

# absolute india

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## INDIANS REPORT UNEXPECTED RISE IN HEART ATTACKS, STROKES IN CLOSE NETWORK

As more and more cases of unexpected heart attacks and even strokes come to light among the healthy, young and middle-aged Indians, a new survey revealed on Friday that both unvaccinated and vaccinated people have been impacted by this new health emergency.

SEVERAL CASES HAVE BEEN REPORTED IN THE MEDIA JUST IN THE LAST 3 MONTHS WHERE HEALTHY, YOUNG AND MIDDLE-AGED INDIVIDUALS, BOTH MEN AND WOMEN HAVE EXPERIENCED A HEART ATTACK AND DIED.  
ABOUT 51 PER CENT CITIZENS SAID THEY HAVE ONE OR MORE INDIVIDUALS IN THEIR CLOSE NETWORK WHO HAVE EXPERIENCED HEART OR BRAIN STROKE, BLOOD CLOTS, NEUROLOGICAL COMPLICATIONS, CANCER ACCELERATION, OR OTHER SUDDEN MEDICAL CONDITIONS IN THE LAST TWO YEARS.

Team Absolute | New Delhi

According to the survey by LocalCircles, a social community platform, 62 per cent citizens said those in their network developed such conditions were double vaccinated, 11 per cent said that those impacted were single-dose vaccinated, while 8 per cent said they were not vaccinated.

While 61 per cent said their contacts with severe medical conditions had Covid once or more, 28 per cent said their contacts who experienced severe medical conditions never had Covid, according to the survey involving 32,000 citizens from 357 districts.

Researchers estimate that over 200 million people worldwide may currently be having long Covid conditions, where they are experiencing myocarditis, pericarditis, brain fog or memory issues, sleep apnea, fatigue, joint pain, and other health conditions.

Though the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare came out with a "National Comprehensive Guidelines for Management of Post-COVID Sequelae" for doctors last year, not much seems to have been done to inform citizens, both vaccinated and unvaccinated, who survived more than one bout of Covid or its variants, on possible complications and the need to avoid Covid reinfections.

The government guidelines at the onset stated that "up to 20 per cent-30 per cent of patients hospitalised with severe Covid have evidence of myocardial involvement manifested by elevated troponin levels, venous thromboembolism, heart failure and arrhythmias".

The survey found that more than half the respondents knew of at least one or more individuals who are suffering due to after-effects of Covid.

LocalCircles said it will escalate these findings to key stakeholders in the governments so the same can be evaluated for further research and on-ground actions.



## COLLEGIUM DISCUSSIONS CAN'T BE PUT OUT IN PUBLIC DOMAIN THROUGH RTI, SAYS SC

The Supreme Court on Friday said only final decisions, and not the discussions of collegium meetings, could be made public under the Right to Information (RTI) Act. The bench dismissed a plea by activist Anjali Bharadwaj seeking a direction to disclose the details of a 2018 collegium meeting, in which the decisions were taken to elevate two high court chief justices to the apex court.

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The bench said during the consultation if some discussion takes place but no final decision is taken and no resolution is drawn, it cannot be said that any final decision is taken by the collegium. It added that collegium is a multi-member body whose decision embodies in the resolution that may be formally drawn up and signed.

It said when in the subsequent resolution dated January 10, 2019, it is specifically mentioned that in the earlier meeting held on December 12, 2018, though some decisions were taken but ultimately the consultation was not completed and concluded and therefore, the matter/agenda items was/were adjourned.

Advocate Prashant Bhushan, who represented the petitioner, argued that the appointment of judges in the apex court and the high court should be made in a transparent manner in order to generate public trust.

The top court said discussions within the collegium system cannot be put in public



domain through RTI, as they do not assume the character of a final decision. The petitioner had also sought a direction to get the agenda, minutes, and resolution of the apex court collegium meeting of December 12, 2018, under the RTI Act.

## 'FEMALE TRIBAL ENTITLED TO PARITY WITH MALE IN INTESTATE SUCCESSION'

New Delhi: The Supreme Court on Friday directed the Central government to consider amending the provisions of the Hindu Succession Act to make it applicable to the members of the Scheduled Tribes, saying that a female is entitled to parity with male tribal in intestate succession.

A bench of Justices M.R. Shah and Krishan Murari said: "When the daughter belonging to the non-tribal is entitled to the equal share in the property of the father, there is no reason to deny such right to the daughter of the tribal community. Female tribal is entitled to parity with male tribal in intestate succession." Emphasising it is bad law after a period of 70 years of the Constitution, under which right to equality is guaranteed, the bench said the Central government should look into the matter regarding the denial of equal right to the daughter belonging to the tribal.

"If required, to amend the provisions of the Hindu Succession Act by which the Hindu Succession Act is not made applicable to the members of the Scheduled Tribe," it said.

FIFA World Cup 2022 Quarter Final

## Croatia wins 4-2 on penalties, Brazil exit the tournament

Doha | Agencies

Croatia defeated Brazil 4-2 on penalties in the quarter-finals of the World Cup on Friday. Croatia were resilient in the 90 minutes, keeping Brazil out of their goal until a moment of magic from Neymar put them ahead. In the dying moments of extra time, a deflected strike from Bruno Petkovic took the game to penalties.

Each of Croatia's four penalty takers - Nikola Vlasic, Mislav Orsic, Lovro Majer, and Luka Modric - found the net but the same couldn't be said for Brazil. Rodrygo's opening penalty was saved by Dominik Livakovic, who had an stand-out performance through the game, and Marquinhos hit the post to knock out the Brazil team that were largely considered pre-tournament favourites.



Croatia deserve massive credit for their game plan, playing right out of the hands of the individually talented Brazilians, using the technical ability of their midfielders to keep a lot of slow possession, not allowing Brazil time and enough of the ball to create enough chances. So proficient was their ability to move the ball in midfield that Brazil were, at times, frightened of pressing them too intensely, in case space opens up in behind them.

Dominik Livakovic was show-stopping in goal, Josko Gvardiol was impressively composed and solid in defence, and Luka Modric was terrific in midfield. Croatia's strategy was effective, but not enough to keep out a moment of genius from Neymar. Ultimately, Brazil conceded a soft goal, and failed to manage the game in the dying moments. Croatia's fighting spirit went on a bit longer, and they stole the win at the end.

## Himachal Congress MLAs authorise Kharge to name CM

Shimla | Agencies

After day-long deliberations and "infighting", the Congress Legislature Party (CLP) in Himachal Pradesh that met here on Friday adopted a single-line resolution authorising party President Mallikarjun Kharge to take a final call on the name of the Chief Minister.

The resolution authorising the party chief was moved by present CLP Leader Mukesh Agnihotri and seconded by Sukhwinder Sukhu, both contenders for the Chief Minister's post.

The meeting was chaired by Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel, former Haryana Chief Minister Bhupinder Singh Hooda and Himachal Congress in-charge Rajeev Shukla.



Of the 40 Congress MLAs, 39 were present in the meeting. Ghumarwin legislator Rajesh Dharmani was not there as he was on his way to Shimla. Shukla introduced all the MLAs and later the central leaders had one-to-one meetings with each of the MLAs to take their feedback on the CM candidate.

Earlier, high drama continued ahead of the crucial meeting of newly-elected 40 Congress legislators to nominate the legislature party leader as it was delayed till Friday night, for the third time in a row. The party observers earlier in the day met Governor Rajendra Vishwanath Arlekar to hand over list of the MLAs showing the strength to form the government.

The meeting was postponed thrice with Member of Parliament and state unit chief Pratibha Singh's supporters raising slogans in her favour, demanding her appointment as the Chief Minister.

The wife of former Chief Minister Virbhadra Singh, she is believed to be the frontrunner for the top job.

## AFTER ECI NOD, KCR OFFICIALLY CHANGES TRS TO BRS

Hyderabad: Telangana Chief Minister K. Chandrababhan Rao Friday signed on the dotted line, formalising the transformation of the Telangana Rashtra Samiti (TRS) into the Bharat Rashtra Samiti (BRS).

KCR as the chief minister is popularly known signed the official letter in response to the communication received from the Election Commission of India the previous day. As announced earlier, KCR signed the letter at the scheduled time of 1.20 pm in Telangana Bhavan, the party state headquarters. Karnataka Chief Minister and JD (S) leader H.D. Kumaraswamy, actor and social activist Prakash Raj, were among those who witnessed the event and congratulated the chief minister. BRS working president K.T. Rama Rao, MLC K. Kavitha, and several party leaders were present on the occasion.

## BJP MP, who foiled Raj Thackeray's UP trip, to share dais with Sharad Pawar in Pune

Pune | Agencies

Firebrand Bharatiya Janata Party MP Brijbhushan Sharan Singh - who once stopped Raj Thackeray's trip to Uttar Pradesh - will attend the finals of the Maharashtra Kesari wrestling tourney here in January 2023, officials said on Friday. A five-time BJP MP from Kaiserganj, Singh is the President of Wrestling Federation of India (WFI) and committed to attend the grand finale of the prestigious Maharashtra tournament in Pune. Singh would



share the dais with NCP supreme Sharad Pawar, who is a former WFI President and also a veteran sports administrator, at the sports mega-event scheduled January 11-15. On Friday, Maharashtra State Wrestling Association (MSWA) President Ramdas Tadas, ex-Pune Mayor Murlidhar Mohol and others called

on Singh in New Delhi and extended the invite for the event which he accepted. "I love Maharashtra and I will definitely attend this tournament," Singh remarked warmly, recalling the services of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj for promoting wrestling around the country. Incidentally, Singh had shot into the limelight in May-June when the Maharashtra Navnirman President Raj Thackeray had announced plans to visit Ayodhya and take darshan of the upcoming Ram Temple there.

## 1,83,741 Indians gave up citizenship till Oct

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The number of Indians renouncing citizenship has gone up significantly in the last few years.

The number of Indians who renounced their citizenship was 1,33,049 in 2017, and five years later till October 31, this year a total of 1,83,741 gave up their citizenship.

As per the information provided by the Minister of State for External Affairs V. Muraleedharan in a written reply in the Lok Sabha on Friday, the number of Indians who renounced their Indian citizenship was 1,31,489 in 2015; 1,41,603 in 2016; 1,33,049 in 2017; 1,34,561 in 2018; 1,44,017 in



2019; 85,256 in 2020 and 1,63,370 in 2021. The written reply also informed about the number of foreign nationals except those from Bangladesh, Pakistan and Afghanistan who took Indian citizenship in the last few years.

## Fear of increasing storm waves in Indian Ocean, north of Arabian Sea and central Bay of Bengal

A team of scientists from NIT Delhi, IIT Kharagpur and Indian National Center for Ocean Information has projected possible future changes in extreme wave height indices over the Indian Ocean. These estimates indicate that under a climate scenario of RCP 4.5 (moderately representative concentration pathway of greenhouse gases), regions of the eastern tropical Indian Ocean, the northern region of the Arabian Sea and the central Bay of Bengal would see an increase in storm surge days. However, with the exception of the northern Arabian Sea and the extratropical regions beyond 48°S, there is a decreasing trend in strong wave days over most regions of the southern Indian Ocean, consistent with RCP 8.5, under the high-emission scenario.

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A recent study of severe storm surge events suggests that the Indian Ocean, the northern region of the Arabian Sea and the central Bay of Bengal are likely to experience an increase in storm surge days in the near future. Due to climate change, such incidents of rising high waves in the sea have been mostly seen in recent times. It can now have tremendous impacts on coastal populations, infrastructure and livelihoods derived from ocean-related activities.

The Ministry of Science and Technology believes that this type of study can help in timely warning and planning to prevent major impacts on life and property, especially in coastal



areas. Changes in storm intensity and path, as well as observed variability and change in extreme wave rise, have played a significant role in changes in the shoreline, rates of erosion, frequent flooding conditions, and other associated coastal hazards. Can perform Climate change is causing extreme waves and its consequences at both the regional and global levels. Therefore, a better understanding of predicted future changes in

the amplitude of high-frequency waves is essential for timely warning and coastal planning and management of these events. This study indicates that predicted changes in the amplitude of high-frequency wave events in the Southern Hemisphere are driven by changes in the sea-level pressure gradient, consistent with Southern Annular Mode (SAM) projections for this period of the twenty-first century.

