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## ADANI GROUP EXERCISED 'IMPROPER INFLUENCE': OPPOSITION TO ED

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Opposition in its complaint to the Enforcement Directorate (ED) against the Adani Group on Wednesday claimed that the group has exercised "improper influence to obtain concessions and contracts from governments and regulated entities which they are unqualified for".

"The Dubai-based Seclink Technology Corporation emerged as the highest bidder with a bid of Rs 7,200 crore in November 2018 tender to redevelop Mumbai's Dharavi area. That tender was cancelled in November 2020 because of delays in the transfer of Railway land. A fresh tender with new conditions was issued in October 2022 which the Adani Group won with a bid of Rs 5,069, lower than the original winning bid by Rs 2,131 crore. The Adani Group has no known experience in urban redevelopment," the Opposition said in its letter to the ED.

The Opposition asserted that several "crucial pieces of evidence have been made available against the group in the public domain over the last three months but the ED, which claims to pursue such cases with vigour and fairness, has yet to launch even a preliminary enquiry into these very serious charges".

The letter further reads: "The Adani Group companies are accused of having established a network of offshore shell companies and offshore funds controlled by parties related to the Adani Group for the purposes of (1) artificially inflating stock valuations and (2) to give a distorted picture with regard to the group companies' financial health."



### WHO CONTROLS ELARA: RAHUL'S NEW SALVO AT GOVT

New Delhi: Amid uproar over his UK statement and government seeking apology, Rahul Gandhi on Wednesday fired a fresh salvo at Adani Group and the government by raising questions on a foreign entity, named Elara. Gandhi, after arriving in the national capital from his foreign trip, alleged that Adani group and Elara have been given a contract for missile and radar upgrade.

In a tweet, he said, "India's missile and radar upgrade contract is given to a company owned by Adani and a dubious foreign entity called Elara. 'Who controls Elara? Why is India's national security being compromised by giving control of strategic defence equipment to unknown foreign entities?' While Rahul Gandhi is at centre of the controversy, the opposition is united on Adani row. The Trinamool Congress, however, is staying away from the Congress-led grouping."

### NO QUESTION OF APOLOGY: KHARGE DEFENDS RAHUL

New Delhi: Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge on Wednesday defended Rahul Gandhi and said there was no question of apology for his UK statement.

Hitting out at PM Modi, Congress chief and Leader of Opposition Mallikarjun Kharge had tweeted: "I want to remind you of your statement made in China. You said - 'Earlier, you felt ashamed of being born Indian. Now you feel proud to represent the country' Was this not an insult to India and Indians? Tell your Ministers to refresh their memories!"

"In South Korea, you had said - 'There was a time when people used to feel that what sin they committed in their past life which resulted in taking birth in India, is this what you call a country...' First see the 'Mirror of Truth', before lecturing the Congress party!"

### SMRITI IRANI SEEKS APOLOGY FROM RAHUL OVER HIS UK SPEECH

New Delhi: Union Minister Smriti Irani on Wednesday criticised Congress MP Rahul Gandhi over his UK speech, and demanded his apology.

In a press conference Smriti Irani said, "Rahul Gandhi called upon foreign powers from a country whose history has been to enslave India. While tearing down India's democratic systems and institutions, Rahul expressed his regret that foreign forces do not come and attack India."



## Congress raises 'old pension' issue in MP Assembly

Team Absolute | Bhopal

With an eye on upcoming Madhya Pradesh Assembly elections, the Congress raised the issue 'Old Pension' scheme in the state Assembly on Wednesday.

The grand old party led by former Chief Minister and state president Kamal Nath strategically raised the issue in the House and asked "whether the Shivraj Singh Chouhan-led BJP government has made any proposal on this matter".

Former minister and senior Congress leader Sajjan Singh Verma asked state Finance Minister Jagdish Devra that whether the government has made any proposal regarding the restoration of the 'old pension' for the state government employees.

To which, Devra replied that there is no such proposal before the government. Soon after the response, Congress MLAs created uproar in the House and termed it an "injustice with state government employees".

Leader of Opposition (LoP) Govind Singh asked the state Finance Minister whether the government will make the proposal for restoration of the old pension in 'supplementary' budget. To which, Devra reiterated: "There is no such proposal for consideration..."

The Congress MLAs walked out of the House. Later in a press briefing, Kamal Nath said: "The old pension scheme would be implemented once the Congress government will return to power."

## BJP infighting in Karnataka comes to fore as senior minister Somanna lands in New Delhi

Bengaluru/New Delhi | Jaipur

The infighting within Karnataka's ruling BJP came out in open as Housing Minister V. Somanna, who is reportedly miffed with former CM B.S. Yediyurappa and his son B.Y. Vijayendra for meddling, reached New Delhi on Wednesday to meet senior party leaders.

The minister, who is in-charge for Chamarajanagar, remained absent from the 'Vijay Sankalp Yatra' in the district attended by BJP national President J.P. Nadda and also kept distance from the party activities. His son Arun Somanna, without taking his name, attacked Vijayendra on a public platform.

Somanna is likely to meet Union Minister for Mine, Coal and Parliamentary Affairs Pralhad Joshi and other senior leaders. Sources said that he is going to seek clarity on his position and seek a stop to interference by Yediyurappa and his son Vijayendra.

A Lingayat leader and brought to the BJP by Yediyurappa, Somanna did not back Yediyurappa when he left the BJP to

form his Karnataka Janata Party (KJP) and since then both leaders are at loggerheads.

Asked if he is in New Delhi to complain on Vijayendra, Somanna said that Vijayendra is just the son of Yediyurappa. "What is his age to compare him with me? There are many leaders of his age with me. Yediyurappa has not spoken to me. If he wants to talk, I will go to him. I don't hate Yediyurappa," he said.

Sources claim that Somanna is all set to join the Congress as the BJP is not giving concrete promises about his future. The Congress has, on the other hand, given him the offer of a prominent post for him and his son Arun Somanna if he quits the BJP. The Congress is thinking of gaining upper hand in at least 10 assembly constituencies in Bengaluru if it manages to lure him to its side.

Yediyurappa has stated that he would talk to him and ensure that Somanna remains in BJP. But, after Somanna's statement, he has not made any attempt to talk to him, sources said.

## NEET PG 2023 RESULT DECLARED

New Delhi: The NEET PG 2023 result was released by the National Board of Exams in Medical Sciences (NBEMS) on Tuesday - just nine days after the exam.

The NEET PG exam was held on March 5 for admission to MD/MS/DNB/Diploma courses of the 2023-24 admission session. Around 2.9 lakh students registered to appear for the NEET PG examination this year.

The NEET PG cut-off 2023 score for the general category and EWS is 291 out of 800, while the same for the general category-PwBD is 274 and 257 for the SC/ST/OBC. "Each and every question in NEET-PG 2023 was reviewed by the subject matter experts from the concerned specialty after the conduct of NEET-PG 2023 to re-check for technical correctness of the questions as well as answer keys," said the official notification.

## H3N2 SCORE 2 SUCCUMB TO H3N2 VIRUS IN MAHA, ANOTHER DEATH TO BE CONFIRMED

Team Absolute | Mumbai

In a major public health concern, at least two persons have died in Maharashtra due to the H3N2 virus infection, Health Minister Tanaji Sawant said here on Wednesday.

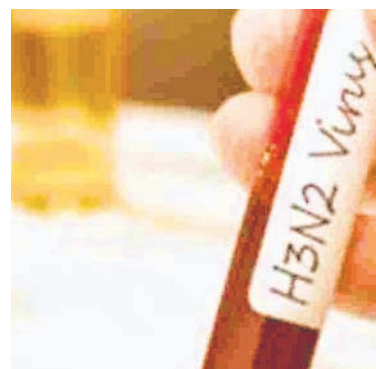
The first death of a 23-year-old male medical student occurred in Ahmednagar and the second death of a 72-year-old man has been reported from Nagpur, and both had tested Covid-19 positive plus multiple ailments, he said.

Besides, there is a third suspected death due to H3N2 from Nagpur, but the official confirmation is awaited.

So far, the state has notched 352 cases of H3N2 patients who are under treatment in different hospitals, said Sawant.

"We are requesting people to take all precautions and avoid engaging in self-medication, as with timely treatment, the disease is fully curable," Sawant told media persons.

In both the cases, the victims were



suffering from various ailments including Covid-19 and H3N2 and the exact causes of their deaths would be available in another 24 hours, he added.

Among the symptoms of H3N2 are prolonged fever with body aches, cough, running nose, and in extreme cases, even breathlessness or wheezing and health authorities advise immediate treatment.

## No holidays for schools in TN due to H3N2 score: TN Health Minister

Chennai: Tamil Nadu Health Minister, Ma Subramanian on Wednesday announced that there will not be any holidays for students up to Class 9 in the state due to the H3N2 score

Talking to reporters after neighbouring Puducherry declared a holiday for student's upto Class 8 due to the increase in H3N2 cases, he said that the incidence of H3N2 cases was not high in Tamil Nadu and rumours must not be spread. He said that people with fever and influenza must isolate themselves and asked people to wear masks and to keep a safe distance from others.

The minister also called upon the people to maintain Covid protocol in the state and said that rumours should not be spread about the incidence of the viral fever.

The Tamil Nadu State Public Health Department has also asked people to wear masks and to keep safe distances. The Health Department has also directed the district administrations to closely monitor the increasing cases of fever in their respective districts and to keep a tab on it.

## Resolution expresses US Senate's support for recognising Arunachal integral part of India

"At a time when China continues to pose grave and gathering threats to the Free and Open Indo-Pacific, it's critical for the US to stand shoulder-to-shoulder with our strategic partners in the region -- especially India," said Senator Hagerty in a statement.

"This bipartisan resolution expresses the Senate's support for unequivocally recognizing the state of Arunachal Pradesh as an integral part of India, condemning China's military aggression to change the status quo along the Line of Actual Control, and further enhancing the US-India strategic partnership and the Quad in support of the Free and Open Indo-Pacific.

"America's values supporting freedom and a rules-based order must be at the center of all of our actions and relationships around the world -- especially as the Chinese government pushes an alternative vision," said Senator Merkley.

"This resolution makes clear that the US views the Indian state of Arunachal Pradesh as part of India - not China -- and commits the US to deepening support and assistance to the region, alongside like-minded international partners and donors."



Washington | Agencies

US Senators Bill Hagerty and Jeff Merkley have introduced a bipartisan Senate resolution reaffirming the US' recognition of the Indian state of Arunachal Pradesh as an "integral part of the Republic of India".

