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AMIT SHAH ON TAWANG CLASH

"Not even one inch of India's land has been captured. Indian soldiers showed immense bravery during the skirmish and within no time gave a befitting reply to Chinese troops," the home minister said, adding that no one could capture an inch of land under the Modi government. He made the remarks while talking to reporters outside the Parliament building.

IT'S NOT 1962 ANYMORE: ARUNACHAL CM

New Delhi: Arunachal Chief Minister Pema Khandu today said the Indian Army will give a befitting reply if someone tries to transgress. His remarks come just days after the soldiers of the two countries clashed in the Tawang sector of Arunachal Pradesh. "Yangtse is under my assembly constituency & every year I meet the Javans & villagers of the area. It's not 1962 anymore. If anyone tries to transgress, our brave soldiers will give a befitting reply," Khandu said in a tweet.

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Satellite images shows that China has built villages on their side of the India-China border abutting Arunachal Pradesh's Tawang, and the PLA army has also constructed a road on that side, Indian Army sources said on Tuesday, a day after a clash between troops of both sides last week became public.

On the clash, sources said that as many as 300 Chinese troops had arrived near the LAC on December 9 to gain control over the peak of a 17,000-foot-high mountain under a well-planned conspiracy, but the Indian troops foiled their attempt, the

source said. Meanwhile, China's first statement on the clash has come, with its Foreign Ministry said that the situation on its border with India is "stable". When India raised the issue of clash between Indian and Chinese soldiers on the Line of Actual Control (LAC) near Tawang, China maintained that the situation on the border is stable.

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Wang Wenbin said: "As far as we understand, the situation on the China-India border is overall stable. Continuous talks are going on, on the border issue through diplomatic and military channels."

Although, China has maintained that the situation on its border with

India is stable but according to sources, the Chinese soldiers had come with barbed sticks near the LAC on December 9.

India has taken a tough stand on the clash between Indian and Chinese soldiers. A meeting with the chiefs of all three armed forces, the CDS, and the NSA was also called by the Defence Minister.

The clash between Indian and Chinese troops on December 9 took place at the 17,000 feet at Yangtse, some 35 km north-east of Tawang in western Arunachal Pradesh.

A source informed that there have been injuries to both Indian and Chinese soldiers and six of the injured Indian soldiers had been

admitted to the military hospital at Guwahati, but here is no reports of any serious injury or death.

China has been repeatedly trying to take control of the 17,000-foot-high peak but Indian Army sources said that India has a firm control of the peak, which provides a commanding view on both sides of the border.

After the tension erupted between India and the Chinese PLA Army in Arunachal Pradesh, now Indian Air Force aircraft are patrolling the skies of Arunachal to prevent the Chinese Army from violating the LAC again.

According to Air Force sources, this patrolling is being done to prevent any possible airspace violations by the Chinese Air Force.

Only about 13% recovery in written-offs loans during last five years: Government



Team Absolute | New Delhi

Only about 13 per cent of the loans written off by the scheduled commercial banks (SCBs) during the last five financial years have been recovered, the Parliament was told on Tuesday.

Government data showing details of loans written off by scheduled commercial banks (SCBs) disclosed that total Rs 10,09,510 crore were written off during the last five financial years (FYs), the Finance Minister told the Rajya Sabha in a written reply.

The data on recovery of the written off loans said that Rs 1,32,036 crore have been recovered during the period.

The data showed that the amount written off by the banks has come down in the last few years.

It showed that in the Rs 1,61,328 crore was written off in 2017-18, Rs 2,36,265 crore in FY 2018-19, Rs 2,34,170 crore in FY 2019-20, Rs 2,02,781 Crore in FY 2020-21 and Rs 1,74,966 crore in FY 2021-22. On recovery of written off loan, the data showed that Rs 12,881 crore was recovered in FY 2017-18, Rs 25,501 crore in FY 2018-19, Rs 30,016 crore in FY 2019-20, Rs 30,104 crore in 2020-21 and Rs 33,534

crore in FY 2021-22. On questions regarding the names and details of the accounts in which loans were written off for amounts of Rs 10 crore and above and the names of top 25 loan defaulters in Public Sector Banks (PSBs), the reply said: "The RBI has informed that under the provisions of section 45E of the Reserve Bank of India Act, 1934, RBI is prohibited from disclosing borrower-wise credit information." In another reply in the Rajya Sabha on Tuesday, the Minister said: "The borrowers of written-off loans continue to be liable for repayment, and the process of recovery of dues from the borrower in written-off loan accounts continues. Banks continue to pursue recovery actions initiated in written-off accounts through various recovery mechanisms available, such as filing of a suit in civil courts or in Debts Recovery Tribunals, action under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002, filing of cases in the National Company Law Tribunal under the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, 2016, through negotiated settlement/compromise, and through sale of non-performing assets. Therefore, write-off does not benefit the borrowers."

GST RAIDS IN UP STOPPED FOR 3 DAYS AS TRADERS' PROTESTS TURN MORE AGGRESSIVE

Lucknow | Agencies

UP Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Tuesday asked officials to stop GST raids on traders for three days.

The decision comes after aggressive protests by traders in Varanasi, Agra, and other major cities of Uttar Pradesh. In Varanasi, traders staged a demonstration and shops in several areas downed their shutters in protest the raids. Varanasi Vyapar Mandal president Ajit Singh Bagga said that the raids were a tool to victimise traders. "If officials do not mend their ways, the traders will take to the streets," he said.

Traders staged a mock funeral to register their protest against the raids. The raids had begun after reports of large-scale bungling and evasion in GST by traders.

Shopkeepers also kept their shops closed in Gorakhpur, Basti and Chitrakoot where raids took place.

Uttar Pradesh Adarsh Vyapar Mandal president Sanjay Gupta said that traders were being harassed in the name of goods and services tax (GST)



as raids were being conducted in the name of tax evasion.

"Raids on business establishments are not justified; investigations should be done only on receipt of complaint. But the officials are carrying out raids randomly to harass the traders," Gupta said.

"The raids have created a fear psychosis following which many traders have closed their establishments, which is not a good sign," he added.

In western Uttar Pradesh, traders have been protesting in Meerut, Pilibhit, Bijnor, and Baghpat. Traders submitted a memorandum to former union minister Santosh Gangwar.

FOUR HELD IN RAJASTHAN FOR TRYING TO SET FIRE TO BHARAT JODO YATRA CAMP

Jaipur:

Amid Rahul Gandhi's Bharat Jodo Yatra in Rajasthan, police in Sawai Madhopur district on



Tuesday arrested four accused of attempting to set fire to a camp associated with the event.

Some unknown people came by car, late on Monday, to Bamanwas in Sawai Madhopur, when food was being prepared for the yatra. Meanwhile, 10 to 15 people came with cattle to the tent to divert the attention of the workers.

One of the workers overheard this group's discussion to set the camp on fire and immediately informed the police about it. When the police reached the spot, the accused tried to flee but police chased them and managed to catch four people.

Further investigations are under progress. A few days back, a person tried to carry out self-immolation during the Bharat Jodo Yatra in Rajasthan's Kota.

2025 Assembly election will be fought under Tejashwi's leadership: Nitish

Patna | Agencies

Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar on Monday said that the Mahagathbandhan will contest the next Assembly election in 2025 under the leadership of his deputy Tejashwi Yadav, of the RJD. The announcement came after the meeting of Mahagathbandhan leaders in the Bihar Assembly. During the meeting, Tejashwi Yadav, Jitan Ram Manjhi, Ajit Sharma, Mahboob Alam, and other leaders of the Mahagathbandhan were present.

"I have no ambition to become Prime Minister of the country. I have only one ambition: to defeat the BJP and remove it from the Centre. We all are work-



ing on it and we will contest the 2025 Assembly election of Bihar under the leadership of Tejashwi Yadav," Nitish Kumar said.

"I have been working for the development of Bihar and Bihar people and now it is the turn of Tejashwi Yadav to continue the good works in future," he added.

Earlier on several occasions, Nitish Kumar pub-

licly said that he wants to promote young generation leader Tejashwi Yadav in future. Now, he has announced it in the Assembly.

Nitish Kumar is looking at politics of the Centre. Even his party JD-U and RJD leaders have claimed that Nitish Kumar has all the ability to be Prime Minister of the country. Tejashwi Yadav, RJD state president Jagadanand

Singh, and JD-U Parliamentary Board Chairman Upendra Kushwaha have claimed that Nitish Kumar is a PM material. However, Nitish Kumar said that he does not have any ambition to become the PM. The announcement of Nitish Kumar came after the Kurhani bypoll results where his party lost. He did an open session with the leaders and supporters of the party on December 10 and 11 and analysed the current political situation. Sources have said that he was not pleased with the performance of JD-U in Kurhani. Hence, he has announced the name of Tejashwi Yadav and it is shocking for his party's leaders as well. Nitish Kumar's announcement was largely welcomed.

MUSK LOSES WORLD'S RICHEST MAN'S TITLE TO BERNARD ARNAULT

San Francisco: Elon Musk, who saw his net worth tumble by more than \$100 billion in 2022, has been replaced by Bernard Arnault, the chief executive of luxury brand Louis Vuitton's parent company LVMH, as the world's richest man. According to the Bloomberg Billionaires Index, Musk, 51, is now worth \$168.5 billion (as of Tuesday), less than the \$172.9 billion net worth of Arnault, 73. Last week, Arnault and his family for the first time logged personal wealth of \$185.4 billion, ahead of Musk which recorded a net worth of \$185.3 billion, before jumping again to \$190 billion. The Tesla CEO's wealth eroded further after he bought Twitter for a whopping \$44 billion.



The 51-year-old's net worth peaked at \$340 billion in November last year.

Meanwhile, Tesla shares have plummeted around 58 per cent to date.

In January 2021, Musk became the richest person in the world for the first time, with a net worth of more than \$185 billion.

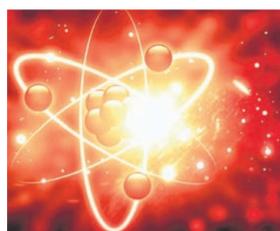
Meanwhile, Tesla shares are further sliding, amid reports that Tesla will cut production at its Shanghai plant by 20 per cent in December.

US officials announce nuclear fusion breakthrough

A so-called "net energy gain" is a major milestone in a decades-long attempt to source clean, limitless energy from nuclear fusion, the reaction that happens when two or more atoms are fused together. The experiment put in 2.05 megajoules of energy to the target and resulted in 3.15 MJ of fusion energy output, generating more than 50 per cent more energy than was put in. It's the first time an experiment resulted in a meaningful gain of energy.

Washington | Agencies

US Department of Energy officials announced a history-making accomplishment in nuclear fusion on Tuesday: For the first time, US scientists produced more energy from fusion than the laser energy used to power the experiment, media reports said. "This monumental scientific breakthrough is a milestone for the future of clean energy," said Democratic Sen. Alex Padilla of California, CNN reported. The breakthrough was made by a team of scientists at the Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory's National Ignition Facility in California on December 5, a facility the size of a sports stadium and equipped



with 192 lasers. US Energy Secretary Jennifer Granholm called the breakthrough a "landmark achievement", CNN reported. In the statement, Granholm said scientists at Livermore and other national labs do work that will

help the US "solve humanity's most complex and pressing problems, like providing clean power to combat climate change and maintaining a nuclear deterrent without nuclear testing." The director of Livermore, Dr. Kim Budil, called scientists' attempts to realise fusion ignition in the lab "one of the most significant scientific challenges ever tackled by humanity" and cheered the work of her lab's scientists. "Achieving it is a triumph of science, engineering, and most of all, people," Budil said in a statement, CNN reported. "Crossing this threshold is the vision that has driven 60 years of dedicated pursuit. These are the problems that the US national laboratories were created to solve."

