that went viral on social media on Monday, two youths were beaten up in the presence of Bandhavgarh Sub-Divisional Magistrate (SDM), Amit Singh, in Madhya Pradesh. The SDM was suspended by Chief Minister Mohan Yadav on Tuesday over the assault on the two men.

According to reports the SDM allegedly ordered and oversaw the assault on the two young men for overtaking his vehicle.

As per information, the incident occurred in Umaria District and the matter came to light after the video of the brutal assault surfaced on social media on Monday.

The incident sparked a controversy and questions were raised asking if senior government officials have been given a free hand to punish people.

Senior advocate and Congress Rajya Sabha MP, Vivek Tankha expressed his dismay saying, "What kind of government arrogance and hooliganism is this in MP? Should the state be known for such incidents?"

Chief Minister Mohan Yadav on Tuesday condemned the incident and ordered the suspension of Bandhavgarh SDM Amit Singh and

two more officials who were with him at that time.

"The incident of the assault on two youths by Bandhavgarh SDM is unfortunate. Instructions have been given to suspend the SDM. There is a good governance government in Madhya Pradesh. This kind of inhuman treatment of common people will not be tolerated at all in the state," the Chief Minister said on

Tuesday.

The SDM in question provided a different version of the events. He denied that the two men were assaulted under his watch and claims that one of them was driving recklessly and nearly collided with his official vehicle.

However, the victims, Prakash Dahiya and Shivam Yadav, both residents of Bharola Village, assert that

they were attacked by individuals who emerged from the SDM's official vehicle. Police have registered a case on the basis of the statements of the victims admitted to hospital and have assured that legal action would be taken against those responsible for the assault. Investigations are underway to ascertain the exact sequence of events and identify the perpetrators, a senior police officer said.



# MP CONGRESS'S SILENT PROTEST AGAINST THE ATTACK ON 'BHARAT JODO NYAY YATRA'

Team Absolute | Bhopal

A silent protest program is being organized by the Congress across the country in protest against the attack on Congress leader Rahul Gandhi's 'Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra' in Assam. In this series, Congress workers also staged dharna in different districts. Madhya Pradesh State Congress mainly staged a protest in Roshanpura, Bhopal. In which a large number of Congress leaders and workers including former Chief Minister Digvijay Singh, Congress State President Jeetu Patwari and Leader of Opposition Umang Singh were present. During this time everyone had tied black bands on their hands. This protest lasted for about 3 hours. Similar pictures have also emerged from Gwalior, Indore, Ashoknagar.

Actually, Congress alleges that BJP workers have attacked Rahul Gandhi's Nyay Yatra in Assam. Congress alleges that the Bharat Jodo Nyaya Yatra being taken out under the leadership of Rahul



Gandhi has been tried to be stopped by the Bharatiya Janata Party's Assam government and BJP workers are creating disruption by attacking Rahul Gandhi's yatra. On the other hand, Congress

MLAs and a large number of workers also staged a protest in Glavier's Phoolbagh. Congress MLA Saheb Singh Gurjar said that this is a democratic country and democracy is being openly murdered in Assam. On this occasion, District Congress President Dr. Devendra Sharma said that yesterday people all over the country were going to the temple for darshan but the Assam government was doing undemocratic work by stopping Rahul ji from going to the temple. Therefore, today we are sitting in front of Gandhiji's statue and praying to give wisdom to such people. Similarly, in Indore also, Congress workers staged a protest under the leadership of City Congress President Surjit Singh Chadha. On the other hand, in Ashoknagar, a silent protest was organized by the District Congress Committee at the local Gandhi Park. Before this dharna, Ashoknagar MLA Hari Babu Rai himself did the cleaning with a broom. Hari Babu Rai said that the way our leader Rahul Gandhi is being treated is indecent.

# Preparation to teach history of Ram Jambhoomi in Madhya Pradesh

Team Absolute | Indore

After the consecration of Ram Lalla in Ayodhya, a big statement of Madhya Pradesh Urban Administration Minister Kailash Vijayvargiya has come out. He has said that efforts will be made to include the history of Ram Jambhoomi in the education of Madhya Pradesh.

State Urban Administration Minister Vijayvargiya, while talking to reporters, said that Lord Ram has entered the Ram Jambhoomi, everyone should read this history.

He said, we will try to include it in education also.

Taking his point further, Vijayvargiya said that many people made sacrifices in this movement. From King Dhananjay to Kothari



brothers, if we look at this series, lakhs of people have made sacrifices. After this statement of Urban Administration Minister Vijayvargiya, there is a possibility of heat in the politics of the state.

# SOLDIER ON LEAVE DIES OF HEART ATTACK WHILE PLAYING CRICKET

**Tikamgarh:** A 35-year-old Army personnel died of a heart attack while playing cricket during his leave in Tikamgarh district of Madhya Pradesh, an official said on Tuesday. The incident occurred on Sunday in Marguva village.

The deceased, identified as Lance Naik Vinod Banskar, died after suffering a heart attack, Dr Yogesh Yadav of district hospital said.

Banskar had gone to play cricket in neighbouring village Birau on Sunday afternoon, where he complained of chest pain, his elder brother Jagdish Banskar said.

His family members then took him to Tikamgarh's district hospital, where he died later that night, he said.

Vinod, who was posted in Saharanpur in neighbouring Uttar Pradesh, was on a leave and scheduled to return in the first week of February, his brother added.