The research, supported by the Science Research and Engineering Board, an organization attached to the Department of Science and Technology, Government of India, can be extremely useful for policy makers and decision-making officials to plan short- and long-term strategies that will benefit coastal populations.



# NOTICE TO CENTRE ON UNIFORM AGE OF MARRIAGE FOR MUSLIM GIRLS

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Supreme Court on Friday issued notice to the Centre on a petition filed by the National Commission for Women (NCW) to make the minimum age of marriage for Muslim girls the same as that of persons belonging to other religions.



gions.

A bench of Chief Justice of India DY Chandrachud and Justice PS Narasimha sought a response from the Centre within four weeks.

The minimum age for marriage in India is currently 18 for women and 21 for men. However, the minimum marriage age for Muslim women is when they attain puberty and 15 years is presumed to be that age.

The NCW said that allowing Muslims to marry at the age of puberty (around 15) is arbitrary, irrational, discriminatory and violative of penal laws.

The plea said even the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act (POCSO) does not provide for those under 18 to consent to sex.

Earlier, the apex court agreed to examine the plea of the National Commission For Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) against an order of the Punjab and Haryana High Court which said a Muslim girl of 15-years-old is competent to enter into a contract of marriage with a person of her choice under the Muslim Personal Law.

It had issued notice to the Punjab government and appointed senior advocate Rajshankar Rao as amicus curiae to assist the court in the matter.

The High Court in June in its order had cited the provisions of the Muslim Personal Law on marriage to rule that a 15-year-old Muslim girl was compe-

tent to enter into a contract of marriage with a person of her choice. The NCPCR sought to ensure the proper implementation of statutory laws that are specifically in place to protect children below the age of 18 years.

The Commission highlighted the provisions of the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act (PCMA) 2006 and the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act (POCSO) to put forth its reasons for challenging the High Court ruling.

NCPCR said that the order is violative of PCMA which, the petition said, is a secular law that is applicable to all.

"The provisions of POCSO say no child below the age of 18 years can give valid consent," it said.

The high court order had come on a plea by a Pathankot-based Muslim couple that had approached the court seeking protection after allegedly being threatened by their families for marrying without their permission.

The girl and a 21-year-old man had said that they got married as per Muslim rites and ceremonies.

The High Court had granted protection to the Muslim couple noting that the law is clear that the marriage of a Muslim girl is governed by Muslim Personal Law.

## PRIVATE MEMBER'S BILL ON UCC INTRODUCED IN RAJYA SABHA



New Delhi: Amid protests by the Opposition, the private member's bill on Uniform Civil Code (UCC) was introduced in the Rajya Sabha on Friday.

The bill was introduced by BJP member Kirodi Lal Meena. A total of 63 members voted for the bill while 23 votes were against it.

The Congress, Samajwadi Party, Rashtriya Janata Dal, and the DMK staged protests while the Biju Janata Dal walked out of the House. The UCC has been in the BJP manifesto for many elections while the private member bill was pending but was not introduced.

The UCC is a proposed law to formulate and implement personal laws of citizens which would apply to all citizens regardless of their religion, gender or sexual orientation.

## Commerce Department amends SEZ rules to liberalise WFH for SEZ units

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Department of Commerce has further amended SEZ rules to liberalise 'Work From Home' for SEZ units.

It earlier amended the Special Economic Zones (SEZ) rules to insert new Rule 43A through notification on July 14, 2022 to enable Work From Home (WFH) for SEZ units. Further, it also issued a standard operating procedure (SOP) to streamline the implementation of amended rule across all SEZs.

After notification of Rule 43A and issue of instruction, the department received further representations from NASSCOM as well as units seeking further flexibility in WFH facility. The matter was examined by it in consultation with stakeholders and accordingly, Rule 43A has been substituted with new rule through notification on December 8, 2022.

As per the notification, WFH regime is significantly liberalised based on consultation with all stakeholders.



Erstwhile regime based on permissions has been converted into an intimation-based regime. WFH can be provided to upto 100 per cent of all employees of the SEZ unit up to December 31, 2023. For units already availing WFH under earlier regime, intimation could be sent by email till January 31, 2023. Besides, units seeking WFH in future can email an intimation on or before the date of commencement of WFH. As per the Commerce Department, hybrid mode of working has become a norm, especially in the IT/ITES sector

in the wake of disruptions caused by the pandemic. The representatives of the IT/ITES industry had represented to the department to enable the units in Special Economic Zones (SEZs) to adopt hybrid mode of working and for providing WFH facility to the employees SEZ units. The decision has been made after duly noting the genuine needs of the industry and also noting the scope of benefits to economies of Tier-2 and Tier-3 cities that such a facility could entail, said the department on Friday.

## Covid-related disruptions delayed cancer detection, treatment: Govt

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Covid-related disruptions led to delay in diagnosis and treatment of cancer cases in the country, the Parliament was informed on Friday.

A total 16 crore cases of oral cancer, 8 crore cases of breast cancer, and 5.53 crore cases of cervical cancer had been detected in the country, which is a matter of serious concern, Minister of State for health Bharti Pawar told the Lok Sabha in response to a question by Trinamool Congress member Kalyan Banerjee.

She said that Covid-related disruptions led to delay in diagnosis of cancer cases,



but the government is now working on early diagnosis and treatment of cancer cases.

"We are going to increase our 1.5 lakh health and wellness centres throughout the country and through these centres, we are providing

very good health screening services," Pawar added.

Banerjee had asked whether Covid-related disruptions led to a reduction in diagnosis and treatment of cancer, fall in admission of patients, their surgery and chemotherapy.

## GUJ POLLS: MASSIVE SEIZURE WORTH RS 801.85 CRORE

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Enforcement agencies made a seizure of worth Rs 801.85 crore and Rs 57.24 crore, respectively, from Gujarat and Himachal Pradesh during the election process in the two states.

As per the Election Commission, this is a significant jump of 2,846.89 per cent in Gujarat and of 533.88 per cent in Himachal Pradesh as compared with the previous assembly polls in the year 2017.

Total seizure in Gujarat and Himachal Pradesh in the 2017 polls was worth Rs 27.21 crore and worth Rs 9.03 crore, respectively.

In the border district of Kachchh in Gujarat, heavy seizures of freebies were reported from Mundra port where DRI seized freebies worth more than Rs 160 crore.

Due to news of huge seizure of drugs in coastal areas of Gujarat prior to announcement of election in Gujarat, the Commission directed Coast Guard, NCB and ATS to keep a close watch on drug seizure.

Officials said that the results were encouraging as ATS seized massive haul of drugs by busting illegal



units in Vadodara which led to seizures of drugs amounting to Rs 478 crore.

What is significant is the tightening has contin-

ued after polling as well.

As reported by Police Nodal, on December 7, further searches by ATS at Gorwa, Vadodara has led to further seizure of 24 kg of Mephedrone drug worth Rs 121 crore. Similarly tightening of borders in Himachal Pradesh led to record hauls of liquor (5.04 lakh litre) in Kangra district which borders Hoshiarpur district of Punjab and Sirmour district (2.51 lakh litre) which borders state of Haryana and Uttarakhand.

On the occasion of announcement of dates for Gujarat Assembly Election 2022, Chief Election Commissioner, Rajiv Kumar stressed on inducement-free elections and cited the significant amount of seizures made in Himachal Pradesh.

On November 23, Commission had interacted with Chief Secretaries, DGPs, Excise Commissioners, DG (Income Tax) and other senior officers of Gujarat and its neighbouring States and UTs - Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Daman and Diu and Dadra and Nagar Haveli.

This was held to review law and order situation and coordinated participation for conduct of free, fair and peaceful polls.

## Can't stop circulation of judicial officer's video without users' numbers: WhatsApp to Delhi HC

Team Absolute | New Delhi

In wake of the Delhi High Court ordering the taking down of sexually explicit video of a judicial officer, social media platforms on Friday told the court that they have removed the video and blocked several URLs.

However, WhatsApp, the Meta-owned instant messaging app, told the court that it is not possible to erase the video from the platform until unless it is provided with users' phone numbers and the court's order.

Appearing for WhatsApp, senior advocate Kapil Sibal said that if they are provided with phone numbers, they will pull down the video if ordered by the court.

At this, the single judge bench of Justice Yashwant Varma told the plaintiff's counsel Ashish Dixit, to provide the phone numbers so that WhatsApp can take requisite steps.

Justice Varma told the matter for next hearing on February 8.

The WhatsApp argument took



place when the court was hearing a plea by the woman present in the video, who is reportedly the judicial officer's steno. She moved the court

arguing that the video is fabricated. The Delhi HC on late November 30, directed the Centre and social media platforms to ensure that the

sexually explicit video of a judicial officer, which had gone viral on the internet on November 29, be not shared, distributed, forwarded or posted further.

Justice Varma had also asked for the video to be taken down and blocked from all ISPs, messaging platforms, and social media platforms. "Bearing in mind the sexually explicit nature of the contents of that video and taking into consideration the imminent, grave and irreparable harm that is likely to be caused to the privacy rights of the plaintiff, an ad interim ex parte injunction is clearly warranted," the court had said.

The plea had sought a permanent direction to restrain the social media platforms from publishing or telecasting the video in question.

The court had also observed that the provisions under Section 354C of IPC as well as Section 67A of the Information and Technology Act "would appear to be violated" if further circulation, sharing and distribution of the video wasn't restrained.

## Headmaster held for cutting and using Tricolour to clean blackboard

Ranchi | Agencies

The headmaster of a school reportedly cut the national flag and used it to clean the chair, desk and blackboard in a class in East Singhbhum district of Jharkhand. He was taken into custody after an agitation by the locals.

The accused, Shafaq Iqbal worked in Board Middle School located in Ghatshila.

A large number of people lay siege to the school on Thursday after information about the incident surfaced.

The Education Department initiated action against the headmaster for disrespecting the Tricolour and removed him from his post.

According to sources, the incident took place during an ongoing class. A crowd gathered at the school to protest after the students



present in the class apprised their parents of the headmaster's act.

On receiving information about the furore, Block Education Extension Officer Subodh Rai and Executive Magistrate Keshav Bharti reached the spot along with the police. Initially, the accused alleged that the flag had been nibbled by a rat, which is why he committed

the act while being unaware of his action being a crime.

Later, the police recovered the damaged Tricolour, cut with scissors from his cupboard. The villagers alleged that complaints had been received against the headmaster earlier also saying he imposed restrictions on children performing Saraswati puja in the school together.

## CYCLONE MANDOUS: TN EXTENDS HOLIDAY FOR SCHOOLS, COLLEGES IN 8 DISTRICTS

Chennai: With the Cyclone Mandous to make landfall by Friday mid-night, the Tamil Nadu Education Department declared another holiday on Saturday for schools and colleges in Chennai, Chengalpattu, Tiruvallur, Vellore, Villupuram, Kancheepuram, Cuddalore and Ranipet districts.

The Indian Meteorological Department (IMD) has declared rains in these districts of Tamil Nadu and issued a red alert in Kancheepuram, Chengalpattu, and Villupuram. Light to moderate rainfall with heavy rainfall at a few places and extremely heavy rainfall at isolated places is expected on late Friday and Saturday.

## TWO CONG COUNCILLORS, DELHI UNIT VICE PRESIDENT JOIN AAP

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Two newly elected Congress councillors -- Sabila Begum and Nazia Khatoun on Friday joined the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), along with Congress' Delhi unit vice-president Ali Mehdi.

Hundreds of Congress leaders also joined AAP along with Mehdi.

AAP legislator Durgesh Pathak inducted the Congress leaders into the party.

"In 15 years, all the BJP did in the MCD was to increase corruption and take the city in a downward spiral. They have made the corporation hollow and this city a mess. I would like to thank the people of the city for giving AAP a full majority in the MCD elections. Just like CM Arvind Kejriwal has said, we want to make Delhi one of the best cities in the world to live in," said Durgesh Pathak while inducting Congress councillors into the party.