The resolution comes following a major clash between India and China in

the Eastern Sector along the Line of Actual Control in six years. The resolution reaffirms that the US recognizes the McMahon Line as the international boundary between China and the Indian state of Arunachal Pradesh, and pushes back against China's claims that Arunachal Pradesh is its territory, which is a part of China's increasingly aggressive and expansionist poli-

cies, the statement said.

The Senators' resolution condemns additional Chinese provocations, including China's use of military force to change the status quo along the Line of Actual Control, construction of villages in contested areas, publication of maps with Mandarin-language names for cities and features in the Indian state of Arunachal Pradesh, and expansion of Chinese territorial claims in Bhutan.

Furthermore, the resolution commends the Indian government for taking steps to defend itself against aggression and security threats from China. These efforts include securing India's telecommunications infrastructure; examining its procurement processes and supply chains; implementing investment screening standards; and expanding its cooperation with Taiwan in public health and other sectors, the Senators said.

## BCI allows foreign lawyers, law firms to practice in India

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Bar Council of India (BCI) has agreed to permit foreign lawyers and law firms to practice in the country in a restricted and well controlled and regulated manner on the principle of reciprocity, which would be mutually beneficial for lawyers from India.

The BCI has come out with the Bar Council of India Rules for Registration and Regulation of Foreign Lawyers and Foreign Law Firms in India, 2022 to enable international lawyers and arbitration practitioners to advise in India.

As per the rules, foreign lawyers and law firms will be entitled to practice only in non-litigious matters.

The three broad areas which have been opened up for them include foreign law, arbitration matters, and international legal issues.

According to the BCI, a



statutory body, opening up of law practice in India to foreign lawyers in the field of practice of foreign law; diverse international legal issues in non-litigious matters and in international arbitration cases would go a long way in helping legal profession/domain grow in India to the benefit of lawyers in India too.

"It is noteworthy that the standards of Indian lawyers in proficiency in law is comparable with the international standards and the legal fraternity in India is not likely to suffer any disadvantage

in case law practice in India is opened up to foreign lawyers in a restricted and well controlled and regulated manner on the principle of reciprocity as it would be mutually beneficial for lawyers from India and abroad and these Rules are an attempt by Bar Council of India in this direction," it said.

Foreign lawyers or foreign law firms can also open up law offices in India and also enter into a partnership with one or more foreign lawyers or foreign law firms registered in India.



# Woman in company of man not basis to infer consent for sexual relations with him: Delhi HC

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Delhi High Court has said that a woman's agreement to be in a man's company can never be used to imply that she agreed to have a sexual relationship with him. "A distinction also needs to be articulated between a prosecutrix 'consenting to a situation' vs 'consenting to sexual liaison'. Merely because a prosecutrix consents to being in the company of a man, regardless of for how long, can never be the basis to infer that she had also consented to sexual liaison with the man," the court said.

A bench of Justice Anup Jairam Bhambhani was hearing the bail plea of Sanjay Malik, also known as Sant Sevak Das, which has been denied.

Malik is accused of raping a Czech national on October 12, 2019, in a Delhi hostel before having physical relations with her on January 31, 2020, in Prayagraj, and on February 7, 2020, in a hotel in Gaya, Bihar.

According to the accused, the prosecutrix did not file any complaints or make any attempts to file any FIRs in the many other locations where she claimed she was sexually attacked, and it was only much later, on March 6, 2022, in Delhi that the FIR was finally filed.

The prosecutrix, on the other hand,



claimed that the accused abused her by posing as a "spiritual guru" who could assist her in carrying out the funeral rites for her departed spouse, who had gone away on August 8, 2019.

The prosecutrix travelled with the petitioner from Prayagraj to Varanasi to Gaya, all of which are centres of Hindu devotion and assemblage, to carry out the final rites and ceremonies of her deceased husband, Justice Bhambhani noted after reviewing the case.

She became dependent on the petitioner to help her put an end to the trauma she had experienced because she was a foreign person and was unfamiliar with Hindu rites and

ceremonies, the court noted.

"Though it is true that the travel to the aforementioned places happened over a period of almost four months, and it is nowhere specifically alleged that the petitioner held the prosecutrix 'hostage' or that she was made to travel with him by use of physical force or restraint, in the opinion of this court, that alone would not be determinative of the state of the prosecutrix's mind, for the court to be able to say at this stage that the alleged sexual liaisons were consensual," the court said.

It further stated that although if the first instance of physical contact is alleged to have occurred in a hostel in Delhi and the alleged act was not

rape, the prosecutrix's silence over that act cannot be interpreted as approval for more, more violent sexual contact in the future.

"In the 'foresaid circumstances', in the opinion of this court, the critical aspect of the offence of rape viz. 'consent' as opposed to 'compulsion' requires a more nuanced consideration," the judge said.

In the present case, Justice Bhambhani stated that the allegations revealed deception and guile on the part of the petitioner in pretending to be a "holy man" assisting a foreign national with reverent post-death ceremonies for her husband. This aspect of the case was particularly concerning, he added.

"In fact, it appears to be the petitioner's own stand, that he took the prosecutrix to Prayagraj, Banaras and Gaya for the post-demise ceremonies. At this stage however, this court is not re-assured that the petitioner would not interfere in the course of justice by practicing the same guile and deception. Whether the prosecutrix and her prime-witness are in India or abroad, the petitioner's attempt to intimidate or influence them, cannot be ruled-out," the court said.

Therefore, the court dismissed the bail plea granting the liberty to apply afresh for the same relief before the trial court once the deposition of all prosecution witnesses is complete.

# Adenovirus alarm: Four more child deaths reported from Kolkata

Kolkata | Agencies

Four more deaths of children admitted with adenovirus-related symptoms have been reported from a Kolkata hospital since Tuesday evening.

Of the four at the B.C. Roy Children's Hospital, sources said, two died on Tuesday evening, while the other two died between early morning and late afternoon on Wednesday.

Of the two children who died on Tuesday evening, one is 14-month-old and a resident of Rajarhat area in North 24 Parganas district, and second a 35-month-old and a resident of Ichapur in the same district.

One of the two children who reportedly died on Wednesday is a four-month-old from Baduria in North 24 Parganas district. She was admitted with fever and severe breathing problems, hospital sources said.

The other child who died on Wednesday was an 11-month-old boy from Nakshipara in Nadia dis-



trict. He was also admitted to the hospital with similar symptoms.

There has been no official update on the death figures on this count.

Meanwhile, questions have been raised over the absence of specialist paediatricians in the task force on adenovirus constituted by the state government.

According to consultant physician and BJP youth wing state President, Dr Indranil Khan it is quite surprising that not a single child specialist has been

included in the task force on adenovirus when almost all of the victims are children. "I wonder how serious the state government is in tackling the problem.

Constitution of this task force is nothing but a farce," he said.

City-based physician Dr Archana Majumdar feels that mere constitution of a task force or a committee is not enough for such health-related problems. "What is required is improvement of hospital infrastructure on an emergency basis," she said.

# Man hiding gold worth Rs 69L in slippers arrested at B'luru airport

New Delhi | Agencies

The Customs official here on Wednesday said that they have arrested a man who was attempting to smuggle gold worth Rs 69.40 lakh by concealing it in the false cavity of his slippers.

A senior Customs official said that on March 12, the accused who arrived from Bangkok to Bengaluru by Indigo flight, was intercepted by the Customs Air Intelligence Officers.

"On asking the purpose of travel, the passenger said that he was travelling for medical purposes. However, the passenger was unable to provide any valid medical documents which made the officers sus-



picious," said the official.

The Customs official said that the suspect passenger was put through thorough checks. On body check and scanning of his bag and slippers, the presence of gold in cut pieces form was revealed concealed in his slippers

which he was wearing during the trip.

"The slippers were cut open and four pieces of gold totalling 1.2 kg having purity of 24 kt worth Rs 69.40 lakh was seized," the official said.

Further investigations are on.

# Centre urged to restore names of 35K voters in Secunderabad Cantonment

Team Absolute | Hyderabad

Telangana's Minister for Municipal Administration K.T. Rama Rao on Wednesday sought immediate intervention of Defence Minister Rajnath Singh in restoring the names of 35,000 electors who were deleted from eight wards of the Secunderabad Cantonment Board (SCB).

The state minister wrote to Rajnath Singh to restore the names of the electors and help them participate in the democratic exercise of voting. Elections for the SCB members are scheduled on April 30.

Stating that SCB has deleted about 35,000 electors' names from the voters' list on the ground that the said persons allegedly encroached on the defense land, KTR said



that it is a completely illegal and unconstitutional act as none of the electors whose names were deleted from the electors' list were given any show cause notice before the deleting their names from the list.

"These electors and their families have been residing in Secunderabad Cantonment Board limits

from SCB have showcased utmost sincerity in executing all their duties which includes payment of electricity and water bills.

He said that these electors have been exercising their right to vote in various elections, which include SCB elections, Assembly elections, and also Parliamentary elections.

KTR said that the relevant law relating to the preparation of the voter list for a Cantonment is contained in Sections 27 and 28 of the Cantonment Act.

Stating that he firmly believes that none of the electors breached these sections but are unfortunately being penalised by the SCB by removing their names from the voters' list arbitrarily, he said that so far, no court in the country gave a judge-

ment that declares any of these individuals to be a non-resident of the SCB.

Neither the SCB has ever issued a notice to any of these persons indicating that they are not a resident or an inhabitant of a Cantonment Board.

"The SCB cannot snatch away the right to vote and the right to contest in the election. By removing the names of the voters from the list, SCB has outrightly violated Article 14 of the Constitution. Under such unconstitutional circumstances, it is unfortunate to see SCB walk backward when it comes to recognizing its voters. With pain, I state that there has been no increase in voter numbers in SCB since 5 years. In 2018, 1,91,849 voters have now been reduced to 1,32,722 voters," wrote KTR.

# Fire reported at Cyber Crime police station in Delhi's Rohini



New Delhi: A fire broke out at Cyber Crime police station in Delhi's Rohini on Wednesday, said a fire department official.

According to Delhi Fire Service (DFS), a call regarding a blaze at the Rohini cyber crime police station in Sector 17 was received around 3.15 p.m. following which five fire tenders were sent to the spot.

"The fire broke out on the ground floor of the building and it was doused by 3.45 p.m.," said a senior fire official. The reason behind the fire is yet to be ascertained while some documents and other material kept on the ground floor of the police station are said to have caught fire, the official added.

# Gangster Lawrence Bishnoi threatens Salman Khan again; seeks apology

Jaipur | Agencies

Gangster Lawrence Bishnoi who is currently lodged in Punjab's Bathinda Jail has issued a fresh threat to Bollywood actor Salman Khan, saying if the movie star does not apologise over the Chinkara hunting episode, "his ego will be smashed".

