

absolute india

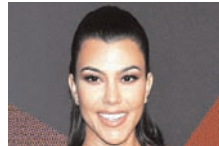
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COP15: Installation calls to secure nature-positive world by 2030

TO NOURISH THE NATURE

The jenga tower has been installed by the Nature Positive pavilion, and highlights the call from more than 350 civil society organisations -- representing humanitarian, development and conservation organisations; faith groups; indigenous peoples; business coalitions; artists; youth; and more -- for governments to strengthen the draft global biodiversity framework to secure a nature-positive world by 2030, in support of climate action and the Sustainable Development Goals.

MONTREAL | Agencies

A giant jenga tower is on display at The Palais des congrès de Montréal where the UN biodiversity conference is taking place for COP15 from December 7-19. The installation made of recycled cardboard boxes resembles the complex web of life and the risk "we all face if we continue with a business-as-usual approach to our relationship with nature". Each brick nudged out of place represents the precarious position "we put our planet in, with each species lost, ecosystem degraded and livelihood ruined because of human-caused damage to biodiversity". "The jenga tower serves as a stark reminder to delegates in Montreal of the very life support systems we all rely on. By removing the foundational building blocks of nature, we risk destroying our societies and humankind. But there is still time to act. Governments meeting in Montreal this week can set a new course for our future and our chil-



children's future," said WWF International Director General, Marco Lambertini. "COP15 must be the moment the world comes together to secure an ambitious global biodiversity agreement, capable of reversing nature loss

and delivering a nature-positive world this decade." "Unlike a round of jenga, the biodiversity crisis is not a game we can afford to lose. Nature provides everything our societies and economies are built upon, yet we are dangerously

close to bringing down this complex, life-sustaining system," said Eva Zabej, Executive Director, Business for Nature. "This COP offers an unmissable opportunity for governments to agree a Paris-style goal for nature that mobilises all parts of society towards halting nature loss this decade. Business stands ready to play its part, provided ambitious policies are agreed in the coming weeks to steer corporate action. Right now, companies are calling for the political leadership that will empower them to contribute to a nature-positive future." Andrew Deutz, Director of Global Policy, Institutions and Conservation Finance at The Nature Conservancy, said this jenga represents the dangerous game "we play with biodiversity". "Leaders must take integrated action at COP15 and secure a transformational agreement to reverse the loss of nature and deliver a just and necessary transition to a world where we live in harmony with nature," added Mark Gough, CEO of the Capitals Coalition.

FIFA WORLD CUP



Morocco stuns Portugal, become first African team to enter semis

DOHA | Agencies

Youssef En-Nesyri's towering header late in the first half gave first-time quarter-finalists Morocco 1-0 victory over Portugal on Saturday. En-Nesyri, who had twice headed over the crossbar earlier, leapt higher than both Portugal goalkeeper Diogo Costa and defender Ruben Dias to put Morocco ahead in the 42nd minute. Portugal forward Joao Felix came close to opening the scoring on two occasions, forcing Morocco goalkeeper Yassine Bounou into an early save before his strike in the 31st minute took a deflection and narrowly missed the target. The winner of the match will face either France or England, who play later on Saturday late night, in the semi-final.

RONALDO LEAVES THE PITCH IN TEARS

Portugal's defeat meant the end of the line for Cristiano Ronaldo at the World Cup. Starting on the bench, Ronaldo came on as a sub early in the second half, but couldn't help his side's case against Morocco. Post match, the number seven was seen leaving the pitch in tears.



PM National Apprenticeship Mela to be held in 197 districts of India

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Aiming to boost career opportunities for India's youth under Skill India Mission, the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE) will hold the Pradhan Mantri National Apprenticeship Mela (PMNAM) on December 12, across 197 locations in 25 states and Union Territories. Several local businesses have been invited to be a part of the mela to provide local youth with the opportunity to shape their careers through apprenticeship training. The event will witness the participation of various companies from different sectors. Participating companies will have the chance to meet potential apprentices on a single platform and choose applicants on the spot and provide them with an opportunity to be a part of their organisation. Candidates who have



passed Class 5 to Class 12 and have skill training certificates, or ITI Diploma holders or graduates can apply during this apprenticeship mela. The candidates must carry three copies of their resume, three copies of all the mark-sheets and certificates, photo ID (Aadhaar card/driving licence etc) and three passport size photographs to the respective venues. Expressing his views on the Pradhan Mantri National Apprenticeship Mela, Atul Kumar Tiwari, Secretary,

Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship, said "India has often been compared to other developed economies in terms of apprenticeship opportunities for the youth of today. To bridge this gap, we are trying our best to make apprenticeship opportunities reachable to trainees and students." With our continuous efforts, our goal is to raise apprenticeship opportunities in India to 10 lakhs by end of 2022, and to 60 lakhs by 2026, added the official.

Kashmir valley soon to get connected by train with rest of India

After completion, this line will be an all-weather convenient and cost-effective mass transportation system and will act as a catalyst for the overall development of the northern most alpine region of the country, reported the Greater Kashmir. The project has great significance for security and socio-economic development. It can play important role in rapid industrialization, movement of raw materials and finished products from J-K and encourage trade and tourism in the region apart from providing an opportunity for employment, an official said.



Team Absolute | Srinagar

Jammu and Kashmir will have a lot of positive things to look forward in 2023. The Kashmir valley will get connected with rest of India through train as all the bottlenecks at the railway tracks would be removed. In this direction, the Railways recently completed a major portion of work on the longest rail tunnel in the country in the Ramban sector of Jammu region. The project manager of this tunnel said that major portion of the work on the rail tunnel which is 12.75 km long in the entire Udhampur-Baramulla-Srinagar Rail (UBSR) Link in Jammu and Kashmir, has been completed. The engineers have named this tunnel as T49, and they are very keen to complete it as soon as possible so that Kashmir valley is linked by train to the rest of the country. The project manager said that it was very difficult to complete so much of

work on this tunnel as it surpasses the Peer Panjal Tunnel (11.2 km) in length and the work has been very challenging so far. This all-weather and cost-effective connectivity shall prove to be a boon for the economy of Jammu and Kashmir besides catalysing industrialisation, movement of raw materials, trade, tourism and employment generation as well, stated a monthly newsletter covering government policies and initiatives. Sustainable connectivity to this region is very important for national security, prosperity and socio-economic development of the region. Despite vast resources, Kashmir valley lagged behind in terms of development due to a lack of railway connectivity. Time to time, the Central and the UT governments made serious efforts to establish rail connectivity to the region for which a number of railway projects have been initiated which

Further proposals emerged in the mid-20th century, but it wasn't until 1994 that Indian Railway Minister Jaffer Sharief made headway in building a line to Baramulla and the Kashmir Valley. In 2001, the Kashmir Railway received National Project Status from the Central government and has seen unlimited funds provided to it. The Railway Ministry itself does not have sufficient funds to tackle the project. Institutions like IIT Delhi, IIT Roorkee, Geographical Survey of India and DRDO are providing expertise in the project planning and its implementation. This route will also see the construction of the world's highest railway bridge and India's first cable-stayed Railway Bridge, reported the Greater Kashmir. It is one of the most remarkable projects by the government and once completed will be revolutionary for the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir.

are under execution in different stages. Constructing the railway route to this isolated region has involved significant engineering challenges. Far from being an ordinary scheme, the 345 km route crosses major earthquake zones, and is subjected to extreme temperatures of cold and heat, as well as inhospitable terrain.

THREE UP STUDENTS MAKE SHOES TO TACKLE EVE TEASERS

Gorakhpur: They are not Cinderella's shoes but shoes that are valuable for women. Three final-year students of Electronics and Computer Engineering at the Institute of Technology and Management (ITM) have designed shoes for women that have an electronic device connected to them. This device sends an alert to the nearest police station and the relatives of the woman wearing them whenever it senses any threat of abduction. Women can also give an electric shock to miscreant(s) through them if they feel threatened. The shoe -- designed by Aditya Singh, Shubham Lal, and Sandeep Kumar Yadav -- was displayed during the Inception Day programme of Gorakhpur Industrial Development Authority (GIDA). Speaking on the innovation, Aditya Singh said, "The electronic device fitted into the bottom of the shoe has a 3.7 voltage battery and a generator system with direct current. At the press of a button, a sharp pin comes out from the bottom of the shoe. This pin, when in contact with an offender, triggers an electric shock." He further explained, "The shoe also comes with a GPS which is connected to the mobile phone of the person wearing it through Bluetooth. In uneasy situations, our feet release sweat. This activates the automatic sensor panel to send an alert to the police and the woman's relatives." The shoe has been designed under the guidance of Diptee Ojha, Head of Department of the Electronics and Computer Engineering department, and Vineet Rai, one of the teachers of the three young innovators.



Looking for realistic life-size elephant model? Thrissur is the answer

THRISSUR | Agencies

For those interested in realistic life-size models of elephants -- a quintessential part of Kerala, Thrissur holds the answer as a group of four youths here are engaged in creating such realistic made-to-order artworks. With five such art-works to their credit, the group is in the process of creating more. The fifth one has just been delivered to a temple near their residence in Chalakudy for Rs 5 lakh. Prasanth, Jobin, Jinesh and Santo -- all close friends in their late thirties -- have decided to turn their passion into profit. Speaking to correspondent, Prasanth stated that for long, they had been toying with the idea of making a realistic elephant which finally became a reality five years back when they made their first model, albeit a small one. "We then injected realism into it and decided to go for a normal size elephant and planned to make one over 10-feet tall for a living touch. It was a success and since then, we have been improving upon the art. The most recent one which has just been delivered has moving ears,



eyes, tail and trunk," said Prasanth. It takes about two months to complete the work on one elephant, he added. "A 10.4-feet tall elephant weighs about 800 kilograms and the major weight comes from the pipe frame structure. About a 100 litres of rubber latex is used besides sponges and other mechanical devices for the movement of the eyes, ears, trunk and tail," added Prasanth. Currently, they have six orders of which three are in various stages of creation. "Our workshop has space only for three models. Every day for two hours, we work on our product as Jinesh and Santo are employed at the Apollo Tyres

unit near here. We have two others helping us at the workshop," said Prasanth. The elephants, he said, can be placed both -- indoor and outdoor --. But since being out for very long might damage the models, we have the placed wheels so it can be shifted around conveniently when needed. "Our next challenge is to design elephants with moveable limbs as many prospective clients have demanded. We are already working on it and hope to achieve it shortly," added Prasanth. Most of their clients, he said, are resort owners who insist on heavy and sturdy models which can withstand the weight of five people.

'KBC14' contestant says he'll use prize money for wife's treatment, moves Big B

Mumbai: Megastar Amitabh Bacchan got emotional listening to the story of 'Kaun Banega Crorepati 14' contestant Harsh Kumar Singh. He told the host that he took over the hotseat so that he could use the winning amount for the treatment of his wife. Saying that he could understand his condition as kidney transplant is not easy and needs a lot of expenditure, Big B extended his best wishes for winning the amount needed for the treatment of his wife. A 36-year-old manager of SEO and growth at an online platform shared with the host about what he is going through in his life and why he wants to win the game. He said: "Sir, all of us have planned to do something with our lives. Many times we are successful and a lot of times we are not. A year after my marriage, my wife's chronic kidney disease got detected, and basically, the kidneys were failing. On the 19th of this month, she had her transplant." "The treatment needs a lot of money and somehow I feel 'KBC' is a platform where we can win a good amount of money with the power of knowledge and do something with our lives." Furthermore, he added that he wants to invest his winning amount to complete his education. "I have an interest in the technical side of things as well. I was studying to create websites and when the opportunity of KBC struck, I found it to be important. Thus, I put my studies aside and focused on it and strove towards it. To be very honest, I have had a good experience and so today I am here."





