

# absolute india



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## NO NEW ZOO OR SAFARI ON FOREST LAND WITHOUT OUR APPROVAL: SUPREME COURT

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Any fresh proposal for opening a zoo or starting a 'safari' on forest land will now require the approval of the Supreme Court, which on Monday issued a slew of directions for forest conservation across the country.

The top court took note of the submission that the definition of forest under the 2023 amended law on conservation leaves out nearly 1.99 lakh sq km of forest land from the ambit of 'forest' which can be used for other purposes.

Dealing with a batch of petitions challenging the amendments to the forest conservation law of 2023, a bench comprising Chief Justice D Y Chandrachud and justices JB Pardiwala and Manoj Misra directed the state governments and union territories to provide the details of the forest land within their jurisdiction to the Centre by March 31 this year.

The top court said the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change will put all the details on "forest-like area, unclassified forest land and community forest land", to be provided by the states and UTs, on its website by April 15.

"No Zoos/Safaris to be notified in forests lands without prior approval...any proposal for the establishment of

zoo/safaris referred to in the Wildlife Protection Act 1972 owned by Govt or any authority in forest areas other than protected areas shall not be finally approved save and except with the prior permission of this court," it said.

In its interim order, the bench asked the states and UTs to act as per the definition of "forest" as laid down by the top court in the 1996 judgment in the case of TN Godavarma Thirumulpad vs Union of India.

It noted that the process of identifying land recorded as forests in government records is going on as per the amended law.

The petitioners have alleged that the wide definition of "forest" in the Supreme Court judgement has been narrowed under Section 1A inserted in the amended law. As per the amended law, land has to be either notified as a forest or specifically recorded as a forest in a government record to qualify as a "forest".

Additional Solicitor General Aishwarya Bhati, appearing for the Centre, said the amendments were passed in furtherance of the Supreme Court's directions in the judgement.

On March 27, 2023, the Centre introduced the Forest (Conservation) Amendment Bill.

The pleas challenge the constitutionality of the amend- ed law and want it struck down as null and void.



## WONDERFUL MOMENT OF CULTURAL RENAISSANCE

PM MODI AT KALKI DHAM FOUNDATION STONE LAYING FUNCTION

Team Absolute | Sambhal (UP)

Prime Minister Narendra Modi while laying the foundation stone of the Kalki Dham in Sambhal on Monday, said that what was once "beyond imagination, has now become reality."

He said, "This is a wonderful moment of cultural Renaissance where we have witnessed the grand opening of the Ram temple in Ayodhya, another temple in Abu Dhabi, renovation of the Kashi Vishwanath temple and the transformation of Kashi.

"Centres of pilgrimage are being built and alongside medical colleges are also being constructed," he said.

He added that this was a moment of India's cultural awakening and also its development.

"January 22 when the Ram temple opened, is the beginning of a new era, new cycle. The Kalki temple is a preparation for the future. It is a temple for Kalki avatar and will have a



sanctum sanctorum for all the ten avatars of Lord Vishnu," he said.

The Prime Minister said that the country was now leading and not following. "We are now the fifth-largest

economy in the world. We have Vande Bharat and soon we will have a bullet train along with hi-tech expressways. This is a land of immense possibilities that draws its

energy from collectivity," he said.

Modi said that the Kalki Dham was yet another stream of devotion and spirituality that is eager to flow from the land of Ram and Krishna.

"Some people left a few good deeds for me to accomplish and I am confident that there are many that will be accomplished in future too," Modi said. The Prime Minister congratulated Acharya Pramod Krishnam for taking the concept of Kalki Dham forward. He said that Pramod Krishnam had to fight a long battle with the previous governments for the Kalki temple and even had to make rounds of the courts. "His fight has ended in our government," he added.

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, while addressing the gathering, said that after the opening of the Ram temple in Ayodhya, the construction of a Hindu temple in a Muslim country was a dream come true! "A similar moment is being witnessed in Sambhal today. The world has hope from a New India," he said.

## SC to review Chandigarh mayoral poll records amid allegations of horse-trading

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Supreme Court on Monday said that it would examine the ballot papers of the Chandigarh mayoral polls and the entire video recording of counting day on Tuesday, citing concerns about potential horse-trading.

The apex court was slated to hear the explanation of Returning Officer Anil Masih who had allegedly "defaced the ballots" in the Chandigarh mayoral polls.

The plea filed by INDIA bloc's mayoral candidate Kuldeep Kumar accuses the Presiding Officer of resorting to fraud and forgery in the counting process.

The court directed the Registrar General of the Punjab and Haryana High Court to assign a Judicial Officer to safely transport the records to Delhi.

Chief Justice of India, DY Chandrachud stressed the urgency of the matter and declined a plea to postpone the hearing, citing ongoing horse-trading concerns.

Masih, appearing before the Bench, admitted to marking eight already defaced ballot papers with



an "X" and accused AAP Councillors of creating disturbances during the process.

He stated that he had to monitor the situation via CCTV due to the disruptions caused by the AAP Councillors.

The top court had summoned the official in question to remain present before it on Monday to explain his conduct. "During the course of the hearing, the video has been played in court. The Returning Officer shall remain present before this court on the next date of list-

ing to explain his conduct as it appears in the video," said the Supreme Court in an order passed on February 5.

After perusal of the CCTV footage given in the pen drive by senior advocate Abhishek Manu Singhvi, representing the AAP

Councillor, CJI Chandrachud had orally observed: "This is a mockery of democracy. He is murdering democracy. Is this the behaviour of a Returning Officer, who looks at the camera and defaces the ballot? It is obvious that he defaced the ballots. This man has to be prosecuted."

## BSE market cap hits record high of \$ 4.7 trillion

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The BSE market cap touching a record high of around \$4.7 trillion reflects the strength of the ongoing bull run and the momentum in the market, said V.K. Vijayakumar, Chief Investment Strategist at Geojit Financial Services.

The fact that the crucial Buffet Ratio (market cap to GDP) is signalling very high valuation at above 120 per cent is a matter of concern. But this is unlikely to halt the bull run in the near-term since flows into the market from domestic individual investors and DIIs continue



to be strong, he added. Siddhartha Khemka, Head of Retail Research at Motilal Oswal Financial Services, said domestic equities attained new highs with Nifty touching fresh levels of 22,186.65 levels before closing with gains of 81 points at 22,122.

The midcap and smallcap indices surged in line with the benchmark.

## Maratha quotas Stage set for Maha Legislature Special Session on Feb 20

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The state government has convened a one-day Special Session of Maharashtra Legislature on Tuesday (February 20) which could be game-changer for the long-pending issue of giving reservation to the Maratha community, officials said here on Monday.

The MahaYuti government Chief Minister Eknath Shinde, Deputy CMs Devendra Fadnis and Ajit Pawar have assured several times in the past -- and reiterated on Monday in Pune -- that they are committed to give quotas to the Marathas without affecting the reservation of the Other Backward Classes (OBCs). The Special Session of Legislature comes barely three days after the Maharashtra State Backward Class



Commission (MSBCC) Chairman, retired Justice Sunil Shukre submitted its comprehensive report ascertaining the backwardness of the Marathas, the CM on Friday (February 16).

Shinde will table the report -- which surveyed the social, economic and educational backwardness of the Marathas -- before the state cabinet, and then it will be debated in the Legislature.

The big challenge for the government is to fulfil its promises - of giving the

Maratha quotas without disturbing the existing OBCs reservation -- making it a tricky proposition, political sources said.

Shirva Sanghata leader Manoj Jarange-Patil, who is on the 10th day of his indefinite hunger strike, said today (Monday) that what the community desires is "actual quotas and not just empty assurances" including the demand of 'Sage-Soyare' (family bloodline). "Tomorrow is the last day of the ultimatum... we shall see the outcome in the Special Session of Legislature before deciding our next course of action," warned Jarange-Patil at his native village, Antaravali-Sarati in Jalna district. The MSBCC's latest survey covered over 2.25 crore families, making it the biggest exercise of its kind anywhere in the country, and involved between three-four lakh officials toiling across the state.

## Another farmer dies in protest in Punjab

Chandigarh | Agencies

One of the farmers who was protesting in front of the house of former Punjab chief minister Amarinder Singh in Patiala has died of a suspected heart attack on Monday.

The farmer, identified as Narinderpal Singh (43), was from Patiala district. This is the third such death during the ongoing farmers' protests over their demands, among others, for a legal guarantee of the minimum support price (MSP) of their crops.

The first death was reported from the Shambhu border,



while another from the Khanauri border, both located on the Punjab-Haryana border. Narinderpal Singh reached the 'dharna' site with his colleagues on February 17. On Sunday night, when his health deteriorated, he asked his fellow farmers to take him back to the village.

## KAMAL NATH WILL PARTICIPATE IN RAHUL GANDHI'S YATRA: CONGRESS LEADER

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Congress on Monday dismissed as "misinformation" the speculation over party leader Kamal Nath's possible switch to the BJP and asserted that the former Madhya Pradesh chief minister will participate in the Rahul Gandhi-led Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra in the state.

The assertion by Congress general secretary in charge of Madhya Pradesh Jitendra Singh came amid speculation that Kamal Nath and his son Nakul Nath, a Lok Sabha MP, may cross over to the ruling BJP. "Kamal Nath ji is a senior leader of our party. All these speculations have been made by the



BJP and the media. I spoke to him yesterday and the day before yesterday also and we discussed the preparations of the Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra," Singh told reporters at the Congress head-

quarters here. "I am going to Bhopal tomorrow and meetings are taking place with MLAs, various committees and MPs. Kamal Nath ji will also join those meetings and his suggestions for the yatra's passage will be taken note of. Kamal Nath will prominently participate in the Yatra in Madhya Pradesh," the Congress general secretary said. Pressed further about the speculation that Nath and his son may cross over to the BJP, Singh reiterated that "all this is speculation" and alleged that the BJP always attempts to "spread wrong news and misinformation". He said Kamal Nath will "100 per cent" participate in the Nyay Yatra when it enters the state later this month.

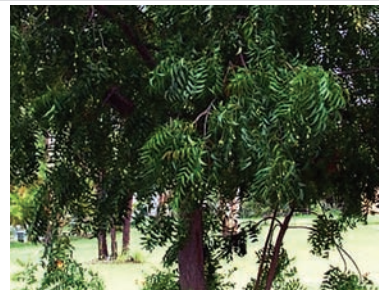
## Agro experts see Neem as a forestry plantation option for India

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The two-day Neem Summit & Global Neem Trade Fair that started here on Monday has identified neem as a plantation forestry option which would sustain the raw material requirements of industry.

Experts are of the view that growing neem trees in the country becomes vital and calls for a national level mission as the Modi government is according high priority to promoting neem coated urea and neem-based health products.

The neem summit has been organised in collaboration with ICAR-Central



Agroforestry Research Institute, Jhansi.

AS many as 22 companies are participating in the trade fair from India and abroad who showcased their products. The seminar is being attended by

nearly 250 participants, including 10 from overseas. The theme of the seminar is Neem for sustainable Agriculture, health and Environment. The participants highlighted the importance of Neem in human wellbeing. The two-day program has about 7 technical sessions to deliberate on various technical matters pertaining to neem research and development for society and industry.

The Souvenir, WNO Calendar and Technical Bulletin titled "Neem Field Gene Bank - Provisioning Opportunities for Conservation and Utilization" were released followed by WNO Documentary launch.



# SAMAJWADI PARTY ANNOUNCES 11 MORE CANDIDATES FOR LS POLLS, INCLUDES SEATS SOUGHT BY CONG

Lucknow | Agencies

The Samajwadi Party (SP) has announced its second list of candidates for the upcoming Lok Sabha polls for 11 seats in Uttar Pradesh.

The list includes seats like Bahraich, Gonda, Shahjahanpur, Pratapgarh which the Congress had been demanding -- a clear indication that SP is now in no mood to wait further for seat-sharing talks, political observers believe.

In a significant development, the SP has fielded Afzal Ansari, brother of Mukhtar Ansari from Ghazipur.

The party has named Harendra Malik from Muzaffarnagar; Neeraj Maurya from Aonla; Rajesh Kashyap from Shahjahanpur; Usha Varma from Hardoi; Rampal Rajvanshi from Mirrikh; RK Chaudhary from Mohanlalganj; SP Singh Patel from Pratapgarh, Ramesh Gautam from Bahraich; Shreya Varma from Gonda, and Virendra Singh from Chandauli.

Akhilesh Yadav has said that he will not join Rahul Gandhi's Bharat



Jodo Nyay Yatra in Uttar Pradesh unless seat-sharing between the SP and Congress is finalised.

Talking to reporters on the sidelines of a function, he said, "We have had several rounds of discussions, exchanged many lists.

"When the seat-sharing is done,

Samajwadi Party will participate in their Nyay yatra."

Replying to a question on Swami Prasad Maurya's tirade against the party, Akhilesh said, "People come for benefits and then go away.

"How does one know what is going on in their minds?"

## SWAMI PRASAD MAURYA MAY FORM HIS OWN PARTY

Lucknow: Senior Samajwadi Party (SP) leader Swami Prasad Maurya has lashed out at SP president Akhilesh Yadav, saying he will return whatever the latter had given him.

Amid speculation about the formation of a new party, Maurya, who has resigned from the post of General Secretary of the Samajwadi Party (SP), said that the "SP government, neither in the Centre nor in the state, is in no position to give anything to anyone".

He was referring to Akhilesh Yadav's statement earlier in the day in which the latter said: "People come for benefits and then go away. How does one know what is going on in their minds?" Maurya said: "I respect whatever they have given, and I will return it with respect. The position does not matter to me, congratulations to Akhilesh Yadav for what he said."