Bishnoi said: "Salman has harmed our society. If he does not apologise by coming to Bikaner's Nokha Dham, then his ego will be smashed." The Bishnoi community is known as guardians of Chinkara.

Salman, during the shooting of 'Hum Saath Saath Hain', hunted Chinkara, which had upset the Bishnoi community.

Meanwhile, officials were unable to answer any questions about how the interview video of Lawrence Bishnoi that recently emerged was shot.

In the interview, the gangster also claimed that gangster Goldie Brar got



popular Punjabi singer Sidhu Moosewala killed.

Meanwhile, the jail officials in Bathinda submitted that jammers are installed in the cell where Bishnoi is lodged, and there is no connectivity.

The gangster was also lodged at Jaipur Central Jail for six days about a year ago. Jaipur Police Commissioner



Anand Srivastava, however, said that Bishnoi neither met anyone nor was he interviewed there.

According to the Prison Department, when Bishnoi was brought to the cell, he was clean shaven. His hair was also short. However, in the interview, he could be seen with a beard and longer hair.

# Shock in Navi Mumbai as realtor shot dead in car on road

Team Absolute | Navi Mumbai

A realtor was shot dead when he was travelling in his car in Navi Mumbai on Wednesday evening, police said.

The victim, identified as Savji G. Manjeri, said to be in his mid-60s, of the Imperia Group, was in the driving seat of the vehicle near Apna Bazar in Sector 6 of Nerul town here at around 5.30 p.m. when, as per eyewitnesses, two motorcycle-borne men sped up, intercepted his vehicle, and forced it to a halt on the busy road.

Then, one of them whipped out his pistol and fired multiple rounds from close range at Manjeri, who reportedly succumbed on the spot, before the duo sped off.



The Navi Mumbai police have launched a manhunt for the killers in the city and surroundings, are scanning CCTV footage of that vicinity and probing the motives - tentatively suspected to be a

business rivalry - behind the shocking daylight killing.

A team led by DCP Amit Kale along with other Crime Branch and Nerul Police officials rushed there for the investigations.

# CM'S FLYING SQUAD RAIDS ILLEGAL RO PLANT IN GURUGRAM

Gurugram | Agencies

The Haryana Chief Minister's flying squad, along with the Electricity Department, Municipal Corporation of Gurugram (MCG), and the Food and Safety Department raided an illegal RO plant here on Wednesday.

The officials said the illegal plant was being run for over a year in Gurugram's New Palam Vihar area.

Necessary actions have been taken against the plant owner, identified as Sukha Singh. He is a resident of Sirsa and was running the plant from a rented premises.

"Campers of 20 liter of water were being sold in the market in the name of branded companies were recovered. Apart from this, the domestic electricity connection at this RO plant was being used commercially. Two vehicles filled with water were found on the spot," Indrajeet Singh



Yadav, DSP, the Chief Minister flying squad said.

The illegal water resource has been sealed by the MCG. The electricity department also served notice to the owner for illegal use of commercial. The Food and Safety Department, Gurugram, has collected the water sample from the plant, which will be tested and the further action will be taken accordingly, Yadav said.

# TRAFFIC SNARLS ON DELHI ROADS FOR THIRD CONSECUTIVE DAY

New Delhi | Agencies

The closure of two roads - Chirag Delhi flyover and a section of the Delhi-Jaipur Highway (NH-48) between Rangpuri and Rajokari - for repair and construction work resulted in traffic snarls in the national capital on the third consecutive day on Wednesday.

On March 12 (Sunday), Chirag Delhi flyover on the Outer Ring Road was closed for 50 days due to repair work by the PWD and on Tuesday road between Rangpuri and Rajokari on a section of the Delhi-Jaipur Highway (NH-48) for 90 days.

Several commuters posted photos of traffic situations on Twitter. Some said it took them 30-35 minutes just to move 200 meters at Chirag Delhi.

People commuting from Gurugram also posted photos of traffic jam near Ambience Mall towards the diversion from Rajokri flyover to Dwarka link



road. "It took an hour just to reach my office near IGI airport. I am a daily commuter and yesterday (Tuesday), I got stuck in the traffic for more than two hours," said Puneet Sharma (29), a resident of Sector-17 Gurugram.

"My office is on Press Enclave Marg. I moved only 100 meters in the last one hour. The sudden closure of the Chirag Delhi Flyover has led to traffic jams and for 50 days, we are left with no option other than getting stuck in a jam and reach office," said Shashank Singh, who works for a law firm.

"I had to take a turn towards Lal Bahadur Shastri Marg but was stuck here in the jam for the last one-and-half hour," he added.

Delhi Traffic Police took to Twitter and said, "Movement of traffic is slow from Raja Garden towards Britannia Chowk due to construction work of Punjabi Bagh flyover. There is delay of 10-15 min to commute this stretch. Kindly avoid the stretch."



EC to SC on Shiv Sena symbol row

PASSED 'WELL-REASONED ORDER' IN QUASI-JUDICIAL CAPACITY

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The Election Commission has told the Supreme Court it has passed a "well-reasoned" order, in a quasi-judicial capacity, allotting the name and party symbol of the Shiv Sena to Eknath Shinde faction.



Representation of the People Act, 1951," it added.

On February 22, the Supreme Court refused to stay the Election Commission decision recognising the Eknath Shinde faction as the official Shiv Sena and granted it the party name and symbol but agreed to entertain a plea by Uddhav Thackeray challenging it.

A bench headed by Chief Justice D.Y. Chandrachud said: "Now, we cannot pass an order to stay the Election Commission order. We are entertaining the SLP (special leave petition) by Thackeray against the EC order. We cannot stay the EC order today." The poll body filed the affidavit in response to the notice on the special leave petition.

become a functus officio for the present case since it has already discharged its duty to adjudicate the petition filed under Paragraph 15 of the Symbols Order, it has no contentions to make on merits of the case as the impugned order is a well-reasoned order and covers all the issues raised by the petitioner." The Election Commission, thus, has

body is under challenge before an appellate court, such a body need not be arrayed as a party to the appeal." It is further submitted that Symbols Order has been formulated by the commission in exercise of its power under Article 324 of the Constitution read with Section 29A of the

TECHIE, WIFE, 8-YEAR-OLD SON FOUND DEAD, MURDER-SUICIDE SUSPECTED: POLICE

Pune: A 44-year-old software professional, his wife and their eight-year-old son were found dead in their flat in Pune's Aundh area on Wednesday, police said.

It seemed that the techie first killed his wife and son and then killed himself, the police said.

Those who died were identified as Sudipto Ganguly, his wife Priyanka and son Tanishka. "As the couple was not responding to phone calls, Sudipto's brother who lives in Bengaluru asked a friend to visit the house. After finding the flat locked, he filed a missing person's complaint," said an official of Pune's Chaturshringi police station. But police then found that the couple's mobile phones were inside the flat as per its location data.

After gaining entry inside by using a duplicate key, police found Sudipto hanging, while his wife and the child were found dead with polythene bags wrapped around their faces. No suicide note was found from the spot, the police official said.

Go and meet farmers who are on 'long march': Thackeray to Maha govt

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Former Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray asked Chief Minister Eknath Shinde and his deputy Devendra Fadnis to go and meet the farmers who are currently on a 175-kms 'long march' to Mumbai.

"It's tragic that the farmers have to undertake such a march in the first place. The farmers are the bread-givers to the nation. Why can't the government go there to meet and resolve their demands," an irked Thackeray demanded.

He pointed out how, when in 2019 the farmers had a similar 'long march', he had sent his son Aditya Thackeray and other senior leaders to meet the peasants, understand their problems besides helping to arrange food and water for them. Thackeray recalled how at the height of the Coronavirus pandemic, the farmers of the country had ensured that the nation got its food and now they deserve help during their crisis. Nationalist Congress Party's Leader of Opposition Ajit Pawar also exhorted the state government to meet the agitating farmers and resolve their griev-



ances. CPI(M) MLA Vinod Nikole also urged the government to meet the farmers saying that during the last long march thousands of women had also participated and suffered serious injuries during the long walk in the blistering sun. The Shiv Sena (UBT) President's comments came amid reports of certain differences between the agitating farmers' leaders and the state government on the details of the proposed meeting with the All India Kisan Samiti (AIKS) leaders, which has been scheduled for Wednesday. The Opposition Maha Vikas Aghadi of Congress, NCP and Shiv Sena (UBT) has thrown its weight behind the 20,000 farmers who started their 'long march' - the third in five years - to press for the implementation of their 17-point charter by the government.

4 die of suffocation inside british-era drainage chamber: Police

Team Absolute | Pune

Four people died due to suffocation inside a British-era drainage chamber in Baramati tehsil of Pune district on Wednesday, police said.



Dung and urine of cattle was released in the chamber located on the farm of Bhanudas Atole, one of the victims", said an official of Malegaon police station.

"The chamber was full and the victims were cleaning it. Some trash got stuck in the motor pump in the chamber, so Pravin Atole ventured inside to remove it. But he fainted due to suffocation," the official said.

After him, his father Bhanudas Atole, Prakash Sopan Atole, and Babasaheb Gavahne entered the cham-

ber one by one and all of them passed out and fell into the water accumulated inside, he said. All four were taken out

from the chamber and rushed to a hospital where they were declared dead, the police official said, adding that further probe was on.

BRS TO HOLD MEETING AT MAHARASHTRA'S KANDAR LOHA ON MARCH 26

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The Bharat Rashtira Samithi (BRS) will organise a public meeting at Kandar Loha in Maharashtra on March 26.

BRS national president and Telangana Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhar Rao will address the public meeting, the second outside Telangana since the launch of the party. The first public meeting was held in Maharashtra, at Nanded last month.

A large number of leaders from various parties in Maharashtra will join the BRS, claimed the party.

The BRS said that its policies and the vision of the party president KCR are impressing people in the entire country as well as many senior and prominent political leaders from various parties. Many senior leaders from many states are already joining the BRS party as they liked the BRS policies, which aimed to bring about a qualitative change in the lives of the people of the entire country.



"The recently held Nanded public meeting drew overwhelming response and became a sensation in Indian politics which led to a big debate in national politics. KCR's quest for India's people's development and welfare and his vision already attracted people in north

India and Maharashtra," it said. The party claimed that revolutionary development programmes and welfare schemes in Telangana are already drawing nationwide attention.

BRS leaders said that people in various states wished to have a Chief

Minister like KCR in their respective states. People are confident that their support to CM KCR will help to develop the country along with Telangana. The big support for the Nanded public meeting made it clear that people are coming forward for a qualitative change in their lives.