ED SEIZES PROPERTIES WORTH RS 152.31 CR OF BAGHEL'S DEPUTY SECY, OTHERS

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Saturday said that they have attached movable and immovable properties worth Rs 152.31 crore belonging to Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel's Deputy Secretary, Saumya Chaurasia, and others in connection with a money laundering case.

The properties include cash, jewellery, flats, coal washeries and plots of land located in Chhattisgarh.

"Agriculture lands admeasuring 63.38 acre in Hirri, Potiya and Sevati, Durg; agriculture lands admeasuring 10 acre in Rasni & Arang, Raipur; commercial land admeasuring 12 acre in Thakuraintola, Durg have been attached," said the ED official.

The ED in September had arrested Chhattisgarh-based IAS officer Sameer Vishnoi, Sunil Agarwal of Indramani Group and one Laxmikant Tiwari. In October, absconding accused Suryakant



Tiwari surrendered before a court and was arrested.

IAS officer Ranu Sahu was reportedly missing but she wrote a letter to

ED in October and told the officials that she was on medical leave. Later ED had conducted search operations at her mother's house in the

third week of October.

Bishnoi was questioned by the ED officials regarding the alleged commission money he allegedly used to take in connection with coal mining. ED also raided locations in Chhattisgarh for two consecutive days and had recovered around Rs 4 crore. The Income Tax had earlier written a letter to the Chhattisgarh government in which it was alleged that a few officials very close to the Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel were involved in getting commission/bribe from coal and other businessmen. However, no action was taken by the state government in this regard.

According to the information, IAS officers J.P. Maurya, Ranu Sahu's premises were among those whose houses were raided by the federal anti-money laundering agency.

The ED team also searched the premises of three IPS officials. Earlier when the searches were conducted, Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel had termed it 'political raids'.

Authorities swing into action after chaos at Delhi airport

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Authorities swung into action following complaints of chaos at the Delhi airport.

A senior official of the Ministry of Civil Aviation said that Joint Secretary Rubina Ali and many senior officials visited T3 on Friday to inspect each passenger and baggage check point.

Moreover, DG, Bureau of Civil Aviation Security (BCAS) is visiting on Saturday.

Officials said that additional four traffic martials (totaling to 12 traffic martials on ground) are posted at the departure forecourt to avoid vehicular congestion at car lane.

Similarly, awareness posters at the entry gate for passengers to be ready with boarding cards and eight dedicated resources deployed at the entry gate to help passengers.



An additional X-ray machine has been installed in T3 Domestic; and additional manpower deployed to help passengers for tray preparation and congestion management.

Besides, awareness posters and mobile announcements are being undertaken to inform passengers about do's and don'ts. Officials said that for overall congestion reduction, discussions are being held with airlines to reduce flights during the peak hour.

Meanwhile, a spokesperson of Delhi airport said:

"We, along with stakeholders -- CISF and Immigration, are working constantly to cope with the demand which includes deployment of additional systems and manpower. We have deployed additional manpower to guide passengers, especially at the key choke points and shifted one additional X-Ray machine. Additional manpower requirements will also have to be addressed by all stakeholders, including CISF and Immigration, to further improve the situation."

6 vehicles carrying areca nuts burnt down in Mizoram

Aizawl | Agencies

Six vehicles carrying dry areca nuts were burnt down by "unidentified people" in Mamit district of Mizoram on Saturday, the police said.

Mamit district Superintendent of police Lalhangpui Pulamte said that no one was injured in the incident and none arrested yet.

"The six vehicles carrying the dry areca nuts, not locally grown, contained 20 cartons and 122 big bags. Police are yet to ascertain their destinations and have not yet identified the traders of these products," Pulamte told reporter.

She said that the police investigating the incidents and further details would be known after completion of



the probe. Another police official said that the trucks were set ablaze between Zawlnuam and Zamuang villages of Mamit District, bordering Assam, Tripura and Bangladesh.

The burning of the trucks happened two days after Mizoram Rajya Sabha MP K. Vanlalvena raised the plight of Mizoram and Tripura areca nut growers in the Parliament.

16 ARRESTED FOR KIDNAP OF A WOMAN IN HYDERABAD

Hyderabad | Agencies

Police have arrested 16 people in the dramatic kidnap of a woman by a mob from her house on the outskirts of Hyderabad, hours before her engagement.

Rachakonda police on Friday night rescued the 24-year-old, who was kidnapped by a group of about 50 to 80 people after barging into her house at Turkayamjal in Adibatla.

The youngsters, most of them armed with sticks, stones and iron rods, entered the house and forcibly took away the dentistry student, whose engagement was scheduled later in the day.

The assailants attacked her father, relatives and neighbours, who tried to resist them. They also damaged the furniture and vehicles parked at the premises. The video of the attack went viral on social media.

Naveen Reddy, who was in love with the girl and claimed to have even married her, kidnapped her after her parents were preparing for



her engagement with another man.

On a complaint by the girl's father Damodar Reddy, police registered a case of attempt to murder, kidnap, trespass and assault against Naveen Reddy and his associates.

According to Damodar Reddy, Naveen Reddy met her daughter at a

badminton training camp in Bangalore. He alleged that Naveen Reddy had been allegedly harassing her for the last two years and had spread the word that he had married her.

The complainant told police that Naveen Reddy and about 50 others

attacked her house on Friday. He said the attackers armed with iron rods and stones barged into the house and tried to kill her daughter and other family members.

Damodar Reddy alleged that Naveen Reddy attacked him on his head with an iron rod and when his relatives and friends came to his rescue, the assailants attacked them.

"After the attack, they forcibly took away my daughter in a car," he said.

The girl's father said Naveen Reddy had been behaving like a psycho. He had spread the word among relatives and friends that he married her on August 27, 2021. He had filed a petition in a court in LB Nagar that his wife's parents are not sending her home. Police said a case has been registered against Naveen Reddy and others at Adibatla police station under Rachakonda police station in connection with Friday's incident.

A police officer said they were scanning the CCTV footage to identify and arrest other accused in the case.

'NEED TO INVEST MORE ON EDUCATION'

Team Absolute | New Delhi

There is a need for more investment on education, said Sanjay Kumar, Secretary, School Education and Literacy, Ministry of Education, on Saturday.

The official said that the NEP 2020 (New Education Policy) envisages that "we should be spending at least 6 per cent of our GDP on education". "Currently we are spending only 4.6 per cent of our GDP on education. It is imperative that while the economy is growing, we need to invest more on education," he emphasised.

Speaking on the backdrop of an event, the official while highlighting the role of technology in the education system said that we are at a new cusp today.

"We are moving away from the book-based education system and technology is playing a key role in it," he added.

He further stated that liberal arts need to regain its ground and the industry, academia must work towards it. "Let us re-imagine our system before we reboot," said Kumar.

The Secretary mentioned that there are around 260 million students from class 1 to 12 in India who are going to 1.48 million schools including 1.05 million government schools.

There are around 9.6 million teachers who are part of these schools, so their training and infra-



structure should also be addressed. The government, he said, is committed to providing necessary support to the sector.

"This is the time when we must start looking and capitalising on the NEP," asserted Kumar.

Highlighting the importance of the New Education Policy 2020, Kumar said that the NEP 2020 encapsulates the DNA of the society and how a society has to develop and build itself around education is envisaged in it.

K'TAKA BJP TO RENAME RITUAL 'SALAAM AARTI' STARTED BY TIPU SULTAN

Bengaluru: The ruling BJP of Karnataka has decided to rename 'Salaam Aarti' -- a ritual started by Mysuru ruler Tipu Sultan in the state.

The announcement to change the age-old ritual made by the Karnataka Dharmika Parishat, which comes under Department of Hindu Religious Institutions and Charitable Endowments, is likely to stoke a controversy. 'Salaam Aarti' ritual was started during the time of Mysuru ruler Tipu Sultan. Tipu got the worship done on his behalf for the welfare of the Mysuru kingdom. Even after he died in the battle against the British, the ritual continues in various Hindu temples across the state. Kashekodi Suryanarayana Bhat, Member of Parishat stated that earlier the ritual was conducted for the welfare of state administration, now it will be for the welfare of the people. Now, the ritual would be named as 'Namaskara'. The ritual was conducted in the famous temples of Puttur, Subramanya, Kollur, Melkote and others in the then Mysuru kingdom. As per Hindu organisations, 'Salaam Aarti' was the symbol of slavery and was practiced to assert domination. They demanded ending the ritual.



Speeding car hits professor in Ghaziabad society

Ghaziabad | Agencies

A speeding car hit a professor who was on his morning walk in a society in Ghaziabad and the entire incident was recorded by the CCTV camera installed in the premises.

The incident took place in Amrapali Empire Society in the Crossing Republik police station area on December 3. The impact was so fierce that the victim, identified as Pankaj Goyal, was thrown 10 feet away.

According to sources, the victim along with his wife, Sukriti Goyal and a resident were on their morning walk inside the society on December 3 at 7 a.m. when the speeding car entered the society and hit Pankaj who was walking on the extreme right of the trio. The vehicle also hit several parked bikes



before coming to a halt about 30 metres ahead.

The victim's wife and the resident narrowly escaped getting hit in the accident.

The police registered an FIR on December 8 on Sukriti's complaint and has started probing the matter. She stated that her husband was badly injured with

several bones fractured and had been admitted in a private hospital.

She added that he was in no position to even get up in view of his grave injuries.

According to the police, the car owner is being searched for by tracing the car number with the help of the Transport Department.

Delhi liquor case: Kavitha to face CBI on Sunday

Hyderabad | Agencies

The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) will question Telangana Chief Minister K. Chandrababhan Rao's daughter K. Kavitha in Delhi liquor scam case here on Sunday.

A team of CBI officials will examine the Member of Legislative Council of the Bharat Rashtra Samithi (TRS) at her residence in Banjara Hills at 11 a.m.

Ahead of the questioning, hoardings, installed by her supporters, have come up outside her residence. "Daughter of fighter will never fear. We are with Kavithakka," reads one of the hoardings.

The CBI had informed Kavitha on December 6 that a team will visit her residence



in Hyderabad on December 11 for her examination and recording of her statement in connection with the investigation in the case.

It had asked her to confirm availability on the said date and time. Kavitha sent a reply the same day confirming her availability on the day.

The CBI's communication

had come a day after Kavitha wrote to the agency expressing her inability to meet them on December 6 because of her preoccupied schedule.

She had conveyed to the central agency that she will be able to meet them either on December 11, 12 or December 14, 15 at her residence in Hyderabad.

DCW asks Centre, Delhi govt to ascertain cause of cardiac arrest-related sudden deaths

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Taking the suo moto cognisance of several media reports of sudden deaths in the country, the DCW on Saturday issued notice to the Centre and the Delhi government to ascertain the cause of rising recent incidence of such deaths due to cardiac arrests.

DCW Chief Swati Maliwal has issued notices to the country's top health research institute, the Indian Council of Medical Research and the Director General of Health Service, and the Union and Delhi governments.