# SUCCESSFUL OPERATION OF OESOPHAGEAL CANCER AT AIMS BHOPAL

Team Absolute | Bhopal

A 62-year-old patient has been suffering from heartburn and upper abdomen discomfort for the last 12 months. He was investigated outside and during upper GI endoscopic examination, diagnosed to have a growth in the mid of the oesophagus. He had taken treatment outside in Bhopal for the same and received chemotherapy as well as radiation. After completion of the treatment, the patient visited surgical oncology OPD at AIMS Bhopal with the similar discomfort. After clinical and radiological examination in AIMS Bhopal it

was found that disease was limited to oesophagus and operable and the decision to proceed with surgery was planned by Dr. Neelesh Shrivastava, Assistant Professor Department of Surgical Oncology AIMS Bhopal for the patient cure. The surgery was challenging in view of old age and especially location of disease in the mid of the chest. Patient was optimized before surgery by lung exercised and protein supplements and after 10 days of optimization he was taken up for surgery. Patient



was kept on one lung ventilation during surgery and successfully operated by the team headed by Dr Neelesh Shrivastava, Dr Sonveer Goutam, Senior Resident and Dr Harish Kumar, Associate Prof Anaesthesia. Surgery was completed in 9 hours. After removal of the oesophagus the continuity of the digestive tract was again maintained by making a pipe by stomach and attached it to remaining oesophagus. Post operatively he was managed well by Dr Sourabh Sehgal, Additional professor in critical care ICU for 3 days. This is to notify you that an

oesophageal tumor is a very common tumor and generally it seems to undiagnosed until it reaches to advance stage. Although it is controllable with chemo radiation followed by surgery. Triple phase esophagectomy for such type cancers is a lengthy surgery and needs special cancer surgery training to deal such cases. In this procedure first the thorax have to open and diseased part of oesophagus have to be removed. Later, abdomen is opened and stomach is modified in a tube shape to mimicking it like an oesophagus and lastly this tube have to pass via thorax to neck where it is joined with remaining oesophagus.

# ACCUSED OF MURDERING WIFE COMMITS SUICIDE IN JAIL

**Indore:** An undertrial prisoner committed suicide in Indore Central Jail. The reason for suicide has not been revealed. The accused was accused of murdering his wife. According to the police of MG Road police station, a prisoner named Anil was serving his sentence in the Central Jail. On Monday, he was found hanging with a sheet in the bathroom of barrack number two. He was taken to the hospital, where doctors declared him dead.

It is reported that the accused was accused of murdering his wife and was in jail. The accused worked as a fruit seller and had murdered his wife by slitting her throat with a big coconut cutting knife. Why Anil committed suicide has not been revealed. But, it is being said that he was a victim of depression and possibly in this situation he took this step.



Los Angeles | Agencies

Singer-actress Selena Gomez has spoken candidly about her body image. The singer recently shared a series of Instagram stories, showing off her body in photos from over the years. The 'Only Murders in the Building' star, 31, first shared a photo from an earlier date, where she's photographed wearing a zebra bikini, reports People magazine.

In the Instagram story, Selena wrote: "Today I realised I will never look like this again".

She followed up the first photo with a more recent bathing suit image. This photo showed Selena in a black, high-waisted bikini bottom with a white tube-top bikini top.

As per People, the second Story caption read, "I'm not perfect, but I am proud to be who I am... Sometimes I forget it's ok to be me".

Her recent posts follow her previous body positivity messages, along with the instances when she's called out body-shamers for sharing unpleasant comments about her body.

People further states that in April 2022, the 'Selena + Chef' star called out body shamers who criticised her appearance.

"Honestly, I don't care about my weight because people bitch about it anyway", she said in her TikTok Stories.

"You're too small,' you're too big,' that doesn't fit.' Meh meh meh meh!."

"B\*\*\*\*, I am perfect the way I am," she added.

"Moral of the story? Bye."

**Selena Gomez reflects on body changes in then & now Instagram posts**

**DAKOTA JOHNSON CLAPS BACK AT CRITICISM OVER HER STATEMENT OF '14 HOURS OF SLEEP'**

Los Angeles | Agencies

Actress Dakota Johnson has told people to "leave her alone" over the idea she sleeps for 14 hours every night. The 34-year-old actress caused a stir last month when she told the Wall Street Journal she could "easily" sleep for such a long amount of time, but now she's insisted she doesn't "demand" it after her comments were misinterpreted, reports 'Female First UK'.

Appearing on 'The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon', she said: "I didn't even say that like that!" When the late night host asked if she "likes to sleep 14 hours," she responded: "No. I said that I could easily sleep 14 hours. But I don't like to demand it. I'm not a monster."

As per 'Female First UK', after Jimmy noted that plenty of outlets picked up the story which sparked a debate on the right amount of sleep, Dakota jokingly argued her case.

