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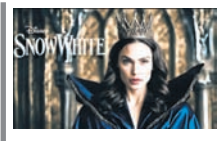
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Fadnavis is new Maharashtra CM, to take oath Today

'MAHA' SUSPENSE OVER

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The wait was over after 132 party legislators and five Independents supporting BJP on Wednesday unanimously elected Devendra Fadnavis as the legislature party leader. With this, he is set to take oath for the third time as the Maharashtra Chief Minister at a grand ceremony on Thursday.



Fadnavis' name was proposed by former Ministers Chandrakant Patil and Sudhir Mungantiwar and it was seconded by a host of legislators, including the Mumbai unit chief Ashish Shelar.

The announcement of Fadnavis' election was made by the party observer and former Gujarat Chief Minister Vijay Rupani, who was accompanied by the co-observer and Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman. Immediately after his announcements, legislators raised slogans like "Maharashtra Mukhyamantri Kaisa Ho, Devendra Fadnavis Jaisa Ho". Strategy unit chief Chandrashekhar Bawankule in his welcome address thanked the 14 crore people of Maharashtra for their overwhelming support given to BJP and Mahayuti in the just concluded

state Assembly elections. "Today is a historical day as the legislature party group leader will be elected. The Mahayuti government will increase the pace of Maharashtra's development," he said. Thereafter, Rupani declared the election process and called upon the legislators to propose and second the names of the legislature party group leader. Chandrakant Patil and Sudhir Mungantiwar proposed Devendra Fadnavis' name amid slogans shouting from the legislators. Fadnavis' name was seconded by legislators, including Pankaja Munde, Praveen Darekar, Ravindra Chavan and Meghana Bordikar. After

that Rupani asked the legislators whether anyone wanted to recommend another name. Legislators said no and thereafter Rupani announced that Fadnavis has been unanimously elected as the legislature party group leader. Fadnavis was felicitated by the core committee leaders and senior leaders, including party Secretary Shiv Prakash and General Secretary Vinod Tawde. Earlier, the state core committee met and unanimously zeroed in on Fadnavis' name as the legislature party group leader.

In her speech, FM Sitharaman said the unprecedented and unexpected mandate in the state legislature is to take forward the Viksit Bharat mission. She thanked the legislators for the unanimous election of Fadnavis saying 'Ek Hai to Safe Hai'.

"The election mandate has proved that 'Ek Hai to Safe Hai and Modi Hai to Mumkin Hai'. I salute the people of Maharashtra for giving such a mega mandate. I also thank the caretaker Chief Minister Eknath Shinde, Dy CM Ajit Pawar and leaders from allies."

Devendra Fadnavis

PERFORMANCE FOR THE PERIOD ENDED JUNE 30, 2023

- Devendra Fadnavis' first record is of becoming the state Chief Minister three times. Fadnavis became the Chief Minister of Maharashtra in 2014 and created a record of completing his five-year tenure smoothly. He was the second Chief Minister after Vasant Naik who held the chief minister's post for a record 11 years and 78 days.
- Fadnavis became the Chief Minister second time for 72 hours after he along with Ajit Pawar took the oath of office and secrecy in November 2019.
- His other record is that the BJP contested three Assembly elections under his leadership and improved its tally crossing 100 seats in successive polls. BJP won 122 seats in 2014, 105 seats in 2019 and now a record 132 seats in the just concluded assembly election in November 2024.
- His third record is quite unique in state politics. Fadnavis broke the trend that a leader who becomes the Deputy Chief Minister does not make himself the Chief Minister's post. However, Fadnavis, who worked as the Leader of the Opposition during the Maha Vikas Aghadi government, created a record by becoming the Chief Minister for the third time.

EKNATH SHINDE TO TAKE UP DEPUTY POST: SOURCES

Mumbai: Eknath Shinde, who bowed out of the race for Maharashtra's Chief Minister post last week and has been keeping a low profile since, will join the Devendra Fadnavis government as his Deputy, sources have told NDTV. Fadnavis will take oath tomorrow in Mumbai, preparations for which are in progress. There is speculation that two Deputies will take oath alongside - Ajit Pawar has already given a teaser, saying he would also take oath tomorrow. Shinde had reciprocated, saying, "Two-and-a-half year ago, Fadnavis recommended my name to become the Chief Minister. This time, we recommend his name to become the Chief Minister".

Man tries to shoot Sukhbir Badal at Golden Temple, arrested

Amritsar | Agencies

A man opened fire at Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) President Sukhbir Singh Badal at the entrance of the Golden Temple in Amritsar on Wednesday when the former deputy CM of Punjab was sitting on "punishment" guard duty.

The assailant was overpowered by bystanders and subsequently arrested.

Videos showed the wheelchair-bound Sukhbir Badal, in a blue 'sewadar' uniform and holding a spear, ducking for cover as the shooter whipped out the gun. However, temple officials near the Akali Dal leader were swift to react and overpowered the assailant.

The shooter has been identified as Narain Singh Chaura, allegedly a former militant, who faces many cases and has remained



underground. At the time of the crime, Chaura slowly approached Sukhbir Badal. When he opened fire at Badal, a 'sewadar' standing nearby pushed his hand upside, thus saving the Akali Dal leader. All the political personalities condemned the act nationally.

MASSIVE PROTESTS HELD ACROSS MP TO EXTEND SUPPORT TO B'DESH HINDU COMMUNITY

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Expressing anger on atrocities against the Hindu community in neighbouring country Bangladesh, the various organisations held a protest here in Madhya Pradesh on Wednesday.

Different organisations, including the Rashtriya Swamsevaka Sangh (RSS) and other Hindu outfits, marched in the streets while raising slogans against the Bangladesh government and demanding security for the minority communities.

The protests were organised in Bhopal, Indore, Ujjain and several other parts of Madhya Pradesh. Many shopkeepers kept their shops closed while some, who tried to open their shops, were forced to down shutters by the protesters.

The protests were held in tight security by police as several ministers, MPs, MLAs and leaders from the ruling BJP participated and marched.

Protest spots and the routes earmarked for the foot march were filled with saffron-colour flags. MP BJP chief V. D. Sharma along with state gen-



eral secretary (organisation) Hitanand Sharma, MLA Rameshwar Sharma and many other party

workers participated in the protest which was organised at Bharat Mata Chowk in Bhopal.

V. D. Sharma said atrocities on Hindus in Bangladesh won't be tolerated at any cost. "All Hindu families in India and across the world are extending their support to Hindus in Bangladesh," he added. Apart from the members of the various organisations and common people, Hindu priests also extended their support for the protest. Priests at the Mahakal temple in Ujjain prayed to Lord Mahakal and offered holy water for the safety of Hindus in Bangladesh.

In Indore, the Mahant of Bhartari Gufa shrine Yogi Rajnath warned the Bangladeshi government against violence against Hindus. He announced if no action was taken, many Hindu seers would walk into Bangladesh to protect the Hindu community.

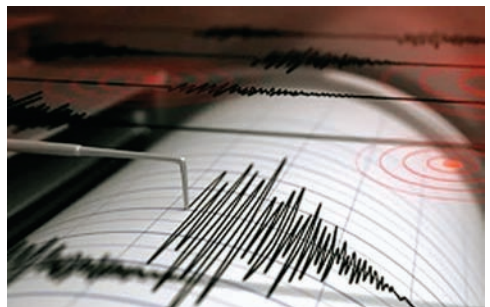
BJP MLA from Indore, Usha Thakur, cautioned "Jihadis" to stay within their limits. She said India knows how to give a befitting response to such nefarious actions.

SECOND BIGGEST EARTHQUAKE IN TELANGANA IN 55 YEARS

Hyderabad | Agencies

The earthquake that hit Telangana on Wednesday morning was the second earthquake of over 5 magnitude on the Richter Scale in the region in the last 55 years.

According to the National Center for Seismology, an earthquake of 5.3 magnitude was felt at 7.27 a.m. on Wednesday with Medaram in Mulugu district of Telangana as the epicentre. The region experienced an earthquake with a magnitude of 5.7 on April 13, 1969, with Bhadrachalam as the epicentre.



(NGRI) scientists say as the intensity of the earthquake was higher the region may feel the aftershocks in the coming hours. NGRI Director Prakash Kumar, however, said there was no need for people to be alarmed as the earthquake was of "moderate" intensity. Like the 1969 Bhadrachalam earthquake, the December 4 earthquake is also attributed to the Godavari fault zone. The seismologists say there are several fractures and faults along the Godavari Basin. Since Telangana falls into Seismic Zone II, which is

categorised as a low-intensity seismic zone, the scientists say there is no need for any panic. D. Srinagesh, retired chief scientist of NGRI, said Wednesday's earthquake is a reminder for both the Telugu states. He suggested municipalities in both states make sure that they give permission for buildings which are designed to withstand earthquakes that are likely in the particular seismic zone. He said the disaster management authorities in both Telugu states should initiate the steps to make sure that the structures are designed in line with the requirements of the particular seismic zone. He believes that earthquake safety is very important to minimise loss of lives and damages. He pointed out that geophysical hazards like earthquakes and landslides have claimed 30,000 to 40,000 lives in India since 1982. Srinagesh said the Killari earthquake of 1993 claimed a large number of lives because the buildings were not designed to withstand it while an earthquake of the same intensity in California in San Francisco claimed only 24 lives. This was due to earthquake-resistant structures.

Rahul Gandhi stopped by cops while heading for Sambhal visit

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Leader of Opposition (LoP) in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi, who along with Congress MP Priyanka Gandhi, was stopped at the Ghazipur border on the Delhi-Meerut Expressway while heading to the violence-hit Sambhal district of Uttar Pradesh on Wednesday, remarked that he was denied his constitutional right.

Taking to social media platform X, LoP Rahul Gandhi expressed his displeasure, stating: "The police stopped us from going to Sambhal. Being the Leader of Opposition, it is my right and duty to go there. Yet, I was stopped. I am ready to go alone, but they did not agree to that either. This is against the Constitution. Why is the BJP scared? Why is it using the police to hide its failures? Why is it suppressing the message of truth and brotherhood?" Congress leader Gaurav Gogoi backed



Rahul Gandhi's statement, adding, "We want peace and prosperity. Even in Manipur, Rahul Gandhi took peace there. I want to ask the BJP why they stop such attempts. When any political leader wants to carry a message of peace, why do they stop them?"

On the other hand, BJP leaders defended the decision to stop the Congress delegation, citing concerns over maintaining peace and order.

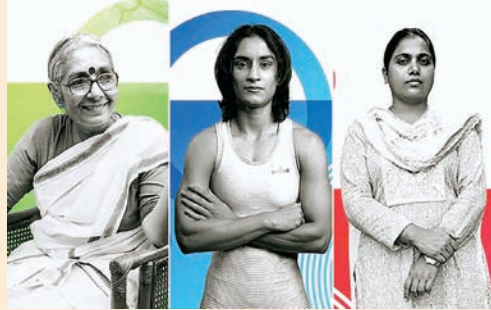
3 Indians Among BBC's 100 Inspiring Women Of 2024

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Three Indians have made it to the list of BBC's 100 Most Influential and Inspiring Women of 2024. Social activist Aruna Roy, wrestler-turned-politician Vinesh Phogat, and funerary rites pioneer Pooja Sharma have joined a stellar lineup that includes stranded astronaut Sunita Williams, Hollywood actress Sharon Stone, rape survivor Gisele Pelicot, Nobel Peace laureate Nadia Murad, and climate activist Adenike Oloadosu.

Aruna Roy, Social Activist

Social activist Aruna Roy has dedicated over four decades to championing the rights of India's rural poor. A former civil servant, Ms Roy co-founded the



Mazdoor Kisan Shakti Sangathan (MKSS), an organisation advocating for transparency, fair wages, and government accountability. Her efforts

were instrumental in enacting India's Right to Information Act in 2005. As president of the National Federation of Indian Women, Ms Roy continues to lead grassroots movements and published her memoir, The Personal is Political, earlier this year.

Vinesh Phogat, Olympic Wrestler

Vinesh Phogat, a three-time Olympian and one of India's most decorated wrestlers, has been a strong voice against gender bias in sports. She has earned medals in the World Championships, Commonwealth Games, and Asian Games.

This year, she became India's first female wrestler to reach an Olympic final but was disqualified after being 100 grams over the weight limit. Following

this, Ms Phogat retired from wrestling and ventured into politics. Known for speaking out against gender stereotypes, she led a prominent protest by Indian wrestlers against former Indian Wrestling Federation chief Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh, who was accused of sexually harassing female athletes - a charge he denied. The protest gained national attention when Ms Phogat and others were detained by police during a demonstration.

Pooja Sharma, Performer Of Funeral Rites

Pooja Sharma has redefined societal norms by performing funerary rites for unclaimed bodies - a role traditionally reserved for men in Hindu culture - in Delhi. Her mission began after the death of her brother, whose final rites she had to perform alone



SAMBHAL VIOLENCE: POLITICAL HEAT INTENSIFIES AFTER PAK-MADE CARTRIDGES FOUND

Lucknow | Agencies

The discovery of Pakistan-made cartridges in the aftermath of the November 24 violence in Sambhal has escalated political tensions in Uttar Pradesh.

