

# absolute india



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## After halting CBI, SC asks Telangana Police not to continue probe into BRS MLAs poaching case

▶ **THREE PERSONS - RAMACHANDRA BHARATI ALIAS SATISH SHARMA, NANDU KUMAR AND SIMHAYAJI SWAMY, NAMED AS ACCUSED - HAVE ALREADY BEEN GRANTED BAIL.**

▶ **ACCORDING TO THE FIR, MLA ROHITH REDDY ALLEGED THAT THE ACCUSED IN OCTOBER LAST YEAR, OFFERED HIM RS 100 CRORE FOR LEAVING THE BRS.**

▶ **IT WAS ALSO ALLEGED THAT THEY ASKED REDDY TO BRING SOME MORE BRS MLAS BY OFFERING RS 50 CRORE EACH TO JOIN THE BJP.**

▶ **IN NOVEMBER LAST YEAR, THE STATE GOVERNMENT HAD FORMED AN SIT, COMPRISING STATE POLICE OFFICERS TO INVESTIGATE THE MATTER.**



Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Supreme Court on Friday asked the Telangana Police not to continue its investigation into the alleged criminal conspiracy behind an attempt to poach BRS MLAs allegedly by the BJP. The development comes after the apex court, earlier this week, asked the CBI to not begin its probe in accordance with the Telangana High Court direction.

Senior advocate Dushyant Dave, representing the Telangana Police, contended before a bench of Justices Sanjiv Khanna and M.M. Sundresh that on the last date of hearing on March 13, the matter was mentioned for hearing as no formal notice was issued. The apex court said the Telangana Police can't continue with

its probe, while issuing notice to the central agency, the BJP and others.

On March 13, the Supreme Court said the CBI should put on hold its investigation into alleged criminal conspiracy behind an attempt to poach BRS MLAs allegedly by the BJP, while hearing an appeal filed by the Telangana Police against the high court order in the matter.

The top court orally observed that the CBI should not proceed with the matter, while listing the matter for further hearing in July.

Dave had vehemently opposed transfer of probe to the CBI. The top court was informed that the case materials have not been handed over to the central agency so far. The bench said it is making it very clear that the CBI probe should not be continued while the matter is sub-judice.

## Delhi HC refuses to entertain PIL seeking compulsory voting in Parliament, Assembly polls

New Delhi: The Delhi High Court on Friday refused to hear a PIL moved by BJP leader and practicing lawyer Ashwini Upadhyay seeking compulsory voting in Parliament and Assembly elections.

Upadhyay had moved the plea on Wednesday.

A division bench headed by Chief Justice Satish Chandra Sharma said that voting is a choice and judges are not lawmakers who can pass such directions.

The bench, also comprising Justice Subramonium Prasad, said that it cannot force a person in Chennai to come back to his home town in Srinagar and vote there. To Upadhyay saying that he will not press his prayer for compulsory voting, the CJ remarked: "It can't be that when you are confronted with something, you will say you are not pressing it."

The bench further remarked that if the plea is not withdrawn, it will impose costs.

The petitioner then proceeded to withdraw his PIL.

## Issue of simultaneous polls with Law Commission for further examination: Govt

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The issue of simultaneous elections to Lok Sabha and State Legislative Assemblies is with the Law Commission for further examination to work out a practicable road map and framework.

It was informed by Minister of Law and Justice, Kiren Rijiju in a written reply in the Lok Sabha on Friday.

"The Department Related Parliamentary Standing Committee on Personnel, Public Grievances, Law and Justice had examined the issue of simultaneous elections to Lok Sabha and State Legislative Assemblies in consultation with various stakeholders including Election Commission of India. The Committee has given certain recommendations in this regard in its 79th Report. The matter now stands referred to the Law Commission for further examination to work out a practicable road map and framework for simultaneous elections to Lok Sabha and State Assemblies," said the reply.

The Minister informed that the simultaneous elections would result in huge saving to the public exchequer, avoidance of replication



of effort on part of administrative and law and order machinery in holding repeated elections and bring considerable savings to political parties and candidates in their election campaigns.

Further, asynchronous Lok Sabha and Legislative Assembly elections (including bye-election) result in prolonged enforcement of Model Code of Conduct with its concomitant adverse impact on developmental and welfare programmes, the Minister's reply said.

However, major impediments or imperatives for synchronisation for Lok Sabha and Legislative

Assembly elections include bringing amendments in not less than five articles of Constitution, namely, article 83 relating to duration of Houses of Parliament, article 85 relating to dissolution of the House of the People by the President, article 172 relating to duration of the State Legislatures, article 174 relating to dissolution of the State Legislatures and article 356 relating to the imposition of President's Rule in the states.

## No question of coordination with Congress: Trinamool

Team Absolute | Kolkata

The Trinamool Congress on Friday made it clear that there is no requirement of having any kind of coordination with the Congress, considering the latter's political approach in West Bengal. The decision was taken at a meeting of the top leadership of the Trinamool, chaired by Chief Minister and party supremo Mamata Banerjee, at her residence here. "Congress's role as a perfect opposition to the BJP is not questionable. In West Bengal, the Congress is having an understanding with both the CPI-M and the BJP to create problems for Trinamool Congress and the state government. On one hand, the Congress will seek the support of Trinamool Congress at the national level and on the other hand at the state-level in West Bengal, they will oppose us. The two things can't go side by side," Trinamool's leader in Lok Sabha Sudip Bandopadhyay told newsmen after the



### 'AKHILESH EXPRESSES SOLIDARITY WITH TRINAMOOL ON CONG-LESS ALLIANCE'

Kolkata: Samajwadi Party chief and former Uttar Pradesh chief minister Akhilesh Yadav has reportedly expressed solidarity with Trinamool Congress' over its move to forge an Opposition alliance against BJP without having Congress in the group. The Samajwadi Party chief reportedly assured the West Bengal chief minister and the All India Trinamool Congress' national president Mamata Banerjee on this count during an hour-long meeting between the two at the latter's residence in South Kolkata on Friday evening. However, at the end of the meeting, neither Mamata Banerjee nor Akhilesh Yadav gave any specific confirmation on the agreement reached between the two parties on this count.

meeting. He also said that precisely that is why the Trinamool is refraining from

floor coordination on the floor of Parliament with Congress.

## Parliament adjourned till March 20 amid protests by treasury benches, oppn

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Parliament was adjourned for the day on Friday amid continued protests by both treasury benches and opposition members over Rahul Gandhi's remarks and Adani issue.

Both Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha were adjourned within 20 minutes amid ruckus.

The BJP MPs raised slogans in both the Houses demanding an apology from the Congress leader, while the Opposition MPs continued to target the Centre over the Adani issue.

Though Speaker Om Birla tried to run the proceedings by announcing Question Hour and asked Congress MP Manish Tewari to put up his question, he adjourned the House after around 20 minutes amid chaos.

Parliament will now reconvene on March 20.

The adjournment meant that the entire week's proceedings were washed out without any business having been transacted in both the Houses. In an unprecedented move, the ruling BJP members have been stalling the

proceedings in both Houses, seeking Congress MP Rahul Gandhi's apology over his remarks on democracy in London. The Congress-led opposition has been protesting over the government's silence on the Adani Enterprises issue. It has been seeking a joint parliamentary committee (JPC) probe into the matter.

Rahul Gandhi and Sonia Gandhi were present in the Lower House.

Rahul Gandhi had met Birla on Thursday, seeking time to speak in Parliament.

He had later said that he wants to respond to allegations against him inside the House, but the BJP is adamant that he apologises first.

Meanwhile, leader of the Congress in Lok Sabha, Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury on Friday sought to know why the BJP was scared to hold discussions in Parliament. "Why are the BJP party members speaking here and there? Why are they scared to hold discussions in Parliament? BJP is scared of Rahul Gandhi. PM Modi's 56 inches chest has now shrunk," Chowdhury said.



### RaGa has become a permanent part of anti-nationalist toolkit: Nadda

"It's unfortunate that the Congress party is indulging in anti-national activities. After being repeatedly rejected by the nation, Rahul Gandhi has now become a permanent part of this anti-nationalist toolkit. At a time when India is becoming the 5th largest economy in the world and G20 meetings are

being held here, Rahul Gandhi on foreign soil is insulting the nation and the Parliament."

JP Nadda, President, BJP

### BJP themselves are Anti-Nationals: Kharge

"They (BJP) themselves are anti-national. They are doing this to deviate from issues of unemployment and inflation. Are people who debate about democracy anti-national?" I condemn JP Nadda's statement. There is no point of apologising. We will give a strong reply to this in the Parliament. Rahul Gandhi Ji will himself reply on this, that's why they (BJP) are scared. Why are they not giving him a chance to speak in Parliament."



Mallikarjun Kharge, President, Congress

- Sleep reduction causes insulin resistance leading to obesity, type II diabetes, high blood pressure, cancers, cardiovascular diseases, musculoskeletal disorders and respiratory disorders.
- While vitamin C is often associated with immunity, study after study has shown that vitamin C plays a powerful role in sleep quality.
- Besides, Zinc, Melatonin, Selenium, Calcium help regulate biological processes, he added.
- 15-20 minutes of exercise and leaving electronic gadgets two hours before going to sleep. If someone is not able to sleep even after making lifestyle changes, medical advice must be sought.

## One-third of world's population suffers from sleep disorders

Lucknow | Agencies

About one-third of the people in the world suffer from sleep disorders which is mainly caused by a sedentary lifestyle, medical experts said. King George's Medical University (KGMU) Vice Chancellor Lt Gen Bipin Puri said, "These can be prevented by a healthy diet, 15-20 minutes exercise, and leaving electronic gadgets two hours before going to sleep. Drugs are needed in extreme cases." He said, "If you are not able to sleep for at least five hours at a stretch in a day or have disrupted sleep patterns for more than three weeks, it



could be insomnia or sleep apnea, which if ignored, could cause high blood pressure, fatigue, depression or anxiety and loss of concentration." He said that while an adult needs around 7 hours of sound sleep daily, a new-born

must sleep for 18 hours and children up to 6 years for 12 hours. Prof Ved Prakash, head of respiratory critical care medicine, KGMU, who is in charge of the comprehensive sleep centre, said, "Extended shifts, prolonged exposure to

light, stress, anxiety, addiction to alcohol, caffeinated drinks and smoking, are the main reasons adversely affecting the body clock in adults."

He said that the modern lifestyle does not give enough time to the body to relax and recharge itself, which leads to decreased secretion of neurotransmitters-serotonin and dopamine - which play a vital role in sleep quality.

Faculty at the physiology department, KGMU, Prof Narsingh Verma said that a person facing sleep issues should take a balanced diet which is rich in green vegetables, fruits and sprouts as they have micronutrients and vitamins.

## Jitan Ram Manjhi claims Ravan was greater than Ram



Patna | Agencies

Former Bihar Chief Minister Jitan Ram Manjhi triggered a fresh row on Friday after he said that Ravan was a greater character than Ram.

Manjhi said: "When Ram was in trouble, some divine powers always helped him, which was not the case with Ravan. Hence, Ravan was a greater character than Ram."

Manjhi, however, also said that Ram and Ravan were imaginary characters in Ramcharitmanas and Ramayana,

but in whatever way the writers presented the characters on the basis of their imagination, Ravan had an edge over Ram.

When asked whether his statement could create a controversy, Manjhi said: "I am telling the truth. Rahul Shankritayan and others had said that Ram is an imaginary character. While most who said that were Brahmins, no one would question them. But some people will accuse me for saying the same."

"Ramcharitmanas is a very good book but it has many points which are wrong. B.R. Ambedkar and Ram Manohar Lohia had also said that the wrongful content should be removed," Manjhi said.

"Ramayans was written by Valmiki, but no one worshiped him. On the other hand, Ramcharitmanas was written by Tulsi Das and hence every one worships him. People having Manuvadi ideology have made such a system," he said.



# 'CAN'T BULLDOZE GOVT AUTHORITY BY JUDICIAL ORDERS', SC ON LAND ALLOTMENT FOR LAWYERS' CHAMBERS

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Supreme Court on Friday observed that a signal must not go to the government that the court can bulldoze its authority by passing judicial orders, while hearing a plea moved by the Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA) to convert a land measuring 1.33 acres allotted to the top court for the construction of lawyers' chambers.