The party claimed that many leaders of Maharashtra Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) are resigning to join the BRS. Maharashtra senior politician, former MLA and President of NCP Kisan cell Shankaranna Dhonge, former MLA Naghath Ghisewad (who lost from Bhokar constituency to former CM Ashok Chauhan by a margin of only 1,000 votes), NCP Nanded district President Datta Pawar, Maharashtra NCP Youth Secretary Shivraj Dhonge, NCP Nanded President Shivdas Dharmapurikar, Kisan Morcha President Manohar Patil Bhosikar, NCP Spokesperson Dr. Sunil Patil, NCP Loha President Subhash Vakore, and others met KCR in Hyderabad on Tuesday.

Garment producers demand Rs 2 bn dues from Kishore Biyani's Future Group

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The All India Garment Manufacturers & Vendors Association (AIGMVA) has demanded that Future Group owner Kishore Biyani should pay up their dues of over Rs 200 crore pending since 2019, here on Wednesday.

The AIGMVA, comprising around 350 members from Maharashtra, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan Punjab, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana and Kerala, has warned Biyani of legal action if he fails to clear their dues.

In a statement, the AIGMVA advisor and Trade Union Joint Action Committee (TUJAC) Convener Vishwas Utagi said that the producers and suppliers had supplied the garments as ordered by Biyani's group of companies between 2019-2022.

"Each manufacturer-vendor has dues of between Rs 70 crore to over Rs One crore and the total amount plus interest would be around Rs 500 crore. We want the union government and all the concerned state governments also to inter-



vene and get the huge amount cleared immediately," Utagi demanded.

A garment producer from Thane said that a majority of them had availed bank loans to fulfil the Future Group's orders then but since Biyani

did not pay up their bills, now the banks are hounding the manufacturers and suppliers for default, and refusing to give more loans.

"Due to this, over 100,000 are directly hit and along with their families and other stakeholders, more than five lakh people are on the verge of joblessness and starvation due to Future Group," explained Utagi.

He said that the Future Group was last year sold to the Reliance Group and in this deal the poor vendors comprising the backbone MSME sector of the Indian economy have been left in the lurch.

A vendor from Gujarat said that their profit margins are very thin, they have no cash surplus and they survive on a cash-credit facility with regular payments to their suppliers, employees, establishment costs, EMIs, etc.

"Owing to Future Group, our 100 per cent working capital is blocked, totally paralysing our operations, and now banks are hounding us with notices of loan defaults, some members have sold off family gold, saving or even their shops or homes to clear their dues and are now practically homeless," he said.

Team Absolute | Mumbai

At least 10 people were injured after fire broke out at Jagruti society in Mumbai's Mulund West on Wednesday at around 5pm. Officials details say that "the fire was confined to electric wiring, electric installation, electric main cables, all meters, all switches etc. in a common electric meter cabin on the ground floor plus upper seven floored residential building."

Fire was extinguished by BMC's Mumbai Fire Brigade. "Due to fire, the entire staircase was filled with smoke and some residents were trapped in the lobby," said an official statement. "Total 80 persons were rescued by BMC's MFB from staircase to



terrace and few were brought down to ground floor, out of which 10 persons were found unconscious state at the staircase, they were removed and sent to Agrawal

Hospital" read the official brief. The ten injured persons were admitted to nearby hospital and currently in stable condition.

GOVT AGREES TO LOOK INTO BVA'S DEMAND FOR INFRA PROJECTS

Vasai: The Bahujan Vikas Aghadi led by Hitendra Thakur has claimed Maharashtra Chief Minister Eknath Shinde has directed officials to look into BVA's demand to implement as many as 25 projects in Vasai region in Palghar district. We had given a list of demands keeping in mind the upcoming monsoon season. All the other projects are aimed to ensure that citizens of the taluka can seamlessly commute from one end to the other. We would appreciate if the demands are executed at the earliest, said Hitendra Thakur. Thakur's MLA son Kshitij Thakur said these projects will facilitate seamless transport and motivate last-mile connectivity in the Mumbai Metropolitan Region.



The projects include the widening and deepening of the Navghar creek which will pave the way for a proposed ro-ro service in Thane, Bhayandar and Naigaon, besides rail overbridges, east-west connecting bridges, and building flyovers.

Maha woman, who killed mom, chopped up body, stored parts at home for 3 months, arrested

Team Absolute | Mumbai

In a grisly act, a 24-year-old woman allegedly killed her widowed mother, chopped up her body, and kept the parts in plastic bags that were hidden in the cupboard for nearly three months, a police official said on Wednesday.

The spine-chilling incident came to light late on Tuesday when the Kalachowki police were investigating the complaint that the widow, identified as Veena Prakash Jain, 55, was missing.

The police swung into action and arrested the victim's daughter Rimple P. Jain in connection with the murder of her mother, though the exact motives behind the ghastly crime are not yet clear.

The deceased woman's elder brother, Sureshkumar Phulchand Porwal, 60, had filed the complaint late on Tuesday night after Rimple refused to let his son (her cousin) meet her mother.

After Porwal's complaint when the police team reached the Jains' first floor home in Ibrahim Kasam Chawl, Peru Compound in the Lalbaug area, Rimple initially did not permit them to enter.

However, the police team sensed a stench emanating from the home and after some tough words, they finally gained entry to the home and launched a search. The police team encountered



a sight straight out of a horror film - they found big and small pieces of Veena's body, wrapped in plastic bags and stored in the cupboard and other places. "The body pieces were in an

advanced state of decomposition, there was a deathly stench in the entire home, maggots and insects crawling around the place.. We immediately summoned the forensic team to investigate

the full home and sent the victim's body to KEM Hospital for an autopsy," said an official, who is part of the probe team.

Early on Wednesday morning, the police detained Rimple, a prime suspect, for questioning in the matter even as the probe team recovered an electric marble cutter, a sickle and a knife - the murder weapons purportedly deployed to kill, chop and carve the woman's body in the same premises.

According to Porwal, for the past over three months, despite several attempts and visits, he could not meet his younger sister as each time Rimple made excuses like "she has gone out" or "she is resting".

The Jains had shifted from Virar in Palghar to Lalbaug in 2005 after the death of Prakash Jain, and Porwal used to support them with monthly financial help, said an official.

Officials said that Rimple, who appeared to be an educated woman, had claimed that her mother suffered a fall after which she brought her home where she died, and then made some other contradictory statements which aroused suspicions, leading to her arrest.

There is also speculation whether the accused woman is of a disturbed mind, particularly since she chose to keep everyone in the dark about her mother's death/killing and chose to live with her body parts scattered in their home for so long.



EDITOR'S SPECS

## It's raining freebies on voters in K'taka

As the Karnataka Assembly polls near, the leaders of all political parties are raining gifts on voters before the Election Commission invokes the model code of conduct. The EC is likely to invoke the conduct by the end of this month. The political party leaders, attached to the BJP, Congress and JD(S) are distributing sarees, silver, gold articles, pressure cookers, mixer grinders, television sets, mobiles to lure voters, without any hesitation. The leaders are even offering exchange gifts to gain the upper hand. The video showing voters being asked to come with a cooker that is being distributed by one leader and another leader throwing them down and distributing superior quality cookers with his name on it has gone viral. The sleuths of Department of Commercial Tax have Tuesday late night conducted a raid at the residence of BJP MLC R. Shankar in Beereshwaranagar in Haveri district and seized Rs 30 to 40 lakh worth house articles with his name and pictures on them. The officers said that they have seized 6,000 sarees, 9,000 school bags, steel plates and glasses. The supporters of MLC R. Shankar gathered at the residence and raised slogans against the government and authorities. Sources said that the leaders are also arranging trips to Goa, other Hindu pilgrimage centers such as Dharmasthala, Kolhapur, Shirdi and other places. Many voters revealed that they were made to pledge before Gods that they will cast their votes to their leader without fail. In a major embarrassment to the ruling BJP, the incident of voters burning down sarees allegedly distributed by the National General Secretary and BJP MLA C.T. Ravi and demanding answers from him on development was reported. In yet another incident, Atalatti villagers threw away sarees and utensils allegedly distributed by senior Congress leader M.B. Patil in Babaleswar constituency.

# ASSEMBLY POLL RESULTS IN 3 STATES SET THE TONE FOR N-E IN 2024

Sujit Chakraborty

The recent assembly elections in the three northeastern states - Tripura, Meghalaya and Nagaland - has set the tone for next year's parliamentary elections with as the BJP has consolidated its position and the Congress trying to revive.

Ahead of the assembly polls in three northeastern states, there was no Congress legislator in Meghalaya and Nagaland and was a lone MLA in Tripura.

In the assembly polls, Congress secured five seats in Meghalaya against 21 in 2018 and three in Tripura while the party, like in 2018 assembly polls, could not open its account in Nagaland. The three states have 60 seats each in the assemblies. The Congress drew blank in 2018 polls in Tripura.

Though BJP and its allies came to power in three states, their vote and seat share remained the same or less in the polls compared to the 2018 polls.

The saffron party in Nagaland and Meghalaya secured 12 and two seats both in 2018 and 2023 polls respectively. In Tripura, the party this time bagged 32 seats, four seats less than the 2018 assembly polls.

Of the 25 Lok Sabha seats in the eight northeastern states, the BJP has 14 seats and the Congress has four. While the All India United Democratic Front (AIUDF in Assam), Nationalist Democratic Progressive Party (NDPP in Nagaland), Mizo National Front (MNF in Mizoram), National People's Party (NPP in Meghalaya), Naga People's Front (NPF in Manipur), Sikkim Krantikari Morcha (SKM in Sikkim) and Independent (in Assam) have one seat each.

The ruling BJP is the dominant party in the alliance government in Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur and Tripura while the saffron party-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA) partners - Nationalist Democratic Progressive Party (NDPP), Mizo National Front (MNF) and National People's Party (NPP) lead governments in Nagaland, Mizoram and Meghalaya respectively.

Since 1952, the northeastern states had been a stronghold of the Congress but over the years the party lost its organisational base leading to the emergence of the BJP and several regional parties.

Eying 14 Lok Sabha seats in Assam, the



Congress like previous efforts, has started to form a 'Mahagathbandhan' (grand alliance) with the like-minded parties.

The Congress on Thursday in Guwahati held a meeting of 10 opposition parties excluding Lok Sabha member and leading Muslim leader Badruddin Ajmal-led All India United Democratic Front (AIUDF), Aam Aadmi Party and Trinamool Congress.

Assam Congress President Bhupen Bora, who called the meeting, said that they would check the division of votes in the next year's Lok Sabha polls in Assam as the BJP always gets electoral mileage due to the division of votes.