Samajwadi Party (SP) MP from Sambhal, Ziaur Rahman Barq, criticised the local police, demanding dismissal of officers involved in the investigation, while Deputy Chief Minister Brajesh Pathak assured a thorough and impartial probe.

The violence erupted in the Sambhal Kotwali area during a survey, leading to five deaths. The police recovered six bullets from the scene, two of which are believed to have been manufactured in a Pakistani factory. This revelation has prompted an investigation into possible terrorist links.

Reacting to the findings, Ziaur Rahman Barq accused the police of failing to prevent things in Sambhal.

"After a week, the cartridges were recovered. The police administration has failed to prove that the people had weapons, and now they are claiming the cartridges were found there," he said.

"It's unfortunate that such police



officers are handling this case. Such officers will only harm the country, and they should be dismissed immediately," Barq told reporter.

However, earlier in the day, UP's Deputy Chief Minister Brajesh Pathak urged all political parties to support the administration in maintaining peace.

"The incident in Sambhal is under impartial investigation, with Section 144 imposed to ensure law and order. A judicial commission

has already visited the site, and strict action will be taken against anyone found guilty," Pathak said.

Highlighting the discovery of foreign-made ammunition, Pathak added, "The involvement of Pakistani cartridges raises serious concerns. Our government is committed to a thorough investigation, and stringent action will be taken against the guilty."

The Special Investigation Team (SIT), along with forensic and Local Intelligence

Unit (LIU) teams, is conducting searches in violence-affected areas.

On Tuesday, Sambhal SP Krishna Kumar Bishnoi visited the site with a forensic team, which used a metal detector to uncover additional cartridges. The police recovered a 'POF 9MM 68-26' cartridge, believed to be made in Pakistan, and a 'Winchester Made-in-USA 12-bore' cartridge. The findings have added gravity to the case, leading the police to probe possible terrorist connections.

"The discovery of Pakistan-made ammunition suggests the seriousness of this case. The police are intensively investigating and working to identify those involved in the violence," the Sambhal SP said.

Meanwhile, to restore normalcy, the municipal team has resumed cleaning operations in the area. Pathak reiterated the government's resolve to ensure justice for the victims while holding the perpetrators accountable.

As the investigation unfolds, the involvement of foreign-made ammunition has raised questions about the extent of external influences in the violence, prompting heightened scrutiny by state and central agencies.

Pocso Act being misused against rivals with ulterior motives, observes Kerala HC

Kochi | Agencies

The Kerala High Court has observed that provisions of the Pocso Act were being misused by some people to wreak vengeance against their rivals with ulterior motives and stressed the need for courts to "segregate the grains from the chaff" to ascertain whether the allegations make out a prima facie case. A bench of Justice A. Badharudeen pointed out that courts should exercise their powers to quash false and frivolous litigations filed with ulterior motives.

"It is discernible that the Pocso Act has been enacted by the legislature to protect children from sexual abuse of any mode with exhaustive penal provisions of a very stringent nature. But nowadays, the provisions of the Pocso Act are being misused by certain groups of persons to wreak vengeance and also to make a strong case against their rivals, so as to obtain ulterior motives therefrom. When the facts of the case are scanned, if the same reveals that the allegations are lev-



elled with ulterior motives and the same are not digestible to prudence, the courts shall exercise their power under Section 482 of CrPC or under Section 528 of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, 2023 to quash the false and frivolous litigations at the threshold," it said. Incidentally, the Court made these points while looking into a case where the husband has been accused by his wife of committing penetrative sexual assault upon her, when she was a minor before their marriage.

The two were in love and this had taken place for around two years prior to their getting married in 2017.

The court noted that there was no sufficient explanation

for the delay in filing the FIR alleging sexual molestation that allegedly took place in 2015. "Here, the wife of the petitioner is the defacto complainant and she lodged the complaint after three years and one month regarding coitus between them in the years 2015 and 2016 when the marital relationship estranged and they become rivals. Prima facie, it appears that the entire allegations are raised with ulterior motives by the wife against the husband by misusing the provisions of the Pocso Act and the penal provisions of IPC at a much-belayed stage after the marriage was solemnised," it added and found that the allegations against the petitioner were prima facie unsustainable.

Kerala Tourism website now available in more than 20 languages

Thiruvananthapuram | New Delhi

Kerala Tourism Minister P.A. Mohammed Riyas on Wednesday launched the revamped website of Kerala Tourism offering more than 20 languages.

The website of Kerala Tourism was last revamped in 2017.

Launching the updated website, www.kerala-tourism.org, Riyas said the user-friendly and interactive portal will showcase the immense possibilities of Kerala as a tourism destination which will be available in a novel way at the fingertips of tourists from any part of the world.

The upgraded website, which is available in over 20



languages, is a comprehensive digital guide that features the state's unique attractions, culture, heritage, and travel information. The user-centric website gives info within three simple clicks and it brags of more than one lakh pages with high-resolution images and engaging videos. Launched in 1998, www.ker-

alaturism.org has played a major role in promoting the tourism initiatives of the Department of Tourism. The website has bagged numerous national and global honours including the best among 10 tourism websites in Asia Pacific and the Middle East.

GOOGLE PICKS HYDERABAD TO ESTABLISH SAFETY ENGINEERING CENTRE

Hyderabad | Agencies

Google has chosen Hyderabad to establish its Safety Engineering Centre (GSEC) which is expected to help establish Hyderabad as a global capital for creating cyber security and safety engineering offerings for the world.

The GSEC in Hyderabad would be the first-of-its-kind in the APAC region, after Tokyo, and only the fifth in the world, with similar facilities in Dublin, Munich and Malaga.

Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy revealed on the social platform 'X' that he along with Industries and IT minister D. Srihar Babu closed a major cutting-edge technology investment partnership with Google.

The Chief Minister and IT Minister met a global team from Google headed by Royal Hansen, CIO, Google. According to an official release, this GSEC is a specialised international cybersecurity hub that will play a vital role in developing advanced security and online safety



products for the Indian context. The centre will focus on cutting-edge research, AI-driven security solutions, and creating a collaborative platform for leading experts and researchers in cybersecurity. It also aims to foster skill development, boost employment, and enhance cybersecurity capabilities in India.

Google, which has its largest employee base in Hyderabad, is cur-

rently building its largest office in the world outside of its headquarters here. The GSEC was initially announced on October 3, 2024, at the Google for India 2024 Conclave, leading to a feisty competition between states to bag this investment.

Telangana's partnership with Google aligns with its broader vision of creating a thriving technological

ecosystem that supports research, training, and innovation in ICT. As part of this ongoing digital transformation, the Telangana Fiber (T-Fiber) initiative intends to connect 47+ lakh rural homes, and this partnership with Google will ensure the digital safety of these homes through the integration of secure Android TV/ Smart TV systems. GSEC's collaboration will further strengthen these efforts, providing a secure and connected future for Telangana's citizens. Google is in discussions to establish a major Cloud Centre of Excellence (Google C-CoE) in Hyderabad, with cutting-edge competencies.

The company will also explore an agreement to partner with the Telangana government to set up India's first Google-powered Intelligent Traffic Management System. This will harness the power of Google Maps, AI, Live Camera Stream data management, and real-time traffic signalling management, among others.

INST researchers find promising materials for next-gen electronic devices

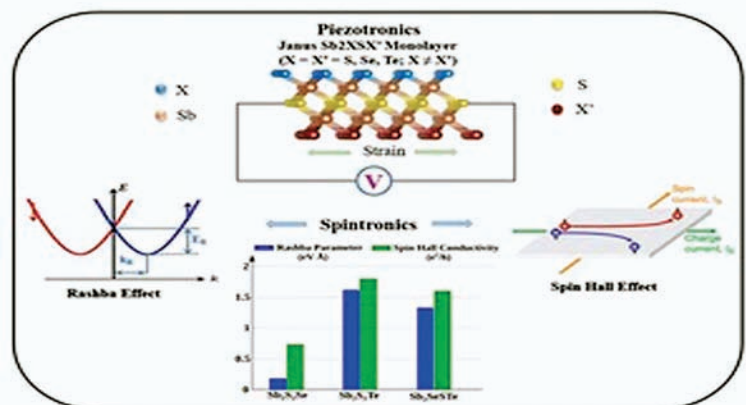
Team Absolute | New Delhi

Scientists from the Institute of Nano Science and Technology (INST), Mohali, an autonomous institute of the Department of Science and Technology, have identified the potential of Janus Sb2X5X' monolayers as promising materials for next-generation electronic devices.

To meet the rising demand for energy-efficient materials with better electronic properties, the team investigated the structural, piezoelectric, electronic, and spintronic properties of the Janus Sb2X5X'.

The results showed that these monolayers can bring potential solutions to pressing demands in energy-efficient electronics, flexible devices, and sensors.

"The Janus structure (a material or system that has two distinct sides with contrasting properties) of two-dimen-



sional (2D) materials has become a significant focus in recent research, notably after the successful synthesis of the Janus MoSSe (two-dimensional (2D) material derived from molybdenum disulfide-MoS2), monolayer," said the Ministry of Science and

Technology.

The structure is characterised by vertical asymmetry and allows for the tuning of intrinsic electric fields and the induction of piezoelectric properties. "The intersection of recent advancements in material synthesis,

the unique properties of non-centrosymmetric structures, and the push for innovative applications in spintronics motivated the exploration of Janus Sb2X5X' monolayers," the ministry said. The study, published recently in the Journal of Applied Physics, showed that the monolayers containing quintuple atomic layers form a stable free-standing 2D crystal with structural, dynamical, thermal, and mechanical stability and exhibit piezoelectric properties. The unique vertical asymmetry of the Janus structure also leads to interesting electronic properties, including properties called Rashba spin-splitting and spin Hall effects. It demonstrates the potential for promising materials for next-generation spintronic devices. In the study, the team combined advanced materials science with computational physics to explore the unique properties of Janus Sb2X5X' monolayers.

AAP MLA Naresh Balyan held under MCOCA, minutes after securing bail in extortion case

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Delhi Police on Wednesday rearrested Aam Aadmi Party's Naresh Balyan under MCOCA minutes after he secured bail in connection with an extortion case.

After the Rouse Avenue Court allowed his bail application in the extortion case, the Delhi Police Crime Branch arrested the AAP leader within the court premises and took him to its office.

Earlier on Tuesday, the Rouse Avenue Court sent the MLA from Delhi's Uttam Nagar constituency to police custody for another day and in the meantime, asked Delhi Police to respond to his bail application in the extortion case.

In the course of the hearing, Balyan's lawyer ques-



tioned the necessity of arrest and submitted that he was ready to appear before the investigating officer, as and when needed, and will cooperate with the ongoing probe. Balyan was arrested on November 30 following the

release of audio clips allegedly featuring him in a conversation with gangster Kapil Sangwan, alias Nandu. The clips purportedly reveal plans to threaten and extort money from Delhi's builders and others.

44 TRANSGENDERS RECRUITED AS TRAFFIC ASSISTANTS IN HYDERABAD

Hyderabad: Hyderabad Police have recruited 44 transgenders as traffic assistants after organising various physical events to select them on Wednesday.

A total of 58 transgenders participated in physical events like running, long jump and shot put at Goshamahal Police Ground.

According to police, 29 out of 44 transgenders selected are female transgenders while the remaining 15 are male. As per the eligibility prescribed for selection, the candidates must be above 18 years and below 40 years of age. The candidates should be Indian citizens, should have at least an SSC pass, should have a personal identity card issued by the concerned District Magistrate and should be local candidates within the limits of Hyderabad Commissionerate.

They will be deployed to manage traffic in bustling areas of Greater Hyderabad in the first phase.

Adani Defence hands over 2nd Drishti-10 drone to Indian Navy to enhance maritime security

Team Absolute | New Delhi

In a bid to boost the country's maritime surveillance capabilities, Adani Defence and Aerospace has handed over a second Drishti-10 Starliner surveillance drone to the Indian Navy.

Drishti 10 Starliner drone or UAV, manufactured by Adani Defence and Aerospace which is part of the Adani Group in Hyderabad, is an advanced intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) platform with 36 hours of endurance and 450-kg payload capacity.

According to sources close to the development, the induction of the second UAV, a version of Israel's Hermes 900 medium-altitude long-endurance UAV, into naval maritime operations was initiated at Porbandar in Gujarat.

The first Drishti-10 drone was delivered to the Indian Navy earlier this year. This marks the first-ever integration of such advanced payload suites onto a Medium Altitude Long Endurance (MALE) platform, enabling the Indian Navy with differentiated capabilities to



dominate maritime surveillance. MALE is a type of UAV that can fly at altitudes of 10,000 to 30,000 feet.

Adani Defence previously delivered the Drishti-10 Starliner to the Indian Army in June this year. The Army will deploy it at its Bhatinda base in Punjab, from where it can keep an eye on the western border with Pakistan. Drishti-10 Starliner is the only unmanned military platform with NATO 'STANAG 4671' cer-

tification, which allows military UAVs to operate in other NATO members' airspace.