A bench headed by Chief Justice of India D.Y. Chandrachud and comprising Justices S.K. Kaul and P.S. Narasimha, said it would take up the land allotment issue for lawyers' chambers with the government.

The bench queried senior advocate and SCBA president Vikas Singh, how could the court pass an order to take over the land for allotment of chambers? Lawyers are part of us, but can we use our own judicial powers to safeguard our own people?

The bench added it would appear that the apex court is exercising its own judicial powers to meet its own needs.

Singh said the apex court is surrounded by roads on all sides, there is



no way to grow except within the campus, and futuristic planning is required for the court campus and urged the court to issue notice on the plea, so that a discussion can start. It was pointed out that a building close to the court has received eviction orders, and they have got another land. The bench asked how it could take over all the buildings judicially, and added that the court did not doubt the requirement of the lawyers, but under Article 32, how can it take

over these buildings? "We must trust the court to take it up on the administrative side with the government. A signal must not go to the government that we can bulldoze their authority by passing judicial orders", said the bench.

Singh pressed for issuing notice in the matter and added that the Delhi High Court expansion land was taken over. The bench replied that it was done administratively. Expressing his reservation, Singh said the bar and

other stakeholders will not be a part of such administrative consultation.

The bench further added that for the e-courts project, the government allotted Rs 7,000 crore because they said that we need it, and the government engages with the top court on the administrative side and the lawyers' chambers issue can be put to it.

Thanking the bench on behalf of the entire bar, Singh said that the entire bar is with the institution and "we will not do anything to undermine the majesty of the institution irrespective of whatever happens in this case".

Counsel for Bar Council of India contended that there is a need for space for the bar body and also Supreme Court Advocate on Record Association (SCAORA) sought to be a part of the proceedings and intervene in the issue.

Attorney General R. Venkataramani submitted that flexibility of the administrative side would certainly be helpful to resolve the matter. After hearing detailed submissions, the apex court reserved its order.

# Delhi Police visit twice, wait for hours at Rahul's house to serve notice: Sources

Team Absolute | New Delhi

After Rahul Gandhi mentioned about the victims of sexual harassment in his Bharat Jodo Yatra speech in January in Srinagar, the Delhi Police have visited him twice and waited for hours to serve the necessary notice to get the details.

The Congress MP was served the notice on Wednesday after he did not meet the police team on Tuesday at his residence here even after waiting for three hours, said a Delhi Police source, adding that the team had visited twice his residence to serve him the notice to provide details about the victims of sexual harassment who had approached him to seek security. According to sources, the police team on March 15 had waited for three hours at Gandhi's residence to serve him the notice, however, he did not meet them.

Again on March 16, senior officers visited his residence



and served the notice after waiting for one-and-a-half hour," said the sources in Delhi Police.

A senior police officer said the notice was issued after the police took cognizance of social media posts and sent a list of questionnaires. "Delhi Police has issued a notice to Rahul Gandhi to give details about those victims who approached him regarding their sexual harassment. Police have asked him to give

details of these victims so that security can be provided to them," said the official. "... in one particular case, I asked a girl (who had been raped) if we should call the police? She said 'don't call the police... I will be shamed'," Rahul Gandhi had said during the Bharat Jodo Yatra in Srinagar.

Reacting to the notice, the Congress in a statement said: "A government rattled by Rahul Gandhi's questions on Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Gautam Adani's relationship hides behind its police. After 45 days of Bharat Jodo Yatra was completed, Delhi Police has, via a notice, sought details of women who met him and spoke about harassment and violence they may have faced.

"We will respond to the notice in due course in accordance with law. This notice is yet another proof of a government in panic and their latest salvo to weaken democracy, women empowerment, freedom of expression and role of the opposition," the statement added.

# Sisodia's family given 5 days to vacate official bungalow

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Former Delhi deputy chief minister Manish Sisodia's family has been given five days to vacate the official bungalow as his Mathura Road residence has been allotted to the newly-sworn in Delhi Minister, Atishi.

The Public Works Department (PWD) in an order said: "The Competent Authority is pleased to offer the Bungalow No. AB-17, Mathura Road, to Atishi, Minister in the Delhi government."

The PWD order asked the occupants to vacate it on or before March 21.

According to the order, the directions were issued in line with provisions of the Delhi Administration Allotment of Government Residences (General Pool) Rules, 1977 that govern such allotments against "the invocation of penal provisions under the rules" if not vacated.

"Where the allottee is



already in occupation of any house earlier allotted, the allottee will have to vacate the house within 15 days after taking the possession of the new house allotted in lieu of the previous house. The allottee shall also be required to submit a Clearance Certificate from the DDO concerned for recovery of license fee/ water charges relating to the accommodation earlier allotted," the order read.

Talking about the order, AAP MP Sanjay Singh said: "Atishi is a minister and the bungalow has been allotted in her name, what is wrong

with it? Manish Sisodia is our brother, his family is our family, we will take care of him. The BJP is treating Sisodia like a terrorist... the party should not play games."

Meanwhile, BJP's IT in-charge Amit Malviya said: "Kejriwal had promised to look after Manish Sisodia and his family. But he was removed as minister almost immediately, while Satyendar Jain was retained as minister for nine months when he was in jail. Now, Sisodia has been asked to vacate the bungalow so that it can be allotted to Atishi."

# 5 PHONES WRAPPED AROUND INMATE'S LEG IN DELHI JAIL RECOVERED

New Delhi: Officials

have recovered five mobile phones wrapped around an inmate's leg in Mandoli prison, an official said on Friday.

According to a senior prison official, on March 14, one under trial prisoner identified as Almas a.k.a Allu, who belongs to the Nasir gang was brought back to Central Jail no. 11 (Mandoli) at about 1 p.m. by DAP 3rd Bn escort after his court production.

"His leg was wrapped in bandages. On his suspicious movement in the 'deodhy' area (handing over area) he was thoroughly searched and frisked. During this course five mobile phones were recovered from bandages wrapped on his leg," the official said.

"Necessary information brought to the notice of the local police," the official added.

# Police can't act biased in permitting political rallies: Calcutta HC

Kolkata | Agencies

A single-judge bench of the Calcutta High Court on Friday observed that the state police forces in West Bengal cannot act in a biased manner while giving permission for rallies by different political parties in the state.

The Calcutta High Court's single-judge bench of Justice Rajasekhra Mantha also ruled that from now onwards instead of seeking permission from the local police station, all political parties can seek permission either from the commissioners of respective police commissionerates or the respective district police superintendents.

"I hope the police to adopt an unbiased approach in permitting rallies without any discrimination in political parties," Justice Mantha ruled in a case filed at the Calcutta High Court complaining denial of police permission for joint rally by CPI(M) and All India Secular Front (AISF)



at Bhargar in South 24 Parganas district in West Bengal.

Justice Mantha observed that recently there had been several cases filed at the court with complaints against police for giving permission to conduct political rallies and programmes. "It seems there is a necessity to format some specific norms on this count," Justice Mantha observed.

He also outlined a specific

format regarding applications for permission for rallies to commissionerates and offices of district police superintendents, besides setting some norms for the police authorities on this count.

According to Justice Mantha, the police authorities concerned should separately register the different applications and at the same time upload the status of the application on their respective websites. He also said

that it is advisable to treat the application on a "first come first serve" basis, which means priority should be given to applicants applying before. "There should not be any kind of disparity on this count," Justice Mantha observed. He also said that the police should maintain and document proposed routes of rally and estimated turnout and ensure that the rally is conducted peacefully.

# DELHI YOUTUBER ARRESTED FOR VIOLATING TRAFFIC NORMS, CREATING RUCKUS

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Delhi Police have arrested a YouTuber for violating traffic norms and creating a ruckus after a video went viral showing him standing atop a moving car's sunroof, an official said on Friday.

The official said that the YouTuber was identified as Prince Dixit, a resident of Shakarpur.

The video shows speeding cars with Dixit and his friends, with loud music playing in the background.

According to police, the video was shot on the NH-24 near Pandav Nagar area on November 16, 2022 on Prince's birthday.

"In that circulated video, it was found that the youths were riding various cars floating themselves outside from the sun roof of cars and obstructing the vehicles in the main carriage way and creating nuisance by dancing on the road," said Sachin Sharma, the Deputy Commissioner of Police (East).

"Thereafter, a police team was formed to trace out the offenders and



to take legal action on the said circulated video. On verification, the identity of one of the main person around whom the whole video was pictured was revealed as Prince. He was found to be a YouTuber having a fan following of more than 2.68 lakhs," said the

DCP. "Various videos on his YouTube channel were found in which he was seen violating the traffic rules. Accordingly, a case under section 279 (rash or negligent driving as to endanger human life), 283 (causing-

danger, obstruction or, injury in any public way or line of navigation), 290 (public nuisance), 34 (common intention), 120 B (criminal conspiracy) of the IPC and 184 (dangerous driving) of the Motor Vehicle Act was registered at Pandav Nagar police station," said the official.

Prince was arrested and one of the vehicles from the fleet was also seized by the police.

"On interrogation from the accused person it was revealed that the circulated video was made on November 16, 2022 on his 26th birthday. On that day he invited his friends at his residence for a party and thereafter, he along with his friends made videos by riding on various vehicles floating themselves from the roofs and windows of the vehicles on NH-24 highway," said the DCP.

"The investigation regarding the other vehicles seen in the circulated video is being carried out. The investigation of the case is in progress," the DCP added.

# Fake PMO official arrested in J&K was on 3rd 'VVIP visit'

Srinagar | Agencies

The imposter arrested on Thursday for posing as a top official of the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) was on his third 'VVIP' visit to Jammu and Kashmir when his luck failed him, an official said on Friday.

Kiran Patel of Gujarat was picked up from the Lalit Grand Palace Hotel in Srinagar after the police got suspicious about his credentials.

Police said he was taken to Nishat police station where he confessed his crime. Ten visiting cards of different identities and two mobile phones were found in his possession.

"He was presented before a magistrate who remanded him to the police custody till Friday. A deputy commissioner posted in one of the districts in the Valley had recommended him for security cover," a police source said. "The accused had been claiming that he had been deputed to identify apple orchards in south Kashmir areas. He impressed officials by dropping names of people in high places. "This was his third visit to the Valley.



During his present visit he had also gone to Gulmarg where he was purportedly looking for improvement in the hospitality industry," the source added.

A number of people have so far been questioned in this case. Reports also said that the same person is wanted in over a dozen other cases of fraud in Gujarat.

# Baby dies in mother's womb after doc refuses C-section surgery without paying Rs 10K bribe in K'taka

Yadgir (Karnataka) | Agencies

In a shocking incident, a baby died in mother's womb as the doctor refused to perform a C-Section surgery until the family paid Rs 10,000 bribe to her in Karnataka's Yadgir district.

The district administration suspended the gynecologist on Friday.

Dr. Pallavi Poojari, Gynecologist attached to the district hospital of Yadgir is the suspended doctor.

According to authorities, Sangeetha, a local homemaker, had come for delivery to the district hospital on Thursday. Dr. Pallavi had allegedly asked for a Rs 10,000 bribe to conduct cesarean surgery on her. The



family of Sujatha, who did not have money, left to arrange the money from relatives and friends. Only after the money was paid to her, she performed the surgery. However, as the delivery got delayed, the baby died in the womb. The family and relatives

alleged that the negligence of the gynecologist was responsible for the death of the baby. They protested in the premises of the hospital. The District Commissioner R. Snehal after getting the report placed the doctor under suspension.

# ED FILES CHARGE SHEET IN CHINESE LOAN APP CASE

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Friday said that they have filed a charge sheet against seven entities and five individuals involved in the Chinese loan app case before the Special PMLA Court, Bengaluru. The court has taken cognizance of the charge sheet.

