

# absolute india

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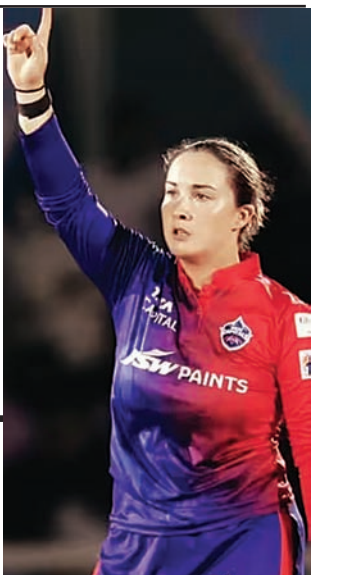
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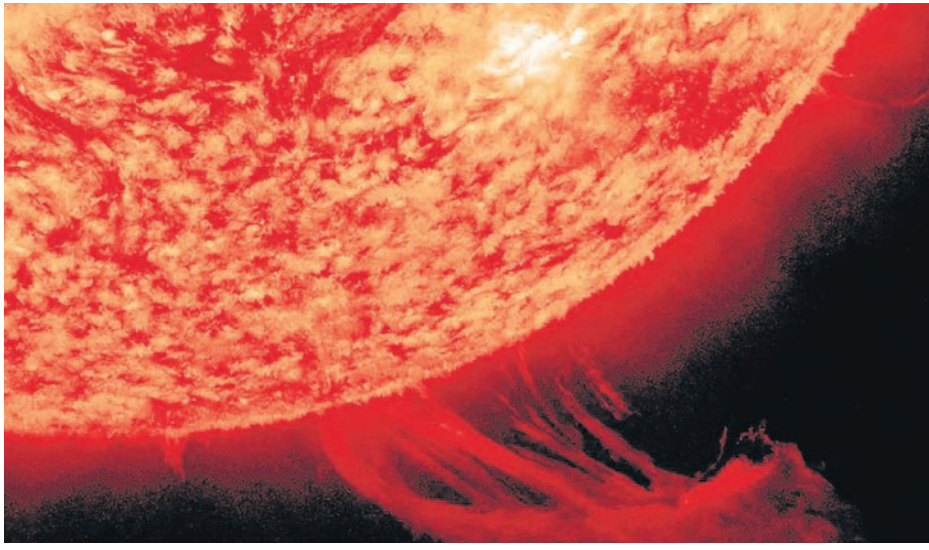


**SPORTS** > 07  
Every player has done something to get us into a match...



## Severe solar storm hits Earth, strongest in last six years

- According to NOAA a powerful geomagnetic storm causes severe disturbances to Earth's magnetic field, spewing solar material from coronal mass ejections (CME) - large expulsions of charged plasma from the Sun's upper atmosphere or the corona.
- The solar storm was the result of a "stealth" CME. It came from a coronal hole wider than 20 Earths that was spewing out solar winds at speeds over 2.1 million km/h, Live Science reported. And the storm was the most intense in the last six years.
- The storm's unexpected ferocity not only made auroras visible as far south as New Mexico in the US, but it also forced space-flight company Rocket Lab to delay a launch by 90 minutes, Space.com reported.



Washington | Agencies

The Earth witnessed a powerful solar storm in nearly six years, causing auroras all over the US, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) said. NOAA had earlier announced moderate G2 storm and G3 conditions between March 23 and 25. However, the Earth witnessed a geomagnetic storm

of magnitude G4, causing the NOAA to update its warning. "Geomagnetic storm responses increased and G4 levels first reached Earth on March 24 at 12:04 EDT," it read. "CME influences continue and geomagnetic response escalated to the G4 (severe) storm level on 24 March at 12:04 am EDT (24/0404 UTC). The G3 Warning remains in effect until 5:00 am EDT (24/0900 UTC)," it added. NOAA said that the severe G4

storm can affect the power grid system with possible widespread voltage control problems; and spacecraft operations with increased possibility of surface charging, and atmospheric drag risk on Low Earth Orbiting (LEO) satellites. We can expect more extreme space weather events like this powerful geomagnetic storm as the sun builds towards a peak in its 11-year solar activity cycle, expected to occur in 2025, the report said.



### WOMEN'S WORLD BOXING CHAMPIONSHIPS: THE GOLDEN PUNCH

New Delhi: India's Nitu Ghanghas (48kg) clinched the Women's World Boxing Championship gold after beating Lutsaikhana Altansetseg of Mongolia 5-0 in the finals at the jam-packed IG Stadium, here on Saturday. The two boxers started proceeding on attacking note. However, it was the Indian, who landed her punches well on the Mongolian's face resulting in Nitu winning the first round 5-0. Throughout the tournament, Nitu played some remarkable games. She had three consecutive Referee Stops Contest (RSC) wins under her belt in the competition.

### KEEP CLOSE WATCH ON EVOLVING ETIOLOGIES: CENTRE ISSUES ADVISORY ON COVID

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Amid rising cases of Covid-19 across the country, the Centre on Saturday issued a joint advisory underlining to keep a close watch on the evolving etiologies. The advisory has been issued jointly by DG, Indian Council of Medical Research, Dr Rajiv Bahl and Union Health Secretary Rajesh Bhushan advising to keep watching the cause of disease. "A gradual but sustained increase in trajectory of Covid-19 cases in the country is being witnessed since mid-February 2023. As on date, most of the active cases in the country are largely being reported by a few states like Kerala (26.4 per cent), Maharashtra (21.7 per cent), Gujarat (13.9 per cent), Karnataka (8.6 per cent) and Tamil Nadu (6.3 per cent). While the rates of hospitalisation and death due to the disease remains low, largely because of the significant coverage achieved in terms of Covid-19 vaccination rates by all states/UTs, this gradual rise in cases needs reinvigorated public health actions to contain the surge," said the advisory. The advisory reads further, "States/UTs must keep a close watch on the evolving etiologies (causes of diseases) of Influenza Like Illness (ILI) and Severe Acute Respiratory Illness (SARI) cases. India usually sees a seasonal rise in influenza cases from January to

March & again from August to October. Presently, the most prominent subtypes of influenza in circulation in the country seem to be influenza A (H1N1) and influenza A (H3N2)." The states have been told that Covid and influenza share a number of similarities in terms of mode of transmission, high risk population, clinical signs and symptoms. While this may present a clinical dilemma for the attending doctors in terms of diagnosis, this also renders both these diseases easily preventable by following simple public health measures like avoiding overcrowded and poorly ventilated settings, wearing a mask in crowded & closed settings, advisory reads. The Centre has also advised to take a stock of hospital preparedness including drugs, beds including ICU beds; medical equipment, medical oxygen, capacity building of human resource on existing guidelines as well as vaccination coverage. The advisory has also flagged low level of testing by states and UTs and has said that testing levels are insufficient as compared to the standards prescribed by WHO i.e 140 tests per million. "Testing at the level of districts & blocks also varies, with some states heavily relying on the less sensitive rapid antigen tests. Hence it is critical to maintain optimum testing for Covid-19, equitably distributed across the states," said the advisory.

## निर्णय वेगवान #महासाक्षर गतिमान

**नरेंद्र मोदी**  
प्रधानमंत्री

**एकनाथ शिंदे**  
मुख्यमंत्री

**गतिमानतेचे प्रमुख टप्पे -**

- जल जीवन मिशनमधून ग्रामीण भागातील प्रत्येक कुटुंबाला नळ जोडणीद्वारे कमीत कमी ५५ लीटर प्रति माणसो प्रति दिन पाणी पुरवठा करणार.
- ग्रामीण भागात आता पर्यंत एकूण १,०८,७९,७९३ (७४.९५%) कुटुंबांच्या घरांना नळजोडणी
- राज्यात नळ पाणी पुरवठ्याच्या एकूण ३४७५३ योजना कार्यरत, त्यापैकी ३२,००० कामे प्रगतीवर, २२३० योजना पूर्ण
- स्वतंत्र पाणी पुरवठा योजनांकरिता इलेक्ट्रोक्लोरीनेटरच्या २०७०६ कामांना मान्यता
- राज्यातील १९८९ गावे "हर घर जल" प्रमाणित.
- पिण्याच्या पाण्याच्या स्रोत बळकटीकरण्याच्या एकूण १७५७७ कामांना मान्यता, त्यापैकी ८२६८ कामे पूर्ण

### जलजीवन मिशन येता दारी, स्वच्छ पाणी मिळे घरोघरी !

**एकनाथ शिंदे**  
मुख्यमंत्री

**देवेंद्र फडणवीस**  
उप मुख्यमंत्री

ROC-2022-23/No - 5/C 7063

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माहिती व जनसंपर्क महासंचालनालय, महाराष्ट्र शासन



# DIFFERENCES BETWEEN GOVT, JUDICIARY CAN'T BE CONSTRUED AS CONFRONTATION: RIJJU

Chennai | Agencies



Asserting that differences were inevitable in a democracy, Union Minister for Law and Justice Rishi Gajendran said differences between government and judiciary cannot be construed as confrontation. He denied any clash between the government and the judiciary.

The Union Law minister was speaking after inaugurating the chief judicial magistrate court at Myladuthurai. Chief Justice of India, D.Y. Chandrachud and Acting Chief Justice of Madras High Court, Justice T Raja, were present on the occasion.

While pointing out at some media reports on differences between the government and judiciary, Rishi said that in a democracy differences were bound to be there and added that these are due to difference in outlook but stated that conflicting positions should not be there.

He said, "This does not mean confrontation between government and the Supreme Court or legislature and judiciary. This is not confrontation but

only differences which are inevitable in the largest democracy in the world."

The Union Law minister said that the central government would support the judiciary to be independent and added that the bench and the bar are the two sides of the same coin.

He said that one cannot work without the other and added that courts should have proper decorum and conducive atmosphere. Rishi said that the country is not ruled by a dictatorial king and added that the differences of opinion cannot be construed as a crisis in Indian democracy. The minister said that the two bodies can criticise each other but in national interest all should be one. The minister lauded the courts in Tamil Nadu for their excellent performance during pandemic and delivering judgments. He said that the judicial infrastructure in Tamil Nadu was much better than many other states.

He said that the government was for the Indian judiciary to completely go paperless in the coming days. The minister said that in the coming days

due to technological advancement everything could be synchronised and the judge need not postpone the cases for want of evidence. He said that works are under progress and added that a major solution for pendency of cases was in the near future.

The minister also said that the executive and judiciary should work together to clear the pendency of cases. Rishi said, "In India, each judge is hearing 50 to 60 cases a day and if I had to deal with so many cases, mental pressure would be tremendous." He called upon all the courts to use Tamil language in all court proceedings in the state and added that with the use of technological advancements, Tamil which was a classical language can one day be even used in Supreme Court of India. The minister also said that his ministry was developing a common core vocabulary where Indian languages will have certain common usages, that are purely technical in nature. He said that this was to ensure that common people receive orders in their respective languages.

# Khusbhu's old tweet against PM goes viral, BJP leader defends herself

Chennai | Agencies



An old tweet by the National Commission for Women (NCW) member and actor-turned-politician Khusbhu Sundar has gone viral on social media.

While the Congress across the country is protesting against the disqualification of Rahul Gandhi from the Lok Sabha following his conviction by a Surat court in a 2019 criminal defamation case, the old tweet by Khusbhu targeting Prime Minister Narendra Modi has become the talk of the town here.