# Centre hikes financial package for rubber sector by 23% to Rs 708 crore

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The financial assistance for the Rubber sector under the 'Sustainable & Inclusive Development of Natural Rubber Sector' scheme has been increased by 23 per cent from Rs 576.41 crore to Rs 708.69 crore for the next two financial years (2024-25 and 2025-26), the Commerce and Industry Ministry said on Monday.

It said that to support the rubber industry, planting of rubber will be undertaken in 12,000 hectares (ha) in traditional areas during 2024-25 and 2025-26 with an outlay of Rs 43.50 crore.

"For this, the rate of assistance has been increased to Rs 40,000 per ha from the earlier Rs 25,000 per ha. This will help to cover the increased cost of production as well as provide additional incentive to growers for



planting rubber," the ministry said. The ministry said that another 3,752 ha will be brought under rubber cultivation in non-traditional regions with an outlay of Rs 18.76 crore during the same period.

"Planting materials worth Rs 50,000 per ha will be sup-

plied by the Rubber Board. This will be over and above the plantation being carried out under the INROAD project in the North East. Planting assistance at Rs 2,00,000 per ha will be provided for SC growers in non-traditional regions," the ministry said.

## Calcutta HC allows LoP to visit Sandeshkhali areas where Sec 144 has been withdrawn

Kolkata | Agencies

A single-judge Bench of the Calcutta High Court, on Monday, allowed the Leader of Opposition (LoP) in West Bengal Assembly, Stuvendu Adhikari, to visit those places in Sandeshkhali where Section 144 has been withdrawn. Following the court order, Adhikari plans to reach the area on Tuesday.

Initially, though the district administration imposed Section 144 in 19 village panchayats, at a later stage the prohibitory orders were withdrawn from four.

As per the order of the single-judge Bench of Justice Kausik Chanda, the LoP will have no restriction in visiting those areas in Sandeshkhali where there are no prohibitory orders in place.

Earlier, the LoP was stopped twice from approaching Sandeshkhali when he tried to go there with a team of BJP MLAs. Both times he was stopped at quite a distance from the entry point.

Thereafter, Adhikari approached the Calcutta High Court seeking permission to visit the troubled zone.

The counsel of the state government said since Adhikari was not a resident of Sandeshkhali there was no reason for him to go there till the situation was totally normalised.

The state government's counsel also said that there were inputs from the West Bengal intelligence agencies on what could happen at Sandeshkhali if the LoP reaches there.

# SUPREME COURT ALLOWS SHARAD PAWAR FACTION TO USE THIS NAME TILL NEW ORDERS

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Supreme Court on Monday directed that Election Commission's order of February 7 allotting 'Nationalist Congress Party-Sharadchandra Pawar' as the party name for the Sharad Pawar faction will continue till further orders.

A bench of Justices Surya Kant and K V Viswanathan sought response of Ajit Pawar-led faction on a plea of Sharad Pawar against the February 6 order of Election Commission recognising the Maharashtra deputy chief minister-led group as the real Nationalist Congress Party (NCP).

"We would like to examine the matter," the bench said as it issued notice to the Ajit Pawar led-faction.

The bench gave liberty to Sharad Pawar to move the Election Commission for allocation of the party symbol and directed the poll panel to allot it in one week of the application.

The bench, which appeared critical of the EC's February 6 order on recognising the real NCP, said, "The order says both of you (factions) violated the party constitution, both of



you went against the 'aims and objective' and yet no one is disqualified. Just imagine what

would happen to the voters, who voted for you." During the hearing, Justice Viswanathan,

while referring to the recent situation in Pakistan, said, "At some stage, let the voter have some say. It will cause chaos. I don't want to draw an analogy but if you're following the elections from across the border, the whole thing happened because someone wanted the 'bat' symbol and it was not given."

Senior advocate Abhishek Singhvi, appearing for Sharad Pawar, said the order passed by the Election Commission on February 7 is an interim arrangement made by the poll panel for Rajya Sabha elections till February 27.

"The budget session of Maharashtra assembly is scheduled to start from February 26 and our group will be without any name or symbol after February 27," he submitted.

The senior lawyer further contended "the order said that Ajit Pawar side is the real NCP, which we will contest at a later stage but for Rajya Sabha elections, Sharad Pawar can use the name as a one-time measure. After February 27, technically I will be nameless, symbol less and will be bound to obey the whip of Ajit Pawar."

The bench told Singhvi that it cannot regulate the proceedings of the House.

# GOONS IN PUNE ATTEMPT TO BURN WOMAN ALIVE OVER PARKING RAGE

Pune | Agencies

In a shocking incident, at least four ruffians poured petrol on a woman and attempted to set her ablaze after a major ruckus over a parking spot in Kharadi area of the city, barely a fortnight after the Pune Police Commissioner Amitesh Kumar carried out multiple parades of notorious criminals, officials said here on Monday.

The chilling incident occurred late on Saturday night, around 9 pm, when the woman, Varsha Gaikwad, was present when her landlord, Mahesh Rajee had parked his car at the dispute spot.

Just then, at least a dozen goons suddenly vroomed there on four-five two-wheelers, and accosted them.

As per CCTV footage of the vicinity of that night, the toughies were armed with sticks and had covered



their faces with scarves to hide their identity.

Taking strong objections to the parked vehicle there, they started clobbering it with sticks and then set it on fire, and also torched another scooter parked there.

As the terrified woman ran from the spot, they threw petrol on her,

ostensibly to set her ablaze, but she managed to reach the safety of her home and remained bolted inside.

They assaulted Gaikwad's landlord, Mahesh Rajee, who later lodged a complaint with the Chandan Nagar Police Station which swung into action. On Sunday, the police teams managed to nab four persons, Akash

S. Sode, 23, Suraj R. Borude, 24, Nayan N. Gaikwad, 19, and Vishal Sasane, 20, while Dhiraj D. Sapate, the main accused and a history sheeter, is reported to be still absconding.

"The victim woman (Gaikwad) is unharmed... the prime accused Sapate was earlier arrested and had been released on a bond of good behaviour under Sec. 110 of CrPC. Further investigations in the case are on," Chandan Nagar Police Station Senior Police Inspector Manisha Patil told reporter.

The latest incident came just a fortnight after the new Commissioner of Police Amitesh Kumar on February 6-7 had summoned over 700 local mafia dons, their associates and operatives, history-sheets, muggers, drug-peddlers and others to instill public confidence in the law-enforcers.

## J&K: Authorities urge people to exercise caution amid heavy snowfall

Srinagar | Agencies

J&K Administration on Monday urged the people in frontier district of Kupwara to remain alert in wake of avalanche warning after north Kashmir witnessed heavy snowfall.

"Administration urges residents to remain cautious and cooperate with the authorities during this time," an official statement reads.

It said that the residents of higher reaches have been sensitised to restrict outdoor activities due to the looming threat of avalanche.

In north Kashmir's Kupwara district, hectic efforts are underway to clear the snow from the main



roads and restore the essential services after the northern areas witnessed heavy snowfall.

The authorities said that they have set up at least 20 control rooms across district

Kupwara and helpline numbers have also been published in various print and electronic media including social media platforms for the convenience of the people.

## Malabar Gold & Diamonds ranked 19th in Deloitte's Global Luxury Rankings; On top of the list in India

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Malabar Gold & Diamonds, one of the leading jewellery retailers, has secured the 19th position in the Global Powers of Luxury Goods 2023 Rankings. The brand has achieved the top position in India, confirming its dominance in the country's luxury market.

LVMH has got first place in the Global Powers of Luxury Goods 2023 list.

Malabar Gold & Diamonds has secured the 19th position in the global list, establishing itself as a leading Indian international jewellery brand. It is noteworthy that some other Indian brands of watches and jewellery have also made it to the top 100. Titan Company Limited, the company operating Tanishq Jewellers, has got 24th position in this list. Kalyan Jewellers has got 46th position and Joy Alukkas has got 47th position. In this list, Senco Gold and

Diamonds is at 78th position while Tangamili Jewellers is at 98th position. The Deloitte Global Powers of Luxury Goods ranking list is created by assessing the global sales and brand value of jewellery, apparels, watches and beauty products. Malabar Gold & Diamonds' stellar performance in global sales and brand value has earned it this elite list, which is an important milestone for the brand.

The Deloitte report highlights the dynamic changes in India's jewellery retail sector, the world's second largest market, where Malabar Gold & Diamonds has emerged as the front runner. Celebrating thirty years of excellence, the brand offers a wide collection of jewellery styles both contemporary and traditional. Its commitment to reliability and authenticity has earned Malabar Gold & Diamonds an eminent position as a consumer preferred brand.

## Allegations left daughters traumatised": Mahabharata actor's bureaucrat wife

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Actor Nitish Bharadwaj's estranged bureaucrat wife said the allegations that she had kidnapped their daughters are "false and malicious".

Smita Bharadwaj, currently posted in Bhopal as the Additional Chief Secretary, and the actor who famously played Lord Krishna in Mahabharat, are locked in a marital dispute. The case is pending in a family court.

Bharadwaj had submitted a complaint to the Bhopal Police Commissioner on Wednesday alleging that his estranged wife had "abducted" his two daughters and was not letting him meet them.

Smita Bharadwaj on Monday issued a statement refuting the "false and malicious" allegations, which she claimed were aimed at maligning her image and are defamatory.

"The assertion made in the police complaint on February 11 by Nitish Bharadwaj and during a press conference in Bhopal on February 14 are categorically and unequivocally refuted as entirely baseless and devoid of any factual substantiation.



"His claims that I have kidnapped our minor twin daughters and have denied him access are entirely baseless," she stated.

In a complaint submitted to Bhopal top cop Harinarayan Chari Mishra, the actor claimed that his wife "abducted" his daughters and he did not know where they were. He also alleged 'mental torture'.

Nitish Bharadwaj demanded the registration of a case of kidnapping against his estranged wife and said their case (of marital dispute) was pending in a family court.

A police official said that a probe was initiated on Bharadwaj's complaint. Smita Bharadwaj claimed her husband met their children in Pune on January 2 and on February 17.

He has maintained regular communication with his daughters since 2022 via the home phone at her residence, a fact documented in the family court files, she added.

"Nitish Bharadwaj himself has claimed before the family court that he has communicated with my daughters on the same landline number. His assertion of being unaware of the phone number is false and misleading," she stated.

She also claimed that Bharadwaj had been communicating on a dedicated email address about court proceedings and matters concerning the children.

The senior Indian Administrative Services (IAS) officer stated that she has been the primary caregiver for their daughters despite the financial challenges of being a single mother but Bharadwaj's "lack of care and involvement caused the girls distress and disappointment".

She claimed her husband never contributed financially towards the expense of bringing up the children, neither towards school fees nor towards any activity that supports their development.

## Chanda Kochhar, Husband's Arrest By CBI "Amounts To Abuse Of Power": Court

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The arrest of ICICI Bank's former Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Chanda Kochhar and her husband Deepak Kochhar by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) in a loan fraud case was "without application of mind and due regard to the law", amounting to an "abuse of power", the Bombay High Court has said.

A division bench of Justices Anuja Prabhudessai and N R Borkar had on February 6 held the Kochhars' arrest as illegal and confirmed a January 2023 interim order passed by another bench granting them bail. In the order made available on Monday, the court said the CBI has been unable to demonstrate the existence of circumstances or supportive material based on which the decision to arrest was taken.

The absence of such circumstances renders the arrest illegal, it said.

"Such routine arrest without application of mind and due regard to the law amounts to an abuse of power," the court said.

The court also refused to



accept the probe agency's contention that the arrest was made as the Kochhars were not cooperating with the probe and said the accused had a right to remain silent during interrogation.

"The right to silence emanates from Article 20(3) of the Indian Constitution, which gives an accused the right against self-incrimination. Suffice it to say that exercise of the right to remain silent cannot be equated with non-cooperation," it said in the order. The CBI arrested the couple on December 23, 2022, in the Videocon-ICICI Bank loan case.

They immediately moved the high court challenging the arrest and sought for the same to be declared illegal, and by way of interim order, sought to be released on bail.

On January 9, 2023, the court, in an interim order, granted the Kochhars bail, noting that the CBI had made the arrest casually and mechanically and without application of mind.



# Maha's first 3-day MSME defence expo to commence in Pune from February 24

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The Maharashtra government will hold a three-day MSME Defence Expo in Pune from February 24 to 26 with participation from the armed forces, defence public sector undertakings and ordnance factories, officials said here on Monday.

The event, to be held at the International Exhibition & Convention Centre, Moshi, will give an exposure to the micro-small-medium enterprises and enable them to contribute significantly to the defence production sector.

The expo will be attended by Chief Minister Eknath Shinde, Deputy CMs Devendra Fadnavis and Ajit Pawar, with the likelihood of Defence Minister Rajnath Singh also joining.

The expo will see the participation of over 200 MSMEs and startups, the Indian Army, Indian Air Force and Indian Navy, plus over 20,000 engineering students who will visit for exchange of knowledge and skills.

There are 10 ordnance factories, five defence PSUs plus several private sector units manufacturing a large number of defence equipment in the state.



"The expo underscores the government's commitment to strengthen our state's defence capabilities. With a focus on innovation and cooperation, the event will play a key role. Under the Aatmanirbhar Bharat initiative, self-reliance, growth and innovation in the defence sector are being propelled," said Shinde.

The Chief Minister also said that Maharashtra is acknowledged as the industrial powerhouse of India, which leads in promoting a self-

reliance, and has a strong network of 39.88 lakh MSMEs.

