

INDIA STANDS TALL ON THE WORLD STAGE

OSCARRRR

India creates history by winning 2 awards at Oscars 2023; Song 'Naatu Naatu' from film RRR wins 'Best Original Song' award, becoming the first ever Indian song to win in the category. 'The Elephant Whisperers' bags award for the 'Best Documentary Short Film'

MONI SHARMA

95th

Academy Awards 2023 was held at the Dolby Theatre in Los Angeles on Sunday. 'Naatu Naatu' from SS Rajamouli's RRR has won the Oscar in the Best Song category by beating the other nominees in the category which included Applause (Tell It Like a Woman), Hold My Hand (Top Gun Maverick), Lift Me Up (Black Panther Wakanda Forever), and This is a Life (Everything Everywhere All at Once). With this, the film became the first song from any Indian production to win the award. It is the second Indian song to win this prestigious award, after Jai Ho from Slumdog Millionaire won one in 2009 in the same category.

Another Indian entry in the Academy Awards 'The Elephant Whisperers' also won an Oscar in the Best Documentary Short Film category. This 41 minutes short documentary movie of filmmaker Kartiki Gonsalves and producer Guneet Monga, explores the bond between Raghu, an orphaned baby elephant, and his caretakers.

The Naatu Naatu craze has been taking over the Oscars this year. At the very start of the ceremony, the audience saw a spoof performance when Jimmy Kimmel was driven off stage by dancers performing the Naatu Naatu hookstep.

At the Dolby Theatre on Sunday, the audience also witnessed an energetic performance of the song. The performance also received a standing ovation from the audience. RRR garnered several US awards, made it to the BAFTA 2023 longlist in the Film Not in the English Language category, won the Golden Globes in the Best Original Song category, and also bagged the Best Song at the 28th edition of the Critics Choice Awards, along with Best Foreign Language Film, among others.

It is the first time that 3 India-made productions earned Oscar nominations and we brought home 2 awards with huge pride!

Full report on 95th Academy Awards, Inside Jacket and City First P10-11



(R) MM Keeravaani and Chandrabose accept the award for best original song for "Naatu Naatu" from "RRR" at the 95th Academy Awards 2023 in Los Angeles on Sunday.

EXCEPTIONAL! INDIA GETTING 2 OSCARS WILL BE REMEMBERED FOR YEARS: MODI



PM Narendra Modi on Monday congratulated the entire team of song Naatu Naatu for its Oscar win. He said, The popularity of 'Naatu Naatu' is global. It will be a song that will be remembered for years to come, adding, Congratulations to the entire team of 'The Elephant Whisperers'. Their work wonderfully highlights the importance of sustainable development and living in harmony with nature.



(L) Kartiki Gonsalves and Guneet Monga pose with the award for best documentary short film for "The Elephant Whisperer" at the Dolby Theatre in Los Angeles on Sunday.

OSCARS 2023

‘EVERYTHING, EVERYWHERE, ALL AT ONCE’ SWEEPS OFF AWARDS



IN-DEPTH

INDIA'S DAY OF TRIUMPH ON THE GLITTERING NITE OF OSCARS 2023



It was India's day today. On the field, Team India retained the Border-Gavaskar trophy and qualified for the World Test Championship where they will face Australia again. Bigger honours came in the form of the prestigious Oscar awards. On the gala night Natu Natu, the iconic chartbuster from the Telugu hit RRR, brought glory to India. It was not an unexpected but the joy was greater given the list of tough challengers like "Tell it Like a Woman" and "This is a Life" from Everything, Everywhere All at Once, "Hold My Hand" (Top Gun) and "Lift Me Up" (Black Panther: Wakanda Forever).

Elephant Whisperers, which bagged an Oscar in Best Documentary Short Film category, also made country proud. Based on life of a family bringing up orphaned elephant calves, it is an emotional depiction of living in harmony with nature and focuses on sustainable development. One must not gloss over the graceful presence of Deepika Padukone at the big stage.

SPIRITUAL SPEAK

Hatred does not cease through hatred at any time. Hatred ceases through love. This is an unalterable law. —Buddha

TOP TWEETS

Amit Shah @AmitShah



A landmark day for Indian cinema, as the 'Naatu Naatu' song creates history by winning the Oscar Award. Congratulations to Team RRR. Congratulations to @EarthSpectrum and @guneetm on their Oscar win for the short film 'The Elephant Whisperers'. The award underlines the potential of the Indian film industry and will inspire young film makers.

Anurag Thakur @ianuragthakur



Congratulations for winning the Academy Award for #BestOriginalSong at #Oscars95! A proud moment for India as #RRR creates history by becoming the first Indian production to bag an #AcademyAwards in the 'best song' category!

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he Academy Awards in 2023 were a less scandalous affair than last year – although host Jimmy Kimmel never let us forget “the slap”, with so many jokes it was verging on a dead-horse-beating situation.