Since 2014, the Congress leaders of the northeastern region who left the party include Himanta Biswa Sarma, Sushmita Dev and Ripun Bora (Assam), Manik Saha, Ratan Lal Nath (Tripura), N. Biren Singh (Manipur), Pema Khandu (Arunachal Pradesh), Neiphiu Rio (Nagaland), Mukul Sangma and Ampareen Lyngdoh (Meghalaya) causing a serious setback for the party.

The Chief Ministers of five of the northeastern states -- Himanta Biswa Sarma (Assam), Manik Saha (Tripura), N. Biren Singh (Manipur), Pema Khandu (Arunachal

Pradesh), Neiphiu Rio (Nagaland) -- are former Congress leaders and now in the BJP, running the saffron party-led governments.

The Congress' downfall in the politically important northeast region began after the BJP's emergence as Prime Minister Narendra Modi-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA) came to power at the Centre in 2014 after defeating the United Progressive Alliance headed by the Congress.

With Nagaland moving towards opposition-less government following all MLAs of most of the parties extending support to Neiphiu Rio-led Nationalist Democratic Progressive Party (NDPP)-BJP alliance government, Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said all parties contesting polls in the northeast must understand that they would have to eventually support the BJP.

The Janata Dal (United) has dissolved the Nagaland unit after its lone MLA has supported the NDPP-BJP government without the knowledge of party leadership.

Sarma, also the convener of the BJP-led North-East Democratic Alliance (NEDA), said that Prime Minister Narendra Modi is the 'tallest leader' of the country, and everyone

favours him in the region. Political commentator Satyabrata Chakraborty said that the regional parties had emerged highlighting the local and regional issues. Due to a lack of proactive leaders and central leaders' inactivity, the Congress gradually lost ground to the BJP and the regional parties. "The Congress could not succeed in effectively dealing with the insurgency, unemployment, connectivity, infrastructure development and solution of the diverse ethnic issues. The party failed to exploit even whatever good steps were taken by the Congress governments including setting up of tribal autonomous councils in several northeastern states," he told correspondent.

Chakraborty said that there is no sign that the grand old party would revive its position in the region with a multiplicity of around 400 tribes and diverse religions.

The fall of the UPA (United Progressive Alliance) government and the emergence of the NDA government at the Centre pushed the Congress to a defensive position in the northeastern region," the analyst said.

## international

# HC PUTS TEMPORARY STOP TO POLICE OPERATION AT IMRAN'S HOUSE, SECURITY PERSONNEL PULL OUT

Lahore | Agencies

Intervening as police and other security personnel clashed with PTI workers outside party chief and former Prime Minister Imran Khan's residence, the Lahore High Court on Wednesday ordered a stop to police operation at Zaman Park till 10 a.m. on Thursday, reports said.

The order was passed by a bench of Justice Tariq Saleem Sheikh, while hearing a petition filed by PTI leader Fawad Chaudhry seeking to stop the "atrocities" outside Zaman Park, passed these orders, Dawn reported.

Earlier, the court had instructed the Punjab's Inspector General of Police, Chief Secretary and chief of operations of Islamabad police (operations) head to appear in court.

On Wednesday morning, Islamabad Police, backed by Punjab Police and Rangers resumed efforts - which began on Tuesday - to arrest the ex-premier in connection with the



Toshkhana case. Imran Khan has skipped appearance several times, which led to the judge issuing non-bailable arrest warrants for him.

However, they were met with strong resistance from PTI workers, who pelted stones at them. The police responded with volleys of tear gas.

After hours of skirmishes, the personnel pulled back to Mall Road,

from where they cleared out, as per a Dawn.coms correspondent at the scene.

Earlier, the PTI in a tweet said that more workers were reaching Zaman Park and vowed not to let the "impure intentions" of the coalition government succeed.

Separately, a video posted on PTI's official Twitter showed Imran Khan,

donning a gas mask, addressing party supporters outside his residence.

The PTI alleged on Wednesday that the party chief's residence was "under extreme attack" as it posted footage of armed law enforcement personnel opening fire, Dawn reported. In a tweet, the party shared a video alleging "open firing by Rangers and Police", without specifying when the video was filmed.

Television footage showed police shelling the protesters, baton charging and firing tear gas at them.

Earlier, in an address to the nation via video link, Imran Khan said that the "hope lies with the courts and establishment" in ending this "farce".

"It will (soon) be out of our hands... the kinds of actions that are taking place... the boys (workers) outside are not listening to me. When this anarchy and shelling is taking place against them, they won't listen to me anymore. I have no control over them now," he said.

# Indian Consulate in Brisbane briefly shut due to Khalistani menace: Report

Melbourne | Agencies

The Indian Consulate in Brisbane was forced to close down temporarily today after Khalistani supporters blocked the entry raising slogans against the Hindus, days after Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese's assurance to curb anti-India elements in the country, a media report said.

According to The Australia Today, slogans were raised against Hindus calling them 'supremacists' at the Consulate, which is located on Swann Road in the Taringa suburb of Brisbane.

The Queensland Police said it was an unauthorised gathering.

"Indian Consulate was forced to close today due to safety concerns after Sikhs for Justice targeted them with their propaganda," Sarah L. Gates, Director of Hindu Human Rights, told The



Australia Today.

"They have been shouting Khalistan Zindabad slogans," Gates said, adding that there is a heavy police presence in the area.

"These thugs should not be allowed to dictate how we live our life in Australia," Parvinder Singh, a resident of Queensland who took leave from work to attend an appointment at Indian Consulate, told The Australia Today. The development comes

just days after Prime Minister Narendra Modi met Albanese and conveyed India's concerns over vandalism of several Hindu temples allegedly by the activists demanding Khalistan.

In response, Albanese said that Australia won't tolerate any extreme actions and attacks that took place in religious buildings, and there is no place for such action against Hindu temples while addressing a press meet in New Delhi.

# BIDEN ANNOUNCES MEASURE ON FIREARM BACKGROUND CHECKS

Washington | Agencies

The White House has said that US President Joe Biden will move to strengthen background checks on gun sales.

Biden announced an executive order on Tuesday with the goal of increasing the number of background checks conducted before firearm sales, according to the White House.

The executive order, the White House said on Tuesday, intends to keep more guns out of dangerous hands by increasing the use of "red flag" laws, strengthen efforts to hold the gun industry accountable, and accelerate law enforcement efforts to identify and apprehend the shooters menacing American communities.

Besides, the President is encouraging the Federal Trade Commission to issue a public report analysing how gun manufacturers market firearms to minors, Xinhua news agency reported.

Biden travelled to Monterey Park, California, on Tuesday, to visit the



community impacted by a mass shooting that claimed 11 lives and injured nine others earlier this year.

"Monterey Park is part of a growing list of communities all across the country that are forever changed due to gun violence -- not only mass shootings, but also daily acts of gun violence that may not make national headlines," the White House said.

The US has lost more than 8,300 lives to gun violence so far this year, according to the Gun Violence Archive.

# 360,000 residences, businesses without power as new storm lashes California

San Francisco | Agencies

More than 360,000 residences and businesses were without electricity in California as another atmospheric river is lashing the storm-ravaged US state, inundating cities already flooded by the recent rain and forcing residents to flee.

Of the overall number as of Tuesday evening, the Santa Clara county accounted for over 130,000 establishments which had no electricity, CNN reported citing PowerOutage.US. Earlier in the day, more than 70,000 people were under evacuation warnings and almost 17,000 were under orders to evacuate, California Governor's Office of Emergency Services spokesperson Gustavo Ortiz told CNN. About 30 million people across the state were



under flood alerts as the 11th atmospheric river to hit the West this season slammed Northern California on Monday and lashed the central and southern parts of the state on Tuesday.

The two areas of most concern are along the central California coast between Monterey and Santa Barbara counties, as well as parts of the Sierra Nevada foothills near

Fresno to Bakersfield.

The atmospheric river also brought hurricane-force wind gusts to parts of central California on Tuesday, along with widespread rainfall totals of up to 3 inches -- and nearly half a foot in some areas.

A high wind warning was in effect for almost 15 million people in the state.

The high winds also caused flight cancellations and delays

at the San Francisco International Airport on Tuesday. According to the FlightAware tracking website, there have been at least 345 delays and 38 cancellations.

Across California, 40 of the state's 58 counties were under a state of emergency.

Over 600 residents have taken refuge in 32 shelters across 13 counties, the California Governor's Office of Emergency Services said.

In the wake of the latest storm, California Governor Gavin Newsom has declared a state of emergency in three additional counties -- Alpine, Orange and Trinity.

The state of emergency will aid the counties with "storm response and relief efforts".

This adds to the 40 counties that Newsom previously declared in a state of emergency due to the storms.

# MOUNT MERAPI VOLCANO ERUPTS IN INDONESIA

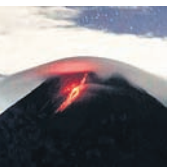
Jakarta: Mount Merapi, located on the border between the Indonesian province of Central Java and the Special Region of Yogyakarta, erupted twice, spewing smoke and ash.

The country's geological disaster institute BPPTKG in a written statement reported that the volcano spewed hot ash at 5.50 a.m. and 5.59 a.m. local time on Tuesday.

Authorities have told nearby residents to avoid the area within a seven-kilometre radius of the crater, Xinhua news agency reported.

The status of Mount Merapi, the most active of Indonesia's 130 volcanoes, has stayed unchanged at its second highest level since November 2020.

In 2010, its major eruption killed more than 300 people and displaced 20,000 residents.





### ED RAIDS FORMER CNI BISHOP PC SINGH'S HOUSE AND OTHER LOCATIONS OF CHRISTIAN MISSIONARIES IN JABALPUR

Team Absolute | Bhopal

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Wednesday conducted raids in Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra and Jharkhand in connection with a money laundering case against former Jabalpur bishop P.C. Singh, the moderator of Church of North India (CNI).

Raids were also conducted at the residences of some of his family members.

As per the information, several ED teams raided at as many as 10 premises, including in Jabalpur, Ranchi, and Nagpur and claimed to have confiscated several incriminating documents.

In September last year, the ED had filed the case under Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) taking cognisance of an EOW FIR that names Singh and his son Piyush Paul.