"For this purpose, we require the support of everyone in Delhi," he said.

"Today, we have Ali Mehdi, a prominent person in the politics of Delhi. He and his father have given several years of their lives to the politics of Delhi. Until now, he was also the vice-president of Delhi Pradesh Congress Committee (DPCC). Prior to it, he was the chairman of the Congress Minority Cell. Besides him, we also have two people who recently won the elections and became the councillors of the MCD," Pathak



said. Before joining the AAP, Ali Mehdi was the Vice President of the Delhi Pradesh Congress Committee. Prior to this, he was the chairman of the Minority Cell.

"We are also proud to join the AAP. Over the years, I have noticed that the people of Delhi are highly impressed by the way Arvind Kejriwal has been work-

ing for the residents and are, therefore, happy to join him in taking Delhi forward," Mehdi said on the occasion.



# BJP MAY ADOPT GUJARAT MODEL IN MADHYA PRADESH ELECTIONS



Team Absolute | Bhopal

Bharatiya Janata Party leaders in Madhya Pradesh are elated with the record-breaking success in the Gujarat Assembly elections. The reason for this is that party did a new experiment in Gujarat, in which he got success. Now there is a possibility that the party may adopt the Gujarat model in Madhya Pradesh as well. If this happens, the future of many leaders may be in

jeopardy. Before the assembly elections in Gujarat, the BJP had done a major surgery in power, not only this, vigilance also increases in the selection of the candidates for the assembly and tickets of 30 percent of the MLAs were cut off. Dissatisfaction was also visible in the party, but new faces were given a chance without hesitation. The results of the elections are in front of everyone as the party has managed to win 156 out of 182 seats. If party sources are to be believed, the BJP has

conducted a survey of MLAs in Madhya Pradesh as well and State Chief Shivraj Singh Chouhan and State President Vishnu Dutt Sharma have also warned such MLAs whose reports have come negative. The party will not refrain from cutting the tickets of such people as well.

The BJP has learned a lesson from the results of the 2018 assembly elections and is not ready to take any risk by giving a chance to MLAs with anti-incumbency in the coming elections in the year 2023. The party has finalized the names of about 50 such MLAs, who are being seriously considered, it will not be a surprise if tickets are cut for most of them. If sources are to be believed, the party has made three categories of MLAs, one is those who will definitely win the elections, the other are those who can be won over with a little effort and the third is those MLAs who cannot be won by the party no matter how hard they try. That's why it is certain to cut the ticket of third class MLAs. Along with this, the round of consideration is also going on for many aged MLAs. Along with this, the maximum emphasis of the other party is on those areas from where Congress MLAs are at present.

The ongoing discussions within the party to follow the Gujarat model have increased the concerns of the MLAs who may be denied tickets. In this situation, many MLAs can also change sides. The party is aware of this and it is making up its mind completely for its decisions.



## 'Samagra' will make Madhya Pradesh well-nourished

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Continuous efforts are going on to eliminate the level of malnutrition from Madhya Pradesh and the Women and Child Development Department is moving forward with the aim of making the state well-nourished. In this sequence, an MoU was signed between the State Government and the American India Foundation (AIF) for the implementation of the project 'Samagra'. State's Additional Chief Secretary Ashok Shah said that it is our priority to root out malnutrition in the state. The main objective of Project Samagra is to improve the nutrition level of children, enhance learning capacity and create opportunities for women empowerment and increase in their income.

Director of Women and Child Development Department, Dr. Ram Rao Bhonsle said that about 10,000 children from zero to six years are being benefited in Gyaraspur block of Vidisha district under Project Samagra. This pilot project will reach 229 Anganwadis, 184 self-help groups and 112 SHG kitchens in Gyaraspur block.

He informed that the American India Foundation project Samagra will provide THR and hot cooked meals for children under six years of age in Anganwadi centers, quality home-based care to sick children and skilling of frontline and health workers to provide nutritional counseling. Apart from this, strengthening linkages for timely referral of severely malnourished children and ensuring school readiness of

children below the age of 6 years, as well as providing need-based learning material to Anganwadi centres.

Mathew Joseph, Country Director of AIF, said that with this partnership with the Women and Child Development Department in Madhya Pradesh, special attention will be given to women,

children and youth. Along with this, our aim is also to take advantage of the specialty and innovation of government schemes to improve the quality of service at the community level.

Joseph said that to assess the overall success of the project, an end-line survey would be conducted and progress would be regularly evaluated and periodic process reports would be prepared and shared with the state from time to time.

### MUKHYA MANTRI JAN-SEVA ABHIYAN SCHEMES

## Beneficiaries identified will start getting benefits from next month: CM Chouhan



■ 83 lakh new names added in 38 government schemes in Janseva Abhiyan. This is a public court - you have been called to be given information. Officers should take government schemes down to the bottommost with full dedication. Mafia and power brokers will be crushed. Chief Minister suspends Chhindwara CMHO and Bichhua CMO. CM fulfils his announcement - dedicates Government Health Center in Puri-Bichhua. Rs 7 crore approved for development of Chhindwara city. Foundation laid and bhoomi puja performed for development works worth Rs one thousand crore.

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has said that the officers should deliver the government schemes to the bottommost with full dedication. Now the government is not running from Bhopal, it is running from Chaupal. The Mukhya Mantri Jan Seva camps were organized in every village and ward, in which officials and people's representatives reached and solved the problems of the people and worked to connect the eligible people with the government schemes. Chief Minister told the officials that this is the court of the people - you are not being called here to be

humiliated but to be given information. Public works should be done on time with promptness.

Chief Minister laid the foundation and dedicated development works worth more than Rs one thousand crore at the venue itself. He also symbolically distributed benefits to the beneficiaries of various schemes. Chouhan said that the names of 83 lakh new beneficiaries have been added to 38 different government schemes in the camps organized in the state under the Mukhya Mantri Jan Seva Abhiyan. Approval letters are being distributed to all of them by setting up camps. All these beneficiaries should start getting the benefits of the scheme from next month.

### FARMERS WILL BE PROVIDED TRAINING IN MODERN AGRICULTURE: CM

Bhopal : Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has said that farmers will be provided training in modern agriculture in the state. Farmers will be made aware about the latest farm equipments and updated technology through special exhibitions. Chouhan said that continuous deliberations are going on for how to do maximum work for the welfare of the farmers. Farmers' welfare is priority. I also need the cooperation of the farmers in this work. He said that such big exhibitions will also be organised in the districts, in which the latest agricultural tools will be displayed. Farmers will be trained through observing them and can make agriculture work easier. Farmer will be able to get more profit on the principle of "Aam Ke Aam Guthliyon Ke Dam" (gaining double benefit at the price of one) by receiving information about new agricultural techniques. Chouhan was addressing the Kisan Gaurav Sammelan. Farmer from the districts of the state took part in the convention.

He appreciated everyone including the district administration for the success of the campaign in Chhindwara district.

Chief Minister Chouhan said that mafia and power brokers will be crushed in the state. The government will reward the officers and employees for good performance and will not spare those who are negligent. He directed to suspend with immediate effect the Chief Municipal and Health Officer of Chhindwara and the Block Medical Officer of Bichua for negligence in work.

### Woman run over by Train, her son dies after falling near tracks

Guna: A woman was run over by a train, while her three-year-old son died of head injuries after she threw him away from the track in an attempt to save him in Madhya Pradesh's Guna district on Friday, police said. The incident took place in the Gulabganj area when the victim Manju Ojha (27) was crossing a railway track with her son Ram Lakhan, inspector Vinod Chhabai of Cantonment police station told media. The woman saw a train closing in on them and threw the boy away from the track, he said. The woman was run over by the train, and the boy who fell on stones sustained head injuries and was declared dead at a hospital, the official said. The victims, who hailed from Rajasthan, had come to Guna to attend a function at a relative's place, he said, adding that the bodies were handed over to the family after post-mortem.

### MP SHOOTERS WON GOLD IN THE TEAM EVENT

Bhopal : In the ongoing 65th National Rifle Shooting Championship at Vattiyorkao Shooting Range, Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala, shooters of Madhya Pradesh State Shooting Academy have targeted gold in the men's team event. Academy's trio of Aishwarya Pratap Singh Tomar, Harshit Binjwa and Goldie Gurjar won the gold medal in the 50m Rifle Senior Men's Team event. Apart from this, Amit Kumar, Harshit Binjwa and Yakub Siddiqui of the academy also won gold medals in the 50m rifle three-position senior men's civilian team event. Academy shooters Avinash Yadav, Amit Singrole and Adarsh won the third gold of the team event in the 50m 3-position junior men's. In this episode, Sameer Ullah Khan, Amit Singrole and Adarsh Tiwari of the academy won the gold medal in the 50m three-position junior men's civilian team event.



## 32 Chief Minister Sanjivani Polyclinics to be opened in Bhopal



Team Absolute | Bhopal

Mukhyamantri Sanjeevani Polyclinics are being started to provide treatment facilities from specialist doctors for diseases including gynaecology, eye disease, dental disease, infant disease and other diseases at one place. State's first Chief Minister Sanjivani Poly Clinic was inaugurated by Public Health and Family Welfare Minister Dr. Prabhuram Chowdhary and Medical Education Minister Vishwas Kailash Sarang at Govindpura.

Health Minister Dr. Chowdhary has said that 32 Mukhyamantri Sanjeevani polyclinics will be started in Bhopal city. Specialists of various diseases will be available in the

polyclinic for treatment. Along with this, various tests and medicines will be available free of cost. Recently the cabinet has given approval to start 226 new health institutions. He said that Madhya Pradesh is the first state in the country which has given the facility of medical education to the students in their mother tongue Hindi.

Medical Education Minister Sarang said that under the leadership of Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan, unprecedented work has been done in the health sector in the state. Polyclinic is being started in Govindpura area by innovation in the field of health. ESI will also be linked to poly clinics, which will benefit the workers in the industrial sector.

### NDB FUNDED \$500 MILLION FOR UP GRADATION ROADS IN STATE

New Delhi: After successfully financing a \$500 million road infrastructure development project in Madhya Pradesh, the New Development Bank (NDB) plans to scale up its infrastructure and development finance in India for a sustainable future. The NDB established in 2015 by BRICS countries -- Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa, has invested in 21 projects worth \$7.2 billion in India since 2016 which is expected to benefit over four million people.

The \$500 million Madhya Pradesh Major District Road Project (MPMDRP), funded \$350 million by the NDB and \$150 million by the state government, aimed at upgradation of major district roads in the state to improve connectivity in the interior areas of the state with the national and state highway networks, with the wider aim of promoting economic and social transformation. Further, the MPMDRP has effected a positive and transformational changes in people's lives across 434,000 rural communities by improving local livelihoods and access to clinics, hospitals, schools, colleges, markets, businesses, and job opportunities in the state, said a new independent evaluation office report of the NDB here.

### Solar rooftop public awareness camp will be held from December 12 to 18

## World famous Sanchi will become Solar City, 7.3 MW of electricity will be produced from solar energy

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Sanchi, a small town in Raisen district, which is world famous for stupas and Buddhist pilgrimage site, will soon be known as the country's first solar city. 7.3 MW of electricity will be generated from solar energy in Sanchi. With this, apart from self-reliance in power supply, solar energy will ensure that Sanchi's power requirements for the next five years will be met. With the formation of Solar City, Sanchi's electricity requirement will be met with solar energy. Along with this, solar street lights, garden lights, stud lights, high-mast lights, solar drinking water kiosks, battery operated e-rickshaws for public transport, charging stations, renewable energy based plants, wind turbines and piezo electric generators will be installed. In this sequence, with the objective of promoting green energy in Sanchi and motivating the general public to install solar rooftops, Madhya Kshetra Vidyut Vitran Company will organize public awareness camps through solar rooftop nodal agencies in Sanchi from 12 to 18 December.