BILKIS BANO CASE: SUPREME COURT'S JUSTICE BELA TRIVEDI OPTS OUT OF HEARING

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Supreme Court judge, Justice Bela M. Trivedi, on Tuesday recused from hearing the petition filed by Bilkis Bano against the release of 11 men convicted of gang-raping her in the 2002 Gujarat riots, and also accused of murdering her family members.

The matter was listed before a bench of Justices Ajay Rastogi and Bela Trivedi. Justice Trivedi chose to recuse from the case.

In the plea, Bano said release of all the convicts came as a shock. 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."

Termining the release order mechanical, the plea said the en-

masse premature release of the convicts in the much talked about case of Bilkis Bano, has shaken the conscience of the society and resulted in a number of agitations across the country. The plea contended that shocking news of premature release of all the convicts, including the writ petitioner, was revealed to the present petitioner and public at large when the convicts were honoured and photographed in full public glare. Bilkis Bano said she was "extremely-extremely" hurt, disturbed, and full of dejection with the early release and sudden and traumatising presence and existence of 11 of her rapists who brutally gang-raped her while she was five months pregnant and inflicted on her person and soul extreme level of violence and brutality.

Bano has also separately filed a review petition against challenging the May 13 judgment of the apex court, saying that Maharashtra's remission policy should be applied in the present case instead of 1992 remission policy of Gujarat since the trial had happened in Maharashtra.



SC COLLEGIUM RECOMMENDS FIVE HC JUDGES FOR ELEVATION TO APEX COURT

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Supreme Court collegium on Tuesday recommended the names of five high court judges for the elevation to the apex court.

A statement uploaded on the apex court website said: "The Supreme Court Collegium in its meeting held on 13 December 2022 has resolved to recommend elevation of the following Chief Justices/Judges of the High Courts, as Judges in the Supreme Court: Justice Pankaj Mithal, Chief Justice, Rajasthan High Court (parent high court (PHC): Allahabad); Justice Sanjay Karol, Chief Justice, Patna High Court (PHC: Himachal Pradesh); Justice P.V. Sanjay Kumar, Chief Justice, Manipur High Court (PHC: Telangana); Justice Ahsanuddin Amanullah, Judge, Patna High Court; and Justice Manoj Misra, Judge, Allahabad High Court."

According to sources, the six-member collegium headed by Chief Justice D.Y. Chandrachud met for the first time on Tuesday, after the Centre cleared Justice Dipankar Datta for elevation as a judge of the Supreme Court, to finalize names to fill up the vacancies in the apex court.



The six-member collegium also comprises Justices Sanjay Kishan Kaul, S. Abdul Nazeer, K.M. Joseph, M.R. Shah, and Sanjiv Khanna. Justice Dipankar Datta was on Monday sworn in as a judge of the Supreme Court. CJI Chandrachud administered the oath of office to Justice Datta on the apex court premises, in presence of all apex court judges, lawyers, and family members.

With this, the working strength of the apex court rose to 28 as against its sanctioned strength of 34. If the Central government approves the five names, the number of apex court judges would be increased to 33.

However, out of the 28 apex court judges at present, nine are scheduled to retire in 2023. Justice Abdul Nazeer will retire on January 4.

SPECIAL SELECTION BOARD TO CONSIDER WOMEN ARMY OFFICERS PROMOTION

New Delhi: The Centre on Tuesday told the Supreme Court that a special selection board has been convened in January next year to examine the promotion of 246 women Army officers. Senior advocate R. Balasubramanian, representing the Ministry of Defence, told a bench headed by Chief Justice D.Y. Chandrachud that the issue of promotion of these women officers will be examined by a special selection board, which would sit for 13 days - from January 2 to 22, 2023. The bench, also comprising Justice P.S. Narasimha, told the petitioners' counsel it is seized of the matter and the government is saying that by January 23, the special selection board will be over. It was informed that all the women officers who joined the Army between 1992 and 2006 would be considered for 150 additional vacancies in the colonel rank, which were recently sanctioned by the Union Ministry of Finance.

The bench said it will keep the matter after January 23, and scheduled the matter for further hearing on January 30. It also asked the government to file an updated report, before the board's results are put out.

Returning medical students conditionally allowed to appear in FMG Exam: Govt

Medical students, returning home due to the Russia-Ukraine conflict, are permitted to appear in Foreign Medical Graduate Examination subject to the condition that they have been granted certificate of course completion by their respective institute, the Parliament was told on Tuesday.

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The National Medical Commission (NMC) has devised a scheme under which Indian students, who were in the last year of their undergraduate medicine course, had to leave their foreign medical institute due to Covid-19, Russia-Ukraine conflict etc. and have subsequently completed their studies as also have been granted certificate of completion of course or degree by the respective institute, on or before June 30, 2022, are permitted to appear in Foreign Medical Graduate Examination, Minister of State for Health Dr Bharati Pravin Pawar told the Rajya Sabha in a written reply.

"Thereafter, upon qualifying the FMG examination, such foreign medical graduates are required to undergo Compulsory Rotating Medical Internship (CRMI) for a

period of two years to make up for the clinical training which could not be physically attended by them during the undergraduate medicine course in the foreign institute as also to familiarise them with practice of medicine under Indian conditions. Foreign medical graduates get registration only after completing the CRMI of two years," she added.

Dr Pawar informed the house that the foreign medical students are either covered under 'Screening Test Regulations, 2002' or 'Foreign Medical Graduate Licentiate Regulations, 2021'.

However, there are no such provisions in the Indian Medical Council Act 1956 & the National Medical Commission Act, 2019 as well as the Regulations to accommodate or transfer medical students from any foreign medical institutes to Indian medical colleges, she said.

Girl kidnapped from Bihar's Vaishali, taken to Delhi, raped for a month

Patna | Agencies

A girl from Bihar's Vaishali district was kidnapped, taken to Delhi and gang-raped by five persons for one month, a police official said on Tuesday.

The victim, a resident of a village coming under the Mahanur police station, was kidnapped by five persons when she was on the way to Jandaha market in the second week of November.

The accused persons saw her walking alone, and forcibly dragged inside a truck. They took her to Delhi and held captive for one month.

As per the statement of the victim, the accused repeatedly



ly gang-raped her for one month and then took her back to Vaishali and released her near her village.

"We have registered an FIR on the statements of the victim and her parents against five persons. Raids are on to

nab them. We have conducted medical examination of the victim which confirms rape," said an official of Mahanur police station. The case was transferred to the women police station of the district.

SEXUALLY EXPLOITED WOMAN SHOT AT IN RANCHI ON DAY OF HEARING

Ranchi: Criminals opened fire at 9.30 a.m. on Tuesday at a tribal woman who had lodged a case of sexual exploitation against Jharkhand IG P.S. Natarajan in 2005. The attack took place at Sahajanand Chowk in Harmu, a congested busy area of Ranchi.

The woman was hit by three bullets and is currently critical and undergoing treatment at Medica Hospital in the city. A hearing was scheduled at the High Court in a case registered in behalf of the woman on Tuesday. The incident took place just before the hearing. The woman was going on a bike with one of her bodyguards when three criminals riding on another bike overtook them and fired at her.

The criminals are in the process of being identified on the basis of CCTV footage installed at the crossroads and nearby shops.

One bullet passed out of her body while the other bullets got stuck. The bodyguard had a narrow escape. One of the three criminals captured in the CCTV footage has been identified by the woman. According to sources, some people were threatening her continuously for two weeks.

Odisha: 16 lawyers arrested, 29's license suspended for violence in courtroom

Bhubaneswar | Agencies

The Odisha Police has arrested 16 lawyers of Sambalpur district Bar Association for violence in a courtroom during a protest for establishment of a bench of the Orissa High Court in the western Odisha town.

Violence was reported in the Sambalpur court on Monday as public, advocates, members of civil society and local outfits indulged in a scuffle with the police and ransacked the courtroom. The protesters also forcefully dragged district judge Manas Ranjan Barik from his chamber.

The violence was reported at the same time when the Supreme Court slammed the



Odisha Police for its failure to provide security to judges and courts. It also asked the Odisha DGP and IGP, Northern Range for personal appearance through VC on Wednesday. Acting on the incident, the police has arrested 16 lawyers, clamped section 144 CrPc near the court and deployed 21 platoons of police in Sambalpur town including 17 platoons near the court complex, Sambalpur SP B. Gangadhar said. The SP said more arrests will be made in connection with Monday's

violence after examining the CCTV footage and on the basis of the video clippings of the TV news. "If required, we will request the District Magistrate to extend the enforcement period of Section 144 of CrPc at Kacheri Chhak of Sambalpur town," he added.

Gangadhar warned that strong action will be taken if anybody violated the prohibitory orders.

Meanwhile, the Bar Council of India (BCI) has suspended the license of 29 advocates for 18 months with immediate effect and has further suspended all the members of the Sambalpur District Bar Association till further orders, said Jajati Keshari Samantsinghar, Secretary of Odisha State Bar Council.

Kerala Assembly passes Bill removing Guv as Chancellor, but its fate uncertain

Thiruvananthapuram | Agencies

On expected lines, the Kerala Assembly on Tuesday passed the University Laws (Amendment) Bill which removes the Governor as the Chancellor of 14 universities in the state.

Even though the bill has been passed, it, according to the rules, has to be sent to Governor Arif Mohammed Khan for his assent.

Khan had earlier hinted that he will not stand in judgment of a case involving him and hence, in all likelihood, if he doesn't sign, either it might lie pending in his office, and if not, it would be sent to the President.

At the end of the debate before the Bill was put for voting, the Opposition walked out of the house after the government stood its ground of having the Speaker in a three member panel to select the next Chancellor instead of a retired High Court judge. The Chief Minister, and the Leader of Opposition will be the other two members. As per the Bill that has now been passed, emi-



nent academicians would be appointed as Chancellors instead of the Governor.

Incidentally since August, ever since Khan put his foot down to clearing the appointment of Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan's private secretary's wife on a teaching post in the Kannur University,

the relation between Vijayan and Khan has gone from bad to worse and with this Bill, it will exacerbate.

The present session of the Assembly was called specifically to pass this Bill among other Bills, after Khan refused to sign an Ordinance on the same topic.

NEXT ELECTIONS IN J&K WILL BE FOUGHT FOR IDENTITY: OMAR

Srinagar: Former Jammu and Kashmir chief minister and National Conference (NC) vice president, Omar Abdullah said on Tuesday that the next assembly elections in the union territory will be fought for identity.

Addressing the National Conference workers in Doru area of Anantnag district on Tuesday, Abdullah said the elections will not be fought for roads, electricity and water. "Elections are generally contested for development but this time, elections will be fought for identity so that land, jobs and other rights are there for locals only," Omar said. He also said that now the government plans to give unique identity card to every household but wondered why this was needed when they already have Aadhaar, PAN and other identities.

Telangana HC extends stay on SIT notice to BJP leader Santhosh

Hyderabad | Agencies

The Telangana High Court on Tuesday extended the stay on the notice issued to BJP national General Secretary, Organisation, B.L. Santhosh and Kerala-based doctor Jaggu Swami in the MLAs poaching case.

The High Court extended the stay till December 22 on notices issued by the Special Investigation Team (SIT) probing the case.

The court restrained the SIT from taking any action with regard to the notices issued to the duo under Section 41A of the Criminal Procedure Code.

The court had earlier stayed notices issued to senior BJP leader and the doctor till December 13.

The stay was extended by the court while hearing quash petitions filed by the



petitioners. Kottilil Narayan Jaggu alias Jaggu Swami also challenged a lookout notice issued for him by the probe team. The SIT issued a lookout notice for Jaggu Swami on November 22, terming him a wanted person in the case. The names of Santhosh and Jaggu Swami figured in the conversation between three alleged BJP agents

arrested by the police in October while trying to lure four MLAs of TRS to the BJP fold with an offer of huge money. The High Court earlier this month granted bail to three accused.

