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# PoK is ours: Amit Shah

Twenty four seats have been reserved in the Jammu and Kashmir Assembly for the Pakistan Occupied Kashmir as "PoK is ours," Union Home Minister Amit Shah said in Parliament on Wednesday.

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Tabling the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation (Amendment) Bill, 2023 in the Lok Sabha, Shah said that earlier, Jammu had 37 seats but now it has 43, while Kashmir had 46 seats, now it has 47 seats.

He said that the Delimitation Commission, set up by the Centre for the delimitation of assembly and parliamentary constituencies in Jammu and Kashmir, has reserved 24 seats for PoK. Shah said, "The Delimitation Commission went everywhere in J&K. The representatives of several communities, including Kashmiri migrants and people displaced in PoK, had submitted applications to them regarding their representation in state assembly. I am happy that the commission has taken cognizance of this and the (then) Election Commissioner of India has nominated two seats in state assembly for Kashmiri migrants and one seat for a person displaced in PoK, which has been occupied unauthorisedly by Pakistan."

"Earlier there were 37 seats in Jammu (division), now there are 43. Earlier there were 46 in Kashmir, now there are 47. And 24 seats for PoK have been reserved, Kyuki Woh Hamara Hai



(because PoK is ours)," he added.

The Union minister said that now there will be five nominated members in the J&K Assembly.

Shah was speaking in Lok Sabha during the debate on the Jammu and Kashmir Reservation (Amendment) Bill, 2023 and the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation (Amendment) Bill, 2023. Earlier two women were nominated by the Governor in state assembly. And now, two of the Kashmiri

migrants, out of whom one of must be a woman, and one person from PoK, will be nominated," he said.

During the debate, Shah also said that these bills pertain to bringing justice to those against whom injustice was done.

He said that, as per figures, around 46,631 families and 1,57,967 people were displaced in their own country. "This bill is to give them rights and representation," he added.

## 'Nehru committed 2 mistakes which made Kashmir suffer for years'

New Delhi: Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Wednesday came down heavily on India's first Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru, and alleged that he committed "two major blunders" -- declaring a ceasefire without winning the entire Kashmir and taking the issue to the United Nations, due to which the people of Jammu and Kashmir had to suffer for years.

Shah said: "Two mistakes that happened due to the decision of (former PM) Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru due to which Kashmir had to suffer for many years."

"The first is to declare a ceasefire - when our army was winning, the ceasefire was imposed. If there had been a ceasefire after three days, PoK would have been a part of India today... The second is to take our internal issue to the UN," the minister said.



## Amid murmurs of new CM face in MP, Chouhan's 'power show' on

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Even as political circles in Madhya Pradesh are abuzz with murmurs that the BJP's central leadership is likely to bring in a new Chief Minister, Shivraj Singh Chouhan in continuing his show of strength as he and his supporters are crediting his flagship scheme 'Ladli Behna Yojana' for the party's landslide win. Four-time CM Chouhan, who had not been projected as Chief Ministerial candidate throughout the election campaign, apparently has emerged more stronger with the BJP's victory. Chouhan, who had been conferred the sobriquet "mama" (maternal uncle) with his women-centric flagship schemes in his previous tenures, established himself as "bhैया" (brother) with his cash scheme for women - 'Ladli Behna Yojana'. Although, after winning the election, Chouhan said he is not in the race for the CM's post, political observers who have been watching his politics for the last three decades, claimed he is very much in the reckoning. Despite not being named as CM candidate

during the poll campaign, Chouhan himself sought support from the people by asking whether he should become Chief Minister again or not. After the BJP won 163 out of 230 Assembly seats, Chouhan attended several events to celebrate the victory organised by his supporters and 'Ladli Behna Yojana' was credited for the election results.

On Wednesday, Chouhan visited Chhindwara, the bastion of former Chief Minister and Madhya Pradesh Congress president Kamal Nath, where the BJP lost all seven seats to Congress. Before his visit, he had said he will be visiting Chhindwara to ensure that the BJP wins all 29 Lok Sabha seats in the state in next year's Lok Sabha election.

Political observers believe that through his power show after winning the election, Chouhan is making all efforts to send a message to the BJP central leadership. "The BJP central leadership is known for tough decisions, but it won't be easy to replace Shivraj Singh Chouhan in Madhya Pradesh," said a senior political analyst based in Bhopal.

## \$175 MILLION ADB LOAN FOR UPGRADING MADHYA PRADESH HIGHWAYS OKAYED

Team Absolute | New Delhi

India and the Asian Development Bank (ADB) have signed a \$175 million loan to upgrade 500 kilometres of state highways and major district roads in Madhya Pradesh to a standard two-lane feature.

These roads will incorporate climate- and disaster-resilient design, innovative road safety elements, and facilities that will respond to the needs of the elderly, women, children, and people with disabilities, the Finance Ministry said on Wednesday.

The signatories to the loan agreement were Juhvi Mukherjee, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Finance, on behalf of India and Takeo Konishi, Country Director of ADB's India Resident Mission, for ADB. After signing the loan agreement, Mukherjee stated that this project will enhance connectivity in the state road



network across 14 districts to enable balanced economic development in Madhya Pradesh.

"Since 2002, the ADB has supported road development in Madhya Pradesh upgrading more than 9,000 kilometres of state highways and major district roads. This project continues these efforts and will connect rural areas to growth centres and industrial corridors and establish roads that are better, safer, and more climate-

resilient," Konishi said.

The ADB will build the capacity of the Madhya Pradesh Road Development Corporation Ltd (MPRDC) on climate change adaptation and mitigation, disaster resilience, and road safety in road network planning and management. The project will help prepare strategies and plans to utilise green technology in road construction and establish charging infrastructure for electric vehicles.

## Maharashtra cops nab Maoist with a Rs 2-L booty from Chhattisgarh

GADCHIROLI (MAHARASHTRA) | Agencies

In a major catch, the Maharashtra Police have nabbed a dreaded Maoist carrying a Rs 200,000-award on his scalp from the forests near Bijapur in Chhattisgarh, officials said here on Wednesday.

The arrest followed a tip-off that a hardcore Maoist, Mahendra K. Veladi, 32, was moving around suspiciously near the Indravati River and appeared on a reconnaissance mission to carry out some terror strikes, said Gadchiroli Superintendent of Police, Neelotpal.

On getting the alert, the Gadchiroli Police immediately launched the Anti-Naxal Operation squad with C60 commandos, the CRPF and local police and they successfully trapped and caught Veladi.

During interrogation, he admitted that he was keeping a watch on police outposts in Damranch and Mennerjam and planned to pass on the intel to the Aheri Maoist units for targeting them in future operations.

The accused also revealed that he was part of an incident of robbery, assault and arson on forest officials in early 2023 between Kapewancha and Nainer forest region.



Veladi started his extremist career in 2009 as a logistics and supply team worker and stood on guard duty when Maoist leaders visited the Cherpalli forests.

Later he joined the Cherpalli Revolutionary Peoples Council of the banned CPI(Maoist) in the Bijapur forests and worked with various units.

He was wanted for two encounters in December 2017 and December 2022 during a joint operation of the Gadchiroli and Bijapur Police in the Tekametta forests, plus an incident of arson this year when he and others ambushed a team of forest officers and set afire their vehicle.

In May 2023, he was involved in the murder of a civilian and the Maharashtra government had announced a reward of Rs 2 lakh for his capture.

## GUJARAT'S GARBA DANCE EARNS UNESCO'S RECOGNITION AS 'INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE'

Ahmedabad: Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel on Wednesday said that UNESCO has included Gujarat's Garba dance in its Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) of Humanity.



An official statement said that the decision was taken during the 18th meeting of the Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage, in Kasane, Botswana.

It said that Garba dance is deeply rooted in ritualistic and devotional traditions, drawing participants from all walks of life.

"It continues to thrive as a vibrant living tradition, bringing communities together," the statement added. It said that the inclusion of Garba in UNESCO list comes from the provisions outlined in the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage.

Garba now stands as the 15th ICH element from India to be accorded this status.

Garba is a traditional dance form of the Gujarat state and is famous for the Navratri festival.

## AT MINUS 2, J&K'S SRINAGAR RECORDS COLDEST NIGHT THIS SEASON

Srinagar: At minus 2 degrees Celsius, J&K's Srinagar recorded the coldest night of the season so far on Wednesday. The Meteorological (MeT) department said the minimum temperature was minus 2 degrees Celsius in Srinagar on Wednesday which is the coldest this season so far. Gulmarg recorded minus 2.2 and Pahalgam minus 5.1 as the minimum temperature.

"Jammu had 9, Katra 8.4, Batote 3.6, Baderwah 1.4 and Banihal 0.8 as the minimum temperature", an official of the MeT department said. Kashmiri's 'defence armour' for the winter including the tweed over-garment called the 'Pheran' and the earthen firepot woven in willow wicker called the 'Kangri' are seen in use everywhere now. The 40-day long period of harsh winter cold known as 'Chhillai Kalan' starts on December 21 and ends on January 30 each year.

## Govt blocks 100 websites involved in job scams, illegal investments

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The government on Wednesday said that it has blocked 100 websites involved in organised crime or task-based part time job frauds, after the Ministry of Home Affairs through its vertical National Cybercrime Threat Analytics Unit (NCTAU) identified them and recommended for the same.

The government in a statement on Wednesday said that the Indian Cybercrime Coordination Centre (I4C), an initiative of the Ministry of Home Affairs, through its vertical NCTAU had last week identified and recommended over 100 websites involved in organised investment or task-based part-time job frauds. "Ministry of Electronics

and Information Technology (MeITy), invoking its power under the Information Technology Act, 2000, has blocked these websites," the government said.

The government said that these websites, facilitated task-based or organised illegal investment related economic crimes, were learnt to be operated by overseas actors and they were using digital advertisement, chat messengers and mule or rented accounts.

It said that it was also learnt that proceeds from the large scale economic frauds were seen to be laundered out of India using card network, crypto currency, overseas ATM withdrawals and international Fintech companies.

The government said that several complaints were received through

1930 helpline and NCRP and these offences were posing significant threat to the citizens and also involved data security concerns. The modus operandi of these websites was also explained. The fraud starts by launching targeted advertisements on platforms like Google and Meta using keywords like "Ghar baithe job" or "Ghar baithe kama kaise karen" in multiple languages.

Targets are mostly retired employees, women, and unemployed youth looking for part-time jobs. Upon clicking the advertisement, an agent using WhatsApp/Telegram starts a conversation with the potential victim, who convinces them to perform some tasks like Video Likes and Subscribe, Maps Rating, etc.

## Shocker: 72% Indians fell victim to online frauds/scams, claims new survey

Team Absolute | Mumbai

A whopping 72 per cent of all Indians have fallen prey to various kinds of online scams/fraud in the recent past, claims an e-survey conducted in November by YouGov, the details of which were released on Wednesday.

While 20 per cent of those surveyed admitted to losing money in online frauds, 47 per cent said a family member or friend had been gyped.

Around 28 per cent of the respondents contended they had escaped such online swindlers, while 10 per cent replied in "don't know" mode.

The scams were of a varied nature - fake job rackets, online shopping, investment scams, bank/card phishing frauds, lottery or fake rewards



offers, government or social media deceptions, fraudulent loans, dating/romance lures, fake charities, etc.

The survey found that online shopping scams top the list (27 per cent), followed by fake job offers (26 per cent), bank/card phishing (21 per cent), investment scams (18 per cent), lucrative lottery

hoaxes (18 per cent), social media swindles and loan offers (17 per cent each), fake charities and government phishing (12 per cent each), and dating App frauds (11 per cent).

Among the top three types of cheatings, Millennials have been worst-hit (33 per cent) by online shopping scams,

while GenZ has been hit (31 per cent) by fake job/employment offers.

Though a huge number of gullible Indians have been duped in one or more scams, only 30 per cent bothered to report them to the authorities concerned and 48 per cent claimed to have got their money back, in the quick survey covering 1,022 people in the 18-plus age group.