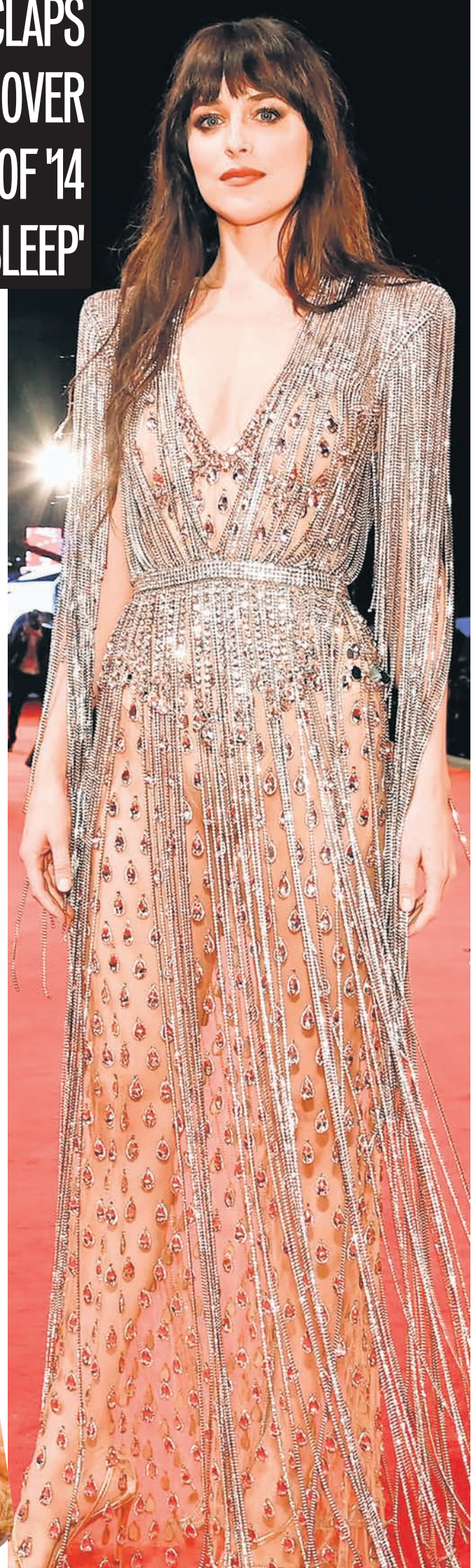
She laughed: "Why is sleep bad? Like, why? Leave me alone. I'm just asleep. I don't have to take anything to sleep like that either, I can just sleep like that. I think if I took like an Ambien, I think I'd wake up next year."

Last month, she told the WSJ that sleep is her "number one priority", while meditation helps her cope with anxiety.

She explained: "I don't have a regular [wake-up] time. It depends on what's happening in my life. If I'm not working, if I have a day off on a Monday, then I will sleep as long as I can. Sleep is my number one priority in life."

Dakota, who is currently promoting upcoming superhero movie 'Madame Web', told the outlet that she needs at least 10 hours of kip a night to function.

She added: "I'm not functional if I get less than 10. I can easily go 14 hours."



Los Angeles | Agencies

Actress Sofia Vergara has shed more light on her divorce from Joe Manganiello. The actress revealed that she and Manganiello, 47, weren't on the same page when it came to expanding their family.

She said the difference ultimately led to their divorce, reports People magazine.

In a new interview with Spanish newspaper El Pais, Sofia, 51, said: "My marriage broke up because my husband was younger; he wanted to have kids and I didn't want to be an old mom. I feel it's not fair to the baby. I respect whoever does it, but that's not for me anymore."

Sofia, who shares son Manolo with ex-husband Joe Gonzalez, continued: "I had a son at 19, who is now 32, and I'm ready to be a grandmother, not a mother. So, if love comes along, he has to come with (his own) children. I'm almost in menopause; it's the natural way of things."

She added, "When my son becomes a dad, let him bring the baby to me for a while and then I'll give it back to him and go on with my life; that's what I have to do." As per People, in July, Sofia and Manganiello, 47, released a joint statement, saying that after seven years of marriage, they made the "difficult decision" to divorce. They wrote, "As two people that love and care for one another very much, we politely ask for respect for our privacy at this time as we navigate this new phase of our lives." Two days later, Manganiello filed for divorce, citing "irreconcilable differences" as the reason for the dissolution of the marriage. He listed the date of separation as July 2.

**SOFIA VERGARA SAYS SHE & JOE MANGANIELLO DIVORCED AFTER DISAGREEMENT ON KIDS**



**Padma Lakshmi dishes on her 'big issue' with 'Top Chef'**

Los Angeles | Agencies

India-born supermodel, TV host, producer, cookbook author and actor Padma Lakshmi served as a host for the show 'Top Chef' from 2006 until 2023, and although she enjoyed the food, said that it was still a "big, big, big issue" for her.

"No, I don't. I mean, the food is great but when you have to eat that much of it, it's really hard. So I'm happy not to have ... that was a big, big issue, yeah," Padma told people.com when asked if she missed eating the food.

She also shared that she'll miss her 'Top Chef' colleagues. The model likened the show's crew to a "family."

She said, "I miss my friends. I miss the whole crew -- they're like family to me."

Last year, Padma outlined her reasons for quitting the show after 17 years.

The runway star -- who also hosts 'Taste the Nation', a travel and food show -- told the 'Awards Circuit' podcast, "I had been on location for eight months out of the year."

"And when I wasn't on location, I was in pre- and post-production for both my shows. And I was looking at edits of one show while on the set of another show. It was just exhausting and untenable for me to continue that way."

Padma also said that her busy schedule was harming her personal life.



Los Angeles | Agencies

Actor Jamie Foxx recently returned to filming 'Back in Action' and will be filming all his parts without stunt doubles.

A source told People, "Jamie is indeed back on set and shooting through February. He looks and feels fantastic."

Jamie is fully committed to the new film, which also features Cameron Diaz. The insider added, "They tried to finish the movie with a stunt double but it didn't come out right so Jamie is going to do all of the parts now. He is doing so well."

