

absolute india

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Malaysia Open: Chirag-Satwik pair and HS Prannoy march...



Upcoming spell of cold wave extreme, never seen temperature go this low: Expert



▶ THE INDIA METEOROLOGICAL DEPARTMENT ON THURSDAY PREDICTED THAT THE COLD WAVE CONDITIONS WERE VERY LIKELY IN ISOLATED POCKETS OVER PUNJAB, HARYANA, CHANDIGARH AND DELHI AND RAJASTHAN DURING JANUARY 15TH-17TH. HOWEVER, A WEATHER EXPERT SAID THAT THE UPCOMING SPELL OF COLD WAVE IN INDIA FROM JANUARY 14-19 WAS GOING TO BE EXTREME 2023.

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The national capital and the adjoining NCR have reeled under a cold wave over the past week with temperatures dipping to as low as 1.9 degree Celsius. "Don't know how to put this up but upcoming spell of Coldwave in India look really extreme during 14-19th January 2023 with peak on 16-18th, Never seen temperature ensemble going this low in a prediction model so far in my

career," tweeted Navdeep Dahiya, founder LiveWxIndia. "Also to note this is a historic run so far in 11 days of Jan with the next few days look really cold, January 2023 can be historically coldest - maybe for the 21st century so far," he said in another tweet. Talking to reporter, he said that the upcoming cold wave will be like freezing. States like Punjab, Rajasthan and some pockets of Haryana will see the temperature dipping below to -4 degree Celsius, while the capital city may witness

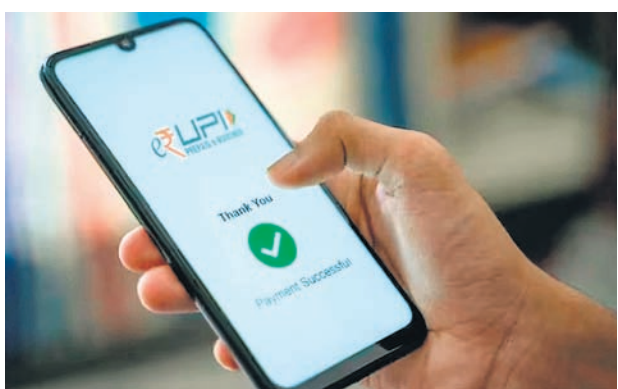
1 degree Celsius. Meanwhile, the IMD has said that due to the continuation of prevailing light winds and high moisture near the surface over the Indo-Gangetic plains, dense to very dense fog is likely in isolated pockets during night and morning hours over Uttar Pradesh and Bihar during the next five days. The dense fog is likely to prevail in isolated pockets during night and morning hours over Sub-Himalayan West Bengal, Assam and Meghalaya and Tripura during the next 24 hours.

10 COUNTRIES WILL SOON LET NRIS MAKE UPI PAYMENTS

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The NPCI (National Payments Corporation of India) has recently declared that Non-Resident Indians (NRIs) with bank accounts in India, but with international mobile numbers, can now make UPI payments.

The organisation which manages UPI payments and developments stated in a circular that account holders with international mobile numbers from 10 countries will be able to conduct transactions. The NPCI has instructed UPI participants like Paytm, Google Pay and others to implement the necessary changes by April 30. However, the UPI system will initially be accessible to individuals with NRE-NRO accounts and international mobile numbers from only certain countries. As of now, NRIs from 10 countries can make use of UPI. Talking about the initiative, NPCI said, "All the members are hereby advised to comply with the above directives by 30th April 2023." Additionally, NPCI has stated that all standard onboarding and transaction level checks outlined in current UPI guidelines will apply to these accounts. UPI was introduced in India in August 2016 by the NPCI.



These countries are:

- ▶ Australia: +61
- ▶ Canada: +1
- ▶ Hong Kong: +852
- ▶ Oman: +968
- ▶ Qatar: +974
- ▶ Saudi Arabia: +966
- ▶ Singapore: +65
- ▶ United Arab Emirates: +971
- ▶ United Kingdom: +44
- ▶ USA: +1

TO PROVIDE UPI SERVICES TO NRIS, MEMBER BANKS OF THE UPI ECOSYSTEM MUST ADHERE TO THE FOLLOWING CONDITIONS:

- ▶ ENSURE THAT NRE/NRO ACCOUNTS WITH INTERNATIONAL MOBILE NUMBERS ARE IN COMPLIANCE WITH EXISTING FOREIGN EXCHANGE MANAGEMENT ACT (FEMA) REGULATIONS AND ANY GUIDELINES/INSTRUCTIONS ISSUED BY THE RESERVE BANK OF INDIA (RBI).
- ▶ UNDERTAKE NECESSARY ANTI-MONEY LAUNDERING (AML)/COMBATING OF FINANCING OF TERRORISM (CFT) CHECKS.
- ▶ THE COMPLIANCE VALIDATION AND ACCOUNT LEVEL VALIDATION AS PER REGULATORY GUIDELINES WILL BE THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE REMITTER AND BENEFICIARY BANKS.
- ▶ CREATING A UPI ID ON A PLATFORM LIKE GOOGLE PAY REQUIRES USERS TO SUBMIT THEIR BANK ACCOUNT INFORMATION AND A 10-DIGIT MOBILE NUMBER. UPI IDs IN PAYMENT APPS SUCH AS PAYTM TYPICALLY CONSIST OF THE USER'S PHONE NUMBER, FOLLOWED BY "@UPI" OR "@PAYTM" FOR EXAMPLE, XXXXXXXXXX@PAYTM.
- ▶ THE NATIONAL PAYMENTS CORPORATION OF INDIA (NPCI) REPORTED THAT AS OF DECEMBER 2022, IT HAS 382 PARTNER BANKS. RECENTLY, UPI PAYMENTS REACHED A RECORD HIGH OF ₹ 12.82 LAKH CRORE. AS PER THE DEPARTMENT OF FINANCIAL SERVICES (DFS), 782 CRORE TRANSACTIONS WERE CONDUCTED IN VOLUME TERMS IN DECEMBER 2022.

RETAIL INFLATION FALLS TO 1-YEAR LOW OF 5.72% IN DEC, FACTORY OUTPUT RISES TO 7% IN NOV



New Delhi: Retail inflation for December 2022 fell to a year's low of 5.72 per cent, mainly due to low food prices, especially those of fruits and vegetables. This is the second consecutive month when it has remained within the RBI's tolerance band of 2 per cent to 6 per cent. The consumer price index (CPI) based inflation was at 5.88 per cent in November 2022, according to data released by the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation on Thursday. In October 2022, it was at a higher band of 6.77 per cent. Food inflation stood at 4.19 per cent in December 2022, lesser than 4.67 per cent level of November 2022, as per the official data. Apart from fruits and vegetables, prices of oils and fats as well as meat and fish also fell in December 2022 compared to November 2022. Meanwhile, factory output, which is measured in terms of index of industrial production (IIP), rose 7.1 per cent in November 2022 as against 4 per cent in October 2022, government data

After Joshimath, cracks in Karnaprayag houses trigger panic

Karnaprayag | Agencies

After Joshimath, now cracks have appeared in several houses in Karnaprayag of Uttarakhand's Chamoli district, forcing at least 70 families to leave their houses. Cracks in houses in Bahuguna Nagar of Karnaprayag Municipality triggered panic among the locals, after which the civic body sought help from Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami. Apart from Bahuguna Nagar, several houses in Upper Bazar ward of the town are also at risk. Meanwhile, a team of district administration inspected the affected areas in the town on Wednesday. Tehsildar Surendra Dev said that the administration had inspected the areas earlier also and had identified 27 unsafe buildings. Along with this, geological survey and major remediation plan were recommended. A team of IIT Roorkee has surveyed the areas twice, and the report of the same is awaited, he added. The official also said that unsafe structures will be identified and they will be evacuated. The report of Wednesday's inspection will be sent to DM and further action will be taken accordingly, Dev said.



AMIT SHAH HOLDS MEETING ON JOSHIMATH CRISIS

New Delhi: Union Home Minister Amit Shah called a meeting on Thursday over the Joshimath crisis. Union Ministers Nitin Gadkari, RK Singh, Bhupendra Yadav, Gajendra Shekhawat along with senior officers were present at the meeting. Home Secretary Ajay Bhalla, BRO and NDRF officials also participated. Shah had sought information about the situation in the holy city in a telephonic conversation with Uttarakhand Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami on Wednesday, and provided assurances of help. The Home Ministry and Amit Shah have been closely monitoring the Joshimath situation.

Army relocates Troops from Joshimath

New Delhi: India has relocated some troops from areas surrounding the sinking Himalayan town of Joshimath that's near the Line of Actual Control or LAC with China, Army Chief Manoj Pande said. "25 to 28 buildings of the army have developed minor cracks and the soldiers have been temporarily relocated," the Army chief said. If needed, said General Pande, the troops would be permanently relocated to Auli, he said. "We remain prepared to relocate more units if required, but our operational preparedness remains intact," General Pande said in an annual address. "There has been no impact on our readiness."

SECURITY BREACH AT HUBBALLI ROADSHOW AS YOUTH ATTEMPTS GARLANDING PM

Hubballi: An enthusiastic youth in his eagerness to hand over a garland to the Prime Minister, ended up causing a security scare here on Thursday. The security breach took place during the Prime Minister's roadshow.



Security personnel sprang into action and pulled the young man away. PM Modi who is in Hubballi to inaugurate the National Youth Festival, participated in the roadshow ahead of the function. People in large numbers had lined the route and accorded the Prime Minister a rousing welcome.

CBI RAIDS FORMER UNION FINANCE SECRETARY

New Delhi: The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) is conducting raids at the premises of former Finance Secretary Arvind Mayaram in Delhi and Jaipur in connection with a Prevention of Corruption Act case. Mayaram, a former IAS officer of the Rajasthan cadre and 1978 batch, is currently serving as an advisor to Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot. The raids are currently going on for last six hours. A CBI source said that a few incriminating documents have been recovered in the raids. As of now, the CBI has not given any official statement on the matter. No arrest has been made so far. Further details are awaited.

Over 70 lakh weddings likely in next six months, expenditure estimated at Rs 13L crore

As per estimates drawn by the Confederation of All India Traders (CAIT), around 70 lakh weddings will be solemnised all over the country during this period with a massive flow of about Rs 13 lakh crore by way of wedding purchases and utilisation of various marriage-related services.

- The wedding season will begin from January 15 and continue till June 27. This time, there are 53 auspicious dates for marriage.
- It is estimated that in Delhi alone, more than 7 lakh weddings will be solemnised with an estimated expenditure of about Rs 1.25 lakh crore.
- During November-December last year, 32 lakh marriages were solemnised all over the country with an expenditure of Rs 3.75 lakh crore.



Team Absolute | New Delhi

The trading community across the country is in an upbeat mood and hoping for much better business prospects as the next phase of wedding season commences on January 15. CAIT national president

B.C. Bhartia and secretary general Praveen Khandelwal informed that in the coming marriage season, about 10 lakh weddings will have an estimated expenditure of Rs 3 lakh per wedding, in about 10 lakh marriages, the expenditure per wedding will be around Rs 5 lakh, 15 lakh

weddings will cost Rs 10 lakh per marriage, 10 lakh weddings will have an expenditure of Rs 15 lakh each, 10 lakh marriages will cost Rs 25 lakh per wedding, 10 lakh wedding will cost Rs 35 lakh per marriage, 3 lakh marriages will have Rs 50 lakh expenditure per wedding, while 2 lakh marriages will each have an expense of Rs 1 crore or more. CAIT said that in view of the good business prospects during the wedding season, traders from across the country have made elaborate preparations, as they want to continue the sentiments emanated from the record business figures of last year's wedding season.