However, the remaining did not complain about losing out in such scams, while 46 per cent said they did not get back their lost money.

On the aspect of fixing the blame, 26 per cent want the government to bear the scam losses, while 23 per cent said the consumers are responsible, 22 per cent feel that banks should reimburse their losses, and 4 per cent want telecom companies to be made accountable.



# MILDER WINTER FOR THE COUNTRY FROM DECEMBER 2023 TO FEBRUARY 2024: PREDICTS IMD

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) has predicted a milder winter for the country from December 2023 to February 2024.

The forecast indicates that the intensity and frequency of cold waves are expected to be lower than usual in the majority of north, northwest, central, east, and northeast India.

Scientists attribute this deviation from normal winter conditions to below-average western disturbances, reducing the influx of colder winds from snowclad regions to parts of northwest and central India.

This weather pattern, responsible for cooler temperatures, is anticipated to persist throughout the season.

The Meteorological Department had similarly projected warmer winters in 2022, and maximum and minimum temperatures across most parts of the country remained slightly higher.

Over the past few months, several



regions in the country have experienced temperatures above the normal range. In a statement, the IMD said that during the upcoming winter season (December 2023 to February 2024), above normal maximum temperatures are likely over most parts of the country except some areas over central and northwest India where normal to below

normal maximum temperatures are likely. "Monthly maximum temperatures for December 2023 are likely to be above normal over most parts of the country except some areas of central India and north India where normal maximum temperatures are likely," it said.

The IMD also predicted that below-normal cold wave days are expected over most parts of northwest, central, east, and northeast India during the winter season.

"Currently, the moderate to strong El Nino conditions are prevailing over the equatorial Pacific Ocean and the sea surface temperatures (SSTs) are above average over most parts of the central and eastern equatorial Pacific Ocean," it said.

"The latest MMCFS forecast indicates that moderate to strong El Nino conditions are likely to continue during the upcoming winter season. In addition to El Nino-Southern Oscillation (ENSO) conditions over the Pacific, other factors such as the Indian Ocean SSTs also influence the Indian climate. At present, strong positive IOD conditions are observed over the Indian Ocean and the latest MMCFS forecast indicates that positive IOD conditions are likely to weaken and turn to neutral by the end of this year," said an IMD official.

# Winter vacation in Delhi schools from January 1 to 6: DoE

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Delhi Government's Directorate of Education has issued a circular regarding the rescheduled winter vacation for the academic session 2023-2024 from January 1 to January 6, 2024.

Initially the schools were supposed to remain closed from January 1 to January 15, 2024, but as they were forced to close from November 9 to 18 due to poor air quality in the national Capital, the winter vacation has now been truncated.

"The Winter Vacation for the Academic Session 2023-24 was earlier scheduled to be observed from January 1, 2024 (Monday) to January 15, 2024 (Monday). However, in order to ensure that our students are not adversely affected by the poor air quality in Delhi, a portion of Winter Vacation was observed from November 9, 2023 to November 18, 2023,"



read the circular issued on Wednesday. "In view of the above, the remaining portion of the Winter Vacation for Academic Session 2023-2024 is scheduled to be observed from January 1, 2024 (Monday) to January 6, 2024 (Saturday)," it said.

"All the Heads of Schools of Delhi are hereby directed to disseminate this information among all the stakeholders

including the Teaching/ Non-Teaching Staff, Students and Parents through SMC Members/ Mass SMS facility/ Phone Calls/ Other suitable means of communication," it said.

"The rest of the contents of the aforementioned circular dated January 27, 2023 will remain the same. This is issued with the approval of the Director (Education)," it added.

# 'There will be game again, be united': Mamata's plea to minority community

Team Absolute | Kolkata

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Wednesday exhorted the minority community of the state to stay united, saying any kind of division will help BJP emerge stronger.

"A lot of negative propaganda is going on. Do not believe in that. If you get divided then ultimately BJP will benefit out of that division. So today is the day to take the oath of remaining united," the Chief Minister said in a mobile message that was played at a meeting of the minority cell of the Trinamool Congress here this afternoon. Speaking on occasion, the Chief Minister also referred to the narrative 'Khela Hobe (There will be game)', which was coined by her party's youth leadership and became extremely popular before the 2021 West Bengal Assembly elections. "You remain united and



there will be a game again," she said. Squarely blaming the Congress again for BJP's landslide victory in the recently-concluded Assembly polls for Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh, the Chief Minister said that the saffron camp took electoral benefit because of the division of opposition votes in these three states.

"That was not BJP's victory in the true sense. BJP can be defeated if the Opposition remains united. Bengal wants the defeat of BJP. Bengal is not eyeing any chair. It will only fight for the sake of common people. BJP always wants to divide people. We have to foil that remaining united," the Chief Minister said. Speaking on the occasion, she also accused BJP of misleading people in the name of religion. "We have respect for all religious places. But we are against doing politics in the name of those religious places," the Chief Minister said.

# 2,430 criminal cases registered against juveniles in Delhi in 2022: NCRB report

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) data for the year 2022 has shown a significant surge in juvenile's involvement in criminal activities in Delhi with a staggering 2,430 criminal cases, marking a stark contrast to the statistics of 19 other major metropolitan cities across India.

Among the reported cases, 92 were classified as murders, while 154 were attempts to commit murder.

The gravity of the situation is further emphasised by 86 cases of rape, 68 cases of outraging the modesty of women, 22 cases of kidnapping and abduction, 286 cases related to causing harm, 862 cases of theft, 235 cases of robberies, and 24 cases of rash driving involving juveniles in the national capital.



Delhi takes the lead in this alarming trend, with Chennai trailing behind at 521 juvenile-involved criminal cases in 2022. Ahmedabad recorded 433 cases, Mumbai 363,

Hyderabad 300, Pune 278, Indore 211, Nagpur 210, Jaipur 205, and Surat 137, as per the NCRB data.

Kolkata, however, stands in stark contrast with only nine

reported juvenile-involved criminal cases in 2022. These figures point towards a disturbing trend, raising concerns about the role of various factors contributing to juvenile delinquency in different regions across the country.

Comparing the data to previous years, the NCRB noted a decrease in juvenile crime from 2,643 cases in 2021 to 2,430 cases in 2022 in Delhi.

Recently, the national capital was shaken after a 17-year-old was stabbed over 70 times by a 16-year-old juvenile during a street robbery of Rs 350.

The accused minor shared videos on his social media account, displaying knives, firearms, and footage of himself within court premises portraying a criminal image, possibly fostering a misguided sense of pride.

"Bhai hai apna jail mein 302

mein andar (He's our brother, locked up on a murder charge in Section 302)," read a caption beneath a video posted by the accused juvenile on his Instagram account, in which a woman was speaking to media persons about her brother's murder.

The entire killing incident was recorded on CCTV camera. In the CCTV footage, the accused minor could be seen dragging the body into a narrow lane and repeatedly stabbing the victim in the neck to ensure his death. He also kicks the lifeless body on the head multiple times.

The disturbing scene concludes with the assailant standing over the body and engaging in a macabre dance.

The incident took place at Janta Mazdoor Colony in North-East Delhi's Welcome area.

# HEAVY RAIN IN PARTS OF TELANGANA, TWO KILLED

Hyderabad | Agencies

A couple died in a wall collapse in Telangana's Khammam district on Wednesday as some parts of the state continued to experience heavy rain under the impact of severe cyclonic storm Michaung in Bay of Bengal. The storm crossed the coast in neighbouring Andhra Pradesh on Tuesday.

The deaths were reported from Cheruvu Madaram village in Nelakondapalli mandal of Khammam district.

Officials said the wall of a house collapsed due to incessant rain since Tuesday. The deceased were identified as Pullaiah (45) and Lakshmi (38).

Forty sheep were killed due to heavy rain in Bhimavaram village in Aswapuram mandal in the same district.



Heavy rain led to massive crop damage in undivided Khammam and Warangal districts.

Farmers suffered huge losses due to the damage to crops which were ready for harvest. Heavy rain damaged

paddy, cotton, maize and chilli crops in some mandals.

The damages were reported from Khammam, Wyra, Aswaraopet, Yellandu, Pinapakka and Palair constituencies.

Affected farmers have demanded the government to come to their rescue by providing compensation.

Heavy rain also affected coal production in two open cast mines of state-owned Singareni Collieries Company Limited (SCL) in Jayashankar Bhupalpally district.

According to Telangana State Development Planning Society, Maddukuru and Aswaraopet in Bhadradi Kothagudem district recorded over 30 centimetres rainfall in 24-hour period till 7 a.m. on Wednesday. Five other places in the same district received rainfall of over 21 cm.

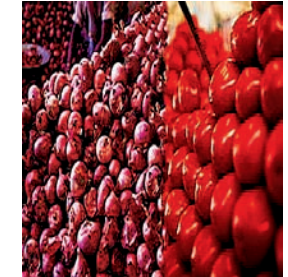
# High prices of onion, tomato drove up cost of thali in Nov

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The cost of a vegetarian 'thali' rose 10 per cent in November as compared to October while the cost of a non-veg thali increased 5 per cent as the prices of onions and tomatoes shot up during the month, according to a CRISIL report.

Unseasonal rainfall during November had damaged the onion and tomato crops which led to a shortage of the two commodities in the market and triggered the price rise.

"The cost of the veg thali rose 9 per cent year-on-year (YoY), driven by a 93 per cent



and 15 per cent increase in onion and tomato prices, respectively. Prices of pulses, which account for 9 per cent of the veg thali cost, also increased 21 per cent YoY," CRISIL said.

A veg thali comprises roti, vegetables, rice, dal, curd, and

salad. Its average cost is calculated based on input prices prevailing in north, south, east, and west India.

For non-vegetarian thali, the increase in prices was lower because of a dip in chicken price which accounts for 50 per cent of the total cost of a non-veg thali. Chicken replaces dal in a non-veg thali while the rest of the items remain the same.

The cost of veg and non-veg thalis came down by 1 per cent and 3 per cent in October as compared to September, as potato, tomato and broiler prices had fallen during the month.



# Five armed robbers loot Rs 16 lakh from bank in Bihar

Team Absolute | Patna

Five armed robbers on Wednesday looted Rs 16 lakh at gunpoint from Axis bank in Bihar's Arrah city. The incident occurred around 10.15 am, soon after the bank opened for the day.

District SP, ASP, DSP and SHOs of Nawada police station reached the spot and investigation is underway.

"Around 10.15 a.m., five armed robbers entered the bank and held the employees hostage at gunpoint. The robbers locked up bank employees in one room and took away Rs 16 lakh from the cash counter in four minutes," said an official spokesperson of Bhojpur police.

"The district police, headed by SP Pramod Kumar, also reached the spot in 10 minutes and investigated the matter. They have scanned the CCTV footage wherein the faces of criminals are visible. We have constituted a dedicated team to nab the accused," he said.

# DELHI POLICE BUSTS INTER-STATE CARTEL SELLING DRUGS TO STUDENTS VIA SOCIAL MEDIA, DELIVERY APPS

Team Absolute | New Delhi

With the arrest of six people in two operations, the Delhi Police's Crime Branch on Wednesday claimed to have busted an inter-state drug cartel supplying narcotics to students in the city and its peripherals through social media and delivery apps.

The accused were identified as Rudransh Gupta, Lakshay Bhatiya, Girik Aggarwal, Nongmaitham Jashobanta Singh, Thiyam Rabikanta Singh and Khalid Zafar, who used to deliver drugs through delivery apps like 'Porter' and 'Wefast' among others. In the first operation, specific input was received about a drug syndicate from the northeastern region engaged in supplying high-quality ganja in Delhi-NCR area from a house at DLF Capital Greens, Moti Nagar in Delhi.

"The information further revealed that ganja was being transported from Manipur and Shillong by train and organic ganja from Phuket, Thailand by air," said the Special Commissioner of Police (Crime) Ravindra Singh Yadav.