Despite his high-profile health struggles, Jamie has always been determined to complete 'Back in Action'.

Another source said: "For Jamie, the show must go on and he has always been eager to

**JAMIE FOXX TO FILM ALL HIS PARTS IN 'BACK IN ACTION' WITHOUT STUNT DOUBLE**

see this project completed. Jamie is super talented and loves his work. He will finish this film."

In April 2023, Jamie's daughter Corinne announced that her dad was suffering from a medical complication.

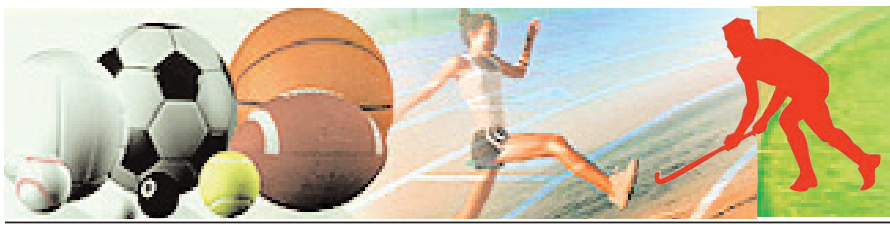
In a statement written on behalf of her family, Corinne explained, "We wanted to share that my father, Jamie Foxx, experienced a medical complication yesterday."

"Luckily, due to quick action and great care, he is already on his way to recovery. We know how beloved he is and appreciate your prayers. The family asks for privacy during this time."

**ABSOLUTE PIC OF THE DAY**



Kim Kardashian



# ROHIT CAPTAIN AS SIX INDIANS FEATURE IN MEN'S ODI TEAM OF THE YEAR

Dubai | Agencies

India skipper Rohit Sharma was named captain with five other Indians making the cut for ICC Men's ODI team of the year released on Tuesday.

Joining Rohit in the ODI team of the year are Shubman Gill, Virat Kohli, Mohammad Siraj, Kuldeep Yadav and Mohammad Shami, with Travis Head (Australia), Daryl Mitchell (New Zealand), Heinrich Klaasen (wk) (South Africa), Marco Jansen (South Africa), Adam Zampa (Australia) also making the cut.

Rohit continued his remarkable record in ODI cricket with yet another sensational year in 2023 with the bat as he amassed a whopping 1255 runs at an average of 52. He was at his brilliant best throughout much of the ICC Men's Cricket World Cup, with his magnificent knock of 131 against Afghanistan in Delhi a clear highlight.

Gill established himself as Rohit's preferred partner at the top of batting

## TEAM OF THE YEAR

- ROHIT SHARMA (C)
- SHUBMAN GILL
- TRAVIS HEAD
- VIRAT KOHLI
- DARYL MITCHELL
- HEINRICH KLAASEN (WK)
- MARCO JANSEN
- ADAM ZAMPA
- MOHAMMED SIRAJ
- KULDEEP YADAV
- MOHAMMAD SHAMI



order at the start of 2023 when he smashed a wonderful 208 from just 149 deliveries against New Zealand in Hyderabad. It was one of five occasions that Gill managed to reach triple figures in 50-over in 2023 and no player finished with more runs (1584) than the star right-hander

compiled during the calendar year. Kohli compiled yet another consistent 12 months in 2023 and only teammate Shubman Gill bettered his total of 1377 runs during the calendar year. Kohli reached three figures on six occasions in 2023, breaking Sachin Tendulkar's record for most

international centuries during India's World Cup campaign on his way to winning the Player of the Tournament award at the showcase event.

The exciting right-arter, Siraj, collected a total of 44 wickets during 2023, with his most impressive performance coming in the final of the Asia Cup as he single-handedly destroyed Sri Lanka's strong batting line-up. He ripped through the Sri Lanka top-order on his way to career-best figures of 6/21 as India clinched the Asia Cup title in style, and entered their home World Cup campaign full of confidence.

No player in the world picked up more wickets than Kuldeep last year, with the in-form left-arm spinner finishing 2023 with an imposing total of 49 ODI scalps.

Kuldeep's biggest haul came against arch-rival Pakistan during the Super Four stage of the Asia Cup as the spinner collected the excellent figures of 5/25 to help India on their path to the title.

# Ashwin, Jadeja named in ICC Test Team of the Year

Dubai | Agencies

Two Indian spinners Ravichandran Ashwin and Ravindra Jadeja have been named in the ICC Men's Team of the Year led by Australia skipper Pat Cummins released on Tuesday.

Ashwin and Jadeja joined Usman Khawaja (Australia), Dimuth Karunaratne (Sri Lanka), Kane Williamson (New Zealand), Joe Root (England), Travis Head (Australia), Ravindra Jadeja (India), Alex Carey (wk) (Australia), Mitchell Starc (Australia), Stuart Broad (England) in the Test Team of the Year.

Ashwin was the leading wicket-taker for India in the Border-Gavaskar series, finishing with 25 wickets in four matches. In the very first Test, Ashwin bagged a five-for in the second innings to go with handy contributions with the bat in each innings.

His all-round showing fetched him the Player of the Series. Despite the stellar showing, Ashwin did not find a place in India's XI for the WTC23 Final against the same opponent but made a mark on his comeback into the Test team with 12 wickets (5/60 and 7/71) in the first game against West Indies followed by fifty and three wickets in the next game.