In the tweet, Khusbhu had said, "Modi is here, Modi is there, Modi is everywhere. But what is this? Wherever there is Modi, corruption has become the surname. So understand one thing, Modi means corruption."

Khusbhu has defended herself for the tweet, stating that she was the Congress spokesperson then and had followed the footsteps of Rahul Gandhi.

The five-year-old tweet of Khusbhu, a former Congress leader who has since joined the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), was dug out by the IT wing of the Congress.

With the old tweet going viral, Khusbhu took to social media and said, "How more desperate can they be!! A five-year-old tweet is what now @INCIndia is taking to defend themselves? I as a spokesman of Congress

was then speaking the same language of @Rahul Gandhi. Just followed the line of this man. Why raise a question to my party? File a case against me if you dare. Learn the difference between corruption and a thief."

Adding that nothing has changed in the Congress, she wrote, "And some learned leaders of the CONgress need to know I am not the spokesperson of my party. At least do some homework to save yourself from embarrassment. It's like CONgress will give you an agenda to attack n you do it blindly. Nothing has changed n nothing will. No wonder they are failing miserably."

# Over 2,200 non-faculty posts lying vacant at AIIMS Patna: Parl panel

Team Absolute | New Delhi

More than 2,200 non-faculty posts are lying vacant in AIIMS Patna, a Parliamentary panel has noted in a recent report.

The panel took note of "substantial shortage" of faculty and non-faculty staff at six AIIMS - Bihar (Patna), Chhattisgarh (Raipur), Madhya Pradesh (Bhopal), Orissa (Bhubaneswar), Rajasthan (Jodhpur) and Uttaranchal (Rishikesh), and has asked the Union Health Ministry to ensure better management of human resource in the top medical institutes.

The committee noted that in AIIMS Patna and Raipur, 143 faculty posts against the sanctioned strength of 305 are vacant, which implies that approximately 47 per cent of the posts in these two institutes are vacant. In AIIMS Jodhpur, 227 faculty



posts are filled which is the highest among all new AIIMS.

In AIIMS Patna, against the sanctioned strength of 3,884 non-faculty posts, 2,202 posts are vacant, leading to a vacancy of approximately 57 per cent. The panel noted with "serious concern" the shortage of faculty as well as non-faculty staff in the six AIIMS. The committee is dismayed at the acute shortage of Professors/Additional Professor/Associate Professor/Assistant Professor

in the six AIIMS and strongly recommends the Ministry to make immediate efforts and ensure better management of human resource in the institutes," it said a recent report.

The committee also recommended the health ministry and the institutes to explore giving special packages and offer incentives such as paid research collaboration, use of high-end technology, and better working hours among others to draw qualified doctors to these institutes.

# SCHOOLGIRL HACKED TO DEATH IN ASSAM

Guwahati: An 18-year-old schoolgirl was stabbed to death by a youth in Assam's Karimganj district, officials said on Saturday.

The youth killed the girl with a sharp machete following a dispute in Dalgram village of the district on Friday. Munwara Begum was a Higher Secondary (HS) student at the Kaliganj Public Higher Secondary School. Partha Protim Das, the superintendent of police in Karimganj, told the reporters that on being informed by the locals, a police team rushed to the spot and recovered the girl's body.

"We have detained one Jaber Ahmed in connection with the incident," he said. However, the weapon allegedly used in the crime is yet to be recovered. Das said, "The girl was stabbed on her neck with a sharp machete and she succumbed to the injuries on the spot."

# Web designer held for cheating people in the name of Patanjali Yogpeeth

Team Absolute | New Delhi

A 38-year-old web designer was arrested for allegedly creating fake websites and duping people in the name of Patanjali Yogpeeth, an official said on Saturday.

The accused has been identified as Rahul Kumar, a resident of Laxmi Nagar in Delhi.

According to police, a complaint was received at Dwarka Cyber police station where the victim alleged that he was searching for treatment of his wife on internet and found a mobile number.

Thereafter, he contacted that number and one Dr Sachin Agrawal asked him to deposit Rs 50,000 in a bank account. However, after that, complainant couldn't contact again on that number.

"The complainant again searched number on Google and found another mobile number and the alleged per-



son asked to deposit Rs 45,600 in another bank account. When complainant again contacted him, he again demanded Rs 56,800 from the complainant, but this time, he didn't pay," said M Harsha Vardhan, the Deputy Commissioner of

Police (Dwarka). During the investigation, the details of the beneficiary bank account were obtained and call detail records of the alleged number was obtained and analysed. "On March 21, on the basis of technical analysis and sur-

veillance, the team raided the house of accused Rahul and apprehended him from the Laxmi Nagar area.

"During interrogation, Rahul confessed that he was doing work of fake website designing. Rahul said that he, along with, co-accused Sumit used to dupe people in the name of some service which never gets delivered.

"Rahul used to design fake websites in the name of other leading companies like Patanjali, among others, and place the numbers there, provided by co-accused Sumit who is resident of Rajgir, Bihar and also receives calls of public persons," said the DCP.

"Sumit used to ask the victims to deposit amount in different bank accounts and then both accused used to divide the cheating amount between them. They mostly used to do fraud in the name of Patanjali Yogpeeth, Haridwar," said the DCP.

# Odisha CM urges Gadkari for early complete of Cuttack-Sambalpur NH

Bhubaneswar | Agencies

Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik has sought personal intervention of Union Minister for Road Transport and Highways, Nitin Gadkari for early completion of the Cuttack-Angul-Sambalpur section of NH-55.

In a letter to Gadkari, the Chief Minister said rehabilitation and up-gradation of Cuttack-Sambalpur national highway (0.400 km to 265 km) to four-lane carriageway is being carried out by National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) since 2017.

It is a matter of great concern that even after more than five years, up-gradation work is yet to be completed, he said.

Stating that the Cuttack-Sambalpur section of NH-55 serves as lifeline to millions of people of the Western Odisha, Patnaik said, "Haphazard construction activities and miserable plight of the road causes frequent accidents leading to loss of human lives."

During the last two years, as many as 399 accidents have taken place causing 196 fatalities, Patnaik pointed out.

There is public agitation and discontent-



ment among the people for inordinate delay in completion of the road work. The concern of the state government on this count has also been communicated to the Ministry of Road Transport & Highways earlier, he mentioned.

Though progress of the instant project is being reviewed with the regional authorities of NHAI at regular intervals, no satisfactory outcome is visible, he added.

He urged Gadkari to intervene in the matter for early completion of the project which will go a long way in redressing the pending demand of the people of the state.

# TEJASHWI YADAV JOINS CBI PROBE IN LAND-FOR-JOB CASE

Deputy Chief Minister of Bihar Tejashwi Yadav on Saturday joined the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) probe here in connection with the land-for-job case.

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Tejashwi reached the CBI headquarters in the national capital at around 10.40 a.m.

He had earlier skipped three CBI summons. Before this, he was called to join the probe on March 4, 11 and 14.

The last time he did not join the probe was due to his wife's health issues.

The agency had recently grilled Tejashwi Yadav's mother and former Bihar Chief Minister Rabri Devi and father and former Railway Minister Lalu Prasad Yadav in the matter.

The CBI has alleged that it was found that the accused in conspiracy with the then GM and CPO of the

Central Railways engaged persons as substitutes in lieu of land either in their name or in the name of close relatives of the family.

The CBI had registered a case against Lalu Prasad Yadav, his wife Rabri Devi, two daughters and 15 others, including unknown public servants and private persons.

"During the period 2004-2009 Yadav had obtained pecuniary advantages in the form of transfer of landed property in the name of his family members in lieu of appointment of substitutes in Group 'D' posts in different Zones of Railways," a CBI official had said.

A number of residents of Patna themselves or through their family members sold and gifted their land

in favour of the family members of Yadav and a private company controlled by Yadav and his family.

"No advertisement or any public notice was issued for such appointment of substitutes in Zonal Railways, yet the appointees who were residents of Patna were appointed as Substitutes in different Zonal Railways located at Mumbai, Jabalpur, Kolkata, Jaipur and Hazipur.

"In continuation of this modus operandi, about 1,05,292 Sq. feet land, immovable properties situated at Patna were acquired by Yadav and his family members through five sales deeds and two gift deeds, showing the payment made to seller in cash in most of the land transfer," the official added.



# TWO ARRESTED FOR ATTEMPTING TO ROB RUSSIAN TOURIST IN GOA

Panaji: Two persons were arrested on Saturday for allegedly trying to rob a Russian national in a hotel room.

According to North Goa Superintendent of Police Nidhin Valsan, complainant Aigul Davletianova, 30, Russian national, staying at Grand Inn hotel in Morjim, Pernem-Goa, said on March 24, two unknown persons entered into her room through slanting window, and when she woke up, the accused persons caught hold of her hands and pressed her mouth due to which she sustained injuries to her lips and her one tooth got uprooted.

"All the staff working at Grand Inn hotel were rounded up and after interrogation, suspects namely Abinash Gorla, 29, native of Assam, who was working as a waiter and Mohammad Faizal Khan, 26, native of Jharkhand, who was working as an electrician in the hotel, confessed to committing the crime," Valsan said.

He said that both the accused persons are arrested and remanded to four days police custody. "During interrogation, the accused persons revealed that they entered the room of the complainant woman with an intention to commit theft," Valsan said.

# SUKESH CHANDRASHEKHAR'S LETTER TO JACQUELINE

## Thank you for giving me your heart

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Alleged conman Sukesh Chandrashekar, who is presently lodged in the Mandoli Jail here in a money-laundering case, on Saturday wrote a letter to Bollywood actress Jacqueline Fernandez on his birthday.

In his handwritten letter addressing the actress as "My baby Jacqueline", the alleged con-man conveyed his message saying that he misses her "a ton on this day" and said that he knows her "love" for him is "never ending". "My bomma (doll), I miss you a ton on this day of my birthday, I miss your energy around me, I have no words, but I know your love for me is never ending, is all over me," he wrote.



He further said that what matters to him is what is in her heart, which he said is beautiful, and that he does not need proof. "But I must admit, I am missing you, you know how much I love you my bomma," he wrote.

Chandrashekar added that Jacqueline and her love is the



"bestest gift", which is "priceless" in his life. "You know I am here for you standing by you come what may... Love you my baby, thank you for giving me your heart," he added. He concluded his letter by thanking all his supporters and friends for wishing him on his birthday.

# DELHI COURT LISTS NORA FATEHI'S DEFAMATION CASE AGAINST JACQUELINE FOR MAY 22

New Delhi: A Delhi court on Saturday adjourned actress Nora Fatehi's plea against Jacqueline Fernandez alleging that the latter made defamatory allegations against her for "malicious reasons" and to destroy her career in Rs 200 crore extortion case involving conman Sukesh Chandrashekar as the prime accused, for May 22. The matter was listed before Metropolitan Magistrate (MM) Kapil Gupta of Patiala House Court. On January 13, Fatehi had recorded her statement as a witness in the money laundering case in the presence of Metropolitan Magistrate Akriti Mahendru.

The court had, on December 19, 2022, noted that counsel for the complainant sought some time to file the list of witnesses. Fernandez is also being investigated by the Economic Offences Wing (EOW) of the Delhi Police in the case involving Chandrashekar.

Earlier, Fatehi had also appeared before the EOW. She has alleged that Fernandez made a false statement against her despite being an actress too. "Fernandez has unnecessarily dragged and defamed me as I am in the same industry. She is fully aware that the business of any artiste and their career is solely based on their reputation."