### COST OF SETTING UP A SOLAR PLANT

- Group housing societies will get 20 percent subsidy up to 500 KW (10 KW per house) on connection with common facility.
- For information about authorized agency, technical details, subsidy and amount to be paid by the company, the nearest office of Madhya Kshetra Vidyut Vitran Company is available on the main page of the company's website portal.mpcz.in. Also toll free number 1912 can be contacted.

### Solar Rooftop: Benefits at a Glance

- Install solar panels on the roof/enclosed open space of your house/group housing society and save on electricity.
- Solar panels will provide electricity for 25 years and the cost of installation will be paid back in 4-5 years. After this, the benefit of electricity from solar will continue for the next 20 years.
- This will reduce the carbon footprint and benefit the environment.
- About 100 square feet of space will be required for a solar power panel of one kilowatt capacity.
- The central government will provide 40 percent subsidy on solar plants up to 3 KW and 20 percent subsidy after 3 KW up to 10 KW.

## RARE 2 FEET LONG PLEXIFORM NEUROFIBROMA WAS OPERATED AT AIIMS

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Rare surgery for a 2 feet long tumor on the back was operated at AIIMS Bhopal in the Department of Neurosurgery in a 31 years old male, who was a resident of Ashok Nagar (Madhya Pradesh). The procedure was done on 6th December 2022 at AIIMS Bhopal. The tumor was extremely vascular. The weight of the tumor was around 4.5 kgs. A 31 years old male presented with a monstrous swelling over the back in Neurosurgery OPD and was admitted for complete evaluation. Patient had multiple swellings over the back but one swelling gradually increased in size over the last 30 years and now had become unbearable for the patient. It was a highly vascular and caused spinal deformity which makes it extremely



ly challenging to operate.

It is an extremely rare case. Such cases are done only in specialized centers. And patient did not have to pay anything extra as he was a Ayushman beneficiary.

What is a Plexiform Neurofibroma? Neurofibromatosis (NF)

type 1 (von Recklinghausen NF) is a genetic disorder that occurs in 1 of 4000 births. It is inherited in an autosomal dominant pattern with variable penetrance; however, as many as 50% of cases may result from spontaneous mutation. The disease results from a defect in a tumor suppressor gene on chromosome 17, which leaves affected individuals at risk for developing a variety of benign and malignant tumors. The most common tumors found in patients with NF-1 are neurofibromas and optic gliomas. Neurofibromas can be of either the plexiform or cutaneous variety.

Plexiform neurofibromas (PNs) are typically congenital, with approximately 50% occurring in the region of the head, neck, face, and larynx. Surgery remains the mainstay treatment.



EDITOR'S SPECS

## Billionaire and criminal lawmakers in Himachal

**W**hile nearly 93 per cent winning candidates in Himachal Pradesh Assembly polls are crorepatis, about 41 per cent have declared criminal cases against themselves, a report by Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR) has revealed. Himachal Pradesh Election Watch and ADR have analysed the self-sworn affidavits of all 68 winning candidates in the Himachal Pradesh 2022 Assembly Elections. Out of the 68 winning candidates analysed in 2022, 28 (41 per cent) winning candidates have declared criminal cases against themselves, while during Himachal Pradesh Assembly elections in 2017, 22 (32 per cent) MLAs had declared criminal cases against themselves. As far as winning candidates with serious criminal cases is concerned, 12 (18 per cent) winning candidates have declared serious criminal cases against themselves. The ADR report said that one winner candidate has declared case related to murder (IPC Section-302) against himself and one winner candidate has declared cases related to crimes against women. The ADR report said that 23 (58 per cent), out of 40 winning candidates from Congress and five (20 per cent) out of 25 winning candidates from BJP have declared criminal cases against themselves in their affidavits. Similarly, nine (23 per cent) out of 40 winning candidates from Congress and three (12 per cent) out of 25 winning candidates from BJP have declared serious criminal cases against themselves in their affidavits. On Financial backgrounds of the MLAs, the ADR report said, out of the 68 winning candidates analysed, 63 (93 per cent) are crorepatis, while during Himachal Pradesh assembly elections 2017, 52 (76 per cent) MLAs were crorepatis. The average assets per winning candidate is Rs 14.25 crore for 40 Congress winning candidates, Rs 12.42 crore for 25 BJP winning candidates while three Independent winning candidates have average assets worth Rs 7.09 crore.

# CHOKING TERROR FUNDING NEED OF THE HOUR

Ashok Bhan

**T**errorist attacks are highly responsive to funding availability, and financial counter-terrorism can therefore be effective in reducing terrorism casualties, according to research conducted by Nicola Limodio, Assistant Professor of Finance at Bocconi University Visiting Fellow at the Economics Department and the Julis-Rabinowitz Center for Public Policy and Finance at Princeton University. Everyone knows that terrorists need money and other assets, for weapons, training, travel and accommodation to plan and execute their attacks and develop an organization. Disrupting and preventing terrorist-related financial flows and transactions is one of the effective ways to fight terrorism. Not only can it prevent future attacks by disrupting their material support, but the footprint of their purchases, withdrawals and other financial transactions can also provide valuable information for ongoing investigations.

Without destroying the war economy in Kashmir, bringing peace to the troubled Indian state will remain a pipedream. Former Commandant of the BSF and researcher N S Jamwal estimates that Pakistan spends around \$5 million annually (Rs 24 crore) to sustain militancy in Kashmir while India's expenditure on counter-insurgency operations (CI-OPS) is around \$1.46 billion annually (Rs. 730 crore). These figures are an indication of how every dollar spent on terrorist activities necessitates a financial commitment several orders of magnitude on counter-intelligence and physical expenditures in the target country. He is of the view that financing terrorism in J&K costs no more than \$70-80 million annually, i.e., Rs 400-500 crore.

The need and importance for blocking finances to terrorist organizations were outlined and emphasized by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the Home Minister recently while addressing a conference 'No Money for Terror' (NMFNT) Ministerial Conference on Counter-Terrorism Financing in New Delhi recently. The two-day conference which was organised on 18th-19th November was a unique platform for participating nations and organisations to deliberate on the effectiveness of the current international regime on Counter Terrorism Financing and the steps required to address emerging challenges.

It was concluded in the conference that countering terrorism financing is an essential part of the global fight against the terror threat. As terrorists and terror groups continue to raise money with the use of various means, countries must make it a priority to understand the risks they face from terrorist financing and develop a policy response to all aspects of it.

State support is one of the major sources of political, ideological and financial support for terrorism. Certain countries support terrorists as part of their foreign policy. There must be a cost imposed upon countries that support terrorism. Organisations and individuals that try to create sympathy for terrorists must also be isolated. There can be no ifs and buts entertained in such matters. The world needs to unite against all kinds of overt and covert backing of terror.

The infrastructure used for cyber terrorism and online radicalisation is distributed while some entities also train the terrorists with weapons from remote locations as well as online resources. Communications, travel, logistics - there are many links in the chain in different countries. Terrorists should not be allowed to misuse differences in legal principles, procedures and processes in different countries. This can be pre-



vented through deeper coordination and understanding between governments. Joint operations, intelligence coordination and extradition help the fight against terror.

As scholar and author Sushant Sareen has said in the context of Jammu and Kashmir that on one hand thousands of people have died, families and properties destroyed, and an entire society traumatised, the one set of people who have prospered beyond their wildest imagination is the separatist mafia. The huge fortunes built by separatists and terrorists in Kashmir are one of the worst-kept secrets in Kashmir. Over the years, Kashmir has been transformed into a war economy, which needs to be dismantled.

For decades, the focus of the Indian security establishment in hotspots around the country has been more on seizing weapons than on cracking down on the funding networks. While in the West, security agencies followed the money to bust criminal syndicates and terror networks, in India the thinking was that the problem wasn't the money but the munitions. Unfortunately, elements in the Indian security establishment have also contributed to the separatist entrepreneurship in Kashmir by plying the separatists with huge amounts of money in the fond hope of weaning them away from Pakistan and eventually winning them over - the former Intelligence Bureau chief in Kashmir and later Research & Analysis Wing chief, A S Dulat, has admitted as much in his book on Kashmir. Essentially what this meant was that the separatists raked in the moolah from all sides - India, Pakistan, within Kashmir, foreign donors, and so forth.

Fortunately, there has been a policy change in New Delhi over past few years. The trigger for the policy change appears to have been the remarkable sting operation carried out by intrepid reporters of India Today TV who exposed the shenanigans of the merchants of death in the Valley. The outcry after the expose probably gave the government the justification it needed for strangulating the funding of the separatists and terrorists.

In fact, among the most interesting aspects of the India Today sting operation was that the separatists who were exposed didn't seem at all surprised or suspicious that they were being offered money by middlemen from outside the state to provide protection for their operations and even create disturbances to further their interests. If anything, the terror

financiers saw they are dealing with these reporters who were impersonating middlemen from mainland India as nothing out of the ordinary, almost as if it was business as usual.

Kashmiri militants obtain financial support from dozens of Islamic charities and radical Islamic organisations that channel funds to terrorist groups. The Pakistan-based Markaz-ul-Dawa-Ishad, the parent outfit of LeT and a religious organisation puts out regular advertisements in its in-house monthly magazine, Al Dawa. It urges Muslims to donate money to Kashmir 'Jehad Fund' and deposit it in bank accounts. 12 At its annual congregation in November 1998 at Muridke, near Lahore, the Markaz decided to raise Rs 5 crore including 3 crores to supply weapons to the Kashmiri 'Jehad', 1 crore for training and 1 crore to rehabilitate Kashmir refugees in POK.

Several First Information Reports (FIRs) filed by the Jammu & Kashmir Police in 1997 indicate that the senior leaders of the APHC receive donations from abroad. The nexus between narcotics and terrorism had led to a new term-Narco-Terrorism. It is recognised as one of the oldest and most dependable sources of terrorist financing, primarily because of the magnitudes of finance involved in both activities.

Extortion has emerged as a major source of terrorist funding. Police and Intelligence agencies believe that most businessmen, shopkeepers, government employees, contractors, especially those dealing in timber and persons with the sound financial background are easy targets. Hawala funding through a network of dealers which extends from the OIC countries to Delhi, Mumbai and other places in India also feeds militancy. Many of these Hawala dealers have begun wholesale/retail businesses as fronts to divert money to the J&K militant groups. Pakistani Finance Minister Shaukat Aziz, a former executive vice president of Citibank in New York said that US \$2-5 billion moves through the Hawala system annually in Pakistan. This is higher than the amount of regular foreign transfers through the country's banking system.

A US Treasury Department study identified Hawala as the preferred means of laundering monies from drug trafficking and other crimes in Pakistan. The report said Pakistan, India and Dubai on the Persian Gulf from the Hawala Triangle to move money secretly worldwide. One Abdul Rehman was arrested on December 6, 2001, with Rs 15.5 lakh in Delhi. This money was coming from Dubai for HM. Further, on the same day, Rs 40 lakh coming Hawala channels were recovered from a Kashmiri militant which was received by him through the Hawala channel. The Delhi Police arrested four Kashmiri militants on January 15, 2002, from the capital and seized Rs. 35 lakh from them. This money was received by militants from Pakistan through a Hawala operator in Chandni Chowk.

It can be safely concluded that terrorism in J&K is financed by a variety of sources, both national and transnational. While it costs the terrorists only a modest sum of money to destabilise the region and spread terror, the Indian government has to set aside huge outlays to tackle the problem. A more effective method of fighting terrorism would be to launch a multi-dimensional offensive against all the sources-narcotic trade, extortion, counterfeiting, fake charities-as well as methods of financing, namely, hawala and front companies.

*(The author is senior advocate in the Supreme Court and a geo-strategic expert. The views expressed are personal)*

## international

## UK, Italy, Japan team up for new fighter jet

London | Agencies

**U**K Prime Minister Rishi Sunak is set to announce a collaboration between Britain, Italy and Japan to develop a new fighter jet that uses artificial intelligence (AI).

According to Sunak, the joint venture aims to create thousands of UK jobs and strengthen security ties, reports the BBC.

The nations will develop a next generation fighter, due to enter service in the mid-2030s, that will eventually replace the Typhoon jet.