Today, while the country is producing a large number of defence equipment, a defence ecosystem has been created in the state, and major corporate houses like Tata, Bharat Forge, Solar, and L&T manufacture products for the defence sector in the state.

"This even will bring in a large number of entrepreneurs, increase investment, and both manufacturers and buyers will be together at one

place along with the armed forces," said Fadnavis.

The exhibitors will showcase their defence-related products, technologies and services in various sectors such as aerospace, armaments, electronics, communication and logistics at the expo.

The IAF will demonstrate its indigenous capabilities through static display of new generation Advanced Light Helicopter MK-IV and Light Combat Helicopter in addition to Aakash and SAMAR missile systems.

The IAF will also showcase products developed by its internal agencies through collaboration with private industry partners, and top officials will interact with the participating industries to make them aware of future requirements of the air force.

There will also be interactive sessions between MSMEs and major defence procurement organisations, industry veterans and potential investors.

The expo is expected to provide the participants with lucrative business opportunities, potential contracts, besides benefiting MSMEs and startups in the defence technology export sector.

# Mumbai woman flags "Brothel" comment on her video, cops respond

Team Absolute | Mumbai

A Mumbai woman has sought police help after an X user made a "kotha" (a term associated with brothels) reference to her dance video. In a post on X on Saturday, Shruti Parija alleged that she made "endless" requests to the user, Prateek Aaryan, to take down the video but he "refused".

The controversy erupted after Aaryan posted a video of Parija dancing at a college fest. The Indian schools and colleges are well known for organising 'sanskriti karyakram' (cultural programmes) and performances based on traditional and regional culture, but now it has become a 'kotha', he wrote on February 13.

"In the name of cultural events, shaking booty on item songs is all they call a cultural program. Along with the education system, the cultural system is in danger in India. What a downfall for this generation and colleges in India," Aaryan added.

Two days later, Parija commented on the post, which has now over 25 lakh views, and said that she was the girl in the video and that the



video was reposted without her consent.

"Please take it down," Parija requested and said that she was not a student at the college but was, in fact, a professional performer.

"I was the judge there. The students, audience and everyone in the auditorium requested me to perform on this track at their own fest," she said.

"You have a right to voice what is right and what is not but not to the extent of defaming me, who is not even associated with the college," Parija added.

However, Aaryan, in response, said he spoke about Indian schools and colleges and was not pointing fingers at her. "I spoke about Indian

schools and colleges, explicitly stating that I haven't said anything about you. I haven't slut-shamed you (as you alleged) in any way. In the second line, I mentioned that under the guise of a cultural program, there is dancing to item songs, so that's clear I'm not mentioning you anywhere. My intention was not to cause you any harm. I've shared my general opinion on the college system posting your video. Please read the original tweet statement once again and consider if I've said anything wrong about you," he said.

In a separate post, he then alleged that Parija and her friend used "violent speech, threatened legal action, and mentioned putting him behind bars".

# Mumbai-Pune to get 'closer' with transport services via new sea bridge

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The travel time between Mumbai-Pune is expected to reduce by an hour with a new public bus service being launched via the Mumbai Trans Harbour Link from Tuesday, officials said here.

The Maharashtra State Road Transport Corporation (MSRTC) will unveil a new state transport route of its prestigious Shivneri Volvo and e-Shivneri buses from the MTHL, or Atal Setu from February 20 on an experimental basis. The MSRTC will operate two new routes -- from Pune Station to Mantralaya (Nariman Point) at 6.30 a.m. and another from Swargate (Pune) to Dadar at 7 a.m., which will be run via the MTHL.

The return journey will commence on the same route at 11 a.m. and 1 p.m., and there will be a saving of around one hour both ways, benefiting the people of the state capital and the state's cultural-academic and IT capital, around 155 kms away.

The MSRTC Divisional Commissioner Kailash Patil informed that there will be no



change in the ticket fares, and urged the people commuting between the two cities to take advantage of the new routes with advance bookings on its site or app.

Presently, the ST buses take over five-six hours, depending on the traffic density en route in both directions to cover the distance between Mumbai-Pune.

However, this is expected to be slashed to about four hours in each direction, through the new route on the MTH, India's longest sea bridge, inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on January 12.

# 'ACT AGAINST TEACHERS, WE WILL SEE', RAJ THACKERAY 'DARES' EC

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Maharashtra Navnirman Sena (MNS) President Raj Thackeray on Monday trained guns at the Election Commission (EC) for its compulsion to involve school teachers in poll-related duties.

Sounding annoyed, the MNS chief demanded to know why the EC is involving school teachers for election work which could directly affect the education of children.

He was speaking to the media here after meeting a delegation of teachers from the Shardashram Vidyamandir School of Dadar west. The teachers complained that they were being forced to do election duties against their wishes and threatened with 'disciplinary action' if they failed to comply.

"Don't they know that the elections are coming periodically? Have the elections been announced abruptly? They, why can't they create a separate cadre for poll duties, train them and then deploy them for their work," said a visibly irked Raj Thackeray.

On the apprehensions of the teachers that they would face disciplinary pro-



ceedings if they flouted the orders, Raj Thackeray countered that "disciplinary action must be initiated against the EC instead of the teaching community".

He directed the school teachers "not to report for election duties or programs anywhere" and instead pay their attention to the student community. "Every time elections are held, things are being done in a hasty manner. You people don't go for election duties. You just concentrate on the school children. If they (EC) act against you, then we will see," said Raj Thackeray.

For the upcoming Lok Sabha elections, BrihanMumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) and other primary school teachers (Class I-IV) have been asked to report for poll-duties. More than 4,000 teachers hailing from only civic schools, besides other schools, have been deployed for election work, prompting Raj Thackeray to ask: "Why is there so much work now? What does the Election Commission do for five years? Action should be taken against the EC for not doing its work for five years." He queried why the EC does not have a proper system in place, and every-time they go after the teachers even as elections are being held in the country for so many decades.

"Should not you have your system ready for the polls? The school teachers are supposed to impart knowledge to the children. Have they been taken (into service) for election work?" said Raj Thackeray, slamming the EC.

Maharashtra English School Trustees Association (MESTA) President Sanjayrao

Tayade-Patil said that it is a routine practice to 'take away' the government or aided school teachers for poll-related duties before and during the actual Lok Sabha or Assembly elections.

"Most teachers are reluctant to report for such extra duties with limited compensation and a lot of responsibilities, that disturbs our academic schedules," said Tayade-Patil, welcoming Raj Thackeray's assertions.

A government school Headmaster, declining to be identified, said that the teachers have to go for a minimum four-day training session, followed by three-four days during the elections at all the polling stations.

"At the end of this exercise, they are paid between Rs 800-1,200, plus given a meal on the final voting day after they complete all their duties. For those teachers who don't attend, they are served notices, issued memos or other forms of punitive action is taken," said the Headmaster.

When asked to react on Raj Thackeray's challenge to the EC, they chuckled and asked whether "he will really stand by any teacher" if any school-teacher dares to flout the EC directive.

# CM Shinde, Deputy CMs pay tribute to Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj at Shivneri Fort

Team Absolute | Pune

Maharashtra Chief Minister Eknath Shinde as well as Deputy CMs Devendra Fadnavis and Ajit Pawar paid tribute to Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj on his birth anniversary on Monday at Shivneri Fort in Pune, reported news agency.

The legendary warrior king was born in 1630 in Shivneri in the district's Junnar tehsil.

Shinde and the two deputy CMs attended various programmes to mark the occasion of Shivaji Jayanti, including the 'cradle ceremony' at the fort.

A large number of followers of the emperor are expected to gather at the site through the day to pay tribute.

Meanwhile, on the occasion of Shivaji Jayanti, Maharashtra Chief



Minister Eknath Shinde on Monday offered floral tribute to the statue of Shivaji in Chembur, Mumbai.

This year marks the 394th birthday of the heroic Maratha king. Taking to his 'X' account, the Chief

Minister paid tribute to Shivaji Maharaj, saying, "Salutations to the revered deity of Akhand Hindustan, the founder of Hindavi Swarajya, Maharajadhiraj Shri #Chhatrapati #Shivaji\_Maharaj on his birth anniversary."

CM Shinde also performed the bhumi puja for the beautification of the Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj circle and statue. Mumbai Metropolitan Commissioner Iqbal Singh Chahal, MP Rahul Shewale, and other Shiv Sena workers and officials were present on the occasion. Former MLA Tukaram Kate expressed his gratitude to CM Eknath Shinde on the occasion. Meanwhile, people in Nagpur, Maharashtra, gathered in large numbers on the streets and offered Aarti as a part of celebrations of the birth anniversary of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj.

# Aaditya Thackeray slams Eknath Shinde's govt, says industries are being shifted to Gujarat

Navi Mumbai | Agencies

Shiv Sena (UBT) leader and MLA Aaditya Thackeray has slammed the current three-party government in Maharashtra under Chief Minister Eknath Shinde, saying the state is lagging behind in terms of employment and industrial investment.

He claimed that Eknath Shinde, then a cabinet minister in MVA government, had come to the residence of the Thackeray's (Matoshree), in May 2022, and cried over the shoulders of the then Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray. "Shinde urged Uddhavji to save him from the Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP) and told him that the BJP will implicate him in cases and put him in jail," Aaditya said, reported news wire.

Aaditya, son of Uddhav Thackeray on Sunday, visited various shakhas (Shiv Sena-UBT party branches) in Thane city. Thane is the bastion of Eknath Shinde from where is

also elected as MLA. Addressing a gathering of Shiv Sena (UBT) workers, Aaditya also mimicked Shinde's style of speaking.

Aaditya also took a dig at CM Eknath Shinde and his son, MP Shrikant Shinde for getting emotional during speech. Recently, in the Shiv Sena convention at Kolhapur, Maharashtra, Shrikant Shinde and Eknath Shinde got emotional remembering the years of efforts CM Shinde has dedicated for the Shiv Sena, and asserting that for Shiv Sena Saikins are his family.

Aaditya also claimed that a hoarding of a "traitor goon" who had tried to kill a woman and her family members had come up in Kolhapur.



# AIMIM functionary seeks FIR against 2 for 'objectionable' remarks

Mumbai | Agencies

A woman functionary from the All India Majlis-e-Mtlehadul Muslimeen approached Mumbai Police seeking action against two persons. The AIMIM functionary sought action against the two for allegedly posting objectionable messages on social media, an official told media on Monday.

The AIMIM Mumbai Women's cell chief Rizwana Khan, reportedly, told the cops that the duo made condemnable

remarks on X (formerly Twitter) against her and her party colleague and former MLA Waris Pathan.

The official said that Khan in her application stated that the police must register a First Information Report against the two for stalking, sexual harassment and making communal statements per the report.

An official from Malwani police station told news agency that Khan's application is being reviewed and a case will be registered if necessary.

# Raj Thackeray meets BJP city chief, sparks speculation of tie-up

Mumbai | Agencies

Sparking fresh speculation of a tie-up, the Mumbai Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) President Ashish Shelar called on Maharashtra Navnirman Sena (MNS) chief Raj Thackeray at the latter's residence here on Monday morning.

The duo was closeted for over an hour without aides, fuelling talks of a possible electoral pact with the ruling Mahayuti alliance of Shiv Sena-BJP-Nationalist Congress Party, though both sides have yet to comment officially on the meeting.



However, MNS Chief

Spokesperson Sandeep

Deshpande said that both Raj Thackeray and Ashish Shelar are good friends and they keep meeting regularly, "so nothing much should be read into it," while not outrightly ruling out the possibility of any political linkup. Political circles were rife with contentions that Shelar reportedly conveyed 'a message from the BJP high command' to the MNS chief, as the countdown to the Lok Sabha elections gets underway. Though Raj Thackeray enjoys cordial relations with Chief Minister Eknath Shinde (whom he met last week to greet on his 60th birthday), Deputy

CMs Devendra Fadnavis and Ajit Pawar, he has so far remained a fence-sitter and kept all political cards close to the chest, specially the prospects of an election tie-up. Recently, senior MNS leaders like Bala Nandgaonkar had met Shinde, Fadnavis and other BJP bigwigs, but there were no concrete developments pertaining to the upcoming Lok Sabha, Assembly and civic elections in Maharashtra.

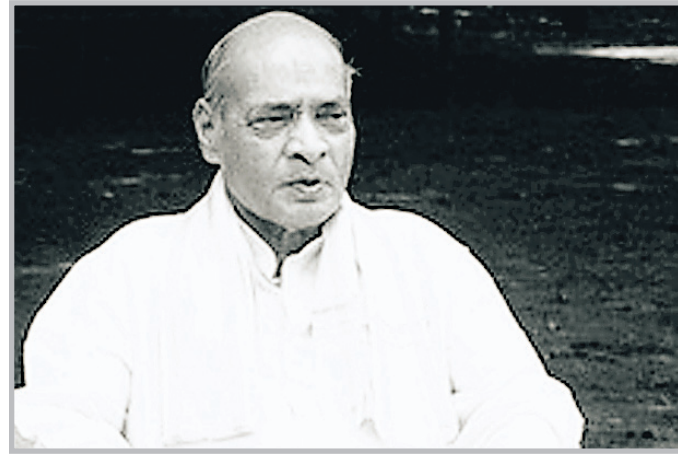
However, Fadnavis kept up the suspense claiming that everything will be known at 'the right time' and hinted that anything could happen in the near future.



