

# absolute india

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PUBLISHED SIMULTANEOUSLY FROM MUMBAI, BHPAL AND NEW DELHI

**NATION** > 02  
BJP received highest donations from electoral trusts in 2021-22 ...



**HOLLYWOOD** > 06  
Disney channel almost fired me for wearing a bikini at age 14: Bella ...



**SPORTS** > 07  
ICC T20I Cricketer of the Year 2022:SKY nominated for T20I ...



## Agra on alert after Covid positive foreign tourist disappears



Team Absolute | Agra

After an Argentinian tourist, who tested Covid-19 positive, disappeared without a trace, the district health authorities here sounded an alert and tightened the preventive pandemic protocol. All tourists are now being screened at the monuments, according to the CMO. The hotels have been told to keep a complete

record and upload the details on the website of the health department.

Sources said the search for the 'missing' Argentinian tourist was on. CCTV cameras were being reviewed, at the stations and city entry points. The guest had recorded a wrong phone number. His sample was collected on Tuesday.

The local district hospital has been readied to meet any emergency situation, and visitors were

### INDIA IMPOSES MANDATORY RT-PCR TESTS FOR TRAVELLERS FROM CHINA, 5 OTHERS BEFORE DEPARTURE

New Delhi: Amid a global resurgence of the Covid-19 pandemic, the Union Health Ministry has made it mandatory for travellers from China, Hong Kong, Japan, South Korea, Singapore and Thailand to undergo RT-PCR tests before departure.

The test should be conducted within 72 hours before their journey to India, the statement noted. This requirement is in addition to the random 2 per cent tests of all international passengers upon their arrival in India irrespective of the port of departure.

being screened at the bus stands and railway stations, officials said. A big rush of visitors was expected for the New Year, said the hoteliers.

Meanwhile, a local businessman, who returned from China recently, has been isolated and is under

### OVER 50% RECENT ARRIVALS FROM CHINA TEST COVID POSITIVE AT MILAN AIRPORT

Berlin: Member states of the European Union are trying to find a joint stance on how to treat travellers entering the borderless Schengen area from China, after Italy urged the rest of the economic bloc to bring back anti-Covid checks following Beijing's rapid rollback of its previously stringent hygiene restrictions, according to a media report. More than 50 per cent of people screened upon arrival at Milan's Malpensa airport in recent days tested positive for the virus, prompting the Lombardy region to require a mandatory negative test result before entry from China, the report said.

observation, after he tested positive. His family members and 37 others who contacted him, have all tested negative.

### 3,15,962 posts lying vacant in Railways, reveals RTI query



Bhopal: At present, 3,15,962 posts are vacant in the Railways, which has been revealed under the Right To Information.

RTI activist Chandrashekhar Gaur of Neemuch district in Madhya Pradesh sought information about the vacant posts, by submitting an application in the Ministry of Railways.

According to the information provided to Gaur by the Ministry, 3,12,944 posts were vacant in Group C of the Railways till November 1 (Provisional). Similarly, in another reply received on December 27, the Ministry apprised that 2,092 posts of Group A, 926 of Group B were vacant as of September 15, 2022. The country has been struggling with an increase in unemployment, which makes the fact of lakhs of government jobs in the Railways lying vacant, quite surprising.

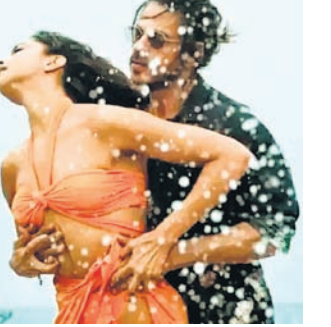
### CBFC asks 'Pathaan' makers to rework song

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Days after a Delhi-based advocate filed a complaint with Information and Broadcasting Minister Anurag Thakur and the Central Board of Film Certification (CBFC) against Bollywood actors Shahrukh Khan and Deepika Padukone for a music video for hurting religious sentiments, CBFC Chairperson Prasoon Joshi has asked the makers of 'Pathaan' to make certain changes in the film and songs, and submit a revised version before its theatrical release.

Controversy broke out over one of Pathaan's songs, "Besharam Rang", after a teaser was released earlier this month. Cases were filed in various states, objecting to the costumes, colour and even the title of the song.

Critics were up in arms over the use of saffron or orange in a bikini and contended that the song "hurts religious sentiments". One of the petitions in court even demanded that a case be filed against the lead actors. The song "Besharam Rang" from the film aired online on December 12.



### Committee Unbiased: Prasoon Joshi

"As far as costume colours are concerned, the committee has stayed unbiased. When the film comes out, the reflection of this balanced approach will be clear to everyone. While the process has been duly followed and getting implemented, I must reiterate that our culture and faith is glorious, intricate and nuanced. And we have to be careful that it does not get defined by trivia or dragged into unwarranted controversy. CBFC always has a tough task to strike a right balance between audience sensibilities and creative expressions and we have stayed true to this spirit in the certification on film Pathaan too."

## UGC-NET Dec 2022 exams to be conducted from February 21

Team Absolute | New Delhi

UGC Chairman Prof. M. Jagadeesh Kumar said that the UGC-NET December-2022 will be conducted from February 21 to March 10 next year.

Kumar, on Thursday, told reporter that the application process had started and students across the country could submit their applications online from December 29 to January 17, 2023 up till 5 p.m.

According to the University Grant Commission (UGC), the NTA has been entrusted with conducting the UGC-NET, a test to determine the eligibility of Indian nationals for the posts of 'Assistant Professor' and 'Junior Research Fellowship and Assistant Professor' in Indian universities and colleges.

The National Testing Agency (NTA) will conduct the test for the posts, in 83 subjects in Computer Based Test (CBT) mode.

The schedule for the same



has been declared and all other details have been made available on the official website, the UGC Chairman added.

Earlier, late on Wednesday night, the exam schedule of the Common University Entrance Test (CUET) for Post Graduation was declared, which will be conducted from June 1-10, next year.

According to the UGC, the application process for CUET-

PG is expected to start in mid-March, 2023.

For CUET-PG, universities can complete the admission process by the end of July, 2023 and begin the academic sessions by August 1.

Other than the application process of CUET-UG, the academic year 2023-24 will start in the first week of February, 2023. CUET-UG exams will be conducted between May 21-31.

### 15 ELECTRIC AUTO-RICKSHAWS CATCH FIRE NEAR 'STATUE OF UNITY'

Ahmedabad: As many as 15 electric auto-rickshaws, part of a fleet used to ferry tourists around the Statue of Unity in Gujarat's Narmada district, caught fire early Thursday morning, officials said.

The Statue of Unity Area Development and Tourism Governance Authority (SOUADTGA), however, denied reports that the rickshaws caught fire during battery charging.

A private firm manages a fleet of more than 90 electric auto-rickshaws for tourists who visit the Statue of Unity and employs local tribal women as drivers, an official said. "During the early hours of Thursday, 15 auto-rickshaws parked at a charging station near Kevadia village caught fire due to unknown reasons. The autos were parked 35 feet away from the charging station which proves that rickshaws did not catch fire during battery charging," said a statement issued by SOUADTGA.

Personnel of the local fire brigade rushed to the spot and doused the fire before it could spread to other electric three-wheelers parked nearby, it said.

The private firm has filed a police complaint seeking to find out the exact cause of the fire, it added. Statue of Unity, a statue of Vallabhbhai Patel, India's first home minister, stands near Kevadia, 100 km from Vadodara city. At 182 metres, it is said to be the world's tallest statue.

## On social media firms' Strike-Down Decisions, Govt to form 3 panels

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The government is considering three grievance appellate committees (GACs) to look into complaints by users against decisions of social media platforms, and consultations on various modalities of the panels will start in January, IT ministry sources said. IT rules had been strengthened in October to pave the way for formation of the Centre-appointed panels to settle often-ignored user grievances against the way social media platforms addressed their complaints regarding content and other matters. Put simply, these panels will be able to review content moderation decisions by social media companies like Meta and Twitter, and can overrule decisions of the big tech firms on takedown or blocking requests. The government had said the move was necessitated due to the "casual" and "tokenism" approach of digital platforms towards user complaints.

According to sources, there will be three grievance appellate panels which will be assigned



different types of appeals based on the categories of harmful content mentioned in the recently-amended IT rules. Broadly, these appeals could be around complaints regarding sexually explicit content, misinformation, or religious incitement. The government has, in the new rules, added objectionable religious content (with intent to incite violence) alongside pornography, trademark infringements, fake information and something that could be a threat to sovereignty of the nation, as content that users can flag to social media platforms. Social media platforms' decisions on such complaints can be challenged in the grievance

committees. IT ministry sources said that appeals pertaining to areas other than those listed out in the amended IT rules will be directed to the relevant authority or tribunal. In such cases, the GACs will act as a signpost, redirecting the complaints to the authority and tribunal concerned, while informing the complainant that their grievance has been forwarded to the relevant agency.

Further, the structure of the grievance appellate committees, design and functions, and how they deal with appeals -- all such nuances will be placed for stakeholder consultation by early January.

## IAF successfully fires Brahmos missile from Sukhoi SU-30 MKI

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Indian Air Force on Thursday said that it has successfully fired the extended range version of Brahmos Air Launched Missile against a ship target from a Sukhoi SU-30MKI aircraft.

The IAF said that the missile can hit a target at a range of around 400 km. After being launched from a Su-30 fighter aircraft, the missile hit the target ship in the centre, achieving the desired mission objectives in firing conducted in the Bay of Bengal region.

With this, the IAF has achieved a significant capability boost to carry out precision strikes from SU-30MKI aircraft against land and sea targets over very long ranges, it added.

According to the IAF, the extended range capability of the missile



coupled with the high performance of the SU-30MKI aircraft gives the IAF a strategic reach and allows it to dominate the future battlefields. The dedicated and synergetic efforts of IAF, Indian Navy, the DRDO, the BAPL and the HAL have been instrumental in achieving this feat, Defence Ministry officials added.

The IAF will be further strengthened with enhanced lethal capabilities by induction of new range of missile system, long-range guided bombs, the range augmentation kit for conventional bombs and advanced surveillance systems.

## 'Make in India' cough syrups trigger serious health debate

Team Absolute | New Delhi

After Uzbekistan's Health Ministry alleged that Indian company Marion Biotech's cough syrup was responsible for the death of 18 children, such drugs have sparked safety concerns in the past too across the globe and back home too. In October this year, the World Health Organisation (WHO) issued a global alert over four cough syrups that were linked to the deaths of almost 66 children in The Gambia.

The WHO found the syrups used there -- made by an Indian pharmaceutical company -- contained "unacceptable amounts" of diethylene glycol and ethylene glycol. The syrups have been "potentially linked with acute kidney injuries", said the organisation.

In the same month, deaths of nearly 100 children in Indonesia prompted the country to suspend sales of all syrup and liquid medication.

Indonesia said some syrup medicine was found to contain ingredients linked to acute kidney injuries (AKI), which have killed 99 young children this year. Indonesian authorities, however, said



the cough syrups used in The Gambia were not sold locally.