It is hoped the new Tempest jet will carry the latest weapons.

Work on developing it is already under way, with the aim to create a combat aircraft that will provide speed stealth, use advanced sensors and even AI to assist the



human pilot when they are overwhelmed, or under extreme stress, the BBC reported. It could also be flown without a pilot's input if required and could be able to fire hypersonic missiles.

But building such a complex aircraft is extremely expensive -- developing the F35 jet was the most expen-

Other countries could still join the programme. France, Germany and Spain are already working together on their own separate design, as is the US. For the UK, this agreement is not just about security but also economics, the BBC reported.

The hope is that developing a new fighter jet could create and sustain thousands of UK jobs and open doors to more arms exports.

sive programme ever undertaken by the Pentagon -- so Britain has been looking for partners.

Italy was already on board, and the addition of Japan is a significant move, at a time when Britain is building closer ties with allies in the Indo-Pacific region worried about a more assertive China.

## US Congress passes bill on same-sex marriage

Washington | Agencies

**T**he US Congress approved a bill on same-sex marriage and sent it to the White House.

The House of Representatives passed the Respect for Marriage Act in a 258-169-1 vote on Thursday, a week after it went through the Senate, reports Xinhua news agency. In a statement,



President Joe Biden called the approval "a critical step to ensure that Americans have the right to marry the person they love". "The bipartisan passage of the Respect for Marriage Act will give peace of mind to millions of LGBTQI+ and interracial couples who are now guaran-

Americans". The legislation was introduced this summer after a conservative Supreme Court justice signaled that rulings on marriage equality and contraception should be reconsidered.

While the bill would not set a national requirement that all states must legalise same-sex marriage, it would require individual states to recognise another state's legal marriage. In the event the Supreme Court might overturn its 2015 Obergefell v. Hodges decision that legalised same-sex marriage, a state could still pass a law to ban same-sex marriage, but that state would be required to recognise a same-sex marriage from another state.

## M23 KILLS 131 CIVILIANS IN EASTERN CONGO: UN

**United Nations:** In eastern Congo last week, M23 rebels killed at least 131 civilians, including 17 women and 12 children, a UN spokesman said.

"An additional 8 people were shot and wounded, 60 people were abducted and at least 22 women and five girls were raped," said Stephane Dujarric, the Chief Spokesman for UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, on Thursday.

"Our colleagues say the victims were arbitrarily executed with bullets and with knives." The UN mission, known as MONUSCO, and human rights partners confirmed the toll after a preliminary investigation into what was described as a reprisal attack November 29-30 against civilians in the villages of Kishishe and Bambo in the Rutshuru territory of North Kivu province, Dujarric added.

"The UN peacekeeping mission condemns in the strongest terms this unspeakable violence against civilians and calls for unrestricted access to the scene of the events as well as to the victims to provide emergency humanitarian assistance," he said.

"The mission welcomes the decision of the Congolese authorities to initiate legal proceedings against the perpetrators of these violations of human rights and international humanitarian law."

The Spokesman added that the mission is ready to aid efforts to bring the perpetrators to justice and calls for an immediate end to the violence against civilians, Xinhua news agency reported.

## US, Russia exchange jailed basketball star for arms dealer

Washington/Moscow | Agencies

**I**n a major development, Washington and Moscow have conducted a prisoner swap, exchanging US basketball star Brittney Griner for convicted Russian arms dealer Viktor Bout, held in an American prison for 12 years.

Griner, the 32-year-old championship-winning player with the WNBA's Phoenix Mercury who for years played for a Russian basketball team in the WNBA's off-seasons, had been held in the country since February after she was arrested on drug possession charges at a Moscow airport, reports CNN.

Meanwhile, Bout, popularly known as the "merchant of death", reached Moscow, the Russian Foreign Ministry confirmed in a statement on Friday.

US President Joe Biden's administration had proposed a prisoner exchange in July, the BBC reported.

Thursday night's elaborate swap involved two private planes bringing Griner and Bout to Abu Dhabi airport from Moscow and Washington, and then flying them home. Footage on Russian state media showed them crossing on the tarmac with their respective teams.



Speaking in the Oval Office, Griner's wife Cherrille praised the efforts of the Biden administration in securing her release and said: "I'm just standing here overwhelmed with emotions."

Also addressing the media at the Oval Office, President Biden said that "she's safe. She's on a plane. She's on her way home".

"After months of being unjustly detained in Russia, held under intolerable circumstances, Brittney will soon be back in the arms of her loved ones, and she should have been there all along."

"This is a day we've worked toward for a long time. We never stopped pushing for her release," he said.

Biden also thanked the United Arab Emirates (UAE) "for helping us facilitate Brittney's return".

"I'm glad to say Brittney's in good spirits... she needs time and space to recover," he added.

Bout's release comes after Biden signed an order for his release, commuting his 25-year jail term, in a direct swap for Griner.

In remarks to the media after landing in Moscow, Bout said that "in the middle of the night they simply woke me up and said 'Get your things together' and that was it", reports the BBC.

### 9 DEAD IN INDONESIA COAL MINE EXPLOSION

**Jakarta:** A coal mine explosion in Indonesia's West Sumatra province on Friday, leaving nine workers dead, two others injured and one missing, an official said. The explosion in the mine located in Sawahlunto town occurred at about 8.30 a.m., a provincial official told Xinhua news agency. The wounded persons have been sent to a nearby hospital for treatment, according to the official. A search and rescue operation for the missing person is underway.

## 15 OIL VESSELS BLOCKED AT TURKISH STRAITS AMID EU SANCTIONS ON RUSSIAN OIL

Ankara | Agencies

**F**ifteen oil tankers were banned from passing through the Turkish Straits due to a lack of proper insurance amid the European sanctions on Russian oil, Turkey's maritime authority said.

The Protection and Indemnity (P&I) insurance of these ships is invalid due to the EU sanctions and such insurance cannot be compensated in the event of an accident, the Turkish General Directorate of Maritime Affairs said on Thursday in a statement.

"Crude oil tankers that cannot offer valid P&I insurance are not allowed to pass through the Turkish Straits and this rule has been in effect since 2002," said the statement, adding it would continue to block the passage of oil tankers without appropriate insurance letters.

The authority noted that Turkey was not obliged to implement sanction decisions of other countries and international organisations, except those taken by the UN Security Council, Xinhua news agency reported.

"However, we do not take the risk that the insurance company will not cover its liability in the event of a catastrophic accident that may occur if a sanctioned ship or a cargo passes through the Turkish Straits," it said. Since December 1, Turkey has started to seek confirmation from the insurance companies that the crude oil tankers to pass through the Turkish Straits are fully insured, the statement added.





MUMBAI AIR QUALITY IMPROVES, EXPECTED TO BE FRESHER ON WEEKEND

Team Absolute | Mumbai

A day after Mumbai's air quality index (AQI) dropped to 308 - worse than Delhi - the situation considerably improved on Friday as per the System of Air Quality Forecasting and Research.

The Mumbai AQI recorded today is 118 for PM 2.5, thus improving from the 'very poor' category witnessed in the past two days, and shifting to the moderate category.

The prediction for Saturday is optimistic at 111 (moderate) according to SAFAR, though Mazagaon in south Mumbai remains the pollution hotspot with a 211 AQI or poor.

In Pune, the AQI today was 149 for PM 2.5, but is likely to worsen to 180 on Saturday though remaining in the moderate category. The December 9 figures



for Mumbai proved a relief after the high of December 8 and the second time in current winter (November 15) when the city's AQI exceeded that of Delhi.

The BrihanMumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) and the state pollution authorities have been making efforts to reduce the pollution levels in the city particularly with the G20-related events lined up in the

city soon.

However, the civic body has pointed fingers at the spike in emissions from the oil refineries in the city as one of the causes for the increased pollution levels.

AQI levels above 500 are termed very severe, above 400 as severe, above 300 as very poor, above 200 as poor, above 100 as moderate, above 50 as satisfactory and below that as good.

Shraddha Walkar's dad meets Fadnavis, slams Palghar cops

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Vikas Walkar, the father of Shraddha Walkar who was killed by her live-in partner and her body butchered for its disposal, on Friday met Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis and slammed the Palghar police for inaction.

Speaking with media persons later, Walkar contended that if the Vasai and Nala Sopara police (in Palghar district) had taken timely action in the matter, his daughter could have been saved from the macabre death.

"Learning about her death has shaken my family and me. My health has deteriorated. If the local police had conducted the investigation then properly, my daughter would have been alive," said Walkar.

However, he said that the joint probe by the Delhi Police and Vasai police (Palghar) is now proceeding in the right direction and reiterated his



demand for the capital punishment for sole prime accused Aftab Poonawala, currently in custody at the Tihar Jail in New Delhi.

Walkar also demanded an enquiry into the role of the police officials who allegedly did not take prompt action on Shraddha's complaint of

November 23, 2020 when she had expressed apprehensions for her life after Poonawala had threatened to kill and cut her into pieces - which later proved prophetic.

Soon after the SOS letter surfaced (reported by IANS on November 23), Fadnavis had announced a probe into the purported delays in probing the complaint, though police sources later said that she had subsequently withdrawn that plea, and she reportedly declined to meet a police team which visited her home.

After meeting Walkar, Fadnavis assured him that justice will be given to his family and their daughter Shraddha, and appropriate punishment shall be given to the accused.

Walkar also acknowledged BJP ex-MP Kirit Somaia for arranging and financing his visit to Delhi to seek justice after his daughter's body parts were recovered in November, shocking the nation.

Mumbai roads will be pothole-free in next two-and-half years: CM Eknath Shinde

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Maharashtra Chief Minister Eknath Shinde on Thursday said the roads of Mumbai will be cement concretised and pothole-free in the next two-and-half years, as per report.

He was speaking at the launch of the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation's 'Mumbai Beautification Project' at Gateway of India in Mumbai.

Shinde said within one or two months there will be visible change in the city.

Informing that the BMC had invited bids for cement concretisation works worth Rs 6,000 crore, the CM said he had asked the BMC to give contracts to reputed firms instead of issuing it for small patches (piecemeal).

Shinde further said Prime Minister Narendra Modi had asked his government to carry out radical change in Mumbai in keeping with its status as the country's financial capital and an international city.

Speaking on the occasion, Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis asked people of the metropolis to accept some troubles while roads are being concretised as it would result in pothole-



free roads for the next 30 years without the need for repairs. "Repeatedly the same contractor, same work and the same money. Every year this formula was going on. A decision has been taken to stop

this formula in the municipal corporation," Fadnavis said, adding there will be transparency while allotting and implementing these works.

Without naming former chief minister Uddhav Thackeray or his Shiv Sena (UBT) party, Fadnavis said those who couldn't come up with these (beautification and cleanliness) initiatives had taken a meeting on Wednesday to bring three-four parties together to come up with a strategy to find flaws in these works and have even formed a task force with this aim. Mumbai municipal commissioner Iqbal Singh Chahal said the civic body will complete black topping of 120 kilometres of asphalt roads within 30 to 45 days. He said as part of the Mumbai beautification project, works such as painting of flyovers, beautification of beaches and traffic islands, painting of walls along major roads, LED lighting on important streets will be carried out.

The work of beautification and cleanliness of forts, Koliwad and civic gardens has been undertaken and the BMC has also accepted the challenge to construct 10,000 new toilets to improve sanitation, besides upgradation of 3,000 toilets transferred to the civic body by MHADA, Chahal said.

Maharashtra man jailed for life for wife's murder

Team Absolute | Mumbai

A court in Thane district of Maharashtra has sentenced a 63-year-old man to life imprisonment for killing his wife in 2015 over a monetary dispute.

In the order passed on Wednesday, Thane Additional Sessions Judge Rachna R Tehra also imposed a fine of Rs 5,000 on the convict, Hiralal Mali, a resident of Lokmanya Nagar in Thane city.

Additional public prosecutor Rekha Hiwrale told the court that Mali, his wife and their children lived together. The couple used to quarrel over financial matters. Mali's wife also wanted him to return the loan he had taken from her brother.