Ramachandra Bharati, Nand Kumar and D.P.S.K.V. Simhayaji were granted conditional bail by the court.

WINTER SESSION OF MAHARASHTRA LEGISLATURE IN NAGPUR DEC 19-30

Mumbai: For the first time after two years of the Covid-19 pandemic, Nagpur will host the Maharashtra Legislature's winter session from December 19-30, officials said on Tuesday.

The decision was taken by the Business Advisory Committees of the Assembly and Council which would meet again later this month to decide on further extending the session. The BAC meeting was held with Chief Minister Eknath Shinde, Deputy CM Devendra Fadnis, Leader of Opposition in Assembly Ajit Pawar, Speaker Rahul Narvekar, Deputy Speaker Narhari Zirwal, Deputy Chairperson of the Legislative Council Dr Neelam Gorhe, Leader of Opposition in Council Ambadas Danve, and others in attendance. Gorhe announced that both houses will also take up a resolution expressing solidarity with the people living in the border villages of Maharashtra-Karnataka and Shinde will move it in the Assembly and the Council. The Opposition parties had argued that since the winter session of the legislature could not be conducted in Nagpur due to pandemic lockdowns, this year it should be held for an extended sitting of three weeks to take up local issues of the Marathwada-Vidarbha regions.



Delhi govt launches Winter Action Plan for homeless, 15 teams deployed

Team Absolute | New Delhi

With the winter setting in, the Delhi government is implementing the Winter Action Plan to rescue the homeless from the chill and provide them accommodation and food in 'Rain Baseras' (night shelters).

Delhi Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia on Tuesday reviewed the plan with senior officials of various departments concerned. The Delhi Urban Shelter Improvement Board (DSUIB) has set up 15 rescue teams, each equipped with a vehicle, for surveillance and rescuing homeless people.

The Delhi government has also set up a 24x7 centralised control room and issued helpline numbers.

An official said that people can inform the DUSIB about the homeless through this helpline and DUSIB's rescue team will reach the location to



take the homeless to the nearest shelter. About the night shelter facility, Sisodia said: "The Delhi government is determined to provide a dignified life to every person residing in the capital, including homeless people. To ensure that no one is left out in the cold during the peak winter season, the government has established fooding and lodging facilities for homeless people

across 195 shelter homes which have the capacity of accommodating over 17,000 people."

He also said that the government is planning to increase the capacity of these shelters, if needed, in the winter.

The DUSIB officials are responsible for managing the night shelter facility across the capital primarily, along with the existing facilities of food, lodging and medical care at the 'Rain Baseras'.

So far, over 1,500 homeless people have been rescued by these teams in the past few weeks. On receiving information from the DUSIB control room or from any other sources, the rescue teams immediately respond to pick up the homeless from the identified location and take them to the nearest shelter home. Out of total 195 night shelters for homeless people in Delhi, 19 are for families, 17 for women, four for drug addicts, and three are recovery shelters.

13th century stone with trident inscribed unearthed in TN

Chennai | Agencies

A stone with an inscribed trident and Pandya period inscriptions was unearthed in Tamil Nadu's Ramanathapuram district on Monday.

Archaeologists and historians said that the trident, found in Oriyur Keezha Kudiyiruppu village, could be of the 13th century AD.

The two-feet-high and one-and-half-feet wide granite stone has a trident symbol inscribed on one side and ten lines on the other side. Historian and Ramanathapuram Archeological Research Foundation President, Rajaguru, after a detailed examination of the stone engraving, told media persons that it was customary to

plant trident engraved stones on the boundary of land donated to Shiva temples.

He, however, said that such tridents were common during the Sethupathi period but not during the Pandya period and that this was the first time that a trident inscription stone during the Pandya period was unearthed in Tamil Nadu.

Rajaguru also said that the Shiva temple that's been mentioned in the inscription was at Thirupunaval in the state's Pudukottai district.

The Archaeological Survey of India and the Tamil Nadu Archaeological Department have been engaged in excavations and at Keezhadi and in Tiruvannamalai areas of Tamil Nadu.



Rains in Madhya Pradesh to continue till tomorrow



Team Absolute | Bhopal

The state of Madhya Pradesh has recorded some unseasonal rains in the last 24 hours. So much so that in the last 24 hours from 8:30 am on Monday, Sagar recorded 16 mm rain, Betul saw 14 mm of rains, Bhopal 8 mm, Umaria 5 mm, Raisen 2 mm, and Chhindwara 2 mm. These rains have been attributed to the remnants of Cyclone Mandous which was in proximity of the state. The system is now over

Arabian Sea, and moist winds are blowing over the region, resulting in rainfall activities.

According to Skymet Weather, Today and tomorrow, rainfall activity is expected to be seen over parts of the state. Rains will be shrinking in space and affect the southern parts of Madhya Pradesh including Hoshangabad, Betul, Chhindwara adjacent to Madhya Maharashtra and Marathwada. Northern parts will not witness rainfall activities.

Mercury dropped up to 5 degrees

Due to clouds and rain, the day's temperature dropped up to 5 degrees in the state on Monday. Due to this, the maximum temperature which went up to 30 or above, suddenly came down to 30 or even below 26 in all the divisions. The maximum temperature fell at 5 degree Celsius in Mandla, 4 degree Celsius in Chhindwara, 3.5 degree in Damoh and 4.5 degree in Umaria. Due to the rains, Bhopal, Pachmarhi, Narmadapuram, Betul, Khargone, Jabalpur, Seoni also recorded a drop of more than one and a half degrees.

Rain in these districts

The effect of cyclone Mandus has started appearing in MP. The process of rain started in the capital Bhopal from late last night. Even in the morning, it continued to rain in Bhopal. The Meteorological Department has expressed the possibility of rain in many cities of the state. Due to Cyclone Mandus, rain is expected in more than 10 districts including Khandwa, Khargone, Betul, Harda, Narsinghpur, Seoni, Narmadapuram, Umaria, Jabalpur, Mandla, Chhatarpur, Bhopal.

Doctors' advice in cold

Due to the effect of cold, people are taking shelter in diseases like cold and flu. Because of this, the number of such people has started increasing in OPDs as well as in hospitals. For this reason, doctors and diet experts are mainly giving proper dietary advice. Along with this, we advise you to wear warm clothes before going out of the house, try not to leave the house if it is not necessary in extreme cold.

CONGRESS LEADER RAJA PATERIYA DETAINED OVER REMARKS ON PRIME MINISTER MODI

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Bhopal: Madhya Pradesh Congress leader Raja Pateria was arrested for his controversial "be ready to kill" Prime Minister Narendra Modi remarks.

Pateria triggered outrage on Monday when a video of him surfaced in which he was heard goading a group of people to "kill" PM Modi in order to "save" the Constitution. In the viral video, Mr Pateria, at a gathering of party workers, said, "Modi will end elections, Modi will divide on the basis of religion, caste, language; the lives of Dalits, tribals, and minorities are in danger. If the constitution is to be saved, then be ready to kill Modi." Following his remarks, the Madhya Pradesh government ordered a police case against Mr Pateria, a former state minister.

A case was registered against Pateria Monday afternoon at Pawai police station in Panna. Pateria was arrested from his residence in Hata town of the state's Damoh district.

Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan condemned the comments and even targeted Congress leader Rahul Gandhi by saying: "The real face of those pretending to do a Bharat Jodo Yatra is coming out."

"Congress people are not able to compete with PM Narendra Modi in the field, that's why a Congress leader



is talking about killing him. This is the height of hatred. True feelings of Congress are being revealed. The law will take its course," the Chief Minister said in a statement.

In the same video, Pateria claimed that the word "murder" in his speech meant "defeat". The Congress leader said that he is a follower of Mahatma Gandhi's ideology of non-violence and defeating PM Modi in elections is necessary to protect the rights of minorities.

The Congress, meanwhile, expressed its dismay over the "reprehensible

comments made by Pateria.

"Absolutely reprehensible! No such words should be used against the prime minister or against anyone. The Congress party denounces, condemns such statements," Congress leader Pawan Khera said. "There is no excuse to use any such language against anyone including and especially the prime minister," Khera said. Pateria will be in jail till at least December 26 after failing to secure bail. Meanwhile, the Madhya Pradesh Congress has issued him a show cause notice and sought a response within three days.

CASE AGAINST FARM OWNER AS MINOR DIES FALLING IN BOREWELL

Betul: A case has been registered against the farm owner in whose farmland the eight-year-old boy, Tanmay, fell into the open borewell and died, the police said.

The farm owner has been identified as Nanakram Chouhan. Tanmay fell into the 400-feet deep borewell dug in the farm while playing on December 6 in Mandvi village of Madhya Pradesh's Betul district. The district administration launched a continuous rescue operation for almost 82 hours and took out Tanmay from the borewell but he died due to broken ribs and heart failure. Sub Divisional Officer of Police (SDOP), Shivcharan Bohit said, "Nanakram dug a borewell in his farm a few years back in which water was not found."

Nanakram left it open even knowing that it could lead to casualty. On December 6, Tanmay fell into the borewell and later died. After that we established a case and investigated the matter."

'With the cooperation of the youth, good governance will be brought to the ground'

Chief Minister Chouhan interacted with the youth and answered the questions. States's new youth policy will be announced on January 13. Chief Minister addressed the Good Governance Samagam.



Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has said that CM Young Professionals for Development Program is an important initiative taken in the democratic system. Work will be done to bring good governance on the ground with the help of youth in Madhya Pradesh. Continuous work is being done in this direction for the last one year. Chief Minister was addressing the Good Governance Samagam program at Rabindra Samagam this evening. During this, Chouhan mentioned in detail the efforts of good governance in Madhya Pradesh. Chouhan also solved the questions and queries of the youth. Chief Minister said that

democracy is the rule of the people, by the people and for the people. Our system is huge. Making schemes is easy, but the task of making the schemes accessible to the eligible people is fraught with various difficulties. In this, due to negligence by some people and due to the feeling of taking advantage, many schemes do not land on the ground. Apart from government machinery, the implementation of schemes can be made easier by using youth energy. Chief Minister Chouhan said that the idea has come in his mind that with the help of the youth, information about the schemes should be obtained. The youth are becoming the eyes and ears of the governance of this system. Based on the information given by the youth, morning meetings of the districts have been held. Good governance is that the benefits of schemes reach the right person without difficulty and without delay.

29 THOUSAND POSTS WILL BE FILLED IN THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

Bhopal : Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan told the ministers in his address before the start of the Council of Ministers meeting that a large number of vacant posts are being filled in various departments in the state. He said that by August 15, 2023, more than one lakh youth will get jobs. From the month of August till now, the education department has started the recruitment work for 29 thousand posts, which will be completed by the coming month of March. Similarly, the process of recruitment for 53 thousand 750 posts has been started by the Staff Selection Board. In this way, along with the filling of 82 thousand 750 posts, advertisements for the remaining vacant posts are also being issued continuously.

TRAFFIC COP DRAGGED ON CAR'S BONNET IN INDORE

Team Absolute | Bhopal

A man has been arrested for dragging a traffic policeman on his car's bonnet for a few kilometres in Indore.

The incident took place at the traffic signal when the policeman tried to penalise the errant driver who had violated traffic rules. It led to an argument between the two and the driver refused to stop the vehicle. To save himself, the policeman jumped on to the vehicle and lay down on the bonnet.

A video of the incident surfaced on social media.



A police official said the accused has been arrested on the charges of rash driving, violating traffic rules, and causing hurt to on-duty public servants. The police also claimed they have recovered two pistols from the possession of the driver, who is a resident of Gwalior district. "The accused has claimed that weapons are licensed and we are investigating the matter. The incident came at a traffic signal point in the city

where the vehicles were being checked by traffic cops," Indore police said.