"The accused entities include three Fintech companies namely Mad Elephant Network Technology Private Limited, Baryonyx Technology Private Limited and Cloud Atlas Future Technology Private Limited which are controlled by the Chinese nationals, three NBFCs registered with RBI namely X10 Financial Services Private Limited, Track Fin-ed Private Limited and Jamnadas Morarjee Finance Private Limited and one Payment gateway, Razorpay Software Private Limited," the ED



said. Earlier, the ED issued two provisional attachment orders and seized Rs 77.25 crore in this case lying in the

bank accounts and payment gateways. The ED had initiated investigation based on various FIRs registered by

CID, Bengaluru based on the complaints received from various customers who had availed loan and faced harassment from the recovery agent of these money lending companies. The ED investigation revealed that the Fintech companies have agreement with respective NBFCs for disbursement of loans through digital lending apps.

"During investigation, it was revealed that the money lending business is being illegally run by these Fintech companies actually and these NBFCs knowingly let these fintech companies to use their names for the sake of getting commission without being careful about the conduct of these fintech companies. The same is also violation of the Fair Practices Code of RBI," the charge sheet said.

Further investigation in the matter is on.



# FIRST H3N2 CASE CONFIRMED IN STATE, PATIENT IN HOME ISOLATION

Team Absolute | Bhopal

The first case of H3N2 influenza is confirmed in Madhya Pradesh. According to state health department, the swab sample of a 26-year-old patient with symptoms of the infection has been sent to AIIMS Bhopal.

The patient is a resident of Bhopal and is in home isolation. Bhopal chief medical and health officer (CMHO) Dr Prabhakar Tiwari confirmed the case as positive for H3N2.

As per the reports, the patient is now among 14 new cases of H3N2 diagnosed during the week in the country, according to the ICMR laboratory network for ILL-SARI surveillance. Patient does not have any travel history. Currently there are no guidelines for home isolation or area wide testing for H3N2.

Seasonal influenza is an acute respiratory tract infection caused by 4 distinct types of viruses- Influenza A, B, C and D belonging to the Orthomyxoviridae family. Among these types, Influenza A is the most common pathogen for humans.

Globally, influenza cases are typically seen to increase during certain months of the year. India usually



witnesses two peaks of seasonal influenza one from January to March and another one in the post-monsoon season.

According to Union Health Ministry, the cases arising from seasonal influenza are expected to decline from March end. In most cases, the disease is self-limiting with symptoms of cough and cold, body ache and fever etc. and usually resolves within a week.

However, potentially high-risk groups such as infants, young children, pregnant women, elderly above the age of 65 years and people with comorbidities might experience more symptomatic illnesses, even requiring hospitalisation.

Disease transmission is mostly airborne from person to person, through large droplets generated by the act of coughing and sneezing.

## JABALPUR TURNS ON ITS PRECAUTION MODE AFTER 1ST CASE IN MP

Jabalpur: After the first case of H3N2 influenza was confirmed in Bhopal on Thursday, the state has started to step-up precautions. Recently, a woman in Jabalpur had similar symptoms, after which the health authorities took her sample and sent it to the ICMR for testing, said medical experts.

According to Jabalpur Chief Medical and Health officer, Dr. Sanjay Mishra, it is essential to follow the protocols used during COVID-19 period to prevent influenza.

The doctors said that Influenza H3N2 is more dangerous than coronavirus because it causes difficulty in breathing and also chokes the throat.

Notably, there are only four centers in Madhya Pradesh for testing of influenza H3N2, out of which, Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) Jabalpur is the one. In view of an Influenza patient in Bhopal, the health department said that it is closely monitoring the situation.

## Uproar over Mhow incident in Assembly, Proceedings adjourned till Monday



Team Absolute | Bhopal

On the 10th day of the budget session of the Vidhan Sabha, the opposition created a ruckus in the House over the Mhow incident. After which the proceedings of the assembly have been adjourned till Monday. As soon as the proceedings started today, Congress MLA Bala Bachchan raised this issue. Opposed the registration of a case against the relatives of the deceased girl and youth. They were demanding the resignation of the Home Minister. On the other hand, MLA Vijayalakshmi Sadhau went out of the House crying.

Former Minister Vijayalakshmi Sadhau felt pain in the House over the atrocities on tribals. She

came out of the House crying and said - the government is doing injustice to the tribals and women. Earlier, as soon as the uproar in the House intensified, Parliamentary Affairs Minister Dr. Narottam Mishra while replying on the Mhow scandal said - According to the PM report, the girl died due to electrocution. Based on the CCTV footage of attacking the police station, a case has been registered against 13 or 17 people. A case has also been registered against the relatives of the deceased girl and youth. However, no injustice will be done to anyone in the investigation.

Home Minister and Parliamentary Affairs Minister Dr. Narottam Mishra, Congress MLA Sajjan Singh Verma, Dr. Vijay Laxmi Sadhau.

after the proceedings of the Assembly were adjourned.

Home Minister and Parliamentary Affairs Minister Dr. Narottam Mishra arrived to discuss with the opposition MLAs after the proceedings of the Assembly were adjourned.

Leader of the Opposition Dr. Govind Singh had accused Parliamentary Affairs Minister Dr. Narottam Mishra of throwing the rule book of the Assembly during the proceedings of the Assembly. After this Congress MLA Sajjan Singh Verma tore the book. No decision has yet been taken on the notice of breach of privilege against Parliamentary Affairs Minister Dr. Narottam Mishra, Congress MLA Sajjan Singh Verma, Dr. Vijay Laxmi Sadhau.

## BISHOP PC SINGH GETS FUNDING FROM ENGLAND, ED FINDS EVIDENCE

Bhopal: The ED team has found evidence against Bishop PC Singh, former director of the Church of North India. The Treasurer of CNI has revealed all the secrets during the interrogation. PC Singh used to get funding from England. PC Singh used to take reimbursement of expenses in foreign tours several times. PC laundered money through his trust. ED left for Bhopal after questioning for 2 days. ED summoned several church officials to Bhopal for questioning.



A few months ago, when the EOW team raided the house of Bishop PC Singh. He was on a foreign tour. During the operation, the EOW recovered Rs 1.65 crore in cash from the Bishop's house in a raid. Along with this, 18 thousand US dollars, 118 pounds including two kgs of gold and silver jewellery were recovered.

After this, the CM had ordered an inquiry against the bishop. The Bishop was accused of misusing the funds of the institution. Not only this, he also used the money for conversion.

## Money will be given directly to brides in Kanya Vivah Yojana: CM

Team Absolute | Bhopal

In Madhya Pradesh, a check of Rs 56,000 will be given in place of goods under the Chief Minister Kanya Vivah Yojana. CM Shivraj Singh Chouhan has made this big announcement. He has taken this decision due to apprehension of disturbances in the purchase of goods under the scheme. He reached Khargone on Friday for the awareness program about 'Ladli Bahna' and Pesa X. He also announced to increase the pension of the elderly to Rs 1000 per month.

CM Shivraj gifted development works worth Rs 240 crore in the programme. More than 30 thousand beneficiaries and villagers participated in this. He talked about taking action against those who demand money in the name of EKYC under Ladli Bahna Yojana. He gave instructions to the Collector and the Divisional Commissioner from the stage itself. The CM said that the PESA Act is not against anyone, it has been



made to further strengthen the tribal brothers.

Earlier, the ladies of Aajeevika Mission welcomed the Chief Minister. He was presented with a 10 meter long rakhi. The Collector presented a Shivaling to him. While

the Banjara Samaj presented Nagada. The Chief Minister played the drum on the stage itself. The CM also visited the exhibition of various departments at the venue. After this, the girl was worshiped on the stage.

## SC issues notice to state govt on bail plea of woman with PFI links arrested for filming Indore court proceedings

Team Absolute | Bhopal

The Supreme Court on Friday sought the Madhya Pradesh government's response on a bail plea of a 30-year-old woman who was arrested for filming the proceedings of a court during a hearing in Indore district. Police officials have alleged the woman has links with the banned group Popular Front of India (PFI).

A bench of justices Ajay Rastogi and Bela M Trivedi issued notice to the state government on Sonu Mansuri's plea. SC asks petitioners to approach MP High Court

At the outset, the bench expressed disinclination to entertain the matter and asked the lawyer appearing for the petitioners to approach the Madhya Pradesh High Court.

"This business of getting everything transferred to Delhi should stop. Why don't you go to the high court," the bench said.



Senior advocate Dushyant Dave, appearing for the petitioner, submitted that the accused was in custody for over two months and no lawyer is being allowed to appear for her.

Dave said the top court has a duty to intervene when the fundamental right of

a citizen is violated.

The apex court then issued notice in the matter and posted the case for hearing on March 20. The incident occurred on January 28

Mansuri, who was arrested on January 28, had told the police that an advocate had asked her to make the video to be sent to the Islamic group PFI and she was given Rs 3 lakh for the work. During the hearing of a case related to Bajrang Dal leader Tanu Sharma, his advocates Amit Pandey and Sunil Vishwakarma noticed the woman shooting the video in court room no. 42 of Indore district court, police had said.

Mansuri, a resident of Indore, claimed before the police that senior advocate Noorjahan Khan had given her the task of making the video to be sent across to the PFI, the official had said.

The woman also told the police that she was given Rs 3 lakh for this work, the police official had said, adding the money has been recovered.

## PANCHAYAT REPRESENTATIVES PLANTED SAPLINGS ALONG WITH CHIEF MINISTER CHOUHAN



Bhopal: Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan planted saplings of mango, banyan and saptaparni in the garden located at Shyamala Hills. Along with Chief Minister Chouhan, panchayat representatives of Bhanderi, Kolans Kala and Kherdi Gram Panchayats of Sehore district. Social worker Vijayashree Satankar along with her family planted saplings on her birthday. She was accompanied by her husband Mukesh Satankar, daughters Anika and Shivi. National Youth Award winner Shaina Qureshi also planted saplings along with Chief Minister Chouhan.

## Unit 4 of Shri Singaji Thermal Power Project created a record of continuous power generation for 150 days

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Unit number-4 of 660 MW capacity Shri Singaji Thermal Power Project of Madhya Pradesh Power Generating Company Limited has created a record of continuous power generation for 150 days in the financial year 2022-23. This unit is operating continuously from 18 October 2022. During this period, the unit generated 1674 million units of electricity at 70.5 percent Plant Load Factor (PLF). The plant availability factor (PAF) of the unit stood at 72.91 per cent during this period. This unit has

generated 3332 million units of electricity in the current financial year till March 16, 2023, which is the highest ever since its inception. Commercial power generation from the unit started on 28 March 2019. Energy Minister Pradyuman Singh Tomar, Principal Secretary Energy Sanjay Dubey and Managing Director of Madhya Pradesh Power Generating Company Manjeet Singh congratulated all the engineers and personnel for making a record of 150 consecutive days of power generation by unit number-4 of Singaji Thermal Power House.



## IMD warns of thunderstorms with lightning; orange alert issued

Team Absolute | Bhopal

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) on Friday said that thunderstorms accompanied by lightning, hail and gusty winds were likely in parts of Madhya Pradesh. The alert, valid till Saturday morning, came after parts of MP received light rain in the 24 hours ending 8.30 am.

"Thunderstorm with lightning, hail, gusty winds reaching 30 - 40 kmph speed, very likely to occur at isolated places in western and eastern MP," the 'orange' alert read. An orange alert signifies a 'be prepared' warning.

Senior meteorologist at the IMD's Bhopal centre N P



Meshram said the change in the weather was due to upper air circulation lying over Rajasthan and neighbourhood. A trough line passing through Madhya Pradesh was bringing moisture from the Arabian Sea, he added. He expected the present weather to prevail for four more days. Sagar, Santa, Ratlam and Gwalior districts received 8.2 mm, 2.2, 1.8 and 0.8 mm rainfall in 24 hours ending 8.30 am on Friday.

## Universities should be agents of change: Governor

Make students aware of social concerns, universities should present solutions to social challenges, Governor Patel told Vice Chancellors of government universities.

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Governor Mangubhai Patel has said that universities should be the agents of change. Their role and responsibility is important for the progress of the society. He said that the universities are the building centers of the future generation of the country. On the Amrit Mahotsav of Independence, emphasis should be laid on efforts to inculcate love and service towards the nation, society among the youth. Through National Service Scheme and National Cadet Corps, students should be made aware and active towards social concerns.