Singh was then taken into custody on September 12 in connection with a case registered by EOW in Jabalpur under the IPC and Prevention of Corruption Act. Nilesh Lawrence, a Chhattisgarh-based activist whose complaint had led to the EOW searches on the bishop, alleges that Singh



had leased out a prime property of CNI in 2016. Singh was accused of misusing his position to change the name of the Nagpur Diocesan Board of Education without the consent of the board and appoint himself its Chairman. He is also accused of diverting funds from educational institutions to religious institutions in Jabalpur Diocese and for his personal

use. In September last year, the EOW had found that from 2004-05 to 2011-2012, Singh had allegedly transferred more than Rs 2.7 crore to the Jabalpur Diocese from different schools run by the society. He is also accused of having taken a loan of Rs 15 lakh in 2009 from Christ Church Boys' Senior Secondary School and used it to buy a private property. This loan was

allegedly fraudulently shown as 'secured loan' by Jabalpur Diocese in the school accounts.

The FIR also alleges that he and another person named Luvy Mary Sathé bought a property meant for opening a branch of Christ Church School in Saliwada in their own names and the EMI for this loan was paid by the school.

### In Madhya Pradesh, 21 People Got jobs At A Cost of 80 Lakh Each

Team Absolute | Bhopal

The employment offices set up across Madhya Pradesh have been able to provide jobs to only 21 men since April 2000 out of 39 lakh registered unemployed people in the state. The shocking three-year figure was part of the government's response to a question by Congress MLA Mevaram Jatav in the MP assembly on March 1. If the cost to run employment offices are factored in, that works out to an expenditure of Rs 80 lakh to employ a single person.

Since April 1, 2020, around Rs 16.74 crore was spent to operate of employment offices across 52 districts in Madhya Pradesh, where 37,80,679 educated and 1,12,470 uneducated applicants have been registered. But only 21 applicants were provided jobs in government offices and various corporations.

It was an explanation of sorts why even on a weekday morning, the employment office in Bhopal was deserted. For a state where elections are due by the end of the year, the situation is less than ideal. The failure to generate jobs has been one of the perennial allegations against the state government from the opposition Congress. "They are wasting money, taking loans and drinking ghee. The system has collapsed in Madhya Pradesh. This is not a government but a circus. Law and order do not mean anything here," said Congress's PC Sharma.

The BJP dismisses the Congress allegations,



insisting that they are on course. "For the fifth time Shivraj will be the chief minister... the Chief Minister has already replied in the House that there is no gap between our government's promises and delivery. We are saying that we are giving employment. So you should get it checked," BJP MLA Gaurishankar Bisen said.

On February 22, we reported that more than 12 lakh candidates, including engineers and doctorate holders, have applied for roughly 6,000 patwari (land revenue official) positions in the state. Today, the candidates appeared for the written exam. The government has promised to provide one lakh jobs by August 15. Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has said that the break-up is 7000 "patwari" posts, 15,700 posts for teachers, 2,600 for sub-engineers, 2,200 for forest guards and 7,500 posts in the police. According to the unemployment figures presented in the monsoon session of the state assembly last year, there were over 25.8 lakh registered unemployed youths till April 1, 2022.

### Boy, who fell into borewell in MP, dies



Team Absolute | Bhopal

A seven-year-old boy, who had fallen into a borewell in Madhya Pradesh's Vidisha district, has died. The boy identified as Lokesh Ahirwar fell into the 45-feet deep borewell on Tuesday while he was playing at farm. Since then, district administration along

with state disaster team were making efforts to rescue him. Ahirwar was rescued after 24 hours through a 50 feet parallel pit which was dug to pull him out. Ahirwar, who was unconscious when rescued, was rushed to hospital, where doctors declared him dead on arrival.

### CM EXPRESSES GRIEF OVER THE DEMISE OF LOKESH

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has expressed deep sorrow over the demise of Lokesh Ahirwar, a boy who fell into a borewell in Kherkhedi village of Vidisha district. CM said that Lokesh could not be saved even after tireless efforts. Financial assistance of Rs. 4 lakh will be given to the victim's family by the state government. He has prayed to God for peace of the departed soul and strength to the family. CM said that appropriate action will be taken against the culprits, so that such incidents can be stopped in future.

### Woman delivers baby in auto rickshaw at District Hospital

DRIVER CLAIMS NEGLIGENCE ON HOSPITAL'S PART

Team Absolute | Indore

A woman delivered her baby in an auto rickshaw at the hospital campus in absence of a ward boy to receive the patient. The woman was in extreme pain. However, when her auto reached the hospital there was no staff to receive her, alleged auto driver Madan Solanki. Wasting no time, Solanki drove the rickshaw into the hospital building where the nurses and staff took the patient inside the hospital. "I came to drop Asha Kadam, a resident of Damodar Nagar, to the hospital. She was having labour pain and there was no ward boy, so I had to drive the



vehicle inside the hospital building," he said.

However, hospital staff rubbished the claims and said that the woman could not reach the hospital on time and the baby's head had already come out. Due to this, the staff helped her in delivery in the auto and later shifted her to the labour room.

"The 25-year-old woman had delayed reaching the hospital. The auto driver drove to the labour room after the staff helped the patient to deliver in the vehicle to save time. Both mother and baby are safe and healthy," Civil Surgeon Dr Pradeep Goyal said.

He further added that there was no negligence on the hospital's part and gave a written statement regarding this.

### MINOR GIRL ENDS LIFE IN GAUTAM NAGAR, PROBE UNDERWAY

Bhopal: Distressed due to family issues, a minor girl committed suicide by hanging herself at her house in Gautam Nagar on Tuesday, the police said. The police added that the exact reason behind the extreme step taken by the girl has not been ascertained yet, as her kin are in a shock due to the same and unable to give statements.

Gautam Nagar police station in-charge, Zaheer Khan said that the minor girl aged 17 years has been identified as Jaya Sauda, who was a student of Class 11 at a private school in Bhopal. Sauda committed suicide by hanging herself to the ceiling of the house on Tuesday morning, when her family members were asleep. When Sauda's mother went to her room on Tuesday at 7 am to wake her up, she found her hanging. Immediately, her mother informed the other family members of the same and Sauda was rushed to the Medi life hospital of the city, where she died during treatment. Her lamenting kin told the police that she might have taken the extreme step as various issues were prevailing in the family. Due to the sudden shock, they are unable to elaborate on the issue and further probe is underway in the case, in-charge Khan said.

### Chief Minister Chouhan plant saplings

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan planted saplings of Banyan, Karanj and Champa in the garden located at Shyamla Hills. Along with Chief Minister Chouhan, State President of Rashtriya Nari Sashaktikaran Sangathan (National Women Empowerment Organisation) Pooja Singh Parmar planted saplings on her birthday. The organisation is working to assist needy women and for women empowerment. Alka Malviya, Uma Lodhi, Mitesh Maran and Rohit Yadav of the organisation also planted saplings.

Along with Chief Minister Shri Chouhan, Subhash Mishra, Shakeel Sajid, Sunil Srivastava and Anshuman Khare of TV channel Asian



News also planted saplings. Devendra Yogi, Devi Singh Lodhi, Babulal Deshwali, Yashwant, Namita Deshwali,

Devi Ram Rajput, Ajay Singhal and Manu Singhal also participated in plantation.

### 2-MONTH-OLD BABY DIES AFTER HUT CATCHES FIRE ON GUNA FARM

Guna: A two-month-old boy died after a hut on a farm in Kakrua Dang in Bamauri block of Guna district caught fire on Wednesday morning.

The two sisters (five and three year old) of the deceased fled seeing the fire. According to the information, Naresh Sahariya, a resident of Dongarpur, works with his wife on Suresh Dhakad's farm at Kakrua Dang, where the whole family was living in a hut. The couple was working on the farm, during which the hut caught fire. At the time of the incident, Naresh's three children were present in the hut, out of which 2-month-old Rajkumar Sahariya died. Bamouri police station reached the spot and further probe is underway.



### Lokayukta raids mineral officer MK Khatadiya's residence, recovers properties

Team Absolute | Indore

Lokayukta raided residence and office of Mineral officer MK Khatadiya posted in Dewas over alleged disproportionate assets case on Tuesday morning. Properties worth Rs 3 crore was recovered, said Anand Yadav, Deputy Superintendent of Police (DSP) Lokayukta Indore. Searches reveal Khatadiya owned several luxury cars and had bought properties on brother's name.

The officials have also registered a case under the Prevention of Corruption Act in Lokayukta police station, Bhopal, said DSP Lokayukta Indore.

According to the officials, Lokayukta's team has found various residences of Manmohan in different areas including Tulsni Nagar Colony and Mahalaxmi Nagar, Indore. Properties are also found in District Dhar, Jhabua, and Ujjain. "Apart from this, three and a half lakh rupees were also found in cash", added DSP Yadav.



Notably, Khatadiya got posted as Class-2 officer in 1991, according to which since then his salary has been around Rs one crore 25 lacs, but in the preliminary investigation, it has been found that he has got property worth more than Rs 3 crores. He worked in Ujjain, Indore and Dhar before getting transferred in Dewas.

"Investigation of other assets such as jewellery, cash, and bank account are underway, added DSP Yadav.

### Woman prisoner jumps from hospital's bathroom window in Chhatarpur, flees



Team Absolute | Chhatarpur

A woman prisoner fooled the guard and escaped from Chhatarpur district hospital on Wednesday. She went to the bathroom and using a pipe for support, she jumped out of the window. The CCTV footage shows her running from the gate of the district hospital. The incident took place at 7

AM in the morning. According to the jailer, prisoner Ritu Jatav was admitted to the maternity ward of the hospital as she was not well. A female guard from the jail was assigned the duty. Ritu went to the bathroom of the labor room and did not come out for a long time. When the guard checked, she was not there.

Ritu was in jail for a case of assaulting a police party. Recently, the police

had gone to arrest Dilip alias Deepu Jatav, a habitual offender living in the Chhui Khadan area under the Civil Lines police station. At that time, Deepu Jatav and his family members attacked the police team and injured them. The police filed a case against them and arrested Ram Sakhi, Ritu, Rohit, and Hari. Ritu had been in jail since.

### Bhopal Gas Tragedy Advocate Karuna Nundy disappointed over SC dismissing victims' plea, says survivors are deeply anguished

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Advocate Karuna Nundy has expressed disappointment over the apex court dismissing the Centre's curative petition seeking an additional Rs 7,844 crore from the successor firms of the Union Carbide Corporation (UCC) to extend higher compensation to the victims. Speaking to the media on Tuesday, Nundy, who represented the victims, said that the survivors of the Bhopal gas disaster are deeply anguished by the court's decision "While hearing the union for seven hours and hearing the survivors for 45 minutes each, the

judgement that has come has thrown water over all claims of the survivors", she said.

'No civil justice means more such cases'

She further added that the Government of India must make good their claim and must make sure that the survivors of the Bhopal gas disaster are sufficiently compensated.