Traffic cop Shiv Shingh Chouhan, who was dragged on the car's bonnet said, "He (driver was talking on phone while he was driving. I asked him to take the car to the side and deposit challan for violating traffic rules. He resisted, then I asked him to come to my senior. He said he wouldn't give a fine and drove away. I lied down on the bonnet to save myself, but he continued to drive. Other cops jumped into action and cornered him and then he stopped the car," Chouhan said.

3 MLAs of Madhya Pradesh are in trouble

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Time is not going well for the MLAs in Madhya Pradesh. This is the reason that one after the other, the legislature of a total of three MLAs is in danger. It has been a long time that such a time has come when the membership of so many MLAs together is in trouble. For the time being, the way to go to the Supreme Court is open to him. All the leaders are busy preparing for the elections to be held in the state next year, while there are three MLAs of the state who have to win through the courts before going to the polls. The new case is of BJP MLA Jajpal Singh Jajji from

Ashoknagar assembly constituency. The Gwalior Bench of the High Court, canceling the caste certificate of Jajji, has written a letter to the Assembly Speaker to terminate the membership of Jajji. The Gwalior bench canceled the caste certificate of Jajji and directed to register an FIR against him. In this order, apart from imposing a fine of Rs 50,000 on MLA Jajji, it has been asked to cancel the membership.

Jajji had contested the assembly elections from Ashoknagar in the year 2018, Jajji had got the Keer caste certificate made. The caste certificate was challenged through a petition, stating that the caste comes under the

Scheduled Caste category in Punjab, but falls under the general category in Madhya Pradesh. That's why reservation cannot be given to Jajpal Singh in Madhya Pradesh. He is basically a resident of Punjab and his certificate will be made there also be applicable in the same state.

Jajji left the Congress along with Jyotiraditya Scindia and joined the BJP, after which he won the 2020 assembly elections as a BJP candidate. Another MLA is Ajab Singh Kushwaha of Congress from Sumavali in Morena district. It is alleged that he had sold the government land for about 75 lakhs claiming it as his own. In this case, a person named

Purushottam Shakya had lodged a complaint in Maharajpura of Gwalior and said that MLA Ajab Singh sold this land to him, but did not get the possession. The police had also registered a case on this.

When the matter went to the Gwalior court, MLA Ajab Singh and others were sentenced to two years each and fined Rs 10,000 each. After this decision, the membership of the Congress MLA is under threat. According to the rules, if an MLA is punished for two years or more, then he will lose his membership of the Legislative Assembly and at the same time he will be ineligible to contest elections for six years.

NATURE CAMP IN VAN VIHAR NATIONAL PARK-ZOO

Bhopal : One day nature program for the students of government schools of Bhopal city and its surrounding villages with a view to develop awareness towards forest, wildlife and environment and sensitivity towards nature conservation in Van Vihar National Park-Zoo Bhopal. Camps are being set up. Subject experts provided participants with bird watching, wildlife viewing, film shows, information about existing forestry activities at the site, interesting activities related to forest, wildlife and environment and their queries were resolved.

Educationists of the country will gather in Ujjain-Indore

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Educationists of the country will gather in Indore and Ujjain from January 16 to 18 for the purpose of discussion on implementation of National Education Policy, educational institutional development, educational innovation, Indian knowledge tradition and Indian language promotion. The 'National Summit of Education Leaders' will be organized on January 16-17 at the Devi Ahilya University campus in Indore. Leaders of private and government universities of the country - Chancellors, Vice-Chancellors and heads of educational organizations of the country will participate in this. 'Ujjain Shiksha Samagam' will be held on January 18 at Vikram University, Ujjain, in which discussions will be held on Indian knowledge tradition and Indian language promotion.

This event is being organized by Higher Education Department along with Vidya Bharti Institute of Higher Education, Madhya Pradesh Private University Regulatory Commission, Association of Indian Universities, Vikram University, Ujjain and Devi Ahilya University, Indore. National



Organization Minister of Vidya Bharati Institute of Higher Education K.N. Raghunandan told that in these events there will be discussions on

challenges, Indian knowledge tradition, best practices, governance regarding the implementation of the National Education Policy. The summit will be held on January 16 and 17 at Devi Ahilya Vishwavidyalaya, Khandwa Road Auditorium, Indore. UGC Chairman Prof. Jagdish Kumar, Chairman, AICTE, Prof. Anil Sahastrabudhe and representatives of other educational institutions will also participate. The Inaugural Session will be followed by Parallel Sessions. The contribution of education to social development will also be discussed. Heads of 200 private and government universities of the country and heads of educational institutions like IIMs, IITs will participate in the summit. 'Ujjain Education Samagam' focused on Indian knowledge tradition, Indian language promotion will be organized on 18 January 2023 at Vikram University Jubilee Auditorium, Ujjain. More than 600 national educationists and linguists will participate in it. In the context of the National Education Policy, priority has been given to education in the mother tongue. Scholars will discuss the promotion of Indian languages.



EDITOR'S SPECS

Delhiites feeling the 'December heat' wait for cold days

Is it winter yet? This is how most of the residents in the national capital are reacting now a days as December has almost reached midway. However, with Delhiites yet to feel the cold December, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) forecast for the week indicates that the minimum temperature could drop to around 6 degrees Celsius by December 17. The maximum temperature in the national capital on Monday was recorded at 28.7 degrees Celsius, which is likely to drop over the week ahead, the forecast indicates. As per experts, the temperature is likely to fall to around 24 degrees Celsius by December 15. "Due the impact of Western disturbance, winds were light over North West India leading to increase in temperatures. Maximum temperature of Delhi was 28.4 degrees, 4 degrees above normal. Will drop in the next 2-3 days," said Mahesh Pahlawat, vice president meteorology and climate change, Skymet. An official said that misty mornings are also on the forecast for Delhi over the next six days and shallow to moderate fog is likely over isolated parts of Delhi, Haryana, Chandigarh and Punjab over the next two days. The IMD record in Delhi's Safdarjung stated that in 2021, December 5 was the hottest day which recorded 26.5 degrees Celsius while in 2007, the highest temperature recorded was 26.9 degrees Celsius on December 25, which is considered as a coldest day. The city has mostly remained warm during the day so far this month. "Since I shifted to Delhi, this is the first time in the last four years that I am waiting desperately for a cold December. It feels like I am sitting somewhere in Rajasthan," said Shobit Sharma, a resident of Malviya Nagar in south Delhi.

CHRISTIANITY IN QUESTION IN UK AND US

Asad Mirza

Over the years, it was believed that Christianity was ebbing in the UK, but now the fear has been proved right. The figures made public on November 29, from the 2021 census published by the Office for National Statistics show that, for the first time, less than half of the population of England and Wales consider themselves to be Christians.

Their number fell by 17 per cent in a decade, to 27.5 million. The number of people who ticked the "no religion" box rocketed by 57 per cent, to 22.2 million. Though some may say that now the UK is becoming more secular, but others also points to the fact that at the cost of Christianity, some other religions are growing.

The annual British Social Attitudes Survey, by contrast, found in 2020 that 53 per cent of British adults belong to no religion, with only 37 per cent Christians. Separately a poll commissioned by Humanists UK in 2019 showed that 29 per cent of British adults hold all the fundamental beliefs and values of humanists, hinting at the widespread shift in popular values, opinions, and identity the UK has undergone in the 21st century.

The census showed that the number of Muslims has risen by 42 per cent; they now constitute 7 per cent of the British population. British Hindus hit the million mark for the first time. These changes also reflect big demographic shifts. One in six of those who filled in the census were born abroad, compared with one in ten a decade ago.

Three cities are "majority-minority": Birmingham (51.4 per cent), Leicester (59.1 per cent) and Luton (54.8 per cent), i.e. Christians have become a minority in these cities. The Economist magazine says that some on the right are bawling the revelation that Christianity is now a minority religion. But will passing this symbolic threshold actually change anything? It could influence discussions over the state funding of faith schools. Most are still Christian amidst concerns that non-Christian faith schools may exacerbate ethnic segregation: Hindu schools, for example, tend to be populated only by children of immigrants from south Asian countries.

There is another related worrying thought, if immigration continues to rise, secularisation will slow. As it is assumed that immigrants tend to have a reviving effect on all religions; that is largely why church attendance has held up better in London than it has in



other places.

Meanwhile, the Labour Party is proposing to abolish the House of Lords, bishops and all. Yet, the most distinctive element of Britain's form of theocracy is likely to adapt rather than disappear. Though he promised in September to "inviolably maintain and preserve the settlement of the true Protestant religion" King Charles III seems taken by the practices of other believers, too. At his coronation next May, he may try to cast himself as defender of all faiths. It helps that he is king alongside a Hindu prime minister and a Muslim mayor of London, opines The Economist.

The ONS figures also revealed that the majority of Muslims are living in the areas of England and Wales with the worst levels of deprivation. Muslims now account for 7 per cent of the population in England and Wales, some 3.9 million in 2021, however, the data showed 61 per cent of them live in the lowest 40 percent of areas ranked by deprivation score, The Guardian has reported.

Added to it, immigration has always been one of the major drivers of the UK's politics and there is a belief amongst the 'Whites', that the immigration is responsible for changing the UK's nature and character. Brexit was chosen as a direct result of this fear along with

related economic woes.

Meanwhile, in the US, growing numbers of religious and political leaders are embracing the 'Christian nationalist' label, and some dispute the idea that the country's founders wanted a separation of church and state. On the other side of the debate, however, many Americans - including the leaders of many Christian churches - have pushed back against Christian nationalism, calling it a 'danger' to the country.

According to a report released by the Pew Research Centre on October 27, more than four-in-ten US adults say the country should be a 'Christian nation', but far fewer want churches to endorse candidates, speak out on politics.

Most US adults believe America's founders intended the country to be a Christian nation, and many say they think it should be a Christian nation today, according to the survey designed to explore Americans' views on the topic. But the survey also finds widely differing opinions about what it means to be a 'Christian nation' and to support 'Christian nationalism'.

For instance, many supporters of Christian nationhood define the concept in broad

terms, as the idea that the country is guided by Christian values. Those who say the US should not be a Christian nation, on the other hand, are much more inclined to define a Christian nation as one where the laws explicitly enshrine religious teachings.

Overall, six-in-ten US adults - including nearly seven-in-ten Christians - say they believe the founders "originally intended" for the US to be a Christian nation. And 45 per cent of US adults - including about six-in-ten Christians - say they think the country "should be" a Christian nation. A third say the US "is now" a Christian nation.

These juxtaposing findings leads us to wonder whether the Western world is trying to really abandon the Christianity as the state religion, or taking a leaf from the current Indian politics, are they going to reassert and re-establish themselves as leading Christian nations needs to be watched. Does it also sound to be a death knell of a secular state, needs to be seen.

(Asad Mirza is a political commentator based in New Delhi)

international

BRIGHTON VARSITY GUIDES STAFF TO NOT SAY 'CHRISTMAS' BECAUSE IT'S TOO 'CHRISTIAN-CENTRIC'

London | Agencies

The UK's University of Brighton has guided staff not to say "Christmas" this year and instead call it the "winter closure period", media reports said.

The word Christmas is too "Christian-centric", according to a nine-page "Inclusive Language Guidance" document sent to lecturers at the university, Daily Mail reported.

Staff should be "empowered" to use "inclusive language confidently and effectively, in order to ensure that both students and staff alike feel safe, valued and respected", the document says.

Generalisations about a group of people based on their age, such as saying "millennial snowflakes" or "old people cannot use technology", should also be avoided, according to the guidance. The document reads: "Language and meaning are powerfully conditioned by the dominant



norms of the culture in which they exist." Prevailing attitudes, misconceptions and stereotypes are embedded within modes of communication, and these factors are sometimes reflected - whether consciously or not - in the language that we use when communicating with and referring to others. "This means that communica-

tion - both oral and written - may be offensive even when this is not our intention."