## Won't Apologies: Rahul

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Saturday said that he was not Veer Savarkar and will not apologise. "I am a Gandhi and not Savarkar and Gandhis do not apologise," he said at a press conference here a day after his expulsion from Parliament following his conviction in a defamation case.

"I will not stop asking questions about whose money is the Rs 20,000 crore that has come out from shell companies. I am not scared of prison sentence, disqualification and others.. I am not that type of person and they do not understand me. I am not going to back down and will stick on the principle and even if I am disqualified for life, then also I will keep raising questions and fight for the people."



said that he will continue doing his work and that it does "not matter if I am inside the Parliament or not. I will keep fighting for the country".

He said that his disqualification is directly related to the Prime Minister who does not want him to speak about his relationship with the Adani Group.

Rahul said that the public knows that Gautam Adani is corrupt and now the question is that why Modi is saving him from all the investigations.

He also said that he is not scared and will not stop asking questions about the alleged relationship.

"My voice is being suppressed," Rahul Gandhi said

and claimed that he spoke to the Speaker against the false accusations made by four ministers but was not allowed to speak.

Rahul Gandhi was on Friday disqualified as member of Lok Sabha a day after conviction in the 2019 "Modi surname" defamation case.

The Gandhi scion who represented Wayanad parliamentary constituency of Kerala was disqualified under provisions of Article 102 (1) (e) of the Constitution of India read with Section 8 of Representation of the People's Act.

On Thursday, he was sentenced to two years in jail by a Surat court in the case filed on a complaint by BJP MLA Purnesh Modi.

### BJP, Centre have no role in court's decision on Rahul: BJP

**Gurugram:** Bharatiya Janata Party's (BJP) Parliamentary Board member, Sudha Yadav, said that Rahul Gandhi's two-year sentence and cancellation of membership from Parliament was due to the wrong statements given by the former Congress President. She said that there is no interference from the BJP and the central government in the matter and Rahul Gandhi should accept the decision of the court.

Yadav said that Congress is wrong in blaming the BJP and the central government for the cancellation of Rahul Gandhi's Lok Sabha membership.

"The proceedings are done by the court. The government, the party have no role in the proceedings of the court. Taking cognizance of the court's order, the Lok Sabha Secretariat cancelled his membership. The proceedings in the case in which Rahul Gandhi has been convicted have lasted for four years," she said.

### 'Betrayal of Gandhian philosophy': Ro Khanna

**New York:** Top Indian-American Congressman Ro Khanna said the expulsion of Congress leader Rahul Gandhi from Parliament is a "deep betrayal of Gandhian philosophy".

Taking to Twitter on Friday, the Democratic Congressman said: "The expulsion of Rahul Gandhi from Parliament is a deep betrayal of Gandhian philosophy and India's deepest values. This is not what my grandfather sacrificed years in jail for." Flagging off Prime Minister Narendra Modi in his tweet, Khanna said "you have the power to reverse this decision for the sake of Indian democracy".

The tweet came as a reaction to a New York Times report, which said that "the expulsion of Rahul Gandhi is a devastating blow to the once-powerful Indian National Congress party".



## GPS-based toll system in 6 months to replace all Toll Plazas: Nitin Gadkari

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The government will introduce new technologies including GPS-based toll collection systems in the next 6 months to replace existing highway toll plazas in the country, Union minister Nitin Gadkari said.

The move is aimed at reducing traffic congestion and charging motorists for the exact distance travelled on the highways, Gadkari said.

Addressing an event organised by industry body CII, Gadkari further said state-owned NHAI's toll revenue is currently Rs40,000 crore and it is going to soar to Rs 1.40 lakh crore 2-3 years.

"The government is looking at new technologies including GPS-based toll systems to replace toll plazas in the country...We will bring new technology in six months," he said.

The ministry of road transport and highways is conducting a pilot project of automatic number plate recognition system (automatic number plate reader cameras) to enable automated toll collection without stopping the vehicles.

During 2018-19, the average waiting time for vehicles at toll plaza was 8 minutes. With the introduction of FASTags during 2020-21 and 2021-22, the average waiting time of the vehicles has come down to 47 seconds.

Although there is considerable improvement in waiting time at certain locations, especially near cities, the densely populated towns there are still some delays at toll plazas during peak hours.

The road transport and highways minister emphasised on the need of reducing the cost of construction without compromising with the quality.

## FM reviews PSBs' performance amid banking crisis in US, Europe

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman chaired a meeting on Saturday to review the performance of Public Sector Banks (PSBs) on various financial health parameters.

The Finance Minister underlined that PSBs "must look at business models closely to identify stress points, including concentration risks and adverse exposures". Sitharaman also exhorted PSBs to use "this opportunity" to frame detailed crisis management and communication strategies. During the review meeting, an open discussion was held with the MDs and CEOs of PSBs on the global scenario consisting of the failure of the Silicon Valley Bank (SVB) and the Signature Bank (SB) along with issues leading to the crisis in Credit

Suisse. Sitharaman reviewed the exposure of PSBs to this developing and immediate external global financial stress from both the short and the long-term perspectives. After detailed deliberations, the Finance Minister advised PSBs to remain vigilant about the interest rate risks and regularly undertake stress tests. Sitharaman also said that PSBs "must leverage the full potential of branches opened in International Financial Services Centres in GIFT City (Gujarat International Finance Tec-City) Gujarat to identify international opportunities, including prospects related to Persons of Indian Origin (PIOs)". The meeting was attended by Union Minister of State for Finance Bhagwat Kishanrao Karad; Secretary, Department of Financial Services (DFS) Vivek Joshi; and MDs and CEOs of PSBs.

The Finance Minister emphasised on preparedness along with due diligence through adherence to the regulatory framework by focusing on risk management, diversification of deposits and assets base.

The MDs and CEOs of PSBs appraised the Finance Minister that they follow "best" corporate governance practices, adhere to regulatory norms, ensure prudent liquidity management and continue to focus on having robust asset-liability and risk management.

Further, they also informed Sitharaman that PSBs are vigilant of developments in the global banking sector and are taking all possible steps to safeguard themselves from any potential financial shock. All the major financial parameters indicate "stable and resilient PSBs with robust financial health".

## DA crisis: Bengal govt slaps show-cause notice on 766 teachers for taking part in strike

Kolkata | Agencies

The Education Department of West Bengal government has slapped show-cause notice on 766 teachers from different state-run schools for reportedly participating in a day-long strike on March 10, which was called by the joint forum of state government employees as a mark of protest against the non-payment of dearness allowance (DA) arrears by the state government.

Sources from in the Education Department said that the figure has been arrived at after checking the attendance records available with the department for that day. "The numbers might increase at a later stage following a school-to-school survey



to be undertaken by the department," said a senior official in the Education Department.

According to the official, these 766 teachers participated in the strike and remained absent from duty on March 10, ignoring the directive from the West Bengal Board of Secondary Education (WBSE) making the presence of teachers at their respective schools mandatory barring cases of emer-

gency or pre-sanctioned earned leave or maternity leave.

The teachers have been asked to give satisfactory explanations justifying their absence on that day within seven days of the receipt of the show-cause notice, failing which the department shall initiate disciplinary proceedings against them.

To recall, before March 10, the Finance Department had issued

a notification cautioning the absentee employees of dies-non (break of service) and non-admissibility of one day's salary barring cases of emergency or pre-sanctioned earned leave or maternity leave.

A teachers' association in state-run schools has decided to take the legal route if disciplinary action is initiated against those slapped with the show-cause notice.

## PM MODI INAUGURATES MUCH-AWAITED WHITEFIELD METRO LINE IN BENGALURU

**Bengaluru:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday inaugurated the much-awaited Whitefield (Kadugodi) to Krishnarajapuram (KR Puram) metro line in Bengaluru, built at a cost of Rs 4,249 crore.

After inaugurating the 13.71 km metro line having 12 stations, the Prime Minister took a ride with school kids, Bengaluru Metropolitan Railway Corporation Limited (BMRC) staff and construction workers.

The stretch will provide much needed succour to people by reducing traffic congestion in the city.

Prime Minister Modi chose to stand in the metro for interacting with students. The students, who got an opportunity to interact with Prime Minister Modi, were thrilled. He also spoke to women drivers of Metro and sat with BMRC staff, construction workers during the journey. Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai and others accompanied him in the metro journey.

Prime Minister Modi will also address the BJP Maha Sangam public rally in Davanagere city in central Karnataka later in the day. Prime Minister Modi will arrive in Shivamogga airport from Davanagere and fly back to New Delhi.



## Couple detained in J&K over links with Amritpal Singh's aide

Jammu: The Jammu and Kashmir Police on Saturday detained a couple for alleged links with one of the aides of radical outfit 'Waris Punjab De' chief, Amritpal Singh. Police said that the couple was detained from R.S. Pura area of Jammu district. "Amrik Singh and his wife, Paramjit Kour were detained and handed over to Punjab Police. They have been detained for having reported links with Papalpreet Singh, a close aide of Amritpal Singh," the police said. The mobile phones of the couple have also been seized for further investigation. The matter is being investigated by Punjab Police and they will be questioning the couple, sources said. It must be recalled that earlier, district magistrates of Kishtwar and Ramban districts cancelled arms licenses of two bodyguards accompanying Waris Punjab De chief and pro-Khalistan Sikh leader, Amritpal Singh.

## Institutional support must be given for presence of more women lawyers in courts: CJI

Team Absolute | Chennai

Chief Justice of India, D.Y. Chandrachud, said that institutional support must be given for the presence of more women lawyers in the country and also state of Tamil Nadu.

Speaking at a function to mark the inauguration of the district and sessions court and the chief judicial magistrate court in Myladuthurai, the CJI said that there was a very poor proportion of women practising as advocates in courts and added that while there are 50,000 male enrollments in Tamil Nadu, the women enrollment was only 5000.

He said that the law chambers were skeptical in employing women and added that the familial responsibilities were cited as a reason for women being singled out.

The CJI called upon all the courts in the country to open creches so that equal opportunities are given to women lawyers. He called upon courts to emulate the example of the Supreme Court of India and the Delhi High Court



where creches are already in place.

Justice Chandrachud asked the Madras High Court Chief Justice to take initiative for the formation of creches in all the high court as well as all the district courts in the state.

The CJI said that the women lawyers were not employed in law chambers not because they lack talent and professionalism but because of the familial responsibilities attached with them. He said that young men lawyers must also

take up child care and family care.

He said, "As a society, we force the responsibility of family care only on women and then use that very bias against women that we hold, to deny them opportunities."

Stressing on the increase in entry level pay for young lawyers, he said, "I've come to know that the entry level pay of young lawyers in Madurai region was in the range of Rs 5000-12000".

The CJI said that such poor pay distances members of the Scheduled Caste, Scheduled Tribe and Women from entering into a fully fledged profession like law. He said that the law chambers were justifying the poor payment to young lawyers with the theory that the first few years were their learning time and was being mentored at the chambers. He said, "Please shed away from this paternalistic approach."

Justice Chandrachud said that the entry level barrier has forced several law graduates to take up other work totally unrelated to their branch of study so that they can meet both ends.

The CJI stressed upon the need for more infrastructure so that there is a

better environment for judicial officers. He also said that the judiciary was choking with pending cases and added that the Supreme Court of India has introduced the hybrid system wherein lawyers can appear both physically and virtually.

He said that this facility provides a connect between a judge sitting at Tilak Marg in New Delhi and an advocate residing in Melur or Virdhunagar.