She said "This is our Supreme Court and we will obviously have no option but to abide by this decision. But, let us be clear that it could be you and it could be me tomorrow because the fact that there is no civil justice in this case will allow more such incidents to happen in Bhopal".



### TWO MEN BURIED ALIVE UNDER MOUND OF MUD IN SHAHDOL DISTRICT



Shahdol: Two young men were buried alive under a heap of mud when a portion of a quarry caved in during soil digging at a village in Madhya Pradesh's Shahdol district on Wednesday, police said. Two others working in the quarry at village Khadda, located some 95km from the district headquarters, were hospitalised, they said.

Sub-Divisional Officer of Police (SDOP) Ravi Prakash Kol said a portion of the heap of mud collapsed when some villagers were digging soil from a quarry and loading it in a tractor-trolley. Two of them, aged 19 and 20 years, got buried underneath and died, he said.

Two others were injured in the incident and undergoing treatment at a hospital in Beohari town, he said. The district administration announced a financial assistance of Rs 10,000 each to the family of the deceased.





## ICC Test rankings

# ASHWIN REGAINS TOP SPOT; KOHLI, AXAR MAKE BIG MOVES AMONG BATTERS

Team Absolute | New Delhi

India's ace off-spinner Ravichandran Ashwin grabbed sole possession of the top spot in the latest ICC Test Rankings for bowlers, released on Wednesday after his haul of 6/91 in the drawn Ahmedabad Test against Australia.

Ashwin was jointly named Player of the Series for his 25 wickets at an average of 17.28. That performance has now propelled him to get on top of rankings and be 10 rating points ahead of veteran England pacer James Anderson.

Talismanic batter Virat Kohli has also advanced seven places to 13th position in the ICC Test Rankings for batters after his Player of the Match effort of 186, ending a drought of 1205 days for a Test century. Australia all-rounder Cameron Green (up 11 places to 26th) and India's Shubman Gill (up 17 places to 46th) have also progressed after notching centuries in Ahmedabad.

Left-arm spin all-rounder Axar Patel has moved up eight places to



44th on the list for batters and jumping one place to fourth overall on the list for all-rounders following an impressive 264 runs over the four

matches.

Australia's left-handed opener Usman Khawaja's score of 180 in the drawn fourth Test against India in Ahmedabad has lifted him two spots to seventh position and to a career-best 815 rating points.

Travis Head's topsy-turvy series ended well with the left-handed middle-order batter, and recently turned opener maintaining his fifth place on the rankings for Test batters at a new career high of 853 rating points.

Sri Lanka's Angelo Mathews is another one to move up the Test batting rankings, his scores of 47 and 115 taking him from 19th to 17th position.

In the bowlers' rankings, New Zealand captain Tim Southee went from 18th to 12th position after taking 5/64 and 2/57.

In the Men's T20I Player Rankings, Bangladesh batter Najmul Hossain Shanto's scores of 51, 46 not out and 47 not out only won him the Player of the Series award at home against England but have also lifted him 68 places to 16th position.

## All England Open

# PV Sindhu suffers first-round exit; Gayatri-Treesa pair advances to Round 2



Birmingham | Agencies

Two-time Olympic medallist PV Sindhu suffered an early exit from the prestigious All England Open Badminton Championships after losing to China's Zhang Yi Man in the women's singles opening round here at the Utilita Arena on Wednesday.

Sindhu, ranked ninth in the world, lost to the world No.17 Chinese shuttler 17-21, 11-21 for her third first-round exit of the year. The former world champion also crashed out early from the Malaysia Open and India Open earlier this year.

Playing against the drift, the Indian ace started with a measured approach and held a lead

at 16-13. However, Zhang's cross-court smashes helped to claw her way back into the match and sealed the opening game 21-17.

After the change of sides, Sindhu seemed to struggle to lift her game as Zhang Yi Man opened a four-point lead at the time of the mid-game break and built on it to seal the match in 39 minutes.

Earlier in the day, teenage women's doubles pair of Treesa Jolly and Gayatri Gopichand, who got a major breakthrough in their career in the last edition as they entered the semifinal after being promoted from the reserves, got off to a winning start and paved a way to the second round.

Treesa and Gayatri registered a 21-18, 21-14 straight games victory against seventh seeds Thai pair Jongkolphan Kititharakul and Rawinda Prajongjai.

## SAINA NEHWAL PULLED OUT OF THE CHAMPIONSHIP



New Delhi | Indian ace shuttler Saina Nehwal has pulled out of the All England Open 2023, the reason for which is yet to be known.

As per reports, the Olympic bronze medalist has been replaced by Singapore's Yeo Jia Min.

Hours after the development, Saina shared her own photograph on the social media platform Koo App with one wide eye peeking through the fingers. On the post itself, one of her fans reacted to it and commented in a funny way. "Saina, it's time to find your charming prince, tell your father to look for one, for the gorgeous girl," the user wrote. The one reaction took away the conversation and every other fan was reacting to it. "Talent and grace in 1 pic," wrote another user.

# Inter Milan move into Champions League quarters

Lisbon (Portugal) | Agencies

Inter Milan moved into the UEFA Champions League quarter finals for the first time since 2010-11, as they held Porto to a goalless draw on Tuesday night to eliminate the Portuguese side 1-0 on aggregate.

Inter were looking for a resounding response after a poor run of domestic performance and entered the Estadio de Dragao with a slender first-leg lead thanks to Romelu Lukaku's late winner, a Xinhua report said.

Porto dominated the game but Inter goalkeeper Andre Onana kept the Portuguese side at bay. The Nerazzurri survived a scare deep into stoppage time, as Denzel Dumfries made a desperate goal-line clearance while



Onana finger tipped Mehdi Taremi's header onto the upright before Marko Grujic hit the post. The home side was reduced to 10 men as winger Pepe received his second yellow card, and Porto failed to turn the game around. Inter followed AC

Milan to become the second Serie A side to reach the Champions League quarters, with Napoli expected to follow them as they host Eintracht Frankfurt on Wednesday with a 2-0 first-leg lead.

## LLC Masters

# Gambhir, Uthappa power India Maharajas to 10-wicket win over Asia Lions

Doha (Qatar) | Agencies

Skipper Gautam Gambhir and Robin Uthappa's spectacular unbeaten 159 runs opening partnership powered India Maharajas to an emphatic 10-wicket victory over Asia Lions in the fourth match of the Legends League Cricket (LLC) Masters at the Asian Town Cricket Stadium.

The opening pair set ablaze the stadium demolishing the Asia Lions' attack with Uthappa cracking an unbeaten 88 off 39 balls with 11 boundaries and five sixes while Gambhir scored an unconquered 61 off 36 balls with 12 boundaries.

Electing to field first, India Maharajas had restricted Asia Lions to 157 for 5 in 20 overs. For Asia Lions, Upul Tharanga cracked 69 off 48 balls with seven boundaries and two sixes while Tillakaratne Dilshan scored 32 off 27 balls with four boundaries and a six. Together they put on 73 runs opening partnership in 8.4 overs, which however went in vain on Tuesday night.

Abdul Razzaq known for his big shots hit Dinda for a boundary to backward point and also a six off



successful balls to remain unbeaten on 27 off 17 balls with two boundaries and two sixes. This also ensured Asia Lions a total of over 150 runs. Finally ending with a total of 157/5 off their 20.

India Maharajas, on the other hand, were brutal and chased the target down with their consistent scorer and skipper Gambhir and on-song Uthappa. They negotiated the pace of Sohail Tanvir and Mohammad Amir confidently with Uthappa picking two boundaries off Amir's second over.

At the halfway mark, India Maharajas needed just 33 runs in the last 60 balls. Gambhir reached his half-century in 32 balls and steered his team to victory with 45 balls to spare.

### Brief scores

Asia Lions 157 for 5 in 20 overs (Upul Tharanga 69, Tillakaratne Dilshan 32; Suresh Raina 2/16) lost to India Maharajas 159/0 in 12.3 overs (Robin Uthappa 88 not out, Gautam Gambhir 61 not out) by 10 wickets.

# This is the kind of batting you expect from Harmanpreet: Anjum Chopra

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Former India Captain Anjum Chopra has hailed Harmanpreet Kaur's stellar performance in the ongoing Women's Premier League (WPL) 2023 saying the performances being put by her is the kind of batting one expects from the right-handed batter.

Harmanpreet hit seven fours and two sixes in her 30-ball 51 to turn around the game in the favour of Mumbai Indians, taking them to a competitive 162/8 in 20 overs against the Gujarat Giants on Tuesday night.

"You know she's in a purple patch, don't you? You just



feel that the manner in which she's constructing her innings, forget the fact she's the captain of the Mumbai Indians team, but just as Harmanpreet Kaur as a batter, you know she's in the zone. You know she's trying to

strike the ball at will, whether it's on the off or on the side. This is the kind of batting you expect from Harmanpreet Kaur. Not only big hits, but rotation of strike," Anjum told broadcasters Sports18 and JioCinema after the end of the match.

Harmanpreet was named the Player of the Match for her effort, making it her third such award of this tournament.

"Everyone is so positive and wants to do well for the team. I have to give thanks to the support staff. Whenever you show trust to the team, that is when you do well," Anjum added.

A strong bowling performance from Mumbai, with Nat Sciver-Brunton and Hayley Matthews taking three-fers each, restricted Gujarat to 107/9 in 20 overs, to win by 55 runs at the Brabourne Stadium. It meant Mumbai became the first team to qualify for the WPL 2023 playoffs.

# SHREYAS IYER RULED OUT OF ODI SERIES, CONFIRMS FIELDING COACH

Mumbai | T. Dilip, India's fielding coach, on Wednesday confirmed that middle-order batsman Shreyas Iyer is ruled out of the upcoming three-match ODI series against Australia, starting here on Friday.

"Injuries are a part and parcel of the game. We have the best medical facilities and they are well-equipped. We are in coordination (with NCA). Regarding Shreyas, he's ruled out of this series. (We will provide) further updates as and when we know it," said Dilip in the pre-series press conference. Iyer had suffered the recurrence of a lower-back injury during the fourth Test against Australia at the Narendra Modi Stadium and did not bat in India's first innings score of 571. During day four's play on Sunday, the BCCI said Iyer had gone for scans after the right-handed batter complained of pain in his lower back following the third day's play and the medical team was monitoring him. Ahead of the start of day five's play on Monday, where the match ended in a draw, the BCCI said in a statement, "Shreyas Iyer will take no further part in this Test."



# Largest ever Indian contingent gears up for World Transplant Games

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The highest-ever Indian contingent of 30 athletes is all geared up for the World Transplant Games to be held in Perth, Australia from April 15 to 21.