Governor Patel was addressing the Vice Chancellors of Government Universities of the state at Raj Bhavan today. Additional Chief Secretary Higher Education K.C. Gupta, Principal Secretary to Governor D.P. Ahuja and other officers were present.

Governor Patel said that universities should become useful for the society. Came forward in presenting solutions to the challenges and problems of the society. He explained the various dimensions of the happy results of the milk distribu-



tion initiative to the children in the tribal dominated area of Gujarat State. The Governor said that by drinking milk, children's eye disease night blindness has been cured. Vision improved. Due to the distribution of milk in the school, the attendance of the students became regular and malnutrition was removed. They, Told the Vice-Chancellors that with this

feeling, understanding the root of the problem, the universities should cooperate in the multi-faceted efforts of rural development. Discuss the problems of the communities surrounding the university. Came forward in efforts to change the social thinking towards the misleading beliefs and perceptions of the community. He said that university professors and teachers should also visit the villages. Review the economic conditions of the village. Understand the needs of poor deprived families. Illuminate the path of their development.

Governor Patel said that the university courses should be made useful for the society. Studying the human resource requirement of business establishments and industries under the university area, create courses to fulfill them. The relevance of the duration of the courses should also be considered. The Governor said that in the same way information about the health related problems of the community should be taken. The courses can be developed to meet the regional health requirement. He inspired cooperation in eradication of other diseases like sickle cell anemia disease, T.B., filariasis and thalassemia in tribal dominated areas.



EDITOR'S SPECS

## K'taka to witness high-voltage campaign by PM Modi, Rahul

**A**s Karnataka is heading for the Assembly elections, major political parties are vying with each other to make an impact on voters. The ruling BJP and opposition Congress are roping in their top leaders in the coming week intensifying the competition. Through these programmes, both parties are showing off their strength. Prime Minister Narendra Modi is visiting Davanagere on March 25 and Congress leader Rahul Gandhi will address a mega public rally in Belagavi on March 20. The Vijaya Sankalp Yatra launched by the BJP on March 1 from four directions of the state is congregating at Davanagere on March 25. The programme is being organised in a 400 acre ground behind MIT college and the party is hoping that minimum seven lakh people will attend the rally. The party senior leaders have been asked to gather a 10 lakh crowd for the programme. Following the repeated visits of PM Modi and Union Home Minister Amit Shah, the Congress is getting Rahul Gandhi to be in the state on March 20. He will attend 'Yuva Kranthi Convention' at Belagavi and leaders are striving to make it a historic rally. The Belagavi city of Karnataka has hosted the first AICC session and Rahul Gandhi is attending a public rally for the first time after the Bharat Jodo Yatra in Karnataka.

# UKRAINE-RUSSIA MILITARY CONFLICT: CAN THERE BE A UNIVERSALLY ACCEPTABLE MEDIATION?

D.C. Pathak

**T**he Ukraine-Russia military confrontation has stretched longer than expected largely because the plan of Russian President Vladimir Putin to establish a protective presence in the eastern provinces of Ukraine for the Russian-speaking population there through a quick military operation went awry because of the determined move of US-NATO combine to pump in war material in the hands of Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky on a big scale. Russia might not have been deterred by the thought of Western sanctions as it had become familiar with them ever since it had annexed Crimea in 2014 following an armed revolt led by Islamic fundamentalists there who apparently enjoyed the US support. Presently, the US-led West is keeping up aid and military support to Ukraine in a 'proxy' mode, believing that for Russia the war was inflicting costs that might become unbearable, that the world opinion was gravitating in favour of peaceful negotiation between the two warring sides and that certainly an escalation into a nuclear dimension would be totally unacceptable for the international community. It is not going unnoticed by observers that Zelensky was taking to an aggressive jargon - all on the strength of US support though - setting demands like immediate withdrawal of Russian troops and talking of an ultimate Russian defeat. Coming from a leader in his precarious situation this was understandable. There is little doubt however, that the world favours an honourable peace pact between Russia and Ukraine. India became the voice of sanity as Prime Minister Narendra Modi reached out to both Putin and Zelensky - he was the world's first leader to do that - and called for peace negotiations. His pithy reminder later that 'this is not a time for war' has swung international opinion in favour of a cessation of armed hostilities. India maintained a non-partisan approach to the conflict and abstained from US-sponsored anti-Russia resolutions at the UN. What is noteworthy, however, is that India retained a bilateral friendship with the US and the UK, as well as the leading European powers like France and Germany. A situation has arisen where any initiative for bringing a halt to the Ukraine-Russia military conflict that has prolonged without creat-

ing any definite advantage for either side would receive a global endorsement. Ukraine is bearing the losses and yet seeking a further upgradation of the US armament support while President Putin might be aware that Russia was running into an image problem as a 'big power' that could not score a decisive 'victory' over a smaller neighbour. Putin can not be serious about injecting a 'nuclear dimension' in the name of using tactical missiles with that special capability. India's balanced approach has already been hailed by the world. It can be surmised that both the US and Russia would welcome any role India could play in bringing about a ceasefire - the US and India would not like Russia to be pushed into the Chinese camp deepening the revival of the Cold War. Any meaningful success of such an intervention would be a feather in India's cap during the G20 Presidency. India's NSA has been in touch with Russia and Ukraine at the highest levels and under his guidance, a track-2 team could quietly get into the act - an official engagement would be vulnerable to fault-finding in case the progress was not perfect. The team comprising a senior diplomat and a strategic expert chosen by NSCS, could possibly start consultations for peace and explore with the help of its counterparts from Russia and Ukraine, the possibility of evolving a framework of guidelines for negotiations. The fundamental point is that the negotiating team must consider concerns and sensitivities of both sides. When the Cold War ended with the success of the anti-Soviet armed campaign in Afghanistan - a battle run on the war cry of Jihad - that resulted in the dismemberment of the USSR and literally the demise of International Communism, the cause of global peace for the future, would have been served better if the newly freed East European countries and the Central Asian Republics were encouraged to have peaceful relations with the residual state of Russia. NATO could be maintaining oversight on these regions but without getting into direct military involvement with the neighbours of Russia. Former US President Donald Trump struck a certain equation with Vladimir Putin despite the history of the 'Crimean war' but the relationship between the US and Russia soured as President Biden renewed emphasis on America's special bonds with NATO and apparently, looked upon Russia as an adver-

sary at par with China. The Democrats, it may be mentioned, had returned to power amidst widespread resentment over the alleged interference by Russia in the US Presidential election designed to favour Trump. The neighbours of Russia left on their own should have concentrated on building themselves as democratic regimes willing to deal with that country on merit - with such help as the international community could possibly extend to them. Annexation of the adjoining Crimea by Russia in 2014 - following the rise of the anti-Russia revolt led by Islamic militants there - had predictably marked the beginning of a constant decline of West-Russia relations. In the environment set by that event countries like Ukraine were nearly sucked into the NATO orbit for their self-defence. European Union saw Russia as a source of threat but Trump who welcomed the British on 'getting their country back' through Brexit, seemingly treated Russia as another European country and thought it could be handled according to what would be in the best American interests. Negotiators working for peace in the present would have to start with an acknowledgement that both Russia and Ukraine had security concerns that needed to be kept in view and that the matter was largely about two adjoining countries with different philosophies of governance, respecting each other and striking an arrangement for living in peace as neighbours. It would help if Ukraine declared that it is a democratic country run by a political executive elected on the basis of 'one man one vote' without any distinction of race, region or gender. Russian-speaking people of its eastern region would have an added confidence and feel they were on the same footing as the rest of the population. It is also - as a good starter - desirable for Ukraine to explicitly indicate that left to itself it would not seek membership of NATO. A ceasefire has to mark the launch of tripartite negotiations between the teams of Ukraine, Russia and the mediators and logically also to a scaling down of the Western supply of arms and ammunition to Ukraine. It would be necessary to let the two warring countries express their concerns and misgivings in the present and for the future. The more open they are about these the easier it would be for the negotiators to work around them and establish a reasonable level of

acceptance and lasting assurance on both sides. The intervention of the US-led West on the side of Ukraine was justifiable up to a point but not the strategy of running a proxy war through that country in the hope of weakening Russia - particularly when this was happening at the cost of a friendly Ukraine. The real challenge for the negotiators would be to do the groundwork for facilitating a Peace Pact between Russia and Ukraine that will create certain checks and balances to the satisfaction of the international community, and see to it that an arrangement both sides could trust would be created - embracing Crimea's status too - and bring in the democratic world as a whole for possible assistance in completing that groundwork. The pact will have to envisage global funding for the reconstruction of Ukraine - with Russia also making a symbolic contribution in keeping with its status as the much bigger power, in the bilateral conflict. A relevant issue would be to fix a reasonable sizing of Ukraine's Defence forces required to preserve the sovereignty of a democratic country and provide internal security in the areas where the Russian-speaking population lived. Conditions would have to be created for a gradual withdrawal of the Russian military from Ukraine in pursuance of the Peace Pact as also a matching lifting of 'sanctions' imposed by the US-led West on Russia. The Russia-Ukraine military conflict had been a prolonged one - adversary impacting the entire geopolitics and global economy - and untangling the complex issues that precipitated it in the first instance will have to be done patiently and with an understanding of what was bothering the two sides. Shared economic growth is a guarantor of peace and the negotiations should give due attention to whatever could provide mutual benefit to the two countries in future. The Ukraine-Russia military conflict had in one sense, a localised dimension involving two neighbours and it cannot be allowed to land the entire world in a crisis. Peace negotiations have to be free of political tints, have to be guided by what was good for the world and had to be conducted upfront on the strength of the bona fides of the mediators. (The writer is a former Director of the Intelligence Bureau. Views expressed are personal)

## international

# DEATH TOLL IN MALAWI FROM CYCLONE FREDDY REACHES 326

Lilongwe | Agencies

**T**he death toll from tropical cyclone Freddy in Malawi has increased to 326, President Lazarus Chakwera announced. In an address to the nation late Thursday, he also said that number of people injured and those still missing have risen to 201 and 796, respectively, Xinhua news agency reported. "The number of people displaced has more than doubled to 183,159, as has the number of households displaced, which now stands at 40,702," he said. The country has set up 317 camps across the stormed region to mitigate the situation, according to Chakwera. The Malawi leader has re-emphasized the need for more humanitarian support from local and international organisations and individuals, describing the devastation and desperation as "unbelievable and over-



whelming." Local business people have pledged to mobilize up to \$1.5 million towards supporting residents affected by the cyclone. Meanwhile, health experts raised concerns that the cyclone-induced floods, strong winds and mudslides, could cause waterborne diseases such as cholera. Charles Mwanamboto, the Secretary for Health, has acknowledged those

risks, but he said the government is working closely with health agencies to minimize the threat. "The ministry and other health agencies are working hand in hand to tighten the efforts and make sure that the response is immediate," Mwanamboto told Xinhua. Malawi Red Cross Society director of programs and development, Prisca Chisala, said that many of the victims residing in evacuation camps are at high risk of contracting cholera due to lack of sanitation facilities. "It has become increasingly challenging to regulate the provision of clean water and food, posing a potential threat to the lives of many," she added. Civil society organizations in Chikwawa and Nsanje districts in Lower Shire Valley, have also sounded the alarm about the potential cholera outbreak in the camps, as many victims lack toilets and other water, sanitation, and hygiene facilities. The country has already recorded 54,120 cholera cases with 1,660 deaths since March 2022, according to the health authorities. Freddy is the strongest tropical cyclone on record and could also be the long-lasting one, according to the World Meteorological Organization. On Sunday, it struck Mozambique as a cyclone -- for the second time in a less than a month after battering the island nation of Madagascar in the Indian Ocean, causing severe destruction. It has been difficult to determine the extent of the damage caused in Mozambique and the number of deaths as power supply and phone signals were cut off in some parts of the affected areas. Freddy also broke records for the strength it has accumulated over the 8,000-km path it travelled across the Indian Ocean from north-western Australia.