On the other hand, Jadeja kicked off 2023 in spectacular fashion, delivering a standout performance against Australia in Nagpur with a five-wicket haul and a half-century. He followed up with an even more impressive showing in the next game, securing a 10-wicket match haul, including a seven-for in the second innings, instrumental in India retaining the trophy. Continuing his fine form, he claimed five more wickets in the series and carried the momentum into the World Test Championship Final against Australia, where he contributed with four wickets and a valuable 48 with the bat, despite India ultimately facing defeat.

# Australian Open: Jannik Sinner qualifies for top-four

Melbourne | Agencies

Jannik Sinner on Tuesday secured a spot in the semi-finals of the Australian Open by defeating Andrey Rublev in straight sets, 6-4, 7-6(5), 6-3, here at the Rod Laver Arena.

The Italian rising star has now advanced to the final four without dropping a set in the tournament. Sinner's victory was particularly highlighted by his resilience in the second-set tiebreak. Trailing 1-5, he mounted an impressive comeback, winning six consecutive points to claim the tiebreak 7-5. This pivotal moment proved crucial in preventing Rublev from leveling the contest and showcased Sinner's mental fortitude on the big stage.

The 20-year-old Italian will now face the formidable challenge of Novak Djokovic in



the semifinals. Djokovic, the top seed and 10-time champion, endured a tough battle earlier in the day against Taylor Fritz, eventually securing a four-set victory to reach his 11th Australian Open semifinal.

For Andrey Rublev, it marks another missed opportunity in his quest to reach the last four at a Grand Slam event. The 26-year-old Russian has now faced defeat in all 10 of his Grand Slam quarterfinal appearances.

# KIYG 2023: Muskan Rana stops Maharashtra's clean sweep in Rhythmic gymnastics for J&K's first gold

Chennai | Agencies

Jammu and Kashmir's Muskan Rana put the brakes on Maharashtra's dominance in Rhythmic gymnastics competition of the 6th Khelo India Youth Games 2023, Tamil Nadu, by clinching the gold medal in individual Clubs category at the SDAT Aquatic Complex, here on Tuesday.

Muskan finished on top with a total of 24.05 points to clinch Jammu and Kashmir's first gold medal of the Games with Maharashtra's Parina Madanpotra (22.95) and Haryana's Life Adlakha (22.80) bagging the silver and bronze medals respectively.

The 15-year-old trainee of Gymnastic Centre of J&K Sports Council had earlier won silver medals in Rhythmic All-round and Individual Ball category and a bronze medal in Individual Hoop.

Maharashtra's Sanyukta Kale, who had won the All-Round gold on Monday, added two more gold medals to her tally in Ball and Ribbon category while her state-mate Kimaya



Karle clinched the Hoop gold to take their state to the top of medals tally for the first time in this edition of the Khelo India Youth Games.

The defending champions also added another gold and silver in Yogasana with the duo of Pranav Sahu and Yash Lagad winning the

Boys Artistic Pair event with a score of 133.23 points while Aryan Kharat and Tanmay Mhalaskar (132.42 pts) finishing second. Tamil Nadu's B Monisha Mahendran and S Kabilan (131.98) bagged the bronze.

Last night table toppers, Tamil Nadu added seventh gold to their tally when Dhanyadha J.P won the Girls Individual Pursuit at the TNPE-SU velodrome with a timing of 2:52.333s. Shiya Lalwani of Maharashtra (2:54.530s) and Gargi Bishnoi of Rajasthan (2:56.396s) took the silver and bronze medals respectively.

Rajasthan also opened their gold medal account with Kheta Ram Chingra winning the boy's Individual Pursuit with a timing of 3:50.494. Bihar's Prahalad Kumar (3:51.953) clinched the silver medal while the bronze went to Aashirwad Saxena (3:47.502) of Telangana.

In the shooting event being held at the Guru Nanak College, Haryana's Samrat Rana and Suruchi defeated Rajasthan's Prachi and Yogesh Kumar 16-6 to clinch the 10m Air Pistol

# Golf: Amateur Dunlap grabs historic PGA Tour title at The American Express

California | Agencies

The American Express tournament was sensationally won by 20-year-old Nick Dunlap, who became the first amateur since 1991 to win a PGA TOUR tournament as he ground out a 70 to edge South Africa's Christiaan Bezuidenhout by a single stroke with his 29-under winning total.

Chinese Taipei's Kevin Yu flirted with a maiden PGA Tour victory with a scintillating final round of 9-under 63 before settling a career-equaling best finish of tied third at The US\$8.4 American Express.

Dunlap, the reigning U.S. Amateur champion who was competing on a sponsor's exemption, produced a gutsy up-and-down par save on the last for an historic victory over a stellar field which featured 21 players in the top 50 in the Official World Golf Ranking, including World No. 1 Scottie Scheffler.

He also became the youngest winner at the age of 20 years and 29 days on TOUR since 1910.

"It's everything that I dreamed of and just to have a chance on the last hole to win a PGA TOUR event is really special. I was so nervous (on the last hole). It's a really cool spot to be in as an amateur, and just to be here and be given the opportunity to play,



and I don't ever want to forget today," said Dunlap, who is in his sophomore year in University of Alabama.

With a two-year exemption on offer to all PGA Tour winners plus guaranteed starts in all the

Signature events and THE PLAYERS Championship, Dunlap will take his time to determine if he is to join the play-for-pay ranks soon. "That's something it doesn't just affect me, it affects a lot of people, coach back there and my teammates, and it's a conversation I need to have with a lot of people before I make that decision," he said.