ORGAN India, the Organ Receiving & Giving Awareness Network (ORGAN) India, on Wednesday in a press conference revealed the names of the players, who will be representing India at the World Transplant Games.

The contingent features Karhun Nanda, Captain, India, Balveer Singh, badminton player, and World Transplant Games medallist; Dharmendra Soti, badminton player and World Transplant Games medallist, Digvijay Singh Gujral, squash player and World Transplant Games medallist. Apart from



players, the conference also had industry veterans and philanthropists among speakers including Anika Parashar, Founder Chairperson, ORGAN India; Kunti Jhaveri, Managing Trustee, Dinesh Vyas Public Charitable Trust; Ronjan Sodhi, Arjuna Award and Rajiv Gandhi Khel Ratna awardee, Mentor, Manav Rachna Sports Science Centre, Priti Agarwal, Director, Geekay Winding; Dr N C Wadhwa (IAS Retd.), Director General, Manav Rachna Educational Institutions.

# 'GRATEFUL FOR SMALL THINGS, BIG THINGS'

Rishabh Pant shared a video of himself regarding his recovery

Team Absolute | Mumbai

India wicket-keeper batter Rishabh Pant shared a video of himself regarding his recovery from multiple injuries he suffered in a horrific car accident in December last year.

In the video shared by Pant on his social media accounts on Wednesday, he is seen making slow walking steps in a swimming pool with the help of a stick in his left hand as a part of his recovery process.

There were no bandages on his knee or right foot, which is a sign of huge improvement on his road to recovery. "Grateful for small things, big things. And everything in between," wrote Pant in the post on his social media accounts.

The BCCI commented on Twitter, 'More power to you champ'.

As per medical literature, water walking is easy on the joints for sportspersons recovering from injuries. The buoyancy of water reduces the impact on joints. Walking in



water can help improve cardiovascular fitness, balance, and range of motion of the sportspersons to gain full fitness.

# ALCARAZ MOVES INTO QUARTERFINALS AFTER DRAPER RETIRES MIDWAY

Indian Wells (USA) | Agencies

Top seed Carlos Alcaraz moved into the quarterfinal of the Indian Wells Masters after his British opponent Jack Draper retired midway with an injury.

The Spaniard led Jack Draper 6-2, 2-0 when the Briton was forced to retire with an abdominal injury that first affected him late in his Monday win against Andy Murray.

In the pair's second ATP Head-to-Head meeting, both men produced highlight-reel shots early, but Alcaraz had more success in the routine points as he took an early lead, escaping 0/40 in his opening service game with timely power plays on Tuesday night.

As the match wore on, Draper's abdominal issue hampered his serve and his movement. After a visit from the physio in between sets, he won just one point in the first two games of the second set before retiring to give Alcaraz his 101st tour-level win.

After a respectful handshake and some warm words on the net, Alcaraz wrote well-wishes on the TV camera: "Get well soon



Jack!" "I felt the ball really well. I'm really happy with that part. I would say I returned well, I hit great shots. I finished the match with confidence in my shots, to come into the next round with more confidence," Alcaraz was quoted as saying by the ATP tour. Spaniard will face Felix Auger-Aliassime or Tommy Paul next in his bid to return to the semifinals.

# SWIATEK STOPS RADUCANU TO ADVANCE TO QUARTERFINALS

Indian Wells (USA) | World No.1 Iga Swiatek moved one step closer to a successful title defense at the Indian Wells Masters after defeating 2021 US Open champion Emma Raducanu 6-3, 6-1 in the fourth round, setting the quarterfinal clash with Romania's Sorana Cirstea, here.

In back-to-back matches against Grand Slam champions, Swiatek's confidence showed in her match management. Her ability at just 21 years old to feel out her opponents and then suddenly break away and flip a set or tiebreak on its head is second to none.

In her wins over Bianca Andreecu in the third round and Raducanu in the fourth round, one could see how Swiatek's surges left her opponents looking to the sky with demoralized grins. Andreecu, by her own admission, played a great match. But Swiatek slammed the door in the second-set tiebreak by playing seven perfect points.





# 'GRATITUDE GRATITUDE AND ONLY GRATITUDE'

Vicky Kaushal expresses gratitude as team wraps up the shooting

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actors Vicky Kaushal, Sanya Malhotra, and Fatima Sana Shaikh wrapped up shooting for 'Sam Bahadur' directed by Meghna Gulzar. Vicky will be starring in the titular role, alongside Sanya as Manekshaw's wife Silloo and Fatima as former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi.

Taking to social media, Vicky Kaushal who will be seen playing role of Sam Bahadur shares a picture of himself with Meghna Gulzar and wrote: "Gratitude gratitude and only gratitude... to be a part of this process to depict the life of a true legend, to be a part of this team which truly gave it their all. So much I got to live, so much I got to learn... so much there is to bring to you all."

"To Meghna, Ronnie, my brilliant co-actors, the incredible Team... to the Manekshaw Family, to the Indian Army and to the man, FM Sam H. F. J." "Manekshaw, himself... Thank You! IT'S A FILM WRAP ON SAMADY!!! See you all in cinemas on 1st Dec 2023." "Sam Bahadur" is the story of India's greatest war hero and first Field Marshal, Sam Manekshaw.

The film is directed by Meghna Gulzar and produced by Ronnie Screwvala and is based on Sam Manekshaw's career in the Army spanning over four decades and five wars. He was the first Indian Army officer to be promoted to the rank of Field Marshal and his military victory in the 1971 Indo-

Pak war led to the liberation of Bangladesh.



## REKHA LAUDS RANI'S PERFORMANCE IN UPCOMING MOVIE, CALLS HER 'BENGAL TIGRESS'

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Rekha was in awe of actress Rani Mukerji's power-packed performance in 'Mrs Chatterjee Vs Norway'. The veteran star said that Rani has outdone herself in the role of the "eternal mother" and has depicted all the "faces of Durga Maa." She said: "Mrs Chatterjee Vs Norway, was both exhilarating and heart-wrenching, was sitting at the edge of my seat from the word go. It was an absolute delight to watch the dynamic performance of this 'Bengal Tigress', of a mother fight tooth and nail for her kids. This film is for the world to see what 'Mother India' is all about!" Rekha added: "This time around Rani has outdone herself in the role of the Eternal mother depicting all the faces of Durga Maa 'the ultimate Mother', an intense performance worth watching countless times! She walks through fire, straight into our hearts! What a pleasure to see the actor and character melt into each other!"

"I also want to congratulate the entire cast and crew, especially the Director, who were on point and beyond! A special mention of Jim Sarbh for his flawless and constrained performance! Extremely grateful and proud to witness this brave film which reinforces the fact that there is nothing mightier than a 'mother's might'!"

'Mrs Chatterjee Vs Norway' talks about the life of an immigrant mother that fights against all odds to win back the custody of her children.



# 'KIND AND WONDERFUL HUMAN BEING'

Kangana penned a note for co-star Raghava Lawrence as she wrapped up shooting for upcoming movie

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actress Kangana Ranaut on Wednesday wrapped up shooting for 'Chandramukhi 2' and penned a note for co-star Raghava Lawrence, by whom she feels very inspired.

Kangana took to Instagram, where she shared a picture posing with Lawrence and wrote: "As I am about to complete my role in Chandramukhi today, I find it very difficult to say bye to many wonderful people that I met, such a lovely crew I had, I didn't have any pictures with Raghava Lawrence sir because we are always in film costumes so this morning before shoot started, I requested for one." "I am so inspired by sir who is popularly known as Lawrence master because he started his career as a choreographer, actually as a back dancer, but today he is not only a blockbuster filmmaker/superstar but also an incredibly lively, kind and wonderful human being. Thank you for your kindness, amazing sense of humour and all the advance gifts for my birthday, sir. Had such a great time working with you." The film's prequel,



which released in 2005, starred superstar Rajanikanth and Jyothika Saravanan. 'Chandramukhi' was a remake of the Malayalam film 'Manichitrathazhu' and was adapted in Hindi as the Akshay Kumar-starrer 'Bhool Bhulaiyaa'. In 'Chandramukhi 2', Kangana will be seen playing the role of a renowned dancer in the king's court who's known for her breathtaking beauty.

Meanwhile, Kangana also has 'Tejas' in which she essays the role of an Indian Air Force pilot, 'Emergency' and 'Noti Binodini' in the pipeline.



# Dimple Kapadia slapped Ranbir 15-20 times for a movie scene

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Veteran actress Dimple Kapadia, who plays Ranbir Kapoor's mother in the recently released theatrical film 'Tu Jhoothi Main Makkaar', slapped Ranbir for about 15-20 times while filming a scene.

The film has a scene in which Ranbir gets slapped by Dimple but what is interesting is that particular shot took 15-20 retakes. The director of the film, Luv Ranjan got the perfect shot in the second take, but

just to tease the team, he said one more take, repeatedly.

This made everyone ask Dimple Kapadia if she was actually slapping Ranbir. Turns out, Ranbir's timing was so perfect that he was ducking the slap at the right time.

Reacting to this, Dimple Kapadia gave a hilarious response saying: He is Rishi Kapoor's son and he knows his timing very well."

The on-screen bond and mother-son chemistry between Dimple Kapadia and Ranbir Kapoor is being loved by the audience.

'Tu Jhoothi Main Makkaar', directed by Luv Ranjan, produced by Luv Films' Luv Ranjan and Ankur Garg, and presented by T-Series' Gulshan Kumar and Bhushan Kumar is running in theatres.



# NUPUR SANON IS ALL SET TO MAKE HER DEBUT ON OTT

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Singer-actress Nupur Sanon, who is the sister of actress Kriti Sanon, will be seen making her debut on OTT with 'Pop Kaun'. She said that her character in the comedy show is a feminist, and it reflects her own value system. Putting in every ounce in fleshing out her character, Sanon said that the character of Pihu was the real driving force. "The show has a quirky name and the premise is about finding Kunal's character's dad in the film. My character is Pihu. I am playing Kunal's love interest. Their relationship is beautifully etched out." "They go through all the hurdles to eventually reach the point of marriage. I loved the character from the second I heard the script. She is someone who finds logic in everything. She is a feminist which is an aspect that reflects my own value system. She is straight and no-nonsense, asks a lot of questions and never holds back from having her own opinions." But there was one aspect of the character she really had to work on. She said: "Pihu won't take no for an answer and she will butt in to anything just to fix it. This is very unlike me so I had to work on landing those nuances of the film. It was such a joy to be on set, work with the creators especially my director Farhad Samji who guided me through and through, ensuring I know the beats of my character to the tee."



Rhea Chakraborty