Andrew Allison, of the Freedom Association, said: "Universities are supposed to be places where ideas are freely debated."

"This is Orwellian and ridiculous. Staff and students ought to ignore it

and have a good Christmas."

Then, in a table advising staff on what not to say to students, they are urged to avoid the term "Christmas closure period" and replace it with "winter closure period". The purpose of this is to "avoid using Christian-centric language", Daily Mail reported.

Meanwhile, staff are also advised not to ask students "What is your Christian name?" but instead question "What is your first name?" or "What is your given name?"

In a statement sent to MailOnline, a spokesperson for the University of Brighton said: "This guidance was produced with our staff and students and is part of our shared commitment to making Brighton a place where everyone feels respected and valued. The guidance is exactly that - guidance." They added: "Words are not 'banned' at Brighton, and neither is Christmas - as is clear from the decorations and Christmas trees in our buildings and across our campuses."

Iran carries out 2nd execution linked to anti-govt protests

Tehran | Agencies

In a second execution linked to the recent anti-government protests in Iran, a 23-year-old convicted of "enmity against God" was publicly hanged in the city of Mashhad, the media reported.

According to the judiciary, Majidreza Rahnavaard was hanged on Monday, the BBC reported.

Rahnavaard was executed just 23 days after he was arrested and charged of stabbing to death two members of the paramilitary Basij Resistance Force.

The BBC report said that his mother was not told of the execution until after his death and the family was then given the name of a cemetery and a plot number.

"When they turned up, security agents were burying his body," the report added.



On Twitter, opposition activist collective '1500tasvir' said that Rahnavaard's family were telephoned by an official at 7 a.m. on Monday morning and told: "We have killed your son and buried his body in Behesht-e Reza cemetery." "They allowed Rahnavaard's mother to visit him, and didn't speak of execution at all. She left smiling

and hoping that her son would be released soon.

"This morning (Monday) she arrived when her son's murderers were burying his dead body alone," the collective said in another tweet.

The judiciary's Mizan news agency said Rahnavaard was hanged "in the presence of a group of Mashhadi citizens" and posted several photographs reportedly showing the execution.

The BBC said that he was denied a lawyer of his choice for his trial. "The lawyer he was given did not put up a defence," it said.

The women-led protests against Iran's clerical establishment were sparked by the death in custody of Mahsa Amini, a 22-year-old woman who was detained by morality police on September 13 for allegedly wearing her hijab "improperly".

5 SL FISHERMEN MISSING AFTER CYCLONE MANDOUS



Colombo: Sri Lanka's Ministry of Fisheries on Tuesday announced that five fishermen disappeared while at sea during cyclone Mandous.

The five from three multi-day fishing vessels are residents of Batticaloa, Trincomalee and Galle districts, reports Xinhua news agency. Susantha Kahawatta, director general of the Department of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources, told journalists that the fishing vessels were already at sea when they issued a warning.

He said that the seas off Sri Lanka are calm now and that fishing activities have returned to normal. Over 21,000 Sri Lankans were affected, with over 5,600 houses damaged by the adverse weather conditions caused by cyclone Mandous.

NZ Air Force's multi-mission long-range maritime patrol aircraft arrives

Wellington | Agencies

The first of the Royal New Zealand Air Forces (RNZAF) four new multi-mission long-range maritime patrol aircraft arrived in the country on Tuesday.

The P-8A Poseidon fleet will replace the P-3K2 Orion fleet, which first entered service in the 1960s, the RNZAF said in a statement, adding that the remaining three aircraft will arrive by mid-2023.

The official welcome ceremony at the RNZAF Base Ohakea was attended by 450 guests including ambassadors, local community members, and defence personnel.

The Poseidon fleet will support New Zealand's peace and security operations, maritime surveillance, resource protection, humanitarian and disaster response in New Zealand, the Pacific and further abroad, the statement said.

The Chief of Air Force, Air Vice-Marshal Andrew Clark, said the arrival marked the start of another chapter for the Air Force and its people.



"Today is a major milestone in building a modern and capable Defence Force for New Zealand," he said.

"It is the next step in the ongoing modernisation of our capabilities and the enhancement of the many roles of the aviators who comprise today's Air Force. "Whether it's saving lives at sea,

securing our vast maritime resources, preventing transnational crime, building regional resilience or defending our region against military threats, the P-8A Poseidon, like the P-3K2 Orion before it, has the breadth of versatility and the depth of capability to take the job on," he said.

Forest fires destroy 13,000 hectares of land in Chile this yr

Santiago | Agencies

Up to 1,587 forest fires have razed more than 13,000 hectares of land in Chile this year, Agriculture Minister Esteban Valenzuela said.

While the fires were 9 per cent fewer than those of the last season, they were more dangerous, leading to "40 per cent more damaged hectares", Xinhua news agency quoted the Minister as saying.

To combat forest fires, the government has invested 82 billion pesos (\$94 million) to establish 243 forestry brigades across the country, he said.

Climate change has worsened forest fires in Chile, just as it has in Spain, France and the US, especially the west coast state of California, according to Valenzuela.

Currently, authorities are combating 11 forest fires around the country, eight of which have received a red alert from the National Emergency Office because they are spreading rapidly and threatening nearby homes and communities, he said.



Aircraft equipped with thermal cameras that can detect the location of hot spots are helping monitor blazes and dispatch brigade members, said Pablo Lobos, the head of Forest Fire Protection at the National Forestry Corporation (Conaf).

This year, the government beefed up Conaf's firefighting budget by 30 per cent.

According to data from Conaf, 35 per cent of forest fires were caused intentionally, and some 52 per cent by negligence or accidents.



PUNE SHUTDOWN

80 groups, parties march to protest insults to Chhatrapati, others

Pune | Agencies

In an unprecedented massive show of strength, over 80 political parties and social organisations staged a silent march here on Tuesday to protest the repeated slurs on Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj and other icons, while large areas of the city, including wholesale markets observed a shutdown.

The processionists, estimated at nearly two lakhs, sported saffron flags, black banners and posts and demanded the removal of Governor Bhagat Singh Koshyari for his recent utterances vilifying great icons of the state.

Maha Vikas Aghadi members Congress, Shiv Sena-UBT, Nationalist Congress Party, around three dozen Maratha, Shiv Premi and Muslim organisations, the royal descendent Chhatrapati Udayanraje Bhosale and a large number of women walked in the silent march from Deccan to Lal Mahal areas of the city.

However, the ruling Balasahebanchi Shiv Sena-Bharatiya Janata Party and Raj Thackeray's Maharashtra Navnirman Sena kept off the protest demonstration, where a massive police contingent of over 7,500 personnel was deployed to ward off any untoward incidents.

Wending its way peacefully through various residential and commercial areas of the city, the processionists condemned the Governor and others who speak ill of the revered personalities in various fora.

Posing a direct challenge to the BJP top



brass, Bhosale asked the media that when Nupur Sharma (who made derogatory remarks on the Prophet Mohammed in May) was removed by the party, what prevented it from ousting the Governor for the utterances against the Chhatrapati, and initiating action against all others who keep making derogatory comments on icons which hurt public sen-

timents. MVA's leaders in the procession included Shiv Sena-UBT Deputy Leader Dr. Raghunath Kuchik, Sushma Andhare, Sena-UBT city chief Sanjay More, NCP's city President Prashant Jagtap, office-bearers Rupali Patil, Deepak Mankar and Ankush Kakde, Ajinkya Palkar, Congress city chief Ramesh Bagwe, office-bearers Arvind Shinde,

Sangeeta Tiwari, Mohan Joshi, Balasaheb Dabhekar, and the Sambhaji Brigade was represented by Santosh Shinde, Vikas Pasalkar, and Prashant Dhumal.

Other major groups which joined were the CPI, Maratha Mahasangh, Dalit Panthers, RPI, Aam Aadmi Party, Vanchit Bahujan Aghadi, over two dozen non-political, social, business organisations, youths, women and Muslim front groups.

The MVA leaders have rejected the Governor's letter (December 6) clarifying his position to Union Home Minister Amit Shah, and said that since he has not apologised for his remarks against Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj or Mahatma Jyotirao Phule, he has lost the moral right to continue in his post.

Among other things in his letter, Koshyari said that he "cannot even dream" of insulting the great personalities as contended and sought Shah's "guidance" in the matter.

The state has been rocked by a series of agitations and protests against the Governor for his recent utterances that have irked the state polity and top leaders also objected to him sharing the stage with Prime Minister Narendra Modi in Nagpur on Sunday.

Besides the Governor, other BJP leaders like state ministers Chandrakant Patil, Mangal Prabhat Lodha, Union Minister Raosaheb Danve, have been accused of making objectionable statements against the state's icons, though Lodha subsequently retracted his utterances while Patil apologised.

Shinde Vs Thackeray: Thackeray faction seeks reference to 7-judge bench in SC



Team Absolute | Mumbai

Former Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray faction on Tuesday asked the Supreme Court to refer the judgement in the Nabam Rebia case to a seven-judge bench of the apex court. The judgement restricted the power of the Speaker to decide disqualification petitions if a resolution seeking his removal was pending.

Senior advocate Kapil Sibal, appearing for the Thackeray faction, contended before a five-judge bench headed by Chief Justice D.Y. Chandrachud, that the court may refer the Nabam Rebia judgement (2016) to the seven-judge bench, "if we are able to persuade the court to do so". However, the bench -- also comprising Justices M.R. Shah, Krishna Murari, Hima Kohli, and P.S. Narasimha -- said this would be decided by the five-judge bench and arguments can be addressed regarding this. Senior advocate Neeraj Kishan Kaul assisted by advocate Abhikalp Pratap Singh, represented Eknath Shinde's

group, while Solicitor General Tushar Mehta represented the Governor to assist the court on question of law only. Mehta said he would like to submit a note as well. Sibal said when the matter is taken up, he will be arguing on the reference to the 7-judge bench. The bench asked both sides to prepare a brief note on issues and submit it to the court. After hearing the brief arguments, the top court scheduled the matter for hearing on January 10.

In August this year, a three-judge bench of the apex court had said that a five-judge constitution bench will hear a batch of petitions filed by Maharashtra Chief Minister Eknath Shinde and Uddhav Thackeray factions on queries related to defection, merger and disqualification. A three-judge bench of the apex court, in its reference order, had framed first issue whether notice for removal of a Speaker restricts him from continuing with the disqualification proceedings under Tenth Schedule of the Constitution, as held by this court in Nabam Rebia (by a five-judge bench).

Unknown caller issues 'death threats' to Sharad Pawar

Team Absolute | Mumbai

An unidentified person called up the residence of Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) President Sharad Pawar and threatened to kill him, party leaders said here on Tuesday.

The caller rang up from an unknown location to the Pawars' Silver Oaks home and threatened in Hindi that he would come to Mumbai and shoot him with a country-made pistol.

As precaution, the NCP leader's security detail has lodged a complaint with Gamdevi Police Station which has started investigations. Confirming the devel-



opment, NCP chief spokesperson Mahesh Tapase said that the caller appears to be 'mentally unstable' who keeps calling up the Pawar residence at regular intervals and makes

such dire threats.

"He has called up several times in the past few days and issued similar threats. The police have been informed," said Tapase.

The calls came a day after Pawar celebrated his 82nd birthday on Monday with a grand function attended by top leaders of the NCP Congress and Shiv Sena (UBT) and other well-wishers.

Even in the past, Pawar has been targeted with such threats, including in May this year, and in April his residence was attacked by striking activists of the Maharashtra State Road Transport Corporation.