He said that since the Supreme Court has commenced live streaming all constitution bench cases, which helps the students of law in government law colleges at Madurai and Tiruchi watch the court proceedings and assume knowledge.

The Chief Justice of India said that during Covid-19 pandemic high courts and district judiciary had heard 2.62 crore cases through video-conferencing. Justice Chandrachud said that from March 23, 2022 to February 13, 2023, the Supreme Court heard 4,13,537 cases. Union Minister of Law and Justice, Kiren Rijiju and Tamil Nadu Chief Minister, M.K. Stalin were present on the occasion.



## HOME MINISTER AMIT SHAH SOUNDS POLL BUGLE IN CHHINDWARA, BOASTS REMOVAL OF SECTION 370

Team Absolute | Chhindwara

Sounding a poll bugle in Chhindwara—known to be ex-CM Kamal Nath's territory, Union home minister boasted removal of Section 370.

Shah reminded public that it was the BJP government that removed the Section 370 to ensure Jammu and Kashmir is fully integrated into India. He further claimed that "only BJP can protect this country."

In an attempt to woo tribals of the state, Shah, repeated, "It is BJP government who gave India its first Tribal President as Droupadi Murmu."

"Amid chants of 'Bharat Mata ki Jai', he urged public to vote for the BJP candidate in Chhindwara—the only Lok Sabha seat won by Congress in 2019.

Notably, Kamal Nath's son Nakul Nath won Chhindwara in last Lok Sabha elections when BJP grabbed 28 of 29 seats. This time, the ruling BJP has decided to focus on this one seat they lost in 2019.

This is Amit Shah's second visit in Madhya Pradesh this year. On February 24, Shah reached Satna to



attend Kol Tribe's convention. Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan, Union Minister Fagga Singh Kulaste and minister in charge of the district Kamal Patel was also present on the occasion.

Reacting to the Shah's visit in Chhindwara, BJP spokesperson Rahul Kothari said, "The people of Chhindwara have come to know about the black deeds of Kamal Nath during his 15 months tenure in the state. Amit Shah has arrived in

Chhindwara, so this time the BJP will register victory there." The fort of Nakul Nath and Kamal Nath, examples of familism, will surely collapse this time, he added.

On the contrary, former minister and Congress MLA P C Sharma said, "Chhindwara is not a parliament; it is a court of the public. Union Minister Shah has arrived here to threaten but the people of Chhindwara are not going to be afraid." BJP may also lose the remaining 28 seats due to the Chhindwara seat. Pradesh Congress

Committee (PCC) chief Kamal Nath has given his blood and sweat for welfare of each and every housed in Chhindwara, he added.

It is believed that the BJP is eyeing to establish its supremacy in Chhindwara district for the Lok Sabha election 2024 as well as the upcoming assembly polls in the state. Notably, the BJP lost only Chhindwara constituency during 2019 parliamentary elections in the state. There are 29 Lok Sabha seats and BJP won 28 seats.

Besides, the Congress party occupied all the seven assembly seats of the district as well. Except in 1997, the Congress has been winning the Chhindwara Lok Sabha seat since independence. Sundar Lal Patwa was the only BJP leader who won the Chhindwara seat after defeating the Congress strongman Kamal Nath in 1997 for a short period of time. Kamal Nath again won the elections in 1998. Since then, Kamal Nath was the MP of the constituency and after he became the Chief Minister of the state in 2018, his son Nakul Nath contested in 2019 parliamentary elections and registered victory on the seat.

## Congress stages statewide protest over Rahul's disqualification from LS

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Enraged over Congress leader Rahul Gandhi's disqualification from the Lok Sabha following his conviction in a defamation case, party members in Madhya Pradesh staged a massive protest on Friday.

The Congress workers across Madhya Pradesh, holding party's flags, took out rallies on roads, blocked traffic and raised slogans against the BJP and Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Hundreds of NSUI workers reached Rani Kamalapati Railway Station in Bhopal and blocked a couple of trains. However, railway officials later jumped into action and train services were started after disruption of around an hour.

The protest was not limited to the state capital Bhopal only. As per reports, Congress workers across Madhya Pradesh marched on roads holding 'mashals'



(torches) in their hands and shouting slogans against Prime Minister Modi.

In Gwalior, youth Congress workers burnt the effigy of the BJP and blocked vehicular movements at several junctions in the city.

Similarly, in Rewa, hundreds of party workers holding 'mashals' marched on the road in support of their leader, Rahul Gandhi.

Reacting to the matter, former chief minister and Madhya Pradesh unit Congress chief Kamal Nath criticised Prime Minister Narendra Modi, stating "the

BJP government has crossed all limits in hatching a conspiracy".

"The way his (Rahul Gandhi) Lok Sabha membership has been cancelled, it is clear that the Modi government is scared of Rahul Gandhi. Instead of answering the questions raised by him, the government was looking for a way to remove him from the Lok Sabha. Today is a day of great sadness and pain for Indian democracy," Kamal Nath said.

"Today, the people of India stand with Rahul Gandhi stronger than ever before.

## Indore collectorate clerk, two others embezzle Rs 5 crore

Team Absolute | Indore

A clerk posted in the collectorate of Madhya Pradesh's Indore embezzled more than Rs 5 crore over a period of three years and transferred the money into his relatives' accounts.

The clerk, identified as Milap Singh Chouhan and two others, Amit Nimbalkar and Ranjit Kirode embezzled the money from the amount sanctioned by the government for compensation to the farmers whose crops had been damaged by insects and other factors. The accused also spent huge amounts of money on call



girls and in bars apart from transferring the money to their wives' and relatives' accounts. Collector Ilaiah Raja T, Additional Collector Rajesh Rathore and his team found that government funds amounting to more than Rs 5 crores were embezzled.

During investigation, the

bank statements of the employees were also examined, which confirmed their involvement in the embezzlement.

A complaint has been filed at the Raoji Bazar police station in which 29 people have been made accused.

## BJP is playing cheap politics, says Congress MLA Singhar who is out on bail

Team Absolute | Dhar

Former state cabinet minister and Gandhwani MLA Umang Singhar who is out on a bail in a case of physical violence, rape and unnatural sex accused Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) of doing cheap politics.

Singhar addressing media persons at his residence in Dhar targeted the BJP government at the centre over the disqualification of senior Congress leader Rahul Gandhi as a member of Parliament on Friday, a day after he was found guilty in a defamation case by a lower court in Surat.

The disqualification of Rahul Gandhi, the former Congress president, is seen as one of the highest-profile disqualifications of a sitting lawmaker in the country.



Singhar, who himself was on a run after—a woman with whom he had a live-in relationship and who also claimed to be married to him, lodged

an FIR against him in November 2022. Singhar got anticipatory bail from Jabalpur High Court only a couple of days ago.

His party men accorded him a welcome at his residence in Dhar after he arrived here. Singhar told that BJP is misusing Enforcement Directorate, CBI, and other Central Agencies to suppress the opposition voice. He will continue his support to Rahul Gandhi and will hold protests in his assembly constituency Gandhwani.

He claimed that not only Congress, but many of the BJP workers also said that this is wrong. Rahul Gandhi should have been given a chance to be heard.

Singhar said that let's contest the elections and form the government, but BJP should not do such cheap politics.

## Madhya Pradesh Civic Body Seizes Man's Buffalo For Not Paying Water Tax

Team Absolute | Gwalior

Gwalior Municipal Corporation (GMC) on Friday seized a buffalo belonging to a dairy operator for defaulting in payment of water tax.

Officials said the action was taken as part of an ongoing drive to recover property and water tax dues from habitual defaulters.

The Corporation's Public Health Engineering (PHE) department had issued a notice in name of the dairy operator, Balkishan Pal, a resident of Dalian Wala area for the delay in payment of water tax due of Rs 1.39 lakh.

Balkishan was asked to pay the due water tax several times, but he did not pay any heed to the warning. Later, GMC's PHE department issued a final notice

and gave him an ultimatum to pay the due water within certain days.

But even after this, when Balkishan did not pay the due water tax, a team of PHE department officials reached at his place and confiscated his buffalo.

Gwalior Municipal Corporation Commissioner Kishore Kanyal said, "When a property owner fails to pay tax on time despite receiving notices, then we start the process of Kurki (property attachment).

A final notice is issued to the defaulter and his movable or immovable property is confiscated or attached."

"We have seized a buffalo of a dairy operator as he failed to pay water tax on time. A total water tax due of Rs 1.39 lakh was pending on his name," the GMC commissioner added.

## CHIEF MINISTER CHOUHAN PLANTED SAPLINGS OF PEEPAL, GUAVA AND JAMUN

Bhopal:

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan planted saplings of peepal, guava and jamun in the garden located at Shyamala



Hills. The organizer of Swarna Kranti Malvi Kalyan Samiti, Bhopal, P.L. Soni, besides Pramod Soni, Lachhiram Soni, Rajesh Soni, Babulal Soni, Anil Soni, Surendra Soni, Lakan Lal Soni, Swati Soni, Neha Soni and Varnika Soni participated in the plantation.

Along with Chief Minister Chouhan, Sanatan Dagdi, Vimal, Deepak, Imran Khan and Umesh Yadav of television channel Khabar Madhya Pradesh also planted saplings. Abhay Sharma and Jitendra Sharma of television channel News State MP-CG planted saplings on completion of 5 years of the channel. Corporator of Ward 65 of Bhopal Municipal Corporation Smt. Shiromani Sharma planted saplings on the birthday of husband Vinod Sharma. Rukmani Bhargava, Aditi Sharma, Kavya Bhargava, Nitya Sharma and Anika Bhargava accompanied her.

## In absence of stretcher at a hospital, woman drags his injured father-in-law using bed-sheet

Team Absolute | Gwalior

A video has gone viral on social media, in which a woman can be seen pulling his injured father-in-law using a bed-sheet in absence of a stretcher at GRMC group's Jaya Arogya Hospital in Gwalior.

The patient had a fractured leg and had come to the hospital for treatment. However, the incident has put a question mark on the health services provided by the Gwalior-based hospital. The matter has reached the Dean of Gajra Raja Medical College (GRMC), Dr. Akshay Nigam, who has promised to take strict action against those found guilty of negligence.

According to Dr Nigam, the hospital has separate departments for different medical conditions. He said that around 60 to 70 stretchers are kept in the new hospital.



Additionally, 10 stretchers have been placed at the gate, and a help center has been set up for the convenience of patients. However, he said he would look into the matter and make sure such an incident is never repeated.

While people have appreciated the daughter-in-law's resourcefulness in using a bed sheet as a makeshift stretcher, the incident has exposed the hospital's claims of providing adequate health facilities to patients.

## BHOPAL: WHY IS JP NADDA'S MP VISIT CRUCIAL?

Bhopal: BJP national president JP Nadda will visit Bhopal on Sunday. The party is all ready to welcome its boss, with Nadda's banners and hoarding standing tall on city's main spots.

This is the second time in two months when a top BJP leader is visiting Madhya Pradesh. On February 24, Home Minister Amit Shah visited Satna.

Now, the question is: Is this just a simple visit or there is more behind it?

Lawyer and politician Nadda took charge of the party's reins in January 2020 and needless to mention, since then the BJP has won several state elections.

It is worth noting, that BJP toppled the Congress government with the help of Jyotiraditya Scindia in March 2020—just two months after Nadda joined as BJP's national president.