"Reportedly, a bride in her early twenties recently died due to sudden cardiac attack during her marriage ceremony in Lucknow. Similarly, a 16-year-old teen died while playing cricket and a man died in a temple in Madhya Pradesh while he was doing 'parikrama'. Many such cases have come to light wherein people of



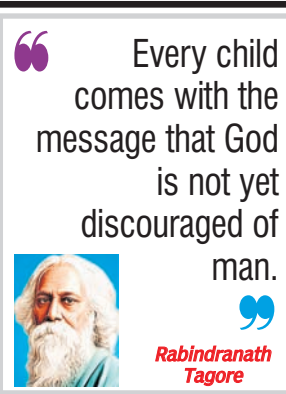
young as well as old age have died due to apparent cardiac arrests while they were simply carrying out their daily routine work," the DCW has said in the notices

The commission has said these incidents have raised serious concerns and is being widely speculated that these deaths are somehow connected to Covid-19.

Through the notices to the ICMR and the DGHS, the DCW has sought details of any committee constituted by the concerned stakeholders to investigate these deaths. It also sought the steps taken to generate awareness amongst people regarding the cause of such deaths, along with the precautions that people should be advised to take.

The commission has also asked for the steps taken by the governments to study the long term impact of the Covid-19 virus on the health of people. Also, it has sought details of the mechanism been setup to ensure that any such sudden deaths are properly investigated by a central forensic and biomedical team so that the cause of such are properly ascertained.

"Some unfortunate incidents of sudden deaths have come before the country. Several videos depicting the same are getting viral, where young and old can be seen dying on the spot suddenly while carrying out routine tasks. The cause of such deaths should be urgently investigated. It should be ascertained whether these cases are linked to Covid-19 in any manner. The government must make a strategy to deal with such cases and advisories should be issued to the government informing people about the precautions they are supposed to take," Maliwal said.



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VOL. 8, ISSUE 30, BHOPAL | SUNDAY, DECEMBER 11, 2022 | ₹5 | PAGE 08

PUBLISHED SIMULTANEOUSLY FROM BHOPAL, MUMBAI AND NEW DELHI

INDIAN STARTUPS SEE HUGE 35% DROP IN FUNDING, EDTECH AMONG WORST PERFORMERS

ECONOMIC CRISES

► The significant drop in funding is attributed to a decline in late-stage investments, which fell by 45 per cent from \$29.3 billion in January-November 2021 to \$16.1 billion for the same period this year, according to data provided by Tracxn, a leading global market intelligence platform. Seed stage rounds also experienced a contraction and dropped by 38 per cent as compared to the previous year.

► The report said that 22 startups entered the unicorn club in the reported period, as compared to 46 in the previous year. The number of big ticket (\$100 million and above) funding rounds dropped by 35 per cent to 55 as compared to 85 in the reported period.

► The number of funding rounds saw a drop of 30 per cent, from 2,647 last year to 1,841 this year, the report said.

► BYJU's raised \$1.2 billion in 2 such more than \$100 million rounds, followed by VerSe and Swiggy, raising \$805 million and \$700 million, respectively.



Team Absolute | New Delhi

As the funding winter deepens amid growing layoffs, India saw a massive 35 per cent drop in funding this year, from \$37.2 billion in 2021 to \$24.7 billion (till November in 2022) and edtech startups saw a significant 39 per cent drop compared to the same period last year, a report showed on Thursday.

Earlier this week, foodtech platform HealthKart raised \$135 million in a funding round led by Temasek,

with participation from A91 Partners and Kae Capital, somewhat breaking the worst funding cycle. "The funding winter, which began in Q4 of 2021, will persist in 2023 as well. In order to survive the drought, startups are taking unit economics more seriously, which has been illustrated through the series of mass layoffs that have occurred this year," said Neha Singh, Co-Founder, Tracxn. Led by the edtech sector, Indian startups have laid off more than 16,000 employees to date, and the number is only growing.

Singh said: "Although we are currently experiencing a slump, the situation is prompting startups to establish clearer and more sustainable paths to growth, as investors' evaluation metrics begin to emphasise good profitability over growth at all costs."

This year saw enterprise applications, fintech and retail emerge as the top performing sectors in terms of funding.

However, fintech and retail were not adverse to the effects of the funding slowdown and saw a drop in funding -- 57 per cent and 41 per cent, respectively -- compared to the same period last year.

The disruption to the fintech sector has been brought on by an RBI policy that prohibits non-bank financial institutions (NBFI) from loading their prepaid instruments using credit lines and the ruling impacted the business model of companies like Slice and Uni Cards.

Furthermore, with crypto experiencing major volatility in asset prices this year, crypto exchanges across the globe as well as in India are facing operational difficulties.

Bengaluru led the maximum total funding raised, the most active investors of the year being LetsVenture, AngelList and Y Combinator.

Ishan Kishan creates World Record of fastest double hundred in ODIs

CHATTOGRAM | Agencies

Ishan Kishan, the diminutive opening batter, slammed a belligerent double hundred during India's third ODI against Bangladesh at Chattogram. Kishan, who was drafted in for the last match of the series after captain Rohit Sharma got injured, threw caution to the wind as he slammed 23 boundaries and 9 sixes to reach the 200-run mark in just 126 deliveries. He had completed his century in just 85 balls.

Kishan broke the world record held earlier by West Indies great Chris Gayle, of slamming the fastest double hundred in 50-over cricket. Gayle had taken 138 deliveries to score his double hundred against Zimbabwe in the 2015 ICC World Cup. Kishan bettered the record by a massive 12 deliveries and also became the youngest cricketer to breach the 200-run mark in ODIs.

He has now become the fourth Indian after Sachin Tendulkar, Virender Sehwag and Rohit Sharma to slam a double century in ODIs. Rohit has three scores of 200-plus to his name. Ishan has become the 7th batter in the history of ODIs to score 200 runs in an innings.

The others apart from the Indians are New Zealand's Martin Guptill, West Indies' Chris Gayle and Pakistan's Fakhar Zaman. Kishan eventually got out for, having slammed boundaries and 10 sixes in his innings.



► 210 runs 128 balls
► 24 fours
► 10 sixes

Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu to be next Himachal CM

Shimla | Agencies

Four-time legislator Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu, 58, also the head of the Congress' election committee, will be the next Chief Minister of Himachal Pradesh, while Mukesh Agnihotri will be his deputy.

Their oath of office will be held in the state capital on Sunday at 11 a.m. with the induction of Council of Ministers later as per the discretion of the Chief Minister.

Sukhu, who is known for his proximity with the Gandhi family, was named leader of the Congress Legislature Party (CLP) after two days of hectic politicking by AICC in-charge for state Rajiv Shukla after his appointment was approved by Mallikarjun Kharge.

Sukhu, who has the support of a majority of Congress lawmakers, emerged from the three candidates in the fray for the chief ministerial post after getting majority in the 68-member Assembly by winning 40 seats.

Pratibha Singh, the wife of Virbhadra Singh, and four-time legislator Mukesh Agnihotri, were the frontrunners for the top job.



CM DESIGNATE STAKES CLAIMS TO FORM GOVERNMENT

Shimla: Chief Minister-designate Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu on Saturday presented his claim to form a new government in Himachal Pradesh to Governor Rajendra Vishwanath Arlekar at Raj Bhavan here. Sukhu would take oath on Sunday at the historical Ridge.

A team of central party observers, including Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel, former Haryana Chief Minister Bhupinder Singh Hooda, and in charge of state affairs, Rajiv Shukla were present on the occasion. They handed over a formal letter to the Governor staking claim to form a new government in the state.

Children must be taught the difference between good and bad touch: CJ

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Chief Justice of India D.Y. Chandrachud on Saturday said it is "unfortunate" that the manner in which the criminal justice system functions sometimes compounds the victim's trauma, and the executive must therefore join hands with the judiciary to prevent this from happening.

Citing rising concerns pertaining to cases of mutually consenting "romantic relationships" falling under the purview of the POCSO Act, he said that this category of cases poses difficult questions for judges across the spectrum.

In his address at a two-day national programme on the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, the Chief Justice said the long-lasting implications of child sexual



abuse make it imperative for the state and other stakeholders to create awareness on prevention of child sexual abuse, its timely recognition, and the remedy available in law.

The Chief Justice said, "it is an unfortunate fact that the manner in which the criminal justice system functions sometimes compounds the victim's trauma. The executive must therefore join hands with the judiciary to prevent this from happening".

SC TO HEAR BILKIS BANO'S PLEA AGAINST RELEASE OF CONVICTS ON DEC 13

New Delhi: The Supreme Court is likely to take up, on December 13, a plea filed by Bilkis Bano, against the release of 11 men convicted of gang-raping her in the 2002 Gujarat riots, and also accused of murders of multiple members of her family. Bilkis Bano said release of all the convicts came as a shock not only to the petitioner, to her grown-up daughters, to her family, but also to the society at large, nationally, and internationally.

A bench of Justices Ajay Rastogi and Bela M. Trivedi is likely to take up the plea in December 13. Bilkis Bano, in the petition filed through advocate Shobha Gupta, said: "The premature release of all the convicts came as a shock not only to the petitioner, to her grown up daughters, to her family, but also to the society at large, nationally and internationally, and the society across segments had shown their anger, disappointment, distrust and protest to the clemency shown by the Government by releasing criminals like the 11 convicts of the case."

MAHARASHTRA MINISTER CHANDRAKANT PATIL TARGETED WITH 'INK ATTACK'

Pune: Maharashtra Higher & Technical Education Minister Chandrakant Patil was shown black flags and targeted with an "ink attack" here on Saturday.

Patil, who had gone to meet a local Bharatiya Janata Party leader, had stepped out of the meeting along with his security personnel when an unidentified person suddenly lunged forward and threw ink on his face.

A momentarily stunned Patil stumbled backward and almost fell down but was caught by his security detail and whisked off from the spot, while other police persons ran after the attacker and pinned him down.

The incident came a day after Patil created a fresh row with his statement in Aurangabad saying that Dr. B.R. Ambedkar and Mahatma Jyotirao Phule did not depend on any government support but used to go around "begging" for money to start schools.

As a massive controversy erupted, Patil sought to clarify his position claiming what he implied was modern-era concepts like "crowd funding" and corporate social responsibility.

"However, if my statements have hurt anybody's sentiments, I hereby apologise for the same," he said on Sunday. Maha Vikas Aghadi allies Congress, Nationalist Congress Party and Shiv Sena (UBT), plus other leaders slammed Patil's utterances terming it as a slur on icons like Ambedkar and Phule.

The National Students Union of India, and several backward classes organisations protested against Patil during his engagements in Pune on Sunday and even attempted to stop his motorcade.

Despite extra tight security, one person managed to jump close enough and throw ink on Patil.

CYCLONE MANDOUS: HEAVY RAINS LASH PARTS OF ANDHRA PRADESH



Amaravati: Parts of south coast and Rayalaseema regions of Andhra Pradesh were receiving heavy rains on Saturday under the impact of the cyclonic storm Mandous which crossed Tamil Nadu coast on Friday night.

Heavy rains were lashing Nellore, Tirupati, Chittoor, and Annamaya districts, inundating low-lying areas. Rivelets, streams and lakes were overflowing due to incessant rains since Friday.