Accordingly, a raid was conducted and Nongmaitham Jashobanta Singh and Thiyam Rabikanta Singh were



arrested. On interrogation, the accused disclosed that they transport ganja from Manipur to Dimapur via road and then by train to Delhi and organic ganja via flight. "They further disclosed that they supplied ganja to one of their associ-

ates named Rudransh Gupta. At the instance of accused Nongmaitham Jashobanta Singh, his partner and co-associate Gupta was arrested and 2.78 kgs of ganja was recovered from his house," said Yadav.

During interrogation, Gupta disclosed that he was involved in the

illegal business of drugs for the last two years and he took delivery of ganja from Jashobanta and Chakma, who belong to Mizoram.

The Special CP said, "Gupta was in touch with his clients through social media platforms like Whatsapp, Instagram and Facebook at various

universities. He took orders from his clients on these platforms and delivered through services like 'Porter', 'Wefast' etc. He took money through UPI in his bank accounts," said Yadav. In another operation, Bhatiya, Aggarwal and Zafar were arrested and 15 grams of MDMA and 1,200 grams of organic ganja were recovered from their possession.

"Bhatiya disclosed that he supplied drugs to university students along with his associate Girik Aggarwal. At the instance of Bhatiya, a co-associate Aggarwal was also arrested," said the Special CP. Bhatiya used to collect drugs through Aggarwal.

"A raid was conducted and the main source of the contraband and the mastermind of the gang, Zafar was also arrested," said the Special CP. Bhatiya and Zafar met each other in Amity University, Noida and both are drug addicts.

"Later on, they engaged in the business of drug supply to the college students. Bhatiya, after procuring drugs, used to supply to his clients through social media platforms like Whatsapp, Instagram and Facebook at various universities like NSUT, Delhi and Amity University in Noida," said the officer.



# Plea to Maha CM: Make Jarange-Patil 2nd CM to solve quota muddle

Team Absolute | Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar

Inspired by the 2001 film 'Nayak', an independent wannabe politician and autorickshaw driver has come up with a bizarre solution to resolve the ongoing caste-based reservations imbroglio rocking Maharashtra politics.

The autorickshaw driver, Vishal U Nandarkar, 38, has made his outrageous plea on a stamp paper addressed to Chief Minister Eknath Shinde and submitted it to the Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar District Collector ahead of the Winter Session of the Maharashtra Legislature starting in Nagpur from December 7.

"My solution is very simple: Make the Shivba Sanghatana leader Manoj Jarange-Patil the second CM for a month with the sole responsibility to crack the caste quota issue that has been hanging fire for several months," Nandarkar declared.

Justifying his contention, he said that when the state can have two Deputy CMs - Devendra Fadnis and Ajit Pawar, "then why not two CMs since Shinde is already overburdened with other



state duties, with little time to solve the caste quota entanglements."

"I demand that the CM should consult all parties and make Jarange-Patil as a second CM for a month, with the exclusive authority to tackle the reservations issue for Marathas, Dhangars, Muslims and any other eligible communities, within the

legal framework," Nandarkar said.

He added that Jarange-Patil has complete faith in the Vanchit Bahujan Aghadi (VBA) President, Prakash Ambedkar, and even listens to his advice.

"In case there are complications, then Prakash Ambedkar will guide Jarange-Patil in fulfilling his responsibilities as a second CM to hammer out an amicable solution within the legal parameters," claimed Nandarkar.

When asked whether Jarange-Patil was aware of his outlandish demand, the autorickshaw driver - who has contested several Lok Sabha and Assembly elections as an independent, but lost - replied in the negative.

However, he warned that if CM Shinde fails to consider his appeal within the next week or so, then he would be compelled to move the Bombay High Court for redressal.

On the response of other state political parties, Nandarkar said, "They only talk and do nothing." So, according to him there has been no communication with any party so far, unless they approach him.

## Sharad Pawar, Uddhav Thackeray and Digvijaya Singh to participate in NCP's 'Yuva Sangharsh Yatra' in Nagpur



Team Absolute | Mumbai

Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) founder Sharad Pawar, Shiv Sena (UBT) chief Uddhav Thackeray, and Congress leader Digvijaya Singh are scheduled to address a public meeting marking the conclusion of the Nationalist Congress Party's 'Yuva Sangharsh Yatra' in Nagpur on December 12, announced former Maharashtra home minister Anil Deshmukh on Wednesday.

The public event, set to take place at the Zero Mile area in Nagpur, will witness the participation of the three prominent leaders, according to Deshmukh, who belongs to the Nationalist Congress Party's Sharad Pawar faction.

The 'Yuva Sangharsh Yatra', led by Nationalist Congress Party MLA Rohit Pawar, commenced on

October 24 from Pune, aiming to highlight various issues faced by the youth in Maharashtra. The foot march, covering over 800 km, will culminate in Nagpur during the Winter Session of the state legislature.

While addressing the media, Deshmukh stated that leaders from the Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA), comprising Nationalist Congress Party, Sena (UBT), and Congress, will also be invited to the public meeting. Sharad Pawar will turn 83 on the same day.

Deshmukh highlighted that the Nationalist Congress Party will raise concerns about pending compensation for farmers affected by unseasonal rains and advocate for a higher minimum support price (MSP) for cotton and soybean. A party delegation is set to meet government authorities with these

demands.

Also read: Maharashtra: BJP has given 'supari' to Ajit Pawar to end Sharad Pawar's political career, says Anil Deshmukh

Discussing the recent Nationalist Congress Party split, Deshmukh expressed confidence that many MLAs with Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar would return to the Sharad Pawar group soon. The Nationalist Congress Party had experienced a split in July, with Ajit Pawar and eight senior leaders aligning with the BJP and Shiv Sena.

Deshmukh concluded by expressing optimism about the MVA winning future assembly elections, asserting that the coalition would return to power in the state. The MVA government, led by Thackeray, had collapsed last year after a rebellion by Eknath Shinde, who later joined hands with the BJP to become the Chief Minister.

# Raut writes to CM, alleges 'limitless corruption' in Maharashtra health department

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Shiv Sena (UBT) leader Sanjay Raut on Wednesday alleged that there was rampant corruption in the Maharashtra government's health department.

Among other things, money was being taken from private hospitals for empanelment under the state government's health insurance scheme, he claimed in a letter to Chief Minister Eknath Shinde.

Health Minister Tanaji Sawant, who belongs to the rival Shinde-led Shiv Sena, said he will respond to every allegation.

"There is limitless corruption in the state health department and officers have been appointed to collect (bribe) money," Raut told reporters in Delhi.

Private hospitals are charged Rs 1 lakh per bed for including them in the panel of hospitals under the state government's Mahatma Jyotirao Phule health insurance scheme, the Rajya Sabha member



alleged in the letter to Shinde.

At least 12 junior-level doctors have been illegally appointed as civil surgeons and the civil surgeons in Washim and Buldhana districts were not from the required cadre, he said.

Fourteen candidates have been selected for the posts of deputy director through the Maharashtra

State Public Service Commission but money is being demanded for giving them postings, Raut's letter said.

Health minister Sawant told reporters that he had read the letter. "I will hold a press conference tomorrow and respond to every allegation," he said.

Meanwhile, Raut has said that the next meeting of the INDIA bloc can take place between December 16 and 18 and many things including the face of the alliance will be decided at that time.

"The INDIA alliance meeting was supposed to be held today but some prominent leaders were not available. There is a wedding in Mamata Banerjee's house, MK Stalin is busy with the relief operation in his flood-hit state, Nitish Kumar is not well, and Akhilesh Yadav is not available, therefore this meeting will be held on 16th or 18th of December. The face etc. everything will be decided in the meeting. We are together and you will see its result in 2024," Sanjay Raut said.

# Spurned suitor stalks, beats girl in Pune, threatens her with dire consequences

Team Absolute | Pune

In a shocking incident, a 20-year-old man allegedly beat up a girl and threatened her for rejecting his marriage proposal, police said.

In what appears to be a case of one-sided love, the man, Prashant S Kamble, accosted the 19-year-old girl at Nanapeth in Pune on the evening of November 23 and proposed marriage. When she flatly refused and started to walk away, Kamble grabbed her arm and started dragging her.

When she resisted, he started slapping and punching her. Though there were a few people around, nobody came to her aid. The girl somehow managed to escape from his clutches and run away from there.

After that the traumatized girl went into hiding at her aunt's home. The girl and her family finally mustered courage and lodged a formal complaint



against Kamble with the Samarth Police Station late on Tuesday and Investigation Officer Dipak Yadav launched a probe.

As per the preliminary investigations, the boy and girl were neighbours since childhood and they hailed from middle-class families which were well-acquainted with each other.

However, for the last few years Kamble had been pestering her and had proposed to her on many

occasions. The girl steadfastly refused, and on at least three previous occasions, Kamble had slapped and beaten her up, but her family did not take the matter to the police.

Fed up of the harassment and stalking for the last few weeks, the girl had shifted to her aunt's home in Samarth area, but the man followed her even there.

In the latest instance, the enraged Kamble reportedly threatened her with dire consequences saying that "if I don't marry you, nobody else will."

Officials said that taking a serious view of the threats, the police are now planning to invoke stringent sections against Kamble which could lead to minimum seven years' imprisonment since it was a matter of the girl's future safety and security.

When contacted, IO Yadav said that the seniors will consult the police legal team and others before taking further steps in the case.

# Bombay High Court denies custody to father facing allegations of violent conduct

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The Bombay High Court, in a recent ruling, deemed it unsafe to grant custody of a minor girl to her father, a 41-year-old UK citizen facing allegations of anger issues and violent conduct.

The court dismissed the petition filed by the father seeking custody of his three-year-old daughter, who he claimed was illegally brought to India by his estranged wife.

A division bench of Justices Revati Mohite Dere and Gauri Godse based their decision on the wife's allegations of the man's past physical abuse towards her.

Emphasizing the well-established legal principle that custody decisions should prioritize the best interest of the child, the court stated that returning the child to a foreign jurisdiction must not pose any harm to her physical, mental, or psychological well-being.

The bench asserted, "Considering the past con-



duct of the petitioner having anger issues, it will not be safe to hand over custody of the child to him."

The court underscored that the allegations of violent and abusive conduct raised concerns about the child's safety and could adversely affect her healthy upbringing.

While acknowledging a child's right to the company of both parents, the court highlighted that in

the midst of parental disputes, the child should not suffer.

The mother, who has been keeping the estranged husband informed about the child's welfare and facilitating video calls between them, was deemed more suitable for the child's care.

The court concluded that, given the child's tender age of three-and-a-half years, she requires the care and affection of her mother. It emphasized that the child's best interest is served by living with her mother in India and rejected the notion that her presence in the country was illegal.

The legal saga began after the couple's marriage in 2018 in the US, with the child born in 2020. Marital disputes led to the couple living separately for six months after the child's birth.

Despite a reconciliation agreement and relocation to Singapore in 2022, the wife returned to India in November 2022, citing safety concerns. The husband, subsequently, sought custody through legal avenues, leading to the recent High Court decision.

# Mumbai fire incidents prompt Bombay High Court's stern rebuke to Maharashtra government

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The Bombay High Court rebuked the Maharashtra government for its alleged negligence in implementing fire safety regulations, stating that the frequency of fire incidents in Mumbai, resulting in loss of life, is "very, very serious." The division bench, comprising Chief Justice D K Upadhyaya and Justice Arif Doctor, emphatically declared that no laxness in addressing the issue could be tolerated. Chief Justice Upadhyaya expressed deep concern over the increasing number of fire incidents in the city, asserting that such incidents seem to be on the rise, with reports of casualties emerging almost daily.

The court rebuked the government, asserting that it is not the court's responsibility to continually

prompt the authorities on necessary actions. The bench particularly highlighted a recent tragic fire in a four-storey residential building in south Mumbai, resulting in the deaths of an 82-year-old woman and her 60-year-old son.