On October 13, 2015, the couple once again quarrelled over the same issue. As their argument escalated, Mali attacked his wife with an iron rod in a fit of rage, in which she died on the spot. The accused then called his son and informed him about his crime, the prosecution told the court.

His son lodged a complaint against him, based on which a case of murder under Indian Penal Code (IPC) section 302 was registered and Mali was arrested. In the order, the judge noted that the prosecution has proved beyond reasonable doubt all the charges against the accused.

Central Railway to operate mega block on Dec 11

Team Absolute | Mumbai

To carry out maintenance work of tracks, overhead and signaling equipment, a Jumbo Block of five hours will be taken on UP and DOWN Slow lines between Borivali and Goregaon stations from 10.35 hrs to 15.35 hrs on Sunday, 11th December, 2022.

According to a press release issued by Public Relations Department of Western Railway, during the block period, all UP and DOWN slow line trains will be operated on Fast lines between Goregaon and Borivali stations. Some suburban trains will remain cancelled during the block.

Detailed information to this



effect is available with Station Masters. During the block period,

no trains will be dealt from platform 01, 02, 03 & 04 at Borivali Station.

Gujarat 'one-sided', Himachal and Delhi results 'harbinger of change': Congress-NCP

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The election outcome in Gujarat is 'one-sided' as anticipated, but the poll results in Himachal Pradesh and Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) are 'harbingers of political change', said Maharashtra opposition parties, Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) and Congress.

"There was no doubt in anyone's mind about the Gujarat verdict... All the power of the country was used to achieve that, decisions were taken specifically to favour one state, efforts were made to divert many development projects there," said NCP President Sharad Pawar.

State Congress President Nana Patole said that barring Gujarat, the other election outcomes have been satisfactory, particularly in Himachal Pradesh, where the Congress ousted



the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party in the home-state of its president J.P. Nadda.

"Even in the MCD, the BJP, which was in power for 15 years, has been

removed, while the Congress candidates won in Rajasthan and Chhattisgarh by-elections. The BJP lost the MCD polls, in Himachal Pradesh and could retain power only

in Gujarat... The countdown has begun," Patole said.

Pawar said the Gujarat victory doesn't in any way convey that electoral politics is becoming one-sided in the country, as he referred to the MCD polls where the BJP had to bite the dust even after 15-year rule, and Himachal Pradesh, where the Congress returned to power after trouncing the ruling BJP.

"This means that political change has begun, though gradually, and the political vacuum is being filled up. People today want change and the process has started," Pawar pointed out.

Referring to Maharashtra, Pawar said there is an emptiness in the state and the NCP has the strength to provide an alternative government to the people for which the party must work very hard.

China mission to commemorate Dr. Kotnis' 80th death anniversary

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The Dr. Dwarkanath Kotnis Memorial Committee and the Consulate General of China in Mumbai will commemorate and pay homage to the legendary medico Dr. Dwarkanath Shantaram Kotnis on the occasion of his 80th death anniversary, an official said here on Friday.

Dr. Kotnis, revered in China and India alike, passed away in China at the young age of 32 on December 9, 1942 and the memorial event shall be held on Saturday, said Consul General Xianhua.

The tributes will be in memory of Dr. Kotnis' services to the Chinese people as part of the Indian Medical Mission there in 1938, and the focus of tomorrow's event would be inheriting the Spirit of Dr. Kotnis & Working together for a bright future, said Xianhua.

"We honour his heroic deeds to renew his spirit in the new era. Chairman Mao wrote in the elegy that the Chinese people will never forget Dr. Kotnis' spirit of interna-

nationalism. He arrived in China at the most difficult time of the country's anti-Fascist war, rescued the wounded in the front-line, and devoted himself to the liberation of the Chinese people," he said.

The diplomat added his countrymen will forever remember how Kotnis devoted his precious life to the cause of China under very tough conditions, and the Chinese people admire and cherish his memory even today. There are many commemoration events lined up in China on Friday and also during the annual Qingming Festival to pay homage to martyrs like Kotnis.

Kotnis was born in Solapur on October 10, 1910 and acquired his medical degree from the University of Bombay through the Seth GS Medical College & KEM Hospital here. After Japan invaded China, the Communist General Zhu De had requested Congress leader Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru to send a medical

team, and the then Indian National Congress President Subhash Chandra Bose made the necessary arrangements and organised the funds for the voluntary mission.

When Dr. Kotnis was barely 28 and preparing his Master's, he took his family's permission and joined the humanitarian Indian Medical Mission Team to China. The mission - with Dr. M. Atal from Allahabad, Dr. M. Cholkar from Nagpur, Dr. B.K. Basu and Dr. D. Mukerjee from Kolkata, besides Kotnis from Solapur - first went to Hankou Port in Wuhan in September 1938.

Later it was sent to Yan'an where they met top Chinese leaders like Mao Zedong, Gen. Zhu De and others. During the IMMT sojourn there, Dr. Kotnis worked under trying conditions to treat and operate upon wounded soldiers in mobile clinics

virtually non-stop for days for nearly five years.

In 1940, Dr. Kotnis, who had learnt Chinese, met a local nurse Guo Qinglan and they married in December 1941, and the couple had a son Yinhua in August 1942.

Barely three months later, owing to the immense stress of his medical duties on the warfronts, Dr. Kotnis suffered major health issues and passed away on December 9, 1942.

Shocked by his demise, subsequently, China honoured him with a statue, a memorial, tomb and other honours, besides a memorial in his hometown of Solapur.

India released a special postage stamp (1993) in his honour, the renowned filmmaker V. Shantaram made a biopic "Dr. Kotnis Ki Amar Kahania (1946) and a Chinese film "Ke Di Hua Dai Fu" (1982).

Successful Indian Presidents and Prime Ministers as well as top Chinese leaders have remembered Dr. Kotnis and his family in Maharashtra, and his selfless services to the Chinese people in their time of need.



Heavy vehicles restricted in Worli on Dec 10, traffic police issues order

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The Mumbai Traffic Police on Friday issued traffic restrictions in Worli traffic division ahead of 'Feeding India Concert' at Mahalaxmi Racecourse on Dec 10.

In the traffic notification, the police said that the entry is restricted for heavy vehicles on Dec 10 between 9.00 hrs to 24.00 hrs on Annie Basant Road, E Mozes Road, Senapati Bapat Road and Khan Abdul Gafar Khan Road.

The order issued by Gaurav Singh, DCP traffic, Mumbai said, on December 10, 'Feeding India Concert' - a Musical event is being organised at the Mahalaxmi Racecourse and large number of crowd is expected to attend the event which may lead to traffic congestion on the roads leading towards programme venue in the Worli



traffic division. It said, in order to minimize traffic congestion in the area, entry of heavy vehicles needs to be restricted by issuing an order on a temporary basis and to prevent any danger, obstruction and incon-

venience to the public the entry of heavy vehicles is restricted in the area.

The order further said that, whatever notification issued for Mumbai city in the past pertaining to heavy vehicles will remain intact.



**Kristen Stewart Selected as President of International Jury**



Berlin | Agencies

Kristen Stewart has been selected as president of the international jury at next year's Berlin International Film Festival. The actor, who shot to fame in films including "Panic Room" and "Twilight," is known for her body of acting work, including recently her portrayal of Princess Diana in "Spencer," for which she was nominated for an Oscar. She is set to make her feature-length directorial debut with "The Chronology of Water," a film adaptation of the novel of the same name by Lidia Yuknavitch. She made her Berlinale debut in 2010 with the independent production "Welcome to the Rileys" alongside director Jake Scott. She also appeared at this year's Cannes Film Festival, in support of David Cronenberg's "Crimes of the Future," in which she plays an employee at the transplant center. The gory film saw multiple people walk out during the screening but also earned a 7-minute standing ovation. "We're excited about Kristen Stewart taking on this distinguished task," said festival directors Mariette Rissenbeek and Carlo Chatrian. "She's one of the most talented and multi-faceted actors of her generation. From Bella Swan to the Princess of Wales she has given life to everlasting characters. Young, shining and with an impressive body of work behind her, Kristen Stewart is the perfect bridge between US and Europe." Stewart is also currently working on a paranormal reality series, for which she recently issued an open casting call. She is exec producing the project, which focuses on LGBTQ+ ghosthunters. She is also working on a project with her fiancée, screenwriter Dylan Meyer, with the duo writing an as yet unnamed TV series.



**JERROD CARMICHAEL TO HOST GOLDEN GLOBE AWARDS**

Los Angeles | Agencies

Emmy-winning comedian Jerrod Carmichael has signed up to host the 80th Golden Globe Awards. "We're so excited to have Jerrod Carmichael host the historic 80th Golden Globe Awards," HFPA president Helen Hoehne said in a statement. "His comedic talents have entertained and thrilled audiences while providing thought-provoking moments that are so important in the times we live. Jerrod is the special kind of talent this show calls for to kick off the awards season." It's a homecoming of sorts for Carmichael, who starred in three seasons of the critically acclaimed sitcom "The Carmichael Show" on NBC from 2015 to 2017. More recently, he guest hosted an episode of NBC's "Saturday Night Live" (SNL) in April. Carmichael received an Emmy nomination this year in the guest actor in a comedy series category for his SNL hosting gig. But his big win at the Emmys this past September was for his landmark HBO Max comedy special "Jerrod Carmichael: Rothaniel," for which he earned the award for writing in a comedy special. Carmichael will helm the three-hour telecast on Tuesday, January 10, 2023, in California. Like Carmichael, Collins also just won an Emmy in September - as the producer behind "The Pepsi Super Bowl LVI Halftime Show Starring Dr. Dre, Snoop Dogg, Mary J. Blige, Eminem, Kendrick Lamar, 50 Cent." "Jerrod is a phenomenal talent with a fresh perspective and excellent comedic style," said exec producer Jesse Collins, who also serves as CEO of Jesse Collins Entertainment. "We're all thrilled to have him host this year's show."

**UK royals had a problem with Meghan's acting career, reveals doc series**

Los Angeles | Agencies

The first three episodes of 'Harry & Meghan', the highly-anticipated Netflix docuseries about Prince Harry and his wife Meghan, the Duchess of Sussex, dropped on Thursday after a frenzy of speculative reporting in the British media about the content and how damaging it would be for King Charles III and Prince William, reports. None of the royal members agreed to be interviewed for the series, which contains a number of revelations on the Harry-Meghan love story -- they met over Instagram and Harry was late for his first date! -- and also about the early bumps in their relationship with the family. The first three episodes, however, do not contain anything that may upset the royal family, but it carries footage from Princess Diana's controversial 'Panorama' interview with the now-disgraced BBC journalist Martin Bashir, which, 'Variety' notes, is "likely to anger" the Prince of Wales. It emerged last year that the interview had been secured via fraudulent



means. Earlier this year BBC publicly apologised to William and Harry, and donated the \$1.6 million it earned from the interview. Prince William had then said: "It is my firm view that this 'Panorama' programme holds no legitimacy and should never be aired again." In the docuseries, Harry says: "I think we all now know that [Diana] was deceived into giving the inter-

view, but at the same time she spoke the truth of her experience." Harry and Meghan also reveal it was Meghan's career as an actor -- at the time she was appearing in the long-running legal drama series "Suits" -- that was one of the "biggest problems" for the royals. Unnamed members of the family reportedly predicted to Harry that the relationship wouldn't last.

**Kate Winslet breaks Tom Cruise's breath-holding record**

Los Angeles | Agencies

Actress Kate Winslet has beaten Hollywood star Tom Cruise's record after she held her breath for a staggering seven minutes and 15 seconds while filming 'Avatar: The Way Of Water'. The average person can hold their breath for roughly one or two minutes.

The actress, who plays Ronal in the highly anticipated sequel stayed underwater for seven minutes and 15 seconds.

Cruise famously held his breath for six minutes on the set of 'Mission: Impossible - Rogue Nation'.

Winslet was so chuffed with her aquatics skills that she got her husband to video the scene after she sneaked him on set during production.