Heavy rains hit normal life in the temple town of Tirupati. Roads in the town were inundated. Pilgrims to the famous Tirumala temple faced inconvenience due to incessant rains. The Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanam (TTD), which manages the affairs of the temple, closed some routes to Tirumala due to apprehension of landslides.

Water level in lakes and ponds in and around Tirupati reached the maximum level due to the downpour.

After crossing the coast, the cyclonic storm weakened into a deep depression.

IIT Hyderabad logs 508 job offers, highest offer of Rs 63.78 L in placements phase 1

► For Phase-1 of placements, a total of 13 International companies have registered, compared with about 12 International companies in Phase 1 and 2 of 2021-22. In addition, 54 International offers were made in Phase 1, which is higher than the previous year's international offers of 46 offers in both Phase 1 & 2.

► The first graduating batch of B.Tech in the AI department at IITH has seen an 82 per cent placement within the 1st week of the placement process. The number of students opting for semester-long internships has also increased to 51 this year as compared to last year's 33.

► The prominent hiring sectors included core engineering, IT/Software, Finance and Consulting. A lot of India-based & International based startups and companies are among the top recruiters this year.

Hyderabad | Agencies

Amid the overall gloomy financial outlook, coupled with massive layoffs all over, campus placements at the Indian Institute of Technology Hyderabad (IITH), are progressing at a brisk pace.

IITH has reported 508 offers, which includes 54 international, received from 144 companies during Phase-1 of campus placements held between December 1-7.

The entire recruitment process was held in hybrid mode. A total of more than 700 students have registered for placements across departments this year, IITH officials stated on Friday.

The highest package is Rs 63.78 lakh, and the average package is Rs 19.49 lakh for the ongoing phase-1 placements. The company Blend 360 has released the highest number of offers, IITH stated.

Prof B.S. Murty, Director, IITH, said, "We believe in creating industry-ready talent with strong fundamentals, which certainly will fetch the dream jobs for the students. The various initiatives



taken in the last two years, like Internship for B.Tech, Interdisciplinary M.Tech & so on, have made us achieve these numbers, and we will continuously innovate to make our students prepared to fulfil their dreams."

Prof C. Krishna Mohan, Dean (Public & Corporate Relations), IITH, said, "Exceeding our own benchmark of the previous year in the given scenario reflects the dedicated and diligent efforts of the team, and we will ensure to have better performance in future."

The current placement season at IITH started on a positive note, with 99 Pre-Placement Offers (PPO), as compared to 82 PPOs in the previous academic year. Phase-2 of Placements will begin in January 2023.

In terms of international offers, for the current placement year 2022-23, IITH has received 50 international offers from seven companies across two countries, Japan & Taiwan. More international offers are expected in Phase 2.



THACKERAY URGES PM TO CLARIFY K'TAKA CM'S STATEMENTS ON BOUNDARY ISSUE

Team Absolute | Jalna (Maharashtra)

Shiv Sena-UBT President Uddhav Thackeray on Saturday called upon Prime Minister Narendra Modi to speak up on the Karnataka Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai's statements vis-a-vis the border row with Maharashtra.

Targeting the PM on the eve of his visit for various functions on Sunday, he said Modi should make his stance clear on Bommai's claims over more villages in Solapur and Sangli which are made out of arrogance.

"The entire state is awaiting your views on Karnataka's attitude... What is your stand and what will you give to us. The Shiv Sena's stand is that Belgaum, Karwar and Nipani must be united with Maharashtra," Thackeray declared, giving the inaugural address at the 42nd Marathwada Sahitya Sammelan meeting in Jalna.

He demanded that first the PM should clarify on these points and then inaugurate the Mumbai-Nagpur Super Communication Expressway, which has been named after the late Shiv Sena founder-patriarch Balasaheb Thackeray, who had gone to jail for three months for the inter-state boundary dispute.

Taking potshots, he said that the PM would first try to shield the Governor Bhagat Singh Koshiyari for his recent statements on Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj, then raise the slogan of "Shivaji Maharajki Ja".



"Then, he will taunt and recall how the expressway has been named in memory of Hinduhriday Samrat Balasaheb Thackeray. But I request him that as the guardian of the nation, he must avoid all this and discuss the Maharashtra-Karnataka border issues," Thackeray said.

Urging even the ruling Balasahebanchi Shiv Sena to make its stand clear, Thackeray cautioned that he would not tolerate anybody coming and ridiculing the state in any manner.

Responding to a query later on Saturday, Chief Minister Eknath Shinde reiterated that the legal issues on the boundary row will be resolved and "not a single village from Maharashtra will go to Karnataka". The 2-day Marathwada Literary Conference got underway with the traditional procession on the opening day, the inaugural by Thackeray, a literature books exhibition, discussions and speeches on various intellectual topics, with more events lined up for Sunday.

PM to inaugurate 1st phase of Mumbai-Nagpur Super Expressway today

Team Absolute | Nagpur

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will inaugurate the Phase-I of the Mumbai-Nagpur Samruddhi Mahamarg (Super Communication Expressway) and take a tour of the new thoroughfare on Sunday, officials said here on Saturday.

The 520 km-long Phase I is part of the total 701 km Super Expressway project linking the state capital Mumbai with Nagpur, passing through 10 districts.

Being constructed at a cost of around Rs 55,000 crore, it is among the country's longest greenfield six-lane expressway and will slash the travel time between the two cities from the existing 16 hrs to just eight hrs.

The Prime Minister will also dedicate the Nagpur Metro Phase I and take a ride from Freedom Park Metro Station to Khapri Metro Station, lay the foundation for the Phase II, of the project costing around Rs 15,000 crore.

He will later flag off the Nagpur-Bilaspur service of Vande Bharat Express at Nagpur Railway Station and lay the foundation stone for



other rail projects worth around Rs 1,500 crore.

The Prime Minister will dedicate the state-of-the-art AIIMS Nagpur, built at a cost of over Rs 1,575 crore to the nation and lay the foundation stone of the National Institute of One Health Nagpur, to be built for over Rs 110 crore.

He will inaugurate the Centre for Research Management and Control of Hemoglobinopathies, and dedicate the Central Institute of Petrochemicals Engineering & Technology, in Chandrapur, and lay the foundation for the Rs 1,925 crore river pollution abatement project in Nagpur, under the National River Conservation Plan.

On Sunday afternoon, Modi will fly to Goa where he has a series of other engagements lined up.

AMIT SHAH TO CHAIR MEETING ON DEC 14 OR 15: BOMMAI



Bengaluru: In a major development, Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai on Saturday announced that the BJP government at the Centre will negotiate between Karnataka and Maharashtra on border dispute. A meeting with Maharashtra Chief Minister Eknath Shinde under the chairmanship of Union Home Minister Amit Shah will be held on December 14 or 15 over the border row between Karnataka and Maharashtra, said Bommai.

Talking to reporters in the Assembly here on Saturday, he said a selected MPs from Karnataka will be meeting Amit Shah on Monday and he has already spoken with him. "Shah has said he will be called when required. The stand and the ground reality had been explained to him and it will be once again clarified with him when met personally," he said. Bommai said an all-party meeting will be held to discuss this issue and he had spoken informally with former CM H.D. Kumaraswamy and Leader of Opposition in the Assembly Siddaramaiah. The meeting date will be fixed in consultation with them.

BMC had become 'private property' of some, we are now giving it back to people: Fadnavis

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis targeted the Uddhav Thackeray-led Shiv Sena and said that the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) had become a 'private property' of some individuals, but the present state government has decided to hand it over to people again, the PTI reported. Fadnavis, on Saturday, also said that in order to prevent irregularities, the construction of concrete roads in the city will be monitored through a satellite. Shiv Sena (Uddhav Balasaheb Thackeray) has been in power in the BMC for the past 25 years.

Fadnavis was speaking at the launch of 500 projects that

the BMC has undertaken in the city's eastern and western suburbs as part of the 'Mumbai Beautification Project'. Chief Minister Eknath Shinde launched these projects at Andheri Sports Complex in Andheri.

Shinde took over as the chief minister of the state after Uddhav Thackeray stepped down from the post following a rebellion by 40 Shiv Sena MLAs led by Shinde in June this year. Fadnavis became the deputy CM. The rebellion split the Shiv Sena into two factions - one each led by Thackeray and Shinde. "The municipal corporation of Mumbai, which was a public property, had gone into the hands of some people. It had become a private property for them. But

now, chief minister (Shinde) and we have decided that since it belongs to people, it should go back into the hands of people," Fadnavis said without naming anyone. Since the term of the corporators ended earlier this year, the municipal commissioner was appointed as the administrator to look after the administrative affairs of the BMC till the elections are held. Fadnavis said companies from national and international levels have now participated in the tender procedure for the construction of Rs 6,000 crore-worth concrete roads in Mumbai. The senior Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leader said that "contractor-driven" road works won't be undertaken in Mumbai henceforth.

Marathi actress, Lavani singer Sulochana Chavan passes away

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Renowned Lavani singer and actress Sulochana Kadam-Chavan passed away following old-age related issues at her home here on Saturday morning, a family member said.

The widow of film-maker S. Chavan, she was 91 and survived by her sons and grandchildren, said her granddaughter Aarti Chavan.

Sulochana Chavan breathed her last at the family's Fanaswadi home and her last rites shall be performed later in the afternoon in Girgaum, south Mumbai, she added. An exponent of Lavani singing - a Marathi style of folk music and dance - Chavan was



honoured with the Padmashri award this year and has been a recipient of the Sangeet Natak Akademi Award (2012) and the Late Mangeskar Award (2010) of the Maharashtra Government.

Starting her artistic career at the young age of only 6, the little Sulochana Kadam used to act in local drama, theatre and garba groups, followed by Gujarati stage acts, working in Urdu and Hindi plays and also performed roles in Punjabi and Tamil films.

Chavan sang Lavani for solo or group albums, playback for Marathi and Hindi films and theatre, and was conferred several honours and awards during her film and music career spanning over eight decades.

BOY RAPES GIRL BY THREATENING TO CIRCULATE THEIR KISS SELFIE Youth held for stalking pregnant woman

Team Absolute | Mumbai

A 17-year-old boy has been detained for allegedly raping a girl of the same age after blackmailing her with a selfie, a Mumbai police official said on Saturday.

The girl and boy are known to each other and the latter had clicked a selfie of the duo kissing while celebrating her birthday in Bandra's Carter Road area on October 10, he said.

"From October 10 to November 26, the accused raped the 17-year-old girl several times by threatening to circulate this selfie. The incident came to light when he reached her college recently and assaulted her when she refused to go out with him," the Khar



police station official said.

"A friend informed her parents about it, she narrated her ordeal after which her kin approached Kherwadi police station. Since the incident happened on the stretch of Carter Road which falls in the jurisdiction of Khar police station, the case was transferred to us," he added. The teen accused was detained from his house on Friday and charged under relevant sections of the Indian Penal Code and Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act for rape and other offences, the official informed.

He has been sent to Dongri children's correctional home, the Khar police station official said.

Team Absolute | Mumbai

A 19-year-old man was held for allegedly stalking and sexually harassing a pregnant woman in Mumbra, police said.