Your mobile calls may turn pricey in 2023

Team Absolute | Chennai

Mobile phone users are likely to shell out more for their calls with the service providers likely to increase their rates for 4G services, said BNP Paribas Securities in a sectoral report. According to the report, the telecom operators would also look to lift their average revenue per user (ARPU) from 5G subscribers by offering them larger data quota at a lower cost/GB. "For CY23, we expect double-digit revenue growth to continue for the industry, with the consolidation trend continuing," BNP Paribas said. "The 5G handsets remain expensive, and we will watch out for the introduction of a cheaper 5G device by Jio," it notes. "Delays in fundraising and its inability to invest in 5G could further erode VIL's (Vodafone Idea Ltd) competitive position among postpaid customers. Airtel appears well positioned to benefit from this, in our view. This, on the other hand, remains an overhang for Indus Towers. Airtel is yet to collect 75 per cent of its Rs 210 billion rights issue, which it is set

to collect in two tranches. We believe one of the tranches could potentially be collected in 2023," the report said. According to BNP Paribas, the capex in 2023 by the industry players is set to increase gradually as operators accelerate the pace of 5G network roll-out. "For Indus Towers, we expect 1.5k tower additions and lower q-q revenue and EBITDA as it saw a boost in 2QFY23 revenue from the settlement of old dues," the report said. As to the events that are likely to happen in 2023, BNP Paribas said the fund raise by VIL and the central government is likely to acquire a stake in the company. The company's debt exceeds Rs 2 trillion. The payables to some of its vendors have been delayed and its capex is well below its peers due to its ongoing liquidity issues. Moreover, VIL's efforts to raise funds have not yielded results. A partial conversion of its dues to the government into equity has also not fructified. Inability to pay vendors and invest in business could hurt its operations, especially its ability to retain high ARPU postpaid customers, the report said.



ADOPTED MEASURES TO CURB MENACE OF MONEY POWER IN ELECTION, WILL CONTINUE: EC TO SC

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Election Commission has informed the Supreme Court that it has time and again adopted various measures to curb the menace of money power in polls and one of the reasons for more money being seized today ahead of all elections is due to its increased vigilance and efforts.

The poll body's response came on a plea by Prabhakar Deshpande seeking directions to come up with a comprehensive plan to curb excessive poll spending by political parties and candidates, and action against erring candidates and parties.

The EC, in an affidavit, contended that such a mechanism already exists and it has substantially managed to curb excessive poll spending by political parties.

One of the reasons for more money being seized today is the increased vigilance and efforts, it said.

"The ECI has time and again adopted various measures to curb the menace of money power in elections and will continue to do so in future...", said an affidavit filed by



V.K. Pandey, Director, Law, EC.

The poll body emphasised that it is seriously concerned about the increasing use of money power in elections. "To curb this menace, the ECI has effectively and successfully enforced the Election Expenditure Monitoring mechanism in the elections since the general elections to Bihar Legislative Assembly, 2010. In

order to keep the election expenditure within the statutory limit prescribed under Rule 90 of the Conduct of Elections Rules, 1961 and also to curb excess expenditure/unaccounted expenditure, the ECI has introduced a robust mechanism for election expenditure monitoring during elections," it said in the affidavit. The poll body added that this

includes deployment of expenditure observers, video surveillance teams, video viewing teams, accounting teams, complaint monitoring and call centre, media certification, and monitoring committee, flying squads and static surveillance teams.

It further added that each candidate has to open a separate account for poll expenditure and maintain a register for day to day expenditure.

"The Election Expenditure Statements of National Political Parties and State Recognised Political Parties are uploaded on the website of the Election Commission of India and Chief Electoral Officer of State/UT concerned respectively.

"Incurring or authorising expenditure by a candidate in contravention of Section 77 of the Representation of the People Act, 1951 is a 'corrupt practice' under Section 123(6) of the Representation of the People Act, 1951," it added.

The EC contended that it requisition services of all law enforcement agencies and deploy their teams for election expenditure monitoring in poll-bound states and Union Territories.

Let's make 21st century the 'century of India': PM Modi



Hubballi | Agencies

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday called upon the citizens of the country to make the 21st century as "the century of India".

"We have to make the 21st century the century of India. The country has to be ahead of developed countries. Our world is going to change," PM Modi said on Thursday.

He said this while addressing the gathering after inau-

gurating the National Youth Festival in Hubballi in Karnataka.

PM Modi stated that the power of women is keeping the spirit of the country up. "Indian women are flying fighter jets. They have achieved new heights," he added.

In the last eight years, many programmes have been launched for the youth.

"We have created a great future for the youth. India is marching ahead in all sec-

tors," he said.

Youth power is the main reason for this. There is progressive development in all sectors. Money is flowing towards Indian startups. Foreign investment is also pouring in, PM Modi stated.

This phase is historical for the youth. Global industries are looking towards India.

"The runway is ready. Your take off is awaited. India is a country of youth. The country has the strength of youth," he said.

Punjab rakes up claim over river waters, Chandigarh



Chandigarh | Agencies

The 20th meeting of the Northern Zonal Council Standing Committee, dealing with inter-state issues of the northern states, on Thursday saw Punjab putting forward its case pertaining to its rights.

The meeting in Mohali near here saw officers from the Inter State Council

Secretariat of the Union Ministry of Home Affairs in attendance along with Chief Secretaries of Punjab, Haryana, Rajasthan, Himachal Pradesh, Delhi, Jammu and Kashmir, and Ladakh and Adviser to the UT Chandigarh, besides Secretaries of the different departments of Chandigarh. Punjab presented its viewpoint on whole gamut of sen-

sitive issues viz. river waters of Punjab, the state's right to Chandigarh and Panjab University, demand for a tribunal to assess current situation with regard to the river waters, increasing international flights from the Mohali airport, starting UDAN scheme from four airports, strengthening the international borders, uniform policy for purchasing land, etc.

In his inaugural speech, Punjab Chief Secretary Vijay Kumar Janjua battled for the cooperative federalism and said such meetings are the right platform for bringing to the fore inter-state matters and debate upon their solutions. He made it clear that as per the current state of river waters, Punjab itself is facing shortage of water, hence it doesn't have extra water to spare for the other states.

BOMB CALL GROUNDS SPICEJET'S DELHI-PUNE FLIGHT



New Delhi: A call claiming there was a bomb on Spicejet's Delhi-Pune flight sent security personnel at the IGI Airport into a tizzy on Thursday evening.

Soon after receiving the call, the Delhi Police personnel, and CISF officials immediately swung into action and the whole flight was thoroughly checked. A senior police official said that they didn't find any suspicious material. "Security drill was followed as per SOP. The flight was stopped," said the official. Further details are awaited.

Bihar Education Minister refuses to withdraw controversial statement on Ramcharitmanas

Patna | Agencies

Bihar Education Minister Chandrashekhar Yadav on Thursday refused to withdraw his controversial statement on Ramcharitmanas.

"There are five to six 'Chand' of Ramcharitmanas's Sundar Kand and Uttar Kand which are objectionable and I have objection to it. That's why I said that it spreads hatred in society. I am firm on it and will not withdraw at any cost. A person announced a Rs 10 crore bounty for slitting my tongue, I want to say that please, someone get rich by doing it," Yadav said.

"Ramcharitmanas spreads hatred in the society. It stops Dalit, Backward Class people and women from education. It stops equality for them in society. Manusmriti spread hatred in the first era, Ramcharitmanas in the second era and M.S. Golwarkar's 'Bunch of Thoughts' in third era," he said.

"If people would want to shoot me, they can do it but I will not withdraw my statement and cannot apologise," he further said.

Earlier, Ayodhya seer Jagadguru Paramhans Acharya announced a bounty of Rs 10 crore for anyone who slits the tongue of Chandrashekhar Yadav if he does not apologise for his statement in one week.

Meanwhile, Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar said



that he will ask the education minister for his comment on Ramcharitmanas. "I am in Darbhanga and I have no details about his actual statement," he said.

Union Minister Choubey faces stone-pelting in Bihar's Buxar

Patna | Agencies

Union Minister of State for Environment, Forest, and Climate Change Ashwini Kumar Choubey had to flee the protest site in Bihar's Buxar after farmers pelted stones on his convoy on Thursday afternoon.

As per videos uploaded on social media, Choubey, after reaching the protest site, faced stiff resistance from agitating farmers, who pelted stones on him and his convoy. The situation reached such a stage when Choubey had to hurriedly move away to save himself. Police rescued him and took him to his car.

The farmers were protesting for 86 days now to seek compensation, according to the fresh circle rate, of their lands in Banarpur village under Chausa block after a thermal power com-



pany had acquired them. They turned violent after Buxar police allegedly carried out a baton charge on them in the intervening night of Tuesday and Wednesday.

Choubey, despite being a local MP, did not go to Banarpur village even as the farmers were protesting against the thermal

power company for the last 86 days. Following the police action in the night, where allegedly women and children were also targeted, the farmers went on rampage and set afire more than 20 vehicles, including half a dozen police vans, on Wednesday morning. The situation is currently very tense in the village.

FSSAI NOTIFIES FIRST-EVER REGULATORY STANDARDS FOR BASMATI RICE

New Delhi: For the first time in the country, the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) has specified identity standards for basmati rice (including brown basmati, milled basmati, parboiled brown basmati, and milled parboiled basmati)

The standards, vide Food Safety and Standards (Food Products Standards and Food Additives) First Amendment Regulations, 2023 and notified in the Gazette of India, are aimed at establishing fair practices in the trade of basmati rice and protect consumer interest, both domestically and globally. These standards will be enforced from August 1. As per these standards, basmati rice shall possess natural fragrance characteristic of basmati rice and be free from artificial colouring, polishing agents, and artificial fragrances. These standards also specify various identity and quality parameters for basmati rice such as average size of grains and their elongation ratio after cooking, maximum limits of moisture, amylose content, uric acid, defective or damaged grains and incidental presence of other non-basmati rice etc.

Maha Cong MLC nominee withdraws, foists son as 'Independent' candidate

Mumbai | Agencies

In a huge embarrassment for the Congress, Sudhir Tambe, the party's official candidate for the January 30 biennial elections to the Maharashtra Legislative Council (MLC) for Nashik Division Graduates' constituency, backed out of the race here on Thursday.

Instead, his son Satyajeeet Tambe has filed his nomination as an Independent candidate, saying he will seek support from all the parties, including the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), and meet Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnis soon, though the latter has not committed anything.

"I have decided to step back in favour of youthful leadership of my son," Sudhir Tambe told media-



persons, amid speculations that the father-son duo may switch loyalties to the BJP.

Tambe's abrupt decision took the Congress by shock and rekindled memories of the rude political setbacks that the party had suffered during the MLC bypolls in June 2022, followed by the collapse of the Maha Vikas

Aghadi government.

The top state and central leaders of the Congress were at total loss to comment on the developments with state Congress chief Nana Patole claiming that he is yet to get a full report as to what exactly transpired and how the official nominee did not file his papers as directed.

MAN DETAINED IN DELHI FOR SUSPECTED LINKS WITH KHALISTANI TERRORIST

New Delhi: A man has been detained by the Special Cell of Delhi Police from the national capital's Jahangirpuri area for allegedly having connections with a Canada-based Khalistani terrorist, an official said on Thursday. A team of Special Cell had picked up a few people from the Jahangirpuri area. They were suspected to have links with the Canada-based Khalistani terrorist, ahead of the Republic Day.

"They were questioned and one person has been detained in connection with the matter," a senior police officer said.

Further details are awaited

Samudrayaan Mission: India aims to send 3 persons to 6K meters below sea level

- The Centre had approved the Deep Ocean Mission at a total budget of Rs 4,077 crore for five years.
- The estimated cost for the first phase for the three years (2021-2024) is Rs 2,823.4 crore.
- India has a unique maritime position, a 7,517 km long coastline, which is home to nine coastal states and 1,382 islands.
- The mission aims to boost the Central government's vision of 'New India' that highlights the blue economy as one of the ten core dimensions of growth.

Team Absolute | New Delhi

India is aiming to send three persons to 6,000 meters below sea level as part of the Samudrayaan Mission, officials said, adding the mission heralds India's ushering into an era of "Blue Economy" which is going to play a major part in building India's overall economy during the years to come.