As state is due for assembly elections later this year, Nadda can be seen playing an important role in chalking out the strategy for to ace the upcoming polls.

During his Bhopal visit, he will be addressing the Booth Presidents' Convention at Lal Parade ground. BJP's state president VD Sharma and Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan will also be present on the occasion.

Notably, BJP recently concluded its 10-day Booth Vistarak Abhiyan 2.0, which aimed to increase party's reach at rural and sub-urban level. Perhaps, the top BJP bosses will expect a report on the areas these booth presidents covered and number of people they were able to reach. So, they can start the designing the party's blueprint for the upcoming MP elections.

## Class 5 and 8 students forced to write exams sitting on ground under open sky in Unhel



Team Absolute | Unhel

Fresh from the recent high school board exam paper leak incident, massive mismanagement was reported at the Government Girls Higher Secondary School in Unhel village of Ujjain district, where examinees were forced to give exams while sitting on the ground under the open sky.

At the Government Girls

Higher Secondary School, an exam centre in Unhel, students and parents were even unable to find their roll numbers on the notice board at the main entrance or in the classrooms.

Students and parents claimed that they arrived at the exam centre well before the scheduled time, but they were unable to see their wards' roll number details at the main entrance, causing them to lose valuable

time. Finally, many of the students who did not find their roll numbers are permitted to sit on the ground or in the corridor. If that wasn't enough, students received their question papers at around 9.30 a.m after a delay of half an hour.

Many of the parents attempted to contact the exam centre head, but they shrugged it off by saying that they did not have

enough seating arrangements to entertain such a large number of examinees at their centre.

School sources claimed that the school has a capacity of around 300 children, but on the contrary, about 600 children were allotted the exam centre at the same school, leaving school teachers with no choice but to allow examinees to sit on the ground or in the corridor to write their exam.

## CM Chouhan paid tributes to Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi on his death anniversary



Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan paid tributes to freedom fighter and doyen of Indian journalism, respected Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi on his death anniversary. Chief Minister Chouhan offered garlands on his portrait in the auditorium located at the residence office and paid obeisance.

Reverend Ganesh Shankar 'Vidyarthi' was born on 26 October 1890 in Allahabad. He was a fearless-fair journalist, social worker and freedom fighter. His name is immortal in the history of the freedom movement.

Vidyarthi ji gave sleepless

nights to the British rule in India with the power of his writing. With his pen and speech, he supported and seconded non-violent ideas and revolutionaries alike. In his short life, he raised his voice against the inhuman system. He joined revolutionary newspapers like 'Karmayogi' and 'Swarajya' and also wrote his articles in them. He was the editor of 'Pratap'. He had to suffer a lot due to his revolutionary journalism.

The government filed many cases against him, imposed heavy fines and arrested him several times and sent him to jail. He died on 25 March 1931 in Kanpur.



# CAG FROWNS AT BMC IN SPECIAL AUDIT OF EXPENSES DURING MVA RULE

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The Accountant General (Audit) Maharashtra has rebuked the country's biggest and richest civic body, BrihanMumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC), for certain lapses and irregularities in a Special Audit of 76 identified works worth Rs 12,000 crore.

The audit, covering nine key BMC departments, was performed for works carried out between November 28, 2019 - the day when Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) came to power in the state and Uddhav Thackeray took oath as the Chief Minister - and October 31, 2022.

Ordered on October 31, 2022 by the new government headed by Chief Minister Eknath Shinde, the audit also included the expenditure on 13 Jumbo Covid Centres, 24 ward offices, five major hospitals, six specialised hospitals, 17 peripheral hospitals, one dental hospital and others.

However, the BMC had sent a legal notice to the CAG on November 17, 2022, not to go ahead with any audit of acts, works or decisions taken for Covid management or expenditure of Rs 3,538.73 crore, referring to the



Epidemic Act, 1897 and Disaster Management Act, 2005.

The state government, in November 2022, rubbished the BMC's contentions, and despite many reminders, the Mumbai civic body did not produce records related to Covid-19 management.

Accordingly, the Special Audit has omitted the Covid-19 management part on grounds that without the relevant records, no confirmation can

be made in audit on the propriety, efficiency, economy and effectiveness of Covid 19 related expenditure by BMC.

"Needless to mention that non-cooperation of BMC in producing the Covid-19 management records for the purpose of Special Audit, apart from impinging on the Constitutional Aresponsibilities devolved on the Comptroller and Auditor General of India, also deprived BMC of crucial

audit inputs. As per the powers and functions entrusted under Constitution and DPC Act and in keeping with legal replies filed as mentioned above, further appropriate steps, are reserved," said the Audit Report.

Established in 1873, the BMC administers an area of 480 sq km through three divisions, seven zones and 24 Wards, that makes up the country's commercial capital.

# Legendary singer Asha Bhosle conferred 'Maharashtra Bhushan-2021'

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Legendary singer Asha Bhosle - of the pre-eminent Mangeshkar clan - was conferred the coveted 'Maharashtra Bhushan - 2021' Award at a swank function near the Gateway of India, on Friday evening.

Chief Minister Eknath Shinde, Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis and other dignitaries, including Bharat Ratna Sachin Tendulkar, were present and hailed the 89-year-old Asha Bhosle's singing career which has completed 80 years.

"Asha-tai is the 'pride of Maharashtra'... The Mangeshkar family has been ruling the minds of the fans for over eight decades and served the field of arts through their singing and music," said Shinde.

The Award, instituted by the erstwhile Shiv Sena-Bharatiya Janata Party regime (1995-1999), carried a cash component of Rs 25-lakh, a shawl, a memento, and certificate. The event saw a documentary on the life and times of Bhosle screened which left the audiences enthralled.

Shinde said that in her long music career, Bhosle had sung thousands of songs in various languages with ease, ranging from devotional to disco. "The songs sung by her remain fresh even today and would continue to regale us in future too... the glory of 'Maharashtra Bhushan' has increased, thanks to her," said Shinde.

He said that though she faced many travails in her life, she made others happy with her songs and inspired us all. Fadnavis termed Bhosle's 80-year-long musical journey (she



started singing from 1943) as 'stunning', her versatility, ability to create different moods through her songs which left people humming the tunes long after.

Replying to accolades, Bhosle said that her father, the late Master Dinanath Mangeshkar, her mother and the late Lata Mangeshkar (also conferred the same award in 1997) were among those whose blessings she got during her entire musical career.

"Singing has enriched my life immensely but the contributions of the musicians and co-singers in my musical journey cannot be forgotten... I urge you to listen to all types of music and songs," said Bhosle with folded hands.

Other prominent persons present included Maharashtra Assembly Speaker Rahul Narwekar, Cultural Affairs Minister Sudhir Mungantiwar, Mumbai Guardian Minister Deepak Kesarkar, Chief Secretary M.K. Srivastava, Cultural Affairs Principal Secretary Vikas Kharge and invitees.

# Threat calls to Nitin Gadkari: Maha cops inspect K'taka prison

Belagav | Agencies

The Maharashtra police have conducted raids at the Hindalga prison in this district of Karnataka in connection with threat calls to Union Minister for Highways Nitin Gadkari, police sources said on Saturday.

According to police, the raid was conducted on Thursday evening. The calls were made from Hindalga prison to the office of Gadkari in Nagpur city on March 21. The office has received three calls of threatening and extortion, the sources said.

The caller has been identified as Jayesh Poojari, an inmate of Hindalga prison. He had demanded Rs 10 crore extortion money from the minister. Gadkari will have to bear the conse-



quences if he fails to pay up, the miscreant added. The calls were made to Gadkari's office in the month of January also.

The team from Maharashtra has seized the mobile possessed by Jayesh Poojari illegally in the prison. Security has been tightened at the office and residence of Gadkari at Nagpur. According to police

sources, two sim cards and as many mobiles were found in the prison. Nagpur police will shortly take Jayesh Poojari into custody for investigation. The accused Jayesh Poojari is convicted of life imprisonment. He was initially awarded a death sentence in connection with dacoity and murder case. Later, the punishment was reduced to life imprisonment.

# Aditya V. Birla's legacy 'Sangit Kala Kendra' celebrates 50 years of patronising fine arts

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The Sangit Kala Kendra (SKK), founded by the late industrialist Aditya Vikram Birla, celebrated 50 years of patronising and promoting the fine arts with a glittering event in which leading names from Bollywood, business and other celebs participated, the organisers said here on Saturday.

The organisation hosts the annual prestigious 'Aditya Birla Kalashikhar Award' and the 'Aditya Birla Kalakiran Award' in memory of its founder, said SKK president Rajashree A. Birla.

To mark the occasion, a grand function was held late on Friday in which eminent personalities like actresses Hema Malini, Shabana Azmi, playback singers Kavita Krishnamurthy, Nitin Mukesh and ghazal singer Pankaj Udhwas were specially honoured along with many others.



Bollywood actor Anupam Kher narrated the SKK's long journey through 'Kaleidoscope' - an audiovisual presentation - at the NSCI Complex that thrilled the audience and gave insights into the life of its founder. Going down memory lane on her late husband, Rajashree Birla said that right from the start, besides business, Aditya V. Birla - who succumbed

to cancer in 1995 - was attracted towards the performing arts.

"It became a part of his mental make-up, of his richly-textured life, he essayed a variety of characters... He had a fascination for the stage as it was full of joie de vivre... where he played as actor, performer and singer," said Rajashree. Since Aditya V. Birla could feel it

running through his veins, he started dreaming of setting up an institution that would showcase talent of various hues among different genres which ultimately led to the birth of the SKK 50 years ago, she said.

The momentous occasion had Maharashtra Additional Director-General of Police Vishwas Nangare-Patil, actor Ranbir Kapoor interacting with Neerja Birla, a performance by Sonu Nigam in the presence of Birla Group Chairman Kumar Mangalam Birla, Aryaman Birla and entire Birla clan. Rajashree Birla recalled with pride how many a new or little-known or budding performer jumped started his/her life as an artist-actor through the SKK, 57 youngsters were conferred the SKKs awards over the years, and some of the biggest legends from the world of arts and music including the late Lata Mangeshkar were involved closely with the organisation.

# Rahul Gandhi's disqualification against basic tenets of constitution: Sharad Pawar

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi's disqualification as a Lok Sabha member was against the basic tenets of the Constitution and was a "condemnable" move that highlighted the curtailment of democratic values, Nationalist Congress Party chief Sharad Pawar said.



Team Absolute | Mumbai

Rahul Gandhi, representing Wayanad parliamentary constituency in Kerala, was on Friday disqualified from the Lok Sabha, a day after his conviction in a defamation case by a court in Surat in Gujarat.

The court sentenced Rahul Gandhi to two years in jail in a criminal defamation case over his "Modi surname" remarks at a 2019 poll rally in Karnataka. However, the court also granted him bail and suspended

the sentence for 30 days to allow him to appeal in a higher court.

Commenting on the development on Friday, the NCP chief also referred to the disqualification of his party MP from Lakshadweep Mohammed Faizal PP following the latter's conviction in an attempt to murder case. Faizal's conviction was later suspended by the Kerala High Court.

"The disqualification of Rahul Gandhi and Faizal a few months ago as MPs of the Lok Sabha are against the basic tenets of the constitution,

where democratic values are being curtailed. This is condemnable and against the very principles on which the constitution is based," Pawar tweeted.

"Our constitution guarantees the right of each individual to fair justice; liberty of thought; equality of status and opportunity and fraternity assuring the dignity of each Indian. #RahulGandhi," the former Union minister said in a series of tweets.