## EDITOR'S SPECS

## Ramayana fervour pervades annual flower show in Lucknow

The Ramayana fervour was visible at the annual fruits and flower show being held at the Raj Bhawan in Lucknow. Statues of Lord Ram, Sita and Lakshman, crafted from vibrant flowers are the major attractions at the ongoing three-day flower show. Pivotal moments from the Ramayana have been recreated with blooms. For instance, Lord Hanuman presenting Ram's ring to Sita in Ashok Vatika and characters like Jamvanti and Jatayu are the major attractions. The show also boasts a unique floral map of India depicting the Ram temple, the Ram darbar, and religious symbols like the Swastika, Om, and Urdhva Pundra (Vishnu Tilak). These stunning floral sculptures stand tall amidst diverse flowering plants such as dahlias, roses, petunias, and marigolds. Children and youths captivated by the spectacle, are seen clicking photos, videos and selfies for their social media accounts. Beyond the sculptures, the exhibition showcases a diverse array of flowers, fruits, and vegetables. From an abundance of rose varieties in various shapes and sizes to flourishing cacti, sweet limes, oversized ash gourds and cauliflowers, and even life-size vegetable bouquets, the display offers something for everyone. Also, Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched projects worth nearly Rs 40,000 crore in Ayodhya, Mathura and Kashi through the ground breaking ceremony (GBC@IV) at the Indira Gandhi Pratishthan in Lucknow on Monday. This will give a major push to religious tourism in Uttar Pradesh. These three places -- Ayodhya, the birthplace of Lord Ram; Mathura, the birthplace of Lord Krishna; and Kashi, the abode of Lord Shiva -- are places of great religious significance and hold a central place in the faith of crores of Hindus. In terms of religious tourism, these three locations are crucial for Uttar Pradesh.



D.C. Pathak

# IN RETROSPECT

The 'Bharat Ratna' awards announced this year to posthumously honour some well-known leaders in public life for their contribution to the country's great democratic progress, add to their credibility and create a good feeling all around. Amongst the recipients is former Prime Minister PV. Narasimha Rao who successfully ran a minority government for five years from 1991 and with whom I served as Director, Intelligence Bureau (IB), from mid-1994 up to the end of his tenure as Prime Minister in 1996. Prime Minister Rao is best known for handling the political strategy that allowed his Finance Minister Dr Manmohan Singh to set out with the much-needed economic reforms.

Prime Minister Rao made a lasting impression as an intellectual, a scholar, and a linguist but more than that as a leader of a nationalist outlook and an administrator who enjoyed the respect of bureaucracy for taking decisions with great clarity. He was impatient with mediocrity but very quick in understanding the nuances of a suggestion. Even senior officials and ministers were somewhat in awe of him for his strategic thinking and deep understanding of what was happening in the country - politically or otherwise. He was a man of few words who always put across his views and advice in effective short observations and had an aura of authenticity about his leadership. He normally never called any officer on Sunday - he was modernistic about realising the importance of a weekly rest day for the hardworking bureaucrats.

Prime Minister Rao appointed me as the Director of the IB - preferring me over a senior - without ever hav-

ing met me personally and in what happened for the first time in the IB, got my name announced as Officer on Special Duty (OSD) two months in advance of the actual take over as the chief.

I remember conveying it to the Prime Minister - in my very first briefing session with him - that this move of a prior announcement had sent a good message to a professional organisation like the IB.

I gathered that the Prime Minister was essentially looking for an upright, apolitical and hard-working professional of long-standing to head the Bureau - he certainly did not need any help in running his politics - and was expecting to be briefed in a timely way on significant developments affecting internal security, stability and peace.

Beyond my regular periodical briefings to him at 7 Race Course Road, I had direct access to him otherwise also - the institution of National Security Advisor did not exist then - and once it so happened that I reached out to him in the afternoon to convey something I thought could not wait and met him at 3 Race Course Road, the private premises of the Prime Minister. He totally trusted the IB for its professional work. There are a couple of instances I recollect as evidence of Prime Minister Rao's strategic outlook on issues of national security. At the height of trouble in Kashmir, he once held a plenary meeting in which all those who mattered in the management of that state - from the Governor and the Army chief to the Cabinet and Home Secretaries - were in attendance. The discussion was on what 'stronger' measures if any, could be taken to deal with the situation. The Prime Minister went round the table and the participants mostly asked for a

new headline. He finally asked me sitting next to him as Director, IB, for my views. On a considered assessment, I advocated that we should stay put and watch the situation further. Prime Minister Rao endorsed this and said that no new steps were needed.

When the participants pressed for a decision on further action, he famously said that "not taking a decision was also a decision". This could come only from an intellectually strong leader. On another occasion, I told the Prime Minister that my senior officers were suffering because the delay in the 'empanelment' process made them victims of the rule that a minimum of 11 months must still be available to them before retirement, for them to be given the promotion due to them. I remember telling the Prime Minister that "the procedural could not kill the substantive" - he immediately grasped the point and called the Cabinet Secretary to sort it out. From this emerged the practice of 'in situ' promotion whereby the IB officer would get the next higher grade from the day he became eligible for promotion. I am happy to say that over the years, IB has continued to enjoy a high level of trust and support of the government as a professional, unbiased and dedicated Intelligence agency of the nation.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi deserves the credit for giving due recognition to those leaders who from a historical perspective stood out for their role in carrying democratic India forward.

The Bharat Ratna to many who had been left out for some reason will have the effect of uniting India by keeping this recognition above party politics. This year, Padma awards were also meant to extend national acknowledgement to craftsmen, scientists and those who did exceptional social service for people at the local level - and were kept relatively free of a political or bureaucratic imprint. If the Bharat Ratna awards are appreciated by the people of India, their 'timing' does not matter to them - better late than never

would be their basic response - and if the action of the government brings political goodwill to the present Prime Minister, why should anybody have a grouse?

Prime Minister Modi's image as a leader of personal integrity, who could govern the country with a firm hand, had brought him onto the national scene to start with and on these basics of public perception, he remains strong.

As a matter of fact, Prime Minister Modi has governed a country known for its diversities, exceptionally well. He has made a big contribution to the rise of India economically and to the advancement of the country in the direction of becoming a global voice on issues of war and peace.

Prime Minister Modi's proactive approach to international relations has enabled India to steer through the complicated geopolitics of these times on a note of confidence, high moral ground and human concern.

Recalling my association with Prime Minister Rao as the Director, IB, for over two years, I do feel that the IB has always served the nation as a professional Intelligence agency - making a judgement call 'on its own about what was a potential threat to national security and integrity. Congress lost the 1996 General Election - partly because of internal rifts - and I became the first Director of the IB to serve a BJP government with the late Atal Bihari Vajpayee being invited to form the government as the head of the single largest party.

I got the opportunity of serving a third Prime Minister - H.D. Deve Gowda - representing the United Front with its heavy dependence on the Congress.

Amidst all the political turmoil that his regime witnessed, I remember Prime Minister Deve Gowda as a person of practical insight and understanding, who valued my briefings.

I presume some political compulsion led him to 'push me up' as Chairman

Joint Intelligence Committee (JIC), responsible for drawing long-term and medium-range national security estimates at the national apex.

Interestingly, he did not appoint a successor and allowed IB to be run through an 'officiating' Director for quite some time. Soon, however, there was another change in government with Indra Kumar Gujral taking over as the next Prime Minister of the United Front.

Late Gujral was a thinking leader with whom I interacted in my new capacity, on a note of intellectual harmony. To him goes the credit of conceiving for the first time the idea of a coordinating body for Intelligence and Security at the national apex - it could not materialise then but would later result in the formation of the National Security Council (NSC) and its Secretariat - the NSCS, after the Kargil war. I am glad I was able to function as the Intelligence chief with all the three regimes that together represented the entire political spectrum of India - Congress, BJP and the United Front - at that point of time.

In a nutshell, my experience as Director, IB, confirms my belief that India must continue to put our national Intelligence agencies on a special footing for their priceless contribution to national security.

It is a matter of great satisfaction that Prime Minister Modi - aided by an extremely competent National Security Advisor - is giving all attention to our Intelligence set-up and the resources it requires, particularly to the matter of inter-agency coordination and the vital need for an integral response to any threat to India's security, integrity and sovereignty. Bharat Ratna awards strengthen the impression that Prime Minister Modi is a national leader and not just the leader of the party in power.

(The writer is a former Director of the Intelligence Bureau. Views are personal)

## international

# India launches construction of houses for plantation workers in Sri Lanka

Susitha Fernando | Colombo

India has launched the construction of houses for the Indian origin plantation workers across six different provinces in Sri Lanka.

The construction will be carried out under the Indian Housing Project (IHP) and around 1,300 houses will be built for 10, 000 for Indian origin plantation workers.

Sri Lankan President Ranil Wickremesinghe on Monday virtually launched the project along with Indian High Commissioner Santosh Jha.

In May 2017, during his visit to the plantation regions of Sri Lanka, Prime Minister Narendra Modi had announced Phase IV of IHP.

Along President Wickremesinghe on November 2, 2023 the foun-



dition stone for the project was laid by Indian Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman during her visit to India's southern neighbour.

"Government of India's total commitment under the flagship IHP currently stands at 60,000 houses. In the first two phases, 46,000 houses

were covered in Northern and Eastern Provinces," Indian High Commissioner in Colombo said. It said that under Phase-III at least 4000 houses being built for plantation workers are at the verge of completion. Indian origin Tamil community and plantation regions have been of

specific focus under the government of India's development cooperation partnership with Sri Lanka.

The overall portfolio of grant projects alone stands at more than SLR 30 billion or nearly Indian rupees 8 billion.

In addition to the remaining 14,000 houses, India launched another landmark project which is the construction of a multi-specialty hospital in Dickoya in the Central upcountry.

Marking the 200 years of arrival of the Indian origin Tamil community to Sri Lanka, in July 2023, a multi-sectoral package of SLR 3 billion was also announced by Prime Minister Narendra Modi during the visit of President Ranil Wickremesinghe to India.

## IDF CLOSING IN ON HAMAS LEADER YAHYA SINWAR IN GAZA

Tel Aviv: The Israel Defense Forces (IDF) is closing in on Hamas leader Yahya Sinwar, widely believed to be the mastermind behind October 7 massacre in southern Israel, leading to the death of 1,200 people and kidnapping of 250 people.

Sources in Israel defense ministry told reporter that they have inputs of Sinwar and that he was on the run with his family in the tunnel network of Hamas and is surrounded by hostages from Israel. Sinwar has made the hostages surround him to prevent any attack from the Israel army. On Sunday night, Israel defense minister Yoav Gallant said that Hamas leadership is looking for a replacement to Sinwar and that the external leadership of Hamas are clueless on the whereabouts of Sinwar and Mohammed Deif, the military commander of Hamas who pulled the strings of the October 7 massacre. Israel's army has also recently released photographs of Sinwar along with his family in one of the tunnel networks of the terror group.

Hebrew media have reported that either Sinwar is captured by the IDF or the military is closing on him. A retired Major General of Mossad also told IANS that the IDF was closing in on Yahya Sinwar. It may be recalled that a few days before the spokesperson of IDF, Rear Admiral Daniel Hagari announced that IDF would catch Sinwar dead or alive, Yoav Gallant had publicly called for the assassination of Sinwar.

## NOTTINGHAM MURDERS: COPS SLAMMED FOR SHARING DETAILS ABOUT BRITISH-INDIAN, OTHERS ON WHATSAPP

London | Agencies

Families have slammed the British Police after it emerged during a misconduct hearing that they shared details about the victims of the 2023 Nottingham murders,

which included an Indian-origin teen, on a WhatsApp group. British-Indian Grace O'Malley-Kumar, fellow student Barnaby Webber, both aged 19, and 65-year-old school caretaker Ian Coates were stabbed to death by Valdo Calocane near the University of Nottingham on June 13, 2023. A message by an unnamed police officer shared details about the injuries suffered by the three victims on the encrypted platform, The Sun reported on Monday.

Following this, police constable Matthew Gell passed on the "distasteful" message to his wife and a friend, the misconduct tribunal heard recently.

"What an abhorrent way to conduct an investigation," Webber's mother was quoted as saying in the



London-based daily. "To learn there has been internal needless voyeurism on our loved ones is unforgivable."

Calling it "shocking", the tribunal reportedly gave a final written warning to the cops.

Last week, the family of O'Malley-Kumar was shocked to learn that their daughter's body was tested for drugs and alcohol but killer Calocane, identified as a paranoid schizophrenic, was not subjected to similar tests.

In January, an independent review was ordered into prosecutors' decision to accept the manslaughter pleas of a 32-year-old Calocane based on diminished responsibility, which meant that he will not be tried for murder. Calocane has been detained in Ashworth secure hospital since January. Calling for a public inquiry into the case, the families have also met Prime Minister Rishi Sunak who promised them that "we will get the answers".

## SERVICES OF SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORM X DISRUPTED IN PAK FOR THIRD DAY

Islamabad | Agencies

Services of social media platform X, formerly Twitter, remained disrupted for the third consecutive day in Pakistan on Monday.

As per Downtetector, which tracks outages by collating status reports from several sources, including users, Karachi, Rawalpindi, Lahore and Gujranwala, among others, are the most-affected areas, Dawn reported. The disruption makes it the third consecutive day when X services have been affected amid allegations of rigging in the February 8 general elections polls.

On Saturday, internet monitor Netblocks had reported a nationwide disruption to X "amid escalating unrest and protests over allegations of election fraud, following a high-level resignation and public admission of vote manipulation by a senior election official", the report said. The outage was report-

ed after former Rawalpindi commissioner Liaqat Ali Chattha, in an explosive press conference, accused the Election Commission of Pakistan and Chief Justice Qazi Faez Isa of involvement in "rigging" -- a claim denied by the electoral watchdog and the top judge.