During the proceedings, Additional Government Pleader Jyoti Chavan informed the court about an expert committee formed last year, which submitted its report in February 2023. Chavan explained that the report is currently with the state Urban Development Department for consideration, emphasizing steps to amend the Development Control and Promotion Control (DCPR) 2034.

Expressing dissatisfaction with the government's inaction, the bench pointed out that the report had been submitted in February, and as of December, no concrete steps had been taken. Chief Justice

Upadhyaya voiced his dismay, questioning the government's apparent indifference to the issue, particularly in light of the tragic deaths resulting from recent fire incidents.

The court directed the Principal Secretary of the Urban Development Department to provide a specific timeline for addressing the matter by Friday. The bench emphasized the urgency of the situation, stating that any further laxness would not be acceptable.

The court's scrutiny stems from a public interest litigation filed in 2019 by advocate Abha Singh, seeking the enforcement of the 2009 draft special rules and regulations for fire safety in buildings vulnerable to man-made disasters. These regulations were issued in the aftermath of the 26/11 Mumbai terror attacks.

# 30-year-old man dies after falling at metro site in Thane

Team Absolute | Thane

A 30-year-old man died after allegedly falling off the metro bridge site in Thane district of Maharashtra, the Regional Disaster Management Cell (RDMC) of the Thane Municipal Corporation (TMC) said on Wednesday.

According to the civic body, the incident took place after the man, a worker at the metro bridge fell off at the construction site near the R.T.O. office in Wagle Estate

in Thane on the Mumbai-Nashik Highway.

The officials said that the incident was reported at around 4:27 hours. Upon reaching the spot, the deceased who was later identified as Dhananjay Chauhan, a 30-year-old metro bridge worker hailing from Uttar Pradesh, was shifted to a hospital where he was declared dead by the doctors.

Locals informed the officials that Chauhan fell from the bridge, leading to severe injuries. Despite the immedi-

ate presence of Wagle Estate Police personnel and disaster management cell personnel, the nature of the injuries proved fatal.

"The deceased was shifted to the District Government Hospital in Thane by the Wagle Estate Police personnel in an ambulance. Unfortunately, despite the immediate efforts, he succumbed to the injuries," an official said.

Further investigations in the matter are underway, sources said.

# Thousands gather at Chaityabhoomi in Mumbai's Shivaji Park to pay tributes to Ambedkar



Team Absolute | Mumbai

Thousands of people on Wednesday gathered at Chaityabhoomi at Shivaji Park in Mumbai's Dadar area to pay tributes to Dr BR Ambedkar on his 67th death anniversary.

The death anniversary of the chief architect of the Constitution is observed as 'Mahaparinirvan Din'.

Maharashtra Governor Ramesh Bais, Chief Minister Eknath Shinde, and Deputy chief ministers Devendra Fadnis and Ajit Pawar also paid tributes to Ambedkar. The leaders paid floral tributes to Ambedkar

at his memorial 'Chaityabhoomi' at the Shivaji Park in Dadar area of Mumbai. Nationalist Congress Party founder Sharad Pawar and former Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray, who visited 'Chaityabhoomi', were among other leaders who paid homage to Ambedkar. In a post on X, Sharad Pawar described Ambedkar as the one who brought about a social revolution to fight for the rights of the deprived sections of society.

Thackeray's party said the presence of a large number of followers at the memorial is a testimony to

Ambedkar's work and ideology. Every year, thousands of people from across the state converge at B R Ambedkar's memorial 'Chaityabhoomi' on December 6. Ambedkar died on this day in 1956.

The Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) has set up temporary sheds, mobile toilets, drinking water and medical stalls at the Shivaji Park, in view of the huge rush of B R Ambedkar's followers.

Maharashtra government has declared that a public holiday will be observed in Mumbai on December 6 to mark the death anniversary of Dr Ambedkar.



EDITOR'S SPECS

### Antibiotic resistance kills millions in India

India ranks among countries with the highest mortality rates due to antimicrobial resistance (AMR), and statistics show that one child dies every nine minutes due to illnesses caused by bugs that resist antibiotics. This shocking revelation was made at a plenary session of the Global Ayurveda Festival (GAF) here on Tuesday, where experts discussed the role traditional medicines can play in overcoming the threat of AMR, which is rising in almost every part of the world, prompting WHO to declare it as one of the top health threats. Terming resistance to antibiotics a "new phenomenon", he recalled that resistance to Penicillin was reported in 1940, though the drug was put into use by 1928. This led to the creation of newer antibiotics to overcome that, but in the last three decades, no new antibiotics have been developed and this has aggravated the problem. Professor Rampp also said the use and overuse of antibiotics are leading to their resistance. Prof Rampp said traditional medicine systems like Ayurveda can contribute significantly to improving the situation, as they approach problems and work to improve immunity. This can prevent illness and stop the unnecessary use of antibiotics. He pointed out that Ayurveda has always focused on providing a balanced diet, and modern science now emphasises the importance of microbiomes in the gut region, which is essential to building up immunity. A network of facilities established to monitor the AMR situation in India has identified about 10 pathogens that are proving to be dangerous. The national health policy says alternative methods to treat infectious diseases should be considered, and this is where Ayurveda can play a vital role, said Roy.

# Promise and perils of Artificial Intelligence

DC Pathak



As the debate on whether Artificial Intelligence (AI) is more of a threat than a technological advancement came to a head, US President Joe Biden issued a wide-ranging Executive Order on October 30 clearly warning against the dangers posed by AI, particularly in the areas of development of devastating weapons of destruction and cyber attacks. The order went on to define the framework of strong intervention by the Federal government -- should it become necessary for ensuring AI Safety, Security and Trust -- by way of monitoring companies in the business of developing AI products and taking even coercive action under the old Defence Production Act to compel abandonment of a given initiative of the enterprise. This move has been made also in the context of the government being a key funder of scientific research in the US. The major threats associated with AI range from breach of data privacy to interference in elections, from destruction of critical infrastructure particularly in the energy sector to pandemic preparedness and from misuse of biological material to creating instruments of repression. American administration officials have talked of Chinese-sponsored research devoted to exploring ways of disrupting critical communications infrastructure between the US and Asia. It was clear -- judging from the fact that Social Media had already become an instrument of combat -- that AI representing an ultimate advance of IT would tempt countries and players to develop it for new versions of 'proxy wars' as well as for weapon automation. Interestingly, AI-based deepfakes -- designed, among other things, to influence the electorate, defame leaders and dignitaries and create public discords -- are already operating in the Indian context. Algorithmic bias can be caused by misusing data to create socio-economic inequality, market volatility and communal friction. Geoffrey Hinton known for his work on machine learning and neural networks has reportedly talked of dangers from AI while Elon Musk along with many other tech leaders has warned in an open letter that uncontrolled AI experiments could pose 'profound risks to society and humanity'. Sam Altman CEO of OpenAI wanted policymakers to ensure that regulations 'promoted innovation and did not strangle it'. India is at the forefront of global efforts to facilitate the legitimate growth of AI for the larger good of the world without letting it produce any destructive fallout. In the run-up to the G20 Summit in Delhi last September, the security establishment was able to bank on the Facial Recognition System relying on AI-based cameras. AI was an important talk point at the Delhi G20 meet. The potential of generative AI in making an economic impact on the world was examined and some concerns

were raised about possible job loss especially white-collar jobs resulting from AI applications. It can be clearly seen that without cutting jobs, businesses can use AI to improve efficiency and productivity -- efficiency being a measure of productivity. The need for global AI regulations will be an important matter on the agenda of the next G20 in Brazil. Anti-competitive policies and big tech monopolies are other points that would come up there. The Delhi G20 summit discussed how to harness AI for economic development while protecting human rights and suggested that there is a need for global oversight of this rapidly evolving technology. Prime Minister Narendra Modi and US President Biden had bilateral talks on the eve of the G20 summit at the Prime Minister's residence on September 8 to expand cooperation between the two countries in emerging domains like AI and Space. This has brought Indo-US relations to an entirely new level of strategic friendship. Earlier in July this year, the Indo-US Science and Technology Forum (IUSSTF) designed a programme of Indo-US engagement for Technology Partnership for the Future with a new direction and investment of energy in AI and with an endowment of \$2 million. The programme will work for the joint development and commercialisation of AI. India believes that it can steer clear of any risks to get the program to promote social well-being by impacting health care, agriculture, climate change and so on. More recently, AI figured prominently in the talks between US President Biden and President Xi Jinping of China held in San Francisco on November 15 during the APEC conference. Just as IT applications made human processes more efficient with computerisation, AI makes IT applications smarter -- being smart means being able to produce more per unit of resource whether the resource is money, manpower or time. Indian industries are well prepared to use AI -- technological services, finance and retail are switching over to AI regime faster than sectors like media& communications, education, transport etc but India on the whole is

moving in that direction more speedily than many other nations. AI is the ability of a system or a program to think and learn from experience. Machine learning and deep learning techniques are based on vast volumes of data being analysed instantly for making intelligent decisions or solving specific problems. AI technology helps to improve relationships with customers and their loyalty to a brand. For this browsing history, the preferences and interests of customers are all collated and analysed through AI tools. Natural Language Processing is used to make conversation as human and personal as possible. Chat boxes improve the user experience and learning material can be accessed through Voice Assistants like Alexa and Siri. Robots powered by AI use real-time updates to provide for carrying of goods, cleaning of offices and managing inventory. For economic companies, AI is helpful in reducing credit card fraud by examining the user's patterns. AI can identify fake reviews. People leverage the strength of AI because the work they need to carry out on a daily basis is increasing all the time. Mention should be made of AI helping to create a rich learning experience by generating audio and video summaries and integral lesson plans. AI can help analyse chronic conditions and lab data to ensure early diagnosis. Apart from personal usage, facial recognition is now a widely used AI application in high-security areas in several industries. AI identifies illegal access. Machine learning allows for the detection of even minor abnormalities and can point to anything that is wrong with the system. AI, however, has to still advance a lot in areas such as language processing, creativity, problem-solving, comprehension of subtleties and evaluation of human output. AI is essentially a computer process -- it is basically adding layers of 1s and 0s amazingly fast. Binary calculations do not create a 'soul' and as an analyst said -- the 'within' of the computer and the human is not the same.

Analytical thinking, human consciousness and emotional intelligence place the human brain on a different footing that was not available to computers. At the end of it, AI worked on pattern reading and word recognition and was governed by the input-output principle. AI can improve business growth and expansion, advance the cause of education and health, reform governance with particular reference to the implementation of welfare schemes, make the organisational working more transparent and ethical and help to enrich everybody's lifestyle. Exercise of human judgement will be necessary in crucial areas ranging from dispensing justice to the responsibility of pressing the nuclear button. Incidentally, nuclear deterrence is based on the principle that whereas the launch of a nuclear missile would be a conscious decision the response ensuring total annihilation of the opponent could be fully automated. In the final analysis, it is to be realised that any technology -- because of its public profile -- would be used for the good of humanity but was also available to the malcontents ranging from non-state actors like terrorists to ruthless dictators who did not think of anything beyond their 'personal' power. President Biden's initiative in issuing an executive order for the benefit of national and global security has come in time -- India fully sharing the hopes and concerns that AI provided to the world. Prime Minister Modi has called for expanding 'ethical' AI and stipulated that even though AI had 'associated risks' it had proven to be an enabler of the digital and innovation ecosystem. India recognises the need for actively formulating regulations rooted in a 'risk-based user harm' approach. It envisages AI as a catalyst for economic growth, job creation and industrial transformation. India acknowledges the importance of safeguarding citizens' interests and wants AI benefits to become accessible to all segments of society in an equitable manner. We should favour a collaborative approach to AI development, involve government bodies, industry stakeholders, researchers, civil society and subject experts and opt for an adaptive regulatory framework. NITI Aayog, the premier policy think-tank of India, is actively engaged in evolving India's strategy for AI development giving special attention to key areas like education, workforce development, data usage, security and research. (The writer is a former Director of the Intelligence Bureau. Views are personal)

## international

## House surrounded, Sinwar still in hiding: IDF

**Tel Aviv** | Agencies  
The Israel Defense Forces (IDF) on Wednesday said that they have surrounded the house of Hamas senior leader Yahya Sinwar in Khan Younis area of Gaza. "We have surrounded his house but could not locate Sinwar. He has gone into hiding," a top IDF ranking officer told reporter. The IDF has claimed that Mohammed Deif and Yahya Sinwar -- Hamas' two top leaders -- are allegedly behind mastering the October 7 attacks on southern Israel. The IDF officer told IANS that Sinwar has gone hiding in the Hamas tunnel network in southern Gaza. The Israel Defense Minister Yoav Gallant has said that IDF will search for Sinwar.