It has four hard points on wings, and a large internal bay for special missions. Drishti-10 Starliner provides over the horizon, persistent multi-payload, fully autonomous capabilities and SATCOM-based operations.

It is the country's only indigenous UAV, operating reliably above 32,000 feet with

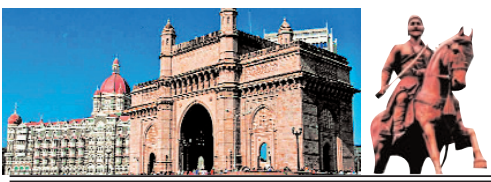
large payload-carrying capacity and distinctively long endurance.

Adani Defence and Aerospace boasts several 'firsts' to its credit - from being India's first private sector military UAV manufacturer exporting to global markets, to establishing India's first private small arms manufacturing facility, and the country's first private sector ammunition player, thus nurturing a domestic defence ecosystem.

HEMANT SOREN CABINET EXPANSION SET TO TAKE PLACE TODAY

Ranchi: The much-anticipated cabinet expansion of Jharkhand's Hemant Soren government is set to take place on Thursday with the swearing-in ceremony to be held at Ashok Udyan in Raj Bhavan at 12 noon, according to a statement from the Governor's house.

Pratim Speaker Stephen Marandi will also take oath at the event. While the list of MLAs being inducted as ministers remains undisclosed, sources indicate a coalition formula -- six ministers from the Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM), four from the Congress, and one from the Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD). Leader of the JMM-Congress-RJD-CPI-ML alliance Hemant Soren took oath as Jharkhand's Chief Minister for the fourth time on November 28.



MAHA GUV INVITES FADNAVIS TO FORM GOVT, SWEARING-IN ON THURSDAY IN PRESENCE OF PM MODI

Priority is to fulfil promises, take Maha to top level in all sectors: Devendra Fadnavis

Team Absolute | Mumbai

MahaYuti submitted a letter to stake claims for the government formation to the Maharashtra Governor C.P. Radhakrishnan on Wednesday.

The Shiv Sena chief leader Eknath Shinde and NCP President Ajit Pawar gave their letters supporting Devendra Fadnavis as the Chief Minister after he was unanimously elected by the BJP legislators as the legislature party leader.

Thereafter the Governor has invited the MahaYuti to form the government.

Fadnavis told reporters that the swearing-in would take place on Thursday at 5.30 pm in the presence of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, adding that other BJP allies and independents also gave letters supporting him as the Chief Minister.

Fadnavis said that he met Eknath Shinde on Tuesday and urged him to be part of the government.

"I am sure that he (Shinde) will accept my request. Similar appeals have been made by the Shiv Sena legislators. During two and half years, we Eknath Shinde, Ajit Pawar and myself together took decisions for Maharashtra's development. We will decide by late evening how many ministers will take oath tomorrow," Fadnavis said.

"I am thankful to the PM for giving me an opportunity to serve the state. I also thank Home Minister Amit Shah,



party president J.P. Nadda and Union Minister Ramdas Athavale for their support," added Fadnavis.

Ajit Pawar clarified that he had visited Delhi not to meet Home Minister Amit Shah. "It was purely a private visit," he said. Meanwhile, Ajit Pawar confirmed that he would take oath today. "We will work together to develop Maharashtra. We have experience helping various sections. The Centre is with us. There is a huge majority. There is no scope for any possibility of discontent. We will make efforts to fulfil all promises given to the people ahead of the Assembly election," said Pawar.

Caretaker Chief Minister Eknath Shinde said that the Governor has given the permission to form the government. "I invite all for tomorrow's swearing-in function. I respect the requests made by Fadnavis for joining the government. Five years ago Devendra Fadnavis had made a recommendation to the Governor for me to become Chief Minister. Today, I have extended Shiv Sena's support to Devendra Fadnavis as the Chief Minister. I had already said that I will abide by the decision taken by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on the government formation," the caretaker Chief Minister said.

Shinde said that Maharashtra had never witnessed a landslide victory earlier, adding that MahaYuti got a mega mandate.

"We as MahaYuti partners were working together as a common man's government. We took decisions for welfare and development schemes. The projects stilled by the Maha Vikas Aghadi government were revived. We made efforts to transform the lives of the common man," he added. Shinde also thanked PM Modi, Amit Shah, Nadda and the Centre in general for helping the state government for expediting the development process.

Team Absolute | Mumbai

BJP Legislature Party leader Devendra Fadnavis in his maiden speech after his election on Wednesday said the MahaYuti government's priority will be to expedite Maharashtra's development by focusing on all sections of the society.

"The election mandate has proved that 'Ek Hai to Safe Hai and Modi Hai to Mumkin Hai'. I salute the people of Maharashtra for giving such a mega mandate. I thank Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Home Minister Amit Shah, BJP President J.P. Nadda, caretaker Chief Minister Eknath Shinde, Dy CM Ajit Pawar and leaders from allies," he added.

With this election, Fadnavis has scored a hat-trick of sorts of becoming the chief minister for the third time. He will take an oath of office and secrecy on Thursday. Fadnavis had ruled the state as the chief minister between 2014 and 2019 and for a brief 72 hours, he became CM for the second time in 2019. Fadnavis along with Shiv Sena chief Eknath Shinde and NCP President Ajit Pawar will meet Governor C.P. Radhakrishnan to formally stake a claim for government formation.

"BJP and MahaYuti have got a big mandate and it has increased responsibility on us. The people of Maharashtra, including the beloved sisters, brothers, farmers and youth apart from OBC, tribals and downtrodden, have supported us and we have to respect the mandate. Our priority is to take forward the ongoing schemes and fulfil promises given in the Sankalp Patra," said Fadnavis. He further added, "Our efforts will be to take Maharashtra to the top position in all sectors."

He called upon the party legislators to be ready for sacrifices, especially as it was the alliance government. "We have to fulfil the expectations of the people keeping in mind



the larger goal of increasing the pace of the state's development and while doing so we take the MahaYuti partners on board. We will work with unity and show our power," he said.

"An activist was appointed to the highest post three times by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. BJP grew under his leadership. It is because of this that the common worker got different positions and an opportunity to work. So I thank PM Modi, Home Minister Amit Shah and party President J.P. Nadda," said Fadnavis. He told the legislators that the BJP received a mandate in 2019 but it was snatched away. "The MahaYuti government is taking over in a year when 75 years of Constitution are being completed. PM Narendra Modi has always said that the country's Constitution is more important to me than any scripture. This Constitution gave every Indian the right to live and grow up. It worked to establish India as a great nation," said Fadnavis. "I am thankful to everyone that they chose me as the leader of the legislature party. This election was historical," he said.

Meanwhile, former Chief Minister and BJP Rajya Sabha member Ashok Chavan said that under Fadnavis' leadership, Maharashtra will have a stable government.

BJP leader Radhakrishna Vikhe-Patil said the Devendra era has begun amid a landslide victory. "

Mumbai shoppy asks Marathi woman to speak 'Marwari', sparks row

Team Absolute | Mumbai

A south Mumbai grocer unwittingly kicked off a political fracas after he allegedly asked a woman customer to converse in Marwari dialect henceforth as a Bharatiya Janata Party-led government is coming to power in Maharashtra.

The incident occurred on Monday evening when the Marathi woman from Girgaon area had gone to the Mahadev Stores in nearby Khetwadi to buy groceries, and videos of her encounter have now gone viral.

When she started placing her order in Marathi, the shopkeeper shocked her by asking to speak with him in Marwari as "a BJP regime is now taking office in the state".

"The BJP has now come to power here... speak Marwari, Marathi will not work here," the woman said, quoting the shop owner on that incident which has triggered a rage on social media.



Incidentally, the ancient and rich Marathi was accorded the coveted Classical Language status by the Centre in early October, just ahead of the Maharashtra Assembly elections which was swept by the BJP-MahaYuti alliance.

Bitter over the slight, the woman complained to Malabar Hill BJP MLA Mangal Prabhat Lodha, but claimed she got no response despite having voted for the BJP. Disappointed but not down, she approached the Raj Thackeray-led Maharashtra Navnirman Sena (MNS) which promptly came to her help and summoned the shoppy to its

office. The rattled shopkeeper stood with folded hands, admitted to his mistake and tendered an apology to the woman and Marathi in Mumbai in general for his faux pas.

The MNS activists gave the shoppy a couple of tight slaps as he expressed his regrets over the comments to the woman sitting beside him.

The issue evoked strong responses from MNS leaders, Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) allies Shiv Sena (UBT)'s Sanjay Raut, Sushma Andhare and Kishore Tiwari, and others from Congress-Nationalist Congress Party (SP).

FARMERS IN DISTRESS, NOT GOOD FOR COUNTRY: VP DHANKHAR

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar on Tuesday said that farmers resort to agitation as they are in distress, which does not augur well for the nation.

"There is a need for introspection. Today the farmers are troubled, suffering and agitated. Had the institutions been alive and contributing, this situation would never have occurred. We cannot reduce our functions to be ceremonial," the Vice President said while addressing the centenary foundation day of the Indian Council of Agricultural Research-Central Institute for Research on Cotton Technology (ICAR-CIRCOT) in Mumbai.

On the occasion which was also attended by Union Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare and Rural Development Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan, the Vice President said: "I can see a ray of hope. An experienced person is the Agriculture Minister of India today. Shivraj ji, the challenge before you is of farmer welfare and rural development. When we talk about developed India, we should never forget that the path to developed India comes from the heart of the farmer." "I will call upon the



Director-General and appeal to the Honourable Minister, the Indian Council of Agriculture Research, all its affiliates, universities, and research centres must be firing on all cylinders to work for a situation to bring about economic prosperity to the farmer," he added.

Stating that he is also a farmer's son, he said, "Only one task has been given to the farmer, that you have to produce food within the field and then keep thinking about selling it at

the right price. I fail to understand why we cannot work out a formula in consultation with economists, and think tanks that will reward our farmers." "Instead of reward, we are not giving what is due. We are being stingy even in giving what has been promised, and I do not understand why talks are not being held with the farmers?" he questioned.

He added that India is the world's fifth-largest economy. "We are going to become the third in the world but

remember one thing, if India has to get the status of a developed nation then the income of every person has to be increased eight times. The biggest contribution in increasing that eightfold is of rural economy and farmer welfare," the Vice President stressed. He added that Prime Minister Narendra Modi gave a message to the world that no matter how big the issue is, no matter how serious the dispute, its solution can be through dialogue," he said.

SC gives Maha govt two weeks time to respond to lawyer Surendra Gadling's bail plea

Team Absolute | New Delhi/Mumbai

The Supreme Court on Wednesday granted the Maharashtra government two weeks' time to file a counter affidavit to the bail plea filed by lawyer Surendra Gadling, who is behind bars in connection with the 2016 Surjagarh iron ore mine arson case.

A bench, headed by Justice M.M. Sundresh, was hearing a special leave petition filed by Gadling against the dismissal of his appeal filed under Section 21(4) of the NIA (National Investigation Agency) Act seeking bail.

The counsel representing the



Maharashtra government sought a "last chance" to file the counter-affidavit in the matter, explaining that the translation of vernacular documents was taking time.

Senior advocate Anand Grover, representing Gadling, apprised the Bench, also comprising Justice Aravind Kumar, that the Maharashtra government has sought adjournment on eight occasions so far.

Gadling has been behind bars for five years and ten months while the trial remains at a very nascent stage, he said. At this, the apex court said: "A matter like this needs to be heard. This is not a normal case. We will give a fixed date. List after two weeks."

Mumbai's underground bullet train station achieves milestone with first base slab cast

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The first concrete base slab of the Mumbai Bullet Train station has been cast, on November 30, 2024, at a depth of about 32 metres from the ground level, which is equivalent to a 10-storey building.

The station is being built using the bottom-up method, which means that excavation work has commenced from the ground level and the concrete work has started from the foundation. This slab is 3.5-metre-deep and measures about 30 meters in length and 20 meters in width. This is the first of the



69 slabs that are cast for the station, which will form the deepest construction level for the Bullet Train station.

Thane MACT awards compensation of Rs 30 lakh to kin of accident victims

Team Absolute | Thane

The Motor Accident Claims Tribunal (MACT) has awarded a compensation of Rs 30.5 lakh in total to the relatives of two persons who lost their lives in an accident on Mumbai-Ahmedabad highway in 2020, reported news agency.

The accident took place on February 24, 2020, when the victims were travelling in an auto rickshaw from Chinchoti Vasai to Bhayander in the district and the vehicle ran into a truck parked dangerously on the road without any warning.

The two families filed separate petitions seeking com-

ensation from the truck's owners. In the order passed on November 29, Thane MACT chairman and principal district judge S B Agrawal held that the truck driver was at fault, and directed its owners and the insurer firm to pay compensation with interest at 7.5 per cent p.a. from the date of filing of the claim.