In fact it was a relatively wholesome ceremony, defined by great sweeps for films All Quiet On The Western Front and Everything Everywhere All At Once. Perhaps the only “shock” was Angela Bassett losing Best Supporting Actress to Jamie Lee Curtis, and thereby being denied the chance to “do the thing”.

Here, we summarise the most important moments from the 2023 Oscars.

ALL THE LOOKS OF THE CHAMPAGNE CARPET

The Oscars 2023 red-carpet fashions will spur a rush of activity as the haute couture and designer looks are rapidly reproduced for the knock-off market. The pillars of European Haute Couture were well represented. The major players such as Louis Vuitton

(Cate Blanchett, Ana de Armas), Armani Privé (Nicole Kidman), Dior Haute Couture (Michelle Yeoh), Valentino (Florence Pugh), Prada (Catherine Martin), Atelier Versace (Lady Gaga), floated across the carpet with all the feel of Paris fashion week.

KEEPING THE SCORE

There was a sore lack of good music throughout this year's ceremony. The orchestra this year was invisible, other than a few short shots of them leading into commercial breaks and during the Best Original Score announcement. They appeared to be in a conference room somewhere backstage; just because one can pipe in a remote orchestra fairly easily doesn't mean one should.

The Academy Awards in 2023 were a less scandalous affair than last year – although host Jimmy Kimmel never let us forget “the slap”, with so many jokes it was verging on a dead-horse-beating situation

MICHELLE YEOH, BEST LEADING ROLE ACTRESS

Everything Everywhere All at Once became the biggest winner at the 95th Academy Awards – surprising, but also not so surprising. Cast mainly by Asian actors and actresses, this strangely (sometimes even disturbingly) funny but also moving comedy won most of the major awards, including Best Leading Actress and Best Director.

CELEBRITY LEGACY AT THE OSCARS

The choice of winners for the acting categories at the 2023 Oscars speaks to a respect for building celebrity legacy – all are actors over 50 years of age and on their first-ever nominations. Despite the backlash copped in the year of the nepo-baby, Jamie Lee Curtis used her speech to thank her dedicated fanbase who have championed her work in action and horror movies.

SOURCE: THE CONVERSATION

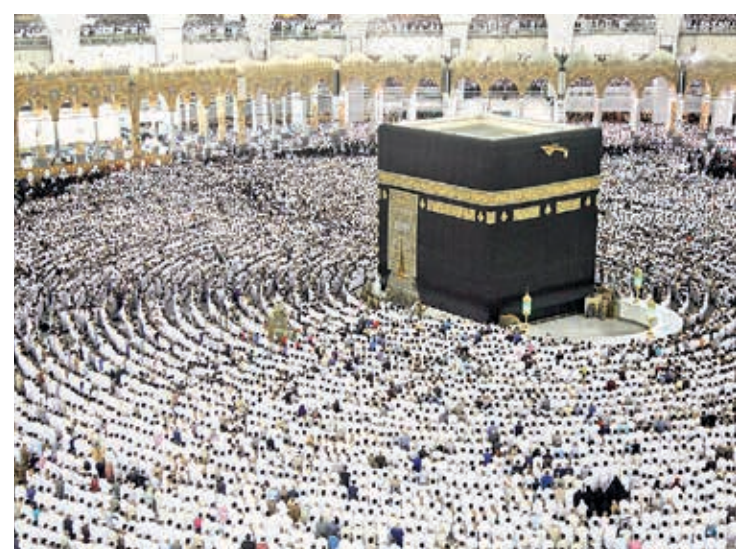
BRENDAN FRASER, BEST ACTOR IN LEADING ROLE

With his Oscar win for Best Actor for The Whale, Brendan Fraser simply proves something most of us have known all along – he's a great performer. If anyone had any doubts, they simply needed to watch performances across his career, from Encino Man to Gods and Monsters to his comical cameo as himself in Dickie Roberts: Former Child Star.



What its win does suggest (along with the success of Top Gun: Maverick), is that audiences are craving nostalgic cinema that plays well on the big screen. And this will excite the kinds of mega-corporations that produce indie cinema these days – they can simply recycle and combine material from their VHS collection

SAUDI ARABIA SEES RELIGIOUS CHANGES



Saudi Arabia where Islam's holiest shrines, Mecca and Medina, are located has angered Muslims for introducing new rules for the forthcoming holy month of Ramzan. The new rules which have upset Muslims prohibit use of loudspeakers, broadcast of prayers on media and hosting of iftar meals in mosques. Some of these practices are followed by Muslims in India despite several attempts to ban the use of loudspeakers. Prince Mohammed bin Salman (MBS) is keen to take Saudi Arabia on a new trajectory of softer Islam. The move is being interpreted as MBS' attempt to “push Islam out of public life”.