According to the BBC, some 40 per cent of over-the-counter and generic medicines sold in the US and a quarter of all medicines dispensed in the UK come from India.

Meanwhile, an investigation by the Noida police and other officials at pharmaceutical company Marion Biotech Pvt Ltd following allegations by Uzbekistan that at least 18 children died in the country after consuming a cough syrup produced by the drugmaker, is underway.

### PROVIDING CONSULAR ASSISTANCE TO UZBEKISTAN: MEA

New Delhi: The Ministry of External Affairs on Thursday said that Uzbekistan has initiated legal action in the cough syrup death row. "Legal action initiated in Uzbekistan. We're providing consular assistance to some linked to Indian firm there," it said in a statement. Uzbekistan has claimed that a cough syrup allegedly made by Noida-based Marion Biotech killed 18 children. As per reports, the Indian embassy has contacted Uzbekistan authorities on the matter.

A joint inspection of the manufacturer's Noida facility is being carried out by teams of the Uttar Pradesh Drug Control Department, Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation (CDSCO) and the Noida Police.

### AFTER "SPYING" ROW, CHINESE WOMAN IN BIHAR TO BE DEPORTED OVER VISA RULES

New Delhi:

A Chinese woman in Bihar's Gaya has been into police custody and will be deported

back due to visa violations. Earlier, the police suspected her of spying on Dalai Lama, who is scheduled to participate at several events in Bihar this week.

Sounding an alert, police had put out sketches of the suspected Chinese 'spy' earlier today on social media requesting residents to provide information about her. The woman was later identified as Song Xiaolan.

According to inputs, the Chinese woman had been living in different parts of the country including Bodh Gaya for more than one year. However, there is no record in the foreign section about the stay of the Chinese woman. Dalai Lama has this year resumed his annual tour to Bodh Gaya, which had been suspended for the last two years due to the Covid pandemic. Security has been increased in and around the Mahabodhi Temple Complex. The Dalai Lama addressed a gathering this morning at the 'Kaal Chakra' maian. He is slated to give his address every day for three days till December 31.





## THE WINTER BEAUTY



Barammulla: A view of the residential area covered in white blanket of snow during the fresh snowfall on Thursday

### Brutality in Tihar Jail: Hospitalised prisoner alleges sodomy, torture

Team Absolute | New Delhi

An undertrial prisoner in Tihar Jail was allegedly brutally assaulted by fellow inmates inside Jail No 7. The victim has alleged that he was also sexually assaulted by fellow prisoners.

The victim has alleged that the jail administration was trying to hush up the matter since the beginning and did not let his family members meet him.

According to sources, his condition deteriorated after which he was admitted to Deen Dyal Upadhyay Hospital, and later was referred to Lady Harding Hospital.

Now the family members

of the victim have lodged a complaint in this regard with DCP West and at Hari Nagar Police Station.

"My nephew, was remanded to judicial custody by Dwarka court on December 8. He was lodged at Jail no 7. He wanted to meet me but jail officials didn't let us meet. On December 27, I was told by jail administration that he was admitted in Lady Harding Hospital. He told me that he was brutally tortured and sodomised inside the jail after which his condition deteriorated," read the complaint lodged by the uncle of the victim.

Delhi police officials were not available for any official comment.

### NIRMALA SITHARAMAN DISCHARGED FROM AIIMS



New Delhi: Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman was discharged from AIIMS on Thursday, informed sources said. She was admitted to the AIIMS' private ward on December 26 with symptoms of viral fever.

Sitharaman is scheduled to present the Union Budget for 2023-24 likely on February 1, 2023.

## Mining minister a land mafia, remove him from post: Cong MLA to Raj CM

Jaipur | Agencies

Senior Congress MLA from Rajasthan's Sangod and former minister Bharat Singh Kundanpur has shot another letter to Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot demanding the removal of the mining minister and threatening to stage a protest at the start of the new year.

While extending New Year greetings to CM Gehlot, Bharat Singh said in his letter, "The corrupt mining minister is a land mafia, remove him from his post".

During the Bharat Jodo Yatra in Alwar, local leaders had raised the issue of illegal mining on which CM Gehlot reportedly told Rahul Gandhi that illegal mining was a disease as there were big mafias involved. "Even deputing IG here did not help us in attaining the success," Gehlot had said.



Without naming anyone, Bharat Singh wrote in the letter, "By writing this letter at the end of the year 2022, I am demanding

from you that the state's mining minister, who is a mining mafia, should remove them from the post in the interest of the party and the state."

He further said, "While writing the letter, I have understood that he is under your protection. Your slogan of corruption is hollow as this minister is 100 per cent corrupt. I am sure to hit the road against corruption in the new year (2023)," said Singh in his letter.

Bharat Singh has been raising his voice against illegal mining for a long time and has written many letters to the CM in this matter. Recently on November 28, he targeted the State's Mining Minister and held him responsible for the death of two people due to electrocution in Simlia police station area without taking his name in a press conference.

## Rahul Gandhi violated security rules 113 times: CRPF

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) said that necessary security arrangements were made for Rahul Gandhi as per the guidelines, but he violated the rules 113 times and was duly informed of the same.

CRPF deployed in Gandhi's security responded to the question raised by the Congress regarding the lapse in his security and the letter written by the party to the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA).

The CRPF, in its reply submitted to the MHA, said that Gandhi violated the fixed security instructions several times since 2020, including during Bharat Jodo Yatra.

It added that the violations had been brought to the leader's notice from time to time.

According to CRPF, the arrange-



ments were made in coordination with the state police and security agencies, after advanced communication regarding security before each

tour, in addition to Advanced Security Liaison (ASL) that was done for Gandhi's security before the Yatra entered Delhi.

According to CRPF, the Delhi Police informed that security personnel were deployed adequately, and that the security arrangements made for the protectee work when the person himself follows the prescribed guidelines.

The Congress demanded for Gandhi's security in Bharat Jodo Yatra from the Central Government.

Congress General Secretary, K.C. Venugopal had written a letter to Home Minister Amit Shah regarding the same, wherein he claimed of lapses in Gandhi's security in the Delhi leg of the Yatra.

The Intelligence Bureau has questioned many people involved in the yatra in this regard.

## Criminal living as sadhu finally arrested after 17 yrs

Mathura | Agencies

A criminal, Ajay Sharma, has been arrested by the Mathura police, who was on the run for 17 years and was staying at a village temple in Hapur district in the guise of a sadhu.

Ajay and three others had been booked for robbing passengers travelling in a car on Agra-Delhi highway in 2005.

The other three were arrested soon after the crime but Ajay managed to escape.

He then changed his name to Brahmagiri Maharaj, shaved his beard and tonsured his head to hide his identity.

Ajay's luck finally ran out two days ago when his brother Arun informed the police about the hiding place, following a fight between the two over sharing of parental



property. Ajay, originally a resident of Ghaziabad, is now 54 years old.

After he absconded, the Mathura police announced a reward of Rs 25,000 for any information leading to his arrest. Police said a case of murder and rioting was also

pending against him in Jaipur.

SHO of Highway Police Station in Mathura said that the police received a tip-off that Ajay had changed his identity and was living at the Shivhari temple in the Shivhari village of Hapur district.

## Fight breaks out between two passengers on Kolkata-bound Thai Smile Airways flight

Team Absolute | New Delhi

A fight between two passengers broke out onboard a Thai Smile Airways Bangkok-India flight bound for Kolkata, after one of them refused to follow cabin crew's safety instructions, according to reports.

A video of the fight between the two passengers has gone viral, where the cabin crew and some other passengers can be seen trying to stop the fight.

The incident, according to reports, occurred on December 26 prior to the Kolkata-bound flight taking off from Bangkok.

As per reports, the crew asked the passengers to adjust their seats to the upright position for take-off, a standard safety procedure also followed on domestic flights.

One of the passengers, reports said, apparently refused to adjust his seat, cit-



ing backache.

When after repeated requests by the crew that a reclined seat can make evacuation difficult in case of an emergency, the passenger refused to comply with safety instructions, another passenger who was seated a few rows behind the passenger in question, came and a fight ensued between both the passengers.

In a tweet today, Thai Smile Airways apologised for the incident.

"THAI Smile Airways feels sorry for this. We reaffirm that the incident has been taken care of as we followed the flight safety procedures in accordance with international standards. Our flight crews have already provided support to the persons affected by an incident," it tweeted.

## GANDHIAN STUDY CENTRE IN GUJARAT NOT RECEIVING GRANTS

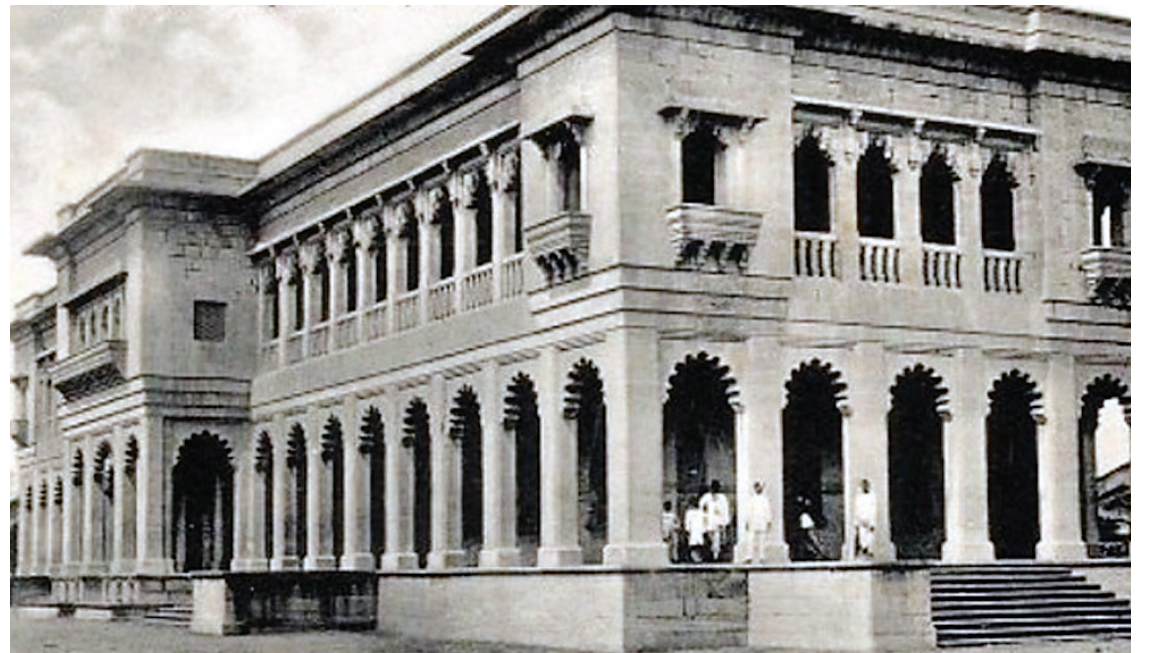
Bhavnagar | Agencies

The Gandhian Study Centre at the Samaldas Arts College in Bhavnagar is facing a major financial crunch after it did not receive the necessary grants.