The incident occurred on Thursday and the accused was arrested on Friday, the police said. "The victim was returning to her parent's home from her in-law's place around 3 pm on

Saturday, when the accused stalked her. When she reached her residential building, he flashed her and sexually harassed her," assistant inspector Krupal Borse of Mumbra police station said. The accused also threatened the woman before fleeing from the spot. The victim later approached the police and lodged a complaint, based on which the Mumbra police registered an offence under

Indian Penal Code (IPC) sections 354 (assault or criminal force to woman with intent to outrage her modesty), 354(D) (stalking), 504 (intentionally insult) and 506 (criminal intimidation), the official said.

"The police formed a couple of teams to trace and nab the accused. They examined the CCTV footage and later arrested the man, who resides in Amrut Nagar area of Mumbra," Borse said.

POLICE CONSTABLE BOOKED FOR SEEKING BRIBE

Mumbai: An FIR has been registered against a police constable in Thane district of Maharashtra for allegedly demanding Rs 25,000 from a man against whom a case of cheating was lodged, the Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB) said on Saturday.

The constable is posted at Naupada police station in the city and the case against him was registered at the same police station on Friday, it said. "The constable demanded Rs 25,000 from a man against whom a complaint of cheating was lodged at Naupada police station.

He made the demand for not registering a case," the Thane unit of the ACB said in a statement. The police constable threatened that he would register a case under section 420 of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) against the complainant and to avoid it, he should pay him the bribe, it said.

Based on the complaint lodged by the man, the ACB is probing the case.

A long, winding tunnel with no light at both ends

Quaid Najmi | Mumbai

Simmering since the past over six decades, the messy Maharashtra-Karnataka inter-state boundary row has suddenly become "hot" with violence in the border districts coupled with a high-decibel war of words between leaders of the two neighbouring states.

The inter-state boundary row, almost as vexatious as some international border disputes, has resulted in allegations, threats, and ultimatums from various leaders even as the Centre is expected to mediate while the Supreme Court verdict is awaited.

After the creation of Maharashtra on May 1, 1960, on linguistic lines as per the States Reorganisation Act, 1956, the state has laid claim to 865 border villages including Belagavi (formerly Belgaum), Karwar and Nipani.

Not only has Karnataka thumbed its nose at Maharashtra, the current Bharatiya Janata Party Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai went a step further and recently demanded several new villages on the other side of his border, leaving political leaders here fuming.

Way back in October 1966, the Centre handed over the prickly issue to a commission headed by former Chief Justice of India, M.C. Mahajan, and it recommended in August 1967 that 247 villages from Maharashtra be merged with Karnataka and 264 Karnataka villages go to Maharashtra.

However, both states rejected it outright, though Karnataka leaders contend that the Mahajan Commission had ruled in its favour, and the political



tug-of-war on the issue has continued since then.

In 2004, the then Congress-Nationalist Congress Party government filed a plea in the SC staking claim over the Marathi-dominated villages in Karnataka, but the latter contested the claims and to needle the northern-neighbour, renamed Belgaum to Belagavi besides upgrading it as the second capital after Bengaluru.

For mostly political reasons, all Central governments - earlier the Congress, then other parties and now the BJP - have treated the matter like a "hot potato", hoping for a legal solution to the issue, as both states have stuck to their respective political stance from the start.

The issue has provided a ready, long-term political

and electoral tool to all parties in both states, and the border row curiously seems to manifest itself around election seasons. Though Maharashtra will go to polls only in end-2024, Karnataka Assembly polls are due in mid-2023 - a fact underscored by Maharashtra Congress President Nana Patole and the Maharashtra Navnirman Sena chief Raj Thackeray.

With the border-row a permanent pledge on the election manifestos of all political parties here, there are doubts raised in some quarters on the political intentions for a quick and lasting solution.

Last fortnight, Maharashtra Chief Minister Eknath Shinde presided over a high power committee meeting on the border dispute, and named two ministers - Chandrakant Patil (BJP) and Shambhuraj Desai

(Balasahebanchi Shiv Sena) to oversee and coordinate the political and legal aspects.

Shinde granted certain concessions to the Marathi-speaking areas of the adjoining state, but Bommai "retaliated" with grants for Kannada language schools in Maharashtra, coveting 40 villages in Sangli and some more in Solapur, announcing a grant for a "Karnataka Bhavan" here, and so on.

Rattled, Shinde and BJP's Deputy CM Devendra Fadnavis rushed to declare that not a single village will go to Karnataka and the state would also raise the original demand for 865 villages.

Hitting back, Karnataka raised objections to Patil-Desai visit to Belagavi on December 6, violence erupted in the region allegedly spearheaded by Karnataka Rakshana Vedike and led to the closure of all government and private buses, trucks, other vehicles, etc. In fact, earlier this year, Karnataka Deputy CM Laxman Savadi had demanded that Mumbai should be a part of Karnataka and made a Union Territory till the border issues are sorted out, and now Shiv Sena-UBT President Uddhav Thackeray has demanded that the border areas should be declared UT till the final solution. Thackeray apprehends that since Karnataka is going to polls next year, the territories of Akalkot and Solapur "may also be given away to Karnataka", while his party MP Sanjay Raut and Patole smell a conspiracy to breakup Maharashtra.

"Shinde might even say that if Prime Minister Narendra Modi has promised to get back Pakistan Occupied Kashmir, then what's the harm in giving 40 villages to Karnataka," said Uddhav Thackeray, in a swipe at the CM.



MY MISSION TO REFORM THE SYSTEM WON'T SUCCEED WITHOUT PUBLIC COOPERATION: CHIEF MINISTER



Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has said that this program of Chief Minister Public Service Campaign is a campaign to change the lives of the poor. In the campaign, 83 lakh new beneficiaries have been added by setting up public service camps to identify eligible persons in 38 different schemes of the central and state governments. All these will start getting the benefits of the schemes now. The Chief Minister said that democracy is the rule of the people, for the peo-

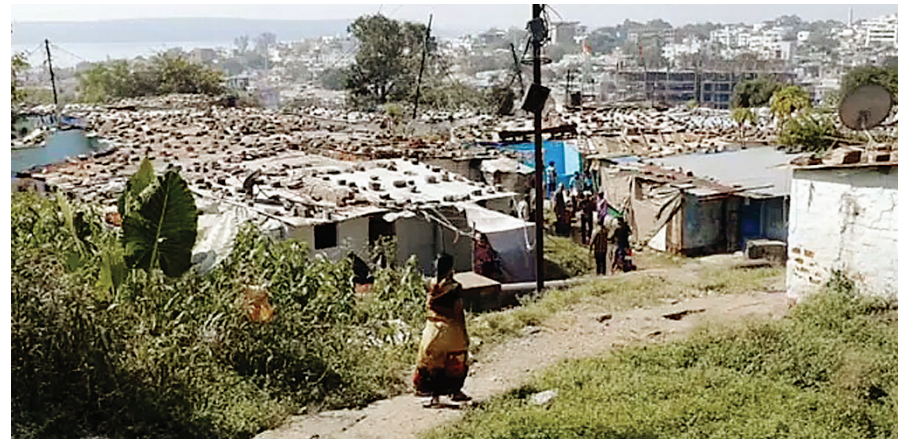
ple and by the people. It is my endeavor that the public does not have to go round the offices for their work. Chief Minister's public service campaign was launched in the state only to fulfill their legitimate needs and solve their problems. Chief Minister was addressing the acceptance letter distribution program to the beneficiaries under Chief Minister's public service campaign in Sidhi district. In the beginning, the Chief Minister inaugurated the program by worshipping the girl child and lighting the lamp. He distributed acceptance letters to the

new beneficiaries of various schemes. In the program, the Chief Minister also performed Bhoomi Pujan of development works worth 43 crore 88 lakh and inaugurated works worth 64 crore 49 lakh. Chouhan said that for me my people are God. I always say, if you want to see God, wipe the tears from the eyes of the poor by serving the poor. Narayan will be visible in their eyes. I tell the entire administration that it is your duty to serve the public better. MLAs including Chief Minister, MPs, Collector-SP and officers-employees down to the bottom, we

all are public servants in a democracy. Chouhan said that nowadays people are telling me that your mood has changed somewhat. When the work is good, I praise it and somewhere there is a mess or someone is eating money, someone is taking bribe, someone is doing corruption, then I also take strict action against such people. If you are sitting on the chair, then work properly for the public. I am trying to rectify the system. Success cannot be achieved in this mission without the cooperation of the public.

Chief Minister Chouhan informed that Gram Sabhas have been given many rights by implementing the PESA Act in 89 development blocks for tribal brothers in the state. Using these rights, our tribal brothers and sisters will move towards self-reliance. The Chief Minister said that we have increased the powers of our newly elected Sarpanchs. Using these rights, the new concept of Gram Swaraj should be given a concrete shape. It is our priority that the public welfare schemes of the government reach the lowest level and all the eligible people get their benefits.

Rights body urges removal of "Hazardous Waste" from Bhopal Tragedy site



Team Absolute | New Delhi/Bhopal

Tonnes of hazardous waste is lying at the site of the 1984 Bhopal gas tragedy and delay in its disposal contaminates groundwater and soil which is a "direct abuse" of the right to health of survivors and locals, NHRC chairperson justice Arun Kumar Mishra (retd) said Saturday. Addressing a Human Rights Day event in New Delhi hosted by the National

Human Rights Commission, he said that one outfall of globalisation is the concentration of wealth in transnational companies and a few countries. "For calamities caused by industrial disasters, transnational enterprises' responsibilities have to be well defined," the NHRC chief asserted. He cited the Bhopal gas tragedy which took place at a plant of a global company in Bhopal in 1984, considered one of the world's worst industrial disasters. The

multinational company, Union Carbide, faced global criticism following the tragedy. Mishra said, "Approximately 3,000 people died. Around 336 tonnes of hazardous waste is still lying on the premises." "The property changed hands. Delay in the disposal of such hazardous waste by a multinational company contaminates groundwater and soil and is a direct abuse of the right to health of the survivors and residents of the area," he added.

BOY STUCK IN BOREWELL IN BETUL DIES

Team Absolute | Bhopal

The boy, who fell into a deep borewell in Betul district of Madhya Pradesh on Tuesday evening, was dead when he was rescued on Saturday morning. The rescue operation was started soon after the incident was reported, however, the boy had stopped responding by the Wednesday. The NDRF and SDRF teams under the supervision of district administration continued rescue operation. They dug a tunnel at the side of the borewell, however, the process took more than 80 hours and by the time, they could reach to the boy, he was dead. The rescue operation completed by early on Saturday and the doctors declared the boy dead. Betul district administration later issued an official statement on Saturday, stating that the boy was dead hours before he was rescued. Chief



Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan expressed his condolences and announced a compensation of Rs four lakh to the family. "It is very sad that little Tanmay (Sahu), who fell in a borewell in Betul's Mandvi village, could not be saved even after tireless efforts by the administration. I pray to God to give peace to the departed soul and strength to the family members to bear this loss, Om Shanti," Chouhan tweeted on Saturday morning. The boy - Tanmay Sahu fell into the borewell while playing in a farm around 5 p.m. on

December 6, and the rescue operation started within the next hour. He was stuck at 55 feet of the 400-foot deep borewell. Digging of tunnel at parallel of the borewell was started hours after the incident took place, however, hard rock and water imitating from it delayed the process. Tanmay's father Sunil Sahu said that his daughter saw him falling into the borewell and informed me about the incident. "We immediately rushed to the spot. He was breathing and we listened to his voice as we enquired. The rescue operation was started from 6 p.m. onwards on December 6. I would appeal people not to leave the borewell open so that no other child met the same fate," Sunil Sahu said. Sources told reporter that the borewell in which the boy fell and died was dug few days back and left uncovered from the top hole, which resulted in death of the boy.