Chattha had claimed that the candidates who were "losing" the elections "were made to win" and that the process to justify the manipulated results was still going in "an organised manner at some offices", Dawn reported.

On Sunday, Netblocks said its metrics showed that X had been restricted in Pakistan for 24 hours, and called it "the latest and longest in a series of nation-scale internet censorship measures imposed by authorities as reports of election fraud emerge".



# Indo-Canadian says police wrongly portraying him as 'high-level' gangster: Report

Toronto | Agencies

An Indian-origin man who was arrested and recently charged with extortion threats targeting South Asian businesses in Canada, has claimed his innocence, saying police are wrongly portraying him as a high-level gangster.

Arundeeep Thind, 39, was among five people of Punjab origin whose arrest was announced by Peel Regional Police's extortion taskforce on February 8 in connection with a laundry list of offences, including extortion, possession of firearms and fraud. Thind, charged with one count of extortion relating to an alleged incident on January 26, is out on bail after spending two weeks in jail, and has reached out to the Canadian media saying he is not a "criminal".



In an interview with CTV News, Thind, a music producer, said: "I have family too. I have kids too. My kids are crying. 'Daddy's not a criminal.' You guys (the media and police) showed (my photo) that I'm a criminal. I'm not." With concerns being raised over an "alarming" escalation of extortion threats against

Indian and South Asian business communities, Thind told the news outlet that he has never been involved in organised crime and extortion.

Asserting that he is a "victim" of these threats instead, Thind said days before his arrest, his friend -- a restaurant owner in Brampton who was targeted by the extortionists -- gave Thind the phone number and asked him to call the people harassing him. He spoke to the person on the phone who coerced him into going to a car dealership to request an extortion payment on their behalf, Thind told the news channel.

At the dealership, he simply handed a phone over to the owner of the car company. "I told them, 'I want nothing more to do with this. You guys speak to each other and leave me out of it,'" he said. It was then that the police

arrived and arrested him, Thind said. On being asked why he posted a series of photos and videos on his social media holding a gun, Thind told the channel that the picture was taken years ago while filming a music video and that "the gun wasn't even real". While he said that he has never been a part of organised crime or extortion in the country, he admitted to a domestic incident charge. However, Thind believes police are wrongly painting him as a "high-level gangster", and are using his mugshot. In addition, Thind said that he has not met and is not connected to the other four people charged by Peel Police, namely Gagan Ajit Singh, Anmoldeep Singh, Hashmeet Kaur and Lymanjot Kaur.

While Thind is yet to be tried in a court of law, Brampton City

Councillor Gurbpartap Singh Toor told CTV that Thind's release isn't sitting well with his community.

Peel Regional Police (PRP) Chief Nishan Duraiappah had said in a statement that "there's a complex ecosystem of people involved" in these crimes. PRP's taskforce said 29 cases of extortion are currently under investigation and of these, nine incidents have involved shootings at local businesses, with multiple bullets being fired. The businesses being targeted are South Asian-owned restaurants, bakeries, trucking and transport companies, independent used car dealerships, and jewellery stores.

Speaking about their modus operandi, police said the victims are contacted via phone or social media and threatened to pay in cash or transfer money -- either in Indian or Canadian currency.



## 50 PERCENT DISCOUNT IN MOTOR VEHICLE TAX IN UJJAIN VIKRAMOTSAV TRADE FAIR 2024

ADMINISTRATIVE APPROVAL OF RS 224 CRORE 46 LAKH FOR AONWALIA MEDIUM IRRIGATION PROJECT

Team Absolute | Bhopal

The State Cabinet, which met under the chairmanship of Chief Minister Dr. Mohan Yadav at Mantralaya here today decided to give 50 percent discount in the lifetime motor vehicle tax rate on the sale of non-transport vehicles and light vehicles in the Ujjain Vikramotsav Trade Fair 2024.

Exemption will be given on getting permanent registration of the sold vehicles from Regional Transport Office, Ujjain. Automobile traders from outside Ujjain will be able to sell vehicles after obtaining the business certificate at the Regional Transport Office, Ujjain and ensuring their presence in the fair.

### Approval of Rs 1692 crore for Indore-Ujjain 6-lane

The Cabinet has given approval for development of 45.475 km. Indore-Ujjain 4-lane road into 6-lane with paved shoulder. Under the scheme, 45.475 km will be constructed at a cost of Rs 1692 crore. Indore-Ujjain 4-lane road is to be constructed under hybrid annuity model (40:60) with 6-lane paved shoulders.

Along with construction of all the structures in 6-lane, Shani Mandir approach road in additional 1.10 km length will be widened to 3-lane. Important junctions in the project will be constructed with grade separations (VUP and flyovers). Two flyovers, six underpasses and eight major junctions falling in the alignment of the route will be constructed under the project. Improvement of all the junctions covered under the scheme, necessary measures for road safety, road marking and road furniture etc. will be done.



Appointment of two members in Public Service Commission  
A total of 5 posts including 1 Chairman and 4 members are sanctioned in Madhya Pradesh Public Service Commission and currently one Chairman and two members are working. On the recommendation of the selection committee on two vacant posts of members in Madhya Pradesh Public Service Commission, the Cabinet approved the appointment of Assistant Professor (Dentistry), Medical College, Jabalpur Dr. H.S. Markam and Dr. Narendra Kumar Koshti, Assistant Professor (Economics), Government Mahakaushal Arts and Commerce College, Jabalpur as members.

### Revised administrative approval of Rs 224 crore 46 lakh for Aonwalia Medium Irrigation Project

The Cabinet has given revised administrative approval of Rs 224 crore 46 lakh for the irrigated area of 6703 hectare Rabi of Aonwalia Medium Irrigation Project on Ghorapachhad River near village Roshni of Tehsil Khalwa of Khandwa district. It is noteworthy that in 2017, the project cost of Rs 165 crore 8 lakh was approved for 5 thousand hectare irrigated area under the said project. The cost has increased by Rs 59 crore 38 lakh due to special package of land acquisition, increase in irrigated area by 1703 acres, increase in construction cost etc. Revised administrative approval of Rs 224 crore 46 lakh has been given for the revised project.

Provision of Rs 1500 crore for infrastructure development in rural areas  
A provision of Rs 1500 crore will be made under capital head for the year 2023-24 to approve fresh works of infrastructure development work in rural areas under "Mukhyamantri Gram Sadak and Infrastructure Development Yojana". The Cabinet approved the proposal of the department to increase the maximum limit of Index-1 from 3 to 7.

### Two new universities

The Cabinet approved amendment in the Madhya Pradesh University Act, 1973 through the Madhya Pradesh University (Second Amendment) Bill- 2024. It has been decided to include Khargone and other districts under the new Krantisurya Tanya Bhil University and colleges of Guna, Ashoknagar and other districts under the new Tatyatope University.

## Kamal Nath takes down 'Jai Shri Ram' flag outside home as BJP rumours swirl



Team Absolute | New Delhi/Bhopal

Amid a buzz in the political corridors over former Madhya Pradesh chief minister Kamal Nath quitting the Congress and joining the BJP, the veteran leader has removed the "Jai Shri Ram" flag which was hoisted at his residence.

The flag was reportedly seen on the roof of Nath's residence in Delhi on Sunday.

Rumours of Nath and his son, Nakul Nath, leaving the grand old party have been doing the rounds for the past few weeks.

They intensified on Saturday when Kamal Nath arrived in Delhi and his son, the lone Congress MP from Madhya Pradesh, reportedly dropped the party's name from his bio on social media. There was speculation that Mr Nath would meet the BJP leadership in the national capital.

According to sources, Kamal Nath is upset over his removal from the Madhya Pradesh Congress chief post after the party's crushing defeat to the BJP in the assembly election held last year.

The Congress, however, has denied reports of Nath leaving the party, citing his long association with it and stressing the fact that former prime minister Indira Gandhi had called him her "third son" while campaigning for him in Madhya Pradesh's Chhindwara, a constituency he represented as an MP for nine terms.

His successor, Jitu Patwari, on Sunday said that Nath is not joining the BJP.

"I had a talk with Kamal Nath ji who told me that the reports floating in the media were part of a conspiracy. He told me he was a Congressman and will remain in the Congress," Patwari told to a news agency. "His relationship with the Gandhi family is unshakable. He has lived with the ideology of Congress and will remain with it till the end. This is what he told me," he added.

## 2 CHILDREN DIE OF SUSPECTED MEASLES, 17 INFECTED IN MAIHAR

Maihar: Two children have died of suspected measles, and 17 have been infected in Madhya Pradesh's Maihar, prompting district authorities to shut down all schools in the eight villages for three days, a health official said.

A medical team has been deployed to prevent the further spread, the official said.

"Two children, one of them seven years old, died of suspected measles on February 14 and 16. Another 17 were found to be infected in eight villages," the chief medical and health officer (CMHO) LK Tiwari said. Of those infected, seven have been hospitalised, he said.

Based on a report, the collector has ordered the closure of all government and private schools in the eight affected villages for three days starting today and sought a survey of the habitations in the five-km radius of these villages, the official said. The collector has also banned gatherings of children at any function in the affected areas, he said. Samples have been collected from the infected and sent to All India Institute of Medical Sciences in Bhopal for examination, he said. A team from the World Health Organisation is also expected to visit the affected villages today, the official said.

## Congress' MLA's meeting convened today

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Congress is trying to show unity amid speculations about former Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Kamal Nath and his son MP Nakul Nath joining BJP. State in-charge Bhanwar Jitendra Singh has called a meeting on Tuesday. All MLAs and senior leaders will be present in this meeting.

State in-charge Bhanwar Jitendra Singh is on a visit to Bhopal today and will meet Congress workers throughout the day. The Congress banner has also appeared in which Kamal Nath is not visible.

State in-charge Bhanwar Jitendra Singh has been given responsibility regarding the news of split in MP Congress. Jitendra Singh will come to the capital Bhopal today where he will discuss one to one with the MLAs. Bhanwar Singh will hold a meeting of MLAs at 10.30 am. It is being told that the MLAs have been called to discuss the Lok Sabha elections and



Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra. Congress MP Rajmani Patel said- Kamal Nath has been fighting against the idea of spreading hatred in the country for a long time. It is difficult to expect that he will join BJP.

It is being told that Rahul Gandhi discussed with Kamal Nath on phone on Sunday. After this the political equations changed. Rahul told Nath that you have done a lot for the party and the country. The party has always respected us and will continue to respect us in the future too. After this, the issue of alleged defection got stuck.

If sources close to Kamal Nath are to be believed, he may announce his retirement from politics. One reason for this is that no consensus is being reached on the inclusion of Kamal Nath in BJP. Secondly, BJP does not want to anger a community because of the Sikh riots. In such a situation, they can send Chhindwara MP Nakul Nath to BJP.

## Demand to stop Patwari recruitment: Students demonstrated at Collectorate in Indore

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Youth under the leadership of National Educated Youth Union surrounded the collector office in Indore on Monday. The demonstration continued for about 3 hours. Their demand is that the results of the Patwari recruitment examination should be withheld. Also, the investigation report conducted regarding the recruitment examination should be made public.

Candidates from different recruitment examinations participated in the demonstration. The candidates raised slogans and sent the Joint Collector back who had come to collect the memorandum at 1 o'clock in the afternoon. They say that the memorandum will be submitted to Collector Ashish Singh only. Later the Collector called the union leaders for talks. Heavy police force also deployed on the spot during the demonstration.

Earlier, the candidates participating in the protest said that "Those who call Delhi the capital of Madhya Pradesh, those who call Mahakal Lok of Gujarat, who do not know how many districts are there in Madhya Pradesh? Madhya Pradesh is being pushed towards ruin by appointing such fake people. The protesters have demanded that the process of appointment for Patwari examination recruitment should be stopped today itself and an investigation should be done by constituting a SIT of experts under the leadership of MP High Court Chief Justice Ravi Malimath.



### DEMONSTRATION REGARDING THESE 13 DEMANDS

- The decision taken by the government to give appointments after declaring the Patwari exam result should be stopped immediately.
- The report of the Verma inquiry committee should be made public.
- The Patwari examination scam should be investigated afresh by constituting a SIT under the supervision of the Chief Justice of Madhya Pradesh.
- Recruitment should be done on 2000 posts of Madhya Pradesh Police Sub Inspector.
- All the vacant posts of Mandi Inspector, Labour, Inspector, Women Supervisor and other examinations conducted by ESB should be filled by releasing the calendar.
- The anti-copying law made by the Central Government should be immediately implemented in Madhya Pradesh.
- ESB exams should be conducted by reputed company (like TCS).
- Appointment should be given after releasing the pending results of all the examinations conducted by MP Constable and ESB.

## Lady Nurses learning stick and sword fighting in the government hospital of Ujjain

Team Absolute | Bhopal

There may be a need to use stick or sword even in the hospital...! It is possible that is why lady nurses in Ujjain are being given training in stick-wielding and fencing. Self-defense is being taught to nurses in the government hospital located in Madhav Nagar of the city. Chief Minister Dr. Mohan Yadav himself has ordered such training.

The first session of the training took place on 16 February in the hospital premises. Whose video has surfaced. Training sessions will take place every Friday. This is the first experiment of its kind in the state. In the first session, about 20 women staff learned how to use sticks. Trainer Muskaan Sisodia is teaching self-defense tips to nurses.