If the Maharaja KrishnaKumarsinhji Bhavnagar University does not arrange funds, the centre might have to be closed down. Mahatma Gandhi did his graduation from the Samaldas Arts College. He took admission to the college in January 1888, three years after the college was founded in 1885. It was the first college of the Saurashtra region and second in the state.

Samaldas College's principal J.B. Gohil told reporter, "Gandhian Study Centre is an independent unit of the History department. Only the university will be able to say about the financial issues. So far the college is concerned, it is doing very well. 3,600 students are studying in the college."

Bhavnagar University's in-Charge Registrar D.J. Sheth told IANS, "Gandhian Study Centre's head M.G. Parmar in a letter to the university has drawn attention towards the grants issue, where he has stated that for



some time the centre is not receiving the grant and it is difficult to run the show further, as he retires next month. The university should take a call whether to run the Gandhian study centre or close it down."

Sheth also told IANS that the University's executive council meeting is scheduled on January 2, 2023, when the matter will be discussed. He said he did not have the exact idea since how long the centre was not receiving

grant and how much fund was required to run the centre.

"But, the University will think and explore other ways to meet the expenses and it is likely to continue the centre," said Sheth.



# ICICI-VIDEOCON SCAM: KOCHHARS, DHOOT SENT TO 14 DAYS' JUDICIAL CUSTODY

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Mumbai special court on Thursday sent former ICICI Bank CEO Chanda Kochhar, her businessman husband Deepak Kochhar, and Videocon Group Chairman Venugopal Dhoot, to 14 days judicial custody... The Kochhars, nabbed on December 23, and Dhoot, arrested on December 26, was produced before a special Central Bureau of Investigation judge S.H. Gwalani after their CBI remand ended on Thursday.



when Chanda Kochhar was helming it. Deepak Kochhar and his company, NuPower Renewables Ltd, along with Dhoot's companies Supreme Energy Pvt Ltd, Videocon Industries Ltd, and Videocon International Electronics Ltd, have been named in the alleged scam.

Under Chanda Kochhar, ICICI Bank sanctioned the loans to Videocon Group companies flouting the RBI guidelines, the Banking Regulation Act, the bank's own codes by misusing her position that led to the huge losses, and pecuniary benefits to the Kochhars.

# Bombay HC slaps fine on law firm revealing rape victim's identity

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The Bombay High Court has slapped a penalty of Rs 5,000 on a prominent legal firm for revealing the name of a rape victim in its petition. The fine has been imposed by a division bench comprising Justices Revati Mohite-Dere and Prithviraj K. Chavan on the Mumbai-based law firm, Hulyalkar & Associates with branches in Pune.



Hence, the law firm, who drafted the petition, to deposit costs of Rs 5,000 with the Kirtikar Law

Library within two weeks from today," the court said in its ruling on December 22.

The order came after the petitioner (rape victim)'s lawyer Zaid Anwar Qureshi, instructed by Hulyalkar & Associates, sought the court's permission to mask the petitioner's name in the petition. The court allowed him to amend the petition and mask the victim's name wherever it was mentioned including in the cause title, to be carried out that day. After the relevant amendments were carried out in the petition, the matter was posted for further hearing on February 8, 2023, the two Justices said. They also directed the petitioner to serve the amended petition copy to all the other parties concerned with the case.

# BMC seals all political parties' offices in civic building

Team Absolute | Mumbai

In an unprecedented move, the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) administration has sealed the offices of all political parties in the civic headquarters, triggering protests by different outfits, here on Thursday. The BMC's move came after a huge ruckus on Wednesday evening between former municipal corporators of the Shiv Sena (UBT) and Balasahebanchi Shiv Sena (BSS) with both attempting to grab control of the erstwhile Shiv Sena office located there. Sena (UBT) Chief Spokesperson and MP Sanjay Raut slammed the BMC Commissioner I.S. Chahal's decision, terming it as "high-handedness" and demanded to know under what rules this was done. The party's leaders in the civic body demanded a meeting with Chahal to discuss the issue, but after he was reportedly not available,



they staged a vociferous sit-in protest in the civic building. They chanted slogans of "Khokhe, Khokhe" against the BSS ex-corporators and accused them of trespassing and attempting to 'grab' the Sena (UBT) party office illegally on Wednesday evening. Besides Sena (UBT), leaders of the Congress, Nationalist Congress Party, Samajwadi Party also strongly criticised the civic body's clampdown on their party offices. The civic headquarters witnessed a huge ruckus Wednesday evening with the Sena (UBT) and BSS leaders clashing and indulging in

fisticuffs to establish their supremacy over the office premises and stake claim to it, even as the BMC elections are round the corner. The police were summoned to break up the mini-war, all the leaders were shunted out and the office was temporarily locked, as an uneasy calm seemed to return. In view of a tense situation, the civic body sealed all the offices - allotted to the major, recognised political outfits with elected corporators -- in the BMC headquarters, situated opposite the world heritage Central Railway headquarters, Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Terminus.

# Eknath Shinde has "evil eye", stay alert: Uddhav Thackeray warns RSS Chief

Uddhav Thackeray, who heads one of the Shiv Sena factions, on Thursday said Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) chief Mohan Bhagwat should stay alert as Maharashtra Chief Minister Eknath Shinde has an "evil eye" and he might usurp the Sangh office.

Team Absolute | Nagpur

Thackeray's statement comes hours after Shinde and Deputy CM Devendra Fadnavis visited Hedgewar Smruti Mandir, the memorial of RSS founder Dr K B Hedgewar, in Reshimbagh area of Nagpur. The two leaders paid tributes at the memorials of Dr Hedgewar and RSS ideologue M S Golwalkar. They also met the Sangh office-bearers. On Wednesday, both Sena factions had faced off in the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) headquarters in south Mumbai over the control of the party office there. The clash led to tension for about an hour before the police intervened. Thackeray also said that those who do not have courage to build anything indulge in stealing and capturing other parties' offices. Shinde's rebellion against Thackeray's leadership in June this year led to the collapse of the Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) government. They are also locked in a tussle for the



parent party's poll symbol - bow and arrow. Addressing a press conference in the Vidhan Bhavan premises in Nagpur, where the winter session of the state legislature is currently underway, Thackeray said, "Yesterday, they tried to capture our BMC office in Mumbai. Today, they went to the

RSS office. Since RSS is strong, they could not take possession of its office. But RSS needs to be on alert henceforth...He (Shinde) has an evil eye." Replying to another query on Shinde's visit to the Hedgewar Smruti Mandir, he said, "Mohan Bhagwat needs to stay alert as they (Shinde group) may take possession of the RSS office. "Those who don't have the courage to build anything, steal or seize. They have an inferiority complex and then they steal others' parties, offices," he added. Reacting to Thackeray's barbs, state BJP chief Chandrashekhar Bawankule accused him of changing colours quicker than a chameleon. He said he was saddened by Thackeray's statement on the CM, and added that the Sena leader could not "digest" Shinde's visit to Reshimbagh. Thackeray had said several times in the past that Dr Hedgewar Smruti Mandir was a place where one derives inspiration, the BJP leader said. "He changes colours more than a chameleon for power," Bawankule added.

# BJP's Nitesh Rane meets CM, seeks law on "Love Jihad"

Team Absolute | Mumbai

BJP MLA Nitesh Rane along with a women's delegation met Chief Minister Eknath Shinde and Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis on Wednesday and sought a law on love jihad and against forcible conversion. "There are lots of morchas being carried out by organizations to demand strict law against love jihad. With women delegation, we have made a request to the Chief Minister Eknath Shinde and Deputy CM Fadnavis to make a law and also



an anti-conversion law on the lines of Karnataka, Gujarat and

Madhya Pradesh," Rane told reporters. "Both Chief Minister and Deputy Chief Minister were very positive about the demands and have assured that in coming months strict law against love jihad will be made," he added. Fadnavis had said earlier this month that the state government will study laws made in different states against forcible conversions. "We have not taken any decision yet, but we will study the laws made by different states in this regard," Fadnavis had said on questions about law against 'love jihad'.

# MAN ARRESTED FOR RAPING GIRL, DIES BY SUICIDE IN JAIL: COPS

Mumbai: A 19-year-old man arrested on the charge of raping a minor girl hanged himself at the Talajo central jail in Navi Mumbai, the police said today. Officials suspect the undertrial might have been disturbed due to the rape case against him. The police said the man, identified as Karan Pramod Serian, was found hanging from a ceiling fan in a barrack in the early hours of Tuesday. After being informed by other inmates, jail authorities took him to a hospital where he was declared dead before admission. Mumbra resident Serian, who had been in the jail since September 26, used his trousers to end his life, said the police. The Kamathe police arrested Serian on September 22 for allegedly raping a 16-year-old girl. Apart from booking him under the Indian Penal Code, they also pressed charges under POCSO, a law aimed at protecting children from offences of sexual assault and sexual harassment. The police said Serian was in a relationship with the girl whom he met on social media. The girl eloped with him after he promised to marry her and the two were living in Mumbra, Thane. Serian had also maintained a physical relationship with her, said an official.

# "Will meet PM Modi to...": Sharad Pawar on arrests by central agencies

Team Absolute | Pune

Listing the names of leaders from the Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) alliance in Maharashtra, NCP chief and former union minister Sharad Pawar today said the "best example" of how central probe agencies such as the Enforcement Directorate can be "misused" is the arrest of NCP's Anil Deshmukh, Shiv Sena (Uddhav) leader Sanjay Raut and others with them. "I will meet with Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Home Minister Amit Shah to prevent anyone going through a similar situation in the future," he added. He was speaking a day after the release of Anil Deshmukh, a former minister in the Uddhav Thackeray-led Shiv Sena-NCP-Congress government that was ousted in June in a Shiv Sena mutiny backed by the BJP. "The court has clearly said in its order that there is no evidence against Anil Deshmukh," Pawar told reporters.



"There has been an abuse of power; and a dutiful and cultured person has been put in jail for almost 13 months... But the Prime Minister and Home Minister should think about the people who have created this situation," the NCP chief said. "After gathering some more information about the agencies involved in this case, I and some of my colleagues will meet the Prime Minister and the Home Minister and talk about it."

# Union Minister Athawale meets Tunisha's kin, assures justice

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Union Minister of State for Social Justice Ramdas Athawale on Thursday called on the family of the late actress Tunisha Sharma at their home in Mira Road town in Thane and assured that justice will be done to them. Athawale said that he met the actress' mother Vanita Sharma and other relatives, and consoled them for Tunisha's sudden death that has shattered the family. Later, in a brief media interaction, he said that the Sharma family has demanded stringent action against Tunisha's former boyfriend and co-actor Sheezan Khan for alleged abetment of her suicide on December 24. "I have sought an in-depth investigation into this case... Khan had betrayed her and he should get capital punishment. I shall also meet Chief Minister Eknath Shinde and Deputy CM Devendra Fadnavis and request them to give a compensation of



Rs 25 lakh to the family," said Athawale. Arrested on December 25, Khan, 27, is currently in police custody and the investigators have recovered a note in the green room of the sets of television serial "Ali Baba: Dastaan-E-Kabul", where Tunisha ended her life. The note purportedly mentioned the names of Tunisha and

Khan with the words - "he's blessed to have me as a co-actor. Woohooo", though when it was written and its exact context is being probed. The investigators are also poring over hundreds of pages of WhatsApp messages exchanged by Tunisha-Sheezan though nothing suspicious has apparently been detected so far.