The 25-year-old Yu, a former world amateur No. 1, was near flawless at PGA West Stadium Course with 10 birdies against a closing bogey which ultimately dashed his hopes of a career breakthrough.

Japanese rookie Ryo Hisatsune, who earned his playing rights on the PGA Tour through the DP World Tour Top 10 last season, continued his strong start to 2024 by finishing T11 on 23-under, while Korean trio Sungjae Im, K.H. Lee and 2021 American Express winner Si Woo Kim shared 25th place on 19-under. After missing four months of action early last year with a knee surgery, the talented Yu displayed his immense potential once more by soaring into contention with an outward 30. He made four more birdies through 16 to jostle for the lead but a costly bogey on 18 after he found the fairway bunker eventually saw him finish two back.

# KIYG: Pooja Arthi R, Tavneet Singh emerge champions in Squash

Chennai | Agencies

Tamil Nadu's R Pooja Arthi and Tavneet Singh Mundra (MP) emerged as the girls' and boys' individual champions respectively in the Khelo India Youth Games squash here on Tuesday.

Squash made its debut in the ongoing sixth edition of the national-level KIYG, and hosts Tamil Nadu underlined their dominance by powering into the final of both the boys' and girls' team events after securing five out of eight medals (one gold & four bronze) in the individual category.

In the girls' singles final, top seed Pooja edged out Maharashtra second seed Nirupama Dubey 11-6, 7-11, 11-8, 9-11, 11-6 in a thriller at the Indian Squash & Triathlon Academy.

Runner-up at last year's National Games, Pooja won the opening game with ease, before Nirupama levelled with some deft drops and volleys. Pooja improved her width to move her opponent and win the third game, but was undone by a string of unforced errors in the fourth.

The Tamil Nadu lass, however, had to fight



back from 1-5 in the decider to emerge as the inaugural champion.

In the boys' singles final, top seed Tavneet rallied to beat second seed Aryan Pratap Singh (UP) 5-11, 8-11, 11-1, 13-11, 11-4 in a nail-biting title round after saving two match points in the fourth game.

In the team competition, Tamil Nadu will take on Uttar Pradesh in the boys' final and lock horns with Maharashtra for the girls' crown on Wednesday.

# WPL: Mumbai Indians to face Delhi Capitals in the season opener on February 23

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The 2024 edition of the Women's Premier League (WPL) is set to kick off on February 23, with defending champions Mumbai Indians facing off against 2023 runners-up Delhi Capitals at the M Chinnaswamy Stadium in Bengaluru.

The tournament will feature five teams and a total of 22 matches, culminating in the final on March 17. Unlike the 2023 season, which took place only in Mumbai and Navimumbai, the 2024 WPL will be hosted across two venues: Bengaluru and Delhi.

The first half of the tournament, comprising the initial 11 matches, will be held in Bengaluru. The Arun Jaitley Stadium in Delhi will host the final 11 games, including the knockout matches. The schedule includes one league-stage game every day from February 23 to March 13, with no double-header days. The Eliminator is set for March 15, followed by the final on March 17 in Delhi.

The opening match will witness Royal Challengers Bangalore facing UP Warriorz



on February 24. Gujarat Giants will play their first game against Mumbai on February 25. The Delhi leg of the tournament begins on March 5 with Delhi Capitals taking on Mumbai in the return fixture.

The 2024 WPL auction, held in December 2023, saw significant bids for players like Australia's Annabel Sutherland (Capitals) and India uncapped Kaashvee Gautam (Giants), each earning INR 2 crore. Uncapped Indian player Vrinda Dinesh was picked up for INR 1.3 crore by Warriorz, while Mumbai spent INR 1.2 crore on South African fast bowler Shabnim Ismail. Phoebe Litchfield also secured a significant contract, being picked up by Giants for INR 1 crore.

# Australian Open: Aryna Sabalenka marches to semis

Melbourne | Agencies

Defending champion Aryna Sabalenka on Tuesday showcased her relentless power and precision to secure a spot in the semi-finals of the Australian Open 2024 with a decisive 6-2, 6-3 victory over Barbora Krejickova, here at the Rod Laver Arena.

Sabalenka's performance was nothing short of clinical, as she unleashed 20 winners while committing just 13 unforced errors. The Belarusian powerhouse continued her dominant run in the tournament, reaching the last four by conceding a mere 16 games throughout her journey.

The ninth-seeded Krejickova, a former Roland-Garros champion, found herself unable to disrupt the rhythm of the second-seeded Sabalenka, who exhibited an unyielding presence on the court. Despite Krejickova's attempts to vary the pace and mix up her game, Sabalenka's relentless power proved too much to handle.