## Italy gives green light to build world's longest suspension bridge

Rome | Agencies

**I**taly's Council of Ministers has approved a decree that will allow for the building of the world's longest suspension bridge between the island of Sicily and the Italian mainland. Such a bridge has been discussed since ancient times, but it is the first time the project has received this level of formal authorisation, Xinhua news agency reported. In a statement on Thursday, the ministry of infrastructure and transport said the bridge would be "the crown jewel of Italian engineering". The north-eastern most tip of Sicily is clearly visible from the western shore of Calabria, but deep water and fast currents between the two land masses mean building a bridge is a daunting challenge for engineers. According to technical specifications, once completed the bridge will be 3,666 meters long, with a single span of 3,300 meters. This means the central span will be over 50 percent longer than the 2,023-meter central span of the Canakkale Bridge in Turkey, currently the world's longest suspension bridge. The Turkish structure, which connects the European part of Turkey to the Asian part, was completed a year ago. The bridge took six



years to build, and reportedly cost at least \$2.7 billion. The timetable and budget for the Italian Messina Bridge project have not yet been announced, but according to previous estimates the project will take at least six years to complete, at a cost of around 8.5 billion euros (\$9 billion). As far back as 251 BC, the Roman historian Pliny the Elder wrote about plans to construct a floating bridge to connect Sicily to the Italian mainland, and other projects were discussed in later centuries. The first modern-day project was announced in 1981, and a blueprint for the project was produced in 2005.

## XI JINPING TO VISIT RUSSIA

Moscow | Agencies

**C**hinese President Xi Jinping will make a state visit to Russia next Monday, the Kremlin and the Chinese Foreign Ministry have revealed, media reported. The trip will last until Wednesday. Xi will meet with Russian President Vladimir Putin to discuss "aspects of further development of comprehensive partnership," according to a statement from the Kremlin. There will also be a discussion of the international agenda and cooperation between the two nations in world affairs, the Kremlin added. Russian and Chinese officials are expected to sign a number of bilateral agreements, RT reported. Putin invited Xi to Russia during a phone call in late December, but the date of the trip was not previously announced. The two Presidents have been in frequent contact after Moscow launched its military operation in Ukraine in early 2022, both in person at international events and via video link. Last month, Beijing revealed an ini-



tiative for a settlement to the conflict in Ukraine. Moscow said it would consider the proposal, but reiterated that Kiev's refusal to acknowledge the new reality on the ground is a major obstacle to negotiations, RT reported. The Ukrainian government has stated that its goal is military victory over Russia and the expulsion of Russian troops from all territories that Kiev claims to be under its sovereignty. It has also prohibited any negotiations with Moscow as long as Putin remains in office.

## 4 PALESTINIANS KILLED IN ISRAELI RAID IN WEST BANK

**Ramallah:** Four Palestinians were shot dead by Israeli soldiers who stormed the northern West Bank city of Jenin, the Palestinian Health Ministry said in a statement. Another 20 Palestinians were wounded, four of whom were in serious conditions, Xinhua news agency reported, citing the statement. According to Palestinian sources and eyewitnesses, heavy clashes between Israeli soldiers and Palestinian militants broke out in Jenin's main street after an Israeli undercover unit stormed the city. There has been no official statement from Israel on the shootings. Israeli security forces have regularly conducted raids in Jenin in the past few months, amid an escalation of tension between Palestinians and Israelis in the occupied West Bank. The Palestinian Health Ministry said that 84 Palestinians had been killed by Israeli soldiers since January. Meanwhile, official Israeli figures show that 14 Israelis were killed in attacks carried out by Palestinians.

## North Korea test-fired missile in 'warning to enemies' holding drills

Seoul | Agencies

**N**orth Korea test-fired a Hwasong-17 intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) in a show of the "toughest response posture" of its strategic forces against "aggressive" massive combined drills by the US and South Korea, Pyongyang's state media reported on Friday. The nation's leader Kim Jong-un "guided" the launch on Thursday together with his young daughter Ju-ae, as it served as an occasion to "give a stronger warning to the enemies intentionally escalating the tension" on the peninsula, according to the North's official Korean Central News Agency (KCNA). It cited the "unstable security environment" in the region attributable to "provocative and aggressive large-scale war drills", referring to the South Korea-US Freedom Shield (FS) exercise underway in a program coupled with major field trainings, reports Yonhap News



Agency. The drill involving the Hwasong-17 was "aimed at confirming the mobile and normal operation and reliability of the country's nuclear war deterrent", the KCNA said. It confirmed "the war readiness of the

ICBM unit and the exceptional militancy of the DPRK's strategic forces and strictly verified their reliability," it added, using the acronym for the North's official name, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.



# WOMAN ACCUSED OF OFFERING BRIBE TO AMRUTA FADNAVIS SENT TO POLICE CUSTODY TILL MARCH 21

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Mumbai court on Friday remanded designer Anishka Jaisinghani in police custody till March 21 in a case registered against her for allegedly offering a bribe to Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis's wife Amruta Fadnavis for intervening in a criminal case, and also threatening her.



Anishka in police custody till March 21.

As per the FIR, Anishka was in touch with Amruta Fadnavis for the past 16 months, and also visited her residence. In her statement to the police, Amruta Fadnavis said she first met Anishka in November 2021. Anishka claimed that she was a designer of clothes, jewellery, and footwear, and requested the BJP leader's wife to wear them at public

events saying it would help her promote the products, a police official said. After gaining Amruta Fadnavis's trust, Anishka offered to provide her with information on some bookies through which, she claimed, they could make money. She then directly offered Amruta Fadnavis ₹ 1 crore to get her father off the hook in a police case, as per the FIR. Amruta Fadnavis also told the police that she was upset by Anishka's behaviour and blocked her number, the official said. The woman then allegedly sent Amruta Fadnavis video clips, voice notes, and many messages from an unknown number. She and her father indirectly threatened and conspired against Amruta Fadnavis, said the official citing the FIR. The police registered the FIR against Anishka and her father under Indian Penal Code sections 120-B (conspiracy) and the Prevention of Corruption Act sections pertaining to using corrupt and illegal means to induce a public servant to take a bribe.

## "TRAP" SET TO CATCH WOMAN: DEVENDRA FADNAVIS

Mumbai: Devendra Fadnavis spoke about the 'trap' that the Maharashtra government and the state police had laid to catch a designer who allegedly tried to bribe and blackmail his wife, Amruta Fadnavis. Devendra Fadnavis said that the FIR by his wife was deliberately not made public as cops want to trap the accused. The police planned to engage with the accused, who was allegedly under the impression that they did not know about the bribe and blackmail against Fadnavis. "With help from the police, we continued to engage the said person and in one conversation names of police officers and leaders were revealed. We were told that the previous police commissioner had started the procedure to take cases back," Fadnavis said. He claimed that now that the case has made headlines, the accused will be alert and may not get caught.

# CBI arrests 7 including 5 Customs officials in forgery case

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) on Thursday said that they have arrested five Superintendents of Customs and two private persons in connection with an on-going investigation of six forgery cases. The arrested individuals have been identified as Kumar Alok, Keshav Pandhi, Hemant Getha, Brijesh Kumar, Dinesh Kumar -- all Superintendents of Customs, and Deepak Parekh and Ashish Kamdar (private persons). An official said the CBI has registered separate cases against six Superintendents of Customs, Mumbai, two private individuals and other unknown persons on the allegations that the said public servants a conspiracy with private persons during their posting at UB Centre, Jawaharlal Nehru Customs House, and misused the provision of "Transfer of



Residence" under the Customs Act. It was alleged that the said syndicate used passports of various persons, who had stayed abroad for more than two years, especially in Gulf countries, to import various items including household items, electronic items and other unknown items by falsely undervaluing the goods and further concealing some other undeclared items along with the other declared items. "The goods imported should have been ideally imported for the person whose passport was declared before the Customs but the

goods were actually imported for many other persons settled abroad and still living abroad. The passport holder was allegedly given Rs 15,000 for allowing his passport to be used. The said modus-operandi was adopted by the syndicate in connivance with the Customs officers," the CBI said. The official said that kickbacks allegedly paid to these Customs officers were around Rs 2.38 crore in lieu of clearing of such illegal consignments. Searches were conducted at 19 places in the premises of the accused and their accomplices, situated at Mumbai, Delhi, Ghaziabad, Jaipur, Motihari (Bihar), Kurukshetra and Rohtak, which led to the recovery of various incriminating documents. The arrested accused were presented before the Special Judge, CBI cases at Alibagh in Maharashtra. They were remanded to five days' CBI custody.

# 3 killed as car rams into truck on Mumbai-Pune Expressway

Team Absolute | Pune

At least three persons were killed when a speeding car rammed into a stationary goods laden truck parked on the Mumbai-Pune Expressway on Saturday, police said here. The crash took place near the Urse village around 7.30 a.m. when the car virtually drove into the truck that had suffered a tyre burst and repairs were underway. The impact was so powerful that the car almost fully went under the loaded truck and was crushed, killing the three occupants on the spot, said a local eyewitness. Among the victims are the vehicle driver and two others and the accident occurred on one of the busiest spots on the Expressway.



Two victims have been identified as Rahul B. Kulkarni, 45, and Vijay V. Khaire, 70, while the identity of the third victim is being ascertained. Following the accident, there was a traffic jam on the affected Mumbai-Pune arm

of the highway which was cleared soon by the local police, highway patrol and volunteer groups. Though the exact causes of the crash are not clear, police suspect that the driver probably may have lost control or was dozing at the wheel.

# 'Chatur', 'Fad-noise': Amruta Fadnavis, Priyanka Chaturvedi's Twitter Spat

Team Absolute | Mumbai

A complaint by Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis's wife, Amruta Fadnavis, against a designer has triggered a war of words on Twitter. Rajya Sabha MP Priyanka Chaturvedi and Amruta Fadnavis have been taking jibes at each other over the bizarre case involving allegations of threats and conspiracy. A woman named "Aniksha" and her father have been named by Amruta Fadnavis in a First Information Report (FIR) filed on February 20. She alleges that the woman had tried to bribe her, offering her Rs 1 crore to intervene in a criminal case involving her father, who has allegedly evaded arrest for years. Aniksha allegedly also offered to give information on bookies "to help her earn money". Aniksha is the daughter of a wanted bookie, Anil Jaisinghani. Priyanka Chaturvedi, a leader of Uddhav Thackeray's party, shared a



news clipping about Fadnavis's complaint and expressed surprise over how the daughter of a criminal gained access to the house of Devendra Fadnavis, who is also the state's home minister. She also sought an independent investigation in the matter, as Maharashtra police reports to Fadnavis. In a no-holds-barred reply, Amruta Fadnavis said that the MP had falsely accused her of helping Axis Bank and

was now challenging her honesty. "Madam???? (clever), earlier you falsely claimed that I brought benefits to AxisBank & now you are challenging my honesty? Of course-after gaining ur confidence, if someone-had approached you to close cases by offering money-you would have helped such person thru ur master-that's your ????? (character)," Fadnavis tweeted. Chaturvedi hit back with a pun of

her own. "Thankfully my aukaat (character) isn't taking designer clothes for promotion that leads to messy situations later, Fad-noise. I don't know why a demand for independent investigation has rattled you so much& honestly you should have reported her the day she gave you money making tips! (sic)," she tweeted. Based on Fadnavis' complaint, Mumbai Police has filed a case against the woman and her father for conspiracy under the Prevention of Corruption Act. The woman allegedly contacted Fadnavis first in November 2021. After that, she met with her 16 times, Fadnavis has said. In their first meeting, the woman had claimed to have lost her mother, the FIR says. Ms Fadnavis alleged that the woman once lied to her body-guard and sat in her car. She allegedly told her that her father had been giving information about bookies to the police and offered a plan to make money.

## WOMEN TO GET 50 PER CENT CONCESSION ON MSRTC BUSES

Mumbai: From March 17, women passengers will get 50 per cent concession on tickets on all types of buses run by the Maharashtra State Road Transport Corporation (MSRTC). The benefit will be extended under the 'Mahila Samman Yojana'. The state government will reimburse the concession amount to the corporation. While presenting the state's budget for 2023-24, Deputy CM Devendra Fadnavis announced 50 per cent concession to all women passengers on public transport buses. MSRTC officials said it would be difficult to determine how many women will be benefited from the scheme as they were not issuing gender-linked tickets earlier. MSRTC expects the population of women passengers to be in the range of 35-40 per cent of its total bus users, they said. According to the press release, MSRTC has a fleet of over 15,000 buses and ferries over 50 lakh passengers every day.