# Mukesh Ambani's son Anant engaged to Radhika Merchant in Rajasthan

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Industrialist Mukesh Ambani and Nita Ambani's son Anant Ambani got engaged to Radhika Merchant, daughter of Viren Merchant and Shaila Merchant, in Rajasthan on Thursday, an official said here. The 'roka' (betrothal) ceremony was performed at the famed Shrinathji Temple at Nathdwara in the desert state on Thursday. It was attended by the Ambani and Merchant families and friends, and priests of the temple blessed the excited young couple. Known to each other for a few years, Anant and his fiancée Radhika spent the day at the temple seeking Lord Shrinathji's blessings for their upcoming union. They also took part in the traditional Rajbhog-shringara ceremonies at the temple, and the two families shall celebrate the happy engagement occasion later in the day. The engagement ceremony marks the formal journey of their marriage in the coming months, and both families have sought the blessings and good wishes of everyone for Anant and Radhika as they commence their journey of togetherness. Anant Ambani completed his studies from Brown University, USA



and is serving the Reliance Industries Ltd. board in various capacities, including as a member on the boards of Jio Platforms and Retail Retail Ventures, and currently heads the RIL's energy business. Radhika Merchant is a graduate of New York University and is serving as a Director with Encore Healthcare.

# AMBANI FAMILY AT SHRINATHJI TEMPLE TO OFFER SPECIAL PRAYERS

Jaipur: Industrialist Mukesh Ambani's family is in Nathdwara on Thursday. Locals said that the family will take part in a special puja recitation in the Shrinathji temple and will also organise a feast in the city on fulfillment of their wish of daughter Isha Ambani having a twin. "Mukesh Ambani will send a packet of sweets to every house in Nathdwara city to celebrate the birth of grandson and granddaughter. Mukesh Ambani's daughter Isha gave birth to twins on November 19 in Los Angeles, USA. After a month, she returned to Mumbai on Saturday. In this happiness, the family is reaching on Thursday to seek the blessings of Shrinathji. The temple has been decorated with flowers and lights for the last two days to mark the special rituals.



EDITOR'S SPECS

Like Bengal, Left and Congress may forge alliance for Tripura polls

In a significant political development, leaders of both Congress and CPI-M on Wednesday indicated that they would forge an electoral alliance in the upcoming Tripura Assembly elections, expected to be held in February. The CPI-M-led Left and the Congress formed an alliance for Assembly elections in West Bengal in 2016 and 2021. Congress in-charge for Tripura Ajoy Kumar said that in the forthcoming Assembly elections, Congress would likely form alliance with the CPI-M so that the anti-BJP vote can be consolidated. Of late, Congress and CPI-M leaders were seen sharing the same dais while five Left parties, including CPI-M, and the Congress on Tuesday jointly appealed to the people to come forward cutting across political identity, religion, caste and community to raise united voice against this misrule of BJP and to make an end to "this black regime". About the possible electoral alliance with the Congress, CPI-M Tripura state Secretary Jitendra Choudhury said that issuance of the joint statement on Tuesday is an indication about "our future political course of action". Tuesday's initiative (issuance of joint appeal) would be a turning point in the political history of Tripura and thanks to all political parties those signed in the joint statement, he said. The CPI-M Politburo in a statement, issued in New Delhi, said that the Left parties and the Congress have jointly demanded the restoration of democracy and the reestablishment of the rule of law that is being destroyed by the BJP government's "tyrannical rule". In another development, leaders of TIPRA (Tipraha Indigenous Progressive Regional Alliance) on Wednesday said that it is ready for an alliance with those parties who give their commitment and support to the demand for a separate tribal state - "Greater Tipraland".

WILL 2022 BE THE LAST YEAR OF PAKISTANI OCCUPATION?

Amjad Ayub Mirza

Until recently the liberation of Pakistan occupied Jammu Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan (PoJK/GB) seemed like a far-fetched dream. However, with the increase in the intensity in armed conflict between the Pakistan army and the Baloch freedom fighters as well as the periodic bloody skirmishes taking place at the Chaman border between Afghanistan and Pakistan military and the recent lethal attacks on the Pakistan army conducted by the Tehreek e Taliban Pakistan, the dream to end of the oppression of the people of PoJK/GB seems in our reach. Six things would be of utmost importance in making the dream of freeing my people come true. First and foremost is the establishment of an umbrella organisation that could unite all political parties and organisations which are fighting for social, political and economic justice in PoJK/GB. This would include the 14 party strong People's National Alliance lead by advocate Zulfiqar Ahmed as well as the workers, farmers, students, shop stewards, doctors, engineers, women and above all the larger sections of the middle class in PoJK/GB. Secondly, a mass campaign inside the occupied territories that challenges the Pakistan establishment's anti-India narrative, and to replace it with facts based truth. (The fact is that it was Pakistan and not India that attacked the state of Jammu and Kashmir on October 22, 1947 and occupied parts of Kashmir and west Jammu as well as Gilgit-Baltistan). Thirdly, establishing a consensus among all organisations to agree on a one-point political agenda to free PoJK/GB from the occupation of Pakistan and reunite with the republic of India. Fourth is to enable the movement to spread all over the occupied territories that leads the struggle for freedom from Pakistan and follows the one-point agenda mentioned earlier. Fifth is an unwavering vocal support from the people of Jammu Kashmir inside the union territory in particular and from the



Indian digital and broadcast media.

And sixth, a well-coordinated international diplomatic campaign to help the world community make sense of what is at stake and how liberating PoJK/GB will help in abolishing terrorist activities in the region and beyond. India would not even have to fire a bullet of put one soldier on ground to liberate PoJK/GB. If we examine closely it will become even more clear that the people of PoJK/GB have been protesting for more than two years on a daily basis against social and economic atrocities that are being committed by Pakistan. Last week speaker after speaker at protests conducted by the civil society in Gilgit-Baltistan said that if Pakistan was not going to solve their problems and if wheat shortage and load shedding issues are not resolved than they will have no other choice but to look in the direction of Kargil. This means that the people of Gilgit-Baltistan have shown their willingness to join Laddakh and the Indian republic. In PoJK, on more than one occasion, individuals as well as nationalist political party leaders have warned Pakistan that they will march to join Srinagar if Pakistan does not meet their social and economic demands. To achieve the above mentioned goal, speedy discussion sessions are currently being conducted with likeminded political

activists, leaders as well as with the broader civil society. My appearance on Indian television channels has contributed in a big way in bringing awareness about the atrocities taking place in the PoJK/GB. Regular daily news bulletins broadcasted through Radio Himalaya are a window that provide a daily update on the situation on ground in PoJK/GB and have played an instrumental role in scraping the Islamic jihadist terrorist narrative of the minds of millions of people from PoJK/GB. Radio Himalaya has broken, what was until few years ago, the backbone of Pakistani military establishment's anti-India propaganda. What has been missing so far is a vigorous international diplomatic propaganda campaign based on facts about the history of the so-called Kashmir conflict and how Pakistan has used this conflict to inflict violence on the innocent people and especially religious minorities living in the Indian union territory of Jammu Kashmir. For this I suggest that an envoy of PoJK/GB should be nominated who should visit as many European capitals as possible, as well as Washington and London, and hold meetings with their respective foreign ministers and parliamentarians. This activity can easily be coordinated through the Indian foreign missions. The enemy of the people of India and the oppressed peo-

ple of PoJK/GB is a common one. Our enemy is the jihadist Islamic terrorist military establishment of Pakistan and the enemy is at its weakest today. Pakistani banks have barred foreign currency holders from withdrawing their savings in dollars. This is because Pakistan has no foreign exchange reserves. Foreign currency account holders are being paid their foreign currency savings in rupees. The situation is so dire that the Combined Military Hospitals (CMH) have stopped issuing medicine to ex-servicemen and their families due to non-availability of funds. Pakistan's economy is under huge pressure and defaulting on payments to its lenders is most likely in the near future. Pakistan army is deeply bogged down in Balochistan where Baloch freedom fighters are defeating an occupying Pakistan army. In Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) is attacking Pakistan military convoys and check posts on almost daily basis. Relations between the Afghan Taliban and Pakistan military are at an all-time low and border clashes have become a weekly occurrence. The people of Sindh province have been devastated by an early monsoon that has caused devastating floods and left millions without home and food. Things are so desperate that any untoward incident could spark a rebellion in Sindh at any time. Therefore, if the above mentioned six points are taken on board the people of PoJK/GB will be able to rid themselves of Pakistani occupation and become free to join Indian republic without a bullet spent. Now, it is only a matter of the will of all stake holders whether they want to take advantage of this once in a life time opportunity and turn 2022 into the last year of Pakistani occupation of the erstwhile Indian territories? Perhaps, this is time to search your soul.

(Dr. Amjad Ayub Mirza is an author and a human rights activist from Mirpur in PoJK. He currently lives in exile in the UK)

international

Russia rains down 120 missiles on Ukraine in biggest attack for weeks

Kyiv | Agencies  
Air raid sirens rang out across Ukraine on Thursday morning as Russia unleashed around 120 missiles in a savage barrage which targeted the capital Kyiv and several other major cities, media reports said. "A massive air raid. More than 100 missiles in several waves," presidential office adviser Oleksiy Arestovych wrote on Facebook, while another adviser Mykhailo Podolyak claimed more than 120 missiles had been fired at Ukraine, Daily Mail reported. Mayors of capital Kyiv, Ukraine's second city Kharkiv and the western city of Lviv all reported that Russian missiles had caused a series of explosions, while blasts were also heard in Zhytomyr, Odesa and Dnipropetrovsk, according to local media



reports. The brutal blitz came hard on the heels of the Kremlin's rejection of a Ukrainian peace plan, as both Russia's Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov and Kremlin press secretary Dmitry Peskov insisted that Kyiv accept Russia's annexation of four Ukrainian regions, Daily Mail reported. Thursday's strikes in Kyiv evoked scenes reminiscent of the Second World War as thousands of people took to the metro tunnels beneath the city in search of shelter. The Ukrainian Air Force said Russia first launched an assault of 'kamikaze' drones overnight before following it up with waves of air- and sea-based cruise missiles. The widespread attack was

the latest in a series of Russian strikes targeting vital infrastructure across Ukraine. Moscow has launched such attacks on weekly basis since October, causing widespread blackouts and cutting water supplies. Podolyak said that Russia was aiming to "destroy critical infrastructure and kill civilians en masse". "We're waiting for further proposals from 'peacekeepers'," he wrote ironically on Twitter, Daily Mail reported. Kharkiv's Governor Oleg Syneubov said "critical infrastructure" was targeted in the region and four missiles hit civilian neighbourhoods in the east and south of the city, while Kyiv's Vitali Klitschko claimed that "40 per cent of the capital's consumers are without electricity after the Russian attack".