Nitin Gadkari laid foundation and dedication of road projects worth 2444 crores in Barsaita Rewa

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Union Road Transport and Highways Minister Nitin Gadkari has said that all-round development of Madhya Pradesh is taking place under the leadership of Chief Minister Chouhan. The changing picture of Madhya Pradesh will fulfill Prime Minister Narendra Modi's dream of self-reliant India. In the coming times, Madhya Pradesh will be leading among the developed states of the country. India will become a super economic power under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Madhya Pradesh will contribute significantly in that. Union Road Transport and Highways Minister Nitin Gadkari inaugurated and laid foundation stones of 7 road projects with a total length of 204.81 kilometers costing Rs 2443.89 crore at Barsaita Rewa today. He inaugurated 4 lane Churhat bypass and 6 lane tunnel, four lane road from Satna to Bela



(with paved shoulder), concrete-cement road in Rewa city under CRIF; two lane road to Gajan, Magarwar, Itour, Khamhariya Goraiya and Sajjanpur. Inaugurated the two-lane road on Chhibora-Gajan section. Along with this, laid the foundation stone of the construction works of Beohari to Adarsh Village New Sapta Marg and

Devtalab-Naigarhi road under CRIF. Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan presided over the programme. Union Minister Gadkari visited the very modern Rewa-Sidhi 6 lane tunnel and appreciated the work done. Gadkari said that Rewa-Sidhi Tunnel is the first "Aqua Duct" of India. The Bansagar canal and road have been

built over it. This is an important tunnel in the history of the country. This will give a new direction to the development of the region. This tunnel has connectivity to the second tunnel after 300 meters, has 46 exhaust fans, optical fiber lane, as well as LXBC system and fire fighting system. He thanked and congratulated the concerned engineers for this work.

Make arrangements for bonfire in cities: Minister

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Urban Development and Housing Minister Bhupendra Singh has directed that in view of the outbreak of cold wave, arrangement of bonfire should be ensured at public places in all urban bodies. Singh said that arrangements for hot water and quilts and blankets should be made necessary for bathing in all the shelters of the civic body. He has said that any kind of negligence will not be tolerated in this work. Minister Singh said that in such urban bodies, where there are no permanent shelters, it will be ensured to provide shelter, housing



and other relief to the urban home-

less by starting a temporary shelter in a rented building or in a vacant building of the urban body. Do it. Make special arrangements for cleanliness in shelters. He said that the shelter sites should be publicized so that the homeless in the city can get information about the shelter sites. Be sure to send the information of the people staying in the shelter every day through the revenue inspector at bus stand, railway station and other such areas where the number of destitute people is more. In this regard, orders have also been issued by the Commissioner Urban Administration and Development to all the urban bodies.

CHIEF MINISTER CHOUHAN PLANTED SAPLINGS



Bhopal : Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan planted saplings of Gulmohar, Amla and Pithoria in the Smart Udyan today. Along with Chief Minister Chouhan, Ramrao Wamankar, Rajurkar Raj, Kailash and Vipin Bihari Vajpayee of Dushyant Kumar Manuscript Museum also planted saplings. Social worker Deepak Dubey of Berasia district Bhopal planted saplings on his birth anniversary. Dubey's family members were also present.

Man caught with lover kills son to hide affair, chops off hands

Team Absolute | Dewas

A 45-year-old man allegedly chopped off his minor son's hands and strangled him to death after the latter saw him in a compromising position with a relative in Madhya Pradesh's Dewas district, police said on Saturday. The incident took place in Bangarda village of Barotha police station area on Monday, while the accused and his paramour were arrested on Friday, superintendent of police Dr Shivdayal Singh said. The accused allegedly chopped off his 15-year-old son's hands and threw them in a 400-feet deep borewell. He then strangled the boy and dumped the body in some bushes close to a field, he

said. The boy had allegedly seen his father and his 35-year-old aunt in a compromising position. The accused had been in an illicit relationship since the last five years, another officer said. According to the police, the boy's body was found on Tuesday evening and a search was launched for the severed hands. A post-mortem revealed that the teen had been strangled to death, following which a case of murder was registered against an unidentified person. The boy's father was questioned about why he had not reported his son missing and after hours of grilling, he admitted to the murder, police said. The police have recovered the severed hands and a rope and sickle used in the crime, they said.

Every person should get rights and their protection is important for all: Sarang

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Duties and rights are two sides of the same coin. If one person discharges his duty properly, then the other person will definitely get his right. In the concept of a civilized society, every person should get rights and their protection is important for everyone. This idea was expressed by Medical Education Minister Vishwas Kailash Sarang on International Human Rights Day in MP on Saturday. Expressed by the Human Rights Commission while addressing a program based on the topic "Human Rights of Persons with Disabilities". Minister Sarang said that every citizen should take a resolution on Human Rights Day that we will perform our duties with full devotion for the protection of human rights. He said that India



will be established as a glorious nation only with the joint efforts of all. Minister Sarang also administered the oath of protection of human rights to all the people present in the program while performing their duties. Winners in Para Olympics and other sports were honored. Minister Sarang felicitated the disabled players who represented India on the world stage in Para Olympics and other sports

for their excellent performance. Apart from this, he also released the booklet 'Human Rights of Divyangjan'. Commissioner Disabled Welfare Sandeep Rajak informed about the efforts being made for effective implementation of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act in the state. Also threw light on the model of quick redressal of problems by the Divyangjan Court. He told that in making UDID card, M.P. now in first place.

Important role of chartered accountants in the economy: Governor Patel

Governor participates in the program of Institute of Chartered Accountants of India

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Governor Mangubhai Patel has said that chartered accountants play an important role in the economy. The contribution of chartered accountants is important in the purity and welfare nature of the economy. Governor Shri Patel was addressing the Institute of Chartered Accountants of India program at Samanvaya Bhavan. Patel said that the Parliament, the holy institution of our republic, has given the right to check and audit the books of accounts only to chartered accountants. In a way, they have been given the important responsibility of being the protectors of the most vulnerable and deprived sections of the society. The Governor said that the competence of Chartered Accountants is not limited to examining the propriety of its purpose on the basis of various



aspects of prudence, integrity and economy.

aspects of prudence, integrity and economy.

Governor Patel said that the financial expertise of chartered accountants is meaningful only in providing the right direction to various subjects related to tax, capital and budget planning and preparation of financing accounting books on a large scale in nation building. He said that it is the responsibility of Chartered Accountants to ensure proper utilization of national resources for the welfare of the poor and deprived sections. Governor Patel said that strict standards of audit should be followed carefully. Similarly, the role of Chartered Accountants is crucial in providing credibility to financial market transactions, as markets, participants, investors and shareholders look to Chartered Accountants for high quality information.

Taylor Swift to make directorial debut with her original script

Los Angeles | Agencies

Singer-songwriter-hitmaker Taylor Swift is set to leave the audience 'enchanted' (pun intended) with her foray into feature filmmaking. She has written an original script, which will be produced by the Oscar-winning studio behind 'Nomadland' and 'The Shape of Water', reports. Other key details, like a plot and casting, are being kept under wraps until a later date, but landing the project from one of the world's most successful musicians is a coup.

"Taylor is a once-in-a-generation artist and storyteller. It is a genuine joy and privilege to collaborate with her as she embarks on this exciting and new creative journey," said Searchlight presidents David Greenbaum and Matthew Greenfield.

According to the reports, Swift recently became the only solo artist ever to be honoured with two best direction awards at the MTV VMAs for her work on 'All Too Well: The Short Film' and 'The Man'. Swift is an 11-time Grammy winner and the only female artist to win album of the year on three different occasions. In October, Swift released 'Midnights', her 10th studio album.

The 14-minute production of 'All Too Well: The Short Film', which Swift wrote and directed, screened at the 2022 Tribeca Film Festival and Toronto International Film Festival.

Swift has also acted on screen, appearing in 'Valentine's Day', 'Cats' and, this year, in David O. Russell's 'Amsterdam'. The latter two films were notorious bombs, but Swift only had small roles in them.



AIVE DECIDED TO NO LONGER USE TWITTER: ELTON JOHN

Los Angeles | Agencies

Musician Elton John is the latest celebrity to leave Twitter following Elon Musk's takeover of the platform. The 'I Guess That's Why They Call It the Blues' singer sent out his last tweet on Friday (Dec 9), writing: "All my life I've tried to use music to bring people together. Yet it saddens me to see how misinformation is now being used to divide our world," reports Billboard.

He continued: "I've decided to no longer use Twitter, given their recent change in policy which will allow misinformation to flourish unchecked."



Upon seeing John's tweet, Musk

responded: "I love your music. Hope you come back. Is there any misinformation in particular that you're concerned about?" John has yet to reply.

John's decision to leave Twitter follows a number of other stars who have done the same, including Nine Inch Nails, Trent Reznor, Sara Bareilles, Jack White and more.

In October, it was revealed that Tesla CEO Elon Musk took control of Twitter after a lengthy legal battle and months of uncertainty. Since beginning his reign on the popular social media platform, the multi-billionaire has made a number of controversial decisions, including reinstating former president Donald Trump to Twitter after the site's previous owners had permanently suspended him for violating company rules in the wake of the deadly Jan 6 attack on the U.S. Capitol.

Alesha Dixon 'has signed up to star in FIVE major shows

Los Angeles | Agencies

Alesha Dixon has reportedly signed up to star in five major shows across ITV and the BBC over the Christmas period. The singer and TV personality will have seven hours and twenty minutes of airtime with her latest work projects, claims The Sun. She will be a panellist on ITV's one-off Christmas Eve special, Britain Get Singing, which will see groups of celebrities compete as choirs. Then she will star on the festive Britain's Got Talent spin-off called Ultimate Magician alongside Amanda Holden, David Walliams and Penn Jillette. Then she will star on the festive Britain's Got Talent spin-off called Ultimate Magician alongside Amanda Holden, David Walliams and Penn Jillette. Next Alesha will be a celebrity guest on Mo Gilligan new BBC gameshow, That's My Jam.

She will also appear on Michael McIntyre's Christmas Wheel on December 25 before starring on the National Lottery's Big New Year Bash to see in 2023.



Nick Carter returns to stage with Backstreet Boys

Los Angeles | Agencies

Singer Nick Carter has returned to the stage for the first time since being accused of rape - an allegation his lawyer says is 'entirely untrue'. The Backstreet Boys singer, performed along with his band mates at iHeartRadio's Jingle Ball stage for their performance at New York's iconic Madison Square Garden, reports.

The whole band was dressed in white for the annual festive event, which pulled together some of the biggest names in music to a crowd of thousands, who sang along to their biggest hits.

The performance comes after a woman named, Shannon Ruth, told a US press conference on Thursday she is to sue the singer of reportedly sexually assaulting her back in 2001 when she was 17-years-old, and he was 21.

Despite the rape allegations against the singer, he appeared smiling as he joined Backstreet Boys members, AJ McLean, Howie Dorough, Brian Littrell, and Kevin Richardson on the red carpet.

Ruth, accused Carter of sexually assaulting her on his tour bus following a concert in Washington state, and further claimed he took her virginity and also gave her a sexually transmitted disease.