## Maharashtra Class 12 Physics, Chemistry papers also leaked

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The Mumbai Crime Branch team during the HSC Board Mathematics paper leak case investigation found that apart from Mathematics, Physics and Chemistry papers were also leaked by the management staff, said the police on Thursday. "Before the leak of Mathematics paper was caught on March 3, the papers of Physics and Chemistry on February 27 and Chemistry on March 1 were also leaked and shared through WhatsApp an hour before the exam to the students appearing for the same", the official said. "Question papers



were shared through WhatsApp. The staff of Matoshree Bhagubai Bhambare Agriculture and Science Jr College, Ahmednagar were arrested and their mobile phones have been seized," the Mumbai Police told news agency. The Crime Branch official said that they have found some

evidence which proves that two more papers have been leaked. The Crime Branch official said, "The police received enough evidence when the WhatsApp data of the arrested staff from the management and the teachers of the college was recovered from their phones."

## Woman loses more than Rs 12 lakh to cyber fraudsters

A 36-year-old woman from Maharashtra's Thane city was allegedly duped of more than Rs 12 lakh by cyber fraudsters, police said on Friday.

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Based on a complaint, the Kapurbawdi police have registered a case under section 420 (cheating) of the Indian Penal Code and provisions of the Information Technology (IT) Act against two persons involved in the crime, an official said. One of the accused befriended the victim on

social media in November 2022. The man claimed that he was from Malaysia and was working in the UK, he said. The accused informed the woman that he has sent her some gift, and a few days later she received a call from a woman who posed as a customs official in Delhi, the official said. The woman informed the complainant that she would

have to pay some money to get the gift parcel released from the customs and that her friend had also sent her some foreign currency, he said. The complainant was told to pay some money to get the foreign currency and the gift. The woman ended up paying Rs 12.47 lakh in bank transactions from time to time and never received the gift, the official said.

# 12-year handicap ends for Raj man after Asia's 1st bilateral total arm transplant

Team Absolute | Mumbai

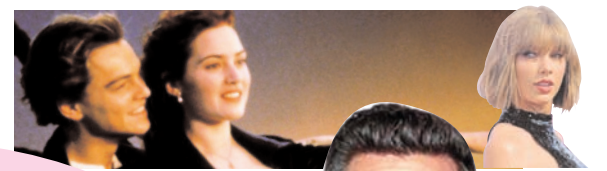
What is stated to be the first of its kind surgery in Asia, a Rajasthan farmer successfully underwent a 'bilateral total arm transplant', spelling the end to his 12-years of handicapped life, at the Global Hospitals here, officials said on Friday. The medical team led by the hospital's Dr. Nilesh G. Satbhai performed the 16-hour complex surgery on Prema Ram, 33, of Ajmer, and rekindled his hopes of an independent normal life. Ram had lost his arms when he accidentally touched a live electric pole in his field and sustained multiple electric burns and was rushed to a local hospital. However, the doctors in Ajmer and later in Jaipur advised a life-saving amputation of Ram's both hands, which he finally underwent almost up to the shoulder level that made his life a living torture. Though the family tried to get artificial limbs and prostheses, they were not practical and Ram led an extremely disabled and dependent life since. Though he lost his arms, he did not lose hope and his family even enquired about arms transplant options in Europe which were very expensive and a similar operation was impossible in India then. Even as he completed his education and a B.Ed course with the handicap in the past few years, finally, he learnt of the Global Hospitals Mumbai where successful hand transplants had been performed in the recent past and came



here in October 2022 to try his luck. Dr. Satbhai said that previously a bilateral total arm trans-

plant was done in Europe and Global Hospitals attempted the first such operation in Asia since such proximal level

surgeries are extremely challenging. The hospital had got a donor limb which matched Ram's hand colour and size and in a race against time the surgery was performed. "For such procedures, timing and coordination are important so that limbs are attached to the body as early as possible to enable immediate resumption of blood circulation in the large number of muscles that are transferred, and doing the same surgery on both arms adds to the technical and logistical efforts," Dr. Satbhai explained. Moreover, here the doctors had to prepare the two arms, attach them, connect the blood vessels, restore the blood supply perfectly so that the donor arms survive and start functioning. Finally, Ram was successfully operated on February 9 and discharged a month later with a pair of two new arms. The hospital CEO Dr. Vivek Talaulikar said that artificial hands provide very limited functions to the amputees and a hand transplant is the sole option to regain useful hand function to lead a normal life. IHH Healthcare India CEO Anurag Yadav said Mumbai has witnessed eight hand transplants till date of which seven were done at the Global Hospitals, and the hospital strives to raise awareness of organs and even limb donations to help other needy people. Now, Ram will undergo physiotherapy on both his new arms for almost two years and achieve substantial hand functions in about 18 months, said Dr. Satbhai.



# TAYLOR SWIFT

## REVEALED SHE WILL DROP 'FOUR UNRELEASED SONGS'

Los Angeles | Agencies

Singer Taylor Swift revealed she will drop four unreleased songs at midnight, on the eve of the first night of her Eras Tour. Three of the songs are part of Swift's massive re-recording undertaking, and one is a never officially released track that was written during the 'Lover' era, reports Variety.

The singer made the announcement on her Instagram story, writing: "In celebration of The Eras Tour I'm releasing four previously unreleased songs tonight at midnight."

The tracks include 'Eyes Open (Taylor's Version)', 'Safe & Sound (Ft. Joy Williams and John Paul White) (Taylor's Version)', 'If This Was a Movie (Taylor's Version)' and 'All of the Girls You Loved Before'.

'All of the Girls You Loved Before' is an unreleased track that was considered for Swift's 2019 'Lover' album.

The song was leaked in February this year, only for it to go viral on TikTok and be met with fans' requests for its official release. As it was recorded after she left Big Machine for Republic Records, a re-recording was not necessary, making it the only one of the four tracks that doesn't carry a 'Taylor's Version' tag.

The rollout of tracks includes two 'Hunger Games' soundtrack cuts fans might have worried would be orphaned in her re-records, since they never appeared on a Swift album.

'Safe & Sound' had the Civil Wars officially co-billed when it was first released in 2011; since the two artists who made up that duo have long since broken up, it appears Williams and White re-recorded their parts separately and will be billed on the remake as respective solo artists.

That song and 'Eyes Open' were featured on 'The Hunger Games: Songs From District 12' and were released in December 2011 and March 2012, respectively.

'If We Were A Movie', meanwhile, precedes a yet-unannounced deluxe version of Swift's album 'Speak Now', which many fans speculate will be the next re-recorded album the singer releases.



## ZACHARY LEVI SAID YES TO THE 'SHAZAM' SEQUEL EVEN BEFORE READING THE SCRIPT

Los Angeles | Agencies

Actor Zachary Levi has talked about how the amped-up action, new worlds, stakes of mythological proportion, roster of aspirational heroes, exceedingly menacing villains and signature brand of humour made him sign on for the David F. Sandberg-directed "Shazam! Fury of the Gods", an easy "yes" for him. Said Levi: "I thoroughly enjoyed the pitch before I even got to read the script! When David and Henry told me what the whole concept of the second movie was going to be, I was in." "I thought, 'These are great ingredients for building a really wonderful sequel to what we had already created,' so I was very excited about that and about getting back together with all of the cast and crew I loved so much, and it's just a really fun role to play. I mean, I get to be a Super Hero, and a really fun one at that." "Shazam! Fury of the Gods" stars returning cast members Zachary Levi, Asher Angel, Jack Dylan Grazer, and Adam Brody. Joining the cast is Rachel Zegler, with Lucy Liu and Helen Mirren.

Directed by David F. Sandberg, Warner Bros. Pictures is set to release the film pan India on March 17 in English, Hindi, Tamil and Telugu language.



## BEN AFFLECK REVEALED WHAT HE SAID TO JLO DURING AWKWARD GRAMMY'S MOMENT

Los Angeles | Agencies

Hollywood star Ben Affleck finally revealed what he and singer-actress Jennifer Lopez were whispering about during the viral moment at the Grammy Awards 2023. The A-list duo took the internet by storm when they were spotted having a seemingly tense exchange during the glitzy awards show at the beginning of February while host Trevor Noah filmed a segment next to them, reports mirror.co.uk.

People were convinced that the Get Right singer 'snapped' at her husband Ben while they 'didn't know the cameras were rolling'. Over a month later, Ben has stepped forward to set the record straight on the awkward television moment.

"I saw (host Trevor) and I was like, 'Oh God.' They were framing us in this shot, but I didn't know they were rolling," the actor explained. "I leaned into her and I was like, 'As soon they start rolling, I'm going to slide away from you and leave you sitting next to Trevor.'" He added to The Hollywood Reporter: "(JLo) goes, 'you better f\*\*\*ing not leave.' That's a husband-and-wife thing."

The original video showed Ben leaning in towards Jennifer while whispering something in her ear. She then quickly moves away.

Her expression quickly changed after clocking live television cameras are pointed right in her direction as she sits up straight and laughs at Trevor's jokes.

Another shot seems to show Ben talking to Jennifer as she somewhat blanks him, turning her attention to her mobile phone on the table. People were so invested in the supposed drama that lip readers and seat fillers chimed in on the conversation.

Seat filler took to TikTok to explain what really happened and it wasn't as negative as people portrayed it to be.

"JLo showed Ben Affleck the phone and was like, 'Oh my God, honey. Look at this meme circulating about you' and he was like, 'Oh God, this again'. He knew during the performance that he was a meme. He knew and just chose not to change his expression."

She added: "I know she was on her phone and saw it and was like, 'honey, this is so funny. Look at this'."

According to the seat filler, they were 'super lovey dovey' and their 'hands were always intertwined'.



## Paris Hilton created her 'Barbie doll fantasy life' on TV as a 'trauma response'



Los Angeles | Agencies

American socialite Paris Hilton said that her on-screen persona was a "trauma response" and a way to deal with the pressures in her life. The TV personality was catapulted to fame in the early noughties in show 'The Simple Life', where she and pal Nicole Richie swapped their lavish lifestyles for humble homes, reports Mirror.co.uk.

However, the person she was while the cameras rolled and on the red carpet was a "mask", the star said as she appeared on 'The One Show'. Paris spoke to Rylan Clark and Jermaine Jenas this evening about her book, 'Paris Hilton: The Memoir', where she recalled the terribly dark times in her teenage years.

The new mum has spoken of how she was drugged and raped aged 15, groped by a teacher, and sexually abused while attending

boarding school in Utah.

Mirror.co.uk further states that as an heiress and model, Paris was already known in the NYC social scene, then scooping 'The Simple Life' in her early twenties, which ran for four years.

"The One Show" host Jermaine asked the entrepreneur whether she had "two characters", and if she found "herself trapped between two versions of Paris Hilton, the real Paris Hilton and the characters she's created?"

The TV star replied: "I think that what I went through it was a trauma response where I created this character, this Barbie doll fantasy life so I didn't have to think about what I went through, and then I got 'The Simple Life', and then I had to continue playing that character season after season and then almost got stuck in it because I got so used to doing it. It was sort of a mask to deal with all of the pressures."

## 'I DIDN'T HAVE A PLAN'

Lucy Liu didn't have a plan when she decided to become a single mother

Los Angeles | Agencies

Actress Lucy Liu, who played the femme fatale O-Ren Ishii in Quentin Tarantino's cult classic 'Kill Bill', "didn't have a plan" and just "pulled the trigger" when she decided to become a single mum.

The actress welcomed a son named Rockwell in 2015 via gestational surrogate and she's now admitted she did very little research before making the life-changing decision because she worried she would "think" herself out of it, reports 'Female First UK'.

In an interview with The Cut, Lucy explained: "I didn't have a plan. I just thought, 'I want to change the conversation a little bit'. I didn't mull it over too much. I didn't do a lot of research, I just pulled the trigger."

She said, quoted by 'Female First UK', "I can think myself out of something easily. If I think too much I won't do it. It's better for me to feel something and just go for it. A lot of people read books about parenting, I didn't do any of that. I was like, 'When the child is here, I'm just going to figure it out.'"