10 IS MILITANTS KILLED DURING AIRSTRIKE IN IRAQ

Baghdad | Agencies  
The Iraqi aircraft bombed two hideouts housing about 10 Islamic State (IS) militants in the eastern province of Diyala, possibly killing all of them, the Iraqi military said. Acting on intelligence reports, Iraqi warplanes completely destroyed the two IS hideouts in the Narin area near the town of Qara-Tappa, nearly 175 km northeast of the capital Baghdad, according to a statement by the media office of the Iraqi Joint Operations Command on Wednesday. Over the past months, Iraqi security forces had conducted operations against extremist militants to crack down on their intensified activities, Xinhua news agency reported. The security situation in Iraq had been improving since the defeat of the IS in 2017. However, its remnants had since melted into urban centres, deserts, and rugged areas, carrying out frequent guerrilla attacks against security forces and civilians.



Kids of drowned PIO couple safe, to fly to India soon

New York | Agencies

The two minor daughters of an Indian-American couple from Andhra Pradesh, who drowned in the state of Arizona, are currently staying with a family friend, and will soon fly to India, according to reports. Narayana Muddana, 49, his wife, Haritha Muddana, and their 47-year-old friend Gokul Mediseti, drowned at Woods Canyon Lake in Coconino County in the US state of Arizona, a day after Christmas. The girls, aged seven and 12, are living with the family of Kishore Pittala -- Muddana's next-door neighbour and close friend, ABC15 reported. Pittala and other friends drove up to Payson in Arizona on the night of December 26 to get the two orphaned children from the custody of the child safety department. "I can see from the faces, I know they have some sadness. But they are doing good for now," Pittala told ABC15.



The girls will soon fly to Guntur where their grandparents will take care of them, the report said. Pittala told ABC15 that the Muddana family had invited him to Woods Canyon Lake a few days ago to celebrate Haritha's birthday, to which he refused. A total of 11 people went, comprising six adults and five children. "I was in shock," said Pittala. "I don't understand, did this really happen for a moment?" The Muddanas, who had been living in Arizona for seven years, were clicking photographs of the lake when the ice suddenly collapsed and the couple drowned in minus 30-degree water.

6 dead in S.Korea expressway tunnel fire

Seoul | Agencies  
Six people were found dead and about 20 others injured on Thursday in a fire that broke out in a tunnel along an expressway in Gwacheon, just south of Seoul, South Korean fire authorities said. The blaze was reported to have occurred at 1.49 p.m. (local time) inside the tunnel along the Second Gyeongin Expressway that connects the western port city of Incheon to Seongnam City, Yonhap News Agency quoted the authorities as saying. About 20 others were under treatment for smoke inhalation, they said, adding the death toll could rise further. Initial findings showed the fire started after a bus and a truck collided. It quickly spread to the tunnel, causing massive clouds of smoke. About 50 fire trucks, 140 fire personnel and helicopters were sent to the scene to fight the fire. The exact cause of the fire is yet to be determined.

Window for reviving nuclear deal not to open forever: Iranian FM

Tehran | Agencies

The Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian has warned that the window for achieving an agreement on the revival of a 2015 nuclear deal won't remain open forever, official news agency IRNA reported. "The window for a nuclear agreement is open today, but... if the other sides, especially the US, do not give up hypocrisy and the West does not act realistically," Amir-Abdollahian told IRNA in Muscat, capital of Oman, following meetings with Oman's Sultan Haitham bin Tarik and other senior officials on Wednesday. Tehran will resort to other alternatives if the West continues its hypocrisy and interference, the Iranian Foreign Minister added. Commenting on his meeting with the EU's foreign policy chief Josep Borrell on the sidelines of a regional conference in Jordan's capital Amman last week, Amir-Abdollahian said the EU, as the coordinator of the



nuclear talks, is continuing its efforts, Xinhua news agency reported. During his meeting with the Omani sultan earlier in the day, the Iranian Foreign Minister said Iran welcomes any initiative by Oman to help reach "a good, robust and lasting nuclear agreement". In a video that emerged last week, US President Joe Biden said the nuclear deal with Iran was "dead," but he would not announce it publicly. The White House had not disputed the authenticity of the video.

FIRE IN CAMBODIA HOTEL & CASINO KILLS 10

Phnom Penh | Agencies

At least 10 people were killed and about 30 others injured in a massive fire inside a hotel and casino in Cambodia's Banteay Meanchey province, a police spokesman said on Thursday. "This is the preliminary information as our rescue operation has not been completed yet," Deputy National Police Chief and Spokesman Lt. Gen. Chhay Kim Khoeun told Xinhua news agency, adding that the exact number of casualties will be updated later when the rescue operation ends. The blaze broke out at the Grand Diamond City hotel and casino in Poipet City at Wednesday midnight, according to the Fire Prevention and Rescue Police Department. A footage posted on the Facebook page of the Fire Prevention and Rescue Police Department showed some people jumping down to escape the fire as some others were trapped on higher



floors. The Department said the cause of the blaze remains under investigation, as a rescue operation is still going on because the flames have not been completely put out as of 7 a.m. local time on Thursday. According to the police, the hotel and casino employed over 400 people.



### CONDOM AD FEATURING GARBA DOES NOT HURT 'RELIGIOUS SENTIMENTS', RULES HC

Team Absolute | Bhopal

The Madhya Pradesh High Court has quashed an FIR lodged against an Indore-based pharmacist for allegedly hurting sentiments of the Hindu community through a social media post of a condom advertisement featuring a couple dancing the traditional 'Garba'.



"The applicant is a pharmacy professional at Indore. Since there is nothing on record except the said post which indicates his such intention (of hurting religious sentiments), therefore, considering the fact that he himself belongs to Hindu community, and so also the fact that he posted it from his own mobile number without concealing his identity, it appears that his intention was just to promote the product of

his company and not to hurt the religious feelings and sentiments of any community," the bench ruled. Mahendra Tripathi had, during the Navratri festivals in October 18, posted an advertisement for 'free condoms and pregnancy test kits for couples'. He had used an image of a couple dancing the Garba and had posted the said ad on WhatsApp groups and also on Facebook. Subsequently, he was booked under Sections 505 (public mischief) and 295A (hurting religious sentiments) of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) along with the provisions of the Information Technology Act. "Upon perusal of the alleged post, it is apparent that the content of the same are not obscene hence, ingredients of Section 67 of the Information Technology Act are also not fulfilled. In view of the above, allowing the prosecution to continue the case would amount to abuse of the process of court, therefore, it is necessary to quash the proceedings," the high court said.

### 5-year-old couldn't spell 'parrot', teacher breaks her hand, arrested

Team Absolute | Bhopal

A five-year-old girl suffered a fracture after a teacher taking private tuition classes in Bhopal allegedly twisted her hand for not properly spelling the word 'parrot', police said today. The incident took place on Tuesday following which the 22-year-old teacher was arrested, they said. The accused, Prayag Vishwakarma, allegedly twisted the minor girl's hand and also slapped her after she could not spell the word 'parrot', Habibganj police station inspector Manish Raj Singh Bhadauriya said. The tutor twisted the girl's hand so badly that it got fractured, he added. Archna Sahai, director of NGO Childline which works for children in distress, said that the girl suffered a severe fracture in her right hand. The girl was admitted to a hospital after the incident



and is likely to be discharged on Thursday, she added. Inspector Bhadauriya said the accused has been charged for assaulting the child under relevant sections of the India Penal Code and the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act. "We arrested him on Tuesday after a complaint from the victim's family," he added. The girl's parents had hired the tutor living near their house in Habibganj to make her prepare for an entrance examination of a school, police said. The child used to go to the teacher's house for the classes, they added.

### Missing files reveal missing law: 66 years on, no official records act

Team Absolute | Bhopal

A man in Madhya Pradesh has run three rounds of red tape in three years to find a caste certificate, but the government has lost all of it - including the application he filed under the Right to Information Act to get some clarity. And this has dug up a problem that goes back decades. Sixty-six years after Madhya Pradesh became a state, the state does not have a Public Records Act. The Centre and several other states have already enacted laws on how to handle official records. As for the man looking for his certificate, his case reached the State Information Commissioner which has levied a penalty of ₹ 58,000 on three sub-divisional magistrates and instructed the District Collector of Satna to start an inquiry. Going further, Information Commissioner Rahul Singh also asked the

government to start the process to have a law in place. For now, he has asked for guidelines based on the Centre's Public Records Act 1993 with strong provisions such as five years of jail for delinquent officials. He has sought a compliance report from the General Administration Department by January 23. When accountability is fixed - if at all - it's done under the Madhya Pradesh Civil Services Rules. The commissioner stressed that absence of any legal framework for management of records is the reason for the officers' "callous and apathetic approach". Cases of missing records - particularly in cases of questionable decisions - keep showing up at the information commission. "There have been several cases in which documents appeared after the authorities were ordered to file a police report," Rahul Singh said.

**NEW VALIANT**

A mother shares a moment with her son during a convocation ceremony of 26th Assistant Commandant (Direct Recruitment) at Sasrastra Seema Bal Academy Chandukhedhi in Bhopal on Thursday.

### MP govt issues security alert to ensure peace, communal harmony

Team Absolute | Bhopal

After receiving inputs from the central agencies that communal harmony may be disrupted in the state around the New Year, the Madhya Pradesh government has issued a statewide security alert. A gazette notification issued by the Home department on December 26 mentioned that the security alert will remain till March 2023. The district collectors have been authorised to use power of detention under the National Security Act (NSA) till March next year. "The state has received a report that certain elements are active to threaten communal harmony and commit acts prejudicial to the maintenance of public order and security of the state. Having regard to such circumstances prevailing in the areas within the local limits of the districts, the state government is satisfied that it is necessary to authorise the



district magistrates to exercise powers conferred under section 3 (3) of the National Security Act 1980," the notification read. It further stated, "The state government hereby authorises district magistrates from a period of January 1, 2023 to March 31, 2023, within their respective jurisdictions to exercise the powers to order detention under NSA." Notably, the state will have Assembly elections in 2023.

### As MP entering poll year, Uma Bharti comes with 'caste card' to find place in BJP

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Days after senior BJP leader Uma Bharti's viral statement 'you are free from any political bond made while addressing a gathering of the Lodhi community, heated up political discourse in the state, the former Chief Minister on Thursday stood firm on her statement saying "there is no need to refute it because I have said the same." On Thursday, Bharti took to her official Twitter handle to clarify a rival video of her statement at a social event in Bhopal. She made as many as 10 tweets and claimed she has raised this issue many times before. "But it is necessary to say some sentences before my speech and why did I say this? I said before 2018 Assembly elections, some calls were received in my office from Lodhi Samaj requesting to cancel Didi's meeting, because we are angry with the BJP candidate here. In response to that, I said this on that day." Bharti, who has been sidelined by the BJP leadership for quite some time, said she had raised this issue when the BJP formed the government in March 2020 after Jyotiraditya Scindia along with over 20 MLAs joined the BJP and the Kamal Nath-led Congress government was sent packing within 15 months despite having a majority of MLAs. Bharti's tweet justified that she is fighting to find



a place for the Lodhi community, an OBC caste group that wields considerable political influence specially in Bundelkhand regions of both Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh. Hindutva proponent Bharti also belongs to the Lodhi community in the Gwalior-Chambal division. "The balance of caste and region is disturbed in this (Shivraj) cabinet. I have said this many times before," another Bharti tweet read.