Hospital in-charge Dr. Vikram Raghuvanshi told that



the female nurses have night duty on a rotational basis. Nurses encounter all types of patients and their families during treatment including medical checkup. Even in the district hospital, incidents of fighting keep happening every day. Keeping this in mind, training is being given for self-defense. After lady staff, training will also be given to male staff nurses. A staff of 40 people will be trained in about five months. The beginning was made with the use of sticks. The hospital in-charge said that the patients should not face any problem during the training, hence the staff will be called only after the duty is completed. He told that at present, apart from lady nurses, lady doctors can also take training if they wish.

## Stringers will be empanelled in the news unit of Doordarshan Kendra, Bhopal.

Interested candidates can apply till March 5

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Stringers are being empanelled for compilation of news in the news unit of Doordarshan Kendra, Bhopal. Doordarshan Kendra Bhopal is inviting applications from applicants to keep its stringers in all the districts of the state. The applicant has to mention the name of the town and cities in his application form; From where he is interested to work for Doordarshan. More infor-

mation in this regard is available on Prasar Bharti website <http://prasarbharti.gov.in/pbv> agencies. Last date of application is 5th March 2024.

Pooja P Vardhan, Director News and Chief Doordarshan Center Bhopal said that interested candidates can get information related to Stringer Empanelment by visiting the vacancy section of Prasar Bharati website. It is mandatory to apply for new empanelment of stringers to old paneled stringers also.

## INNOVATIONS IN RADIODIAGNOSIS AND IMAGING: ABIR-2024 CONFERENCE AT AIIMS

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Two day, AIIMS Bhopal Endovascular and Interventional Radiology Conference (ABIR-2024) was successfully conducted on 17th and 18th February 2024, by the Department of Radiodiagnosis & Imaging, in collaboration with Indian Society of Vascular & Interventional Radiology (ISVIR) Chandigarh, Punjab and Himachal Pradesh State Chapter and Madhya Pradesh State Branch of Indian Radiological & Imaging Association.

A hands-on training workshop on Vascular and Nonvascular interventions was conducted on 17th February, by 25 Interventional Radiology experts of National and International repute, from all across India. 120 Radiology resident delegates were trained in minimally invasive and advanced Interventional Radiology treatments for stroke, cancer management, deep venous thrombosis, pulmonary embolism, laser and glue treatment of varicose veins etc.

Prof. (Dr.) Ajai Singh, CEO & Executive Director, AIIMS Bhopal inaugurated the work-

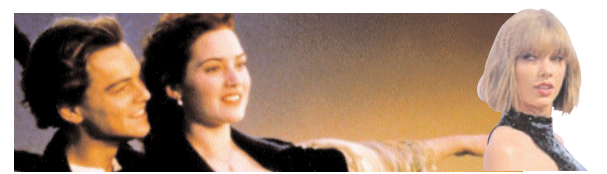


shop and emphasized the need of teamwork between Interventional Radiologists and other specialists for maximum benefit of treatment for patients at AIIMS Bhopal and for the State. A Continuing Medical Education (CME) programme was conducted on 18th February by expert interventional radiologists for participants that included clinical specialists like Neurologists, Neurosurgeons, General surgeons, gastro surgeons, cardiac surgeons, and

oncologists. Best treatment options were discussed with emphasis on the role and importance of interventional radiology in treating complex diseases like peripheral arterial disease, deep venous thrombosis, Pulmonary Embolism, gastrointestinal bleed, Intracerebral hemorrhage, acute stroke management and advanced cancer treatment. Dr. Sunil Malik, President, AIIMS Bhopal inaugurated the CME on 18th Feb and appreciated the efforts by the

Department of Radiodiagnosis in successfully conducting the conference and training resident doctors on Interventional Radiological procedures. Prof. (Dr.) Rajesh Malik, Head Radiodiagnosis and President State Chapter of IRIA and the Organizing chairperson of ABIR-2024, emphasized on the vital role played by the interventional radiologists and the importance of the outreach initiative taken up by the department for providing Interventional Radiological services upto the primary health care centers, by training young Radiologists by conducting regular hands on workshops on different interventional modules. Dr. Aman Kumar, Organizing secretary of ABIR-2024, gave an overview of the ABIR-2024 conference and the proposed training modules for future at AIIMS Bhopal.

The 2 day event of ABIR-2024, with an enthusiastic participation of 120 delegates, 25 Interventional Radiology expert trainers from all over the country and academic discussions with more than 30 Senior specialist doctors from Bhopal, was highly appreciated, with a strong demand from delegates for conducting more such academic events in the future.



# Taylor Swift, Travis Kelce take home big honours at People's Choice Awards

Los Angeles | Agencies

Singer-songwriter Taylor Swift and her beau Travis Kelce won big at the 2024 People's Choice Awards. While Swift won four awards — female artiste, pop artiste, concert tour and social celebrity, Kelce won one — athlete of the year, reports Billboard. Actor and author Simu Liu hosted the show from the Barker Hangar in Santa Monica, California. Liu was nominated in the movie performance category for his role in 'Barbie', but lost to America Ferrera. As per Billboard, Olivia Rodrigo, Nicki Minaj, Ice Spice and Jimmy Fallon each won two awards. Rodrigo took song ('Vampire') and album ('Guts'). Minaj took hip-hop artiste and collaboration song (the latter for 'Barbie World', a collab with Ice Spice featuring Aqua); Ice Spice won that award and also new artiste, Fallon won nighttime talk show ('The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon') and host (for 'That's My Jam'). Billie Eilish won the TV performance award for 'Swarm'. Selena Gomez took the female TV star award for 'Only Murders in the Building'. 'Billboard' further states that Kelly Clarkson won a daytime talk show for 'The Kelly Clarkson Show'. 'Barbie' won five awards — best movie, best comedy movie, male and female movie stars (Ryan Gosling and Margot Robbie) and movie performance (Ferrera). 'The Hunger Games: The Ballad of Songbirds & Snakes' won two awards — action movie and action movie star for Rachel Zegler. 'Only Murders in the Building', 'The Last of Us' and 'The Kardashians' also won two awards each. 'Only Murders in the Building' won the comedy show and female TV star for Selena. 'The Last of Us' won the drama show and male TV star for Pedro Pascal. 'The Kardashians' won reality show and reality TV star for Khloe Kardashian (who beat sister Kim). Jennifer Aniston presented the Comedy Icon Award to Adam Sandler. Victoria Monét presented the Music Icon Award to Lenny Kravitz, who performed on the show. Lainey Wilson and Kylie Minogue also performed.



## KATHRYN NEWTON CALLS MCU ROLE ONE OF HER BIGGEST GOALS

Los Angeles | Agencies

Actress Kathryn Newton, who played Cassie Lang in 2023's 'Ant-Man and the Wasp: Quantumania', has fulfilled a long-held dream by becoming part of the film franchise. She told Empire magazine: "I started watching those movies when I was eight years old. So they're a big part of my life. Honestly, one of the biggest goals of my career was to be a Marvel superhero. I would do it forever if I could."

Newton is determined to try her hand at different roles and on-screen challenges over the coming years. The actress was just four years old when she landed her first role in 'Bun-Bun', a short film, and she remains as enthusiastic about her work as she ever has been, reports aceshowbiz.com.

Recalling her debut appearance, Newton said: "I didn't even say my lines half of the time. I just thought I was dressing up."

Meanwhile, Newton previously said that her Marvel opportunity "came out of thin air." The actress also acknowledged that casting director Sarah Finn changed the course of her life. She told The Hollywood Reporter: "I had a meeting with Peyton Reed, our wonderful director, and it was really, really, really weird. It came out of thin air. That's how it felt to me."

"I think Sarah Finn saw something in me a long time ago," she continued. "I don't know what she saw in me, but I was lucky enough to be cast in 'Three Billboards Outside Ebbing, Missouri' and 'Pokemon Detective Pikachu', both of which were through Sarah Finn. There could be another one in there, but I think she's the reason that I got introduced to the MCU. And then Peyton also believed in me."

She added: "He saw me as Cassie Lang, and it just takes one person to change your life. And they both did."



## Selena Gomez strips for racy bathtub photo during Paris trip

Los Angeles | Agencies

Singer-actress Selena Gomez recently took to social media and shared a racy bathtub picture. The singer stripped off for the picture during a romantic trip to Paris. The 31-year-old shared a slideshow of snaps on Instagram of her enjoying a quick city break to the French capital, as she prepares to release her first new music since she started dating music producer Benny Blanco, reports 'Mirror.co.uk'. Selena could be seen looking chic in an all-black coffee-dipped croissant at a Parisian bakery, and posed in an outfit as she indulged in a coffee-dipped croissant at the Eiffel Tower, and posed in an orange walled room with her hair piled on top of her head. However, her fans were left gobsmacked when she continued her run of sharing racy snaps on social media, as she uploaded a photo of her posing naked with her back to the camera while in a huge bubble bath.

As per 'Mirror.co.uk', Selena looked overjoyed as she raised her arms high above her head while relaxing in the opulent bathroom, and many fans suggested it was boyfriend Benny who was behind the camera.

The singer wrote in the caption: "40 hours. Paris. LOVE ON 2/22".

She hinted at the countdown to the release of her new single 'Love On'.

Selena looked carefree and relaxed in the snaps, and showed off her long legs in a black mini skirt with thigh-high split, and finished off her Parisian-inspired outfit with a black biker leather jacket.

According to reports, her new single is inspired by the months she spent in Paris last year.

Fans quickly gushed over the star in the comments section, with one user simply writing: "That's my girl," while another said: "So bomb wow".

The 'Only Murders In The Building' star went public with her romance with Benny in December, and she recently heaped praise on her boyfriend in a gushing Instagram post on Valentine's Day.

Calling him "my best friend", she uploaded a series of snaps of her and Benny in a series of loved-up poses.



## 'Home Improvement' actor Zachery Ty Bryan arrested for DUI

Los Angeles | Agencies

'Home Improvement' actor Zachery Ty Bryan has landed in legal trouble once again as he was arrested for driving under influence in California. It's reported that the former star of 'Home Improvement' was arrested for a suspected DUI in La Quinta, California. According to TMZ, the 42-year-old star was booked by La Quinta Police around 2:36 a.m. on that day due to driving under the influence with three or more priors, reports aceshowbiz.com.

"Deputies assigned to the La Quinta Sheriff's Station conducted a traffic stop in the area of Washington Street and Calle Tampico in La Quinta on a vehicle suspected of being involved in a recent traffic collision," Sergeant Wendy Brito-Gonzalez told Fox News Digital.

"When deputies contacted the driver, they observed indications of impairment, leading to the driver's arrest for driving under the influence with priors," he continued, reports aceshowbiz.com.

"The driver, later identified as 42-year-old Zachery Bryan, was booked into a Riverside County jail."

Bryan was charged with a felony for driving under the influence of alcohol and/or drugs, in addition to a misdemeanor "contempt of court."

Despite the legal trouble, he appeared all smiles in his mugshot. The actor was booked into the John Benoit Detention Center at 5 a.m. before being released after posting \$50,000 in bail.

Bryan is set to appear at the court on April 23.

This wasn't the only legal issue that Bryan faced. Back in 2020, he was arrested for allegedly assaulting his then-girlfriend.

Bryan allegedly "assaulted the victim, impeded her breathing, and [took] the victim's phone from her when she tried to call 911."

The actor was later charged with two felonies and six misdemeanors relating to the incident: Two counts of menacing, two counts of assault in the fourth degree, felony strangulation, coercion, harassment and interfering with someone making a report. He pled guilty the following year to menacing and assault in the fourth degree.

In 2023, he was arrested on July 28 after "Eugene Police received report of a physical dispute between a male and adult female at a north Eugene residence."

## Nolan breaks his BAFTA 'curse', ending long dry spell with two big awards

London | Agencies

'Oppenheimer' director Christopher Nolan finally won a BAFTA trophy, two as a matter of fact, on Sunday, breaking what some admirers had lovingly described as a "curse", writes The Hollywood Reporter (THR). The director, one of the most prolific and best-known British film exports, had previously lost out on picking up a BAFTA trophy. Nolan, notes THR, had received three nominations for his 2010 hit 'Inception', but the movie lost out to 'The King's Speech' in the best film race. David Fincher earned the best director honour for 'The Social Network' and David Seidler won the best original screenplay BAFTA for 'The King's Speech'. In 2018, Nolan was also in the running for the best picture and director awards from the British Academy for his 2017 film 'Dunkirk'. In that case, 'Three Billboards Outside Ebbing, Missouri' was honoured as the best film, and Guillermo del Toro walked away with the director trophy for 'The Shape of Water'. This year, Nolan entered the BAFTA awards ceremony on Sunday with three nominations, for best picture, director and adapted screenplay, for 'Oppenheimer', bringing his total career



BAFTA noms count to eight, THR points out. The biographical epic led the pack of nominees with a total of 13. Early on during the awards ceremony on Sunday, the adapted screenplay honour went to Cord Jefferson for 'American Fiction'. But later, Nolan was unveiled as the best director honoree before ending the evening with a second trophy, the one for best film. "They are very heavy," Nolan told the press after the BAFTA ceremony, holding the two trophies. "I feel like I am getting a workout."

## Jeremy Renner shows up at People's Choice Awards: 'Feels good to be back'

Los Angeles | Agencies

Hollywood star Jeremy Renner took the stage at the Barker Hangar in Santa Monica, California, on Sunday to introduce the first award of the night at the recently concluded People's Choice Awards. He helped his fellow Marvel star Simu Liu kick off the ceremony, more than 13 months after the snow-plough accident that left Renner in critical condition. "Gotta say, it feels good to be back", Renner, 53, told the audience after walking out to thunderous applause, reports People magazine.