Carter's attorney Michael Holtz called the allegations 'entirely untrue' in a statement. "This claim about an incident that supposedly took



place more than 20 years ago is not only legally meritless but also entirely untrue," he said.

Holtz said: "Unfortunately, for several years now, Ms.

Ruth has been manipulated into making false allegations about Nick - and those allegations have changed repeatedly and materially over time."

Cardi B says she's had 'nearly 95 per cent' of her buttock fillers removed



Los Angeles | Agencies

Rapstress Cardi B has said that she has almost all of her big 'bum fillers' removed as she warns fans about the dangers of "a*s shots" in a candid conversation.

The Bodak Yellow hitmaker, 30, urged her younger followers to ignore the temptation of pumping fat into their bodies if they feel "too skinny", reports mirror.co.uk.

She warned anyone thinking about having the cosmetic procedure to "make sure your blood levels are all right" by a professional doctor in a video shared to Instagram.

Cardi confessed to having "95 per cent" of the fat injections removed from her behind earlier and gave a lecture on staying safe. She said: "In August I got surgery and I removed 95 per cent of my biopolymers... if you don't know what it is, it's a*s shots. It was a really crazy process. All I'm going to say is that if you're young, if you're 19, 20, 21, and sometimes you're too skinny, and you be like 'OMG I don't have enough fat to put in my a*s', so you result to ass shots, DON'T!"

Kourtney 'finally' has her energy back after quitting IVF

Los Angeles | Agencies

Reality TV star Kourtney Kardashian has shared an intimate health update with fans as she said that she is "finally" feeling energised since she stopped IVF treatment 10 months ago.

The reality star stopped the treatment after it became "a lot" and negatively impacted her mental health. Kourtney also gained weight and suffered menopause-like symptoms, reports. Taking to Instagram on Thursday, the Poosh founder posted a black-and-white snap from her workout session as she offered support to those in a similar situation.

She captioned the picture: "Finally started getting my energy back 10 months after IVF, for anyone else going through it, it gets better!"

Kourtney and her husband Travis Barker have been very open about their IVF journey and it's featured in Hulu's The Kardashians. Speaking candidly about the process, drummer Travis said that it's very "real" and hopes he can normalise the role men play when it comes to conception.



"If any of that can help people - seeing Kourtney's journey through IVF, which is super hard for a woman. You saw her struggle with it and talk about it. That's real." "And there's however many millions of dudes that have to go give their semen for this same procedure. So it's, like, relatable, you know?"

"I've never been fazed by any of that," she said in an interview.

Kourtney has previously admitted they stopped IVF to take "a break" and be able to focus on planning their wedding. The happy couple tied the knot in May after almost a year of dating. In July, Travis was then admitted to the hospital for pancreatitis, with his health taking priority for the couple. "Having a baby together is still an ongoing conversation, but Travis' health is top priority right now," a source told Entertainment Tonight. During an episode of The Kardashians, Kourtney told her mum Kris Jenner that the medication and doctor appointments had been "awful". "Travis and I want to have a baby and so my doctor took us down this road of doing IVF and it hasn't been the most amazing experience," she said.



ABSOLUTE PIC OF THE DAY

Demi Rose



IND v BAN 3rd ODI

INDIA SIGN OFF FROM ODI SERIES WITH CRUSHING 227-RUN WIN



INDIA SIGNED OFF FROM THE ODI SERIES AGAINST BANGLADESH WITH A CRUSHING 227-RUN WIN AGAINST THE HOSTS IN THE THIRD AND FINAL MATCH AT THE ZAHUR AHMED CHOWDHURY STADIUM IN CHATTOGRAM ON SATURDAY.

Chattoagram | Agencies

India's victory in a dead rubber was effectively set up by left-handed opener Ishan Kishan smashing the fastest double hundred in the history of men's ODI cricket in 126 balls, breaking the previous record of 138-ball double-century by West Indies' Chris Gayle in the 2015 ODI World Cup against Zimbabwe in Canberra.

When he got out for 210 off 131 balls, converting his maiden ODI ton into a double-hundred, Kishan had more records against his name -- the highest individual score by a batter in men's ODIs in Bangladesh, as well as the highest score by an Indian batter outside of the home. His 210 is also the third-highest individual score by an Indian men's batter in

this format.

Kishan also added 290 runs for the second wicket with Virat Kohli, who made his 44th ODI hundred, and his first in the format since August 2019, also his 72nd international hundred, through a 91-ball 113 as India made 409/8 in their 50 overs.

Chasing 410 was always going to be difficult for Bangladesh. Axar Patel broke the 33-run opening stand on the first ball of the fifth over when Anamul Haque holed out to long-off. Three overs later, Litton Das hit straight to the mid-off fielder off Mohammed Siraj.

Axar got his second wicket as Mushfiqur Rahim went for the sweep but was castled. Eight overs later, Yasir Ali was trapped lbw by Umran Malik in a successful review by India. Shakib Al Hasan was

accumulating runs in his steady flow but chopped onto his stumps off Kuldeep Yadav.

As Mahmudullah was trapped lbw by Washington Sundar and burnt a review while Mehidy Hasan Miraz didn't produce any heroics with the bat, the result was all but a foregone conclusion as India registered a crushing victory.

Brief scores

India 409/8 in 50 overs (Ishan Kishan 210, Virat Kohli 113; Shakib Al Hasan 2-68, Ebadot Hossain 2-80) beat Bangladesh 182 all out in 34 overs (Shakib Al Hasan 43, Litton Das 29; Shardul Thakur 3-30, Axar Patel 2-22) by 227 runs.

FIFA WORLD CUP

Martinez heroics take Argentina into semis

Doha | Agencies

Goalkeeper Emiliano Martinez saved two penalties to help Argentina beat the Netherlands in the FIFA World Cup quarter-final penalty shootout and set up a semi-final against Croatia.

On Friday at the Lusail Stadium in Qatar, the Dutch came back strongly from two goals down to level the scores at the death and take the game into extra time but fell short in the penalty shootout.

The late fightback meant that Lionel Messi's magic, of setting up a goal and then scoring a goal from the spot kick almost meant nothing as Argentina squandered a two-goal lead at the death.

Messi fed Nahuel Molina with a sensational pass to score in the 35th, and then calmly converted a 73th-minute penalty as Argentina seemed well on course with a 2-0.

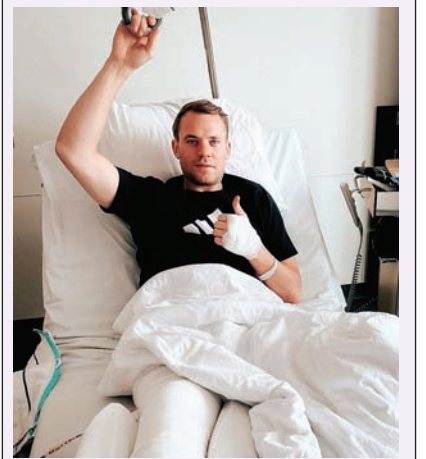


But substitute Wout Weghorst headed the Dutch back into the game in the 83rd and then forced extra time 11 minutes into stoppage time in an extraordinary free-kick trick play, scoring with the final kick of the game. With the 30 minutes of extra time failing to break the 2-2 deadlock, it was left to the penalty shootout to decide the winner in the second quarter-final of the day.

Martinez was the shoot-out hero saving the first two Dutch penalties from captain Virgil van Dijk and Steven Berghuis, while Lautaro Martinez clinched the matter for Argentina.

The Dutch failed to reach the last four for the third time in four editions and suffered a shoot-out loss to Argentina just as in the 2014 semi-finals.

GERMANY CAPTAIN NEUER RULED OUT FOR REST OF THE SEASON



Berlin | Germany and Bayern Munich captain Manuel Neuer has been ruled out for the rest of the season after breaking his leg while skiing during 'extra vacation' time allocated after his nation's FIFA World Cup elimination.

The player played every minute of Germany's campaign in Qatar which saw them get knocked out of the group stages for the second successive tournament.

The veteran goalkeeper, who has been given extra time off by Bayern Munich boss Julian Nagelsmann, confirmed in an Instagram post on Saturday that he underwent surgery that will rule him out for the rest of the season.

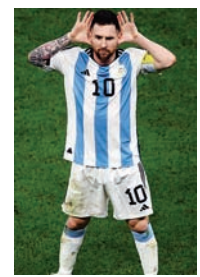
"What can I say, the end of the year could have definitely gone better," Neuer wrote along with his picture in a hospital bed with his right leg in a cast and a bandage on his left hand.

"While I was trying to get my head clear while ski touring, I suffered a lower leg fracture. Yesterday's surgery went well.

MESSI HAPPY TO QUALIFY FOR SEMIFINALS

Doha | Lionel Messi admitted his side had suffered to qualify for the semifinals of the World Cup after a dramatic penalty shootout against the Netherlands.

"We are really happy, we suffered too much, but it's a quarterfinal in the World Cup, and we suffered what we had to suffer to qualify," said Messi. Messi was the man of the match after setting up Nahuel Molina for the opening goal and then scoring Argentina's second from the penalty spot with just 17 minutes left to play, reports. "We are taking it game after game with the same intensity and same desire. We want to be protagonists. We are really excited and really want to win and we need this joy for us and for everyone who supports us," he said. The striker expressed his frustration at the second equaliser for the Netherlands, saying that Spanish referee, Mateu Lahoz had added on too much injury time. "I felt really angry at the late goal. I don't want to talk about the referee, because you can get a suspension, but people saw what happened. FIFA have to look at that. They can't put in a referee who isn't up to the job at this stage," he said. However, Messi said that he had confidence his side would qualify. "We knew we had an advantage with Emiliano (Martinez)," he said. He then looked ahead to the semifinal against Croatia, who also beat Brazil in a dramatic penalty shootout. "Croatia will be really hard. They were better than Brazil at times and move the ball really well. They are working with the same coach (Zlatko Dalic) as 2018 and it will be really hard. "I've said all World Cup; we are enjoying this, the fans, and taking it step by step. "I am very happy," he concluded.



2nd Test, Day 2

DUCKETT, BROOK HELP ENGLAND GAIN CONTROL OVER PAKISTAN

Multan | Agencies

Fantastic fifties by Harry Brook and Ben Duckett helped England gain control over hosts Pakistan on Day 2 of the second Test, despite Abrar Ahmed's 10 wickets on red-ball debut, here on Saturday.

After finishing with superb figures of 7-144 in the first innings, Abrar picked three of the five wickets to fall in England's second innings but the visitors ended Day 2 on 202 for 5, with a lead of 281 runs.

Beginning the day, Ollie Pope bowled Babar Azam early in the morning session as England began to claw back into the game after a mixed opening day. Jack Leach then bowled a ripper to get rid of Mohammad Rizwan.

With the ball turning sharply, Ben Stokes threw the ball to his predecessor Joe Root and it brought success for England as the likes of Agha Salman and Mohammad Ali got out in the same over. As Pakistan crumbled, a proactive Stokes brought on



Mark Wood towards the end of the first session to close out the innings

and he obliged as Pakistan were bowled out for 202.

England had a vital lead of 79 runs but they suffered early blows in their second innings as Zak Crawley got run out and Abrar dismissed Will Jacks with a googly in his first over. Thereafter, Ben Duckett put a lid on the fall of wickets and stitched a partnership with Joe Root. The stand was broken when Root fell for 21 as England went to Tea at 79 for 3.