### 'DON'T PLAY POLITICS, IT'S A SOCIAL ISSUE': BJP MP MOHAN YADAV ON LIQUOR BAN

Jabalpur: Cabinet minister Mohan Yadav said in a statement that liquor ban is necessary and might be implemented in Madhya Pradesh, however, not as a result of deliberate violent protests being carried out by political leaders (hinting at former CM Uma Bharti). Addressing the prevalent concern of liquor abuse in the state, Yadav slammed the opposition and said, "prohibition of liquor is a matter of social consciousness on which opposition should not play politics." The statement came as a result of the government campaigns against alcoholism which allegedly never resulted into action. "It would be better if the opposition will also work on the prohibition rather than just campaigning and protesting," Yadav told media. The Higher Education Minister Mohan Yadav also pointed out about the shortage of staff in the respective department, and that the action to recruit 2200 posts through PSC is underway. He added, "As infrastructure is concerned, buildings of about 200 colleges are being prepared and will soon be completed."

### 'Reel life also affects real life; filmmakers must keep this in mind,' Mishra on 'Pathaan'



Team Absolute | Bhopal

The Central Board of Film Certification (CBFC) has finally reacted to the ongoing controversy around the song 'Besharam Rang' from Shah Rukh Khan and Deepika Padukone's upcoming film 'Pathaan'. Home Minister Narottam Mishra in the mat-

ter said, "The decision of the Censor Board is commendable. When this matter came before me, I had said that it is a malicious attempt to hurt the sentiments of the majority class with a tainted mindset. Reel life also affects real life; producers, directors, and artists should keep this in mind." According to a report in India Today, the makers of

'Pathaan' recently submitted the film to the CBFC examination committee for certification. Post-screening the film, the committee asked the makers to implement several changes, including songs. The film certification body also asked the makers to present the revised version to them before the film hits theaters.

### Man duped of Rs 98K by conman posing as BSF personnel

Team Absolute | Indore

A man was duped of Rs 98,000 by a conman, who posed as a BSF official and told him to book DJ and cameras for a year-end party at the BSF campus and then he tricked the complainant into sharing his UPI details and withdrew the amount from his account. However, the crime branch ensured the return of the entire amount within a few days to the bank account of the complainant. According to a crime branch officer, a person named Narayan in his complaint said that he is an events manager and arranges for cameras, DJs etc for parties in

the city. He had received a call from a person, who posed as a BSF officer. He told Narayan to arrange for DJ and cameras for a party on 31st December on the BSF campus, Aerodrome Road. The deal was done for Rs 80,000. He informed the complainant that he would be given entry into the campus on the day of the event and said his senior officers would make payment of the bill. Then the complainant received a call from a person, who said that he was calling from the accounts department of the BSF. He gathered information from the complainant about his bank account details and then somehow tricked him into parting with his UPI details and withdrew Rs

98,000 from his account. After finding that he had been duped, the complainant informed the cyber helpline. The crime branch contacted the concerned officer and ensured that the money was returned to the complainant's bank account. The complainant thanked the officers for returning his money to his account. The crime branch officers said that the people should not trust unknown people posing as army men, BSF and CRPF personnel. Before making a payment, people should check the reliability of the caller. In case of any online fraud, report the matter to the cyber helpline (704912445) immediately.

### COMMANDO BIKE RALLY REACHES AMBEDKAR'S BIRTH PLACE

Team Absolute | Mhow

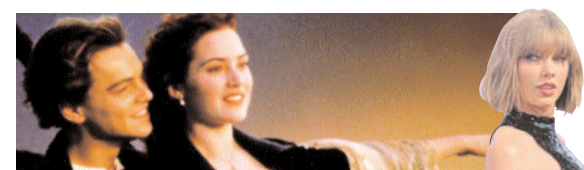
Five police commandos of C-60 special force of Maharashtra Police fighting naxalites in Gadchiroli region of Maharashtra reached Ambedkar memorial on Wednesday afternoon. They are on an India tour on their bikes and are riding four bikes for the rally. After reaching Dr Ambedkar's birthplace at Mhow, they garlanded the statue of Dr Ambedkar and then took a round of the whole building of the memorial. Their rally kicked off at their commando force headquarters situated at naxal-affected Gadchiroli in Maharashtra and will go to the country's borders in the states of Gujarat and Rajasthan. They halted at Mhow for about two hours. They left Mhow and reach Udaipur in Rajasthan on Thursday. Dr Ambedkar University's officiating vice chancellor Prof DK Verma and



Prof PC Bansal welcomed the commandos at the memorial and also briefed them about the thoughts of Dr Ambedkar on various issues. They had a meaningful discussion at the memorial. On their bikes, they had put the

banners which read the message regarding their tributes to the martyrs. Banners are stating about the martyrdom of around 275 police jawans who died fighting naxals in their area. They also talked to the people there and briefed the media

about their mission. Their commander Kishore Khobragade said that when a jawan becomes a martyr, his whole family is affected and this has happened with the martyrs of Gadchiroli violence 275 times. For this reason, they are going to the border villages of the country and spreading the messages about naxal problem. About coming to the birthplace of Dr Ambedkar, they said that they are fighting the naxals as part of their duty to safeguard the Constitution. As naxals do not want the Constitution to be supreme in the country, they want their control. The commando rally will pass through Udaipur, Chittorgarh, Ajmer, Jaipur, Bikaner, Jaisalmer, Longewala, Rann of Kutch, Koteswar, Mandavi, Dwarka, Porbandar, Somnath, Diu, Surat, Statue of Unity, Mumbai and Pune. It will reach Gadchiroli in January next year.



# Disney channel almost fired me for wearing a bikini at age 14: Bella Thorne

Los Angeles | Agencies

Actress Bella Thorne was a staple on the Disney Channel for many years, but she apparently almost lost her job when she was 14. During Tuesday's episode of Emily Ratajkowski's 'High Low With EmRata' podcast, Thorne opened up about many instances where she felt she was sexualized as a young girl, reports 'Variety'.

"One time I almost got fired off the Disney Channel because I was 14, and I wore a two-piece on the beach," Thorne said.

"This stylist that I was hanging out with put this chain on me that's, like, a body chain. I don't know? I don't care. There was a fan, they got a photo of me on the beach. I almost got fired. It was all over the media, it was literally viral in that time. It was, 'How dare this little girl do this? This is so disgusting.'"

Thorne, who starred opposite Zendaya on 'Shake It Up' from 2010 to 2013, explained that people were "putting Disney under pressure" to fire her, but ultimately they didn't.

"They were like, 'Hey, we're getting a lot of heat for this. Everyone's getting heat for this because you're in a bikini on a beach, so she needs to make sure she goes out in boy shorts and a loose t-shirt next time she's at the beach.'" During the episode, the actor, 25, also recounted a disturbing situation that happened four years before that.

Bella Thorne



# 'AVATAR: THE WAY OF WATER'

In just 14 days, the movie crosses \$1 billion in ticket sales

Los Angeles | Agencies

James Cameron's epic movie, 'Avatar: The Way of Water', has sailed past \$1 billion in global ticket sales in just 14 days, becoming the fastest movie to cross the coveted box office milestone this year, reports 'Variety'. Only three films released in 2022 managed to surpass the billion-dollar mark. Apart from 'The Way of Water', the other two are Tom Cruise-starrer 'Top Gun: Maverick'

(which took 31 days to clear the benchmark) and the Chris Pratt-led 'Jurassic World Dominion' (which took more than four months to join the club).

By comparison, according to 'Variety', nine movies released in 2019 surpassed \$1 billion worldwide. 'The Way of Water' is the fastest to hit the mark since 2021's 'Spider-Man: No Way Home', which took 12 days. Only six movies in history have cleared \$1 billion in their first two weeks of release.

James Cameron's long-delayed sequel to the 2009 'Avatar' -- which remains the top grosser of all time with box office pickings totalling \$2.97 billion worldwide -- has so far generated \$317.1 million in North America and \$712.7 million overseas, bringing its global tally to \$1.025 billion.

It has surpassed 'Jurassic World Dominion' as the second highest-grossing movie of the year, and it's the third highest of the pandemic era, adds 'Variety'.

## Kate Hudson only had cucumber for bikini scenes in 'Knives Out 2'

Los Angeles | Agencies

Actress Kate Hudson joked that she stuck to a diet of cucumbers while filming her bikini scenes in 'Glass Onion: A Knives Out Mystery'. Hudson made the gag on ITV's 'This Morning' show on Wednesday, while discussing her poolside scene where she wears an orange two-piece. She said about abstaining from booze being drunk by other cast members to keep her figure, "When everybody was having aperol spritz, I was waiting for that scene to be shot. So, I was like, 'I'll just have that cucumber,'" reports aceshowbiz.com. Hudson added about getting involved in the film, which also stars Daniel Craig as detective Benoit Blanc: "When we found out they were doing a second one ('Knives Out'), I was like gonna barrel (director) Rian Johnson's door down. I was like, 'I want in.' We were really locked down together because of COVID." "It was right at the peak of Delta (the COVID variant) so we couldn't go anywhere. We'd rent out a bar, do murder mysteries and then have parties. That's how we kept entertained." Hudson, who plays Birdie Jay in the 'Knives Out' sequel, previously told 'Today' about the cast enjoying wild parties during filming due to lockdown, "We had so much fun. It was at the height of Delta and we were in Belgrade, Serbia so the producer was like, 'You are not leaving this hotel.'"

## Olivia Colman's 'Empire Of Light' intimate scene was awkward

Los Angeles | Agencies

Actress Olivia Colman recalled a "slightly embarrassing situation" while shooting a sex scene with Micheal Ward. The 48-year-old star admitted to feeling awkward when she and her 'Empire of Light' co-star, 25, chatted while she was straddling him and discovered he has a mother, who is five years younger than Colman, reports aceshowbiz.com. "There was one particular moment when I was astride Micheal in a compromising and slightly embarrassing situation and he said, 'It's my mum's birthday today.' When he said she was 43, I was like, 'Okay, stop talking!'" she said on the New Year's Eve special of

'The Graham Norton Show'. Olivia, who played Queen Elizabeth II in Netflix's 'The Crown', was director Sam Mendes' first choice for the role of Hilary Small in the 2022 British romantic drama. She said: "Apparently it was. But Sam is so nice he would say that anyway." "He was watching 'The Crown' at the time and thought of me. We had a Zoom conversation during lockdown and I said 'okay, yes' before I even knew what it was. It is an incredible accolade for him to write something for me," Colman quipped. "It was an amazing part, thank God - can you imagine if it had been rubbish!" Micheal was blown away by how nice Olivia is and "learnt so much" from her.