With a chaotic surge, Mumbai airport mirrors suburban railway stations

Team Absolute | Mumbai

After notching a record post-pandemic air passengers movement, the Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport (CSMIA) is witnessing a massive overcrowding of fliers with the swank terminal resembling a chaotic Mumbai railway station during peak hours.

Social activist Binu Varghese and other passengers posted alarming videos of the sea of humanity at the airport, with many irate fliers breaching security norms to rush past barricades or security and baggage check-ins, even as the harried CISF and Mumbai Police personnel tried to grapple the situation.

Videos showed huge crowds at CSMIA-T2 with passengers wearily awaiting their turns to complete the check-in procedures as the crowds continued to increase outside and inside. "Massive crowds of passengers were seen moving around in CSMIA T2, today at 5 a.m., shot by me. Do plan your sched-



ule," advised Varghese, while businessman Ritesh Dodhia of 'Dodhia Group' suggested "heavy rush at domestic airport security check-in whoever planning to travel please take care of extra time". The social media went viral with the videos of

the disarray at CSMIA, venting their ire on the airport authorities and even tagged Ratan Tata and AAI, among others.

Another Twitteratti uploaded a photo and wrote how "Mumbai roads and stations had this scene", and said the chaos is such that even gates are not allotted to airlines, with no kiosks and pad.

The besieged CSMIA has said that it is working on the issue but due to the sudden passenger surge, they are being prioritised as per departure timings. The developments came just a day after the CSMIA announced on Monday that it had created a record of 1.50 lakh domestic and international fliers passing through the airport, in the post-pandemic times on December 10, which was 97 per cent of the pre-pandemic peak.

Tuesday's photos and videos at CSMIA were similar to the scenes witnessed at Delhi airport last week and after many complaints, Civil Aviation Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia paid a surprise visit to the airport.

Porn videos case SC grants pre-arrest bail to Raj Kundra, Poonam Pandey, Sherlyn Chopra

Team Absolute | New Delhi/Mumbai

The Supreme Court on Tuesday granted anticipatory bail to Bollywood actors Sherlyn Chopra and Poonam Pandey, and businessman Raj Kundra and others, in connection with a case against them for allegedly distributing pornographic videos.

A bench comprising Justices K.M. Joseph and B.V. Nagarathna said, "Having heard the counsel for the parties, we are of the view that the petitioners may be granted anticipatory bail..."

Senior advocate R. Basant, representing one of the petitioners, contended before the bench that a charge sheet has been filed in the case. Basant emphasized that the accused were cooperating with the police in the investigation.



The bench also directed Kundra and other accused in the matter to cooperate with the police in the investigation. Earlier, Kundra had got interim protection from arrest from the apex court. The case also named Chopra and Pandey as co-accused. Kundra claimed that he was not connected to the content creation, publication or transmission of alleged illegal videos. He was arrested by the Mumbai Police in July 2021 in another case where he was accused of distributing porn films through an app. In September 2021, Kundra was granted bail.

The cyber cell of the Mumbai Police filed a case against Kundra under sections of the Indian Penal Code, Indecent Representation of Women (Prevention) Act, and Information Technology Act for allegedly distributing sexually explicit videos.

'Will tell our stand in meeting with Amit Shah': Bommai on border row

Chamarajanagar | Agencies

Karnataka Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai on Tuesday said that state government will tell its stand on the border dispute with Maharashtra during the scheduled meeting with Union Home Minister Amit Shah on December 14.

"We will clearly tell our stand on the issue. Already, we have furnished details to Amit Shah regarding State Reorganisation Act, pending case in the Supreme Court and others. We will inform the home secretary that the Apex Court has not taken up any such case since 2004," he said. Replying to a question, the Chief Minister said he



will be going to Delhi in connection with a meeting with the Union Home Minister on the border row, but he will go prepared in case, the issue of cabinet expansion is dis-

cussed. The Union Home Minister has convened a meeting of chief ministers of Karnataka and Maharashtra on border row between the states.

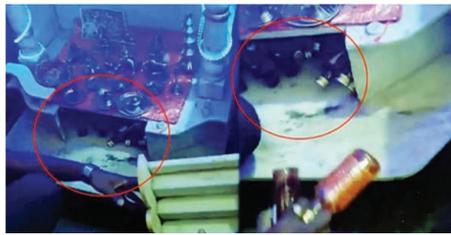
MUMBAI MAN LUNGES UNDER MOVING BUS ON BUSY ROAD, DIES

Mumbai: The Mumbai Police has registered a case in the death of a 59-year-old man, who allegedly dived under a moving bus in Andheri West. In the incident that was recorded on camera, the rear wheels of the bus were seen running over his waist.

The video of the incident that apparently took place on December 6 made rounds on the internet before it came to the police's notice.

The police identified the victim as Abdul Gaffar Ismail Sayyed, 59, who killed himself under the limits of DN Nagar Police Station in Andheri West. His body has been handed over to the family, the police said.

Woman hides liquor under home shrine for illegal sale, arrested



Wardha | Agencies

Police have arrested a woman for illegally selling alcohol in Maharashtra's Wardha district. Several liquor bottles were found hidden under a shrine at her home.

The woman hid the bottles inside a hollow compartment under the shrine to avoid discovery in case the police conducted a raid at the house.

Since the sale of alcohol is

banned in Wardha, police have been routinely searching the woman's house after suspecting her of selling liquor. But every time they returned empty handed.

The breakthrough came when the police were tipped off about the alcohol being stashed under the shrine. A video shows police officials removing a portion of the shrine to reveal large number of liquor bottle.

A case has been registered against the woman.

High Court refuses urgent hearing on Nawab Malik's bail plea

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The Bombay High Court on Tuesday refused to grant urgent hearing on former Maharashtra minister Nawab Malik's bail plea in a money laundering case linked to a land deal in which fugitive gangster Dawood Ibrahim and his aides were involved.

The 62-year-old politician had approached the high court after a special court here rejected his bail plea on November 30. The single bench of Justice M S Karnik denied Malik's request for an urgent hearing on his plea and directed the Enforcement Directorate (ED) to file its response to the plea in two weeks. The judge adjourned the matter to January 6. As the matter was called out on Tuesday, Justice Karnik asked



Malik's counsel Amit Desai to first satisfy the urgency for hearing the matter. Desai then informed the court about the senior NCP leader's medical conditions.

Malik had only one functioning kidney and required an urgent transplant, he said and submitted that the former minister's family wanted

to start the procedure for a transplant, which may require tests and meetings with specialists.

The judge then asked Desai to submit before the court what treatment is required, and said a reply will then be sought from the ED and orders will be passed accordingly.

Bouncer held with heroin worth Rs 50 lakh

Team Absolute | Mumbai

A 35-year-old bouncer was arrested with heroin worth Rs 50 lakh. He had allegedly brought the narcotics from Rajasthan to sell them at bashes organized on New Year's Eve in the city.

According to police sources, the accused, Sohel Ahmed Shaikh, was booked and arrested under various sections of the NDPS Act and was produced before the court on Monday. He was remanded in police custody. Shaikh was caught by API Nilesh Salunkhe and his team near Mohammed Rafique Ground at Malwani on Sunday night.

The accused was nabbed while suspiciously carrying bags during a crackdown on illegal activities in the area that was carried out under

the guidance of DCP Ajay Kumar Bansal and the supervision of Senior Inspector Shekhar Bhalerao. During his interrogation, it was revealed that Shaikh was attached to a private agency and he would protect celebrities and businessmen at parties and events. A couple of months ago, he lost his job and found it hard to make ends meet, said an officer attached to the Malwani police station.

Later, a friend and he happened to go to Rajasthan where he met a drug peddler. Shaikh told the latter about his access and contacts and also talked about the drugs used at parties. Shaikh then demanded drugs to sell at parties. The peddler had faith in Shaikh and he gave him the narcotics without taking a single penny, the officer added.



Who even is she?'

Vanessa Hudgens can't recognise herself as she channels Lady Gaga with platinum hair and bleached eyebrows

Los Angeles | Agencies

Vanessa Hudgens stunned fans when she debuted a whole new look on Instagram on Tuesday. The actress, channelled her inner Lady Gaga as she rocked a platinum blonde wig and bleached eyebrows for a new undisclosed role, reports dailymail.co.uk. Vanessa joked she was even struggling to recognise herself as she captioned the pouty selfie: "Who is she?"

Vanessa styled the blonde wig in Hollywood curls and muted her normally dark bushy eyebrows with bleach. The High School Musical icon was keen to make a statement as she rocked a bold red lip, a PVC trench coat and a chunky gold choker.

Fans took to the comment section to comment on the actress' likeness to Lady Gaga. One wrote: "You look like Lady Gaga", while another added: "She's giving Lady Gaga for sure!".

A third chimed: "I'm loving this new era". It comes after Vanessa said she has learnt about embracing her confidence to not give a f**k about what doesn't serve her.



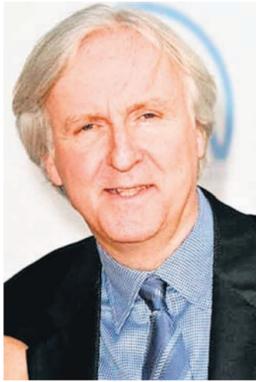
James Cameron opts out 'Avatar: Way of Water' LA premiere

Los Angeles: Covid-19 has changed the way of life and James Cameron's 'Avatar: The Way of Water' isn't untouched by it. The Hollywood director has opted out of the premiere of his highly anticipated film in Los Angeles after he contracted Covid-19.

Cameron, who has not brought a film he directed to Hollywood's backyard since 2009 when the game-changing 'Avatar' debuted, is asymptomatic and feeling well, reports 'Variety'. He will continue to engage in publicity for the film, albeit virtually.

Industry players and lucky fans pouring into the Hollywood and Highland complex Monday night (Pacific Standard Time) will have to make do with the film's starry cast, which includes Kate Winslet, Zoe Saldana, Sam Worthington, Sigourney Weaver, Edie Falco and Jemaine Clement.

According to 'Variety', Cameron did attend the film's world premiere in London last week. His latest opens this Friday and looks to close the year with a bang for distributor Disney. Reports have the opening weekend box office projections at \$150 million minimum. The film also scored a release in China, bolstering its chances for profitability.



CHRISTOPHER NOLAN RECREATES FIRST N-WEAPON DETONATION WITHOUT VFX

Los Angeles | Agencies

The pursuit of keeping things real pushed Christopher Nolan to recreate the first nuclear weapon detonation without CGI effects as part of the production for his upcoming movie 'Oppenheimer'. The film is based on nuclear physicist J. Robert Oppenheimer, who was the director of the Manhattan Project and therefore universally regarded as the "father of the atomic bomb", reports 'Variety'.

Nolan made the revelation about the film to 'Total Film' magazine. The director has always favoured practical effects over VFX (he even blew up a real Boeing 747 for 'Tenet'), so it's no surprise he went the practical route when it came time to film a nuclear weapon explosion.

"I think recreating the Trinity test (the first nuclear weapon detonation, in New Mexico) without the use of computer graphics was a huge challenge to take on," Nolan was quoted as saying by 'Variety'.

"Andrew Jackson -- my visual effects supervisor, I got him on board early on -- was looking at how we could do a lot of the visual elements of the film practically, from representing quantum dynamics and quantum physics to the Trinity test itself, to recreating, with my team, Los Alamos up on a mesa in New Mexico in extraordinary weather, a lot of which was needed for the film, in terms of the very harsh conditions out there -- there were huge practical challenges," Nolan added.

'Variety' adds that Nolan went on to call 'Oppenheimer' a "story of immense scope and scale". He said, "It's one of the most challenging projects I've ever taken on in terms of the scale of it, and in terms of encountering the breadth of Oppenheimer's story. There were big, logistical challenges, big practical challenges."

Billie Eilish doc-maker ready to roll one on Olivia Newton-John

Los Angeles | Agencies

A documentary about the late music star Olivia Newton-John, who died in August 2022, is in development.