Sharing the details, Minister of State (Independent Charge) Earth Sciences Jitendra Singh said Prime Minister Narendra Modi had referred to the Deep Sea Mission in his Independence Day address in two consecutive years in 2021 and 2022. He elaborated that a vehicle called MATSYA will carry three persons to a depth of 6,000 meters for explo-



ration of deep-sea resources like minerals. This mission, he said, is expected to be realised in the next three years. Singh added that MATSYA 6000 is being designed and developed by the National Institute of Ocean Technology (NIOT), Chennai under the Ministry of Earth Sciences.

"It has an endurance of 12 hours under normal operation and 96 hours in case of emergency for human safety." "The design of the vehicle is completed and realization of various components of the vehicle is in

progress. Manned submersible facilitates the direct observation by the human in deep ocean in exploring mineral resources rich in nickel, cobalt, rare earths, manganese etc., and collection of samples, which can be used for analysis," said the Minister. The Minister added that apart from the scientific research and technological empowerment as the benefits, the mission has immediate spin-offs in the form of underwater engineering innovations in asset inspection, tourism and promotion of ocean literacy. "Development of 6,000m-depth rated Integrated Mining Machine and unmanned vehicles (tethered and automated) to explore deep sea resources and biodiversity assessment," Singh said.

ICG ship 'Kamla Devi' equipped with Medak gun commissioned

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Indian Coast Guard (ICG) ship 'Kamla Devi', the fifth in series of five fast patrol vessels, was commissioned in Kolkata on Thursday.

The ship was commissioned by ICG Director General V.S. Pathania.

The event was graced by various military and civil dignitaries of the Central and state government. ICGS Kamla Devi is 48.9 meters long and 7.5 meters wide with a displacement of 308 tonnes. The ship is capable of achieving maximum speed of 34 knots, powered with MTU 4000 Series Engines and propelled by three 715 type III Kamewa waterjet of Rolls Royce. The ship has been built indigenously by M/s Garden Reach Shipbuilders & Engineers (GRSE) Ltd, Kolkata.

According to the Ministry of Defence, the ship is capable of



undertaking multi-faceted tasks such as surveillance, interdiction, search & rescue and medical evacuation.

The ship is fitted with state-of-the-art technology, navigation & communication equipment, sensors and machinery. The ship is also equipped with 30 mm 2A42 Medak gun and 12.7 mm SRCG (stabilised remote controlled gun) for enhancing the fighting efficiency of the ship. ICG ship Kamla Devi has been named in honour of Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay, an esteemed Indian social reformer and freedom activist.



CM SHINDE TO LIMIT DAVOS STAY FOR ATTENDING PM'S FUNCTIONS; RAUT SAYS HE IS MORE WORRIED ABOUT BMC

Chief Minister Eknath Shinde will cut short his visit to Davos for the World Economic Forum (WEF) gathering as Prime Minister Narendra Modi would be in Mumbai on January 19, a close aide of Shinde said on Thursday.

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis has cancelled his visit to Davos as he would be overseeing preparations for the Prime Minister's events, he added.

Reacting to Shinde and Fadnavis changing their Davos plans, Shiv Sena (UBT) leader Sanjay Raut said the government was more worried about the civic elections in Mumbai than it was about bringing investments. CM Shinde will visit Davos and participate in the World Economic Forum on January 16," his close aide said. The WEF annual meeting is scheduled from January 16 to 20. The CM will return on the night of January 18. He will be present for all the events of Prime Minister Narendra Modi on the next day, the aide added. Modi will be visiting Mumbai for the first time after the Shiv Sena faction of the Shiv Sena joined hands with the BJP and formed a government.

Maresh Tapase, spokesperson of the Nationalist Congress Party, an ally of Shiv



Sena (UBT), said the chief minister should tell the people how much investment he will bring from Davos.

"They are not at all serious about it (bringing investments to the state), Almost all chief ministers and their delegations are going to Davos. Even Gujarat chief minister is going. But the Maharashtra chief minister and deputy chief minister are more concerned about BMC elections than about investments," The Maharashtra government could ask the prime minister to reschedule his visit for the inauguration of projects in Mumbai as the dates of the Davos meet cannot be changed, Sanjay Raut told reporters.



Anushka Sharma goes to Bombay High Court over taxes

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Bollywood actress Anushka Sharma on Thursday challenged in the Bombay High Court the orders of the Maharashtra State Tax Department hiking levies on the payments she has received for endorsements and hosting award functions.

When the matter came up before a division bench of Justice Nitin Jamdar and Justice Abhay Ahuja, government pleader Jyoti Chavan sought time to file a reply.

Accordingly, the court has directed the state government to file its response in two of the pleas which were taken up and posted the matter for further hearing on February. 6.

Anushka has questioned the orders of the Deputy Commissioner, Sales Tax raising her dues for the assessment years 2012-2013, 2013-2014, 2014-2015, and 2015-2016, under the Maharashtra Value Added Tax Act.

She has contended that the assessing officer had wrongly levied the ST and said that for 2012-2013, the ST was Rs 1.20 crore on her income of Rs 12.30 crore and for 2013-2014, the ST was Rs 1.60 crore on around Rs 17 crore payments received by her.

In her plea, Sharma said that the assessing officer had erroneously held that she had acquired copyright through endorsements and anchoring function and had sold or transferred the same.

The actress, through her lawyer Deepak Bapat, has pointed out that the copyright of



videos is always retained by the producer who also owns such videos and performer's rights which are not capable of being transferred or sold.

Bapat said in the petition that as per the MVAT Sec. 6(1), there shall be levied a sales tax on the turnover of sales of goods, and unless it is established that there is a sale of goods, sales tax cannot be levied on it.

Police nab Gujarat man for bomb threat to Ambani School

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The Mumbai Police have arrested a man from Gujarat for making bomb threat calls to the elite Dhirubhai Ambani International School in Bandra Kurla Complex, a top official said here on Thursday.

According to Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP) Dikshit Gedam (Zone VIII), the two calls were received on the headline of the DAIS between 1600-1630 hours on Tuesday afternoon after all the students had left for home. The unknown caller first called shortly after 4 p.m. to warn that he had planted a 'time-bomb' in the school premises and abruptly disconnected.

A few minutes later, he again called up and repeated the threat even as the panicked school authorities



approached the police.

A complaint was lodged under various IPC Section and a manhunt was launched using tech-intel to track down the caller within 24 hours, said DCP Gedam.

"He was traced to Morbi town in Gujarat where a team of officers rushed and took him into custody. He has been identified as Vikram Singh Zala, working as a driver. He was placed under arrest and brought to Mumbai," DCP Gedam added. As per initial probe, the accused reportedly wanted to attain fame in the media and felt that after the

police probe and arrest even industrialist Mukesh Ambani would know him. In the second call, he even provided his full name, and said that "after the calls, the police will go to catch him, throw him in jail, and I will attain fame on social media", besides sharing other details of his identity and whereabouts with the school's chief of security.

As a precaution, the bomb squad scanned through the entire DAIS where children of top celebs study campus but nothing suspicious was found even as the police team located him in Gujarat.

CBI raids Pratibha Industries officials in Rs 4,957cr loan fraud case

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) has lodged a case of a bank loan fraud of Rs 4957 cr against Pratibha Industries, it's Directors and others and is conducting raids in Mumbai and Thane.

According to information, a complaint was lodged on September 12, 2022 by Sanjay Kumar Tiwary, Deputy General Manager, Stressed Assets Management Branch, Bank of Baroda, Mumbai against Pratibha Industries Limited, it's Directors Ajit Bhagwan Kulkarni, Ravi Kulkarni, Sunanda Datta Kulkarni, Sharad Prabhakar Deshpande and others for causing a wrongful loss of Rs 4957.31 crore (Rs. 4735.67 crore as per the complaint made by Bank of Baroda and Rs 221.64 crore as per the mandate dated 13.09.2022 given by SBI - one of the Consortium Member Bank) to the Consortium of Banks led by Bank of Baroda. The CBI after



receiving the complaint lodged a case under sections 120-B, 420 IPC and 13(2) read with 13(1)(d) of the PC Act and formed a team to look into the matter.

The account of Pratibha Industries was classified as NPA on December

31, 2017. Subsequently the accounts were also declared as fraud by the members of the consortium banks.

Pratibha Industries was into development of infrastructure projects, which included designing, engineering and execution, construction of

complex, integrated water transmission, distribution projects, water treatment plants, mass housing projects, precast design and construction, road construction and urban infrastructure etc.

"The accused had diverted huge amount of money from the borrower company to its related parties & subsidiaries and subsequently, these advances were written-off by the company. The company had entered into fictitious sales & purchase transactions in order to inflate its turnover. Further, to avail credit facilities from the lender banks, the work-in-progress was allegedly inflated and huge amount of Vender Liability was directly adjusted against Customer Account without having any supporting document for the same," the CBI said. On Thursday the CBI conducted raids at 14 locations belonging to the accused and bank officials which led to recovery of several incriminating documents and articles.

Three booked for duping people of Rs 56 lakh on pretext of starting hospital

Team Absolute | Thane

Police have registered a case against two men and a woman for allegedly cheating some people of Rs 56 lakh after approaching them to set up a pharmacy and a lab at a hospital which they planned to start in Maharashtra's Thane district, an official said on Thursday. One of the victims told the police that the accused approached him saying were launching a hospital in Kalyan town and asked him to set up a pharmacy at the facility.

The accused allegedly asked the victim for a sum of Rs 32 lakh as deposit, which he and his partner paid to them, an official from Manpada police station in Dombivli said quoting the complaint.

The accused also approached a woman and her partners in a health care company and offered them to set up a lab in the hospital for which they took an amount of Rs 24 lakh from them as deposit, the official said.

The financial transactions took place



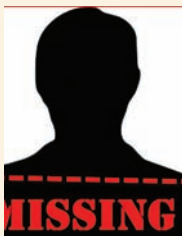
between January and May 2021 and thereafter, the accused told the victims that the hospital could not be run in the locality.

They shut the facility and informed the victims that they would refund the deposit money in six months, but did not do so, official said.

The victims then approached the police, who registered a case against the three accused on Wednesday under Indian Penal Code Sections 406 (criminal breach of trust), 420 (cheating), 506 (criminal intimidation) and 34 (common intention), the official said. No arrest has been made so far. A probe is on into the case, the police said.

MISSING BOY FOUND IN MP'S KHANDWA TOWN

Mumbai: A nine-year-old Mumbai boy, who went missing five days ago after his tuition teacher told him to complete his homework, has been traced to Khandwa town in Madhya Pradesh, a police officer said on Wednesday. The boy, a Std IV student, left his home in Santacruz on Saturday evening to attend his tuition class but did not return home, said the Vakola police station officer. His worried family members enquired with their relatives and the tuition teacher, who told them that she had told the boy to complete his homework and bring it back, he said. The boy left the tuition teacher's home around 8 pm, but did not reach his residence. His father, who works with a restaurant aggregator and food delivery company, searched for his son at different locations in the city, to no avail, said the officer. He took the help of social media influencers and circulated his son's pictures on different platforms, but did not get any clue about his whereabouts, he said. Later, the minor's family members approached the Vakola police station and lodged a kidnapping complaint. On Wednesday, the Mumbai cops got a phone call from their counterparts in MP's Khandwa town informing them that a minor boy from the city was in their custody. He was the same boy whom the Mumbai cops had been looking for, said the officer. How the boy reached Khandwa was not yet known and a team of the Vakola police was on its way to the MP town to bring him back to Mumbai, he added.



ED arrests head of Karan Group Builders & Developers in Rs 500cr fraud case

Team Absolute | Mumbai/Bengaluru

Enforcement Directorate (ED) said on Thursday that it has arrested Mahesh B. Ojha, the head of Karan Group Builders & Developers, Mumbai, in a fraud and cheating case involving an amount of more than Rs 500 crore. Ojha was produced before a special PMLA court here, which sent him to 10-day ED custody.

The ED said that multiple FIRs related to fraud and cheating in the name of investment in real estate projects were registered by Karnataka Police.