In the first petition, the Thane MACT awarded a compensation of Rs 13,66,000 to victim Sandip Markandey Chavan's mother Malati (56) and sisters Kirandevi (22) and Priya (20). Sandip (22) was earning a monthly income of Rs 8,000 at the time of death and the compensation was calculated accordingly.

IIT BOMBAY UNVEILS 'IMPART' APP, CAN TRACK CLIMATE CHANGE THROUGH LAKE WATER TEMPERATURES

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The researchers from the Indian Institute of Technology Bombay (IIT Bombay) have unveiled IMPART, a web-based application designed to monitor changing water surface temperatures with "unparalleled" accuracy.

Developed by Kumar Nitish and Prof. J. Indu from the Department of Civil Engineering and Interdisciplinary Centre for Climate Studies, this open-source tool offers a transformative approach to tracking climate change's impact on freshwater ecosystems.

Studies have consistently shown that water surface temperatures in seas, rivers, and lakes are rising due to climate change and human activities. This trend is particularly alarming in Asia, where river and lake temperatures are increasing at unprecedented rates. In 2023, global sea surface temperatures saw their steepest rise in more than a century, underscoring the urgent need for effective monitoring tools.



Water bodies, unlike land masses, heat up slowly, making their surface temperatures a critical indicator of global warming. These temperature changes impact aquatic life, reduce oxygen levels, and can lead to harmful algal blooms, threatening both biodiversity and water resources. Accurate and dynamic monitoring of these changes is vital for effective water resource management and ecological conservation. IMPART, short for Integration of dynamic water extents towards improved lake water surface temperature, bridges the gaps left by traditional monitoring methods, which often assume static lake areas. By incorporating dynamic changes in lake extents-affected by factors like urbanization, seasonal shifts, and temperature variations-IMPART provides a more accurate representation of lake water surface temperatures. "Accounting for dynamic changes in lake water surface

extents significantly improves the accuracy of temperature estimations," explains Prof. Indu. "This approach offers a more nuanced understanding of how freshwater ecosystems respond to climate change," Indu added.

HOW IMPART WORKS

IMPART utilizes data from satellite instruments such as MODIS and LANDSAT, along with lake extent images sourced from Google Earth Engine. By combining this data, the tool calculates both static and dynamic lake water surface temperatures. For its dynamic module, IMPART factors in real-time changes in lake areas, offering a level of precision previously unattainable.

In a comprehensive study involving 342 lakes worldwide-including 115 in India-the tool revealed significant differences between static and dynamic temperature estimates for more than half the lakes analyzed. The differences were particularly pronounced in tropical, arid, and temperate zones, where climatic variability has a greater influence on water bodies.



EDITOR'S SPECS

Tripura boycotts Bangladeshi visitors

After a multi-speciality private hospital in Agartala, an apex body of the hotels and restaurant owners in Tripura has decided not to provide accommodation and services to the Bangladeshi nationals in protest against the atrocities on Hindus in the neighbouring country. The leaders of the All Tripura Hotel and Restaurant Owners' Association (ATHROA) in a meeting here on Monday night discussed the situation in Bangladesh and decided not to provide any accommodation to its nationals. Bangladeshi patients following protests by some local activists over reported atrocities against minorities in Bangladesh and disrespect to the national flag. Responding to the protests, the Chief Operating Officer of the private hospital, also announced the closure of the hospital's Bangladesh desk, he had said, adding that the hospital had already seen a decline in the number of Bangladeshi patients since the unrest hit the neighbouring country. The Agartala hospital's decision follows a similar move by a private hospital in North Kolkata, which recently announced it would discontinue medical treatment to Bangladeshi patients over the same issue. The protests of the activists come amidst growing concerns over the atrocities on Hindus and other minorities in Bangladesh and reports of disrespect toward India's national symbols, which have stirred strong reactions in India. Meanwhile, in the Sribhumi district (formerly Karimganj District) of southern Assam, at least 500 traders have announced that they would stop trade (both import and export) with Bangladesh due to the rising violence against minorities and disrespect for the Tricolour in the neighbouring country. On Monday, the traders assembled at a river port close to Sribhumi town, where some of them set fire to Bangladeshi goods that had previously been shipped here.

DEVENDRA FADNAVIS : A VISIONARY LEADER KNOWN FOR CONVERTING ODDS INTO OPPORTUNITY

Sanjay Jog

Devendra Fadnavis, a committed and dedicated BJP and RSS activist, a fighter and leader with a development vision, will take over as the Chief Minister of Maharashtra for the third time. Despite the opposition's taunts and insults, especially from Uddhav Thackeray's Shiv Sena, Fadnavis continued his march relentlessly taking the BJP's agenda to the people while also taking along Eknath Shinde-led Shiv Sena and NCP headed by Ajit Pawar. Undeterred by BJP's dismal performance in the Lok Sabha elections, Fadnavis with tacit support from BJP's state and central leadership backed by a powerful RSS network, worked relentlessly to improve the party's tally. Fadnavis with military-like precision planning tweaked the party's strategy for the state Assembly election by reaching out to the OBCs considering the Maratha community, especially in the wake of pro-Maratha reservation activist Manoj Jarange-Patil's stance. His

move worked as the OBC community with subcastes overwhelmingly supported BJP and led the party to a record 132 seat-win after contesting 149 constituencies. Yogi Adityanath's 'Batenge To Katenge' call and Prime Minister Narendra Modi's 'Ek Hai Tau Safe Hai slogan' came in quite handy for Fadnavis and the BJP to lure the voters by exposing the Congress party's 'divide and rule' conspiracy. Fadnavis focused on strengthening the party organisation at the level of one lakh plus booths across Maharashtra. While doing so, he saw to it that not only BJP candidates but Mahayuti nominees also benefited. His plan was quite clear that the Mahayuti alliance should reach a magic figure of 145 in the 288-seat state Assembly while countering the opposition's fake narrative. Fadnavis, an ace administrator and strategist, applied all possible tactics to outsmart the opposition, especially by puncturing their "save constitution" and cancellation of reservation narrative.

He took to the voters the pro-development agenda by promoting the Mahayuti government's slew of welfare and development schemes, including the Ladki Bahin Yojana which created a magic in favour of BJP and Mahayuti in general. As a politically conscious and alert leader, Fadnavis succeeded in putting the opposition parties in the wrong box over their statements that if voted to power they would stop Ladki Bahin Yojana and several other schemes. Fadnavis, who led the state during 2014 and 2019, also blamed the opposition for tarnishing Maharashtra's image by painting a bleak picture of economy and investments. He cornered the opposition by projecting how Maharashtra has regained the top position in attracting investments during Mahayuti's tenure from the third position during the Shiv Sena-led Maha Vikas Aghadi government. As a close confidant of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Fadnavis will seek his guidance and the central government assistance for the smooth functioning of the 'double-engine sarkar' in Maharashtra. He, however, faces several challenges,

including mobilising funds for various development and welfare schemes, curbing revenue and fiscal deficits, increasing employment, providing higher procurement prices to cotton and soybean farmers in particular and stopping the increasing crimes against women. However, his supporters and well-wishers claim that there is no word impossible in Fadnavis' directory and he will take Maharashtra to a new scale by converting all odds into opportunity. Ahead of the 2019 Assembly elections, Fadnavis in his concluding speech at the last session of the state legislature, had announced that he will return -- "Mi Punha Yein (I will return)". It was ridiculed by the opposition then. He became the CM for the second time for 72 hours after Ajit Pawar ditched him and the government did not survive. After the collapse of Maha Vikas Aghadi's government, he became the deputy chief minister. And, now Fadnavis has come back with full force and a strong mandate to start his third innings.

Exposed after Biden pardons son, 'vulnerable' US justice system reflects on Adani case, say India experts

US President Joe Biden's decision to grant a sweeping pardon to his eldest son, Hunter Biden, convicted on charges of gun crimes and tax violations, has triggered sharp criticism from Indian experts, who also see double standards in the American justice system, particularly in relation to allegations against industrialist Gautam Adani. The move, described as a major "U-turn" from Biden's earlier commitment to judicial impartiality, has also reignited debates over the independence of the US Department of Justice and its alleged vulnerability to political influence. Biden defended the pardon by claiming that the case against his son was politically motivated and intended to "break" both him and Hunter. In stark contrast to his previous public statements, where he vowed to uphold the rule of law and not

interfere in the legal proceedings involving his son, Biden's decision has sparked accusations of hypocrisy. Meanwhile, President-elect Donald Trump bashed the move as a "miscarriage of justice". Indian experts have also weighed in on the controversy, with several highlighting what they perceive as the double standards of the US justice system, particularly in relation to allegations against Indian industrialist Gautam Adani. Speaking to correspondent, former diplomat and IFS officer Ashok Sajjanhar slammed Biden's decision, describing it as evidence of America's "hypocrisy." "In my opinion, this demonstrates America's hypocrisy. Joe Biden had earlier said he would not use his presidential powers to interfere in his son's legal matters, but he has now completely reversed that position. Biden likely fears that the incoming Trump administration

will aggressively pursue his son, much like the Democrats targeted Trump himself. This U-turn raises serious questions about his credibility," Sajjanhar said. Sajjanhar also drew attention to the US Department of Justice's actions against Adani, calling them politically motivated. "The same Department of Justice that pardons Biden's son has also levelled charges against Indian businessman Gautam Adani and his associates. This highlights the political interference at play and exposes the double-faced policies of a country that claims to champion democracy and the rule of law," he added. Retired Lt. Gen. Sanjay Kulkarni also criticised the pardon, asserting that the Department of Justice operates under political pressure. "Joe Biden has completely pardoned his son, even as Hunter faced multiple indictments related to

drugs and tax evasion. At the same time, the Department of Justice has filed charges against Adani and his team without proving their guilt. This suggests a politically driven agenda," Kulkarni said. Kulkarni further questioned the legitimacy of the charges against the Adani Group, arguing that they appeared to be aimed at tarnishing the industrialist's reputation. "If the US President himself lacks faith in his Department of Justice, how can we believe the charges against Adani are free from political pressure? These baseless accusations are a clear attempt to mislead and damage his credibility," he added. Former Ambassador Yogesh Gupta echoed these sentiments, calling Biden's decision "undemocratic" and an act of interference in the

judicial process. "Biden earlier claimed he would not interfere in judicial matters, but his pardon for Hunter represents a complete U-turn. This raises serious questions about the independence of the US justice system," Gupta said. Gupta also condemned the Biden administration's actions against Adani, describing them as unfounded. "The Biden administration has raised questions about Gautam Adani's business dealings without corroborating evidence. Reports suggest that the US Department of Justice even issued arrest warrants against Adani group members, which further underscores the politically motivated nature of these actions," he said.

international

SENSELESS, HORRENDOUS: UK MP PRITI PATEL CONDEMNS VIOLENCE AGAINST HINDUS IN B'DESH

London | Agencies

Indian-origin UK MP Priti Patel on Wednesday strongly condemned the ongoing violence against Hindu minorities in Bangladesh, calling it "senseless" and "horrendous." Patel, a Conservative MP and Shadow Foreign Secretary, urged the Bangladesh government to prioritise the security and religious freedom of Hindus. In a statement to correspondent, Patel expressed her concerns over the instability in Bangladesh and the attacks on religious minorities. "These senseless acts of violence and the instability in Bangladesh are deeply concerning, and my thoughts are with all of those affected," she said. "The targeting of religious places of worship is horrendous, and I know many Hindus will be feeling frightened and fearful, especially given the impact of previous waves of violence," she further said. "The Bangladesh government must ensure robust action is taken to protect life, prevent violence, and

safeguard religious freedoms. I have called on the UK government to do all it can to support that work," Patel added. On Monday, British MPs, including Patel, raised concerns about violence against Hindus and other minorities in the Muslim-dominated nation during a parliamentary session, demanding a statement from Foreign Secretary David Lammy. Patel stressed that the escalating violence in Bangladesh is "deeply concerning." Patel also highlighted the arrest of an ISKCON leader at a place of worship, describing it as a critical issue. Addressing the House of Commons, she said, "There are deep and longstanding ties between our two countries, and the degree of escalation in the violence is deeply concerning. What we are witnessing now is uncontrolled violence in many quarters, and we are watching with horror and shock as further violence spreads in Bangladesh. Our thoughts in this House are most definitely with the diaspora community here and

those affected in Bangladesh." She further noted that the current instability in Bangladesh since the departure of former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in August has heightened global concerns. "Many governments are condemning the violence and calling for peace and law and order to be restored," she said. Sharing the Parliament briefing in a post on X, she said, "I am deeply concerned by the awful violence we have seen in Bangladesh, and my thoughts are with those affected." "I called on the government to set out how they are engaging with the Bangladeshi government on this pressing and important issue. Robust action needs to be taken to protect life and prevent violence and persecution, including those based on religious beliefs," she added. The discussion in the UK Parliament was prompted by an urgent question tabled by Labour MP Barry Gardiner. Responding to the query, Catherine West, Foreign Office

Minister for the Indo-Pacific, stated that the Muhammad Yunus-led interim government had assured support for minority communities. The atrocities against minorities in Bangladesh have drawn widespread condemnation from around the world. US Congressman Brad Sherman also criticised the violence, stating that the Yunus government has "an absolute obligation to protect the minority Hindu community" following the fall of the democratically elected Sheikh Hasina-led government. Meanwhile, tensions between New Delhi and Dhaka have been rising since August 5, when Sheikh Hasina fled to India following her ouster. Her departure was followed by a series of attacks by radical Islamists on minorities in the violence-stricken nation. India has repeatedly expressed concern over the extremist rhetoric against Hindus in Bangladesh, urging the Yunus government to ensure the safety and security of Hindus and all other minorities.