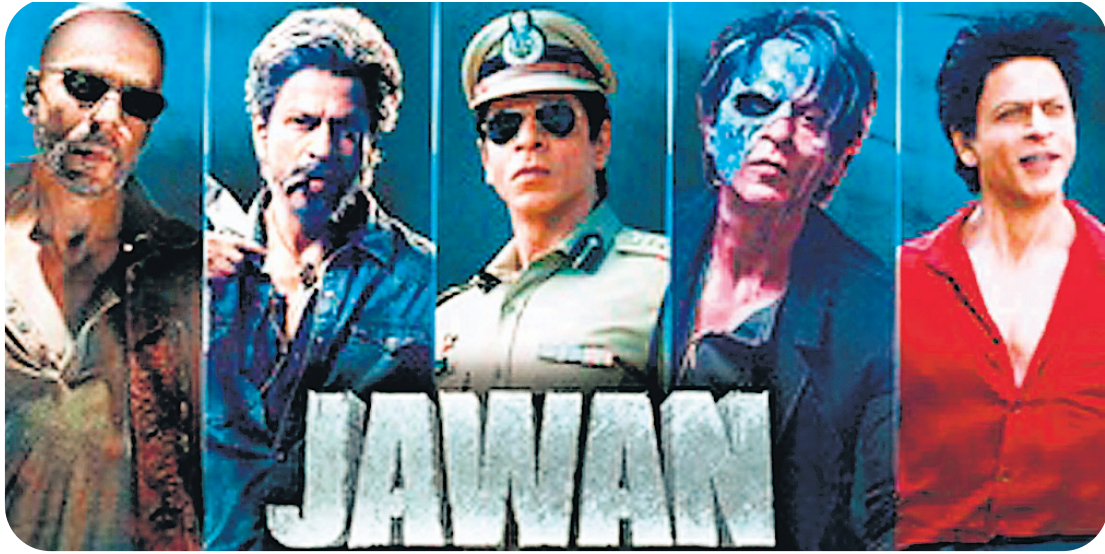
The Czech player won only 20 percent of points on her second serve, constantly under pressure from Sabalenka's authoritative returns and

accurate groundstrokes. The first break came in the third game, highlighted by a brilliant backhand return followed by a powerful

forehand from Sabalenka. Even with a brief comeback from Krejickova, Sabalenka maintained her composure and swiftly regained control. Sabalenka's variety was on display with a stunning drop shot in the fifth game, securing a 4-1 lead.

While Krejickova managed to break back, Sabalenka responded immediately, showcasing her resilience. Sabalenka's groundstrokes were delivered with such intensity that Krejickova found herself consistently stretched behind the baseline, desperately attempting to return the ball in a defensive manner.

The first set concluded in just 33 minutes, with Sabalenka holding to love. The second set followed a similar pattern, as Sabalenka broke for a 2-1 lead after Krejickova held serve. Despite a brief interruption for low-flying pigeons, Sabalenka maintained control, extending her lead to 4-1. Although Krejickova managed to claw back one break, Sabalenka's dominance was evident as she swiftly closed out the match.



## SRK shares mantra to stay 'Jawan' at heart

Team Absolute | Mumbai

**B**ollywood superstar Shah Rukh Khan has shared the mantra to remain 'Jawan' at heart and in life, and it is to be pure at heart, and not to have cynicism towards people or things that you are doing.

SRK's action packed pan-India film 'Jawan' has enthralled audiences across the globe with its gripping plot, brilliantly choreographed action sequences, masaledaar dialogues and enticing acting prowess.

The flick stars Shah Rukh in a dual role as Vikram and Azad Rathore, alongside Nayanthara, Vijay Sethupathi, Deepika Padukone (billed as a special appearance), Priyamani and Sanya Malhotra.

Opening up on the mantra to remain 'Jawan' at heart and in life, the 'Pathaan' actor said: "The only way to be Jawan at heart, happy at heart is to be pure at heart. The only way to do that is not to have cynicism towards people or things that you're doing."

"Have the nicest and highest regards for people that surround you, love your family and friends and just be kind hearted. I think it takes very little to remain young at heart," he said.

Talking about the genre of 'Jawan', which is directed by Atlee, SRK said: "There's a genre of filmmaking that exists-- a genre that's dynamic, larger, bigger than life. It's a rollercoaster ride of everything packed in one film

and it really is a fun, worthwhile trip."

"Jawan will make you think, will make you fall in love, make you angry, make you laugh and cry but it will be a journey worth experiencing with your family."

The film features SRK in different looks. Speaking of the same, the 'Don 2' actor said: "Adding so many different variations was a unique addition which we thought would create intrigue. The narrative warranted for us to experiment with looks, also a first for me, and an exciting part of the film."

He shared: "Each look was central to carrying the storyline forward. And honestly, we chose the bald look because I was too lazy to sit through hair and makeup for two hours."

On collaborating with Atlee, SRK said it was not just about executing a script, but it was a mutual exploration of characters, narratives, and storytelling.

"Atlee's clarity of vision and his ability to communicate is truly commendable. I really appreciate his directorial style. He's massy, bold, larger than life-- he's Atlee," SRK added.

The Red Chillies Entertainment presentation, directed by Atlee, produced by Gauri Khan and Co-produced by Gaurav Verma, the movie had a theatrical release on September 7, 2023.

The film has reportedly collected over Rs 1160 crore worldwide.

It will premiere on Zee Cinema on January 28.

## ANANYA PANDAY WALKS RAMP AT PARIS FASHION WEEK IN GIANT SIEVE



Team Absolute | Mumbai

**A**ctress Ananya Panday, who has been receiving a lot of positive response to her work in the recently released streaming film 'Kho Gaye Hum Kahan', walked the ramp at the ongoing Paris Fashion Week.

The actress turned showstopper for designer Rahul Mishra at the Paris Haute Couture Week 2024.

She became the youngest Bollywood actor to walk the ramp. However, it was her attire that left people talking on the internet.

Ananya wore a butterfly-inspired black mini dress. She also carried a giant sieve decorated with butterfly motifs. The sieve was seemingly attached to the dress underneath. She rounded up her look with a sleek hair bun and black high heels.