"Our investigation revealed that the complainant had invested a total of Rs 526 crore in different real estate projects undertaken by various groups and individuals. Subsequently, this amount was siphoned off by showing it as to be paid to various persons and collecting cash and commission in lieu of bank entry," an ED official said.

The ED said it has learnt that out of the total investment of Rs 526 crore made by the



complainant, a bulk amount of Rs 121.5 crore was invested in a real estate project undertaken by Karan Group Builders & Developers, headed by Ojha.

This amount was routed through various entities and subsequently diverted by Ojha through another network of entities and people. Ojha was earlier arrested by the CID, Bengaluru, and is presently in judicial custody.

Disrespect to national anthem case: Court sets aside summons issued to Mamata Banerjee

Team Absolute | Mumbai

A special court in Mumbai on Thursday set aside the summons issued by a magistrate to West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee in a case pertaining to alleged disrespect to the national anthem. Noting the magistrate didn't follow the mandatory provisions, Special Judge R N Rokade, after hearing both the sides, set aside the summons and asked the magistrate to proceed with the case from the stage of verification (of the complainant).

The special judge directed the magistrate to give fresh consideration on the issuance of process against Banerjee.

Vivekanand Gupta, a functionary of the Mumbai unit of Bharatiya Janata Party, had approached the magistrate court with a complaint claiming the West Bengal CM did not stand while the national anthem was being played at an event during her visit to Mumbai in December 2021.

Gupta had sought the registration of a First Information Report (FIR) against Banerjee under the Prevention of Insults to National



Honour Act. Taking cognizance of Gupta's complaint, the magistrate court had issued summons to Banerjee, who moved a review petition before the special court against it.

Banerjee's lawyer had earlier told court no sanction, mandatory under the Code of Criminal Procedure to prosecute a government servant, was taken.

However, Additional Public Prosecutor Sumesh Panjwani had argued Banerjee's visit was political and not official and, hence, no sanction was required. After hearing both the sides, the judge allowed Banerjee's plea.

India's longest sea bridge

MUMBAI-NAVI MUMBAI TRAVEL TIME TO REDUCE TO 15 MINS

Team Absolute | Mumbai

A three-hour ordeal to travel from India's financial capital Mumbai to its satellite city Navi Mumbai will be cut to 15 minutes when the country's longest sea bridge opens later this year, Maharashtra Chief Minister Eknath Shinde has said.

The 22 km-long Mumbai Trans-Harbour Link (MTHL) will open to the public in November this year, linking connect upscale South Mumbai to Navi Mumbai and Raigad, Shinde told said.

"The current travel time from Mumbai to Navi Mumbai is 2.5 to 3 hours. It will be reduced to 15 minutes," Shinde said.

The bridge will also be the first in the country to have an Open Road Tolling (ORT) system, a technology in use in countries like Singapore where



a vehicle does not have to stop to pay a toll. Of its 22 km length, 16.5 km will traverse the sea. "This bridge has international technology. This project will give a big boost to the economy," Shinde said. The Trans-Harbour Link will also be connected to the under-construction eight-lane coastal highway which begins from Marine Drive to the Worli end of the

Bandra-Worli Sea Link. "The MTHL will save a lot of fuel. By reducing travel time from hours to minutes, it will play a huge role in reducing air pollution," the Chief Minister said. Shinde added that his government is working with the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) to begin various developmental works in Mumbai. He alleged that there has

not been any real work done in the city in the last few years. "This is a project of superlatives. India's longest sea bridge, the first project to use OSD technology, reverse circulation. Construction of the bridge took the ecosystem into account, which is why pelicans and flamingos are back despite heavy machinery functioning," SVR Srinivas, Additional Chief Secretary and Metropolitan Commissioner said. Srinivas said the number of wires used in the project if joined together, can go around the earth.

"Most importantly, the impact of this project will not only benefit Mumbai but also the country at large. As the islands get connected with the mainland, it will open up new avenues for further growth," he said. Srinivas added that almost 90% of the construction has been completed.



EDITOR'S SPECS

'New Joshimath' on lines of Tehri

The government has been considering the making of a new Joshimath, along the lines of Tehri, which is being opposed by the locals who insist on staying in the holy city. The government has selected three places to shift the people, including the land of the horticulture department near JP Colony, the ground near Pipalkoti and near Gauchar. In a meeting between the administration and the residents, it was announced that a compensation of Rs 1.5 lakh would be provided to the affected families, which was refused by the locals. The survey of the affected buildings is being conducted and the district administration has been temporarily moving people to safer places. An amount of Rs 1.5 lakh is being provided as interim assistance to the affected families, where Rs 50,000 will be given in advance for house shifting and Rs 1 lakh for disaster relief, which will be adjusted later. The main opposition Congress has been criticising the state government on the matter. Former Chief Minister Harish Rawat registered his protest by observing a day-long fast on Wednesday. Rawat staged a demonstration along with his supporters at Gandhi Park, and termed the policy of demolition without any rehabilitation, as unjust. He demanded a one-time settlement for the buildings that are to be demolished. Joshimath, a temple town that is the gateway to popular pilgrimage sites like Badrinath, is facing a crisis with yawning cracks appearing in buildings and roads after years of unplanned infrastructure building. The region is prone to earthquakes and has seen disasters in recent years blamed on melting glaciers and incessant construction and drilling in the mountains. In 2021, at least 200 people were killed in flash floods in Joshimath and surrounding areas in a disaster partly blamed on excessive development.

Jaipur Literature Festival to feature some of the greatest minds from across the world for its 16th edition

Lalit Sharma

The 16th edition of the iconic Jaipur Literature Festival is all set to take place from 19th to 23rd January 2023, at Hotel Clarks Amer, Jaipur. The festival will feature some of the greatest literary minds this season, including Nobel Laureate Abdulrazak Gurnah; International Booker Prize recipient Geetanjali Shree; author and translator Daisy Rockwell; popular author Deepthi Kapoor; Booker Prize winning author Bernardine Evaristo; celebrated author Siddharth Mukherjee, Booker Prize winning Sri Lankan author Shehan Karunatilaka, celebrated poet, lyricist and author Gulzar; filmmaker and producer Onir; winners of 2022 JCB Prize for Literature Khalid Jawed & Baran Farooqi; and one of India's most respected classical musicians Padma Vibhushan Hariprasad Chaurasia to name a few.

The literary extravaganza will see a spectacular range of language diversity in the programme, displaying 21 Indian and 14 international languages. The speaker list includes a large number of Rajasthan based speakers namely CP Deval, Nand Bhardwaj, Rima Hooja, Malchand Tiwari, Sandeep Purohit, Tripti Pandey, Devraj Singh, Ambika Dutt, Lakshyaraj Singh Mewar, Anshu Harsh, Era Tak, Anukriti Upadhyay, Princess Diya Kumari, and CP Joshi amongst others.

Today at a press conference, hosted at the Clarks Hotel, Amer addressing the media, Sanjoy K Roy, Managing Director, Teamwork Arts the producer of the annual Jaipur Literature Festival said, "Jaipur Literature Festival spreads and proliferates discerning debate and knowledge, presenting different perspectives on complex issues of our times. In 2023, the Festival will focus on themes such as climate crisis, geopolitics, the Russia-Ukraine conflict, Indo-China relations, agriculture, and energy. The 16th edition of the Festival will be hosting the world's greatest writers, including Nobel Prize winner Abdulrazak Gurnah; International Booker Prize winner Geetanjali Shree; Booker Prize winners Shehan Karunatilaka, Marlon James, Bernardine Evaristo, Howard Jacobson, Booker Prize finalist NoViolet Bulawayo & Women's Prize winner Ruth Ozeki. As we embark on a new year, we bring to you a stellar line-up that celebrates the power of words!"

The Festival will continue to remain committed to its core values: to serve as a democratic, non-aligned platform ensuring inclusivity and freedom of speech. The past 15 years have seen the iconic Festival transform into a global literary phenomenon having hosted nearly 5000 speakers and artists reaching out to over 200 million people globally.



For its 2023 edition, the Festival will host about 400 speakers from across a vast array of nationalities, as well as recipients of major awards such as the Nobel, the Booker, International Booker, the Pulitzer, the Sahitya Akademi, Baillie Gifford, PEN America Literary Awards, the DSC Prize for South Asian Literature, the JCB Prize for Literature and many more. It will feature a range of themes including the ongoing climate justice debate under the urgency of borrowed time; great women writers and artists focusing on the female voice and identity, crime fiction, memoir, translation, poetry, economics, tech morality and Artificial Intelligence, the global crisis in agriculture, Russia-Ukraine conflict, violence of the British Empire, cutting-edge science, India at 75, remembering Partition, geopolitics, art and photography, health and medicine, amongst others.

This year, the Festival has brought back the much-awaited School Outreach programme in collaboration with Pratham Books to ensure a wide variety of children and young people are involved in the ambit of the Festival. Today Teamwork Arts, the producer of the 'greatest' literary show on earth, hosted an exclusive press conference highlighting the significance of the school outreach programme. This year, the Outreach Programme has reached out to over 50 institutions across Jaipur, impacting 5000+ children. The programme has focused on championing the spread of ideas among the next generation of students through a range of conversations, book readings, storytelling sessions and illustration workshops. With the aim of opening up a wealth of knowledge for children and in turn giving back to the city of Jaipur, the Festival's annual outreach programme pushes forth its core philosophy of empowering young minds through various sessions across the Festival days and via this robust outreach programme that starts prior to the Festival. This year, the initiative will help readers bridge learning gaps left in students' academic and emotional growth by online schooling and digital classrooms. With the Library-in-a-

Classroom, children will enjoy invaluable physical proximity to printed books, which in turn will encourage them to read and grow emotionally and intellectually.

Speaking about the collaboration, Himanshu Giri, CEO, Pratham Books, said, "We are delighted to be back at JLF as Outreach Partner, taking the joy of reading to thousands of children. As we continue to strive towards putting 'a book in every child's hand', we are mindful of the learning gaps brought about by school closures during the pandemic. We hope, through this and many other such initiatives, that more children discover the joy of reading through engaging with contextual storybooks in mother tongue languages." This season, the Festival pass for all the students will be available at only INR 100/- which is applicable for all Festival days. The literary show will also live-stream some key sessions which will be available on the Festival's microsite. Audiences watching from across the globe will be able to access these sessions free of charge.

international

Putin demotes 'General Armageddon', publicly humiliates deputy PM for 'fooling around'

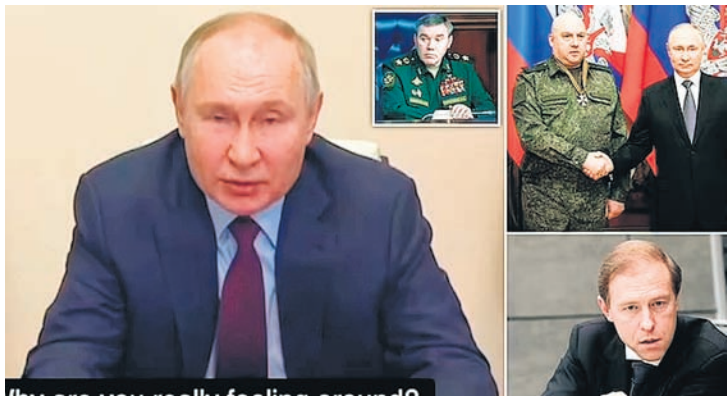
London | Agencies

Russian President Vladimir Putin ordered yet another shake-up of his war cabinet, demoting the head of his forces in Ukraine after only three months on the job, the media reported.

General Sergei Surovikin, who earned the fearsome nickname 'General Armageddon' for employing brutal tactics during Russia's intervention in Syria, was named as Russia's overall military commander on October 8.

Putin on Wednesday replaced Surovikin with General Valery Gerasimov, Russia's chief of the general staff who was seen by many as the top architect of the invasion. But critics have already blamed him for Moscow's military setbacks.

Putin also humiliated one of his deputy prime ministers on a video



conference call, blasting the official for failing to procure civilian and military planes and accusing him of 'fooling around', Daily Mail reported.