## DRAKE DENIES KNOWING WOMAN WHO CLAIMS HE KICKED HER OUT AFTER SEX

Los Angeles | Agencies

Rapper Drake has spoken up after a woman exposed her reported ill-fated fling with the star. After the TikTok user went viral with a story about how the Toronto native reportedly flew her out to have sex with her only to kick her out afterwards, the

rapper has appeared to clap back, reports aceshowbiz.com.

Drake seemingly stepped forward with a flat-out denial to the woman's claims through his Instagram Story on Wednesday. "Never met. Never spoke. Never flew," he wrote, before adding: "I hope people start doing more with the one life we are given s\*\*t is sad out here." While Drake didn't give a context to his statement or mentioned a name, his post arrives after his fan, who goes by imbigjas on social media, posted a TikTok video in which she detailed her alleged encounter with him. The young woman said the 36-year-old slid into her DMs after seeing that she tagged him in a sexy photo on Instagram. "So, he had texted me in vanish mode," she said. According to the woman, Drake asked for her phone number and dropped the "heart eyes emoji".

## MARVEL ANNOUNCES STAN LEE'S DOCUMENTARY ON HIS 100TH BIRTH ANNIVERSARY

Los Angeles | Agencies

Marvel Entertainment tweeted a 25-second video on Wednesday confirming the 2023 release of a Disney+ documentary on Stan Lee. The announcement aligns with what would have been the 100th birthday of the late comic creator, reports 'Variety'. "100 years of dreaming. 100 years of creating. 100 years of Stan Lee," Marvel Entertainment wrote in a caption that accompanied the teaser. "Stan Lee, an Original documentary, is streaming 2023 on @DisneyPlus." The newly released video



shows glimpses of some of Stan Lee's minor roles and guest appearances in cinema. The celebratory montage concludes with a gradual zoom-out that reveals an illustration of the multi-talented creator. Working alongside fellow writer-artists like Jack Kirby and Steve Ditko, Lee is best known for creating beloved characters like Spider-Man, the Hulk, Iron Man, the X-Men and more. Even after retiring from Marvel in the 1990s, Lee continued to stay involved with the company through cameo appearances and executive producer titles on Marvel productions.

## ABSOLUTE PIC OF THE DAY



Jenifer Lopez



## ICC T20I Cricketer of the Year 2022

# SKY NOMINATED FOR T20I CRICKETER OF THE YEAR 2022 AWARD

Team Absolute | New Delhi

India batter Suryakumar Yadav was unveiled as one of the four nominees for the ICC Men's T20I cricketer of the year 2022 award.

Apart from him, England's left-arm pace all-rounder Sam Curran, Zimbabwe's off-spin all-rounder Sikandar Raza and Pakistan's wicket-keeper-batter Mohammad Rizwan have been nominated for the honour too.

Suryakumar had a sensational 2022 in the shortest format of the game, becoming just the second batter to score more than 1000 runs in a year in the format with his 360-degree strokeplay. He ended the year as the highest run-getter, scoring 1164 runs at a ridiculous strike rate of 187.43, averaging 46.56. His tally of



68 sixes in 2022 is the highest anyone has hit in the format in a year by a fair distance. With two hundred and nine half-centuries in the year,

Suryakumar was undoubtedly the standout men's T20I batter. Suryakumar had lit up the Men's T20 World Cup in Australia, slam-

ming 239 runs at an outstanding average of 59.75 and a whopping strike rate of 189.68, including match-tempo changing fifties against South Africa, Zimbabwe and Netherlands. In the second T20I against New Zealand at Mount Maunganui, he hit 11 fours and seven sixes all over the park at a strike rate of 217.65 to be unbeaten on 111 off 51 balls, his second T20I century. But it was his first T20I century against England at Trent Bridge, Nottingham, 117 off 55 balls, which caught the eye of cricket fans. From 31/3 in a run chase of 216, Suryakumar lifted India with his outrageous stroke-making, giving the visitors a chance at chasing down the target. Suryakumar put the team within touching distance of what would have been an incredible win.

# Australia thrashes South Africa by 182 runs to wrap up series



Melbourne | Agencies

Spinner Nathan Lyon claimed 3-58 while replacement-pacer Scott Boland bagged 2-49 as Australia bowled out South Africa for 204 in their second innings to hand the visitors an embarrassing innings and 182 runs defeat in the second Test and wrapped up the three-match series 2-0.

The win in four days follows their humiliating 6-wicket thrashing within two days at the hands of the hosts in the first Test at Brisbane. The third and final Test will be played in Sydney from January 4.

Australia have boosted their chances of appearing at next year's ICC World Test Championship (WTC) final

and put a big dent in South Africa's hopes with a dominant victory over the Proteas in the Boxing Day Test in Melbourne.

The victory sees Australia open up an insurmountable 2-0 series lead on the Proteas and helps them extend their lead at the top of the World Test Championship standings.

South Africa resumed on the fourth day at 15/1 and needed a miracle to try and work their way back into the Test, with Temba Bavuma (65) and Kyle Verreynne (33) offering some brief resistance during a 63-run stand for the fifth wicket.

But Boland broke the partnership when he trapped Verreynne LBW and then Lyon wrapped up the tail to

ensure Australia cruised to victory and yet another series triumph on home soil.

It was an abject surrender by South Africa at the MCG after they had suffered a humiliating defeat within two days in the first Test at the Gabba. That win was blamed on a "below-average" pitch in Brisbane, but their performance at the MCG could be hard to explain as they barely managed to cross 200 in their second innings.

### Brief scores

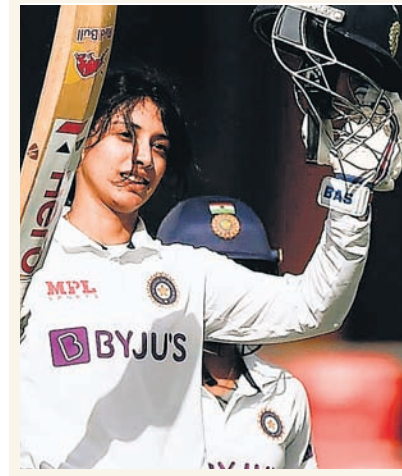
South Africa 189 & 204 all out in 68.5 overs (Tamba Bavuma 65, Kyle Verreynne 33; Nathan Lyon 3-58, Scott Boland 2-49) lost to Australia 575/8 decl by innings and 182 runs.

## Smriti Mandhana among nominees for women's

New Delhi | India vice-captain Smriti Mandhana was nominated for the ICC Women's T20I Cricketer of the Year 2022 award for the second straight time.

Apart from her, Pakistan's off-spin all-rounder Nida Dar, New Zealand skipper Sophie Devine and Australia's fast-bowling all-rounder Tahlia McGrath have also been nominated for the honour.

Smriti enjoyed a good run in T20Is this year, smashing the quickest fifty by an Indian woman (off just 23 balls), to breaching the 2500-run mark in T20Is, scoring 594 runs in 23 matches, including five half-centuries, in 2022. The left-handed opener left her mark on the 2022 Commonwealth Games in Birmingham, the Women's T20 Asia Cup in Bangladesh, and a memorable five-match T20I home series against Australia towards the business end of a fruitful year. Her most exciting innings of 2022 came in the second T20I of the bilateral series against Australia in December. In front of over 47,000 spectators - the highest turnout for a women's cricket match in India - at the DY Patil stadium in Mumbai, Smriti smacked a 49-ball 79 while chasing Australia's 187/1. She was India's top-scorer in the match, taking the match to the very end as India set up a Super Over clash after levelling the scores at 187/5. In the Super Over, India made a competitive total of 20/1, out of which Smriti scored 13 of the last three balls. India then restricted Australia to 16/1, sealing a memorable win in front of a roaring home crowd.



## National Motorcycle Drag Racing

# Big wins for Alimon Saidalavi & Hemanth Muddappa

Chennai | Agencies

Bengaluru riders Alimon Saidalavi and Hemanth Muddappa scored dominating wins in their respective superbike categories in the third round of the MMSC fmsci Indian National Motorcycle Drag Racing Championship 2022 at the Madras International Circuit.

Alimon continued his win-spree in the Unrestricted category as he took the honours on a Kawasaki Ninja H2, in a record time of 07.556 seconds over 302 metres to repeat his Round-2 victory yesterday, as he finished ahead of Hemanth Muddappa (Mantra Racing) and Attaulla Baig, also from Bengaluru. Alimon, thus, set the fastest time at the MIC, bettering the previous best of 07.749 by Muddappa. The victory also gave Alimon an unassailable 32-point lead over Baig in the championship standings with a round to spare.



Earlier, Muddappa, the multiple National Champion, was in his elements in the 1051-1650cc category astride a Kawasaki Ninja ZX-6R, with a winning time of 07.910 seconds while Mujahid Pasha (Bengaluru) and yesterday's Round-2 winner Md Riyaz (Hyderabad) came in second and third, respectively. After three rounds, Muddappa

leads Riyaz by 20 points in the championship stakes. Another Bengaluru rider, Anish Damodara Shetty (PRN Motorsports) notched a splendid win in the 361-550cc class on a KTM RC-390 bike while Mumbai's Sarah Khan (Axor Sparks Racing) topped in the Girls category (Stock 165cc), riding a Yamaha R15.

## INDIAN SUPER LEAGUE AS SECOND-MOST SEARCHED SPORTS LEAGUE IN INDIA

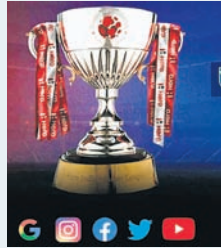
Mumbai | The 2022-23 season of the Hero Indian Super League (ISL) has emerged as the second-most searched sports league in India, according to the top search engine Google.

The league, which has already taken the scene by storm with some thrilling and edge-of-the-seat action on the pitch, featured in the top-10 searches on google in India amongst all categories, sixth in the overall sports category and second amongst all Indian sports leagues in the country after the Indian Premier League.

As noted by Google in its year-end report for 2022, these numbers have been achieved with marquee global tournaments being hosted during the same time, including the recently-concluded FIFA World Cup.

This is a testament to the country's growing engagement with Indian football, the league said in a release on Thursday.

From featuring in the top 10 searches on Google in India to roping in a bigger audience on social media platforms, the Hero ISL has registered impressive engagement numbers offering a variety of content over the past year.



# Rishabh Pant should focus on red-ball cricket: Gautam Gambhir

Team Absolute | New Delhi

One of the most significant developments from India's squads for the upcoming white-ball series has been the exclusion of Rishabh Pant from ODIs and T20Is. Though reports came of him being asked to report to the NCA for a strength and conditioning programme, the future of Pant in India's white-ball scheme of things is under dark clouds.

Former India opener Gautam Gambhir thinks that Pant needs to focus on red-ball cricket while he waits to have a chance at making the cut for white-ball cricket. "That's why he's not part of both squads. His white-ball numbers are not that great as compared to his Test numbers."