The feature-length doc will explore Newton-John's life and work as an iconic entertainer, best-selling music artist, animal rights and environmental activist and health, wellness and plant medicine advocate.

R.J. Cutler's production hub This Machine Filmworks has taken the onus of developing the project, reports Variety. This Machine has secured full authorised access to Newton-John's music and personal archives.

In 1978, Newton-John co-starred with John Travolta in 'Grease', which catapulted her into super-stardom. During her career, she garnered four Grammy Awards, an Emmy Award and numerous other trophies. Her other feature film credits include 'Funny Things Happen Down Under', 'Tomorrow', 'Xanadu', 'Two of a Kind', 'It's My Party, Sordid Lives', 'Score: A Hockey Musical', and 'A Few Best Men'.

According to Variety, Cutler, along with This Machine's Elise Pearlstein and Trevor Smith, will produce the untitled docu, while John Easterling, Larry Mestel, Natalia Nastaskin, John Mason and Mark Hartley will serve as executive producers.

This Machine is behind the 2021 Oscar-shortlisted documentary 'Billie Eilish: The World's A Little Blurry', which Cutler directed.



'EGOS CAN CLASH'

Daniel Craig discusses his co-stars and the 'funny' atmosphere on set of Glass Onion: A Knives Out Mystery



Los Angeles | Agencies

Daniel Craig has given fans an insight into the atmosphere on set of his new film Glass Onion: A Knives Out Mystery. The James Bond star also discussed the star-studded cast of the murder mystery film while appearing on Lorraine on Tuesday, reports dailymail.co.uk. He explained: "Keeping secrets seems to be hard to do, so to have an audience experience this in a completely unknowing way is the best way to see it." Daniel continued: "When you throw an incredible bunch of actors together sometimes it can go wrong, ego's can clash, but everybody was so generous. There was lots of improvising going on and then just trying to crack each other up, not by putting each other off but trying to be funny."

Teasing a third film, the actor said: "As long as we entertain and we can do something different each time, then it's up to the audience."



This is the week of sparkles: Amanda Holden

Los Angeles | Agencies

Amanda Holden has broken out her festive wardrobe as she counts down to Christmas.

With less than two weeks to go until the big day, the TV and radio star, 51, dressed to impress for her Tuesday at work on the Heart Breakfast Show.

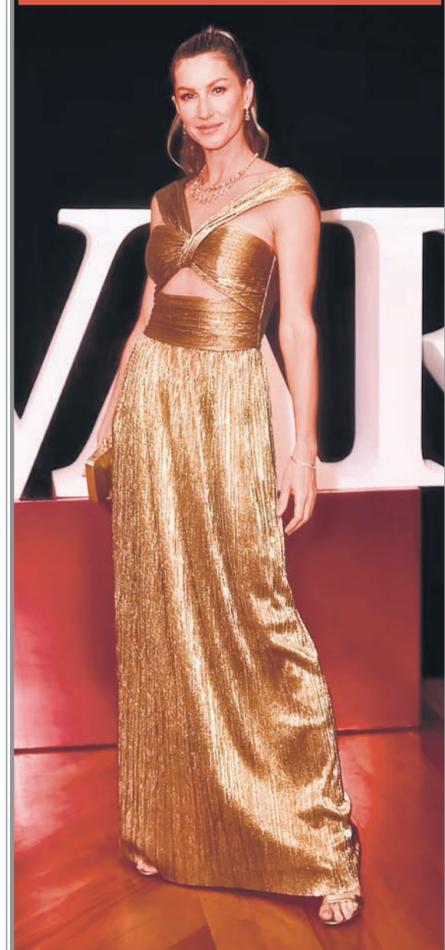
Amanda posted one of her regular outfit videos for her 1.8million Instagram followers, flashing her bra under her racy sheer dress.

The star flaunted her incredible physique in the Karen Millen dress which boasted a sheer silver top, showing off her black underwear.

The tight skirt highlighted Amanda's trim figure while she accessorised with classic black heels.

"This is the week of sparkles, sparkly week as we count down to Christmas, 12 more sleeps!" an excited Amanda exclaimed in the video, reports dailymail.co.uk.

ABSOLUTE PIC OF THE DAY



Gisele Bundchen



FIFA World Cup 2022

MESSI WILL CONTINUE TO APPEAR FOR ARGENTINA MUCH AFTER QATAR 2022, HOPES COACH SCALONI

Doha | Agencies

Argentina manager Lionel Scaloni is pinning hopes that Lionel Messi will continue to play for Argentina much after the FIFA World Cup is over. The Argentinian superstar had announced at the start of the tournament that he will retire from international football after Qatar World Cup but Scaloni feels there will be a change of heart and he will continue.



"I know Messi and he was always like that, he was always a winner and he has pride and a big desire to continue playing football that

makes us happy. And also because the first year was difficult in terms of adaptation and now, from what they explain to me, their life in Paris is perfect. The children are happy, he and his family, his wife too," Scaloni added. The Argentina captain is eyeing his second World Cup final after his team lost to Germany in 2014 and the only major title missing from his collection, which includes every big club and the national team title. Croatia will be looking to become the first back-to-back finalists since Brazil in 2002.



Coach Dalic wants repeat of 2018 as Croatia eye back-to-back finals

Doha | Agencies

Croatia reaching the final of the FIFA World Cup in Qatar will be "the greatest success in our history," said coach Zlatko Dalic ahead of the semi-final clash with Argentina. "For me, the semi-final match against England (in 2018) was the greatest of all time, and Brazil was second. Tomorrow's match will be the third. To repeat such an achievement (of

reaching the final) on the World Cup stage, to win tomorrow, it would make it the greatest game for Croatia of all time," Dalic added. The Croatian side reached the final in Russia in 2018, when they were defeated by France. Croatia defeated Argentina in their group, but Dalic said that will not count much in Tuesday's clash at the Lusail Stadium. "This 2018 match has nothing to do with this match. It is a great

match for both countries. The stakes are high for both teams. None of us will spare any effort. I expect a solid, dynamic and fair game from both sides." Dalic added that his team reaching the final four years back served as an inspiration to many smaller countries throughout the football world. Dalic said that there were no real fitness concerns among his squad, despite a gruelling journey so far in Qatar.



Indian Premier League 2023

Player Auction on Dec 23 to begin with batters set

The IPL 2023 Player Auction on December 23 in Kochi will begin with the batters' set which features Indian opener Mayank Agarwal, Kane Williamson and the England pair of Joe Root and Harry Brook while the top all-rounders of modern-day cricket -- Ben Stokes, Sam Curran, Cameron Green -- have been listed in the second set, the league announced on Tuesday. A total of 405 cricketers will go under the hammer during the IPL Player Auction, beginning at 1430 hrs IST.

Team Absolute | New Delhi



Initially, a total of 369 players were shortlisted by 10 teams from the initial list of 991 players. Thereafter, thirty six additional players were requested by teams, which are added into the final list which makes a total of 405 players which will be presented at the IPL 2023 Auction, a media release from the league said.

Out of 405 players, 273 are Indians and 132 are overseas players of which four players are from associate nations. The total capped players are 119, uncapped players are 282 and 4 from associate nations.

As per the norm, the auction will begin with capped players going under the hammer. The IPL has created the order by breaking up the list into different sets based on the specialisation. The order are: batters, all-rounders, wicketkeeper-batters, fast bowlers and spinners. The same order will be followed for the uncapped players.

England skipper Stokes, who has listed his base price at Rs 2 crore, remains a strong contender to bag the most expensive player reward only because he is a proven serial match-winner and gives a captaincy option as well.

The franchises will also keep their eye on Aussie

all-rounder Green, who has also listed his base price at INR 2 crore. His power-hitting during the white-ball series in India recently made him an instant attraction for IPL teams.

Meanwhile, Curran, who was named player of the match for his 3-12 in England's T20 World Cup victory over Pakistan and was also player of the tournament, will also be one of the most sought after players in the auction. The all-rounder has done well for CSK in the previous seasons of IPL.

Last month, franchises had announced the list of their retained and released players and the largest purse (Rs 42.25 crore) for the auction, followed by Punjab (Rs 32.20 crore), Lucknow (Rs 23.35 crore), Mumbai (Rs 20.55 crore), Chennai (Rs 20.45 crore), Delhi (Rs 19.45 crore), Gujarat (Rs 19.25 crore), Rajasthan Royals (Rs 13.2 crore), RCB (Rs 8.75 crore) and KKR (Rs 7.05 crore).

Women's T20I Rankings: Tahlia McGrath becomes No.1 batter, Mandhana holds third place

Dubai | Agencies

Continuing her remarkable recent rise, Australia batter Tahlia McGrath jumped three places to become the No.1 ranked T20I batter in the latest ICC Women's Player Rankings, released on Tuesday, after her superb performances in the first two matches of their ongoing series against India.



The 27-year-old, who struck unbeaten knocks of 40 and 70 in Mumbai, has overtaken compatriots Meg Lanning and Beth Mooney as well as India opener Smriti Mandhana to become the fourth Australian and 12th batter to top the women's T20I rankings.

India opener Smriti Mandhana, who continues to maintain her third position, has gained 11 rating points to reach a career best 741 points after her Player of the Match effort of 79 off 49 deliveries in

ICC picks Jemimah Rodrigues in next crop for 100% Cricket Superstars squad

Dubai | Agencies

India's Jemimah Rodrigues along with Thailand's pioneer batter Nattakan Chantam, Bangladesh captain Nigar Sultana along with Alana King (Australia) and Lara Goodall (South Africa) have been included in the next crop of players for a 100% Cricket Superstars squad that fans can pick from to decide on a final XI.

Jemimah joins her India teammates Smriti Mandhana and Shafali Verma as the third Indian to be included in the shortlist for the contest being conducted by the International Cricket Council.

Shafali Verma was included in the first crop for the 100% Cricket Superstars squad. Others who were part



of the first crop are Sophie Ecclestone (England), Amelia Kerr (New Zealand), Hayley Matthews (West

Indies) and Laura Wolvaardt (South Africa). Smriti along with Fatima Sana (Pakistan), Ashleigh Gardner (Australia), Sophia Dunkley (England), and Gaby Lewis (Ireland) have been selected as the next lot of crop following in their footsteps. Calling Jemimah Rodrigues India's young batting hope, a report ICC website introducing the next crop for 100% Cricket Superstars squad said, the young Indian star has impressed one and all since her debut in 2018.

Rodrigues has featured in 68 T20Is and 21 ODIs for India. In the T20 format, she has notched up an impressive 1494 runs at a healthy strike rate of 113.95 and an average of 30.48, with nine half-centuries. She is also making her mark in the 50-over format, with 394 runs.

INDIA VS BANGLADESH TEST MATCH

INDIA AIM FOR AGGRESSIVE PLAY AGAINST B'DESH FOR WTC FINAL

Chattogram | Agencies

At a time when the attention of all teams is building up to the ODI World Cup next year, there is another championship before it where qualification for the finals is heating up with every passing week.

As India, hit by multiple injuries of late including to captain Rohit Sharma, aim to play aggressive cricket, as said by stand-in skipper K.L. Rahul, against Bangladesh in the Test series opener at Zahur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium, the race to make it to the WTC final for them also returns in a phase where Test cricket is happening from the sub-continent to the southern hemisphere.

The away series defeat to South Africa and losing the Edgbaston Test in England has meant India are in fourth place on the WTC points table. If they are to make it to a second successive WTC final, to be held at The Oval in June 2023, they need to win at least five, if not all six of their remaining Tests, including four against Australia at home in February-March.



This is where the challenge for the Indian team is -- wins and draws will work, but not a loss. 2022 has been a year in which India have won only two out of five Tests played this year --

both those wins came against Sri Lanka at home in March.