Britain's Ministry of Defence (MoD) said promoting Gerasimov above Surovikin is 'an indicator of the increasing seriousness of the situa-

tion Russia is facing, and a clear acknowledgement that the campaign is falling short of Russia's strategic goals. The MoD added in a tweet that Russian ultra-nationalists and military bloggers critical of Gerasimov are likely to greet the news with 'extreme displeasure', Daily Mail reported.

The Russian Defence Ministry's formal explanation for the reshuffle was that expanded military tasks and the need for 'closer interaction between branches of the military as well as increasing the quality of supplies and the efficiency of directing groups of forces' prompted the leadership changes.

The move appeared to buttress Gerasimov's standing with Putin amid growing resentment and dissent in the army. Gerasimov is seen as a loyalist with no political ambitions, and is likely to side with Putin on any strategic decisions - likely the reason for his promotion.

Surovikin, meanwhile, was made deputy in an announcement made not by Putin, but by defence minister Sergei Shoigu, who has also been widely criticised for his bungling of Moscow's operations, Daily Mail reported.

Google hits back in US search antitrust lawsuit, says doesn't block rivals

San Francisco | Agencies

Google has hit back at a US government antitrust lawsuit over its search engine, saying its search deals -- including agreements with Mozilla and Apple -- don't prevent users from trying other search platforms. The US Department of Justice and a coalition of state attorneys general had sued Google in 2020 under the Donald Trump administration.

The complaint alleged that Google used its "incumbent power" and its Android operating system to lock up the search market, denying competitors "vital distribution, scale, and product recognition".

Google said in its filing that "no evidence suggests that Google coerced Apple, Mozilla, or any other browser developer into adopting a design that includes a single default search engine".



The tech giant also argued that its contracts with Android phone makers don't constitute exclusive deals.

The lawsuit against Google had contended that the company harmed competition by entering revenue share agreements with web browser developers that provide that Google will be the pre-set default general search engine on their browsers.

Plaintiffs also contend that Google has harmed competition through three

sets of agreements with companies that manufacture and/or sell Android devices," said the Google filing.

Android is a mobile operating system, licensed open source, in which Google has invested billions of dollars since its release in the fall of 2008.

Google said although ITS agreements with browser developers are individually negotiated and differ in some respects, they have three important commonalities.

WHO alert against use of Indian cough syrups in Uzbekistan

Geneva | Agencies

The World Health Organization on Thursday warned against the use of two Indian cough syrups for children that have been linked to deaths in Uzbekistan.

The WHO said the products, manufactured by Marion Biotech, were "substandard" and that the firm had failed to provide guarantees about their safety, the BBC reported.

The alert comes weeks after Uzbekistan alleged that 18 children died after consuming a syrup made by the company.

The firm has not yet commented on the alert.

After the deaths were reported in Uzbekistan, India's Health Ministry suspended production at the company.

This week, the food safety department in Uttar Pradesh, where Marion Biotech is based, also suspended the company's production licence.

In the alert issued on Thursday, the WHO



said that an analysis of the two cough syrups -- Ambronol and Dok-1 Max -- by the quality control laboratories of Uzbekistan's Health Ministry found unacceptable amounts of two contaminants -- "diethylene glycol and/or ethylene glycol", the BBC reported.

Diethylene glycol and ethylene glycol are toxic to humans and could be fatal if consumed.

"Both of these products may have marketing authorizations in other countries in the region. They may also have been distributed, through informal markets, to other countries or regions," the global health body said.

It added that "the substandard products" were "unsafe and their use, especially in children, may result in serious injury or death", BBC reported.

India is known as the "world's pharmacy" as it produces a third of the world's medicines, meeting much of the medical needs of developing countries.

The country is also home to some of the fastest-growing pharmaceutical companies.

PAKISTAN FACES THREAT OF HUNGER

Islamabad | Agencies

The World Economic Forum (WEF) sees Pakistan facing a huge threat of hunger and distress amid a prevalent cost-of-living crisis, warning that it may be further aggravated by extreme weather events and constrained supply.

About Pakistan, the report identifies that a combination of extreme weather events and constrained supply could lead the current cost-of-living crisis into a catastrophic scenario of hunger and distress for millions. This can also turn the energy crisis towards a humanitarian crisis, Geo News reported.

Energy shortages -- because of supplier shut-offs or natural, accidental, or intentional damage to pipelines and energy grids -- could cause widespread blackouts and fatalities if combined with seasonal



extreme weather. Amir Jahangir, Chief Executive Officer Mishal Pakistan, the Partners Institute for New Economy and Societies Platforms of the WEF, said: "The Global Risk Report 2023 identifies that for Pakistan, both the affordability and availability of basic necessities can stoke social and political instability.

The report identifies that the cost-of-living crisis is the biggest short-term risk while the failure of climate mitigation and climate adaptation is the largest long-term concern, Geo News reported.

The geopolitical rivalries and inward-looking stances will heighten economic constraints and further exacerbate both short and long-term risks.

5 KILLED IN SUICIDE BLAST OUTSIDE AFGHAN FOREIGN MINISTRY

Kabul: At least five people were killed in a suicide bomb attack outside Afghanistan's Foreign Ministry in Kabul, police said. The Islamic State terror group's Khorasan unit (IS-K) has taken responsibility for the attack which took place at around 4 p.m. on Wednesday evening, the BBC reported. According to the Taliban-led Afghan government, the suicide bomber had tried to enter the Ministry premises but failed. Several countries have embassies in the area, including China and Turkey.

The Italian humanitarian agency, Emergency NGO in Kabul said it had received more than 40 wounded people and the casualty numbers were continuing to rise. "We have received more than 40 patients in the hospital, it is difficult to draw up a final number, we are continuing to respond," TOLO News quoted Stefano Sozza, the NGO's Country Director in Afghanistan, as saying in a statement late Wednesday.

"This is the first mass casualty in 2023, but certainly one of those with the most patients since the beginning of 2022. So much so that we have also set up beds in the kitchens and canteen."

Spokesman for the Kabul security department, Khalid Zadran said the Taliban regime has condemned the "heinous" attack and will punish the perpetrators. There was widespread condemnation for the attack.



INFRASTRUCTURE AVAILABLE FOR INDUSTRIES OF ALL SECTORS: CM SHIVRAJ SINGH CHOUHAN

Foreign industry groups show interest in investment in MP

Chief Minister Chouhan participated in the first session of one-to-one discussion with industrialists and investors at the Brilliant Convention Center in Indore on the second day of the Global Investors Summit.

Bhopal: Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has said that Madhya Pradesh has developed policies according to the needs of industries by making basic arrangements in the state for industries of all sectors. The state government is also ready to make arrangements in policies accordingly if there is possibility of more investment and more employment in the state. The team Madhya Pradesh is committed to implement the spirit of Ease of Doing Business.

Consulate Generals of various countries, representatives of industry and trade organisations and persons from industrial groups met CM Chouhan. Representatives of Norway, Kingdom of Netherlands, Israel, United Arab Emirates, Canada, Thailand, Mauritius, France, Jamaica, Ghana and Singapore, delegations from Indian Chamber of Commerce from Slovakia, Indian Export Organization met Chief Minister Chouhan.

Hong Kong's Epic Group will invest Rs 400 crores in a one-to-one discussion with Chief Minister Chouhan, the Executive Chairman of Epic Group, a leading group in the garment sector established in Hong Kong, Executive Chairman Ranjan Mehta and Vice President Anu Arora, discussed the action plan for setting-up a vertical fabric and garment unit with an investment of Rs



400crores on 35 acre land near Bhopal. The unit will generate employment opportunities for about 10,000 persons.

Norway keen on long-term investment in wind and solar power

A delegation led by Hans Jacob Frydenlund from Norway discussed about long term investment in solar and wind energy green energy and renewable energy in Chhindwara district. The delegation expressed its desire to work together with both the countries in the field of climate change and environment.

Delegation of Singapore interested in expansion of training activities

Representative of Singapore Indian Chamber of Commerce and Industries led by Manish Tripathi met Chief Minister Chouhan. The delegation discussed about expansion of training activities for agriculture processing, development of theme parks and skill upgradation. Plan to develop cyber city near Bhopal

In a meeting with Chief Minister Chouhan, Harish Ahuja of M/s Shahi Exports made a proposal regarding the establishment of a readymade garment unit with an investment of Rs 200 crore on 25 acres of land near Indore. Netlink Strategic Solutions Pvt. Ltd, in collaboration with Flash Scientific

Technology of America, is interested in building a cyber city near Bhopal with an investment of Rs 200 crores. Anurag Srivastava from Netlink said that he wants to invest Rs. 25 crores in start-up promotion. He discussed about implementing a pilot project of technology in the state to protect against losses caused by lightning strikes.

J.L.L. Group working in Commercial Real Estate shows interest in Madhya Pradesh Sandeep Patnaik and Mohit Jain of JLL group, working in the field of commercial real estate at global level, met Chief Minister Chouhan and proposed the project of Central Business District and Industrial Park with an investment of Rs 5 thousand crores. Discussion was also held on bringing funding from foreign and domestic institutions for the project. Proposals from fertilizer production to strawberry and blue-berry production in a one-to-one discussion with Chief Minister Chouhan, Pankaj Ostwal of Krishna Phoschem Limited discussed the action plan for setting-up 7 units of fertilizers and agricultural chemicals with an investment of Rs. 5,100 crore on 200 hectares of land in Jabhua. Sanjay Kumar of Texmo Pipes and Products Limited informed about the project of ethanol plant on 18 acres of land at Pithampur at a cost of Rs 130 crores.

MP HC denies bail to Raja Pateria

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Madhya Pradesh High Court denied bail to former minister Raja Pateria, who was arrested for his controversial statement on Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Pateria had approached the HC after his bail plea was denied by a district court a few days back. However, the Congress leader got no leniency for his alleged remarks on Prime Minister Modi during a meeting with party workers in Panna district.

"It is noticed that it has become a fashion for some public leaders to seek popularity of the followers without caring for the consequence of delivrance. This practice is not only belittling the image of public leaders in the society but also becoming a cause of increase in criminality in the politics," Justice Sanjay Dwivedi observed while hearing Pateria's bail plea on Wednesday.

The court also mentioned that the use of foul language was not expected from a public leader. The bench said there was no occasion



for the applicant, who is a public leader, to use such derogatory language for the prime minister of the country." The manner in which the crime has been committed, the applicant cannot be granted bail as it will give a wrong message to the society," Justice Dwivedi said while dismissing Pateria's application.

Congress MLA demands plots, Rs 2 Lakh compensation for slums dwellers whose houses were removed for road construction

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Congress MLA PC Sharma and corporator Pravin Saxena have demanded plots and Rs 2 Lakh compensation for slums dwellers removed from Kolar Tiraha (Trisection) besides, Rs 50,000 for the shop keepers of the locality. Notably, slums were removed for the construction of a 6-lane and 16 kms cement concrete road from Kolar Trisection.



pathetic situation. The Congress MLA and Saxena added that the slum dwellers are being misled with assurances of allotment of plots.

"But the reality is that even after one month, they are living in the open, in biting cold, they added. Administration should immediately allot plots and

Rs 2 lakh compensation for the slum dwellers along with Rs 50,000 for shopkeepers. Even demarcation was done earlier but the administration took a U-turn and dismantled the slums for construction of the road. No one is protesting road construction but slums dwellers should be properly rehabilitated," said Sharma.

MP Pragya Thakur faces ire of ex-officers

Team Absolute | Bhopal

More than 100 retired bureaucrats -- IAS and IPS officers -- who are the members of 'Constitutional Conduct Group' have sought action against BJP MP Pragya Thakur over her controversial statement in Karnataka's Shimoga.

In a letter to Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla on January 7, the former officials demanded strict action against the Bhopal MP for a controversial statement she made in Karnataka's Shimoga 15 days ago.

Notably, during a program in Shimoga, Thakur was heard advising women to keep knives ready for their safety. "At least keep your kitchen knife sharp, they (Muslim) can charge into your homes," Thakur had said.