"Probably Rishabh will have to wait for his opportunity if he gets that chance in white-ball cricket. At the moment, he should focus on red-ball cricket. We know he's got the talent, but he has got enough opportunities in white-ball cricket, where he was asked to open the batting or be in the middle-order. The management has tried every possible way for him to succeed or given him the platform to be so in white-ball cricket, but



unfortunately that didn't happen," said Gambhir.

Apart from Pant, right-handed opener KL Rahul has been under the pump across all formats. After a forgettable outing in the Men's T20 World Cup, Rahul isn't a part of the T20I team against Sri Lanka. Though he is in the ODI squad, Rahul isn't the vice-captain anymore, with Hardik Pandya named as deputy to Rohit Sharma.

"KL Rahul has the ability. If a player like him scores two or three T20I centuries and has the capability to score hundred as an opener at Lord's or in South Africa, and he even got two hundreds against Mumbai (Indians)

in the Mumbai city. So, he has got the ability to hit hundreds in T20Is, ODIs or make that as an opener in Test cricket. But with his recent performances not being good, then the people who are performing well will be given the chance." "I have always believed he's the talent of every kind. If there's anyone who can stop KL Rahul from the way he wishes to play, then it is KL Rahul himself. No one has got to provide to anyone, especially to KL Rahul. Whatever the talent he had to show, he's done it. But he can express himself more and play in that way, it is that one thing which he will have to change."

# Sanju Samson should just concentrate on batting: Kumar Sangakkara



from January 3. "He's got to keep things simple, just concentrate on batting. The IPL is one thing, playing for India is another. What you got to concentrate on, as Sanju Samson in the Indian side, understands what your job is. When you go out, make sure you're relaxed, you have the clarity about how you're going to play your role."

"He might have to bat outside position depending on where they want him to fit in. Whether he's batting at the top or lower-middle order at 5 and 6, he's got the game, the power, the touch, the placement and the mentality to do really well," said Sangakkara.

"The one thing he shouldn't do is think that this is his final chance to prove his mettle and try and be desperate to succeed. He's got every single thing going for him. He's a wonderful young man; he's got skills and temperament. Let it settle, don't fight it, make sure you're adjusting to what comes at you on the day. And then, go out there and enjoy the way he plays."

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Sri Lanka batting great Kumar Sangakkara has urged India middle-order batter Sanju Samson to keep things simple and to concentrate on his batting when the T20I series starts

# Rashid Khan named as new captain of Afghanistan T20I team



Team Absolute | New Delhi

Leg-spin all-rounder Rashid Khan on Thursday has been appointed as the new captain of Afghanistan for the T20I format. Rashid replaces senior off-spin all-rounder Mohammad Nabi, who stepped down from the role post the ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2022 in Australia.

This will be Rashid's second stint as Afghanistan's T20I captain after he had quit as captain of the side shortly after the squad for T20

World Cup 2021 was announced, being at the helm for only two months.

Rashid has so far represented Afghanistan in 74 T20I matches and has 122 scalps to his name in the format, which makes him the third leading wicket-taker in the format behind New Zealand pacer Tim Southee (134) and Bangladesh left-arm spinner Shakib Al Hassan (128).

He has also been in very high demand in franchise cricket, playing 361 T20 matches for 15 different

teams around the globe from 2015 onwards and has bagged a mammoth 491 wickets which makes him the second bowler behind Dwayne Bravo (614) with the most wickets in the format.

Afghanistan is set to tour UAE in February 2023 where they will take on the hosts in three T20Is, which will be Rashid's first tour as Afghanistan's skipper in the shortest format after 2019. Rashid will also be captaining MI Cape Town in the inaugural SA20 league in January 2023.

# Santosh Trophy Delhi's hard-fought victory, Karnataka hit 'four', Gujarat also wins



Team Absolute | New Delhi

Delhi may have registered their third consecutive win in Group-1 of the 76th National Senior Men's Football Championship being played for the Hero Santosh Trophy on Thursday, but they had to struggle hard to 2-1 win against Uttarakhnad in the match played at the Dr Ambedkar Stadium.

Meanwhile, at the Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium, Karnataka thrashed Tripura 10-0 to secure their fourth straight win while Gujarat beat Ladakh 2-0. In the first match of the day played at the Dr. Ambedkar Stadium, hosts Delhi took a 2-0 lead in the first half through goals from Mahip Adhikari and Jaideep Singh. At the interval, it looked like Delhi were going to register another big

win, but wrong decisions by the team management put the hosts on the defensive. After Thursday's win, Delhi have 10 points from four matches with three wins and one draw and remain second in the Group-1 table. They are two points behind Karnataka, who scored their fourth win today. Four consecutive wins from four matches have taken Karnataka to 12 points and are at the top. Gujarat has moved to the third position with its second win. Even though Delhi registered its third win, Karnataka riding on the chariot of victory has definitely created a stir in the Delhi camp by crushing Tripura by ten goals. In the third match of the day, Gujarat beat Ladakh 2-0. This is Gujarat's second victory. Jai Kanani scored in the 28th minute and Rutig Ahirrao in the 50th minute in Gujarat's victory.



## FANS SAYS RASHMIKA DOESN'T "RESPECT HER ROOTS"

Team Absolute | Bengaluru

Rashmika Mandanna is being trolled once again for "forgetting and looking down upon her roots." It comes days after she invited the ire of netizens for showing no gratitude for the production house that gave her a break in Kannada cinema. The 'Pushpa' star, whose Hindi movie 'Mission Majnu' with Siddharth Malhotra is releasing soon, stated during the film's promotions that in Bollywood, romantic songs have a tradition, whereas in the south, there are only masala songs and item numbers.

"For me, when I was growing up, romantic songs meant Bollywood romantic songs," Rashmika said, upsetting her fans and followers.

"In the south we have all mass masala songs, item numbers and dance numbers. This is my first Bollywood romantic song from the film 'Mission Majnu'. I am excited because it's so good and I am waiting for you all to listen to it," Rashmika continued. Rashmika earlier landed into a controversy by expressing aversion to the production house that launched her through the Kannada movie 'Kirik Party', which was directed by Rishab Shetty, now famous because of 'Kantara'. She played the female lead opposite Rishab's good friend, Rakshit Shetty, who has been in the news this year because of his film '777 Charlie'. She did not tweet or comment on 'Kantara' and even stated that she didn't watch the movie, when every other celebrity from the Indian film industry showered praise on it.

The Kannada film industry has already banned her and now fans are demanding that similar action must be taken against her by Tollywood because she doesn't "respect her roots". They point out that she owes her national reputation to the Telugu film industry.



Bhaweeka  
finds her role  
similar to Geet from  
'Jab We Met'

Team Absolute | Mumbai

'Baalveer Returns' actress Bhaweeka Chaudhary, who will be seen playing the role of a strong and glamorous girl in the new show 'Maitree', spoke about getting a role similar to Geet in 'Jab We Met', and how the lead actress Shreenu Parikh made her comfortable on the sets. Bhaweeka said: "Shreenu is a down-to-earth person; she made me feel comfortable from day one. Moreover, I am so glad to get this role because it is very similar to Jab We Met's Geet and I always wanted to play a character like that. I just hope the audience will shower their love and support and accept me in this new character."

The actress has worked in TV shows such as 'Swaran Ghar', 'Baalveer Returns', 'Humkadam', and many more. She further talked about getting selected for the role and her initial inhibitions about joining the show.

"I remember I was in Chandigarh when I got selected for this role and I didn't even think for a second before saying 'yes' when I got the call. Considering Shreenu has been part of the industry for a long time, I had my inhibitions around her initially." The show is a reflection of true friendship and childhood bonds between two friends living in Prayagraj. Their mothers feel that their friendship will continue after marriage as the two are sure to be best friends even if they settle down. However, there is a twist in the story and it will be seen if things go as per their planning even after marriage or if destiny has something else in store for them.

## 'MY FATHER COULD NOT UNDERSTAND THIS PROFESSION'

BASSI REVEALED HOW HIS FATHER RECONCILED HIS MOVE, FROM LAW TO COMEDY.

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Stand-up comedian and YouTube personality Anubhav Singh Bassi shared how he told his parents about his interest in making others laugh rather than being a professional lawyer.

He shared: "Only my sister knew I had left the job and started my career in comedy. After 6-7 months I told my parents, and my father could not understand this profession and hoped that after a few days I will leave this and join a regular

job. I don't know why but he had this notion fed to his mind that if one has studied in a good college he will end up with a good job. But who will tell him that I did not learn anything in the 5 years of college?"

Anubhav,

whose YouTube videos have got 200 plus million views and a number of followers on social media, recalled how even after studying law for five years he could just remember the taste of cold coffee and the profession didn't work for him. "I even did an internship at the High Court for a month but after the completion, I remember someone asking me what I learned, and all I had to say was that the cold coffee they serve tastes different every day. I tried working but it didn't work out so I gave

it up and moved on."

Anubhav appeared on 'The Kapil Sharma Show' and shared how his journey as a comedian started.

"After all the trial and error, I decided to make videos and upload them and started earning enough money to take care of my own livelihood in Delhi. Initially, my parents were a little hesitant when they got to know what I started doing but with time I started earning well with the stand-up, and with that my father never questioned my profession," he added.



## ONE OF THE BEST AWARDS I RECEIVED WAS YOUR TEXT: VICKY TO BIG B

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Bollywood actor Vicky Kaushal shared that the best award he has received till now was a text from megastar Amitabh Bachchan praising his acting skills in his 2015 film 'Masaan'.

During a conversation with Big B on 'Kaun Banega Crorepati 14', he said: "I still recall my father calling my name at one in the morning with great joy and showing me the message he had received from you. I was asking when my father handed me his phone and showed me your message." "I typed the entire message on my phone and realised it takes 90 seconds to type. I spent the entire night unable to sleep because I believed that BIG B thought about me for a minute and a half in his whole day. One of the best awards I received was your text," he added.

Later on the show, the host received a video call from Vicky's father, Sham Kaushal. He told Big B about when he first saw him, how he later began his career as a stuntman, and how he got to know the host well while filming the movie 'Mard'. He also mentioned: "Masaan" was released on Friday, Amit saw the movie on Saturday and texted me at 1 a.m. saying that he cannot believe it is Vicky's first film as he is so good and after reading that text I felt like crying tears of joy."



## SOUNDARYA SHARMA AND SREEJITA DE SHARES A 'KISS'

Team Absolute | Mumbai

In the recent episode of 'Bigg Boss 16', contestants Soundarya Sharma and Sreejita De shared a kiss leaving Abdu Rozik and Shiv Thakare stunned. The housemates, who were not getting along earlier, in the latest episode and they were having fun, cracking jokes and during this Soundarya and Sreejita locked lips. They ask Abdu and Shiv to do the same, but both refused and said they would prefer getting kissed by a girl. And in his adorable voice he is heard saying "Paagal hai kya" to Soundarya and Sreejita's demand. Soundarya starts flirting in a healthy way with Shiv and plants a kiss on his cheeks. This makes Abdu jealous but eventually she kisses him as well.

Both the boys get super happy and say now they can sleep well.



Avneet Kaur