South Korea: Opposition parties submit impeachment motion against Yoon after martial law turmoil

Seoul | Agencies

Opposition parties in South Korea submitted a motion to impeach President Yoon Suk Yeol on Wednesday after Yoon's declaration of martial law was blocked by lawmakers. The main opposition Democratic Party and five other minor opposition parties, including the Rebuilding Korea Party and Reform Party, submitted the motion to the bills office at the National Assembly at 2:43 pm, Yonhap news agency reported. The impeachment motion was signed by 190 opposition lawmakers and one independent lawmaker, with no support from any ruling party lawmakers. The opposition parties



plan to report the motion to a parliamentary plenary session on Thursday and to put it up for a vote on Friday or Saturday. By law, an impeachment motion must be put to a vote between 24 and 72 hours after the motion is reported to a plenary session. Representative Shin Chang-sik of the Rebuilding Korea Party said the parties have not decided yet whether to vote 'right away' or at some other time 'within 72 hours.' The impeachment motion requires a two-thirds majority to pass the parliament. Of the 300-member National Assembly, the opposition will need eight votes from the ruling People Power Party to pass the bill.

Trump's nominee to head anti-drug agency becomes 2nd high-level appointee to quit

New York | Agencies

Donald Trump's nominee to head the Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) has become the second high-level appointee to quit, highlighting the problems the President-elect faces in filling the top jobs in his administration. Chad Chronister, a local-level law enforcement official who was boosted for the nation's top drug-fighting job, announced on X on Tuesday night that he was withdrawing, apparently overwhelmed by the magnitude of the task he would face. "Over the past several days, as the gravity of this very important responsibility set in, I've concluded that I must respectfully withdraw



from consideration," he said. Trump's nominee for attorney general, Matt Gaetz, dropped out last month amid allegations of sexual misconduct involving a minor and drug use that was investigated by a Congressional ethics committee, giving Trump his first setback in fielding untried and controversial fig-

NEARLY 4,000 FAMILIES DISPLACED BY FLOODS IN KENYA

Nairobi | Agencies

About 4,000 households have been displaced by floods in Kenya, a government official said Tuesday. Raymond Omollo, principal secretary in the Ministry of Interior and National Administration, said the most affected families are in the western part of the country. "Busia and Kisumu counties are among the hardest-hit following heavy rainfall over the past week, which has displaced 3,970 households. The displacement has been largely attributed to the overflow of rivers Nzoia, Nyando, Yala, Miriu and Awach," Omollo said in a statement issued in the Kenyan capital of Nairobi. He said that as part of a long-term strategy, the government will relocate communities at risk to better housing facilities and redesign 30-meter riparian corridors along the rivers and other large water bodies to curb displacement. Omollo said the government will support affected communities,



which are currently hosted in camps at different schools, as the rains continue to pound the East African nation, Xinhua news agency reported. The Climate Prediction and Applications Center (ICPAC) of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development, a regional bloc, fore-

casted in November that eight countries in the Horn of Africa, including Uganda, Kenya, Rwanda, Burundi, Tanzania, Somalia, Ethiopia and South Sudan, would receive more than usual rainfall leading to floods. According to the ICPAC, affected areas in Kenya are expected to receive

between 50 and 200 mm of rain per day, with communities in high-risk areas advised to exercise caution during this period. In 2023, some 270 people were killed and over 900,000 displaced by floods in the Horn of Africa, said the ICPAC.



SAMBAL YOJANA WORKS AS PER ITS NAME-CHIEF MINISTER DR. YADAV

▶ THE CHIEF MINISTER TRANSFERRED AN AMOUNT OF RS 225 CRORE TO THE ACCOUNTS OF BENEFICIARIES UNDER THE SAMBAL YOJANA

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Dr. Mohan Yadav has said that the Sambal Yojana provides support to the workers in emergency situations as per its name. He said that the government is with the workers in times of difficulty and sorrow. He said that this amount is in the form of condolences from the state government for the family of the affected beneficiary. This amount will definitely support the workers in times of difficulty. Chief Minister Dr. Yadav on Wednesday transferred an amount of Rs 225 crore to the bank accounts of 10 thousand 236 beneficiary labor families under the Chief Minister Jan-Kalyan Yojana (Sambal) from the Ministry through a single click. Chief Minister Dr. Yadav said that the Chief Minister Jan-Kalyan (Sambal) Yojana was started in the year 2018. Under this scheme, benefits worth more than



Rs 5,626 crore have been given in more than 6 lakh 16 thousand cases since its inception. Chief Minister Dr. Yadav praised Labor Minister Prahlad Singh Patel and said that Patel has worked with sensitivity. He has made efforts to ensure that the person till the last row of the society gets the benefit of the public welfare schemes of the government. Chief Minister Dr. Yadav informed that more than one crore 73 lakh workers have registered themselves in the Sambal Yojana. Out of these, more than 32 lakh workers have been registered in the Sambal 2.0

scheme. He said that this is a unique scheme, in which crores of needy families are helped from the birth of the child till their entire life. Chief Minister Dr. Yadav said that the workers who deliver goods and services from door to door have been placed in the category of unorganized workers and they are also being given the benefit of Sambal Yojana from March 2024. These include stone breakers, brick makers, cooks, household workers, tendu leaf collectors, etc. They are also being given the benefits of schemes like ex-gratia assistance, education

incentive scheme, maternity assistance, Ayushman Bharat and ration slips in this scheme.

Chief Minister Dr. Yadav also had a virtual dialogue with some beneficiaries of Sambal Yojana in the amount transfer program. He discussed with Rekha Pradhan from Narmadapuram, Krishna Bai from Sehore, Lamati Bai from Dindori, Shobharani and Krishna Devi from Sagar. Chief Minister Dr. Yadav told the beneficiaries that the government is with you in this hour of grief, the amount being given today will prove to be helpful for your family.

Chief Minister Dr. Yadav said that today is the death anniversary of Krantisurya Jananayak Tantiya Mama. He made efforts to free his society from the atrocities of the British. It is on this day that the state government has given benefits to the workers' families. Labor, Panchayat and Rural Development Minister Shri Patel expressed his gratitude to Chief Minister Dr. Yadav for transferring the amount of Sambal Yojana to the workers. He said that our sensitive government is committed to the welfare of workers and the poor. This is the first time that the amount has been transferred by linking the accounts of the beneficiaries with Aadhaar.

Madhya Pradesh High Court orders man to plant 50 trees in month in contempt case

Team Absolute | Jabalpur

The Madhya Pradesh High Court has ordered a man to plant 50 trees of indigenous species within a month, while accepting his apology in a criminal contempt case. A division bench comprising Justice Sanjeev Sachdeva and Justice Vinay Saraf issued the order on December 2 in a suo motu criminal contempt petition against Rahul Sahu.



"Keeping in view the conduct, we direct that respondent (Sahu) shall plant 50 trees of indigenous species in the area of Sambalgarh in Morena district. The trees shall be of indigenous nature of at least height of 4 feet," it said. "The trees shall be planted under the direction of Sub Divisional Officer (Forest), Sambalgarh. The trees will be planted within a period of one month," it said. The high court took suo motu action on a contempt reference received from the Judicial Magistrate First Class (JMFC), Sambalgarh. "The respondent is present in person. He (Sahu) has filed his affidavit dated October 15, 2024 and has contended that he is a semi-literate per-

son and has studied only up to Class 10," the court order said.

"He submits that he does not have formal legal education and has limited knowledge of legal procedure and is unfamiliar with the decorum and requirement of court proceeding," it said. The order said that Sahu expressed regret and remorse at his conduct and furnished unconditional apology and undertakes to be careful in future. "He has volunteered to undertake social service," the court said.

The area where the trees shall be planted would be decided by the Sub Divisional Officer (Forest),

Sambalgarh, it added. "The respondent complying with the direction, the proceedings shall stand closed," the court order said.

Sahu posted certain photographs of the court in Morena with a comment on a social media platform related to court proceedings when a family case filed by his wife was being heard, his advocate Ashish Singh Jadoun said.

The JMFC took cognisance of the social media post and served notice to Sahu, but he did not respond despite giving an opportunity. The JMFC later referred the matter to the high court, the counsel said.

UK, Germany to be partners in MP Global Investors Summit: Kailash Vijayvargiya

Team Absolute | Bhopal

The UK and Germany -- the two countries Chief Minister Mohan Yadav visited in November -- will be partners in the Madhya Pradesh Global Investor Summit, state Urban Development Minister Kailash Vijayvargiya said on Wednesday after a cabinet meeting.

The Minister said a proposal for the same was brought before the cabinet chaired by CM Mohan Yadav, which has been approved unanimously by the council of ministers.

He said both countries have agreed to participate as partners in the 'MP Global Investors Summit', which will take place in Bhopal in February 2025. It will be the first Global Investors Summit in Bhopal, the minister said. During the cabinet meeting, the ministers also congratulated Chief Minister Mohan Yadav for his successful visit to UK and Germany. He further informed that Madhya Pradesh has received investment proposals worth Rs 78,000 crore during his six-day tour to the UK and Germany. "If this huge amount is invested, Madhya Pradesh will write a new history of industrial growth in coming years," Vijayvargiya added. Investment proposals of Rs 59,350 crore and Rs 18,090 crore were received from the UK and Germany, respectively, in the education, health, skill development and technology sec-



tors, the state government has stated earlier.

Meanwhile, Kailash Vijayvargiya said that the Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan governments have agreed to sign the Memorandum of Agreement (MoA) over the Parbati-Kalisindh-Chambal river linking project. The minister informed that works on the crucial project of rivers linking (Parbati-Kalisindh-Chambal) between two neighbouring states will start once the MoA is signed.

A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for this project worth Rs 75,000 crore was already signed earlier in July this year.

Notably, the Parbati River is the third largest tributary of the Chambal River flowing through Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan. It originates from the Vindhyanal ranges near Astha in the Sehore district of Madhya Pradesh at an elevation of 609 m and joins river Chambal in the Kota district of Rajasthan.

Dalit 'torture': Police denies claims, BJP hits out at Congress for 'false' info

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Madhya Pradesh Police have denied a Dalit youth's claim that he was tortured and urinated upon when he went to file a complaint against people who thrashed him.

The controversy erupted after a video went viral in which, a Dalit youth, identifying himself as Deepak Malviya, alleged that he was tortured in a police lock-up in the Raigarh district.

Malviya claimed he had gone there to file a complaint against persons who had beaten him up a few days back, however, police took him inside the police station and "tortured" him.

"A couple of cops took me inside the police station and gave me an electric shock. Police did not register my complaint and instead tortured me," Malviya claimed in his video.

On Tuesday, Congress state unit chief Jitu Patwari shared the video on his official social media account, alleging that Dalit youth was brutally



beaten up by police. "Torturing Dalits and urinating on them have become common in Madhya Pradesh," Patwari said.

However, Raigarh district police said, "No such incident occurred." "There are over a dozen CCTV cameras installed in the police station which are controlled directly from the

SP office. No such incident occurred in Narsingharh Police Station," a Police official said in a video message issued on Wednesday.

He further stated Malviya was booked for creating a ruckus eight months back. Later, he was also arrested for inciting violence through his false messages on social media

and both cases were being heard in a district court.

Police officials said Malviya wanted to file a complaint against Sarpanch of his village. "SP (Raigarh) had ordered an investigation on Malviya's allegation, which turned out to be a fake, that's why the case wasn't registered. Now he has come up with a new story of torture at the police station, which is completely wrong," the police official added.

After the police official's statement on Wednesday, Madhya Pradesh BJP accused the Congress of spreading wrong information on social media in a "deliberate attempt to defame" the BJP government.

"Congress was trying to create unrest in Madhya Pradesh, which is why false allegations were being made against police and the state government. The police have clarified the entire matter, therefore Jitu Patwari should apologise for his false claims," MP BJP media in-charge, Ashish Agarwal said.

Approval to include 442.04 acres of land in Industrial Area Mohasa-Babai to promote manufacturing of electrical and renewable energy equipment

Team Absolute | Bhopal

A meeting of the Council of Ministers was held in the Mantralaya on Wednesday under the chairmanship of Chief Minister Dr. Mohan Yadav. The cabinet approved the expansion of the area of Industrial Area Mohasa-Babai District Narmadapuram to promote manufacturing of electrical and renewable energy equipment. According to the decision, 442.04 acres of land of Industrial Area

Mohasa-Babai has been added to the 441.96 acres area reserved for manufacturing of electric and renewable energy equipment. Now total area of the industrial park has become 884 acres. Similarly, facilities and allotment process approved for the industrial park were approved to be made available for the units to be set up under the revised area.