The actress took to her Instagram stories and posted a video from the show.

Ananya wrote in the caption, "Walking for @rahulmishra\_7 at Paris Couture week".

Rahul's collection is titled 'Superheroes' and is inspired by insects and snakes.

The Internet had a field day reacting to the outfit sported by the actress on the ramp. One user wrote in the comment section, "Ananya in Paris couture week so proud of her".

Another commented, "Fashion inspired from Urfi". A third user wrote, "As a model, she is fantastic".

Another user wrote, "Is this a new Uorfi?" Meanwhile, on the work front, the actress will be next seen in a cyber-thriller tentatively titled 'Control', directed by Vikramaditya Motwane. She also has 'Call My Bae' and Akshay Kumar-starrer 'Shankara' in the pipeline.



## Hansika Motwani

### Doing a single shot film is very difficult

Team Absolute | Mumbai

**A**ctress Hansika Motwani, who will be soon seen in a one-shot Telugu film '105 Minutes' has opened up on working in such a unique cinematic narrative, saying she loves challenges and wanted to do something different.

The entire movie unfolds seamlessly in a single, uninterrupted shot, pushing the boundaries of filmmaking.

Hansika, who is known for her work in 'Koi... Mil Gaya' takes on the challenge of a one-shot film, revealing her versatility and superb acting abilities.

This experimental film takes place in real time, drawing viewers into a suspenseful horror story that lasts for 105 minutes without a single cut.

Talking about the same, Hansika said: "I have never done something like that, like a single shot. We do have a few here and there, stitches in the film. Um, but yes, the longest takes. The whole idea of, you know, doing a single shot film?"

"It's very difficult because there's literally one side, there is wind, then another side there is fire, and the other side there's rain and there's so much to coordinate, but I love challenges and I wanted to do something different, so I did it," she added.

Meanwhile, on the work front she was last seen in Telugu thriller film 'My Name Is Shruthi'.

She also has 'Rowdy Baby', 'Guardian', 'Man', and web series 'Nasha' in the pipeline.

## SAIF REVEALS THE ADVICE RANI MUKERJI GAVE HIM ON DATING KAREENA KAPOOR

Team Absolute | Mumbai

**A**ctor Saif Ali Khan has spoken about one piece of advice that Rani Mukerji gave him when she got to know about him dating Kareena Kapoor Khan.

Saif and Kareena were asked about their love life in the final episode of 'Now Bingeing' by Tata Play Binge.

Saif said: "Rani is really amazing, I enjoy being friends with her now, more than ever before. But she said this thing, we were shooting I remember, and she was away from the love of her life and she was like 'Lets just shoot non-stop really fast and finish this and let's not take a day off' and she also told me 'Oh you're going out with Kareena I'm so happy.'"

"I'll give you some advice, just think of it as two heroes in the house. I kind of got what she meant, but now more than ever I go back to that advice sometimes. Because it is, it's two people who are equal, who are contributing to the sanity and the sanctity of the home." He added: "When one is working the other one is doing that with the children."

Continuing on the same thought, he said: "But I understand it, it was really good advice, it was brilliant advice and it's a complicated thing what she was saying because she was talking about gender, roles and whether you feel -- 'is it okay for my wife to be out of the house working so much while I'm doing this'." "And what she meant was of course it is! Just give her the respect of equality, is what she was talking about." In the episode, Saif and Kareena got candid and spill the tea about their relationship, choosing off beat projects, working life as parents, the media's interest in their children, some advice from co-stars and their bingeing habits!



## Boman Irani to receive a special honour from British Parliament

Team Absolute | Mumbai

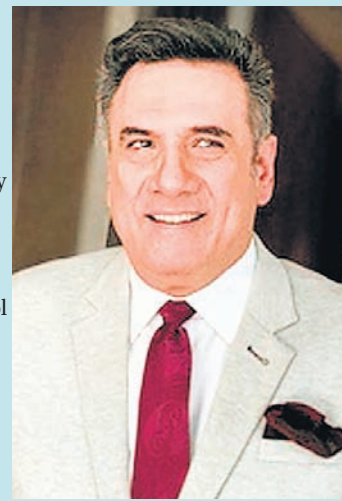
**A**ctor Boman Irani, who is known for 'Munna Bhai' franchise, '3 Idiots', 'Khosla Ka Ghosla', and others, will be conferred with a special honour by the British Parliament for his contributions to Indian cinema.

The actor has also been invited as a featured speaker at Oxford University and The London School of Economics. Boman will be travelling to London on January 24 with his family for the events. On January 25, he will deliver speeches at the aforementioned venues.

With this memorable achievement, Boman has now joined the ranks of esteemed speakers at Oxford, following in the footsteps of Shah Rukh Khan and Shashi Tharoor. Boman expressed his gratitude for the opportunity and honour, as he said: "It's truly humbling to represent India on such esteemed global platforms and receive this recognition. Especially as my family will be present with me to witness this gratifying moment."

He added, "I look forward to sharing my life experiences and the wisdom gained throughout my two-decade career with other bright minds there. Taking a piece of India with me, I'm truly grateful for this opportunity." Boman was recently seen in the Shah Rukh Khan-starrer 'Dunki' which released last month.

The film touches upon the subject of illegal immigration. The two have earlier worked in films like 'Main Hoon Na' and 'Happy New Year'.



Aahna Kumra