Speaking at a global press conference ahead of the film's launch she said: "I actually have a video of when I surface from that breath-hold. And the only reason I have it is because my husband snuck in."

"I said, 'Please don't come because I just don't want you videoing. I'll just feel pressure, just please don't do that' and he snuck in."

She continued: "I have the video of me surfacing saying, 'Am I dead? Have I died?' And then going 'what was it?' - straightaway I wanted to know my time. I couldn't believe that it was 7.15 but

having been told it's 7.15 - you want to know what the next thing I say is? We need to radio set."

"I wanted James to know right way, that's the first thing I wanted to do - it definitely wasn't a competition."

The Avatar sequel has reunited Kate and director James Cameron on set for the first time since the 1997 blockbuster Titanic.

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London | Agencies

Katherine Jenkins wore two stylish outfits as she marked her 50th performance at the Royal Albert Hall with friends including Sir Cliff Richard and Andy Serkis on Thursday night. The opera singer, donned a glittering white gown for one part of her show, called Christmas with Katherine. She later changed into an off-the-shoulder red ball dress with puffed sleeves for her concert which was part of the Christmas at the Royal Albert Hall season. Both of her frocks cinched in at the waist and tumbled down to the floor in beautiful ballgown style. Her hair tumbled into loose waves over her shoulders and she kept her make-up simple. Katherine opted for golden eyeshadow with a sweep of pale pink lipstick while she accessorised with beautiful dangling silver earrings. She sang festive favourites including Joy to the World, I Wish You Christmas and White Christmas. Later, Katherine embraced Sir Cliff, and smiled before they duetted some of his classics including Saviour's Day, reports dailymail.co.uk. She was also seen grinning as Andy Serkis, played the saxophone for her.



**Katherine Jenkins marks her 50th performance at the Royal Albert Hall**

**ABSOLUTE PIC OF THE DAY**



Christine Quinn



## FIFA World Cup

# CROATIA STUN BRAZIL IN PENALTY SHOOTOUT TO REACH SEMIS

Doha | Agencies

Neymar drew level with football legend Pele's record of 77 Brazil goals with his effort against Croatia on Friday but that was not enough for the South Americans to take them to the next stage of the FIFA World Cup.

Instead, Neymar's team crashed out of the football showpiece event after going down 4-2 to 2018 runners-up Croatia in the penalty shootout.

At the Education City Stadium on Friday the teams were locked goalless at the end of the normal period of play and both teams found the back of the nets in the 30 minutes of extra time. Brazil scored first with Neymar scoring a gem of a goal in the 105th minute only to find Croatia fighting it back to draw level in the 117th minute through Bruno Petkovic and take the 120



minutes to clash into a penalty shootout.

Dominik Livakovic in goal for Croatia was once again brilliant. He will likely be a contender for the best goalkeeper of the World Cup award.

In the penalty shootout, Croatia keeper Livakovic, who had done a splendid job in the normal period of play and extra-time, pulled off brilliant saves once again during the penalty shootout to give the Croatians their

second successive win in the tie-break, having earlier similarly defeated Asian giants Japan the last-16 clash.

Rodrygo and Marquinhos missed from the spot from Brazil, while Nikola Vlasic, Lovro Majer, Luka Modric and Mislav Orsic converted all four penalties taken by Croatia.

A scare, however, came in extra time, when Neymar scored a stunner that seemed to send the five-time champions into the next stage, but it

was not to be. Neymar scored in extra-time after a superb run into the penalty area and one-two with Rodrygo and Lucas Pacheta, rounding goalkeeper Livakovic and firing high into the net from a right angle. Croatia didn't settle for defeat and were gifted a counter-attack, which was concluded by Petkovic. His weak shot was deflected by Brazilian defender Marquinhos into the net to make the shoot-out decide.

## IND vs AUS 1st T20I

# Australia Women thrash India Women by 9 wickets, take 1-0 series lead

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Australia Women produced a dominant performance to hammer India Women by nine wickets in the first T20I to take a 1-0 lead in the five-match series at D.Y. Patil Stadium, here on Friday.

Brilliant quickfire knocks by Deepti Sharma (36 not out off 15) and Richa Ghosh (36 off 20) propelled India Women to 172/5 in 20 overs. Apart from Deepti and Richa, the likes of Shafali Verma (21 off 10), Smriti Mandhana (28 off 22), and Harmanpreet Kaur (21 off 23) got decent starts but couldn't convert to big innings.

In reply, opener Beth Mooney (89 not out off 57) played a sensational knock and led Australia's domination throughout the innings.

Mooney was well supported by Tahlia McGrath (40 not out off 29) and Alyssa Healy (37 off 23) as Australia chased down the target quite comfortably in overs with nine wickets in hand.

Devika Vaidya (1/33) was the lone wicket-taker for India, who were ordinary with the ball as well in the fielding. Earlier, put into bat first, Shafali Verma smacked 21 runs off 10 balls to



give India a flying start before falling to Elyse Perry in the third over. After Shafali's wicket, Smriti Mandhana continued the charge and hit a few boundaries to continue the momentum.

India were four down for 76 in the 12th over, when Richa Ghosh walked out to bat and changed the complexion of the game. She stitched a quickfire half-century partnership with Devika Vaidya (25 not out), which got India going.

### Brief scores

India Women Innings 172/5 in 20 overs (Deepti Sharma 36 not out, Richa Ghosh 36; Elyse Perry 2-10) lost to Australia Women 173/1 in 18.1 overs (Beth Mooney 89 not out, Tahlia McGrath 40 not out; Devika Vaidya 1-33) by 9 wickets.

## BWF World Tour Finals

# Prannoy beats Axelsen to end campaign on a winning note

Bangkok (Thailand) | Agencies

India's HS Prannoy ended his campaign in the Badminton World Federation (BWF) World Tour Finals 2022 on a happy note with a superb victory against World No.1 Viktor Axelsen of Denmark in a Group Stage match at Court 1 in Nimibutr Arena on Friday.

Prannoy, who is out of contention for a spot in the semifinals after losing his previous matches against Japan's Kodai Naraoka and Lu Guang Zu of China, respectively in the four-player Group A, defeated Axelsen in three games, winning 14-21, 21-17, 21-18 in nearly one-hour encounter in his maiden appearance in the year-end extravaganza. With nothing to lose playing against



the World No.1, Prannoy started the match on equal footing against the Danish shuttler. However, from 5-5, Axelsen raced ahead by winning five straight points and eventually took a 1-0 lead. Ranked 12th in the world, Prannoy was trailing 10-6 in the second game before he mounted a comeback. The Indian badminton player then engaged in longer rallies and got Axelsen to make a few unforced errors to win the sec-

ond game 21-17 and take the match into the decider.

Prannoy, who qualified for his maiden BWF World Tour Finals on the back of some strong performances, lost his previous two group matches from a winning position, going down in the decider. On Friday, he kept his composure to build a five-point lead from 12-12 onwards. Axelsen tried to fight back strongly but Prannoy kept his nerve and closed out the game and match.

Friday's win helped Prannoy, who helped India win the Thomas Cup gold earlier this year, finishing third on the BWF World Tour Finals standings and also maintained his position in the top 15 of the badminton world rankings.

## ENG vs PAK 2nd Test Day 1

# PAKISTAN SPINNER ABRAR SHINES ON DEBUT

Multan | Agencies

Pakistan spinner Abrar Ahmed impressed with the ball on his debut, claiming 7 for 114 on the first day of the second Test against England at the Multan Cricket Stadium, here on Friday.

The leg-spinner's 7/114 is the third-best haul in an innings by a Pakistan bowler in their first Test. He is the 22nd bowler in men's Tests to take seven wickets or more in an innings on debut.

Abrar cleaned up Zak Crawley in his first over with a sharp googly to break the opening stand, but went on to concede 11 runs off his next over as England continued to attack.

After five overs, Abrar had conceded 39 runs as Ben Duckett and Ollie Pope put up a good partnership. He himself broke the stand in the 19th over by trapping Duckett in front. He followed it up with the big wicket of Joe Root, trapped LBW with another



superb leg-break. Ollie Pope holed out trying a reverse sweep and Harry Brook fell attempting a loft as Abrar completed a five-wicket haul in the morning session. He became just the second Pakistan bowler after Wahab Riaz to take a five-for on his first day of Test cricket.

The spinner added two more after lunch to take each of the first seven wickets before Zahid Mahmood broke any chance the leggie had to take all 10, taking the remaining three wickets.

Abrar's dream debut came after a solid showing in the Quaid-e-Azam Trophy for Sindh in 2022. The leg-spinner, whose variations have stood out so far in his career, took 43 wickets in the season, the most by any bowler, with five five-wicket hauls and a ten-for. His stunning debut saw England bowled out for 281 after a promising start that had seen them get to 117/1.

## IND vs BAN ODI Series

# RAHUL TO CAPTAIN IN ROHIT'S ABSENCE, KULDEEP YADAV ADDED IN THE SQUAD

Chattogram | Agencies

Left-arm wrist-spinner Kuldeep Yadav has been added to India's squad for the third and final ODI against Bangladesh, with KL Rahul to captain the side in Rohit Sharma's absence, said the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI).

Yadav was initially named in India's Test squad for the two-match series against Bangladesh, starting from December 14. But with fast-bowlers Kuldeep Sen and Deepak Chahar ruled out due to injuries, he had to be called up for the third and final ODI against Bangladesh.

Yadav had been in India's squad on tour of New Zealand, but did not get any match to play. He last played in an ODI against South Africa at New Delhi on October 11, picking 4/18 and got the Player of the Match



award for playing a pivotal role in a 2-1 series victory for the hosts.

BCCI has said that Rohit has now

flown back home to Mumbai for specialist consultation and will miss the final ODI. BCCI added that a call on

his availability for the upcoming two-match Test series against Bangladesh will be taken later.

In the post-match presentation ceremony of 2nd ODI, Rohit admitted his thumb isn't in good condition, but conceded that too many injury concerns in the Indian team were not ideal. With Bangladesh having an unassailable 2-0 lead, India will be aiming to sign off from the series on a high in the third and final ODI set to happen at the Zahur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium (ZACS) in Chattogram on Saturday. India's squad for 3rd ODI against Bangladesh: KL Rahul (C) (WK), Shikhar Dhawan, Virat Kohli, Rajat Patidar, Shreyas Iyer, Rahul Tripathi, Ishan Kishan (WK), Shabbaz Ahmed, Axar Patel, Washington Sundar, Shardul Thakur, Mohammed Siraj, Umran Malik, Kuldeep Yadav.

## PGA Tour Champions Q-School

# Randhawa and Singh trail going into final round

Scottsdale (Arizona) | Agencies

India's Jyoti Randhawa and Jeev Milkha Singh have an uphill battle in trying to secure a PGA Tour Champions card for 2023 following the conclusion of the third round on Thursday.

Randhawa carded his week's best of 5-under 66 featuring six birdies against a lone bogey at TPC Scottsdale but his three-day total of 4-under 209 puts him in a share of 26th position, some eight shots back of players currently in position to win the five Champions cards at stake this week. A level par 71 in the



third round will see Singh entering the final day in tied 32nd position on 2-under for the tournament. While a top-5 finish may be out of their reach, players finishing sixth through 30th will be eligible

to apply for PGA Tour Champions Associate Membership for the 2023 season, which will afford them the opportunity to enter 2023 PGA Tour Champions weekly event qualifiers.

## BARTY AWARDED AUSTRALIAN SPORT'S HIGHEST HONOUR

Canberra:

Retired tennis star Ashleigh Barty has been awarded Australian sport's highest individual honour for a second time.

At the annual Sport Australia Hall of Fame event on Thursday night Barty became the third person to win The Don Award -- named after cricket great Don Bradman -- multiple times. Entering 2022 as the world No. 1, Barty in January became the first homegrown Australian Open singles champion since 1978. Less than two months later, the three-time Grand Slam champion announced her shock retirement from tennis at the age of 25, reports.

The Don is awarded to the athlete or team that most inspired Australia through their performance and example.