The Cabinet approved road construction works worth more than Rs 2312 crore in Indore-Ujjain in view of the upcoming

Simhastha-2028. In this, Ujjain Simhastha bypass length 19.815 km, 4-lane with paved shoulder upgradation and construction work costing Rs 701 crore 86 lakh were approved. Similarly, Indore-Ujjain Greenfield Road 4-lane with paved shoulder length 48.05 km and costing Rs 1370 crore 85 lakh and Ingoria-Depalpur 2-lane with paved shoulder road length 32.60 km under Ujjain district worth Rs 239 crore 38 lakh have been approved. All these roads will be developed through

MP Road Development Corporation.

The Cabinet approved the formation of a Cabinet Committee for determination of Excise Policy for the year 2025-26, for taking ancillary decisions from time to time and taking necessary policy decisions in the interest of revenue. The Cabinet Committee includes Deputy Chief Minister Jagdish Deora, Ministers Uday Pratap Singh, Govind Singh Rajput and Nirmala Bhuria.

School Teacher Falsely Cites Student's Death To Take Leave, Suspended

Team Absolute | Mauganj

Authorities have suspended a government school teacher in Madhya Pradesh's Mauganj district after he took leave citing the death of a student who was alive, officials said on Wednesday. The accused, Hiralal Patel, worked at a government primary school in Chigrika Tola of the district, they said.

Patel took leave on November 27 and noted

in the attendance register that a class 3 student of the school died and he was going to attend the funeral, according to the officials.

When the student's father got the information about the teacher's note, he made a complaint to the district collector as his son was alive and healthy, they said.

Mauganj Collector Ajay Shrivastava said Patel has been suspended and a probe ordered into the matter.

Madhya Pradesh Awarded as the Best Adventure Tourism State

▶ ARUNACHAL PRADESH MINISTER CONFERRED THE AWARD AT THE ATOAI CONVENTION IN TAWANG. MADHYA PRADESH TOURISM BOARD PARTICIPATED AT THE NATIONAL CONVENTION OF ADVENTURE TOUR OPERATORS ASSOCIATION OF INDIA (ATOAI)



results. The MP Tourism Board was honoured with the award for the 'Best Adventure Tourism State' at the national convention of the Adventure Tour Operators Association of India (ATOAI) held in Tawang, Arunachal Pradesh. The Chief Minister of Arunachal Pradesh, Pema Khandu presented the award to the Joint Director Madhya Pradesh Tourism Board, Dr. S.K. Shrivastava. The Best Adventure State award is given to states that have excelled in promoting adventure tourism through infrastructure, diverse activities, and innovations. Principal Secretary Tourism

and Culture Department and Managing Director Madhya Pradesh Tourism Board Shekhar Shukla said "Under the guidance of Tourism, Culture and Religious Trusts and Endowments Minister (Independent Charge) Dharmendra Bhav Singh Lodhi, efforts are being made at various levels to establish the state as an adventure tourism hub. This award is not only a recognition of our state's unique natural resources and diverse tourism experiences but also a result of the state government's continuous efforts and innovations in the field of adventure tourism."

Convocation is an occasion of resolution to serve the nation along with education and sanskars: Governor

Governor attended the convocation of IES University. Youth, Developed India should participate enthusiastically in the Young Leaders Dialogue

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Governor Mangubhai Patel said that convocation is an occasion for the students to resolve to serve the nation along with education and sanskars. It is an opportunity to commit to nurture and flourish our intellectual, cultural traditions and sanskars. Governor Patel was addressing the first convocation of IES University Bhopal. On this occasion, degrees and medals were awarded to the initiated students and students of various faculties. Higher Education Minister Inder Singh Parmar was also present in the program.

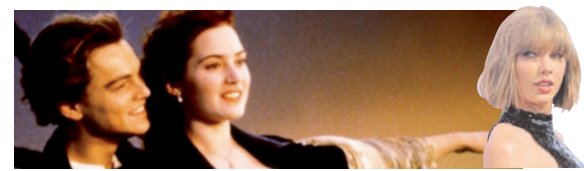
Governor said that the first convocation is a very emotional and unforgettable moment for both the students and the university. It is an important milestone in moving for-



ward on the path of building a new future. He told the initiated students that all of you are the representative generation of Amrit Prasanga of

developed India. Your generation is fortunate to have got a historic opportunity to contribute to the process of nation building by Prime Minister

Narendra Modi. Governor said that the youth can convey their views to the top level of the government on what kind of developed India they want to see, what and how the government should do for it. He appealed to the students to be a part of the Developed India Young Leaders Dialogue on the occasion of the historic event of 12 January 2025. Participate enthusiastically in interesting online quiz competitions, block and essay writing competitions at the state and national level related to developed India. Governor Patel also asked the university management to motivate the students to participate in the dialogue. Provide them with necessary facilities, convenience and support. Organize competitions as per the format of Developed India Young Leaders Dialogue at the university level.



Gal Gadot plays evil stepmother to Rachel Zegler's Disney princess



Los Angeles | Agencies

Gal Gadot plays the Evil Queen in Marc Webb's upcoming adaptation of the Disney classic Snow White, which stars Rachel Zegler as the Disney princess, reveals a trailer for the film dropped on Tuesday.

The two-minute-24-second-long trailer begins with Zegler's Snow White recalling how after her father's demise, her stepmother, the Evil Queen, took over the country. And as Gadot's Evil Queen reigned supreme, Zegler's Snow White was pushed to the shadows. To make matters worse for Snow White, the Evil Queen's magic mirror tells her that her stepdaughter is the "fairest of them all". In order to save herself from the clutches of the Evil Queen, Snow White escapes to the forest, where she comes across the seven dwarves. Teaming up with the dwarves, the princess embarks on a journey to take things into their hands and save their kingdom.

The trailer ends with the Evil Queen dressed as an old woman and offering Snow White a poisonous apple.

While many fans have appreciated Gadot as the Evil Queen, Zegler has been receiving a lot of flak for her role. Also, the use of CGI for the dwarves have also been criticised on social media.

Snow White is slated to hit theatres on March 21, 2025. It's co-written by Erin Cressida Wilson and Greta Gerwig, who directed the blockbuster Barbie last year.



Los Angeles | Agencies

While Justin Timberlake is off on his Forget Tomorrow World Tour, his wife Jessica Biel will be able to get the much-needed break from drama she so desperately wants. The "Mirrors" hitmaker has been touring since April and is scheduled to continue the musical journey through next summer. The 43-year-old pop star hit a snag earlier this year when he was apprehended in New York for driving while intoxicated. In light of the bubbling drama surrounding his troublemaking status, Timberlake eventually pleaded guilty to a lesser charge of driving while ability impaired. Although the issue of his June arrest was settled in September after he agreed to pay a fine and perform community service for the updated noncriminal traffic violation, his wife has had no choice but to deal with another rough path through their already rocky 12-year marriage.

JESSICA BIEL 'DESPERATE FOR A BREAK' FROM HUSBAND JUSTIN TIMBERLAKE AFTER HIS DUI ARREST



Khloé Kardashian claims therapist leaked 'private' info from session to a tabloid: 'I did not trust anybody'

Los Angeles | Agencies

Khloé Kardashian turned to the gym as a form of therapy after being betrayed by her therapist.

The "Kardashians" star revealed she started working through her mental health struggles with exercise after her former counselor allegedly breached doctor-patient privilege amid her divorce from Lamar Odom.

"I remember I was going to therapy and the next thing I knew, something private I told my therapist was on a tabloid," she told Bustle in an interview published Tuesday. "And I knew that my therapist disclosed this information to a tabloid because there's no way this could have gotten out there," she continued.

Kardashian, 40, did not disclose exactly what her therapist leaked about her marriage to the former NBA star, 45, which ended in 2013 due to infidelity and his battle with addiction.

Although the traumatic experience kickstarted her love for fitness, it ruined the reality star's relationship with therapy for nearly a decade. "I stopped going to therapy and started going to the gym," she explained. "I needed a release, but I did not trust anybody else anymore. And the place that I felt the safest was the gym."

Kardashian called the experience "very jarring and sort of unbelievable" and insisted "there's not a chance in the world that it came from anywhere else."

The Hulu personality refused to seek help for years as a result of the betrayal until her older sister Kim Kardashian finally convinced her to give it another shot. "I started when I was 39," Khloé said, noting that her new doctor is "really lovely." "I was like, 'I'll do this for you.' I dragged my feet, and then I was like, 'Wow, OK, this is good. I needed this.'"

It turned out the "Revenge Body" alum had a lot to unpack after keeping things bottled up for years.



ANGELINA JOLIE CALLS QUESTION ABOUT HER BIOPIC 'MOST INSANE', HOPES IT NEVER GETS MADE

Los Angeles | Agencies

Angelina Jolie has said she hopes no one ever makes a biopic about her life. The actor has herself starred in several biopics. She played supermodel Gia Carangi in 1998's Gia and journalist Mariane Pearl in 2007's A Mighty Heart, and plays opera singer Maria Callas in the forthcoming film Maria.

But she does not want one made about her. "That gets the most insane question award," Jolie told The Sunday Times. "When you are a public person and you are playing [someone else], you are conscious of how you would hate for somebody to interpret your life or think they understand your life, so we tried to be thoughtful [with Maria]. Let's hope there isn't one about my life." The Oscar winner, 49, stars in Pablo Larraín's biopic about the final days of Callas, the famed American-born Greek opera singer, before her fatal 1977 heart attack.

Jolie also spoke about the extensive training that she went through to properly portray Callas, describing the lessons as therapy. "It was the therapy I didn't realise I needed," she said.

"Singing opera requires you to be as emotionally open as you possibly can be - it's not like singing in the car. It's cathartic. I have never pushed myself or opened myself up in that way, that was daunting." Jolie has earlier opened up about the emotional release she felt while practising her singing for the film.

"I walked into the room with the piano, and somebody said, 'Ok, let's see where you are at.' And I got really emotional. I took a big deep breath, and I let out a sound, and I started crying," she told Variety.

"I think we all don't realise how much we hold inside our bodies, and how much we carry and how much that affects our sound and our voice and our ability to make sound. I have been holding a lot for a long time, and that beginning and that sound, and then when that sound would eventually come, it was the best therapy I've ever had."

"Honestly, I think I would tell a lot of people before you try therapy and spend too much time there, go to singing class."

Jennifer Lopez Breaks Silence on Teaming Up with Ben Affleck for New Movie Amid Divorce Drama!

Los Angeles | Agencies

The artist known for "This Is Me... Now" featured in the film Unstoppable, which was produced by the director of Argo. Jennifer Lopez has shared insights regarding the significance of her recent film project, which she completed shortly before her separation from Ben Affleck.

This week, the artist known for "This Is Me... Now" is set to premiere Unstoppable, a narrative centered on Anthony Robles, a wrestler who was born with one leg and won the NCAA individual wrestling national championship in 2011.

In this film, the actress from Hustlers portrays Anthony's mother, featuring alongside Jharrell Jerome (who plays Anthony), as well as Bobby Cannavale, Michael Peña, and Don Cheadle, among others. Jennifer stated in an interview regarding her character, who is not only Anthony's mother but also trapped in an abusive and toxic marriage, remarked: "I found many aspects of her relatable." She continued, "There were facets of [her husband] that the children were unaware of, which only Judy perceived. Individuals like him often possess a deceptive quality that leads you to believe they care for you and genuinely love you; however, it is primarily their own issues that they project onto you."

She further elaborated, "The dynamics between them were fraught with dysfunction and unhealthiness, yet she loved him and desired his presence."

Jennifer additionally expressed her enthusiasm on Instagram regarding the film and its narrative. She stated, "When I first learned about the true story behind Unstoppable, I was moved beyond words," she wrote, noting: "It's a testament to resilience, grit, and the human spirit."