The IDF has also claimed that most of the middle rung leaders Hamas have been killed since Israel began its ground offensive in Gaza. Israel has killed over 15,000

Wednesday that reservists of the Menashe Regional Brigade, Duvdevan unit, LOTAR and Border Police operated overnight in the West Bank's Jenin refugee camp, detaining 10 wanted Palestinians and locating two tunnel shafts and three bomb-making labs, the media reported. Several firearms, weapons, and other equipment were seized, it added. The IDF said that Israeli troops clashed with Palestinian gunmen in the area, returning fire at the armed suspects and those hurling explosive devices, The Times of Israel reported. One soldier was lightly hurt in the clashes, according to the IDF. The IDF said that another 16 suspects were detained in other areas of the West Bank. Unification Ministry said Kim Ju-ae appears to have emerged "at an early stage" in the process of a hereditary succession. In a party Congress in 2021, North Korea newly awarded the title of General Secretary to Kim Jong-un and created the posts of seven secretaries, including the first secretary. The first Secretary of the Workers' Party could assume Kim Jong-un's role when the General Secretary cannot perform his duty. "The position of the first Secretary has been vacant. This could be in consideration of Kim Ju-ae," the official told reporters on condition of anonymity. Ju-ae, believed to be around 10-years-old, made her first public appearance on November 18, 2022, when she, along with her father, attended the firing of a Hwasong-17 intercontinental ballistic missile. Unification Minister Kim earlier left open the possibility that Ju-ae could be an heir apparent to succeed Kim Jong-un. Kim Jong-un took over the communist country following the death of his father, Kim Jong-il, in 2011. The late Kim inherited power from his father, the country's founder, Kim Il-sung, who died in 1994.



**Yangpyeong (South Korea)** | Agencies  
North Korean leader Kim Jong-un appears to have been "in a hurry" to bring his daughter to the forefront in a bid to demonstrate his commitment to the third hereditary power succession, Seoul's top point man on Pyongyang said on Wednesday. Unification Minister Kim Yung-ho made the assessment amid speculation that frequent public appearances by Kim's daughter, believed to be named Ju-ae, may indicate she could be anointed to succeed her father. "The North Korean leader appears to be in a hurry to highlight his daughter in an indication that he is trying to demonstrate his will for succession in the face of difficulties (facing the North Korea)," Kim said in a meeting with reporters at a hotel in Yangpyeong, about 40 km east of Seoul. The Minister said there are "signs" that North Korea has been facing multiple difficulties, citing a series of closures of its diplomatic missions and a food shortage, Yonhap news agency reported. Kim called on the North Korea's leader to shift the focus of state policy to measures to improve people's livelihoods from mili-

tary-focused policy at a key party meeting set for later this month. North Korea plans to hold a plenary meeting of the central committee of the ruling Workers' Party late this month in a bid to review its 2023 policy measures and unveil its policy lines for next year. "(The North Korean leader) should make a bold decision for the economy and people's livelihoods by realising that it is impossible to catch the two rabbits of the military and the economy," the Minister said. Meanwhile, a senior official at the

## 25 dead after bus plunges off cliff in Philippines

**Manila** | Agencies  
At least 25 persons were killed when a passenger bus plunged off a cliff in Antique province in central Philippines, local media reported. The bus, carrying 53 passengers, was travelling west from Iloilo City to San Jose de Buenavista in Antique province when it crashed into a concrete road barrier before plunging into a ravine shortly before 5 p.m. local time on Tuesday in Hamtic town.



The deaths include the bus driver and

his collector, Xinhua news agency reported, citing local news web ABS-CBN. Quoting the Antique provincial government, Panay News, a regional newspaper, reported that two critically wounded passengers, including a male from Kenya, were taken to a hospital in Iloilo City for treatment. Emergency workers are rescuing the survivors and retrieving the bodies of the people in the ravine.

## Looking forward to see results of India's probe on Pannun: US

**Washington** | Agencies  
The US has said that it is looking forward to seeing the results of India's investigation into the plot to kill a Sikh separatist leader, and will not make any assessments before the probe is finished. "We have noted at the most senior levels of this government -- the Secretary of State has raised this directly with his foreign counterpart that we take this issue very seriously. They told us they would conduct an investigation," US State Department spokesperson, Matthew Miller, said in his news briefing on Tuesday. "They have publicly announced an investigation. And now we'll wait to see the results of the investigation, but it's something we take very seriously," Miller said in response to a question on developments in the case at the diplomatic level. He further said that it would be "inappropriate" for him to comment on a "law enforcement matter" as the Department of Justice is presenting the case in court. "We are looking forward to seeing the results of that (India's) investigation, and I'm not going to make any assessments,



obviously, before the investigation itself is completed," Miller told reporters. The comments come a week after the White House said that it takes the allegations that an Indian was involved in a foiled bid to kill Khalistani leader Gurbhag Singh Pannun on its soil "very seriously". When asked by a reporter whether the plot to kill Pannun is an attack on the US sovereignty, Miller said: "I'm not going to speak beyond what -- the information that's contained in an indictment for I think what are -- for what I think are fairly obvious reasons". US federal prosecutors last month

accused Indian intelligence official Nikhil Gupta of "planning and directing" a plot from India to allegedly kill Pannun in New York. Reacting to the charges, India's Ministry of External Affairs said it was a "matter of concern" and "contrary to Indian government's policy". India constituted a high-level Enquiry Committee to look into all the relevant aspects of the matter, and said it will take necessary follow-up action based on the findings of the Committee. On being asked about India's 'non-cooperation' with the Canadian government on Khalistani leader Hardeep Singh Nijjar's case, Miller said in his Tuesday's briefing they have urged New Delhi to cooperate with Ottawa. Canada claimed in September that Nijjar was shot dead by Indian agents in British Columbia province in June this year. While responding to Canada's allegations, India said recently: "As far as Canada is concerned, they have consistently given space to anti-India extremists and violence. That is at the heart of the issue".

## IDF issues apology for accidental killing of Lebanese soldier

**Tel Aviv** | Agencies  
The Israel Defense Forces (IDF) has issued an apology to the Lebanese army after its missile attack hit a Lebanese military base killing one soldier and injuring few more. IDF in a statement on late on Tuesday said that it regrets the death of a Lebanese soldier and injuring several other Lebanese soldiers in an attack directed towards Hezbollah linked targets in Lebanon. The Lebanese army had earlier issued a statement which read: "An army military position in Adayssah area was bombed by Israeli enemy army. One soldier of our army was martyred and three soldiers injured." It is to be noted that ever since the Hamas attack on October 7, Israel and Hezbollah are engaged in skirmishes with Hezbollah claiming that 79 of its soldiers were killed in Israeli bombardments. Israel has also said that six of its soldiers were killed in Hezbollah attacks in Northern Israel borders.



## A non-MLA can be the Chief Minister in Madhya Pradesh!

Team Absolute | Bhopal

After the landslide victory in the assembly elections in Madhya Pradesh, the brainstorming session regarding the Chief Minister is going on in the Bharatiya Janata Party. Whether the party will retain Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan or bring in a new face remains a big topic. But, the discussion is that the party can also make a non-MLA the Chief Minister. In the elections of 230 assembly seats in the state, BJP has won 143 seats. Who will be the Chief Minister in the state? This remains a question. The national leadership has almost decided who will be the Chief



Minister, but it has not been announced yet. All the big leaders of the state have met the national leaders through mail and it is likely that observers may come to Bhopal by Thursday evening and a meeting of the legislative party may also be held. BJP had made a new experiment in the state in the assembly elections and had

fielded seven MPs including three Union Ministers, out of which Union Minister Faggan Singh Kulaste and MP Ganesh Singh had to face defeat.

Whereas, everyone else has won. Apart from Union Minister Narendra Singh Tomar and Prahlad Patel, who won the assembly elections, MPs Reeti Pathak,

Rakesh Singh and Uday Pratap Singh have resigned from the post of MP.

The names of many contenders for the post of Chief Minister are being discussed in the state. Apart from Union Minister Narendra Singh Tomar, Prahlad Patel, National General Secretary Kailash Vijayvargiya and Union Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia are prominent among them. The responsible official associated with the party says that BJP has won in the three states Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh and Rajasthan. There the party can adopt the Gujarat model. It is even said that even a non-MLA can become the Chief Minister in the state.

## 10 BJP MPs including 2 ministers resign after winning Assembly elections

Team Absolute | New

Delhi/ Bhopal  
Ten BJP MPs including two Union ministers, who won the Assembly elections, have tendered their resignations after receiving instructions from the party high command.

Two MPs Mahant Balaknath and Renuka Singh could not reach Parliament to resign but both of them will also resign. In the meeting of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and JP Nadda, it was decided that all the MPs who won the Assembly elections should resign from their Parliament membership and work in the state assemblies.

Following the decision of the high command, Union ministers Narendra Singh Tomar and Prahlad Singh



Patel, who won the Assembly elections in Madhya Pradesh, have resigned from the Lok Sabha membership. Along with them, Rao Uday Pratap Singh, Rakesh Singh and Riti Pathak, who won the Assembly polls in the state, have also resigned from the Lok Sabha membership. Now these five leaders will take

oath as MLAs in Madhya Pradesh. Of these, Tomar and Patel are also being considered as contenders for the post of Chief Minister.

On the instructions of the party high command, Rajyavardhan Singh Rathore and Diya Kumari, who won the Assembly polls in Rajasthan, have also resigned

from the Lok Sabha membership. Apart from them, Kirori Lal Meena, who won the election in Rajasthan, has also resigned from the Rajya Sabha.

State President Arun Sao and Gomati Sai, who won the Assembly elections in Chhattisgarh, have also resigned from Parliament membership.

All these MPs met Prime Minister Narendra Modi along with party president JP Nadda before resigning. JP Nadda was also present when they handed over their resignations to Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla and Rajya Sabha Chairman Jagdeep Dhankhar. Narendra Singh Tomar, Prahlad Singh Patel and Renuka Singh will also meet Prime Minister Modi and submit their resignations from the post of Union Ministers.

## 4-Year-old girl, rescued from borewell in Rajgarh, dies

Team Absolute | Rajgarh

A four-year-old girl who fell into a borewell in Madhya Pradesh's Rajgarh district on Tuesday died in a hospital in Bhopal, a few hours after her rescue early on Wednesday, a senior official said. The child, identified as Mahi, was rescued alive around 2.45 am and was rushed to the Civil Hospital at Pachore, but her condition deteriorated en route, the official said.

The girl was then taken to the state-run Hamidia Hospital in Bhopal, about 70 km away, where she died during treatment around 6 am, Chief Medical and Health Officer Dr Kiran Wadia said.

The body will be handed over to the child's relatives after autopsy, she said. Mahi fell into an open borewell in a field on Tuesday evening and was rescued by a team of experts who dug a parallel pit to a depth of about 25 feet.

She was stuck at 22 feet, and after connecting the two pits, she was rescued by the experts and rushed to the hospital, Rajgarh Superintendent of Police Dharmaraj Meena said.



The incident took place at Pipliya Rasoda village under Boda police station limits, he said. Personnel from the State Disaster Emergency Response Force (SDERF) had reached the spot and arrangements were made to provide

oxygen inside the borewell shaft, he said.