In Rohit's absence, Rahul will likely open with Shubman Gill, with Cheteshwar Pujara, Virat Kohli,

Shreyas Iyer and Rishabh Pant occupying numbers three to six. Axar Patel could be picked to fill the void in Jadeja's absence and pair up with Ravichandran Ashwin for spin-bowling duties.

In case India need three spinners, Kuldeep Yadav can add that variety. As far as the fast-bowling department is concerned, Umesh Yadav and Mohammed Siraj will be the first-choice picks, with Shardul Thakur as a possible third choice, though Jaydev Unadkat's left-arm angle could make team management think about taking him. While India are playing Tests after five months, Bangladesh are also returning to the fold after six months. Shakib, their talismanic captain, is having an injury concern after being hit on the ribs in the second ODI against Umran Malik, while Taskin Ahmed is ruled out due to recovery from a back injury.

India have never lost to Bangladesh in a Test match and the visitors would want to keep it intact at Chattogram and later in Dhaka to inch closer to sealing a WTC final spot.

Challenge League victory

Canada keep 2023 ICC World Cup dream alive

Kuala Lumpur | Agencies

Canada have beaten Malaysia in the final to claim Challenge League Group A and seal a ticket to the ICC Cricket World Cup Qualifier Playoff in 2023.

Winning their final Challenge League match with a resounding 189-run victory over Malaysia, Canada have topped the group with 27 points and advanced to the World Cup Qualifier Play-off 2023.

It means the side are one step closer to reaching the ICC Cricket World Cup 2023, though have two more qualification steps on their way to India, first via the six-team Qualifier Playoff, and the Cricket World Cup Qualifier in Zimbabwe.



It's been a dominant display by the Canadians across the Challenge League campaign -- losing just one match in 15 outings -- their only defeat all the way back in September 2019. They

continued to showcase their good form earlier this week in Malaysia, accounting for Qatar in a four-wicket win, before a trouncing 187-run victory over Singapore to punch their Playoff tickets.

Olympics

FIBA optimistic Lille will be ready for hosting basketball competition at Paris 2024

Mies (Switzerland) | Agencies

Andreas Zagklis, the Secretary General of the International Basketball Federation (FIBA), said Monday he is optimistic the Paris 2024 will get the desired results at the venue in Lille for the group phase of the basketball competition.

"That would be the first for basketball," Zagklis said at an online annual meeting for FIBA. "Basketball should contribute to the success of the Olympics, on the financial side, playing in a bigger venue in order to have 25,000-27,000 people attending. Even it would in Lille."

The Paris 2024 decided to move the preliminary phase of the Olympic basketball



competition to the Pierre Mauroy stadium in Lille and keep the knock-out round in Paris as scheduled. FIBA Central Boarding

meeting on December 2 "conditionally" approved the decision, citing the concerns about the safety of the athletes.

Hockey World Cup

NEXT ONE MONTH IS VERY CRUCIAL: HARMANPREET SINGH

Team Absolute | New Delhi

With just one month remaining for the FIH World Cup to be played in Bhubaneswar and Rourkela, drag-flicker Harmanpreet Singh says the next 30 days will be very vital for the Indian men's hockey team as it gears up for the mega event.

The Indian men's hockey team is going all out in its preparations for the prestigious quadrennial tournament which is scheduled to take place from January 13 to 29, 2023.

Pragmatic in his assessment of the team's progress, Harmanpreet, who recently led the team during the Australia tour, highlighted that the five-match series against the world No.1 side has given the team insights into the areas that need improvement ahead of the World Cup.

"The Australia tour was a great learning experience for us. We could only register one win out of five, but I would say we put up a solid fight against a very strong team in their home. As you see, all

the games were closely fought. We have got the insights into the areas that we need to further improve upon ahead of the FIH Odisha Hockey Men's World Cup 2023 Bhubaneswar-Rourkela," he stated.

Speaking about the team's plans for the 30 days leading to the World Cup, Harmanpreet said, "The next month is going to be vital for us. We got a mini-break after the Australia tour, we are refreshed now and raring to go once again. We have a specialized drag-flick and goal-keeping camp starting tomorrow and we are looking forward to soaking up the knowledge and expertise from legends Bram Lomans and Dennis Van De Pol. The time we spend with them over the next week will definitely help in our preparations."

The Indian men's hockey team are placed in Pool D alongside England, Spain, and Wales. They will kickstart their campaign against Spain on the opening day of the tournament at the newly-built Birsu Munda Hockey Stadium in Rourkela.





'RRR' lands two Golden Globe noms in a year



Los Angeles/ Mumbai | Agencies

S.S. Rajamouli's epic period drama has earned a Golden Globes nomination for Best Picture, Non-English Language, category and it is up against serious competition: "All Quiet on the Western Front" (Germany), "Argentina, 1985" (Argentina), "Close" (Belgium) and "Decision to Leave", the South Korean romantic mystery that won for its celebrated helmer, Park Chan-wook, the Best Director award at this year's Cannes Film Festival.

For "RRR", it is the penultimate shot at the Oscars, where it is being billed as a potential award-winner either for Rajamouli in the Best Director category, or for the movie in the Best Foreign Film section.

The chart-topping "RRR"

song, 'Naatu Naatu' (pictured on Ram Charan and Jr NTR), is in contention for the trophy in the Best Original Song, Motion Picture, category as well, up against Taylor Swift's "Carolina" ("Where the Crawdads Sing"), "Ciao Papa" from "Guillermo del Toro's Pinocchio", "Hold My Hand" ("Top Gun: Maverick"; Lady Gaga, BloodPop), and Rihanna's haunting anthem for "Black Panther: Wakanda Forever" -- "Lift Me Up".

If "Naatu Naatu" gets the final nod, then the trophy will be lifted by music composer M.M. Keeravani as well as playback singers Kala Bhairava and Rahul Sipligunj.

Keeravani won the award for the Best Original Score on Sunday at the Los Angeles Film Critics Association, where Rajamouli was the runner-up for the Best

Director prize. The creator of blockbusters, incidentally, was named Best Director at the New York Film Critics Circle awards. The honours are just piling up for "RRR".

'Variety', meanwhile, reports that "The Banshees of Inisherin", a darkly comic story of a shattered friendship set against the backdrop of the Irish civil war, led the nominations for the 2023 Golden Globes. It scored eight nods, including best picture in the musical or comedy genre, as well as for Martin McDonagh's directing and screenplay.



SIDHARTH AND RASHMIKA STARRER TO GET DIRECT-TO-DIGITAL RELEASE

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Sidharth Malhotra and Rashmika Mandanna starrer, Mission Majnu has taken OTT route. It will release on a leading OTT platform on January 20, 2023. The makers have also shared a poster featuring Sidharth. He is seen in a serious look dressed in a pathani suit and holding a gun in one hand.

Talking about the film, inspired by true events, it transports you to the past to uncover one of India's most important missions. The film takes you through the emotions of loyalty, love, sacrifices and betrayal with an action-packed screenplay where one wrong move can make or break the mission.

Directed by Shantanu Bagchi, Mission Majnu also stars a stunningly talented cast including Kumud Mishra, Parmeet Sethi, Sharib Hashmi, Mir Sarwar and Zakir Hussain.

Meanwhile, on the work front, Sidharth Malhotra will next star in Yodha with Disha Patani and Raashi Khanna. Rashmika Mandanna, on the other hand, is gearing up for Pushpa 2: The Rule shoot. She will also star in Thalapaty Vijay's next and Sandeep Reddy Vanga's Animal with Ranbir Kapoor.



Contestant impresses Sunny Leone with his life story in a show

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Sunny Leone has said that she got goosebumps after learning about the journey of 'Splitsvilla X4' contestant Sohail Shaikh, who has no more than 1 million followers on Instagram and runs his own gym. The 25-year-old model and social media influencer told the host that he had a tough life. "I used to sell vada pav in a canteen and from there my journey started."

Sunny replied: "So from vada pav to 'Splitsvilla', that's not an easy journey and it gives me goosebumps."

He added: "I never fail, either I win or learn, that is what my mother taught me."

To this one contestant shared that with the earned money he has now opened his own gym. Sunny and everyone applauded him.

Another piece of news: Actor and model Shivam Sharma is all set to enter as a wild card contestant this week. Hosted by Arjun Bijlani and Sunny Leone, the dating-based reality show 'Splitsvilla X4' airs on MTV.



When KJo, Malaika hosted reality show, they would have potluck parties

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Filmmaker-producer Karan Johar and Malaika Arora are known to be best of friends. But, their friendship started with a reality show, the 'My Name Is Khan' helmer recently revealed. The two used to have potluck parties everyday back then during the lunchtime of shoots.

Talking about their friendship and fun times, KJo said: "Malla and I have had the best times when we have hosted a reality show. I think that's when we truly connected and bonded to become really close friends."

The Dharma Production head honcho will soon be seen on the streaming show 'Moving In With Malaika'. He further mentioned that he has seen her go through many "ups and downs emotionally." He shared: "I remember watching her joyous when she wasn't. Our teams became so close, we used to hang out everyday at lunch and made it like a potluck party everyday. I miss doing shows with Malaika because I know when we do very soon, which I know will happen, we will have the same energy all over again." 'Moving In With Malaika', created by Banijay Asia and Malaika Arora, is available to stream on Disney+ Hotstar from Monday to Thursday every week.

From Reel to Real to Reel life love

Team Absolute | Mumbai

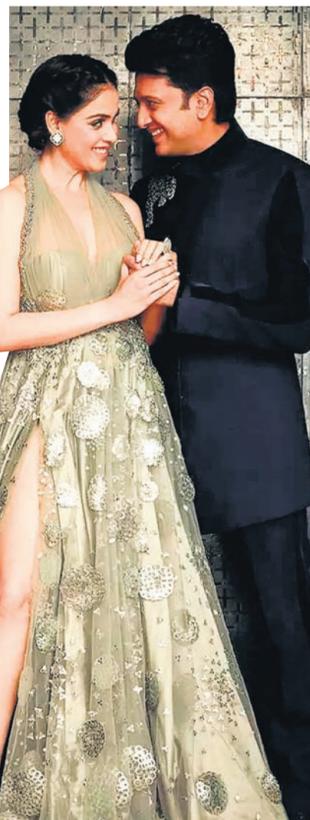
Riteish Deshmukh reveals the most romantic thing he has done for wife Genelia Deshmukh

Riteish Deshmukh and Genelia D'Souza, one of Bollywood's adorable couples, and are all set to reunite on the big screens after a very long time. Now, the trailer of Riteish Deshmukh and Genelia Deshmukh's upcoming movie is 'Ved' is out. It is an intense love tale that is all set to be released in December 30.

Ahead of the release, a trailer launch event was held in Mumbai. At the event, Riteish Deshmukh shared what is his idea of love and the most romantic thing he has done for Genelia.

Talking about love, the actor shared,

"Love is a unique concept. You can fall in love at first sight or after 20 years. The most important part is to fall in love. That is the most beautiful thing life offers." "Sharing a romantic he has done for her, the actor quipped, "I would like to share one instance. When telegram services were getting closed down, on the last day I had written three letters to Genelia saying I love you very much. She received all three of them. Prior to this, I had not ever written letter to anyone. In life, you need to express love to the people you love." Genelia Deshmukh said, "I want to be that person in Riteish's life, who is either two steps behind or holding his hand. Talking about her experience of being directed by Riteish, Genelia shared, "I'm very happy because it was Riteish's dream to direct films, and he never brought it out. I feel lockdown was the time when he decided that he wanted to get into this direction and he did it with all his heart and soul. So, whatever you see on the screen is Riteish Deshmukh, whether it was my clothes, to my bindi, to my jewellery, it was all selected by Riteish."



INSTAGRAM PIC OF THE DAY



Mukti Mohan