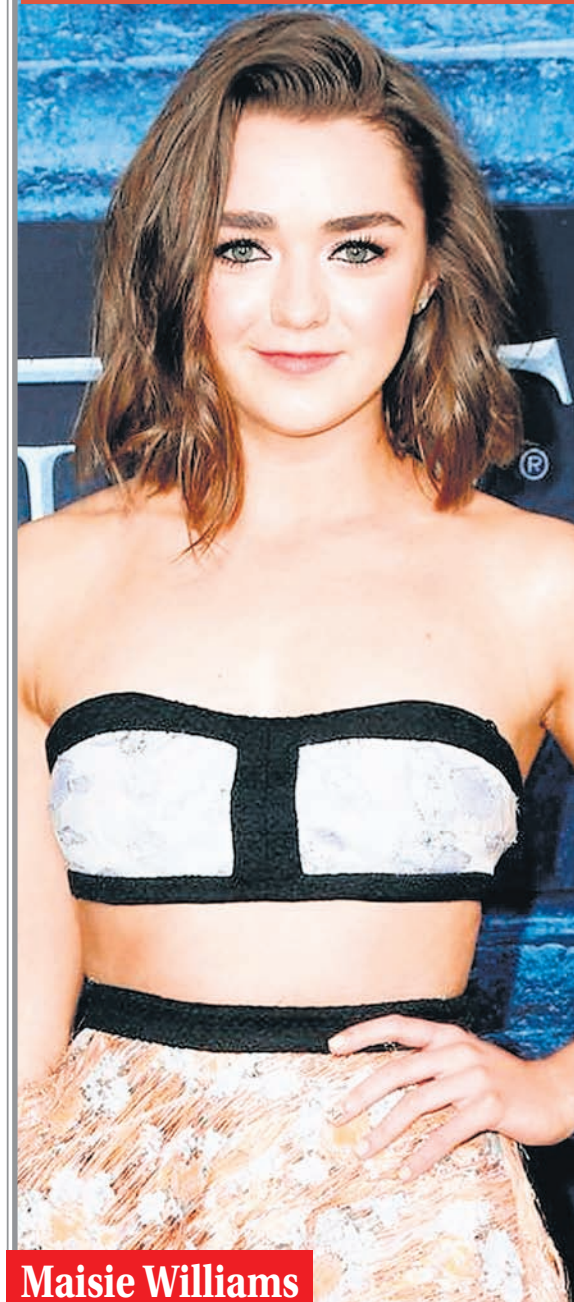
"It was such an honor playing Judy Robles in this incredible story about her son Anthony Robles. Both Anthony and Judy are real examples and define what it means to be UNSTOPPABLE," she concluded.

In the previous year, when the project was initially revealed as the second film that Ben and Matt would be producing under their newly established production company, Artists Equity, the former expressed great enthusiasm about casting Jennifer in the role.

During an interview with CBS News at that time, when questioned about the speculation surrounding her involvement, he sought to maintain discretion, stating: "We consistently select the finest performers. In this instance, I can confidently assert that every individual cast thus far is, in my opinion, the optimal choice."



ABSOLUTE PIC OF THE DAY



Maisie Williams



India set to debut in FIFAE World Cup 2024

New Delhi | Agencies

India are all set to make their debut in the FIFAE World Cup 2024, which will be held between December 9 to 12, at the SEF Arena, Boulevard Riyadh City, Saudi Arabia.

The World Cup, which will be held as part of the FIFAE Finals 2024 in Riyadh, will feature competitions on both console and mobile platforms. Chinmay Sahoo, Ibrahim Gulrez, and Saksham Rattan will represent India in FIFAE World Cup (Console), while Danial Shakeel Patel will be the eTigers' sole representative in FIFAE World Cup (Mobile).

The domestic qualifiers for the FIFAE World Cup was held in October, with participants from across the country fighting it out across three rounds of in-game events. The top eligible athletes from the FIFAE Ranking



list based on the online qualifier results were invited for online trials, based on which the squad was selected. India have been drawn in Group A in both the Console and Mobile

events. They will face Korea Republic, Spain, and France on December 9, and Poland, Malaysia, Netherlands, Indonesia, and England on December 10, in the Console event.

In the Mobile event, the eTigers will face England, Japan, Indonesia, and Spain on December 9, and Korea Republic, Costa Rica, and Brazil on December 10. For both versions of the game, the quarter finals and semi-finals will be held on December 11, and the final on December 12.

The FIFAE World Cup Console matches will be played in a 2v2 format using the eFootball 2025 game on PC, using PlayStation 5 controllers, while the FIFAE World Cup Mobile matches will be played using the same game on mobile.

The group stage and quarterfinal matches of India will be streamed live on the official Indian Football channels on YouTube and Twitch.

Under-19 Asia Cup: 13-year-old Vaibhav Suryavanshi's 76 not out guide India to semis

Sharjah | Agencies

India's 13-year-old sensation, Vaibhav Suryavanshi, lit up the Sharjah Cricket Stadium on Wednesday, as he smashed an unbeaten 76 off 46 balls to lead India to a resounding ten-wicket victory over the United Arab Emirates (UAE) in Match 12 of the Under-19 Asia Cup 2024. Suryavanshi, who became the youngest player in IPL history to be sold at auction, with Rajasthan Royals (RR) buying him for a whopping Rs 1.10 crore, has been under intense scrutiny. Expectations skyrocketed after the historic deal, but the prodigy struggled in the tournament's opening two games, managing scores of just 1 and 23. Facing mounting criticism, Suryavanshi walked out to chase a modest target of 138 with a point to prove and he wasted no time in making a statement. The left-hander got off the mark in emphatic style, launching UAE pacer Ali Asgar for a towering six off his very first delivery. Suryavanshi's aggression continued unabated, as he



smashed two more sixes in the next over off spinner Aayan Khan. His ferocious strokeplay saw him race to 28 off just 11 balls, peppering the Sharjah boundary with ease. Suryavanshi brought up his half-century in style, reaching the milestone in 32 balls with a mix of power and finesse. Mhatre followed suit, notching his own fifty off 38 balls as the pair continued their assault. Fittingly, Suryavanshi sealed the chase in the 17th over with a massive six, finishing with a

sparkling 76 not out that included three fours and six towering sixes. Mhatre, equally impressive, remained unbeaten on 67 not out off 51 balls, smashing four boundaries and four sixes. With this dominant performance, India finished as runner-ups in Group A, behind Pakistan, with two wins from three matches, securing their place in the semi-finals. They will face Sri Lanka in a highly anticipated clash on Friday at the same venue.

BGT 2024-25: Very hopeful that Hazlewood will take part in rest of the series, says Starc

New Delhi | Agencies

Australia's left-arm fast-bowling spearhead Mitchell Starc said the team is hopeful of Josh Hazlewood featuring again in the ongoing Border-Gavaskar Trophy series after the pacer was ruled out of the upcoming day-night Adelaide Test against India due to a side strain.

"He's hopeful. He, Nathan and I were in the gym during the week in Sydney. He's obviously here with us in Adelaide. So he's just getting some work done. Hopefully, he'll have a role at some point," Starc said, adding, "It's certainly not a big (tear). I think he caught it early enough and had the awareness of the discomfort to get it without having a big rip in it. We are very hopeful that - whether he takes part in Brisbane or not - (that he will play) still in this series," said Starc on cricket.com.au's Unplayable Podcast episode.

In Hazlewood's absence, seamer Scott Boland shapes as the most likely candidate to replace him in Australia's playing eleven for the game in Adelaide. If selected, Adelaide will be the venue for Boland to play a Test match after 18 months.

Starc has backed Boland, who has picked



35 wickets at an average of 20.34 from his 10 Tests, to come good in Adelaide. "I don't know who they'll play but Scotty has been around for a while and has played a couple of pink-ball games. He loves playing here as well when it's nipping and just doing enough," he said.

"We saw his skills on show in the PM's XI when it was just doing enough. I played that Shield game (against) him a few weeks ago (at the MCG) where he was coming back from a couple of niggles and just coming into his rhythm."

"But you could see he was on the verge of that rhythm that you always know is there with Scotty. If he does get the chance this week, he'll be the Scotty we know and have seen before."

ISL 2024-25: Mumbai City eye seventh straight unbeaten match against Odisha

Bhubaneswar | Agencies

Mumbai City FC are all set to take on Odisha FC at the Kalinga Stadium in Bhubaneswar as the two teams battle it out in the reverse fixture, for bragging rights in their Indian Super League (ISL) 2024-25 fixture on Thursday.

The two sides played out a 1-1 draw in their previous encounter that was played in Mumbai in October, but with the competition intensifying, they will have their eyes on all three points in the forthcoming encounter.

Odisha FC, buoyed by consecutive wins, will look to make it three on the bounce, while Mumbai City FC are aiming to extend their unbeaten run against Odisha FC to seven games in the competition.

Mumbai City FC are unbeaten in their last six games against Odisha



FC. Only against FC Goa (13 games) and Chennaiyin FC (9 games) do they have a longer active streak. In 11 ISL encounters, Mumbai City FC have

won six matches, whereas Odisha FC have emerged victorious thrice.

Odisha FC head coach Sergio Lobera expressed that the Juggernauts will stay true to their playing philosophy and will not be swayed by Mumbai City FC's strengths.

Mumbai City FC head coach Petr Kratky emphasized that they need to be defensively strong to halt Odisha FC's goal-scoring spree.

"Odisha FC have scored 10 goals in their last two matches. We need to find a way to stop this. Because, they have found a way to out-score the oppositions. We have to stay true to our style of play too," Kratky said.

The Juggernauts were handed a devastating blow last time out as star striker Roy Krishna will be sidelined for the remainder of the season due to an ACL (Grade 3) injury sustained against Hyderabad FC.

ILT20 Season 3: Parashar, Lakra, and Farhan Khan among 12 UAE players picked for next season

Dubai | Agencies

Indian-origin youngster Dhruv Parashar, Aryan Lakra and Rohan Mustafa were among 12 players owning alliance to the United Arab Emirates (UAE) that were picked up by the franchises ahead of Season 3 of the International League T20 (ILT20) here on Wednesday. Ethan D'Souza, Aryan Lakra and Dhruv Parashar, three of the most promising UAE stars, were picked by the franchises for Season 3 via the Player Selection Process for UAE players, which was conducted on Wednesday in Dubai. The Season 3 of ILT20 will be played from January 11 to February 9, 2025. Left-handed batter D'Souza will represent the Sharjah Warriorz while Parashar and Lakra will be part of the Desert Vipers and MI Emirates squads respectively. Recently, Dhruv Parashar was in action for the Desert Vipers Development at the DP World ILT20 Development Tournament 2024, where he bagged five wickets, while Aryan Lakra featured for Gujarat Giants Development, scoring 85 runs and a crucial half-century. The Abu Dhabi Knight Riders selected Shahid Iqbal Bhutta and Ibrar Ahmed, both of



whom also impressed during the ILT20 Development Tournament 2024. Bhutta represented the ILT20 Pearls taking six wickets in seven innings while Ibrar Ahmed finished with six scalps

in just four outings for Dubai Capitals Development.

Khuzaima Bin Tanveer, who was a part of Desert Vipers Development, will move up to the Vipers squad along with Parashar. The Dubai Capitals have chosen Farhan Khan and Zeeshan Naseer banking on their potent showing with the ball in the Development Tournament with 8 and 10 wickets respectively. Meanwhile, the Season 1 champion Gulf Giants have added Muhammad Saghir Khan after his strong performance for the Gulf Giants Development and Muhammad Uzair Khan, the leading wicket-taker with 16 wickets for the ILT20 Pearls in the ILT20 Development Tournament 2024, to their squad. Players chosen through the UAE Player Selection Process: Abu Dhabi Knight Riders: Shahid Iqbal Bhutta, Ibrar Ahmed; Desert Vipers: Khuzaima Bin Tanveer, Dhruv Parashar; Dubai Capitals: Farhan Khan, Zeeshan Naseer; Gulf Giants: Muhammad Saghir Khan, Muhammad Uzair Khan; MI Emirates: Zahoor Khan, Aryan Lakra; Sharjah Warriorz: Rohan Mustafa, Ethan D'Souza

SIX GURUGRAM PLAYERS WIN MEDALS IN MALAYSIA KARATE CHAMPIONSHIP

Gurugram | Agencies

The National Karate Federation felicitated six players from Sai Karate Academy of Gurugram who won medals at the International Karate Competition held at Stadium Titivangsa Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

The players from the academy won a total of 06 medals including 01 gold, 01 silver and 04 bronze medals, brining laurels to Gurugram.

On this occasion, national federation President Hansi Bharat Sharma said, "play your game with consistency and hard work and set big goals."

"Children have started paying more attention to making their future in sports. Due to this awareness, today our country is registering victory in every competition", he added.

"Around 2,500 players from 20 countries participated in this competition held from 29 November to 1 December 2024. In which 6 players from Gurugram of Haryana participated and won 1 Gold, 1 Silver and 4 Brown medals," Coach of Sai Karate Academy, Sunil

Saini said.

For the successful program, Sports Karate Association General Secretary India Technical Director Shihan Sunil Saini said that all the players impressed everyone with their excellent performance and brought glory to Gurugram.

General Secretary Saini assured that the team will bring glory to Gurugram with better performance in future as well. Apart from this, preparations have started for the championship to be held in England recently, he said.

Despite tough competition, Indian athletes demonstrated extraordinary skill and determination. Young talents Aditya Dahiya and Kavya Bhardwaj won bronze medals in the sub-junior category Kumut event, while experienced athlete Geeta Godara won a silver medal in the veteran category Kata event and a bronze medal in the veteran category Kumut event.

Shalu Hari won gold in the veteran category Kata, and Rinki Goyal won a bronze medal in the veteran category Kata.