He said: "This year's been a heck of a journey and I'm happy to be here with you, the fans. You guys are the best. You guys really brought this year. You broke records. You turned movies into movements. We heard you all loud and clear, we heard you."

The dad of 10-year-old daughter Ava then turned to introducing the nominees for TV performance of the year.

"Right now I get the privilege of celebrating the most powerful movie performances on screen," Renner continued. "So, are you ready for the first award of the night?"

As per People, Renner announced that



Billie Eilish beat out Queen Charlotte: A Bridgerton Story's Adjoa Andoh, Ayo Edebiri from The Bear, The Morning Show's Jon Hamm, Matt Bomer of Fellow Travelers, Only Murders in the Building's Meryl Streep, Steven Yeun from Beef and Storm Reid of The Last of Us for her performance in Swarm. As Eilish, 22, made her way to the stage to accept her award, Renner stepped back and hugged his Avengers co-star Tom Hiddleston — who gave him a standing ovation earlier — as he headed backstage. Hiddleston, 43, went on to accept the sci-fi/fantasy show of the year for Loki.

**ABSOLUTE PIC OF THE DAY**

**Karishma K Tanna**





## Matsuyama takes historic ninth PGA TOUR victory at Genesis, Theegala 37th

**Los Angeles** | Agencies

Japan's star Hideki Matsuyama secured a historic three-stroke victory at The Genesis Invitational to become the leading Asian golfer with the most PGA TOUR titles with an unprecedented nine career wins. The 31-year-old started the final round six shots off the lead but put together one of the greatest rounds at the iconic Riviera Country Club in Los Angeles with a sensational 9-under 62 to win comfortably from Will Zalatoris (69) and Luke List (68). Overnight leader Patrick Cantlay finished tied fourth after a 72. The win was worth \$4 million from the \$20 million purse and moves him to No. 20 in the world with the entire major season ahead of him. Matsuyama now has 18

wins worldwide, eight on the Japan Golf Tour and the unofficial Hero World Challenge, also hosted by Tiger Woods. Indian-American Sahith Theegala (72-69-70-71) at 2-under had an average week in T-37th place, while World No. 1 Scottie Scheffler (66) was T-10 and Rory McIlroy (70) was T-24. Earlier tournament host Tiger Woods withdrew from the event in the second round due to illness. Matsuyama's nine-birdie round without a bogey was the lowest final day score in history at Riviera and ended a frustrating two-year title drought. He broke a tie with Korea's K.J. Choi for most victories by an Asian player. His only disappointment was not being able to receive The Genesis Invitational trophy from tournament host Tiger Woods, who had to withdraw from the event on Friday due to ill-

ness. "You know, to win in this tournament was one of my goals ever since I became a pro. After Tiger being the host, that goal became a lot bigger. A little disappointed I wasn't able to take a picture with Tiger today," smiled Matsuyama, who won the Masters Tournament in 2021 to become Japan's first male major champion.

Woods did offer his congratulations to the newest PGA TOUR Signature event champion, who also became the second Asian to win The Genesis Invitational following Chinese Taipei's T.C. Chen in 1987. "Congratulations to @hidekiofficial on an incredible win at @thegenesisinv. I was watching all day and seeing a record breaking 62 and coming from six shots back is truly special," the American legend posted on X

## New Delhi to host Asian Track Cycling Championship from February 21

**Team Absolute** | New Delhi

India will be hosting the prestigious 43rd Asian Track Cycling Championship at the iconic IG Indoor Stadium in New Delhi from February 21 to 26, the Cycling Federation of India (CFI) announced on Monday. The championship will be staged at the state-of-the-art Indoor Cycling Velodrome, a legacy of the Commonwealth Games 2010, symbolising India's commitment to fostering sporting excellence. With nearly 500 riders from 18 countries competing across various categories, including Men Elite, Women Elite, Men Junior, Women Junior, and Para-cycling events, this championship is set to be Asia's most significant cycling extravaganza in the Olympic and Paralympic qualifier year. The championship also holds significance as it serves as the final Track Continental Championship before the Paris Olympics. The points accrued by the riders will play a pivotal role in determining their rankings for the Olympic qualification process, adding an extra layer of intensity to the competition. The event will have a highly competitive field with participants from leading cycling nations such as China, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Kazakhstan and Iran in the fray. Notable riders from China, Korea, Hong Kong, and Malaysia, including former world champions and Olympic medalists, will vie for top honours, promising thrilling battles on the track. The total participant countries are Nepal, Kazakhstan, China, Hongkong, Korea, Thailand, Iran, Chinese Taipei, Japan, Bangladesh, Uzbekistan, Malaysia, UAE, Laos, Saudi Arab, Indonesia, Macau China & the

host India.

### Indian Contingent

The Indian team, led by the formidable Sprint team comprising former Junior world No.1 Ronaldo Singh, along with David Beckham, Rojit Singh, and Esow Alben, carries high hopes for a podium finish. With talents like Dhandhya J.P, the last Asian Championship's medalist, in their ranks, India aims for gold in this category. Under the expert guidance of renowned coach Kevin Sireau, a two-time Olympic medalist and six-time World medalist, the Indian contingent of 60 members, including 42 riders, is primed to deliver their best-ever performance on the Asian stage.

In a testament to inclusivity, six countries, including India, will compete in Para-cycling events, showcasing the spirit of determination and resilience that defines the sport.

Maninder Pal Singh, Secretary General, CFI said during a press conference in Delhi on Monday, "The 43rd Asian Track Cycling Championships represent a significant milestone for cycling in Asia. We are confident that the event will provide an exciting platform for athletes to compete at the highest level and inspire the next generation of cyclists."

On the occasion, Onkar Singh, Secretary General, Asian Cycling Confederation said, "The Asian Cycling Confederation is delighted to collaborate with India in hosting the 43rd Asian Track Cycling Championships. We extend our heartfelt gratitude to the organizers and look forward to witnessing thrilling competitions that showcase the rich diversity and talent of Asian cycling."

## Bumrah to be rested for fourth Test against England: Report

**Team Absolute** | New Delhi

Indian pacer Jasprit Bumrah is likely to be rested for the fourth Test against England, starting from Friday, at the JSCA International Stadium Complex, Ranchi, say reports. Bumrah is the leading wicket-taker of the ongoing series with 17 scalps at an impressive average of 13.64, and has already bowled 80.5 overs across the three games thus far. The Indian team will leave Rajkot on Tuesday, while Bumrah is unlikely to travel with the team. The decision to rest Bumrah is part of workload management by the Indian team, a Cricbuzz report said.

His participation for the fifth Test could depend on the result of the fourth Test.

There is currently no indication whether the team management will opt for a replacement player for the fast bowler.

But in Bumrah's absence, pacer Mukesh Kumar, who was earlier released from the squad for the third Test to participate in Ranji game for Bengal, is expected to rejoin the team in Ranchi.



## Enjoyed hitting Anderson for three sixes: Yashasvi Jaiswal

**Team Absolute** | Rajkot

Left-handed opener Yashasvi Jaiswal, who hit an unbeaten 214 in India's 434-run win over England in the third Test, said he enjoyed hitting veteran fast-bowler James Anderson for three sixes during his enthralling knock.

After retiring hurt on 104 due to back cramps on day three's play, Jaiswal made 214 off 236 balls in India's second innings total of 430/4 declared, making a double century for the second match in a row. Jaiswal, who scored 171 on debut against the West Indies in July last year, hit 14 fours and 12 sixes, and levelled with Wasim Akram for the world record for most sixes in a Test innings.

"I think I was in a really good zone. I felt if he was going to bowl there, I would need to play my shots. He is a world class bowler and I made sure that if I were going to hit him, I did it well. I was just trying my best and I really enjoyed that," said Jaiswal to broadcasters JioCinema after the match ended.

In seven Tests, Jaiswal has now made 861 runs at an average of 71.75, including three hundreds, all of which have been converted to 150-plus scores. Jaiswal is also the first Test player to hit more than 20 sixes



in a series.

"In India, when you grow up, you work really hard for each and everything. Even when getting the bus you have to work really hard to get on the bus. You have to work really hard to get to the train and auto and everything and I have done that since my childhood."

"I know how important every innings is and that's why I work hard in my (practice) sessions and every innings counts for me and my team. That is my biggest motivation to play for my country and I just make sure that whenever I'm there I need to give my 100% and then enjoy," he added.

His 214 not out also made him the third youngest Test batter in the world to record two double centuries in the format after Sir Donald Bradman and Vinod Kambli. Jaiswal also became the third Indian batter to make back-to-back double hundreds in Tests after Kambli and Virat Kohli.

Talking about his 172-run partnership in the second innings with Sarfaraz Khan, who made 62 and 68 not out on Test debut, Jaiswal said, "I am really happy for Sarfaraz (Khan). He played really well in both the first and second innings. When I was in the middle with him, he played some really good shots."

"We have been playing together since the past three or four years. We know how to play along with each other and that's why we run really well between the wickets. Of course, we had planned about which bowler to target and how to build the innings. Overall, it was really good to bat with him."

Jaiswal further said he is learning more things about batting from head coach Rahul Dravid and batting coach Vikram Rathour. "They (Rahul Dravid and Vikram Rathour) have been incredible. I have spoken to me about my mindset, how to think about the game, to read the wicket and take the game as deep as I can. They have given me the freedom to bat."

"They say if you think you can play that shot well then make sure that you're committing to it. And I think they know that I play the sweep and reverse sweep. I have been really enjoying it. It's been a while that I have played under Rahul sir and Vikram sir."

"As a cricketer, I always back my emotions. Sometimes I do well and sometimes I don't and during those times in particular, the way they talk about cricket and other things is really good to see. So, it has been an incredible experience," he concluded.

## La Liga: Real Madrid drop points, Barca and Atletico win

**Madrid** | Agencies

Real Madrid dropped two points in the race for the La Liga title, being held to a 1-1 draw away to Rayo Vallecano. The draw lifts Carlo Ancelotti's team six points clear of second-placed Girona, who have a difficult game away to Athletic Bilbao on Monday night, but means they miss the chance to go eight clear and increase the pressure on their nearest rivals in the title race.

Real Madrid got off to a perfect start on Sunday night when Mato Joselu slid them ahead from a low Fede Valverde cross after just two minutes.

Inigo Perez was making his debut as Rayo coach, and his players responded with an impressive display, getting their reward in the 27th minute when Eduardo Camavinga was penalized for handball and Raul de Tomas leveled from the spot, reports Xinhua.

In injury time, Madrid right-back Dani Carvajal was sent off after receiving two yellow cards in two minutes, and he will miss next weekend's home game against Sevilla.



On Saturday, Robert Lewandowski scored a twice-taken 97th-minute penalty to give FC Barcelona a 2-1 win over Celta Vigo.

Lewandowski had put Barca ahead in the 44th minute, before Iago Aspas' 200th goal for Celta leveled the score in the 46th minute.

Atletico Madrid impressed with a 5-0 win at home to Las Palmas, with forwards Marcos Llorente and Angel Correa each scoring twice.

Merino's injury-time header gave Real Sociedad a 2-1 win away to Mallorca after Antonio Sanchez had given the home side a fourth minute lead.

Real Betis and Alaves drew Sunday's final game 0-0, with the visitors frustrating Betis, who have had a poor week after losing at home in the UEFA Conference League on Thursday night to Dinamo Zagreb.

Sunday's game between second-bottom Granada and bottom side Almeria ended in a 1-1 draw, which helps neither club's aim to avoid relegation.

Valencia dominated at home to Sevilla, but were unable to beat visiting keeper Orjan Nyland, who made several important saves to help his side continue to edge away from the relegation zone.

Ante Budimir scored two second-half goals as Osasuna beat Cadiz 2-0 to stretch the visitors' winless run to 21 games. Cadiz have gone five games without scoring.

The round of matches began on Friday night with a 1-1 draw between Villarreal and Getafe.

## 'Anyone who thinks T20 is a better game than the 50-over game is off their rocker', says Ian Chappell

**Team Absolute** | New Delhi

Former Australia captain Ian Chappell said he fears for the future of the 50-over format due to the attitude of the administrators. His comments come after the Chappell-Hadlee Trophy would be contested for T20Is for the first time through the upcoming series between Australia and New Zealand, starting in Wellington on Wednesday.

Since its inception in 2004, the Chappell-Hadlee Trophy was always for ODIs between Australia and New Zealand. Statements from Cricket Australia (CA) and New Zealand Cricket (NZC) said a points system will also be used for future back-to-back ODI and T20I series between the Trans-Tasman rivals.

"They certainly have T20 cricket at the top of the pole, and there's more and more T20 cricket being played and less and less 50-over cricket. Anyone who thinks T20 is a better game than the 50-over game is off their rocker. The administrators have let 50-over cricket go, and I think they've let it go to the point where they may not be able to resurrect it," said Chappell on Wide World of Sports (WWS).



Australia are the current holders of the Chappell-Hadlee trophy, which was last contested for three ODIs in Cairns in September 2022. Chappell is also not convinced the 50-over format can ever regain the popularity it once held previously.

"I'd like to think that you'll get good crowds at the 50-over game because it's a very good game of cricket - the next best thing to a Test match. But it's not in the mind of the administrators at the moment, and whether you can turn the clock back, I'm not so sure."

"I don't see the World Cup going up in smoke - it's too important and it's still pretty well attended. But if you're going to have the World Cup, you've got to have the players playing some matches. But will it have the importance that it used to have? I'm very doubtful."