In their letter to Birla, former officials have termed Thakur's speech "controversial", amounting to "hate speech" and "spreading hatred"



among the people. Those who have signed this letter, includes - Delhi's former Lt. Governor Najeeb Jung, ex-Chief Secretary of Madhya Pradesh

government- Sharad Baihar, former Foreign Secretary Shivshankar Menon, ex-IPS A. S. Dulat and many more.

"We are a group of former officers of the All India and Central Services who have worked with the Central and State governments in the course of our career. As members of the Constitutional Conduct Group, we believe in impartiality, neutrality and commitment to the Indian Constitution and safeguarding its values," CCG's letter to Birla read.

"Parliament has a greater role in safeguarding Constitutional values, which makes the laws. Its members shouldn't be allowed to violate the principles of the Constitution. Therefore, we request the Lok Sabha Speaker to take action in the matter," it further read.

Responding to the letter, Thakur said that she stood firm on what she had said in Karnataka. "I had said that for the safety of women and I am not afraid of any such letter. If my statement was unlawful, you know that many enemies are here to attack me."

National Youth Day

HM Narottam Mishra performs Surya Namaskar with school kids

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Home Minister Narottam Mishra performed Surya Namaskar with school children at Government Subhash Excellence Higher Secondary School to mark National Youth Day on January 12.

Mishra, along with Mayor Malti Rai, participated in the Mass Surya Namaskar programme at the Government Subhash Excellence Higher Secondary School, Shivaji Nagar, Bhopal, and performed the Sun Salutation. The birth anniversary of Swami Vivekananda is celebrated as the National Youth Day, and to mark the occasion, a mass Surya Namaskar is performed in different schools and colleges in Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh, on Thursday. Addressing the students and officials during the program, Mishra said, "Regards to Swami Vivekananda, the great Karmayogi and symbol of national consciousness, on his birth anniversary. He is the one who



brought global glory to spirituality."

Thanking the PM and CM for organising the Mass Surya Namaskar, Mishra said, "Thanks to the Honourable Prime Minister, Chief Minister, and School Education Minister for organising the Mass Surya Namaskar program."

YASHODHARA RAJE SCINDIA PERFORMS SURYA NAMASKAR WITH YOUTH ATHLETES

Bhopal: Sports and Youth Welfare Minister Yashodhara Rajee Scindia performed Surya Namaskar with youth athletes at Taty Top Stadium, Bhopal. The Sports and Youth Welfare Department, MP, shared a glimpse of Scindia performing Surya Namaskar with young athletes of the Madhya Pradesh State Sports Academy at the stadium on their Twitter handle. They captioned it "Surya Namaskar with Youth-on-Youth Day."

Minister Scindia was dressed in an MP State Sports Academy tracksuit during the Mass Surya Namaskar session. According to the tweet, during the program, Director of Sports Ravi Kumar Gupta was also present during the Mass Surya Namaskar session.



Army's job is to fight battles, you make defense equipment-Air vice Marshal Ranjan

About 68 percent of the defense budget is for local manufacturing You should come forward in this field by taking advantage of the policies of the government and end the dependence on import of equipment

Team Absolute | Bhopal

The work of the Army is to fight battles, to protect the country. You make necessary equipment for the Army. Air Vice Marshal Rajeev Ranjan said this in the session "Aerospace and Defence" of the Global Investors Summit in Indore. Ranjan said that there is no dearth of money for the work. About 68 percent of the defense budget is for local manufacturing. The window is open for private investors to manufacture equipment related to the defense sector. You should come forward in this field by taking advantage of the policies of the government and end the dependence on import of equipment. Ranjan said



that at present the defense equipment being manufactured in India are no less than any other country. He said that there are favorable conditions for investors in Madhya Pradesh. Sufficient raw material and skilled work force is available here. Joint President and Head Land Systems Defense and Aerospace Adani Group Ashok Wadhawan said that we had first started manufacturing defense equipment from

Malanpur in Madhya Pradesh. We make pistols and machine guns and other equipment here. Soon we will be expanding it. He said that MSMEs can co-operate in our work. Wadhawan said that a cell that supports investors should be made in Madhya Pradesh. The licensing process should be simplified.

Programme Director idex Retired Captain Roy Joseph said that we are continuously working with the start-up. We are funding them too. He said that less number of young entrepreneurs and start-ups are applying from Madhya Pradesh. The youth of Madhya Pradesh should also come forward in this. Joseph said that defense PSUs can be established in Madhya Pradesh.

LOCAL BJP LEADER'S BROTHER ABDUCTS ASI

Team Absolute | Sagar

An Assistant Sub-Inspector of Police (ASI) posted in Madhya Pradesh's Sagar district was abducted by the brother of a local BJP leader on Wednesday. The case has been reported from Gourjhamar police station area. The accused, abducted ASI Ramlal Ahirwar, beat him up and then left him before fleeing the scene. Sagar police have registered a case against Chandrahas alias Hallu Dangi in the matter under relevant sections for assault, kidnapping and obstructing official work.

According to information, ASI Ahirwar was posted at Gourjhamar police station

and was doing duty at Gourjhamar bus stand when the incident took place. Chandrahas alias Hallu Dangi was riding a four wheeler and repeatedly honking the siren of the police. When ASI Ahirwar stopped him from doing so, he started arguing. This is where the matter escalated and Chandrahas took ASI Ahirwar along with him, in his four wheeler.

Ahirwar was accompanied by other policemen, who immediately started chasing the vehicle. The accused took ASI Ahirwar to Barkoti village, where he assaulted him. After this, he left Ahirwar on the spot and ran away. When the policemen chasing the vehicle reached the spot, they

found Ahirwar in an injured condition.

On the complaint of ASI Ahirwar, a case has been registered against accused Chandrahas under sections 353, 186, 332, 365 of the Indian Penal Code as well as the SC/ST Act. Gourjhamar police station in-charge Brijmohan Kushwaha said, "We have registered a case against the accused and are searching for him. The accused is an alcohol addict. He belongs to Barkoti village but resides in Makronia. His family owns private buses in the area." The accused is said to be BJP leader Rajkumar Barkoti's brother. Raj Kumar was the vice president of district panchayat in the year 2000.

Madhya Pradesh will be among the Top-3 export states: Additional Secretary Sarangi

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Madhya Pradesh will be among the Top-3 export states of India in future. Relatively more exports have taken place from Madhya Pradesh than the previous year. There will be better opportunities for exports in the state's electronic equipment, engineering, automobile, soya, wheat, agriculture, spices, cotton yarn and other sectors. Additional Secretary, Directorate General of Foreign Trade Santosh Sarangi said this to the investors in the session "Fostering Exports from MP" at Brilliant Convention Centre on the second day of Global Investors Summit. Sarangi said that Madhya Pradesh will focus on final product rather than raw material to increase revenue in exports. Fabric and apparel in place of cotton yarn, soybean products instead of soybean, spices, home furnishing products and gems and jewellery will play a critical role



in the state's exports. He urged all the investors to become a partner in the development by investing in the state.

Principal Secretary Technical Education Manu Srivastava said that the state's exports in the financial year 2021-22 had been worth 58 thousand 407 crores. The state has been leading in Kabuli Chana, soybean, pharma, textile and agricultural products. Madhya Pradesh exports to more than 200 countries. Investors will get the benefit of better law & order and pro-active bureaucracy

In the "Fostering Exports from MP" session, Saurabh Kalani of Flexituff Group said that 3-P-Performance, Policy and Perception will have to be worked upon to further promote the trade in Madhya Pradesh. Law and order is very good in the state. There is no dearth of work force and the bureaucracy here is pro-active. Clearance is being provided through single window system by the state government. Fast decisions are being taken.

Favourable environment for investors in Madhya Pradesh Chairman of Engineering Export Promotion Council of India Arun Kumar Garodia said that Madhya Pradesh has a very supportive approach in trade promotion. The state is a power surplus state. There is an abundance of raw material here. A lot of progress can be made in the MSME sector with the help of the Central Government. He told the investors that there are immense possibilities of investment in the state, come here and invest.



LOVE ISLAND BOMBSHELLS

First time viewers are given the chance to vote for the new Islander



Los Angeles | Agencies

Love Island 2023 is already introducing a twist, days before the winter series kicks off. The ITV2 show announced on Thursday that for the first time ever they are giving the public the chance to choose the first male or female bombshell to enter the Villa.

The public can choose between Ellie Spencer, a Business Development Executive at a law firm from Norwich and Tom Clare, 23, a semi-pro footballer from Barnsley. Ellie promises to 'shake things up' if she's voted in, adding that the other girls would 'definitely feel threatened.' She's hoping to find the one after being single for three years, admitting 'the roster is pretty dry, it's been dry for the last year, I don't know what happened, it's just not been a great time for me so I'm ready to find my husband.' Calling herself 'fun, caring and smart,' Ellie says she's single 'because I fall in love really quick, but I fall out of it just as quickly. I could literally fall in love with a chair and then a week later be like, 'Oh wait, no, that's a chair...'

As for what gives her the ick, she confesses it's 'overconfident guys and men that think they can get any girl when they think they are so fit and a 10/10 when in actual fact they are none of the above. I like confidence but not arrogance.'

The blonde bombshell admits she is accident-prone, revealing: 'When I was drunk I climbed over the gates of my friend's house, fell and almost lost my leg.' 'I was in hospital for two weeks but they stitched me back up. It left me with a big scar on my leg.'

Tom is equally keen to land votes from viewers, promising he'll bring a 'good vibe' the villa. The footballer, who plays for Macclesfield FC, has big ambitions for love inside the villa, declaring: 'Since my ex-girlfriend, no-one's really come to me and I've thought, 'Wow'. Until I have that, I'm not really going to settle for less. Not in a bad way, but the next person I get with, I want to marry.'



'My mind is blown!'

Julia Roberts is stunned to learn she isn't actually a 'Roberts'



Los Angeles | Agencies

Julia Roberts was shocked out to find she isn't a 'Roberts' after a dig into her family archives revealed a secret scandal. The actress, who starred in Ancestry's Finding Your Roots to discover more about her family tree through DNA archives and genealogical work with the help of Dr Henry Louis Gates Jr. And Julia couldn't believe it when she was told her last name is actually completely different, due to her great great grandmother Rhoda Suttle Roberts having an affair with a married man after her husband Willis Roberts' death. Dr Henry told the actress: 'Digging into Georgia's County archives, we discovered that sometime in the 1850s, Rhoda married a man named Willis Roberts. Julia carries Willis' last name. But Willis passed away in 1864, over a decade before Rhoda gave birth to Julia's great grandfather, John, leading to an inescapable conclusion.' When looking at the archives, Willis isn't listed in the 1880 census but her great grandfather John Pendleton Roberts is. Dr Henry allowed Julia time to discover Willis was missing, leading him to tell her: 'Willis Roberts could not possi-

bly be your great, great grandfather. He was dead.' A shocked Julia replied: 'But am I not a Roberts?' The historian went on to explain how his team delved deep into Georgia's archives but couldn't find any details of the identity of Julia's great great grandfather. They then turned to looking at DNA having extracted samples from the actress and a cousin to see if they could find a match on who their great grandfather's father was. Dr Henry explained: 'We found a cluster of matches that tie Julia and her cousin to one man... Henry MacDonald Mitchell Jr.'

After reading out the name, Julia asked: 'So we're Mitchells?', with the professor confirming she's 'Julia Mitchell'. The story takes another interesting twist as it's revealed in the census Henry is married to a woman named Sarah and has six children. Putting the jigsaw puzzle together, Dr Henry then says Rhoda lived only four houses away from Henry's mother.

Taking in the news, Julia said: 'Truly my mind is blown. It is fascinating. And on the other hand there's you know part of me that you know that when I'm calmer, you know can still wrap my arms around the idea that my family is my family.'

Kerry Washington to star in WWII drama

'Six Triple Eight'

Los Angeles | Agencies

Filmmaker Tyler Perry's upcoming Netflix film 'Six Triple Eight' has lined up an all-star cast, led by Kerry Washington and Oprah Winfrey.