The screen star went on to explain why she chose to raise Rockwell in her home town of New York City, insisting she wanted him to see more of the world.

She added, "I definitely wanted to raise a kid in New York. People will say, 'It's not convenient, you don't even have a car,' but this way, they're going to see all the things. You're going to show them what's safe and what's not, and they're going to understand that through experience. It's hard to build common sense when you're in a car all the time. They're going to smell the smells."



NICOLETA VACULOV JOVANOVIC



## IND vs AUS 1st ODI

# KL RAHUL'S BRILLIANT KNOCK GUIDES INDIA TO VICTORY

Team Absolute | Mumbai

KL Rahul struck a well-controlled unbeaten 75 while being in a crucial sixth wicket partnership of 108 runs with all-rounder Ravindra Jadeja as India defeated Australia by five wickets with 61 balls to spare in a low-scoring affair. With the win at the Wankhede Stadium, India took a 1-0 lead in the three-match series.

After the pace duo of Mohammed Shami and Mohammed Siraj claimed three wickets apiece to help India bundle out Australia for 188 after skipper Hardik Pandya had won the toss and elected to bowl first, Rahul and Jadeja came together to extricate India from a precarious 83/5 to take them to a memorable victory.

It was not the usual Wankhede wicket and offered movement off the seam to the bowlers. The bowlers held the upper hand barring the magnificent 65-ball 81 by Australia's makeshift opener Mitchell Marsh and the controlled knocks by Rahul and



Jadeja.

India made a disastrous start as they lost their first three wickets with just 16 runs on the board. With the ball swinging and nipping around, the Indian batters found the going tough and the Australian bowlers made their life difficult by not giving them any chances.

Gill stayed at the wicket for 31 runs and scored 20 runs, failing to adapt to the conditions as Starc claimed 3-24 in his first spell.

Rahul and skipper Hardik came together to raise 44 runs off 55 deliveries for the fifth wicket. Rahul played the waiting game while Pandya (25 off 31 balls) went for his shots.

Rahul then figured in the most crucial partnership of the Indian innings -- a half-century partnership for the sixth wicket with Jadeja as India, who were lagging in comparison to Australia at the end of 28 overs at 114/5 to the visitors' 169/5, fought back brilliantly.

Rahul completed his half-century in 71 deliveries, opening up later by hammering Adam Zampa for a four and a six in the 36th over. He had reprieves when a couple of outside edges did not carry and was also beaten on a few occasions but kept building his innings, hitting four boundaries in his fifty. He celebrated it by hitting two fours and a six but raised most of his runs through singles. Jadeja proved an able ally as they raised an unbeaten century partnership to help India escape to victory from a difficult situation.

### Brief scores

Australia 188 all out in 35.4 overs (Mitchell Marsh 81, Steve Smith 22; Mohammed Shami 3-17, Mohd Siraj 3-29) lost to India 191/5 in 39.5 overs (KL Rahul 75 not out, Ravindra Jadeja 45 not out, Hardik Pandya 25; Mitchell Starc 3-49, Marcus Stoinis 2-27) by five wickets.

## All England Open

# Gayatri-Treesa pair reach women's doubles semifinal

Birmingham | Agencies

Continuing their scintillating form, India's young women's doubles sensation Gayatri Gopichand and Treesa Jolly on Friday sailed into their second successive semifinal of the prestigious England Open Championships.

The Indians defeated China's Li Wen Mei and Liu Xuan Xuan after coming from losing the second game to win 21-14, 18-21, 21-12 in the women's doubles quarterfinals played at the Axiata Arena.

The world No. 17 Indian pair had a major breakthrough in their career in the 2022 edition as they reached the semifinal after being promoted from the reserves but lost to the Chinese pair Shu Xian Zhang and Yu Zheng in straight games after putting up a great fight. Earlier in the tournament, the Commonwealth Games



bronze medallists pair of Gayatri and Treesa Jolly knocked out the world No. 9 Japanese pair of Yuki Fukushima and Sayaka Hirota in their round of 16 match on Thursday. The teenage women's doubles pair started their campaign with a 21-18, 21-14 straight games victory against seventh seeds Thai pair Jongkolphan Kititharakul and Rawinda Prajongjai, which was the Indians' first win over the Thai pair in five meetings. Next, Treesa and Gayatri will face either the eighth-seeded Indonesian

pair of Apriyani Rahayu and Siti Fadia Silva Ramadhanti or the Korean combination of Baek Ha Na and Lee So Hee on Saturday for a place in their maiden final.

Notably, the young women's pair is the only Indian challenge left in the tournament as the last year's finalist Lakshay Sen, HS Prannoy, and Kidambi Srikanth, men's doubles pair of Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty bowed out after suffering losses in their respective second round matches on Thursday.

## FIH World Rankings

# Pro League success helps Indian men climb two spots to fourth



Team Absolute | Mumbai

A brilliant home run of three outright wins and one in the shoot-out in the FIH Pro League helped the Indian men's team climb two spots to fourth place in the World Rankings.

In the updated list, which was released on Friday following the completion of matches in Rourkela, the Netherlands moved to the top spot with 2848.28 points as Australia dropped points after losing to India and Germany in Rourkela. Belgium is at the second spot with 2845.82 points while Germany (2752.12) is third with India following at fourth with 2689.07 points.

Netherlands (2848) climbed up one spot to the top of the world rankings on account of

Germany dropping points to Australia and India in the Rourkela mini-tournament. Belgium (2846) are also a beneficiary of Germany's loss climbing up one spot into second place. Germany (2752) managed to get one win out of four in the Rourkela mini-tournament and slip down to third in the world rankings, just ahead of India (2689) who had a stellar home run of 3 wins and one shoot-out win to climb two spots into fourth.

India's charge up the rankings sees England (2536) lose ground as they slide down to sixth in the world rankings. Argentina (2269) and Spain (2251) played in the mini-tournament in Hobart alongside Australia with both teams maintaining their rankings in seventh and eighth place respectively. Spain's three wins in the first three matches had seen them briefly climb up to the seventh spot, but a final match loss to Argentina saw the teams switch back. In the FIH Women's World Rankings, the Netherlands (3199) remain at the top of the table, continuing to maintain their huge lead over Argentina (2640) in second place. India (2086), New Zealand (1879) and China (1777) close out the top-10 positions, with India last featuring in the Nations Cup where they finished as champions, securing a place in the FIH Hockey Pro League for the 2023/24 season.

## Europa League

# ARSENAL KNOCKED OUT AFTER PENALTY SHOOTOUT LOSS TO SPORTING CP

London | Agencies

Premier League leaders Arsenal were knocked out of the Europa League at the last-16 stage in a penalty shootout 1-1 (3-5) loss by Sporting Lisbon at Emirates Stadium, here.

Gabriel Martinelli saw his spot kick saved in the shoot-out, allowing Nuno Santos to convert the winner, after a 1-1 draw on Thursday night, and a 3-3 draw on aggregate.

There was further bad news for Gunners in the match as Takehiro Tomiyasu and William Saliba were both withdrawn in the opening 20 minutes due to injury.

Arsenal bowed out of the competition despite taking a first-half lead. When Granit Xhaka fired Jesus ahead inside the opening 20 minutes, there was little sign of the drama in store on a long evening at the Emirates. But the Gunners failed to build on the lead and were punished when Pedro Goncalves scored an outrageous equaliser from near the halfway line. The Premier League topper came close to the winner several times in extra-time -- notably from Gabriel and when Leandro Trossard hit the post -- before Sporting had a man sent off late on.

Spot kicks were needed in the



shootout, although Martin Odegaard, Bukayo Saka and Leandro Trossard all scored, Martinelli had his effort saved by Antonio Adan and the Portuguese side advanced.

With Arsenal's European campaign over for another season, now they have 11 games left this season, all in the Premier League. The Gunners will be back in Premier League action at the weekend, when they host Crystal Palace on Sunday.

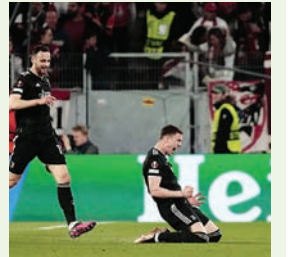
# JUVENTUS BEAT FREIBURG TO ADVANCE INTO QUARTERS

Berlin | Freiburg crashed out of the UEFA Europa League after losing 2-0 in the last-16 second leg, and 3-0 on aggregate, to Juventus.

The hosts assumed control from the start and created chances through Ritsu Doan, who unleashed a dangerous effort in the fifth minute, and Matthias Ginter, who tested Juventus goalkeeper Wojciech Szczesny with a 22nd-minute header.

Juventus broke the deadlock as VAR awarded them a penalty just before the break. Dusan Vlahovic kept his nerves from the spot and beat Freiburg custodian Mark Flekken. The hosts were reduced to 10 men as Manuel Gulde was sent off for his second yellow card after handling the ball inside the area. Despite the numerical disadvantage, Freiburg came out with guns blazing in the second half as Michael Gregoritsch and Lucas Holer came close from promising positions after the restart, a Xinhua report said. The Breisgauers pressed frenetically but couldn't do any damage to Juventus' well-positioned defense, whereas the visitors searched for counterattack opportunities.

Federico Chiesa nearly caught Freiburg's defense flat-footed, but Flekken was on guard and tipped his effort onto the crossbar in the closing stages. Chiesa kept it bowling though and doubled the advantage in injury time after Adrien Rabiot's cutback allowed the striker to put the result beyond doubt.



## Hockey India Awards

# HARDIK SINGH, SAVITA NAMED PLAYER OF THE YEAR 2022

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Young midfielder Hardik Singh and seasoned woman goalkeeper Savita were on Friday named winners of the Balbir Singh Sr Award for male and female Player of the Year for 2022 at the Hockey India 5th Annual Awards 2022 here.

Hardik Singh and Savita received a standing ovation as they were announced as the winners of the Hockey India Balbir Singh Sr. Award for Player of the Year 2022 Awards for Men and Women, respectively. The winners of the prestigious players' awards for 2022 received a glittering trophy along with a cash prize of INR 25.00 Lakh each.

The awards ceremony started with the felicitation of awardees from 2021 and 2022.



For 2021, Indian Men's Hockey Team Legend Amit Singh Bakshi, who was part of the Indian team that won

the Gold Medal at the 1956 Olympics in Melbourne, received the prestigious Hockey India Major Dhyan

Chand Lifetime Achievement Award for the year 2021. Meanwhile, Harmanpreet Singh and Savita won the Hockey India Balbir Singh Sr. Award for Player of the Year 2021 awards in the Men's and Women's categories, respectively.

The awards for 2022 started with Milestone Awards, given to athletes who achieved important milestones in the past year. Those that got the awards include Manpreet Singh, Rani, Navjot Kaur, Mandeep Singh, Neha, Navneet Kaur, Lalremsiami, Harmanpreet Singh and Karthi Selvam, who received a cash prize of INR 1.00 lakh for scoring a goal on debut. Umpire Javed Shaikh was awarded a cash prize of INR 1.50 lakh for officiating in his 150th senior international match.

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Former Australia Test captain Tim Paine has announced his retirement from first-class cricket after an incredible 18-year domestic career, following the conclusion of Tasmania's Marsh Sheffield Shield match against Queensland at Blundstone Arena.

Paine captained Australia in 23 Tests between early 2018 and 2021, playing 35 Tests overall. He became Australia's 46th Test skipper after Steve Smith stepped down during Australia's 2018 tour of South Africa.

However, the wicket-keeper batter stepped down from



the captaincy in late 2021 after it was revealed he had sent explicit text messages to a Cricket Tasmania employ-

ee in 2017.

The 38-year old's career ended after playing 154 first-class matches including 35 Tests and 95 Sheffield Shield appearances for Tasmania.

"He has been a phenomenal player, it is an incredible effort to have the longevity that he has had," Tasmania captain Jordan Silk was quoted as saying by cricket.com.au.

The Hobart-born Paine also holds the record for the most Shield dismissals by a Tasmania wicketkeeper in Shield cricket with 296 and finishes 12th all-time on the Shield wicket keeping dismissals list.