We all need to stand together to defend our democratic institutions, he added.

# Rahul Gandhi must be punished for insulting Savarkar: CM

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Maharashtra Chief Minister Eknath Shinde on Saturday claimed Congress leader Rahul Gandhi has insulted Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the OBC community and Hindutva ideologue V D Savarkar and should be "punished".

Replying to a debate on the Opposition sponsored "Last Week" resolution in the Legislative Assembly, the chief minister said the law under which Rahul Gandhi has been disqualified as an MP was enacted by the Congress-led UPA government and the Modi government has implemented it.

"Rahul Gandhi has been convicted and stands automatically disqualified as a member of Lok Sabha. But he continues to insult V D



Savarkar by saying that he is not Savarkar to apologise.

Who does he think he is? He must be punished," Shinde said. Rahul Gandhi was disqualified as a Lok Sabha MP after a Surat court on Thursday sentenced him to two years in jail for criminal defamation over his 2019 "Modi surname" remark. The sentence is suspended for 30 days to allow Rahul to appeal in a higher court.

Shinde said Rahul Gandhi had insulted the OBC (Other Backward Classes) commu-

nity by targeting the prime minister.

"Savarkar is a patriot. Why insult a patriotic person? Maharashtra will not tolerate the insult of PM Modi and Savarkar. People will not let him (Rahul Gandhi) move on the streets of Maharashtra," he said.

Addressing a press conference in Delhi over his disqualification, Rahul Gandhi said that "My name is not Savarkar, my name is Gandhi and Gandhi does not offer an apology to anyone".

# FOUR BOOKED FOR ASSAULTING NAVI MUMBAI CIVIC STAFF DURING BANNER REMOVAL DRIVE

Mumbai: Police have registered a case against four persons for allegedly attacking the security staff of the Navi Mumbai Municipal Corporation (NMMC) after the latter pulled down a banner put up illegally in Airoli area, an official said on Saturday.

The incident occurred on March 23 afternoon, he said. "The victim, a 40-year security guard, along with some other staff of the NMMC was on the job of removing banners put up on the occasion of Gudhi Padwa celebrated on March 22. At that time, a group of four persons came to the spot and started abusing and beating them up for pulling down their banner," the official of Rabale police station said. A case under Indian Penal Code (IPC) sections 353 (assault), 332 (voluntarily causing hurt), 143 (unlawful assembly), 147 (rioting), 504 (intentional insult to provoke breach of peace) was registered against the accused, but nobody has been arrested so far, the police said.

# Central railway to operate mega block on suburban sections on Sunday

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The Central Railway Friday said that it will operate a mega block on its suburban sections for carrying out necessary maintenance work on March 26, Sunday.

Thane-Kalyan Up and Dn fast lines from 10.40 am to 3.40 pm

In a press release, the central railway said that down fast services leaving Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Terminus Mumbai from 9.30 am to 2.45 pm will be diverted on down slow line between Thane and Kalyan stations halting at Kalva, Mumbra and Diva stations in addition to their scheduled halts and will arrive destination ten minutes behind schedule.

Up fast, semi-fast services leaving



Kalyan from 10.28 am to 3.25 pm will be diverted on up slow line between Kalyan and Thane stations halting at Diva, Mumbra and Kalva

stations in addition to their scheduled halts, further re-diverted on up fast line at Mulund and will arrive at the destination ten minutes late.

Kurla-Vashi up and Dn harbour lines from 11.10 am to 4.10 pm

Down harbour line services to Panvel, Belapur, Vashi leaving Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Terminus Mumbai from 10.34 am to 3.36 pm and up harbour line services towards Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Terminus Mumbai leaving Vashi, Belapur, Panvel from 10.16 am to 3.47 pm will remain cancelled. However, Special services will run between Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Terminus-Kurla and Vashi - Panvel stations during the block period.

"Harbour line passengers are permitted to travel via Transharbour line (Thane-Vashi/Nerul) from 10.00 am to 6.00 pm during the block period," the press release said.

# SEVEN BUSES GUTTED AS HIGH-TENSION WIRE FALLS ON GARAGE IN LATUR

Latur: Seven private buses worth nearly Rs 2 crore were gutted after a high-voltage electricity wire snapped and fell on a garage in Maharashtra's Latur, an official said on Saturday.

No one was injured in the incident that occurred at Sikandarpur chowk in the early hours of Friday, the official said. The vehicles had been sent to the garage for repairs and painting. A fire erupted after the live high-tension line broke and fell on the garage. It engulfed the buses, valued at nearly Rs 2 crore, in no time, the official said.

Firefighters later brought the blaze under control.

State-run power distributor Maharashtra State Electricity Distribution Company Limited (MSEDCL) is probing to ascertain what caused the wire to break, while police have registered a case, the official added.



# SELENA & ZAYN WERE SEEN KISSING DURING DINNER DATE

New York | Agencies

Singers Zayn Malik and Selena Gomez are sparking rumours of a relationship after the two were spotted out to dinner together here. An eyewitness said: "Selena and Zayn went out in SoHo in New York City last night at around 10:30 p.m. They walked in holding hands and were kissing."

"Most restaurant staff and restaurant goers didn't notice them. It seemed like they were comfortable together and it was clear that it was a date," reports etonline.com.

Speculation about the two began when TikTok user klarissa.mpeg shared a text exchange with a friend of hers who claimed she was the pair's hostess at an unnamed restaurant in the city.

The TikTok user explained that she and her friend work at hot spots frequented by



celebs, before sharing a screenshot of their conversation in which the friend wrote: "Tell me how Selena Gomez and Zayn just walked into (restaurant) hand in hand making out and I seated them."

Gomez's romantic life has making headlines lately, after reports and rumours began to surface earlier this year that she and 'The Chainsmokers' Drew Taggart were dating.

"The Only Murders in the Building" star and 'Paris' singer were first spotted bowling together in New York City, where an eyewitness told Page Six that the two were "making out" during their time on the lanes, while Gomez also took time to snap photos and sign autographs with some fans.

A source told ET the following day that the 30-year-old singer-actress and 33-year-old 'Closer' artist "are dating and things are still new."

The source also said the two "met through mutual friends in a friendly, low-key way, but had an instant connection and liked each other as people."

Shortly after, Gomez seemingly shot down those speculations with a message she posted to her Instagram Story, saying, "I like being alone too much," adding, "famsingle."

Days after, she deleted that post, Taggart and Gomez were seen together again as they strolled hand in hand.

Meanwhile, Malik, who welcomed a daughter, Khai, with ex-girlfriend Gigi Hadid in 2020, has mainly kept out of the spotlight as he works on various projects, including speaking out on behalf of causes he's passionate about.



## 'I DO IT FOR MY OWN DISCIPLINE & DIGNITY'

Amanda Holden insists she's 'not a slave' to her fitness regime because she 'loves food too much'

Los Angeles | Agencies

Amanda Holden said she's 'not a slave' to her fitness regime as she revealed her beauty secrets and intentions to 'flaunt it' in a new interview on Saturday. The Britain's Got Talent judge admitted she 'loves food too much' and ensures she sticks to her routine for her 'own discipline and dignity.' Known for her incredible figure, she has caused plenty of controversy and has even drawn Ofcom complaints for her revealing television outfits in the past. But Amanda insists that she will never 'fade into the background' like her grandmother's generation, instead 'flaunting it' for as long as she can.

Speaking to The Times about how a 'school-gate mum' achieves and maintains her good looks, the TV personality shared the details. Amanda discussed her extensive fitness regime, revealing that she runs three to four miles a week in addition to Kundalini yoga practice and a 'Viking workout regime.' Despite her somewhat intense sounding exercise plan, she reiterates that she doesn't do it because she 'feels like she has to,' and explained the importance of balance. 'I am not a slave to any beauty or fitness regime because I love food too much. I eat cheese and butter and I love a drink. But the deal I struck with myself was I have to run for my rosé wine in the summer and run for my red wine in winter. And I don't do it because I feel I have to; I do it for my own discipline and dignity,' she told the publication. Amanda joked that it's 'all downhill from your 20s' but added that, like Cher, you can 'turn back time' with proper nutrition and exercise. 'I'm from a generation of women who won't [fade into the background] - we'll flaunt our bits for as long as we can. I am certainly going to - even when they're drooping down to the floor, I'll scoop them up again,' she laughed.

## ELLIE GOULDING RELEASES NEW SINGLE 'BY THE END OF THE NIGHT'

Los Angeles | Agencies

British pop superstar Ellie Goulding released her new single 'By the End of the Night' on Friday. The track follows the recent release of trance banger 'Miracle' with Calvin Harris - which entered the UK Official Chart at No. 3.

Speaking of the track, Ellie said: "I feel like we've all been through so much over the last few years, we're still processing everything. I don't know if it's just me but I feel like we need music that uplifts us and makes us feel good and that's exactly how I feel about 'By The End Of The Night!'"

She further mentioned: "It gives me a sense of euphoric, sensual escape, like being on a dance floor on another planet, something that was definitely appealing back in the late 80s where this track could have easily come from!"

Ellie's hotly anticipated fifth studio album 'Higher Than Heaven' is due for release this April 7.



Speaking about the new album Ellie explained: "There was definitely a darkness about (the past two years) that was palpable in the studio, with everyone having gone through it differently. I think for that reason, nobody wanted to sit and agonise over some relationship or some drama."

"So that's how this album came together. ('Higher Than Heaven') is about being passionately in love. But it's a hyper form of love, almost like a drug induced feeling. It feels almost artificial and there's the potential for a crash," she concluded.



## REESE WITHERSPOON SEPARATES FROM HER MARRIAGE OF TEN YEARS

Los Angeles | Agencies

Hollywood actress Reese Witherspoon has announced she is divorcing her husband, Jim Toth just two days before their 12th wedding anniversary. The former couple tied the knot on March 26, 2011 in a stunning ceremony in Ojai, California, reports 'Mirror.co.uk'. Reese and Jim were first linked in February 2010 and it's believed they met at work as Jim worked as a talent agent and co-head of motion picture talent at Creative Artists Agency, where Reese was a client. In an emotional statement in view of her 29.2 million Instagram followers, Reese penned: "We have some personal news to share. It is with a great deal of care and consideration that we have made the difficult decision to divorce. We have enjoyed so many wonderful years together and are moving forward with deep love, kindness, and mutual respect for everything we have created together." She further mentioned, quoted by 'Mirror.co.uk', "Our biggest priority is our son and our entire family as we navigate this next chapter. These matters are never easy and are extremely personal. We truly appreciate everyone's respect for our family's privacy at this time."



## JAY-Z NET WORTH SOARS TO \$2.5 BILLION

Los Angeles | Agencies

Hip-hop mogul Jay-Z has seen his net worth soaring to a new height. He boasts a fortune of \$2.5 billion. According to a Forbes report on Friday (March 24), Jay-Z is now the 1,203rd wealthiest person on the planet. French business magnate Bernard Arnault, CEO of LVMH Moët Hennessy Louis Vuitton, currently sits at No. 1 on that list with a reported valuation of \$216.1 billion, reports 'aceshowbiz.com'.

The report notes that the Grammy Award-winning artist's fortune reaches far beyond music. "Even in a year without a tour or album release, Jay-Z mints millions from his Armand de Brignac champagne and D'Usse cognac," it says.