Chappell also feels that the popularity of T20s and more recently, of T10 cricket, also present a huge threat to the game. "As a cricketer, I want to walk off the field at the end of the day's play thinking I've earned my beer. I don't think if I played a 20-over game and I faced four balls, that I would walk off the field thinking I've earned my beer."

"Where are T20 leagues popping up everywhere, and now you've got a few T10 leagues... what are you going to do if the crowd get bored with T20? Are you going to cut it back to T10 and then T5? How are you going to play a T5 game, walk off the field, and think you've earned your beer?"



## Ayesha Takia slams trolls for picking on her looks

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actress Ayesha Takia, who was recently spotted at the Mumbai airport, has slammed trolls who attacked her for her looks.

As she checked-in at Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport recently, her photos and videos went viral, with a certain section of Internet users commenting on the actress' looks. Many trolls commented on her pictures accusing her of having plastic surgery and using botox.

However, the actress decided to school the trolls as she took a stand for herself on social media and said she would not be returning to films any time soon.

The actress took to her Instagram and penned a long note. The actress revealed in her post that she was on her way to Goa for a medical emergency.

She wrote: "Need to say this, I rushed to Goa two days ago... Had a medical emergency in my family... My sister has literally been in the hospital. Amidst all this, I remember being stopped by paps and posing for them for basically a few seconds before flying off. Turns out there are no other important issues in the country except dissecting my looks."

She went on to clarify that she won't be making her comeback in



Bollywood, as she wrote: "Been bombarded by viral ridiculous opinions of how ppl think I should have looked and don't. Literally get over me yaar, I have zero interest in doing any films or any comeback like people are saying. I'm living my life happily, never want to be in the limelight, not interested in any fame, don't wanna be in any film...So chill.. Pls feel free to not care about me at all (sic)"

She further mentioned: "Expecting a girl whose mostly been seen in her teens to look identical even after 15

years...How unrealistic and ridiculous are these ppl...Lol please find better things to do with ur time rather than pick apart good looking women, I'm blessed with a fabulous life and do not need your opinions, save it for those interested."

I'm sending back all your shitty energy. Do better ppl, get a hobby, eat a fun meal, talk to ur friend, smile, whatever it takes to not feel so unhappy that u need to tell a gorgeous happy woman how she's not looking like u wanted.

## Deepika in Sabyasachi sari presents Glazer award for 'The Zone of Interest'

Los Angeles | Agencies

Indian actress Deepika Padukone presented the honour of Best Film not in English language to Jonathan Glazer for 'The Zone of Interest' at the BAFTA Awards.

The actress looked every inch gorgeous as she took the spotlight dressed in a silver shimmery sequined saree with a matching blouse by ace couturier Sabyasachi at the event.

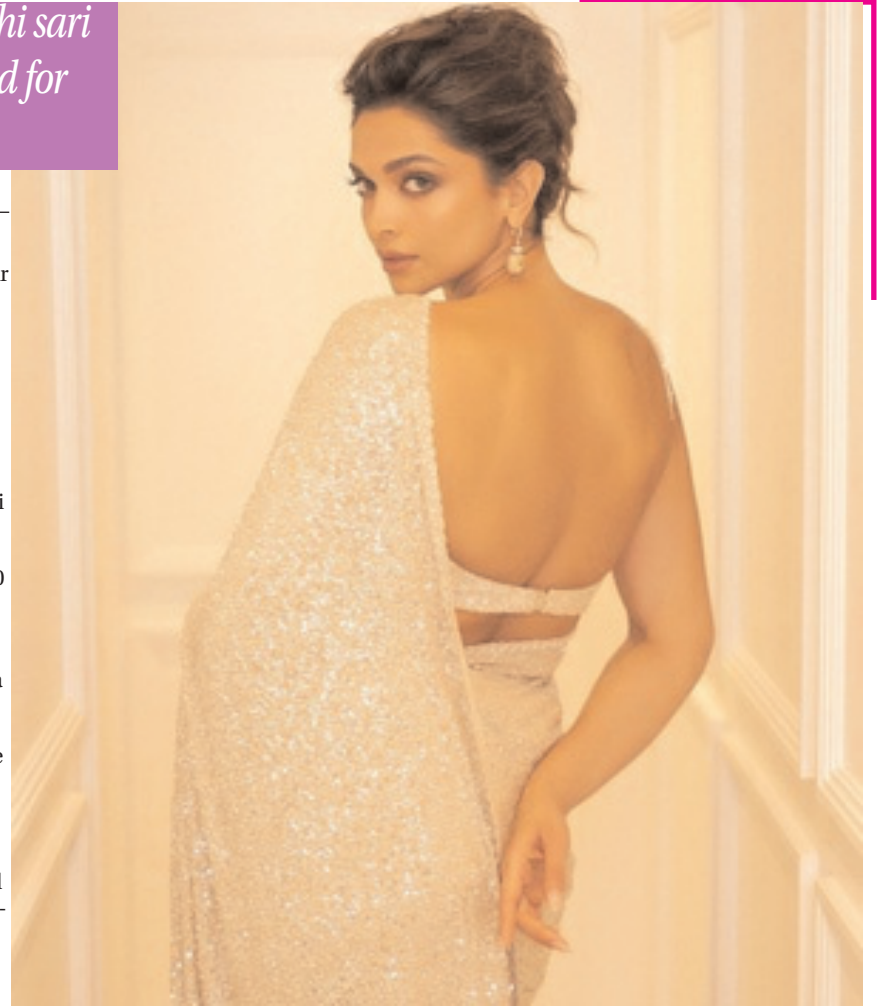
"The Zone of Interest" was contending alongside films such as "20 Days in Mariupol", "Anatomy of a Fall", "Past Lives" and "Society of the Snow".

This is not the first time Deepika has taken the center stage for an international award event.

Just last year, she was seen at the Oscars, when she introduced the song 'Nattu Nattu' from the movie 'RRR'.

Talking about 'The Zone of Interest', it is a UK-Polish historical drama about Auschwitz concentration camp.

The film is based on the 2014 novel by Martin Amis.



## Sonarika Bhadoria ties knot with Vikas Parashar in a royal-themed wedding

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actress Sonarika Bhadoria tied the knot with her longtime boyfriend and businessman Vikas Parashar in Ranthambore, Rajasthan on Sunday, in a grand royal-themed wedding.

The wedding video which is doing rounds on the internet, features the couple exchanging vows in a grand royal-themed wedding, marking the beginning of a new chapter in their journey together.

For the bridal look, the 'Devon Ke Dev...Mahadev' actress wore a red and golden heavily embroidered lehenga. The groom opted for a golden sherwani.

In the midst of the exquisite grandeur and fireworks, Vikas and Sonarika stood intertwined, their eyes reflecting a cascade of emotions. As tears of joy glistened in Sonarika's eyes, she hugged her partner.

Surrounded by the majestic ambiance, they sealed their bond with the ritual of exchanging garlands.

Fans showered love and blessings on the newly wedded couple.

Sonarika had earlier treated her fans with the pictures of their haldi ceremony. For the ritual, she wore a pre-draped yellow saree with pearl blouse. For the



jewellery she opted for floral ornaments, and kept her locks open.

Vikas wore a yellow half sleeves kurta and white dhoti.

## Rakul, Jacky nuptials kick off with sundowner haldi near Goa's Arossim beach

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Bollywood star couple Rakul Preet Singh and Jacky Bhagnani's wedding festivities have begun with their Haldi ceremony in Goa.

According to a source close to IANS, the couple, who are all set to tie the knot on February 21, are having their Haldi ceremony in the luxurious ITC Grand Goa, near Arossim Beach.

The couple are having a sundowner Haldi, which will be attended by their closest friends and families. A picture from the wedding festivities are doing the rounds, where a coconut featuring their initials "R" and "J" can be seen.

For the ultimate day, the couple will be having "gluten free, sugar free and healthy treats" along with other cuisines, keeping fitness in mind.

They chose Goa as the venue as the two had reportedly fallen in love in the same location. After dating for a few years, Rakul and Jacky will be having an eco-friendly wedding and will be resuming work right after getting married.



## Vidyut Jammwal: Proud to produce a film where women have equal opportunity in action



Team Absolute | New Delhi

With his unflinching stunts, it won't be wrong to say that Vidyut Jammwal's films have everything that titillates the action lovers in you.

However, in his next, it is not just the action star who will be keeping the audience at the edge of their seat, but his leading ladies. Nora Fatehi and Amy Jackson, too, will be raising the bar in this genre.

Vidyut, who is gearing up for his next 'Crakk - Jeetega Toh Jiyega', which he has bankrolled and starred in, said that he is proud to have produced a film "where

women have equal opportunity in action as men."

"In my movies, whether it was 'Commando 3' or 'Sanak', I have always believed that women have been given an opportunity to perform action stunts in a secure and safe environment," Vidyut told.

The actor-producer said that Nora and Amy have performed excellently in the film, which is slated to release on February 23.

"I am very proud to produce a film in which we have given an equal screen space to women to perform action as the men have," he added. The film, touted as a sports

action thriller, has an international feel to it, courtesy eighth international athletes and international choreographers hailing from Spain, South Africa, Italy, Germany, and other places.

Talking about what makes the film so big, the actor said: "We got the best from across the world to be a part of the movie. The kind of action and stunts we have done has never been seen in Indian cinema or internationally."

"I say it with great belief as you must have witnessed it in the trailer and teaser. The action is something that has not been delivered before," he added.

## Rahul Vaidya shares photos with daughter Navya, wife; 'My World'

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Singer Rahul Vaidya on Monday shared a glimpse of his 'world'-- his actress wife Disha Parmar, and their newborn daughter, Navya in an adorable social media post.

On February 12, the couple delighted their fans as they revealed the face of their daughter Navya, while en route to Doha. The singer, known for his tracks like 'Baaton Ko Teri (Unplugged)', 'Ek Rupaiya', took to Instagram and shared a series of pictures. The photos show the family in pink outfits. Rahul is wearing a pink



tee shirt, and blue denims. Disha is sporting a pink co-ord set, while their baby girl is wearing a cute pink and white frock. The duo are seen showering love on Navya and kissing her. The post is captioned: "My WORLD," followed by a red heart, and a child emoji. Disha Parmar and Rahul Vaidya tied the knot in 2021. The couple had announced the birth of their child on September 20.

## Ila Arun: Every woman in India is an 'Aarya'

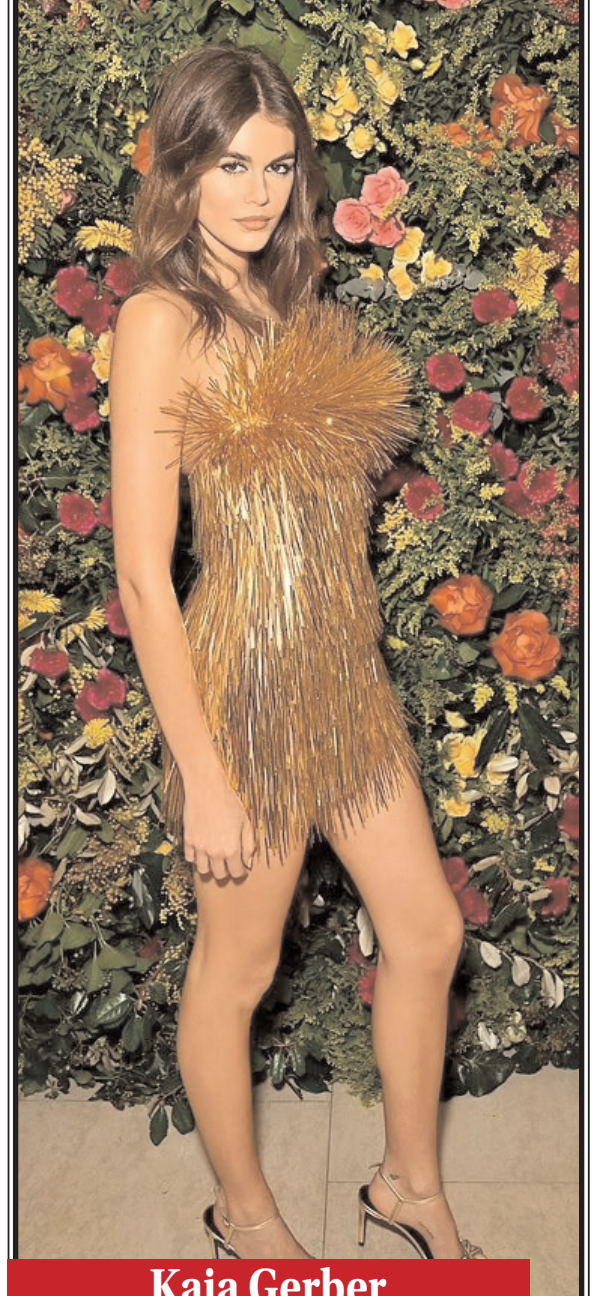
Team Absolute | Mumbai

Veteran actress Ila Arun believes every woman in India possesses a courageous soul akin to Aarya's. The actress is currently seen as Nalini in the crime thriller drama 'Aarya: Antim Vaar'. The show is headlined by actress Sushmita Sen, who plays the titular character of Aarya Sareen. Ila said:

"Aarya in the show has the power to combat every struggle, and I have learned that from Aarya. It gave me strength on how to be strong for my daughter and be energetic. When it's the question of maintaining a family, every woman in India is an Aarya." "If some injustice is happening with her family, she'll come to the roads and fight; if her house breaks, she tries to build it up," said Ila. Ila further said that Aarya will remain in her heart always. "I wish to work with Ram Madhvan, his unit, and Sushmita again and again," she added.



## INSTAGRAM PIC OF THE DAY



Kaia Gerber