Duckett, who got his second fifty of the Test before the break, carried on in the final session in the company of Harry Brook. It was once again Abrar, who gave Pakistan a breakthrough by removing Duckett.

Brief scores

England 281 & 202/5 in 49 overs (Ben Duckett 79; Harry Brook 74 not out; Abrar Ahmed 3-81) lead Pakistan 202 in 62.5 overs (Babar Azam 75, Saud Shakeel 63; Jack Leach 4-98, Joe Root 2-23, Mark Wood 2-40) by 281 runs

PT Usha becomes first woman IOA president

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Legendary athlete PT Usha was on Saturday officially elected as the first woman president of Indian Olympic Association (IOA) during the governing body's polls.

Usha -- a multiple Asian Games gold medallist -- was declared elected unopposed for the top post.

The Pilavullakandi Thekkeraparambil (PT) Usha from Payyoli town in Kerala's Kozhikode district, who had won four gold and seven silver medals in four Asian Games between 1982-1994, said she was "humbled and touched" by the messages of support over her election as the President of the IOA.

"Through the experiences of my journey, I know very well the value of this post. I



feel the pain of an athlete, and that of a coach. Above all, about the role of a true admin," Usha wrote in a tweet on Saturday.

"I look forward to upholding the Olympic values and working with national and international sporting feder-

ations to ensure India propels forward in our quest of being a global sporting powerhouse!" Usha added in her statement.

The polls were held under the supervision of Supreme Court-appointed retired SC judge L. Nageswara Rao.

IND vs BAN Test Series

Jaydev Unadkat to replace Mohammed Shami

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Left-arm pacer Jaydev Unadkat is set to replace injured senior right-arm pacer Mohammed Shami in India's Test squad for the upcoming Test series Bangladesh, starting from December 14 in Chattogram.

A report said Unadkat is currently in Rajkot, and is waiting to complete his visa formalities. It added that he is expected to link up with the Test squad in Chattogram over the next couple of days.

Shami had been earlier ruled out of India's ODI series against Bangladesh due to sustaining a shoulder injury during a training session in the lead up to the trip. He is currently undergoing rehab at the National Cricket Academy (NCA) in Bengaluru.

The report said after Shami missed the ODI leg of the tour of Bangladesh, there was a slim chance that he would be fit for the two Tests against Bangladesh, but that has now been ruled out. Unadkat, is receiving just the second call-up in his playing career to the Indian Test squad. His only appearance so far in



Tests came almost 12 years ago, in the first Test of the 2010/11 tour of South Africa in Centurion.

Recently, he was the highest wicket-taker in 2022/23 Vijay Hazare Trophy, picking up 19 wickets in ten matches to lead Saurashtra to the title. Apart from a solitary Test appearance, Unadkat has also played seven ODIs and ten T20Is for India, seen in the national set-up last time when India won the Nidahas Trophy in Sri Lanka in March 2018.

India's top skaters to compete in 60th National Roller Skating Championship

Bengaluru | Agencies

World speed skating medallist Anand Velkumar from Tamil Nadu, world artistic champion Abhijit Amalraj from Kerala, Asian podium finisher and Gujarat National Games triple gold medallist speed skater Aarathy Kasturiraj (from Tamil Nadu), Manipur's skateboarding sensation Ranju Chingangbam along with more than 100 international-level skaters will be vying for the top honours in the diamond jubilee celebrations of the India's roller sports meet -- 60th National Roller Skating Championship -- to be held in Bengaluru and Tumkur, Karnataka, from December 11 to 22.

The championship is being organised by the Karnataka Roller Skating Association under the aegis of Roller Skating Federation of India (RSFI).

Over 4,000 skaters, representing 31



states and union territories, will compete in 12 disciplines, spread over four venues in Bengaluru and one in neighbouring district Tumkur.

Andhra Pradesh is sending the biggest contingent of 367 skaters, while hosts Karnataka's contingent is of 328 skaters. There is a sizeable representation from the North-Eastern states, while newly-formed unit Ladakh is being represented by two women speed skaters.

Union Sports Minister Anurag Thakur and Karnataka Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommal will inaugurate the championship on Sunday (December 11). Member of Parliament from Bengaluru Tejasvi Surya is the chairman of the organising committee.

Apart from the opening and closing ceremonies, the speed skating events will be held in the newly-built India's first indoor 200m banked track in Bengaluru.



Deepika Padukone in her most glam avatar ever

Team Absolute | Mumbai

'Pathaan' director Siddharth Anand said that the makers wanted to present Deepika in her most glamorous avatar yet in the upcoming actioner. The director said: "Deepika Padukone, apart from being a fantastic actor who has grown with each film, is also the hottest actress of our country. Casting her for the character in the film was as organic as it could get. She can be vulnerable and yet very, very sexy just effortlessly."

"So, when you have her in the film, you have to present her in a way that does complete justice to her."

He added: "I wanted to present her in her most glam avatar ever. That became a mission for the team and me. So, for Besharam Rang, when she is in a visually stunning coastal town of Europe, dancing with Shah Rukh Khan, we decided to just maximise how hot DP could look on screen! And the result will be unveiled when you see this amazing song."

'Pathaan' is part of Aditya Chopra's spy universe and has the biggest superstars of the country - Shah Rukh Khan, Deepika Padukone and John Abraham - in it. The adrenaline pumping, visually extravagant film presents Shah Rukh Khan as a gun-toting spy with a license to kill.

'Pathaan' is set to release on January 25, 2023 in Hindi, Tamil and Telugu.



Team Absolute | Bengaluru

Actress Rashmika Mandanna has reacted to demands of banning her from Kannada film industry for looking down on the production house which launched her.

"I only love them. Rest is up to them," she said when reporters asked for her response to the demand to ban her from Kannada film industry.

'Kantara' fame director and actor Rishab Shetty had launched Rashmika Mandanna with his first venture as a director in hit 'Kirik Party' movie.

Rakshit Shetty, friend of Rishab Shetty of 'Charlie 777' fame, was the hero of the movie. Rashmika and Rakshit Shetty fell in love and got engaged. Later, Rashmika got breakthrough in Telugu film industry and went on to become a successful actress.

The couple called off their engagement citing incompatibility. Recently, when asked about her launch, Rashmika didn't even take the name of the production house or the director. She gestured with fingers that "this production house approached me and they were heads over heels for having me in the project."

Rishab Shetty had made his displeasure clear in an interview that he doesn't like heroines who use gestures to recall the production house which launched them.

Fans of Rishab Shetty and Rakshit Shetty are demanding that she should be banned for looking down on the Kannada film industry.

Rashmika reacts after fans want her banned from Kannada films



I have always been a huge fan of Ritviz's music: Fatima

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actress Fatima Sana Shaikh, who most recently featured in the music video "Taj" composed by Ritviz of "Hum Toh Udd Gaye" fame, has shared that she said yes to the project in an instant. To quote her, she "didn't even think twice before saying yes". The video also features Tahir Raj Bhasin, who was last seen in the Taapsee Pannu-starrer "Looop Lapeta".

About the song, Fatima said: "I have always been a huge fan of Ritviz's music and when I got an opportunity to collaborate with him on this music video, I didn't even think twice before saying yes."

The actress can be seen in a nerdy, geeky look in the romantic song. She revealed that the song is quite special to her, "The moment I heard the storyline of the song from the director, I found it extremely beautiful and I instantly connected with it. The song revolves around a girl who has grown up in a toxic household, with parents who hurt more than love and how against all odds she dares to dream."

She further mentioned, "How a little nudge of hope helps her break free. It's been such a wonderful experience working on this song.. it'll always remain special for me."

On the movie front, Fatima will next be seen in "Dhak Dhak" which has been directed and co-written by Tarun Dubeja, and co-produced by Taapsee Pannu, Pranjal Khandhdiya, and Ayush Maheshwari.

AYUSHMANN MADE A MAJOR CAREER DECISION INSPIRED BY SRK

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Bollywood star Ayushmann Khurrana, who was most recently seen in 'An Action Hero', is a huge fan of superstar Shah Rukh Khan - to the extent that he studied mass communication because of him. SRK had enrolled for a course in mass communication Jamia Millia Islamia, but left to pursue his acting career.

Talking about the same, the 'Vicky Donor' actor said: "I am a huge fan of Shahrukh Khan. In fact, I even studied Mass Communication because of him. In my films, I have often dedicated some scenes to him."

He also revealed that he once saw SRK's 1997 release 'Dil To Pagal Hai' while standing for three hours straight inside a theatre in Chandigarh.

Ayushmann said: "I was in the seventh grade when 'Dil To Pagal Hai' was released. I still remember, I had gone on my cycle to buy tickets but the theatre was housefull. So, I stood behind and watched the whole film."

Ayushmann also had recently posed outside SRK's Mumbai bungalow, Mannat.



Hrithik reveals why his dad didn't want him to enter B'wood

Los Angeles | Agencies

Actor Hrithik Roshan spoke at length about his career, his charitable work and the professional relationship he has with his father, director Rakesh Roshan at the ongoing Red Sea Film Festival.

"My father was against me coming into films because of the struggle that he had to go through," said Roshan when asked if his father supported his choice to venture into acting. "He struggled very hard for 20 years and did not want me to go through what he went through. But I think there was something inside me that was really determined," reports Variety.

"I wanted to prove myself because I grew up with a really bad stutter and this was my one chance to look and feel normal," he continued, telling the audience how the exclusion and isolation he felt due to his childhood stammering led him to set up a charity foundation with the aim of helping children with special abilities.

"What this did for me was equalise every one of us in my head. I see myself in every single human being I meet, which makes

me able to connect with people very easily. It makes me very empathetic, very tolerant and patient."

"I wouldn't wish this upon my children or the children of the world," he said of the correlation between success and self-esteem experienced by many people in the industry. "I'd rather they grew up with enough self-worth, to be okay with or without the success and then yearn for bettering themselves as human beings or actors or whatever career they choose."

The actor does not rely on social media for boosting his ego either, stating that he "has never been on the receiving end of anything negative on social media," something he attributes to not giving it "much attention."

"I need social media to contribute, to inspire, but I don't indulge. If you're posting something to feel better about yourself then you're setting yourself up for disappointment. I make sure that I am feeling my best when I am doing any social media posts because I don't want to be at the mercy of people to feel good, so to me it's always been great.



'BAALVEER' ACTOR DEV JOSHI TO JOIN SPACEX MOON MISSION

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The phrase "To the moon and back" could prove true for actor Dev Joshi, who is known for his work on the television show "Baalveer". Joshi is the youngest among the 7 people who will fly to the moon in 2023 in a SpaceX flight.

The actor was selected from one million applicants from 249 countries for the first civilian mission to the moon bankrolled by Japanese billionaire Yusaku Maezawa, who bought every seat for the lunar expedition.

The winners were announced on Twitter and dearMoon website. In a video posted on the website, Dev can be heard saying: "You have seen me flying in space as a superhero. Time to make it real."

Dev has been in the entertainment industry since he was three and has done several television series. He has also worked in Gujarati regional cinema with more than 20 movies to his credit. The actor, who started his journey in 2010, has also worked in music albums, stage shows and commercials.

He is currently pursuing a Master's in International Affairs and Diplomacy from the United Nations Institute of Training and Research.



INSTAGRAM PIC OF THE DAY



Ambika Nayak