Earlier, Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan had directed officials to send teams of SDERF, National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) to the site and asked the district administration to help in the rescue operation.

## Chief Minister Chouhan planted saplings of peepal, saptaparni and guava

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan planted peepal, saptaparni and guava saplings in the garden at Shyamala Hills. Newly elected MLA from Sumavali Assembly Constituency Andal Singh Kansana also planted saplings along with Chief Minister Chouhan.



## Date extended for pre-matric application in "Financial Aid Scheme for Education".

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Extension of the last date for applying on the National Scholarship Portal <http://scholarships.gov.in> for the eligible pre-matric students to avail the benefit under the "Shiksha Hetu Financial Aid Scheme" for the academic year 2023-24 from 31 December 2023 has been done. In the scheme, the amount of scholarship/uniform is sanctioned from 1000 rupees to a maximum of 25000 rupees on completion of higher education from class 1 in the financial assistance scheme for sons and daughters studying in recognized educational institutions of beedi, limestone and dolomite and iron manganese ore mine workers of the province. The in-charge Medical Officer Bidi Shramik Kalyan Nidhi Dispensary Bhopal said that information and other conditions related to applying and eligibility can be seen on the National Scholarship Portal. The applicant should attach clean and legible copies of the documents to be attached with the online application. After applying, get in touch with your institution of study and verify the application online and ensure that it is forwarded through the scholarship portal. It will be the responsibility of the student to verify the application. For solving any other problem related to online application, contact can be established at Jabalpur HQ Email- [wcljab@mp.gov.in](mailto:wcljab@mp.gov.in).

## 90 out of 230 newly elected Madhya Pradesh MLAs have criminal cases: Report

Team Absolute | Bhopal

After the assembly elections in Madhya Pradesh concluded and its results announced, the Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR) released its report in which it was revealed that 90 newly elected MLAs out of 230 in the state, which is nearly 39 percent, have criminal cases against them.

ADR is a non-profit organisation that discloses criminal, financial, and educational backgrounds of the candidates contesting elections.

"90 winning candidates out of the 230 analyzed in 2023 have declared criminal cases against themselves. Similarly, 34 winning candidates out of 230 which is nearly 15 percent, in the state have declared serious criminal cases against themselves," says ADR report.

Of these 90 MLAs having criminal cases, 51 belong to the BJP, 38 belong to the Congress Party, and one from the Bharatiya Adivasi Party.

There is a slight downfall in the numbers this time in comparison to that of the previous 2018 assembly polls. During the 2018 MP assembly polls, 94 MLAs out of 230 had declared criminal



cases against themselves while 47 MLAs out of 230 had declared serious criminal cases against themselves.

Another interesting data in the report is that 205 newly elected MLAs in the state which is nearly 89 percent are 'crorepati'. Of these crorepati MLAs, 144 belong to the BJP and 61 belong to the Congress party.

The number of crorepati MLAs in the state has increased in comparison to that of last assembly polls as during the 2018 assembly polls, 187 MLAs were crorepaties.

BJP MLA from Ratlam city constituency in Ratlam district, Chetanya Kasyap is the richest MLA in the state whose total wealth is over Rs 296 crores.

Similarly, a BJP MLA from Vijayraghgarh assembly seat in Katni

district, Sanjay Satyendra Pathak is the second richest MLA having wealth of over Rs 242 crores followed by Congress MLA Kamal Nath who has a total wealth of over Rs 134 crores, the report said. Besides, 161 winning candidates are graduates or above educational qualifications. Similarly, 64 candidates have declared their educational qualification to be between class 5th pass and class 12th pass, while three winning candidates are Diploma Holders and two are just literate, the report further read. Out of 230 winning candidates, only 27 candidates around 12 percent are women. Though the number of women MLAs in the state is a bit higher than that of the last assembly polls.

During the 2018 assembly polls, out of 230 MLAs, 21 MLAs, around nine percent, were women, it added.

Madhya Pradesh went to polls for 230 assembly seats in a single phase on November 17 and the counting of votes was done on Sunday.

The BJP registered a comprehensive victory in the state by winning 163 seats while the Congress party stood at second place after winning 66 seats and Bharat Adivasi Party won one seat in the state.

## Don't blame EVMs for hiding infighting in Madhya Pradesh: Laxman

Team Absolute | Bhopal

After the crushing defeat in the assembly elections in Madhya Pradesh, Congress leaders are busy raising questions on their own people. Some are talking about internal attacks while some are busy raising questions on the organization.

Former Chief Minister Digvijay Singh attributed the defeat to infighting and also raised questions on the questions being raised on EVMs. In the state assembly elections, Congress has won only 66 out of 230 seats, many stalwarts have lost the elections, Laxman Singh is also included among them.



On the questions being raised by the party on EVMs, he said that they are two-faced. On X, he wrote, "We

have been demanding postal ballot for the last twenty years, on social media, on media, by going among the public, by going to the Election Commission, but till date we have not taken the help of law, why so? Maybe internal attack. "Blame the EVMs for hiding it. The machines don't have mouth."

Many leaders of the state have also raised questions about the organization and said that the party will have to take tough decisions, only then the situation will change. Many Congress leaders are raising questions on EVMs. At the same time, most of the leaders are raising questions on the party itself.

## 'Sanctuary Asia Award' for wildlife tourism in Madhya Pradesh

Honored for Best Sustainable Wildlife Tourism State Category at Hua Toff Tigers Wildlife Tourism Awards in New Delhi

Team Absolute | Bhopal

The Madhya Pradesh Tourism Board has been honored with the Sanctuary Asia Award for "The Best Sustainable Wildlife Tourism State" at the Tough Tigers Wildlife Tourism Awards in New Delhi. Madhya Pradesh has been awarded for excellence in nature, tourism, industry, sustainable practices and responsible tourism in the Indian subcontinent.

Chief Secretary Tourism and Culture and Managing Director Tourism Board Shiv Shekhar Shukla expressed his happiness on the honor and said that Madhya Pradesh is the tiger state of the country and tourists from all over the world come to national parks here to see tigers. Along with increasing the number of tourists in the province, the board is also responsible for



reducing the negative impact on the environment. Therefore, various efforts are being made around the forest areas like eco-friendly homestays, waste management, awareness among tourists.

**Short film and presentation based on tourism**

A short film based on various tourism destinations and products of the state was screened by Madhya Pradesh Tourism in the ceremony. Information based on various historical, natural, spiritual, folk and craft arts and wildlife tourism of Madhya Pradesh

was shared through audio-visual presentation. Madhya Pradesh, the heart of incredible India, has been featured as an attractive and ideal destination to visit. The state encompasses spirituality, natural splendor, wildlife and cultural aura, which overwhelms the tourists. Deputy Director Yuvraj Padole accepted this award on behalf of the Tourism Board.

**Tiger, Cheetah and Leopard State of India**  
Madhya Pradesh is a rich state in terms of wildlife. With 12 national parks and 24

wildlife sanctuaries, it is rich in natural resources such as various plants, animals and birds. Madhya Pradesh has the pride of being the 'Tiger State of India' due to having the largest number of tigers in the country. M.P. I currently have 785 Tigers. Madhya Pradesh is known as 'Tiger State of India'. Along with this, the province is also proud of 'Leopard State' and 'Ghadiyal State'. The arrival of cheetahs in Kuno National Park has been recognized as the Cheetah State of the province.

## Gopal Bhargava called to Delhi

Team Absolute | Bhopal

BJP National President JP Nadda has started discussions with Prime Minister Narendra Modi regarding the post of Chief Minister in three states. The question is arising again, will Shivraj Singh Chouhan become the Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh for the fifth time? Or will a surprising face come to Madhya Pradesh? Meanwhile, senior MLA Gopal Bhargava has been called to Delhi. He has left by plane.

Sources say that discussion is going on on five names for

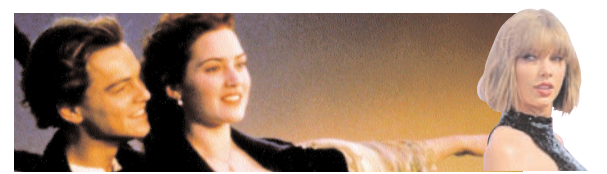


the Chief Minister from Madhya Pradesh. Apart from Shivraj, the names of Jyotiraditya Scindia, Narendra Singh Tomar, Prahlad Singh Patel, Kailash Vijayvargiya are included.

And BD Sharma's name is also being taken. Meanwhile, due to the calling of Minister Gopal Bhargava, a discussion has also started that maybe Bhargava is not being made the president in place of VD

Sharma? However, Bhargava is said to be more likely to become the Deputy Chief Minister. After some time, Home Minister Amit Shah has also joined the discussion, such information has been received.

It is being told that BJP can also work on UP formula in Madhya Pradesh. There is discussion that MP can also have one CM and two Deputy CMs. Again emphasis is being laid on OBC face for CM. If an OBC is made the CM, then a Brahmin and a tribal or Dalit can be given the post of Deputy Chief Minister.



## Jamie Foxx gets emotional in 1st public appearance since medical scare

Los Angeles | Agencies

Hollywood actor Jamie Foxx has reflected on his medical emergency in April. Speaking at the Critics Choice Association's Celebration of Cinema & Television: Honouring Black, Latino and AAPI Achievements in Los Angeles, Foxx, 55, opened up about his health scare during an emotional award acceptance speech.

"I want to thank everybody. I've been through something. I've been through some things," Foxx said as he accepted the Vanguard Award for his performance in 'The Burial', reports People magazine.

"It's crazy, I couldn't do that six months ago. I couldn't actually walk too....," he added as he welled up with emotion.

Showing his appreciation for life, Foxx said: "It feels good to be here. I cherish every single minute now. It's different. It's different. I wouldn't wish what I went through on my worst enemy, because it's tough when you almost... When it's almost over, when you see the tunnel," he continued. "I saw the tunnel. I didn't see the light!" he then joked. "It was hot in that tunnel so I didn't know where I was going. S---, am I going to the right place? I seen the devil goin 'C'mon, now'."

As per People, in another lighter moment, Foxx assured the audience that he was also not a clone, despite previous rumours.



Los Angeles | Agencies

## Sofia Vergara gets temporary restraining order against alleged stalker

Actress Sofia Vergara has been granted a temporary restraining order against an alleged stalker. The 51-year-old 'Modern Family' actress went to court to gain an order of protection for herself and her 32-year-old son Manolo Gonzalez Vergara to keep Gregory Brown away from them both after the TV star accused him of "aggressive and harassing conduct", reports Female First UK. In legal documents obtained by TMZ.com, Sofia called Brown a "mentally unstable stalker" with "a delusional belief he personally knows her and has a relationship with her and her family."

She added that his "aggressive and harassing conduct" has caused her anxiety and emotional distress and made her fear for her safety. In her filing, the actress claimed Brown made several attempts to contact her and her son including gaining unauthorised access to the gated community where she lives back in July. As per Female First UK, Sofia also claimed to have received a letter from Brown in which he vowed to be "seeing and hearing her very soon" and she signed from "Gangsta". A judge granted a temporary restraining order against Brown which means he now has to stay at least 100 yards away from Sofia and her son. He's also banned from contacting them. It comes after Sofia admitted she has endured a "very difficult" year. As well as her ordeal with Brown, Sofia has been going through heartbreak after splitting from her partner Joe Manganiello in July and she admitted it's been a "very interesting" time for her. She told People: "I've had a very interesting and very difficult." Sofia observed the long-running SAG strike also made it a "weird, weird year". She added: "I went through a divorce this year, the SAG strike that went on for so long. I've seen my friends struggle - some had to take their kids out of their schools or had problems with their mortgages, so it's been a weird, weird year."

Despite this, Sofia remains optimistic about her future. The actress said: "It's not like it's bad. I think all the things are resolving, everything is going to be okay and I'm very excited for next year."