FIDE World Chess Championship GUKESH MISSES CHANCES AGAIN AS DING TURNS TABLES ON HIM IN A DRAWN GAME 8

Singapore | Agencies

For the second game in a row, India's D. Gukesh failed to capitalise on a big advantage and landed in an inferior position as Game 8 ended in a draw with reigning champion Ding Liren of China defending stoutly and brilliantly to turn things around in another edge-of-the-seat roller-coaster in Singapore.

Gukesh had a big advantage in position and time and the Chinese player looked on his way to defeat, just in Game 7 on Tuesday, came up with a risky plan and grabbed the advantage. He offered a draw by repetition of moves despite having a slight advantage but the 18-year-old Indian courageously rejected the offer. The game eventually ended in a draw after more



than four-and-half hours thrilling action that lasted 51 moves.

Both players are still tied 4-4 after eight games. Gukesh will continue to feel frustrated as he could not convert a promising position into a win for the second successive game. This is the fifth succes-

sive draw in the 14-game match in which the first three games produced two wins.

It was Gukesh all the way at the start of the game. The game eventually ended in a draw after Ding forced the exchange of queens and the game ended in 51 moves.

International Series by breakaway LIV Golf announces debut tourney in India for Jan-Feb 2025

Gurugram | Agencies

Some of the biggest LIV Golf and Asian Tour stars will be in the fray when the International Series makes its historic first entry into the Indian subcontinent next year, bringing the cream of the tour to the country for the International Series India, the opening tournament in a ground-breaking 2025 calendar.

The high-profile event will carry a prize purse of US\$ 2 million and will take place at the picturesque and exclusive DLF Golf and Country Club in Gurugram from January 30 to February 2 2025. It will be the first of 10 events on a carefully curated schedule in 2025 that offers a pathway onto the LIV Golf League for the end-of-season rankings champion.

In a special launch event on the sidelines of the season-ending PIF Saudi International, LIV Golf League star Anirban Lahiri confirmed he will compete in the eagerly-anticipated 2025 curtain raiser on home soil in the International Series created through a



landmark agreement between LIV Golf and the Asian Tour, with the first event taking place in 2022 in Thailand. Aligning with an overarching LIV Golf League schedule, this year's

event is scheduled just before LIV Golf's season-opener in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia from February 6 to 8 bringing some of the biggest names to the iconic and challenging Gary Player-

designed course.

DLF's joint managing director and chief business officer Akash Ohri welcomed the maiden event in the International Series in India. "We are confident the course will offer the world's best a stern test, and we are looking forward to welcoming India's golf fans - and sports fans from all over the world - to experience Gurugram and India." Ohri was quoted as saying in a release on Wednesday.

Rahul Singh, Head of The International Series, said: "It is no secret that India is a key market in world golf, and partnering with DLF to bring this tournament to the subcontinent is a landmark for The International Series. "It is further compelling evidence of the strength of The International Series as we enter our fourth season, and we look forward to making further exciting announcements in due course that will bring our brand of golf to a number of key territories around the world," he added.



'BAND OF MAHARAJAS' ENTERS THE RACE FOR OSCARS

Girish Malik expresses pride

Team Absolute | Mumbai

In a significant achievement for Indian cinema, "Band of Maharajas," a musical film directed by Girish Malik, has been declared eligible for the Oscars in two prestigious categories. The film's powerful song "Ishq Walla Daku" and its captivating original score, composed by the renowned maestro Bickram Ghosh, are now contenders for nominations in the Best Original Song and Best Original Score categories. This achievement highlights the remarkable collaboration between Girish Malik and Bickram Ghosh, who previously earned Oscar

recognition for their acclaimed 2014 film "Jal." Their latest partnership breaks new ground, captivating audiences globally. In a statement, Director Girish Malik shared, "We are overjoyed that Band of Maharajas is now in the race for the contention for nomination at Oscars. This film is not just a story; it is a heartfelt tribute to the power of music to transcend borders and bring people together." Bickram Ghosh added, "Band of Maharajas is a labour of love, and we are grateful for the support and appreciation it has received so far." "Band of Maharajas" tells the inspiring and heartfelt story of three young musicians from a small border village in Punjab. Driven

by their passion for music, they bravely cross into Pakistan, a country where music is often met with resistance from radical forces. The film chronicles their journey of resilience, bravery, and the unifying power of art.

As the sole Hindi film in the running for Oscar contention this year, "Band of Maharajas" represents Indian cinema on the global stage. After Kiran Rao's "Laapataa Ladies" was chosen as India's official entry for the 2025 Oscars, Iman Chakraborty's song "ItiMaa" and Bickram Ghosh's "Ishq Walla Daku" are now being considered for the Best Original Song category.



HRITHIK PROVES HE'S GIRLFRIEND SABA AZAD'S BIGGEST CHEERLEADER

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actor Hrithik Roshan has once again shown his unwavering support for his girlfriend, Saba Azad, proving that he's her biggest cheerleader.

The 'War' actor recently took to his Instagram handle to cheer on Saba by sharing a video of her latest singing performance. Along with the video, Hrithik wrote in the caption, "Killing It!" and added a red heart emoji. In the clip, the actress could be seen singing and dancing during her live performance.

This is not the first time Hrithik has cheered for his ladylove. He often gives her sweet shout-outs on social media. Last month, the 'Fighter actor' penned a heartfelt birthday message for Saba. He dropped a collection of their joyful photos from their travels. One image captured the couple cycling along a scenic trail, while another showed them enjoying a delicious croissant together.

For the caption, the actor wrote, "Happy Birthday Sa. Thank you for you. 1.11.2024."

Hrithik and Saba's love story began to bloom in 2022. According to reports, the couple first connected on Twitter when the actor liked and shared a video featuring Saba and a rapper. Saba responded with a thank-you message, which sparked a conversation between the two, eventually leading to their blossoming relationship.

They were first spotted together in February 2022 during a dinner date. Later that year, the couple made their first public appearance as a couple at Karan Johar's 50th birthday celebration, where they were seen walking hand-in-hand.

The duo began dating in 2021 and celebrated their third anniversary on October 1. To mark the special occasion, the couple shared a picture from one of their vacations on social media. Hrithik captioned his post, "Happy anniversary partner 1.10.2024 @sabazad."

Shahid Kapoor flaunts rugged look in sunkissed picture

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Bollywood actor Shahid Kapoor shared a sunkissed image of himself flaunting a rugged look.

Shahid took to his Instagram stories section, where he shared a selfie of himself. In the image, the actor is seen wearing grey woollens and sunglasses. The actor is seen sporting a scruffy look with a beard and is looking into the camera with an intense look. For the caption, he wrote: "Whatever however but blue skies always smiling at you." The actor chose the number "Blue Skies" by Ella Fitzgerald as the background score for the picture.

Meanwhile, the actor will next be seen playing the role of gangster Hussain Ustara in Vishal Bhardwaj's upcoming project. Shahid has reportedly begun rigorous training to get into character.

A source close to the development was quoted as saying, "The gangster was a layered personality, defined by his ruthless exterior but driven by personal codes of loyalty and honour."

He will portray a don inspired by Hussain Ustara in the upcoming thriller, which also stars Tripti Dimri.

The 43-year-old actor was last seen in the romantic comedy 'Teri Baaton Mein Aisa Uljha Jiya' with Kriti Sanon. In the film, Shahid played a robot scientist who develops feelings for Sanon's character, a female robot.

Shahid is an ardent social media user and keeps sharing pictures and videos of himself. Last month he shared a picture of himself from the sea side. In the image the actor was shirtless and was seen wearing sunglasses as he struck a pose for the selfie. For the caption, he wrote: "Sweat sun sea."



Here's how Fatima Sana Shaikh gives her 'social media attendance'

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actress Fatima Sana Shaikh has uploaded a picture of herself to give her "social media attendance". Fatima took to Instagram, where she shared a picture of herself holding a DSLR camera in what seems to be like a mirror selfie. The actress is flaunting a no make-up look and her hair is done up with beach curls. "A photo just to give my social media attendance," she shared as the caption.

On the work front, Fatima has several exciting projects lined up. She will soon be seen alongside R. Madhavan in Vivek Soni's upcoming untitled film, an age-defying love story.

Additionally, she has 'Metro In Dino', directed by Anurag Basu, co-starring Aditya Roy Kapur and Sara Ali Khan. It is the spiritual sequel to Basu's previous critically acclaimed hit film Life in a... Metro, which was released in 2007. The film is an anthology of 4 different heartwarming stories of contemporary couples. The film draws its title from the popular song "In Dino" from Life in a... Metro.

Amid dating rumours with Abhishek, Nimrat Kaur finds 'new companion'

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actress Nimrat Kaur has found a new tea-time companion. On Wednesday, she took to her Instagram stories to share an adorable photo of her pet cat. Alongside the image, the 'Airlift' actress wrote, "Back home with my tea-time companion." In the picture, Nimrat's cat is seen sitting on a sofa with her.

Recently, the actress has been very active on her photo-sharing app. Earlier, she posted a series of photos of herself posing in a field of flowers. She captioned the post, "Khil-khi-laatekhetonmeinkhelti-hueekhaatoon!! 5 baarlagataarbolsakte-ho mere yaar!!"

A few weeks ago, the 'Dasvi' actress made headlines for a post where she talked about a friendship so strong it makes people jealous. She shared a humorous reel where she was seen sitting on the floor and lip-syncing to a trending dialogue: "Friendship inni-pakkhionichahiye di, lokidekhte hi jal-jaye, jaljaan. Kahe 'haww', aida." (Friendship should be so strong that people feel jealous just by looking at it.



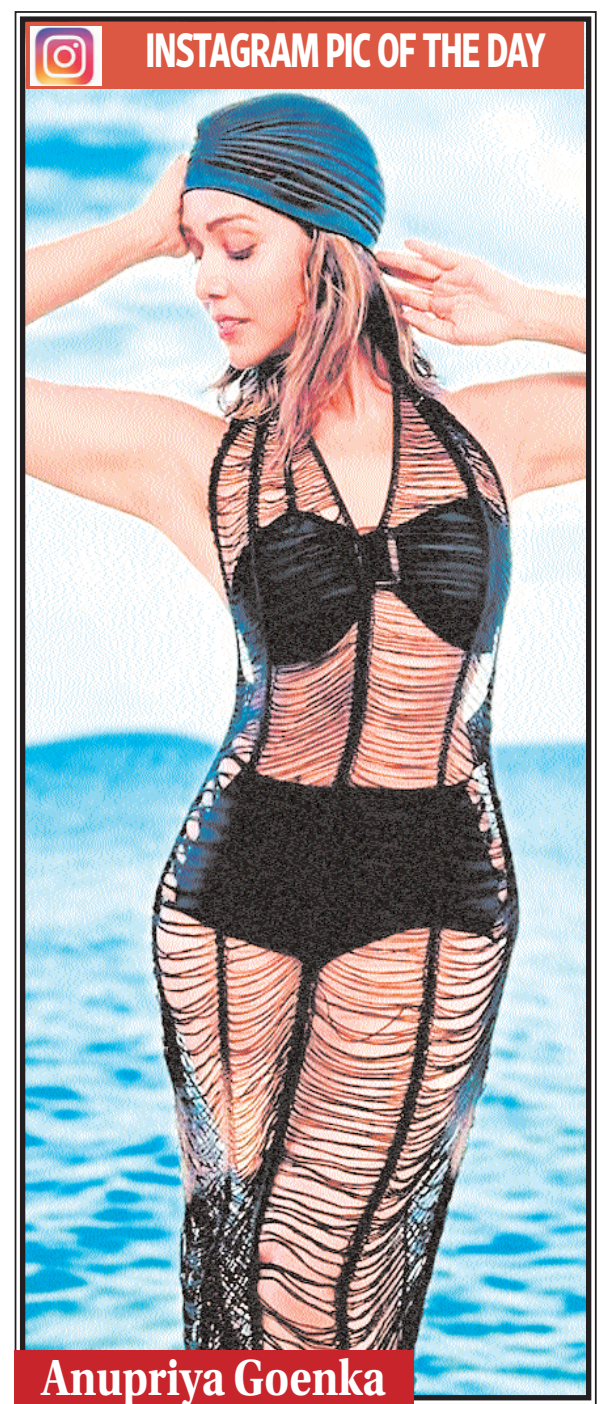
They should say, 'Wow, like that.) Alongside the reel, she captioned, "Meri aur KC (Karam Chand) kidostito-hhaiaisi... tag your BFF!! #friendship #bffgoals #sundaytimepass #weekend-vibes #pakkadost #trendingreels."

Nimrat Kaur has recently been in the spotlight due to an unverified Reddit claim suggesting she is in a relationship with Abhishek Bachchan, allegedly sparked during the filming of their 2022 film "Dasvi." Since the rumours surfaced, she has faced significant backlash on

social media, with some accusing her of being involved in the breakdown of Abhishek and Aishwarya Rai's marriage.

However, a source close to the Bachchan family has dismissed these allegations, calling them "mischievous, malicious, and utter rubbish."

Nimrat had also addressed the rumours, stating that no matter what she does, people will always say what they want. She further explained that gossip is inevitable, so she chooses to focus on her work instead.



Anupriya Goenka