Barty, who previously won in 2019, joins Olympic gold medalists Steve Hooker and Sally Pearson as multiple winners. Middle and long distance runner Ron Clarke, who set 17 world records in a highly decorated career, and Shane Warne, widely regarded as one of the greatest bowlers in the history of cricket, who died in March aged 52, were posthumously elevated to legend status in the hall of fame.



# BCCI launches campaign to promote women's cricket in India

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) and Mastercard, the current title sponsor of all international and domestic men's and women's matches in India, on Friday announced that they have jointly launched the #HalkeMeinMattLo (don't take it casually) campaign as part of their ongoing endeavour to support gender equality on and off the field.

The films developed under the campaign depict the journey of top Indian women cricketers -- opener Shafali Verma, all-rounder Harleen Kaur Deol and fast-bowler Renuka Singh Thakur --, highlighting their struggle, hard work and determination to do well.

"India and Australia are among the top teams in world cricket and the contests between these teams have been quite thrilling. Each of their last few games has gone down to the wire and I



am sure we will get to witness some top-quality cricketing action in Mumbai as the two teams meet again."

"We are happy to partner with Mastercard for the campaign, which will bring out the stories of hard work, sacrifices and dedication. We want to encourage young girls to pursue cricket as a passion and a career option," said Jay Shah, Honorary Secretary, BCCI, in an official statement. The

#HalkeMeinMattLo campaign is designed to break stereotypes by presenting the achievements of women cricketers at both national and international levels and highlighting their commitment and passion towards the game. The campaign will run during the India-Australia Women's five-match T20I series to be played in Mumbai from December 9-20, 2022. The first two matches will be played in DY Patil Stadium, while next three matches would take place in Brabourne Stadium. India women's team, led by Harmanpreet Kaur, will be playing in a home series after almost 21 months, with their last series at home coming against South Africa in March 2021.

They face a formidable challenge in the Alyssa Healy-led Australia side, who are current holders of T20 and ODI World Cups as well as gold medalists in 2022 Birmingham Commonwealth Games.

## I AM HAPPY TO END 2022 AS WORLD NO 2: SHUTTLEUR SUKANT KADAM

New Delhi | Indian para shuttler Sukant Kadam has achieved world no 2 ranking in SL 4 category following his exploits in the international circuit in the last few months.

The ace shuttler finished the year with gold at the recently concluded Peru Para-Badminton International in Lima. He also won a bronze medal at the BWF Para World Badminton championships in Tokyo in November.

The ace shuttler is behind France's Lucas Mazur who is currently world and Paralympic champion in SL4. Talking about the same Sukant Kadam said, "I am really excited on becoming world no 2, I have put in a lot of hard work in the training which showed in the results that I achieved which helped me to be world no 2."

"It is a great to end 2022 being world no 2; this will only motivate me to work harder. But the Jobs not finished as 2023 is very important year which includes Asian Para Games and also Paralympics Qualifications. I wish to improve on my performance and continue performing at this high level."



## I WANT TO BE KNOWN BY MY CHARACTER NAMES: VARUN SHARMA

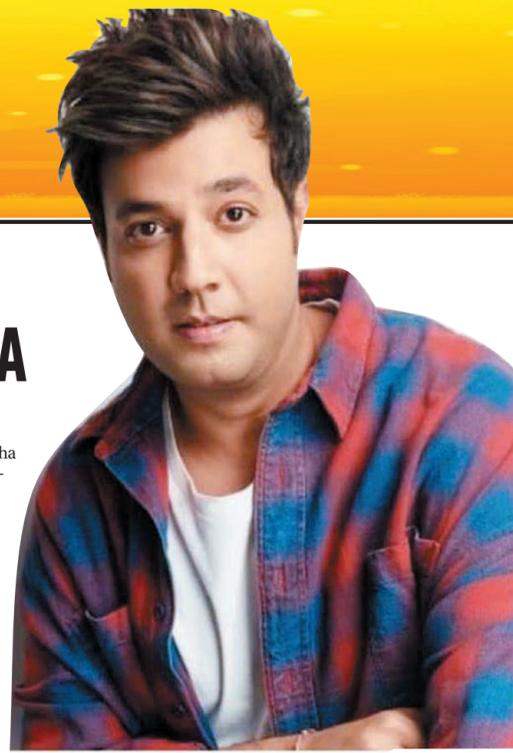
Team Absolute | Mumbai

After five years in Hindi film industry, actor Varun Sharma, who is popularly known for his roles as Choocha from 'Fukrey' and Sexa from 'Chhichhore', said that his biggest win would be being known by his characters' names more than his own.

Talking about his most loved character Choocha, that's also become his colloquial name, the actor said: "Our common madness is what drove the film and while shooting it this time around, I realised, we haven't changed a bit. The energy of the Fukrey set is still as mad and unmatched."

"There is such great love for my characters - like Choocha (Fukrey) and Sexa (Chhichhore) which is so beautiful for me. I want to be known by my character names more than my own name and that will be my biggest win. It's the toughest to put a smile on anyone's face and I am glad I make people laugh."

Now that the actor is busy with Cirkus promotions, he said: "I am ending the year with the biggest film of my life. It's a special experience working with Rohit Shetty Sir and Ranveer Singh. With Fukrey finishing 5 years now in the midst of Cirkus promotions, I am just amazed at how far life has come and how much love has come my way." "I am eternally grateful for it all. My comments section of the post is flooded with requests for the third part. I've finished our shoot and the film will be out soon. The film is a piece of our hearts and I can't wait for the world to watch it."



## KASHIKA KAPOOR

MAKES HER B'WOOD DEBUT

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actress Kashika Kapoor, who was seen in the web series 'The Vibe Hunters', is all set to make her Bollywood debut with director Pradip Khairwair's next film, a romantic-comedy.

She said: "Finally, now that I am able to speak about it and by the grace of Ganpati Bappa, I am ready to begin working on my first Bollywood movie. My movie is scheduled to start shooting by the end of next week, and I am beyond excited about the chance. I've always pictured myself acting in my first Bollywood movie at the age of 20, and with this movie, my dream is finally coming true."

"We took a lot of time to understand and develop each aspect of my personality for this part. For my role, I have been attending workshops constantly, and it has been a fascinating experience," she added.

Pradeep is known for films such as 'Sarkar 3', 'Blind Love', and many others, and is now coming up with another project which is still untitled.

"The movies will cover a very delicate subject that is girl education with a strong message that will be sent to young people, but the story will also take many unexpected turns. I will be sharing screen with Anuj Saini and I am really excited about it," said Kashika.



## I want to do things for myself: Malaika Arora

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Malaika Arora spoke about how she copes with all the pressure and said that now she wants to do things for herself. She said: "Personally, I've become a certain way because I'm very conscious about people's perception and what they will say, how will it be taken, hurting people's feelings...there's a constant battle over there."

Malaika, who is dating actor Arjun Kapoor added: "I feel I want to go against the grain for a change now. I want to do things for myself, I want to push the envelope."

Malaika spoke about Arjun at length and said that she is not ruining his life by dating him.

She said: "And unfortunately not only am I old, I am also dating a younger man. I mean I have guts. I mean I am ruining his life, right? I am not ruining his life."

"It's not like he was going to school and he couldn't focus on studies and I told him to come with me. I mean, every time we are on a date, it's not like he is bunking classes. I didn't catch him on the street while he was catching Pokemon."

Malaika said that Arjun is "a goddam grown up man." "We are two consenting adults. If an older man dates a younger girl, he is a player. But if an older woman dates a younger man, she is a cougar. This is not fair."

Malaika has made her digital debut with Disney+ Hotstar. She is set to give fans access to her life through unfiltered conversations in an all-new show, 'Moving In With Malaika'. Created by Banijay Asia and Malaika Arora, the series is streaming now.

## Genelia grooves to the classic 'Mera Dil Yeh Pukare Aaja'

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Bollywood actress Genelia D'Souza will be seen grooving on the latest version of the classic song 'Mera Dil Yeh Pukare Aaja' originally sung by legendary singer Lata Mangeshkar, which is currently trending on social media. She made her appearance on 'Indian Idol 13'. As the actress came along with her husband and actor Riteish Deshmukh to promote their upcoming film 'Ved', the actress added more elements of entertainment in the show by grooving to the remix in her own style. Riteish made his directorial debut with 'Ved'. Apart from her amazing dance moves, contestants Shivam Singh and Senjuti Da will be seen giving performance on the song 'Pehla Nasha' from the film 'Jo Jeeta Wohi Sikandar' and 'Ghum Hain Kisi Ke Pyaar Mein' from the film 'Rampur Ka Lakshman'.

After their romantic performance, Genelia said: "I am in love with your performance. Both of these songs are closest to my heart. It takes me back to those moments of life when we cherish little things about love." Shivam also added: "Love is really a special feeling and it's a responsibility. I still haven't fallen in love but people who fall in love automatically start losing two or three friends in their life. It has happened with my friends."

## FOR ME, WORKOUT IS TO STAY FIT & HEALTHY: AMAN GANDHI



Team Absolute | Mumbai

'Bhagya Lakshmi' actor Aman Gandhi is a fitness freak and despite his busy schedule, he makes sure to never miss his workout and tries to maintain a balanced diet. He spoke about how he does this.

Aman said: "I have always believed in maintaining a work-life balance, but it gets very difficult for us to take out time for our personal things with a hectic shoot schedule."

He added that he never goes to gym alone and is always joined by his co-actor and friend Rohit Suchanti. "Over time Rohit and I have bonded very well and being fitness enthusiasts, we have come a long way. We share our workout routines, diet plans, and some healthy food recipes," he said. He said that it is always fun to workout with a friend or someone sharing the same interest and that is why he and Rohit often train together, even during shoots.

According to the actor, for him daily exercises are not just for losing weight but are also important for a healthy body and mind.

"For many people working out is about losing weight or gaining muscles but for me, it is to stay fit and healthy. We both believe in maintaining a regular workout schedule despite the long working hours of our shoot," he shared.

## INSTAGRAM PIC OF THE DAY



Deepika Padukone

## Salaam Venky makes you cry through Conditioning, not by Content



### FILM REVIEW

BY SHACHI CHATURVEDI

**Director:** Revathi

**Cast:** Kajol, Vishal Jethwa, Rahul Bose, Ahana Kumra & Rajeev Khandelwal

**Runtime:** 2 hr 17 mins

**Ratings:** 2.5/5

**Synopsis:** Based on a true story. Venkatesh has Muscular Dystrophy, a degenerative condition that limits his life to 16 years. Venkatesh's resilience and boundless human spirit overcome the barriers, astounding medical science. He becomes a hero among his peers at the end of his life, at the age of 24. Venkatesh, who wants to give his organs before he dies, defies the authorities and the law and wins a place in everyone's hearts in just 15 days.

**Review:** The film opens with a heart-breaking scene in which Sujata (Kajol) is bringing her son Venkatesh (Venky (Vishal)) to the hospital, where his condition is deter-



ating. The youngster has Duchenne muscular dystrophy, a rare illness in which the nervous system of the body eventually fails.

"Zindagi lambi nahi badi honi chahiye," he feels. The youngster wants to donate his organs in order to save other lives and fulfill

his right to die with dignity. The story of the movie is powerful and heart-touching but the movie has been made in a way that you should cry. Seeing a child dying in his mother's lap is devastating but Revathi has failed to put the proper portrayal of the story.

It lacks the necessary build-up and emotional context. Although the subject is compelling, the manner in which it is presented is overwhelming.

In terms of performances, Vishal does well in the film. Despite the fact that the sequences need a lot of passion, he goes overboard there, yet he does justice to Venky.

Kajol's character plays one of the leading parts in film. Although, she acts effectively throughout the film, when a situation calls for powerful emotions, she chooses to yell rather than work on them.

The film's background score gets thumbs up for being good enough to set the tone.

In technical aspects, this film needs tighter editing and more effort in screenplay execution. Otherwise, the camera work is satisfactory.

**Conclusion:** A great tale has been adopted but poorly handled. It may be a one-time watch, but there is no harm in skipping it.