## Robert Downey Jr offered advice at Chris Evans' wedding

Los Angeles | Agencies

Robert Downey Jr. has been something of a "mentor" to his MCU co-stars and they go to him for advice. The 58-year-old actor, who has battled addiction and been in both rehab and jail in the past, has served as a "mentor" to his fellow stars in the Marvel Cinematic Universe (MCU) and has always been happy to offer them guidance and support, including at the 'Captain America' star's nuptials to Alba Baptista in September. His wife Susan Downey told America's Vanity Fair magazine: "I even saw it at Chris Evans's wedding. Chris Evans and Chris Hemsworth were talking to Robert. I was like, Oh right, he is the guy who is... I don't want to say a mentor, but I just see him as the dude who knows a lot. He's been through a lot of scenarios, both in life and in work, and has survived a lot. All of the stuff that made him wonderful and weird when I met him, and made him someone unlike anyone I've ever known, is still who he is today."

MCU head honcho Kevin Feige praised the 'Iron Man' star for being a "cheerleader" and a source of paternal guidance on the superhero blockbusters, reports femalefirst.co.uk. He said: "We used to joke and say that Robert was the head of the acting department because everybody there looked up to him. He took them all under his wing, but not in a subservient sense. He just became their cheerleader."



## Paris Hilton says 'teenage trauma' was the reason she opted for surrogacy

Los Angeles | Agencies

Socialite Paris Hilton has revealed the reason why she opted for a surrogate for the birth of her two children. She said that it was due to the trauma she endured during her teenage years. During an interview with Romper, Paris said that she still has "so much PTSD from what (she) went through" at Utah's Provo Canyon School for troubled youth.

"If I'm in a doctor's office, I get a shot, anything, I will literally have a panic attack and I can't breathe," she told the outlet, reports pagesix.com.

"I just knew that would not be healthy for me or the baby, growing inside of someone who has such high anxiety."

In 2020, the socialite alleged that she had been physically, sexually, and emotionally abused during her nearly year-long stint at the school. She claimed that part of the alleged abuse included non-consensual gynecological examinations in which she was held down against her will. The school previously said that they "do not condone or promote any form of abuse."

The 'Simple Life' star previously touched on her fear of pregnancy during an interview with Glamour UK, saying that "death" and "childbirth" were the "two things that scare (her) more than anything in the world."

Aside from that, Hilton said that it would have been nearly impossible to manage her hectic work schedule along with the side effects of pregnancy.

"My schedule is out of control," she said, adding that her days are often planned a year in advance.

"There never would've been the right time to do it because there's literally no time to do anything in my life," she said. Despite the long and difficult road to motherhood for Hilton, she feels like her "life is finally complete."

While the heiress-turned-entrepreneur says two kids is the "perfect" number, she is still open to potentially having one more.

# Angelina Jolie: I wouldn't be an actress today

Los Angeles | Agencies

Angelina Jolie has spoken about her perspective on Hollywood and said that she wouldn't choose to be an actress if she were starting out in this era. "I wouldn't be an actress today," Jolie said in an interview with WSJ Magazine. She added that she would probably do theater but not Hollywood, reports deadline.com.

"When I was starting out, it wasn't as much of an expectation to be as public, to share so much. Because I grew up around Hollywood, I was never very impressed with it. I never bought into it as significant or important."

The 48-year-old actress also mentioned that she plans on leaving L.A. at some point and relocating to her home in Cambodia, saying: "It's part of what happened after my divorce. I lost the ability to live and travel as freely."

"I will move when I can. I grew up in quite a shallow place. Of all the places in the world, Hollywood is not a healthy place. So you seek authenticity."

The Oscar-winning star says that she is not dating and doesn't really have a social life, saying that her "closest friends are refugees."

She mentioned the closeness she has with her children, adding: "They are the closest people to me and my life, and they're my close friends."

"We're seven very different people, which is our strength," she concluded.



Madison Beer





## I-League

# UNSTOPPABLE SHILLONG LAJONG REGISTER FOURTH STRAIGHT HOME WIN

Shillong | Agencies

Shillong Lajong beat Churchill Brothers 2-0 in their I-League 2023-24 game here at the SSA Stadium on Wednesday. The win takes Shillong to third on the table, below Sreenidi Deccan on goal difference, Churchill meanwhile remain rooted to the bottom half of the table just above the relegation zone.

In the first half, Shillong Lajong's right flank were riotous, creating chances aplenty and causing Churchill headaches on every attack. Pursunep in particular was exemplary, his speed, and perfect crossing technique let down just as equally by striker Abdou Karim Samb's profligacy in front of goal.

Samb was guilty of the easiest of misses early in the game, heading Kynsailing Khongsit's brilliant cross straight at Subashish Roy Chowdhury



in the Churchill goal from six yards. The keeper did well to hold his line, but if the header had been marginally to either side the home would've led right then.

It was ironic then that Samb played a huge role in Shillong's opener when it arrived right at the edge of halftime.

It was another Pursunep cross that started it, this one more a low fizzing one that Samb tried to meet first time from the penalty mark. He miscued his kick and the ball looped upwards, into no man's air, no defenders nor goalkeeper committing to push it away.

Laiwang Bohham met it five yards from goal and kicked it in. Churchill protested, insisting the ball had hit Samb's hand, but the referee was not convinced. The home side had a deserved lead.

Lajong did not let go of the pressure they had Churchill under in the second half, and six minutes in doubled their lead with a calmly taken Renan Paulino penalty. In a sequence of serious indiscipline, Churchill's Rahul Raju brought down Bohham illegally inside the box, just after Pursunep had been brought down in similar fashion.

If there is one thing the home side were guilty of, it was their inability to extend the lead, Samb in particular missing enough clear chances to have taken a double hat trick of sorts.

It didn't matter as Lajong wrapped up a comfortable three points, and also picked up their first clean sheet of the season.



## Leg-spinner Ravi Bishnoi becomes new top-ranked bowler in Men's T20I rankings

Team Absolute | New Delhi

India's leg-spinner Ravi Bishnoi has become the new number one bowler in the latest update to the ICC Men's T20I Player Rankings on Wednesday. Bishnoi only made his international debut against West Indies in February 2022.

But some consistent performances have seen the 23-year-old rise four spots to be on top of the men's T20I bowler rankings. Bishnoi was recently named Player of the Series during India's successful 4-1 T20I series triumph over Australia on home soil, taking nine wickets at an average of 18.22.

Overall, Bishnoi has picked up a total of 34 wickets from 21 T20I matches at an average of 17.38, with a strike rate of 14.5 and an economy rate of 7.14. Bishnoi first caught the eye of the world at the ICC Men's Under 19 Cricket World Cup in South Africa in 2020.

In that tournament, the Jodhpur-raised leg-spinner took the most wickets (17) of all players as India finished as runners up behind champions Bangladesh. With Bishnoi's jump to the top, it means Rashid Khan (second), Adil Rashid (equal third), Wanindu Hasaranga (equal third) and Maheesh Theekshana (fifth) all drop one spot inside the top 10, while India left-arm spin all-rounder Axar Patel rises 16 places to 11th in bowlers' rankings.

The biggest movers on the latest T20I rankings for batters sees India's left-handed opener Yashasvi Jaiswal soar up 16 places to 19th behind top-ranked teammate Suryakumar Yadav. Australia's left-handed Travis Head improves 16 places to 29th after the pair per-

formed admirably during the recently-concluded series.

India opener Shubman Gill (batting) and South Africa spinner Keshav Maharaj (bowling) remain in the top position of the ODI rankings, although there were a few changes following the opening game of the series between the West Indies and England in the Caribbean.

West Indies skipper Shai Hope improves four places to 11th on the list for ODI batters after he scored his 16th ODI century in Antigua, while teammate Brandon King jumps six spots to 78th position.

The top 10 Test bowlers remains unchanged behind first-placed veteran India off-spinner Ravichandran Ashwin. New Zealand pacer Kyle Jamieson re-enters the Test bowlers rankings at No.13 following his return to red-ball cricket.

On the other hand, Bangladesh spinner Taijul Islam jumps four places to a career-best 14th after his 10-wicket haul and Player of the Match heroics against the Kiwis in the first Test. Taijul's total of 708 rating points is the highest-ever by a Bangladesh bowler, surpassing Shakib Al Hasan's 705 achieved in August 2017.

Kane Williamson remains the top-ranked Test batter, while Bangladesh skipper Najmul Hossain Shanto jumps 13 places to 42nd after his superb century in the second innings against New Zealand. New Zealand all-rounder Daryl Mitchell rises one place to seventh position inside the top on the list for batters after scores of 41 and 58 in Sylhet.



## I will play IPL until I can't walk anymore: Glenn Maxwell

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Australia all-rounder Glenn Maxwell has said he would continue playing in the Indian Premier League until the very end of his career, saying it's been one of his greatest learning experiences.

Arriving at the Melbourne airport ahead of the Big Bash League season, Glenn Maxwell discussed the impact of the Indian Premier League on his career, emphasizing that he plans to play until he "can't walk anymore". In the first game of BBL 13, Maxwell will lead the Melbourne Stars in their matchup with the Brisbane Heat in Brisbane.

"The IPL will probably be the last tournament I ever play, as I will play the IPL until I can't walk anymore. I was talking about how good the IPL has been to me throughout my career; the people I've met, the coaches I have played under, the international players that you get to rub shoulders with, how beneficial to my whole career that tournament has been," said Glenn Maxwell to foreign journalist.

Maxwell, who has been part of the Royal Challengers Bangalore side since 2021, also talked up his experience of sharing the dressing room with the likes of Virat Kohli and AB de Villiers.



## Mumbai: Amidst the proliferation of franchise T20 leagues in the world,

Team Absolute | New Delhi

England opener Tammy Beaumont has called for protecting the 50-over format of the game, especially from a women's cricket perspective. The future of 50-over format has been a subject of huge debate, despite the 2023 Men's ODI World Cup happening successfully in India.

"We see the men's game talking about 50-over cricket: 'is it even worth doing?' Well, if only four nations are playing Test cricket in women's cricket, then we

have to protect 50-over cricket at all costs. "I think everyone would love to have loads of Test-playing nations and play big Test series but, at the moment, that's not a reality." "At the same time, if you're just a Test match player and you play two Tests a year, you're not playing much cricket. Hopefully we can keep and protect all formats of cricket and not just jump on the wave of T20 and leave everything else behind," said Tammy on ESPNcricinfo's Ladies Who Switch podcast.

## Rahul Dravid believes batting will be key to win on the South Africa tour



Team Absolute | New Delhi

India head coach Rahul Dravid has asked every player to make a match-winning contribution in a long month tour of South Africa.

India is set to face South Africa for a three-match T20I, three-match ODI, and two-match Test series starting from Sunday. Suryakumar Yadav will lead the Indian side for the first T20 match at Durban.

Dravid believes South African pitches to be difficult to bat on and wants batters to have a game plan for batting responsibly.

"So, it is a challenging place to bat; the statistics will tell you that. It is one of the more difficult places to bat in, especially up here in Centurion and Johannesburg. The wickets do tend to do a bit, and they tend to get up and down as well. Every one of the batsmen will have a game plan as to how they want to go, as long as they are clear about it and they commit to it and are practicing towards that, that's fine," said Dravid to Star Sports.

Dravid also expressed the mental toughness that will be required to play on the African continent rather than physical toughness.

"We don't expect everyone to play in the same way. We want them to be very clear about what works for them, and then be able to execute that. The boys, once they get out there, a lot of it is mental, and I guess, you know, we try and stress on the fact that if we do get going, if we get the opportunity to get set, they try to make it a match-winning contribution," Dravid added.

India will be taking on South Africa in a two-match Test series, starting December 26. India has never defeated South Africa in an away Test series.