Washington will also executive produce the film, which tells the inspiring true story of the only all-Black, all-female World War II battalion, reports 'Variety'. In addition to directing and producing the film, Perry also wrote the screenplay, based on an article by Kevin M. Hymel published in WWII History Magazine by Sovereign Media about the 6888th Central Postal Directory Battalion, made up of 855 Black women. When these women joined the war effort, they were given the herculean task of sorting through and delivering the three-year backlog of undelivered mail. For nearly 75 years, their story has been kept out of history books and away from the national spotlight. But, on March 14, 2022, President Joe Biden signed the bill for the women to receive the Congressional Gold Medal, Congress' highest honour. 'Facing discrimination, unfamiliar land, and a war-torn country, they persevered and sorted over 17 million pieces of mail, reconnecting American soldiers with their families and loved ones back home,' the film's official synopsis reads. 'The motto that kept them going each day was one they created themselves: 'No Mail, Low Morale'. The women of the 6888 weren't just delivering mail, they were delivering hope.'



'ACTING GAVE ME ACCESS TO CHANGE MYSELF':

LUCY BOYNTON

Los Angeles | Agencies

Lucy Boynton has opened up about how acting helped change her from a shy child into a confident adult. The Bohemian Rhapsody star, made the revelation in a stunning Harper's Bazaar UK shoot where she graced the cover in a gorgeous white lace gown. She admitted that as a child she was in her 'older sister's shadow' and was always 'really shy and uncomfortable'. She told the publication: 'You wouldn't think I'm the actress in the family. As a child, I remember being really shy and uncomfortable, and in the shadow of my older sister.'

'But I think acting gave me access to change myself somehow... It unlocked the idea that I could be different.' Lucy looked sensational in the ruffled frock which featured a mint green trim and chiffon overlay. She completed the show-stopping look with towering green heels and accessorised with sparkling diamonds. Speaking about her glamorous red carpet appearances she said: 'The publicity side of things still feels a step away from who I really am, but I've found a way to take the pressure off those moments by thinking of them like costume fittings.' She also discussed the importance of carving time for herself outside of her busy work schedule. 'Going from character to character can be addictive, and it's hard to sit still when you're surrounded by so much inspiration, but I'm very conscious of not leaning in to that exhaustion if I want to preserve my sanity.'



ABSOLUTE PIC OF THE DAY

MAKING ORIENTAL
NEW YORK



Maya Henry

EZRA MILLER TO PLEAD GUILTY IN VERMONT BURGLARY CASE

Los Angeles | Agencies

Actor Ezra Miller is expected to plead guilty to a lesser charge of unlawful trespassing in a Vermont burglary case, with two other charges against the actor being dropped.

The 'Fantastic Beasts' and 'The Flash' star is reported to have entered a plea deal, after being accused of stealing several bottles of alcohol from the pantry of a neighbour last May. Miller was charged with burglary last August, reports 'Variety'. According to a police report, authorities discovered that bottles were missing from the homeowners' residence. After collecting statements and reviewing surveillance footage, police found probably cause to charge Miller with felony burglary.

According to NBC News, a clerk for Vermont Superior Court confirmed that the parties have agreed to drop two charges, one of petit larceny and another of burglary in an unoccupied dwelling. Miller is expected to plead guilty of unlawful trespassing on Friday in Bennington County Superior Criminal Court. Court documents indicate that prosecutors are recommending that Miller face 89 to 90 days in a suspended sentence, in addition to a year's probation and a \$500 fine. The maximum sentence would have been 26 years. Last August, Miller apologised for their behaviour and stated that they would be undergoing mental health treatment. The actor was introduced as Barry Allen a.k.a. The Flash in 2017's 'Justice League'. Miller will star in the superhero's first solo film, set to hit theaters on June 23.





India vs Sri Lanka 2nd One Day International

RAHUL'S UNBEATEN 64 CARRIES INDIA TO HARD-FOUGHT FOUR-WICKET WIN

Kolkata | Agencies

Wicketkeeper-batter KL Rahul stepped up when it mattered the most to pull India out of a tricky stage by slamming his 12th ODI fifty and carry them to a hard-fought four-wicket victory over Sri Lanka in the second ODI at Eden Gardens, here on Thursday.

After Kuldeep Yadav and Mohammed Siraj picked three wickets each to bundle out Sri Lanka for 215, the visitors' bowlers reduced India to 86/4. But Rahul kept his calm and batted sensibly under pressure to make an unbeaten 64 off 103 balls, and struck a crucial 75-run partnership with Hardik Pandya to take India over the line with 40 balls to spare, giving the hosts' a series win.

Chasing 216, Rohit Sharma and Shubman Gill smacked six boundaries in the first four overs. But Rohit fell in the fifth over to Chamika Karunaratne, giving a regulation catch to the keeper while looking to punch it through covers without any footwork.

Gill smacked Lahiru Kumara for back-to-back fours in the next over. But the pacer had the last laugh as Gill picked out short mid-



wicket through a short-arm pull. Kumara inflicted more damage by getting a length ball to come in sharply and Virat Kohli, stuck in the crease, got an inside edge to the stumps, as India's top three fell in power-

play. Shreyas' stay ended when he played the wrong line off Karunaratne, Hardik was stuck at crease and nicked behind to keeper.

Axar Patel began well. But his attempt to take the aerial route again backfired when his lofted extra drive was caught by long-off against de Silva. After Rahul got his fifty in 93 balls on a no-ball, Kuldeep Yadav took India closer to victory with a fierce cut through backward point for a boundary.

Rahul applied finishing touches to the chase with flicks and inside edges fetching him boundaries off Rajitha, followed by a top-edge on full flying over keeper's head to make it three fours in an over. Kuldeep finished off the chase with a four slapped through mid-off to give India series win.

their time to settle down in order and weather the early storm. Hardik, in an attempt to drive again off Karunaratne, Hardik was stuck at crease and nicked behind to keeper.

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Brief scores

Sri Lanka 215 all out in 39.4 overs (Nuwanidu Fernando 50, Kusal Mendis 34, Mohammed Siraj 3/30, Kuldeep Yadav 3/51) lost to India 219/6 in 43.2 overs (KL Rahul 64 not out, Hardik Pandya 36; Chamika Karunaratne 2/51, Lahiru Kumara 2/64) by four wickets

Malaysia Open

Chirag-Satwik pair and HS Prannoy march into quarterfinals

Kuala Lumpur | Agencies

World championships bronze medallist men's pair Chirag Shetty & Satwiksairaj Rankireddy, and India's top-ranked shuttler HS Prannoy stormed into the quarterfinals of the Malaysia Open Super 1000 badminton tournament here on Thursday.

Playing on Court 3 at the Axiata Arena, World no 5 Satwik and Chirag outplayed their Indonesian counterparts Muhammad Shohibul Fikri and Bagas Maulana 21-19, 22-20 to strengthen their head-to-head record 3-0.

Chirag-Satwik will next face the winner of the match between world-champion Malaysian pair Aaron Chia & Soh Wooi Yik and Liu Yu Chen/Ou Xuan Yi of China for a spot in the semifinals.

Earlier on Thursday, World No 8 Prannoy registered a 21-9, 15-21, 21-16 victory over 19th-ranked Chico Aura Dwi Wardoyo in over one hour of play and leveled up the head-to-head record with the Indonesian.



He will square off with Japan's Kodai Naraoka for a place in the last last-four.

Playing on Court 1 of the Axiata Arena, World No 8 Prannoy registered a 21-9, 15-21, 21-16 victory over 19th-ranked Chico Aura Dwi Wardoyo in over one hour of play and leveled up the head-to-head record with the Indonesian.

India's challenge in the women's singles ended with Treesa Jolly and Gayatri Gopichand's 13-21, 21-15, 17-21 loss to Bulgarian sisters Gabriela Stoeva and Stefani Stoeva.

Adelaide International 2

Badosa outlasts Haddad Maia to set up SF clash with Kasatkina

Adelaide | Agencies

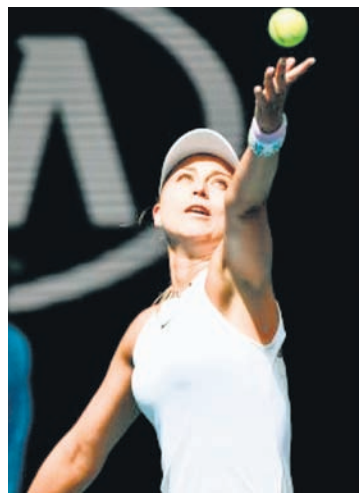
World No. 11 Paula Badosa of Spain on Thursday claimed a semifinal spot in the Adelaide International 2, beating Brazil's Beatriz Haddad Maia 7-6(5), 7-5 in over two-and-a-half hour contest.

The win was in straight sets, but the match stretched beyond two-and-a-half hours as both players exchanged long rallies in their first meeting, with a gruelling 74-minute first set followed by an even longer 81-minute second set.

In the final four, Badosa will face fifth seed Daria Kasatkina, who became the first player into the semifinals with a win over two-time Grand Slam winner Petra Kvitova of the Czech Republic.

Earlier on Thursday, Kasatkina claimed her second straight win over a Grand Slam champion to reach the semifinals of the Adelaide International 2.

Kasatkina defeated two-time Wimbledon champion Petra Kvitova



6-3, 7-6 (3) just a day after her win over former Roland Garros champion Barbora Krejickova.

The world No.8 held two match points at 6-5 in the second set but eventually closed it out in a tiebreak to enter her 11th semifinal since her career resurgence began at the start of 2020.

U19 WOMEN'S T20 WC: INDIA LOSE TO BANGLADESH BY 3 RUNS IN WARM-UP MATCH

Johannesburg: India and hosts South Africa suffered disappointing losses to Bangladesh and Australia respectively in their warm-up matches while Rwanda warmed up for their first-ever ICC World Cup with a thrilling surprise victory over Ireland.

Bangladesh made 121/7, thanks to an unbeaten 75 off 54 balls by Shorna Akter, including two fours and seven sixes at St Stithians ground in Johannesburg. India looked to be in control of the chase with all but two of their wickets in hand, but miscalculated what was required and ended agonisingly short of their target on 118/2.

Hosts South Africa, on the other hand, were bowled out for only 61 against the highly-fancied Australia. Karabo Meso (24 from 20 balls) played a lone hand as the only South Africa batter to reach double figures, while Rhys McKenna (3/7) and Charis Bekker (2/6) did the damage for Australia.

Real Madrid squeeze into Spanish Super Cup final after penalty shootout

Riyadh (Saudi Arabia) | Agencies

Real Madrid qualified for the final of the Spanish Super Cup after beating Valencia in a penalty shootout here on Wednesday.

Thibaut Courtois saved Jose Luis Gaya's spot kick for Valencia after Eray Comert had fired over the bar, while Karim Benzema, Luka Modric, Marco Asensio and Toni Kroos all scored for Real Madrid.

It was cruel on Valencia, who produced a hard-working and disciplined display, making Madrid look ordinary for long periods of the second half and extra time. Real Madrid coach Carlo Ancelotti surprisingly left Modric on the bench while Nacho Fernandez filled in at left-back for the injured David Alaba and Ferland Mendy.

Meanwhile, Kroos was partnered in midfield by the ener-



getic duo of Fede Valverde and Eduardo Camavinga.

The first half saw each side have spells of pressure, with Rodrygo firing wide for Real Madrid, before Benzema's run ended with his shot just going wide of the near post and Valverde shooting just wide from 30 meters. Valencia then

had some promising attacks, with Edinson Cavani forcing a good low save from Courtois, who was then lucky not to concede a penalty after he caught Toni Lato as the Valencia player tried to dribble past him. There were no doubts when Real Madrid took the lead in the 39th minute when Benzema

beat the offside trap and Comert caught his thigh as he shaped to shoot. Referee Hernandez pointed to the spot and Benzema made no mistake, sending the keeper the wrong way, reports Xinhua.

Modric came on at the start of the second half, but Valencia levelled directly from the kick-off as the ball came to Lato, who crossed for Samuel Lino to score at the back post.