"The Brooklyn-born rapper was crowned hip-hop's first billionaire by Forbes in 2019, thanks to a sprawling and diversified empire," the report adds, noting his assets range from his Roc Nation entertainment and sports empire to "a fine-art collection including works by Jean-Michel Basquiat."

With his reported current net worth, Jay-Z, also known as Jigga, has extended his lead as the richest hip-hop mogul. Last year, he topped Forbes' list with a reported \$1.5 billion net worth.

Sean "P. Diddy" Combs, who finally joined the billionaire boys club last October thanks to the continued success of his Ciroc partnership with Diageo, DeLeon Tequila and REVOLT network, currently sits at No. 2 on the hip-hop rank after dethroning Kanye West. For the record, Ye (Kanye West) is no longer a billionaire after Adidas cut ties with him amid his anti-Semitic scandal. In October 2022, it's reported that his \$1.5 billion net worth had been brought down to \$400 million after losing the deal with the world-renowned athletic wear company. The report of Jay-Z's current net worth comes after he sold his 50 per cent stake of his D'Usse cognac back to its parent company Bacardi for a reported \$750 million in February after an intense court battle.

He still retains a significant ownership in the brand.

## ABSOLUTE PIC OF THE DAY



Demi Rose



### Women's World Boxing C'ships

## NITU GHANGHAS CREATES HISTORY, CLINCHES GOLD

Team Absolute | New Delhi

India's Nitu Ghanghas (48kg) clinched the Women's World Boxing Championship gold after beating Lutsaikhana Altansetseg of Mongolia 5-0 in the finals at the jam-packed IG Stadium, here on Saturday.

The two boxers started proceeding on attacking note. However, it was the

Indian, who landed her punches well on the Mongolian's face resulting in Nitu winning the first round 5-0. The second round was close enough but Nitu managed to keep the lead 3-2. In the third round, the Indian gave her all and bagged the championship gold with some smart display of boxing.

Throughout the tournament, Nitu played some remarkable games.

## India could play 3 ODIs in June, 2 extra T20Is on West Indies tour: Report

Team Absolute | New Delhi

India could be playing three ODIs in June against an opposition yet to be decided, and also are in line to play two extra T20Is on their tour of the West Indies in July-August.

As per a report in Cricbuzz, the BCCI is contemplating having another short home series in June, in the ODI format, which could be held in the window between India playing against Australia in the World Test Championship (WTC) final from June 7-11 and departing for the West Indies in first week of July.

"Although nothing has been firm as yet, options are being explored to see if a three-match ODI series against Sri Lanka or Afghanistan in the second half of June, more precisely after the World Test Championship (WTC) final, is possible," it said.

The report also mentioned that the



BCCI's discussions with various boards have taken place on this some time back but the outcome is still not known.

Regarding the tour of the West Indies, with the possible addition of two extra T20Is, the tour will feature ten games -- starting with two Tests, three ODIs and five T20Is, instead of three matches in the shortest format of the game.

The report added that the additional games were finalised bilaterally on the sidelines of the recent ICC meetings in Dubai.

After the tour of the West Indies, India will travel to Ireland to play three T20Is in the third week of August.

India will then feature in the 50-over Asia Cup in September, followed by three-match ODI series against Australia at home, right before the ODI World Cup in October-November.

## Messi 'grateful' to Argentine fans after homecoming celebration

Buenos Aires | Agencies

Lionel Messi has sent a heartfelt message to fans after Argentina's 2-0 victory over Panama in the Albiceleste's first match since winning the World Cup in December.

Thursday's friendly was played in a festive spirit as more than 80,000 people crammed into the Monumental Stadium in Buenos Aires to see their World Cup heroes.

"Many times I imagined what it could be like to return to my country as a world champion but now I have no words to explain what I feel, how grateful I am to all the people for their love," Messi said in a social media post on Friday.

Messi netted his 800th career goal and Argentina's



second for the match with a superb late free-kick. The strike means he has now scored 99 times for Argentina, in addition to his 701 goals at the club level.

In an emotion-charged ceremony after the match, Argentina's players lifted replica World Cup trophies as they were surrounded by their families.

"These are very, very

special days and I can only tell you that I am immensely happy to see all the Argentine people enjoying and celebrating what was another success for everyone. Thank you," Messi added in his social media post. The Albiceleste will now turn their attention to Tuesday's friendly against Curacao in Santiago del Estero.

## WPL 2023 Every player has done something to get us into a match-winning position: Alice Capsey

Mumbai | Ahead of the inaugural Women's Premier League (WPL) final against Mumbai Indians at the Brabourne Stadium on Sunday, Delhi Capitals all-rounder Alice Capsey feels the side has made it to the title clash on the back of every player contributing their bit to take the team into a match-winning position.

"I've been very fortunate to be a part of some pretty outstanding teams. The two teams I've been a part of have had lots of different characters, lots of different match-winners, who have all stood up at different times. That's what makes a great team."

You could list every single player. They've all done something throughout this competition to get us into a match-winning position. You can't just rely on one or two players. And that's definitely the case here at Delhi. It's brilliant to be part of those teams. The experience and wealth of knowledge in the changing room is amazing," Capsey said.

Alice signed off by hoping Delhi would get the win on their side on the final day. "It's two very different roads to the final. But it's about peaking at the right time. Hopefully we've done that. We've got one more game and hopefully we win it. That would be great," she concluded.



## IPL 2023 Injured Bairstow ruled out, PBKS name Matthew Short as replacement

Team Absolute | New Delhi

the best and look forward to

In a major blow for Punjab Kings (PBKS), England wicketkeeper-batter Jonny Bairstow has been ruled out of the upcoming IPL 2023 after



falling to recover from his injury, the franchise confirmed on Saturday.

The Punjab based franchise has named uncapped Australian batter Matthew Short as Bairstow's replacement for the 2023 season. It will be Short's maiden IPL experience. "We regret to inform you that Jonny Bairstow will not be a part of the IPL this season because of his injury. We wish him

seeing him next season," the PBKS said in a tweet. "We are pleased to welcome Matthew Short as his replacement," it added.

Recognised as one of the all-format batters, Bairstow's absence will have a massive impact on Kings' strategy. Last IPL, Bairstow scored 253 runs in 11 innings, averaging 23.00 with a strike rate of 144.57, with two half-centuries.

## SL vs NZ 1st ODI SRI LANKA'S WORLD CUP CHANCES SUFFER HUGE BLOW AFTER HEAVY DEFEAT

Auckland | Agencies

Right-hand medium pacer Henry Shipley claimed a five-wicket haul as New Zealand beat Sri Lanka by 198 runs to go 1-0 up in the three-match ODI series. This is the biggest win by Black Caps over Sri Lanka (in terms of runs) in men's ODIs.

Shipley's brilliant effort of 5-31 and two wickets apiece claimed by Daryl Mitchell (2-12) and Blair Tuckner (2-20) helped New Zealand bowl out Sri Lanka for 76 in 19.5 overs after posting 274 in 49.3 overs on being asked to bat first. With this win, New Zealand has topped the ICC Men's Cricket World Cup Super League standings. They have 160 points from 22 games. If they manage a 3-0 sweep in the series, they will overtake Australia, to go No. 1 in the ICC Men's ODI Team Rankings.

Sri Lanka skipper Dasun Shanaka took the field after winning the toss. New Zealand got going on the back of



crucial top-order contributions from Finn Allen (51) and co. Despite losing a flurry of wickets in the middle overs, the Kiwis got to 274 with the help of some lower-order hitting from Glenn Phillips (39) and Rachin Ravindra (49).

Chamika Karunaratne was the pick of Sri Lanka bowlers with his 4-43. Sri Lanka's top order was wrecked, thanks to a destructive spell from fast bowler Shipley. They lost half their side in the first 10 overs and never recovered, eventually getting bowled out for 76. This was their heaviest loss

against New Zealand by the margin of runs (in this format) and the fifth-heaviest defeat overall.

This loss further jeopardises Sri Lanka's quest for a direct qualification. They are placed 10th in the Super League standings, with 77 points and two more games to play.

Only the top eight sides in the Super League get a direct qualification to the World Cup, which will take place later this year in India. Even if Sri Lanka wins the next two ODIs in the series, they will have to bank on other results for direct qualification.

### Brief scores

New Zealand 274 all out in 49.3 overs (Finn Allen 51, Rachin Ravindra 49, Daryl Mitchell 47, Glenn Phillips 39; Chamika Karunaratne 4-43, Kasun Rajitha 2-38, Lahiru Kumara 2-45) beat Sri Lanka 76 all out in 19.5 overs (Angelo Mathews 18; Henry Shipley 5-31, Daryl Mitchell 2-12) by 198 runs.

### ISSF World Cup 2023

## MANU BHAKER WINS BRONZE MEDAL IN 25M PISTOL

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Manu Bhaker won the bronze medal in 25m pistol on Sunday. It was India's sixth medal at the ongoing ISSF World Cup. China currently leads the medals tally.

Manu Bhaker, a 2018 Youth Olympic Games gold medalist, scored 20/30 in the medal match to finish third ahead of China's Yaxuan Xiong, who shot 12/20. World No. 2 Doreen Vennekamp of Germany claimed gold with a score of 30/40 while 15-year-old Ziyue Du of China settled for silver with 29/40.

Earlier, Manu Bhaker qualified for the ranking match after finishing third with 584 points in the qualification round. Esha Singh also made it to the ranking match after claiming the eighth spot in the qualification round. However, Esha Singh managed 11/20 in the ranking match 1 for third place and bowed out. Doreen Vennekamp and Manu Bhaker scored identical 14/20 and made it to the medal match.

Rhythm Sangwan, with 580 points, came 12th in the field of 29 competitors. Niveditha Veloor Nair (577) and



Abhidnya Ashok Patil (573) were competing for ranking points only (RPO) and claimed 17th and 21st place, respectively. In the men's 50m rifle 3 positions; Olympian Aishwary Pratap Singh Tomar missed out on a medal after finishing fourth in the ranking match. Aishwary Pratap Singh Tomar scored 102.4 in kneeling, 104.6 in prone and 198.5 in standing position for a total of 405.5

points. Earlier, Aishwary Prapat Singh Tomar topped the qualification round with 591 points. Akhil Sheoran missed out on a place in the ranking round as he finished ninth with 585 points in the qualification. Swapnil Kusale, who secured a Paris 2024 Olympics quota for India in the world championship last year, came 11th with 583 points. Niraj Kumar (575) and Sanjeev Rajput (573) were com-

peting for RPO and came 21st and 24th, respectively.

India now have a total of six medals at the Bhopal meet - one gold, one silver and four bronze. Sarabjot Singh claimed India's solitary gold in the tournament so far in the men's 10m air pistol on Wednesday.

China lead the medals tally with six gold medals, two silver and two bronze.

### Euro 2024 Qualifiers

## France thrash Netherlands, Belgium too win their opening match

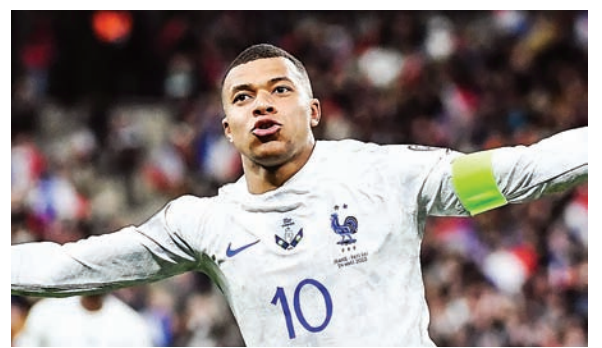
London | Agencies

World Cup runners-up France swept the Netherlands 4-0 in their opening group match at the Euro 2024 Qualifiers while Belgium outplayed Sweden 3-0 with Romelu Lukaku's hat-trick.