## Mushfiqur Rahim becomes first Bangladesh Men's batter to be given out for obstructing the field



Dhaka | Agencies

Veteran wicketkeeper Mushfiqur Rahim has become the first Bangladesh Men's batter to lose his wicket via obstructing the field in Test cricket. The incident happened during the post-lunch session of day one of the second Test against New Zealand on Wednesday.

In the 41st over, Rahim defended the ball against Kyle Jamieson and extended his right hand to keep the ball away which looked to

have come out of instinct, though the ball was far from the stumps.

On seeing that, New Zealand players appealed immediately and the on-field umpires sent the decision to the third umpire to review. The TV umpire Ahsan Raza was satisfied after watching the replays that Rahim stopped the ball deliberately and was given out for obstructing the field.

Since 2017, handling the ball, under which the Rahim dismissal would have come, has been included within the

ambit of obstructing the field. The Laws of Cricket regarding this rule after the update reads as follows:

37.1.1 says, "Either batter is out Obstructing the field if, except in the circumstances of 37.2, and while the ball is in play, he/she wilfully attempts to obstruct or distract the fielding side by word or action."

37.1.2 says, "The striker is out Obstructing the field if, except in the circumstances of 37.2, in the act of receiving a ball delivered by the bowler, he/she wilfully strikes the ball with a hand not holding the bat. This will apply whether it is the first strike or a second or subsequent strike. The act of receiving the ball shall extend both to playing at the ball and to striking the ball more than once in defence of his/her wicket."

With the ball still in play and Rahim 'wilfully' pushing the ball away, he had to be sent back to the dressing room after scoring 35 off 83 balls. Rahim's dismissal is also the first time a batter was for obstructing the field in Tests since the rule update in 2017. While previously, seven batters have been given out 'handling the ball' in history of Men's Test cricket.



## AFC: Mumbai City FC suffer a narrow defeat against PFC Navbahor Namangan

Team Absolute | Pune

Two well-executed goals from set-piece movements paved the way for PFC Navbahor Namangan's 2-1 victory over hosts Mumbai City FC in their concluding Group D AFC Champions League 2023-24 match at the Shree Shiv Chhatrapati Complex on Monday.

While the win confirmed the Uzbek side's entry to the round of 16 for the first time, Mumbai City FC finished their campaign without a point, though they managed to score their first group league goal in this outing.

In all fairness, with a little more luck and precision, it could have been Mumbai City's night in the floodlit stadium. They not only surprised their mighty opponents by scoring first but also created enough opportunities in the second session to come close to scoring on more than one occasion.

But then, Navbahor are certainly a superior side, tighter in defence and possessing more than one plan in midfield and attack. They extracted the best out of the set piece movements and against Mumbai City FC, it helped them take home three points.

A day before the match,

Mumbai City FC coach Anthony Fernandes promised to play for a win. His boys kept his word. The home side, with the sparse crowd in the stands, started on an attacking note and picked up the lead in the 15th minute.

After Jorge Pereyra Diaz's attempted header was parried away by the goalkeeper, Abdenasser El Khayati, who was lurking around in the area, slammed it in. The celebrations that followed were very much there. After all, it was Mumbai City FC's first goal in the tournament.

Mumbai City could not hold on to their lead for a long time. The Uzbeks levelled the score at the stroke of half an hour courtesy of an infringement by Akash Mishra just outside the area. Jamshid Iskanderov's left-footed curling free-kick was a piece of beauty; it beat the wall and the goalkeeper Mohammed Nawaz hands down.

The Uzbek side's match-winner came moments before half-time from yet another set-piece movement. This time Jamshid was the creator, as his low corner kick eluded everyone before reaching Jovan Doki, who beat a jungle of legs with an angular shot.

## Monchengladbach upset wasteful Wolfsburg in German Cup

Berlin | Agencies

Borussia Monchengladbach advanced into the German Cup quarterfinals after Kouadio Kone's last-gasp extra time winner defeated Wolfsburg 1-0 on Tuesday.

Monchengladbach made the better start into the encounter as Joe Scally unleashed a long-range hammer from 20 meters to come close with seven minutes played, reports Xinhua.

The Wolves created their first opportunity three minutes later after Aster Vranckx tested Gladbach goalkeeper Moritz Nicolas from the

edge of the box. It remained the only clear-cut chance for the remainder of the first half, as both defences were able to neutralize attacking actions within the midfield.

After the restart, spectators had to wait until the 71st minute to see more action on the pitch as Christopher Kramer chipped the ball from a tight angle into the arms of Wolfsburg keeper Koen Casteels. The Wolves thought they had opened the scoring in the 86th minute, but Tiago Tomas' strike was ruled off-side. Wolfsburg remained on the front foot and should have taken the lead four minutes later, but Nicolas defused Jonas Wind's dangerous

header with a diving save.

Wind wasted another golden opportunity moments later after heading past the target from eight meters in the dying minutes.

Into extra time, Wolfsburg controlled proceedings but lacked in accuracy in front of goal, whereas Gladbach snatched the late winner through Kone, who finished the job following a counterattack in the 120th minute.

In the other matches, Kaiserslautern booked their berth in the next round after moving 2-0 past Nuremberg. Fortuna Dusseldorf came from behind to edge Magdeburg 2-1, while St. Pauli overpowered Homburg 4-1.





## 'Temptation Island' is my go-to for guilty pleasure: Divya Agarwal



Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actress Divya Agarwal, who is known for participating in 'MTV Splitsvilla 10', 'Bigg Boss OTT 1', 'MTV Ace of Space 1' has shared her opinions on the ongoing reality show 'Temptation Island India', and said how the show has become her go-to for guilty pleasure.

Divya's relationship with fiancé Apurva has ignited numerous conversations among netizens, and their story has emerged as a fan favorite, underscoring the significance of timing and patience in a relationship.

Talking about 'Temptation Island India', Divya shared: "Apurva and I were approached for the show, and we were like, 'No way, the concept is too overwhelming, we cannot!' It's a funny show and has become my go-to for guilty pleasure. It reminds me of my days on 'Splitsvilla', but these guys, they are too good."

The 'Cartel' actress said that the concept of the show is not something that is relevant to the concept of the shows in India.

"But, production-wise the makers are doing a great job. The show is executed very well

and looks great. I'm loving the Mouni Roy and Karan Kundrr's duo in the show. They are handling it very well," shared Divya.

Speaking about her favorite contestants on the show, Divya said she loves Nishank and Chetna.

"I love Nishank and Chetna. We're friends and very close in real life. I'm just waiting for when the show ends so I can meet them to ask what they did and why they did it. I know Nishank so well. I thought he would confess on the very first date that he will marry Chetna after coming out of the show," she said.

Calling Chetna a 'funny' girl, Divya said she has a very full-of-life personality.

"The way the show is formatted, she thinks the way things are happening in her villa, it's the same in Nishank's villa as well.

This makes her misunderstand things; when she's outside and sees things from here, I'm sure she'll understand. She's not like this in real life. The new contestants are good, and they're doing well. I have been following the show and I think Nidhi will not walk away with her partner," added Divya.

## Rachi Sharma opens up about her dream proposal

Mumbai: Actress Rachi Sharma shared that she believes in old school romance, and wants a grand proposal from her man. Rachi is currently seen in the show 'Kumkum Bhagya'. After a startling twist in the lives of Ranbir (Krishna Kaul) and Prachi (Mugdha Chaphekar), the whole tale turned on its head as the show fast-forwarded 20 years and started following the lives of Poorvi (Rachi) and Khushi (Simran Budharup), Ranbir - Prachi's beloved daughters.

In the recent episodes, viewers were also treated to the exciting preparations for Poorvi and Ashutosh's (Arjun Singh Shekhawat) engagement. We have seen them have a gala time shopping for jewellery, clothes as well as decorating their houses.

While, Rachi is having the time of her life shooting for this sequence, the actor revealed that she also wishes that she wants her future real life partner to do similar romantic gestures as the ones Ashutosh is currently seen planning for her in her reel life.

Talking about the same, Rachi said: "Currently we are shooting for Poorvi - Ashutosh's engagement sequence in 'Kumkum Bhagya', and I feel the highlight of one of the major sequences is my dress and my ring, which are very beautiful."

"Poorvi herself chooses the dress and her jewelry as well as decorates her house in the show, and believe me, I want to plan my engagement in real life as well," she shared.

Rachi continued saying: "What's more is that since I was a kid, I had thought about my dream proposal and I want my partner to select my ring, and my dress as well. I want him to plan everything along with me. And while in reel life my dream has been achieved, I just hope this dream will be fulfilled in my real life too."



## Shefali Jariwala is 'too temperamental to consider TV roles'

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Best known as 'Kaanta Laga' girl, actress Shefali Jariwala, who is set to make her television debut with the upcoming show 'Shaitani Rasmein', said she was too temperamental to consider TV roles earlier, adding that she couldn't connect with the monotony of the TV shows storylines and concepts.

Shefali discussed her television debut and the excitement surrounding this project.

Embracing a new challenge, Shefali is bringing her talent to the small screen with 'Shaitani Rasmein.'

She said: "I believe I was too temperamental to consider television roles before. I couldn't connect with the monotony of television show storylines and concepts."

The ex-'Bigg Boss' contestant shared: "However, when I was presented with the opportunity to be a part of 'Shaitani Rasmein,' I knew I had to say yes. It felt like the right opportunity for me to explore television because it offers a very different concept."

"The intriguing storyline made me hungry as an artist, and it's exactly what I've been waiting for," she added.

Produced by Triangle Film Company, this thrilling wedding fantasy promises a fresh take on television narratives with its innovative storyline and supernatural elements.

It will soon premiere on Star Bharat.



## Big B urges for vigilance as kids imitate superheroes

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Megastar Amitabh Bachchan has cautioned parents to be alert so that their children don't get swayed away by the superhero characters trying to imitate them.

During the episode 82 of the quiz-based reality show 'Kaun Banega Crorepati 15', host Amitabh spoke to government primary school principal Sevak Gopaladas Vitthaladas.

The 'Don' actor said: "Mr Computer wants to know when you aren't at school and you are with your wife at home, how do you spend your free time?"

The contestant replied: "Sir, I like to watch films when I'm free. I play with my son. I like to play pranks. We have Lord Hanuman's character in Ramayana. He is shown flying. In reality, the actor lies on a glass plate. He is



shown flying through computer graphics."

"I show my son the tactics by lying flat on the floor, moving my legs and carrying the mace like this. I show him what they show on TV," he added.

Replying to this, the 81-year-old actor said: "Sir, just as a precaution, please be cautious. We see many characters like the superman in films. They fly in the air. Children think they can also fly. They consider it real. They dress up like those characters and act like a superman."

"I feel awkward to say but I saw a child standing near the window on the first floor. I asked, 'what are you doing?'. The child said 'I'm a superman. I'm going to fly'. So we need to be alert while handling them. They get swayed after watching such images. Children get impressed just like you," added the 'Brahmastra' actor.

'Kaun Banega Crorepati 15' airs on Sony.

## BOBBY DEOL'S VIRAL ENTRY SONG IN 'ANIMAL' GETS RELEASED AS 'JAMAL KUDU'

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actor Bobby Deol is currently riding high on the success of his latest release 'Animal'. Apart from his action, the star also got a raving review over his entry in the film with an old Iranian song titled 'Jamaal Jamaaloo', which the makers have officially released as 'Jamal Kudu'.

Bobby Deol's entry song in the movie has gone viral. In the Sandeep Reddy Vanga directorial, Bobby's character Abrar enters dancing to a traditional Iranian song 'Jamal Kudu'. The peppy track is half a century old and finds its roots from an Iranian poet named Bijan Samandar.

'Animal' is directed by Sandeep Reddy Vanga. The film stars Ranbir Kapoor, Anil Kapoor, Bobby Deol, Rashmika Mandanna and Tripti Dimri.

It revolves around Ranvijay 'Vijay' Singh, who learns about an assassination attempt on his father Balbir Singh by Haque and his brothers, where he sets out to extract revenge.



## INSTAGRAM PIC OF THE DAY



Aamna Sharif