Valencia then kept their shape and pressed Madrid, who were limited to playing a string of horizontal passes. It was only in the closing minutes that they threatened with Valencia keeper Giorgi Mamardashvili saving at full stretch from Kroos and then blocking Vinicius' shot.

Fran Perez had the chance to win the game for Valencia in extra time, but Courtois made a magnificent save, and his stop from Gaya saw him named man of the match.

Australian Open: Nadal handed tough draw; to open against Draper; Djokovic, Kyrgios in same quarter



Melbourne | Agencies

Spain's World No. 2 Rafael Nadal, the most successful men's singles player in tennis with 22 Grand Slam titles, was on Thursday handed a tough draw at the year's first Grand Slam with an opening round encounter with Britain's in-form Jack Draper at Melbourne Park.

The 2021-winner Novak Djokovic, who is close on Nadal's heels with 21 Grand Slam titles, and Australia's Nick Kyrgios are in the same quarter

of the draw in the bottom half and are scheduled to meet in the quarterfinals.

Defending champion Nadal will need to be sharp from his first match against Draper, a 2022 Next Gen ATP Finals competitor. The 21-year-old, who owns two Top 10 wins, has made a quick start to his season. The World No. 40 will compete in the Adelaide International 2 semifinals on Friday. Nadal, on the other hand, has struggled in the United Cup, losing to Cameron Norrie, Draper's compatriot, as Spain failed to advance in the

United Cup. If Nadal navigates past the British star, his path will not get much easier, with one of two Americans - Mackenzie McDonald or Brandon Nakashima - waiting in the second round.

Also in the Spaniard's quarter is seventh seed Daniil Medvedev, which means a rematch of the 2022 Australian Open final between them could be played in the last eight. Sixteenth seed Frances Tiafoe, who upset Nadal at last year's U.S. Open, is a potential fourth-round opponent for the lefty.

Canberra | Agencies

Australia has decided to withdraw from their three-match ODI series against Afghanistan men scheduled to be played in March 2023 in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) over the Taliban government's restrictions on women's sports and outdoor activities in their country. Cricket Australia had earlier announced that it was reconsidering the decision to play Afghanistan in the ODI series after the Taliban captured power in the country last year.

"Following extensive consultation with relevant stakeholders, including the Australian Government, Cricket Australia has decided that it is unable to proceed at this time with the upcoming ICC Super League three-match Men's ODI series between Australia and Afghanistan scheduled for the UAE in March 2023," Cricket Australia announced on Thursday. This decision follows the recent announcement by the Taliban of further restrictions on women's and girls' education and employment opportunities and their ability to access parks and gyms, Cricket Australia said further in its statement.



HOCKEY WORLD CUP: ONUS ON INDIA TO CAPITALISE ON FAMILIAR CONDITIONS AGAINST SPAIN IN OPENER

Rourkela | Agencies

As they sit down to give the finishing touches to their strategy for Friday's encounter with Spain on the opening day of the FIH Odisha Hockey Men's World Cup 2023 at the Birsa Munda Stadium here, the Indian team will be thinking of their Pro League matches against the same opponents in Bhubaneswar in October-November 2022.

India had lost the first game in the two-game series 2-3 at the Kalinga Stadium in Bhubaneswar and could only win the second match in a shootout after the teams were tied 2-2 at the end of the regulation 60 minutes.

Those two matches played around 67 days back, must have given Graham Reid and his boys an insight into how tough the World Cup opener against the Red Sticks is going to be. Spain is ranked 8th in the FIH Rankings, just two spots below India and have come up strongly as a team recently after nearly a decade because a generation of players retired from the game.

Friday's encounter is thus very crucial for both teams as winning it will give them a chance to establish an early lead in the

Group of Death in which England and Wales are the other opponents.

The Spanish players are known for their flair, skills and attacking prowess. They are one of the most talented and unpredictable teams out there and could prove a big stumbling block for India if the hosts are not at their best on Friday. The Red Sticks have in their ranks electrifying attacker Enrique Gonzalez, experienced midfielder Marc Miralles, classy captain Alvaro Iglesias, Pau Cunill (Rising Star nominee -- FIH Hockey Stars Awards 2021-22) and former Argentina international and 2016 Olympic gold medalist Joaquin Menini.

The hosts on the other hand will bank on their settled squad which has drag-flicker and captain Harmanpreet Singh, a two-time FIH Player of the Year award winner, experienced goalkeeper PR Sreejesh, seasoned midfielder and former captain Manpreet Singh and forwards Akashdeep Singh and Mandeep Singh. Backed by a strong mid-field comprising Manpreet Singh, Vivek Sagar Prasad along with youngsters Raj Kumar Pal, Hardik Singh and Shamsher Singh, the Indian squad is well-balanced and capable of matching the top teams in the world.

'Start of something special'

ILT20 captains upbeat about producing electrifying performances in the inaugural season

Dubai | Agencies

The DP World International League T20 is all set to get off to a flying start with Dubai Capitals taking on the Abu Dhabi Knight Riders in the opening match of the competition at the Dubai International Stadium on Friday.

The teams will battle it out following a glitzy opening ceremony at the 'Ring of Fire'.

Before they took on each other on the park, a representative from each of the franchises assembled for a press conference at the Dubai International Stadium on the eve of the start of the month-long contest to share their thoughts about the beginning of the exciting T20 league.

The Abu Dhabi Knight Riders Captain Sunil Narine expressed that he wants his team to enjoy the ride in the DP World ILT20, "Anything you do in cricket is challenging. We have to adapt and enjoy what we are doing. I hope everyone enjoys the



cricket and gives their best."

Meanwhile, Colin Munro, the captain of Desert Vipers is confident that his team will sting his oppo-

nents hard. He revealed that he has such a strong team that he has a problem of plenty with many good players in the squad.

Rovman Powell, skipper of the Dubai Capitals, wants everyone to use the opportunity to improve, especially the UAE players. "This is a good chance for the UAE players to showcase their talent. The DP World ILT20 is a good launching pad for them and hopefully, they'll utilise this opportunity."

James Vince, the skipper of the Gulf Giants has giant hopes about his team's chances but accepts that all other teams are strong too. "We are excited to see the tournament get underway. Every team has good talent and I'm looking forward to seeing the teams play against each other."

Dwyane Bravo, the senior most player who represented MI Emirates in the press conference said that the event will be very competitive.

Meanwhile, Moeen Ali, skipper of the Sharjah Warriors, like brave warriors, emphatically said, "We'll look to play some good cricket and we are here to win."

Tiger Shroff pays a dance tribute to 'Naatu Naatu'

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Bollywood action star Tiger Shroff is celebrating the Golden Globe win of the song 'Nattu Nattu' from 'RRR'. The song was recently feted with the award for Best Original song in a Motion Picture at the 80th edition of the Golden Globe awards. The star paid a dancing tribute to the song to mark the achievement by India on the global canvas. Taking to social media, Tiger celebrated this success in an energetic and swag filled manner. He shared a clip of himself dancing to 'Naatu Naatu', donning an all black look, from hat to shoes and captioned it: "This should be our victory dance after yesterday, huge win for Indian Cinema! congratulations to the whole team of RRR Ss rajamouli, Jnr NTR & Ram Charan." Bollywood producer-filmmaker Karan Johar lauded Tiger's gesture as he shared Tiger's reel in the story section of his Instagram handle.

Meanwhile, on the work front, Tiger is currently gearing up for two mega releases of the year, 'Ganapath' and 'Bade Miyan Chhote Miyan'. A few days ago, the 'War' star had also shared glimpses of his action sequences from 'Bade Miyan Chhote Miyan'.

Ekta Kapoor to enter reality show to cast a new face for film

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Ekta Kapoor has announced that she will be casting a new face for her upcoming film and would enter the 'Bigg Boss 16' house to look for the cast.

Ekta also bid adieu to Tejaswi Prakash, who had bagged Ekta's 'Naagin' Season 6 while she was in the Bigg Boss 15 house last season. As the show's sixth season is wrapping up, Ekta penned an emotional note for Tejaswi, whom she tagged as Nagina. Ekta wrote, "Lots of love for this nagina! Found her in the bigg boss house n in throes of corona n high fever n coughs forced colors n Manisha that I wanted to cast her!"

She is also excited to enter Bigg Boss 16 house to cast a new face for an upcoming film.

"Hopefully going to big boss for an exciting film announcement, let's see who we find there this time #byebyenagin." In another video, sharing the promo of Naagin 6, she bid adieu to the show.

'Naagin 6' is soon going to wrap up and Ekta wrote: "As we introduce a new folklore weekend show. Time to say bye to my favourite show n India's biggest folklore franchise naagin6! This season marked comeback found its place right with season one n three! Thanku for all d love and now for the next. JAI MATA DI. Ps to the team party zaroor hogi."



Diljit to perform at Coachella music and arts festival 2023

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Indian singer-actor Diljit Dosanjh is set to perform at the Coachella music and arts festival 2023 in April. The Instagram handle of the festival recently shared the lineup on their feed. The festival will be headlined by South Korean girl band - Blackpink, Bad Bunny, Bjork.

As the news of Diljit performing at the fest travelled, fans expressed their excitement over their idol gracing the stage.

One fan exclaimed, "DILJIT DOSANJH AT COACHELLA!!!! This was the QUICKEST impulse purchase of my life and I have no regrets". Diljit retweeted the fan and put up praying hands emoji in his tweet.

In addition, the festival will also feature Pakistani singer Ali Sethi, whose song from 'Coke Studio' - 'Pasoori' has become a viral sensation.

Last year's edition featured Harry Styles, Billie Eilish, and The Weeknd, among many others, following the cancellation of the event in 2020 and 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

I WANTED TO CHANGE MY NAME TO RECOGNIZE MY MUM'S GUIDANCE IN SHAPING ME: MAIRA DHARTI MEHRA

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actress Maira Dharti Mehra, who is known for 'Sasuraal Genda Phool 2', 'Yeh Rishta Kya Kehlata Hai', among others, opens up about the reason behind changing her original name which was Ashwini Shukla. Talking about her name change, the actress says: "Yes, I changed my name, but not for the industry, but to empower all the single parents out there. Earlier, my name was Ashwini Shukla but now I am Maira Dharti Mehra."

When asked about the reason which led to changing her name, the actress adds: "The main reason was the separation of my parents. Since a very young age, I have been brought up by my mother single-handedly, so I wanted to change my name to acknowledge my mother's influence in shaping me. She has been my role model and guru, she plays the role of my father, mother, guardian, best friend, philosopher and guide." Lastly, sharing the incident when she went to change her name, Maira says: "When I went to change my name officially, I was so shocked to see that the form doesn't give you the option for mother's name. The form has only two options - father or husband's name. Even after growing in many spheres of life, we are still lagging behind in the little things that make a difference." "Why can't the form have the option of a mother's name also? Even today, the idea of having a woman's name as a surname makes people jump. We shout and talk about women empowerment but we deeply need to see where we stand when it comes to giving equal rights to women," she concludes.

INSTAGRAM PIC OF THE DAY



Pragya Jaiswal



Team Absolute | Mumbai

In the upcoming episode of 'Bigg Boss 16', contestant Sreejita De's fiancé Michael Blohm-Pape will be seen entering the house with a 'griha pravesh'. However, it is Archana Gautam's fantasy that left Blohm-Pape in splits. She shared that talking to a to foreigner has been on her bucket list.

In a promo shared by the channel Colors on Instagram, Michael is seen entering the Bigg Boss house. He gives a warm hug to her. Then, Archana sits with Sreejita's fiancé in the garden area, and says: "Meri fantasy pata hai kya thi, ek baar foreigner se baat karun (You know what, my fantasy was to talk to a foreigner)."

After hearing this, Michael says: "Seriously?" and started laughing. She then teaches Michael her famous catch phrase: "Maarte maarte more bana dunga."

He tries looks at Sreejita and says: "Maarte maarte mor bana dunga." In the end, Archana can be heard saying to Sreejita: "Terko ghar jaakr banayega mor, ruk."

ARCHANA GAUTAM REVEALS HER FANTASY TO SREEJITA'S FIANCE