The Netherlands' suffering was even ahead of the match as five of their players were sent home on the eve of the game for catching the flu virus.

With Kylian Mbappe wearing the captain's armband of the French national team for the first time, the hosts started their campaign perfectly in Paris as Antoine Griezmann curled in the opener after two minutes, reports Xinhua.

Six minutes later, French defender Dayot Upamecano



tapped in a second, followed by Mbappe's neat finish to make it 3-0 after 21 minutes. In the closing stages, Mbappe drove in to seal the 4-0 victory and climbed up to the fifth in France's all-time scoring list with his tally of 38.

In the other encounter in Group B, Gibraltar lost to Greece 3-0.

Belgium won their opener in Group F comfortably as

Inter Milan striker Lukaku found the net three times. But they have to trail behind Austria in the group standings after the Austrians beat Azerbaijan 4-1.

The Czech Republic defeated Poland 3-1 in Group E while Moldova and the Faroe Islands drew 1-1. In Group G, Bulgaria lost to Montenegro 1-0 and Serbia

saw off Lithuania 2-0.

### Miami Open

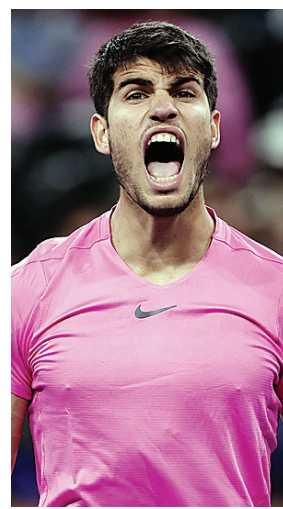
## Alcaraz cruises into third round; Sinner, Fritz win openers

Miami | Agencies

World No. 1 Carlos Alcaraz of Spain defeated Facundo Bagnis in straight games to storm into the third round at the Miami Open while Jannik Sinner of Italy and American Taylor Fritz also advanced in the ATP Tour event.

Returning as defending champion at an ATP Masters 1000 event for the first time, Alcaraz picked up where he left off at the Miami Open last year. The Spaniard raced to a 6-0, 6-2 win against Facundo Bagnis in just 65 minutes.

Although the 21-year-old Italian struggled to find his best level at times during his 84-minute triumph here, the 10th seed's sharp returns proved enough to move past the World No. 58 Djere.



Sinner converted five of 10 break points to improve his season record against opponents outside the Top 50 of the ATP Rankings to 13-0.

He now holds a 9-2 record at Hard Rock Stadium, where his third-round opponent will be 21st seed Grigor Dimitrov or qualifier Jan-Lennard Struff.

Taylor Fritz put together a big mid-match streak en route to a 6-4, 6-1 win against his countryman Emilio Nava. The ninth seed reeled off seven games in a row from 4-4 in the first set to take control of his meeting with 21-year-old Nava, who had beaten former Miami champion John Isner for just his second tour-level win in the first round.

Fritz, who reached the fourth round in Miami in 2021 and 2022, reclaimed the break in the next game and then effectively adjusted his tactics to accelerate to a 60-minute triumph.

## It's going to be a number of months before I'm 100 per cent: Maxwell

Bengaluru | Agencies

Ahead of the 2023 IPL starting from March 31, Australia all-rounder Glenn Maxwell has admitted that the leg injury he suffered last year would take at least a couple of more months so that he can be 100 per cent fit.

Maxwell had broken his left fibula at a friend's birthday party immediately after the conclusion of Australia's campaign in the Men's T20 World Cup at home in November last year. He had to undergo surgery and rehabilitation to make a competitive comeback to cricket through the ODI series against India, where he played the opening game in Mumbai. As a result of that freak injury, Maxwell missed Australia's ODI series against England and the entire season

of the Big Bash League (BBL) that followed for Melbourne Stars. He was in danger of missing the IPL but has now recovered enough to turn out for RCB in IPL 2023.

"The leg's okay. It's going to be a number of months before I'm 100 per cent. Hopefully, it's (leg) good enough to get through the tournament and still does the job," said Maxwell. "Finally getting back after a couple of years (of playing inside bio-bubbles). It's pretty exciting and I'm pretty pumped to play in front of our home fans. See you at the Chinnaswamy Stadium."

Royal Challengers Bangalore will open their IPL 2023 campaign against five-time champions Mumbai Indians at the M Chinnaswamy Stadium on April 2.



## KIARA PRAISES SIDHARTH, SAYS 'THIS MAN HAS MY WHOLE HEART'

Team Absolute | Mumbai

**B**ollywood couple Kiara Advani and Sidharth Malhotra is redefining couple goals as the actor gushed about his wife while accepting an award.

Sidharth went on stage during an award ceremony held on Saturday and while accepting the honour he dedicated his award to his wife Kiara, adding that she is "a good actor who is extremely stylish!"

A fanpage of the actor shared the speech, where he was heard saying: "This is actually my second award post my marriage... pehla wala acting ke liye tha aur dusra wala style ke liye hein, so I think my wife will be happy... she is a good actor who is extremely stylish. "This one goes to her and to all the stylists and designers everywhere who are making me look cool!"

Kiara took to her Instagram story and reacted to the gesture made by Sidharth. She shared the video and wrote: "This man has my whole heart."

Kiara and Sidharth made it official by getting married in February in Rajasthan. On the work front, Sidharth will be next seen in his debut web series, Indian Police Force and in the film 'Yodha'. Kiara will be seen in 'Satyaprem Ki Katha' alongside Kartik Aaryan.



## Anushka Sharma laughs on being called "Mrs Kohli"

Team Absolute | Mumbai

**B**ollywood actress Anushka Sharma, who was seen attending an event here, had a hilarious reaction when she was referred to as 'Mrs Kohli' by the paparazzi.

A video shared by a celebrity paparazzi shows Anushka looking stunning in a black dress. As soon as she stepped on the red carpet, the photographers started referring to her as 'Mrs Kohli' and kept screaming for her to look at the camera.

Hearing this, Anushka laughed and was heard saying: "Relax! Why are you all shouting? Wait! Mere kaan... I have not recovered from the shouting from yesterday."

The photographers said that they missed her clicking her at events; she replied 'mere kaan bajj rahe hai.'

Recently, Anushka and her cricketer husband Virat Kohli decided to merge their respective foundations - Anushka Sharma Foundation and Virat Kohli Foundation - to launch a joint non-profit initiative aimed at helping those in need.

Anushka will next be seen in 'Chakda Xpress'. The Netflix film, which is based on the life and times of one of the fastest female pacers in the history of world cricket, Jhulan, will showcase how the pacer moves up the ladder despite countless hindrances to fulfil her only dream -- to play cricket.

Jhulan went on to captain the Indian women's national cricket team and is a role model for aspiring cricketers in the country. In 2018, an Indian postage stamp was issued in her honour. Jhulan holds the world record for the highest number of wickets taken by a woman in an international career.



## Nushratt & Soha Ali Khan wrapped up the shooting of upcoming film

Team Absolute | Mumbai

**A**ctress Nushratt Bharuccha and Soha Ali Khan are over the moon as they have wrapped up shooting for their horror movie 'Chhorii 2'.

Taking to Instagram, Soha shared a video of the two jumping in happiness and then hugging each other. The video ends with pictures of the both smiling at the camera.

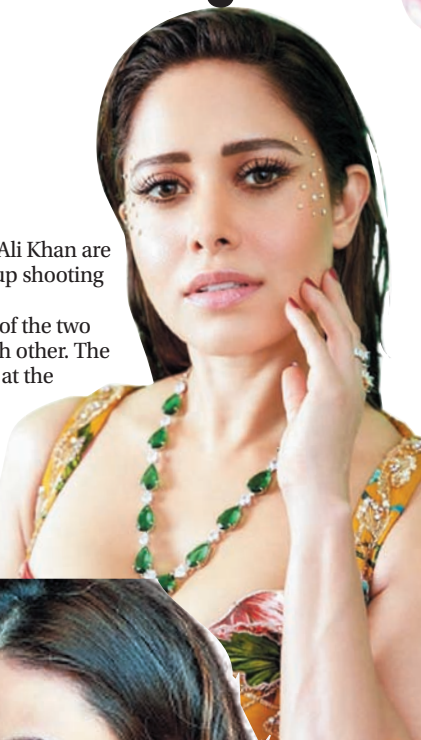
She captioned the image: "2 chhorii very happy to wrap chhorii 2."

Vishal Furia, who helmed 'Chhorii' in 2021, returns to the director's seat in the sequel.

The sequel, which is produced by T-Series, Crypt TV and Abundantia Entertainment, is set to pick up Sakshi's (Nushratt Bharuccha) story from where it left in the original and will bring back some key characters as well as introduce new characters and monsters.

Nushratt reprises her role as Sakshi from the first outing, ably supported by Pallavi Patil, Saurabh Goyal and Soha.

'Chhorii 2' is presented by Gulshan Kumar and T-Series Films. An Abundantia Entertainment and Psych production is produced by Bhushan Kumar, Krishan Kumar, Jack Davis and Vikram Malhotra and directed by Vishal Furia.



## SHRADDHA KAPOOR EXPLAINS WHY SHE IS PURSUING HER "CHILDHOOD AMBITION"

Team Absolute | New Delhi

**A**ctress Shraddha Kapoor agrees that there is a "big sense of responsibility" on her shoulders as so many hopes are riding on her when it comes to her performances. She said that it is because of the love she gets from the audiences, who she says is the reason behind living her "childhood dreams".

With so much love coming her way and hopes riding on her, does Shraddha, whose latest release is 'Tu Jhooti Main Makkaar', feel the pressure? In a conversation with media, Shraddha said: "It definitely adds a big sense of responsibility. I feel that I am here to entertain people and I want to keep doing that. I need to be a part of films that will provide that." The actress added: "So, I take that kind of responsibility and yes, it's also inspiring and

all the energy and inspiration comes from the audiences... They are the reason I have been able to live my childhood dream. It does feel like there is pressure and responsibility." Looking forward, Shraddha has the second installment of the 2018 comedy horror film 'Stree'.

INSTAGRAM PIC OF THE DAY



Mehak Ghai

## I still wish u were here: Arjun Kapoor remembers mother

Team Absolute | Mumbai

**O**n his late mother and producer Mona Shourie's 11th death anniversary, her actor-son Arjun Kapoor remembered his mother and wished she was here as he is "still this lost child".

Arjun took to Instagram, where he shared a throwback picture featuring him and his late mother.

Alongside the picture, he wrote an emotional note, which read: "I never cared what anyone said or felt cause I always had u in front of me to make me realise who & what I was... 11 years have



passed since u become the shield that protects me from beyond but I still wish u were here because in this cruel world today I try & handle all the hate but I really miss ur love which made me deal with everything with a smile on my face & made me a better person a happier person a calmer person perhaps maybe a more alive soul..."

He added: "I'm still this lost child without u Maa... I look for you everywhere cause I'm lost just like I'm this picture but I always believe ur smiling & looking after me somehow just like in this picture... We shall meet someday soon."

In March 2012, Mona passed away after battling cancer. Her popular films, as a film producer, were 'Sheesha' and 'Farishtay'.