# IRELAND TO HOST INDIA FOR THREE MEN'S T20IS IN AUGUST



New Delhi | Cricket Ireland announced on Friday that the men's team will face off against India in a three-match T20I series at Malahide from August 18-23.

India and Ireland had earlier played a two-match T20I series in 2022. India, led by all-rounder Hardik Pandya, won the series 2-0, though Ireland ran them close in the second match.

Earlier in the summer, Ireland's men's team will face Bangladesh in a three-match ODI series which is crucial for the hosts from the 2023 ODI Cricket World Cup qualification point of view. The matches, to be played at the Cloud County Ground in Chelmsford, in early May are both sides' final ICC Cricket World Cup Super League fixtures.

## Indian Wells

# SWIATEK SAILS INTO SECOND CONSECUTIVE SEMIFINAL, TO FACE RYBAKINA

Indian Wells (USA) | Agencies

Defending champion Iga Swiatek's title defense at the Indian Wells Masters remains on track after the World No.1 posted her 16th straight-sets win of the season to defeat Romania's Sorana Cirstea 6-2, 6-3 and returned to the semifinals of the Masters 1000.

The victory on Thursday extended Swiatek's head-to-head record over the Romanian to 2-0. Into her third consecutive semifinal, the Pole has yet to lose a set during this fortnight. She has now won 10 consecutive matches at the Indian Wells Tennis Garden.

"I'm happy that I played so intensely that I could start both sets well. I feel like handling things pretty well, and just playing my game," Swiatek said of her victory over Cirstea.



The 21-year-old Swiatek improved to 16-3 on the season and 12-1 lifetime at Indian Wells, as she set up a clash with Elena Rybakina, who sent her packing from 2023's first Grand Slam.

The duel will be a rematch of their Round of 16 clash at the Australian Open in January, which Rybakina won 6-4, 6-4. Swiatek and Rybakina have split their two meetings, both of which were played on hard courts.

The world no. 1 Pole is bidding to become the first No.1 seed to advance to the Indian Wells final since Serena Williams in 2016 and the first top seed to win the title since Victoria Azarenka in 2012.

Should she go on to successfully defend the title, the 21-year-old will join Martina Navratilova as the only two women to win back-to-back championships at Indian Wells.

# ALCARAZ RETURNS TO SEMIS, DEFENDING CHAMPION FRITZ BOWS OUT

Indian Wells (USA) | Top-seeded Carlos Alcaraz of Spain surged past Canada's Felix Auger-Aliassime, 6-4, 6-4 to book his spot in the Indian Wells Masters semifinals for the second consecutive season.

Alcaraz continued to gain steam in his bid for a maiden Indian Wells title as he marched to his first victory in four tries against the 10th-ranked Canadian.

"Today, the goal was to stay there. I knew that I was going to have my chances. I had to try to take it. Probably I played one of my best matches this season, in 2023. I'm really happy and want to keep going," Alcaraz said.

The Spaniard won 30 percent of his first-serve return points and 58 percent of his second-serve return points and saved three of the four break points he faced to come through a close contest in two hours.

The victory, Alcaraz first against a Top 10 opponent since he beat Casper Ruud in the US Open final, moved him within two wins of a return to the top of the ATP Rankings.



## KAREENA REVEALS HER SON DOESN'T EAT UNTIL HE HEARS 'NAATU NAATU'

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Bollywood actress Kareena Kapoor Khan, whose streaming talk show 'What Women Want', released its fourth season on Friday, has revealed that her younger son Jehangir absolutely loves dancing to the Oscar winning song 'Naatu Naatu' and that he doesn't eat unless the song is played for him.

The actress said, "Jeh only eats his dinner when we play 'Naatu Naatu' and he wants the original version not the Hindi dub version of the song. The song touches a 2 year old's heart, it shows that they have created something spectacular with the film and the song".

With India bagging two Oscars at the 95th Academy Awards, it has brought a sense of pride for every Indian. Kareena feels proud to be a member of the fraternity that's bringing accolades for the country on the international platform.

She said, "I'm very proud to see the audience watching more movies, be it Hindi films, regional films, parallel films or documentaries. People are taking Indian cinema a lot more seriously and as a member of the fraternity it fills my heart with so much pride and gratitude towards our audience".

The fourth season of 'What Women Want' is available to stream on the YouTube channel of Mirchi Plus.



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Actress Rani Mukerji spoke candidly about why the film 'Mrs Chatterjee VS Norway' speaks to her.

Rani in an exclusive BTS clip shared with IMDb, said: "The film resonates with one emotion which is the mother's emotion. This movie is a reminder to all children in the world that there's no greater emotion or relationship than with a mother. As a mother, I couldn't place myself in Sagarika's shoes because it is a painful thought to be separated from your child. She added: "I can't even imagine it. Animals too have a natural instinct with their children that if someone tries to take their children away, the mother will straightaway attack. It is the same with human mothers as well. If you try to do something with their child, they will not spare you."

"You forget to say thank you to your mothers and take them for granted. I am hoping after watching this film, a lot of sons and daughters will reach out to their mothers and give them tight hugs and kisses."

'Mrs Chatterjee Vs Norway' is directed by Ashima Chibber. It stars Rani Mukerji, Anirban Bhattacharya, Neena Gupta and Jim Sarbh. The film is the true story of an Indian couple, an adaptation based on the mother - Sagarika Chakraborty's autobiography titled 'The Journey of a Mother', whose children were taken away from them by the Norwegian Childcare System (Barnevernet) in 2011.

THE FILM RESONATES WITH ONE EMOTION WHICH IS THE MOTHER'S EMOTION: RANI



## ANANYA, DAD CHUNKY PANDAY DANCES TO 'SAAT SAMUNDAR PAAR'

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It was a visual treat to see actress Ananya Panday dance with her father Chunky Panday on the song 'Saat Samundar Paar' at her cousin Alanna Panday's wedding held here on Thursday.

A video shared on Ananya's fan page, showed Ananya dressed in a powder blue and white saree dancing with Chunky, who sported a parrot green blazer paired with white pants. They were also joined by Ananya's cousin brother Ahaan, who looked dapper in a black suit.

The song 'Saat Samundar Paar' is from Chunky's 1992 film 'Vishwatma' directed by Rajiv Rai. It also stars Sunny Deol, Naseeruddin Shah and Divya Bharti among many others. The film follows Prabhat, an honest police officer, being sent to Kenya by the Indian Government to capture the dreaded crime lord Ajgar Jurrat and bring an end to his illegal businesses.

On the work front, Ananya will next be seen in Vikramaditya Motwane's untitled cyber crime-thriller, Farhan Akhtar's 'Khushi' and 'Dream Girl 2'.



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Actress Richa Chadha, who will soon be seen in the Sanjay Leela Bhansali's web series 'Heeramandi', has shared that she was "stretched out of her comfort zone" while working on the project. The actress said: "Sanjay sir is a visionary, magician, and storyteller. I have never felt so stretched out of my comfort zone as a performer. So many times, I go on a set and the director tells me, 'aap to kar hi logi (for you, this is a cakewalk), you were so great in this film, that film.'" However, she said that it's not as easy as it looks because everyone keeps evolving. She continued: "Honestly, I feel like saying that was 10 years ago, I am not the same person I was even one year ago. I have evolved, I have grown. I am a director's actor; I love being pushed to my maximum potential. I like to be challenged till my throat is dry and I have nausea from nervousness. And hence, I loved working with Sanjay sir as he is so respectful of collaboration. He doesn't suffer fools easily and has high standards." 'Heeramandi' is her second project with Bhansali, the first one being 'Goliyon Ki Rasleela - Ram Leela', which has clocked almost a decade. "I'd rather work with a taskmaster who holds himself to a high standard than a director who coddles me but makes a shit film. Being associated with SLB and his project in any capacity is always an honour. And I feel lucky that I got that chance twice, the first one being Goliyon Ki Rasleela - Ram Leela.

But Heeramandi will always be special since it is one of many firsts. You will see," she added. 'Heeramandi', set in pre-independent India, is based on the life story of three generations of courtesans in Heeramandi district. The series also stars Sonakshi Sinha, Sharmin Sehgal and Manisha Koirala, and will release on Netflix.

Richa Chadha was pushed out of her comfort zone for web series

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actor Sunil Grover along with Satish Shah will be soon seen in the upcoming streaming series titled 'United Kacche'. The show is a light-hearted comedy based in the United Kingdom and has been shot in the UK. It follows the story of Tejinder 'Tango' Gill (played by Sunil Grover) from Punjab who aspires to migrate to a foreign land where the grass is greener. He inherited this dream from his late father and grandfather as they too wished to settle abroad for a better life.

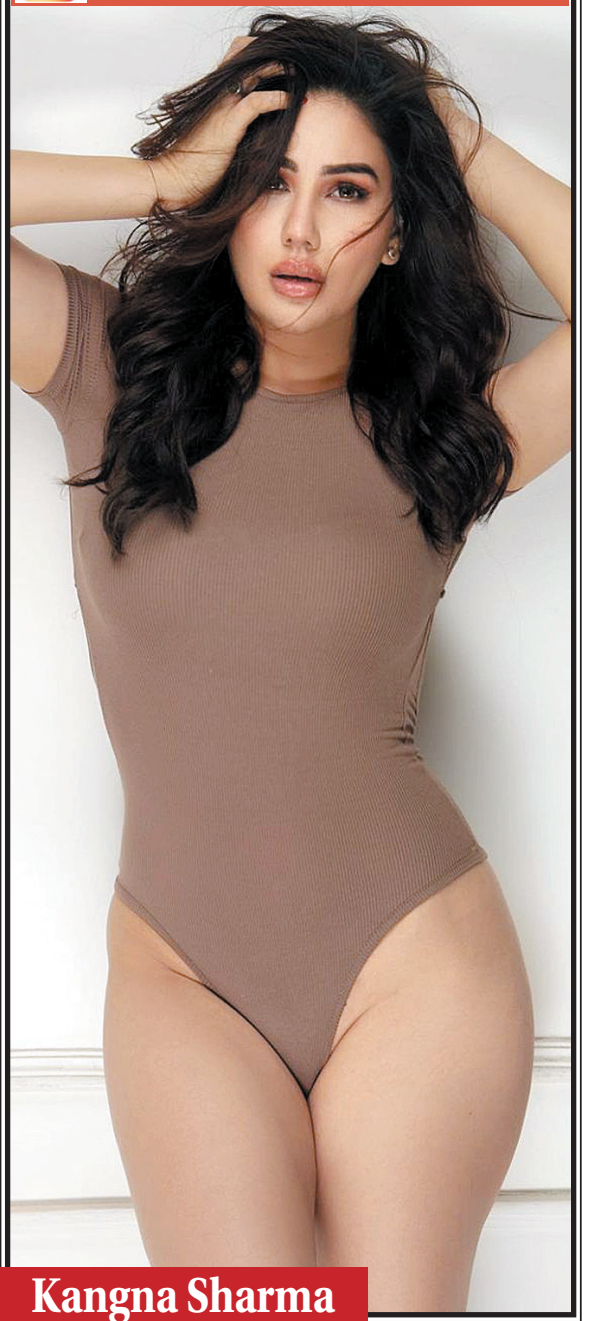
He somehow manages to arrange for a tourist visa for the United Kingdom and takes off without planning much into the future. As his visa is about to expire, and he will be considered an illegal immigrant marking the beginning of the real struggle of living abroad. The director of the show, Manav Shah said: "In India, everyone has an aspiration to go and settle abroad and they would do anything for it. 'United Kacche' is a light-hearted funny show that takes you into the lives of people who would do anything to settle abroad and how people from different communities and countries unite to support each other."

The show also stars Sapna Pabbi, Nikhil Vijay, Manu Rishi Chaddha, Nayani Dixit and Neelu Kohli in pivotal roles. The show highlights the living conditions of many such Indian, Pakistani and Bangladeshi citizens who are not permanent residents of England and are thus known as 'Kacche'.



SUNIL GROVER, SATISH SHAH STARRING SERIES HIGHLIGHT IMMIGRANTS' PLIGHT IN UK

INSTAGRAM PIC OF THE DAY



Kangna Sharma