Saudi Arabia where Islam's holiest shrines, Mecca and Medina, are located has angered Muslims for introducing new rules for the forthcoming holy month of Ramzan

some devout find upsetting. One of the new rules provide that prayers should not be prolonged and the congregation should stick to some supplications. Volumes of loudspeakers will be kept low barring those at Mecca and Medina. The other important rule concerns financial donations. The rule has banned collection of financial donations for

feeding people. The Imam will be responsible for permitting a worshipper to stay in the mosque. The fundamental changes have made MBS an unpopular leader among followers of Islam. That he has overseen a crackdown on prominent clerics also has been decried. As the monarch envisions a modern and reformed Saudi Arabia, changes are aimed at restructuring religion in a highly religious, Wahaabi society. The changes do not seem irreversible but are cause of disquiet because the country was once known for its tough religious police and a sharia-trained judiciary. The changes have been possible because MBS may not be unreasonably committed to Wahabi teachings.

MHATRE MORPHED VIDEO CASE

SIT to probe video; Aaditya's friend, three others held

Cops detained Shiv Sena (UBT) leader Sainath Durge, a close associate of Aaditya Thackeray, in the case

Kartikey Dev Singh

Mumbai: The Maharashtra government will appoint a SIT to probe the alleged morphed video of Shiv Sena MLA Prakash Surve and the party's deputy leader Sheetal Mhatre, state Minister Shamburaj Desai said on Monday in legisla-

tive Assembly, adding that SIT will be headed by a senior IPS officer.

Earlier in the day, Shiv Sena's Yamini Jadhav and Manisha Chowdhary raised the issue in the House and sought strict action against persons who "morphed" the video of a public event.

The police have arrested four people, including one Vinayak Davare (26), a social media state coordinator of the Shiv Sena UBT faction, the minister said.

Davare had posted the "morphed" video on Facebook, while the other three had helped make it viral, he said.



Party's deputy leader Sheetal Mhatre and Shiv Sena Prakash Surve —FILE PHOTO

Meanwhile, the Mumbai police on Monday detained Shiv Sena (UBT) leader Sainath Durge in connection with the morphed vid-

eo case, an official said here.

Durge is a close associate of Aaditya Thackeray.

The four arrested ac-

cused have been remanded to police custody till March 15.

The arrested accused have been booked under sections 354 (out-



“My friend has been taken into custody in the Sheetal Mhatre video case. He is fighting and will keep fighting. Many issues are being sidelined in Maharashtra.”

—Aaditya Thackeray

raging a woman's modesty, 509 (gesture or act intended to insult the modesty of a woman), and 500 (defamation) etc of the IPC and IT Act.

IF YOU START THIS GAME, WE CAN FINISH IT: RANE

First India Bureau

Mumbai: The objectionable video has heated the political atmosphere in the state and various political reactions have started coming out. Meanwhile, MLA Nitesh Rane has targeted the Thackeray faction with this video and said, "The morphed video of Sheetal Mhatre has gone viral. A complaint has been registered in this regard and according to that complaint it has come to the fore that Manas Kuwar and Ashok Mishra are behind the viral video. Both of them are office bearers of the Thackeray faction. The mastermind behind making this video viral is sitting in Kalanagar. If he is a worker of the Yuva Sena, then the head of Yuva Sena should give an explanation in this regard." Speaking further on the matter, Rane said, "The practice of defaming those who deserted him (Uddhav) has been going on for a long time. Also, it's not like only you can create morph videos. If you start this game, we can finish it. We will also release some videos after 7.30 pm. We also have some videos from June 8."

1ST DAY OF 2ND PHASE OF THE PARL BUDGET SESSION

RAHUL'S UK 'RaGa' ROCKS PARL

➤ Uproar in LS, RS over Rahul Gandhi's remarks on democracy, both the Houses adjourned

Moni Sharma

New Delhi: The second leg of Union Budget 2023 commenced on Monday, after 1st half being marred by a series of disruptions over number of issues with Hindenburg report and Adani Group issue being the focal point. Centre's top-most priority this time is to pass the Finance Bill along with a number of other pending bills. A total of 26 bills in RS and 9 bills in LS are pending. Both the Houses, were adjourned minutes after the Budget session began. After 2nd part of Budget session got underway, Defence minister Rajnath Singh and Union minister of Commerce & Industry, Consumer Affairs & Food & Public Distribution and Textiles Piyush Goyal demanded an apology from Rahul Gandhi for his statement at the Cambridge University, where he allegedly defamed India by his remarks on democracy was "under attack". **Full Report on P6**



Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla conducts proceedings of the House on the first day of 2nd half of Budget session in Delhi on Monday.



Rajya Sabha Chairman Jagdeep Thakkar conducts proceedings of the House during Budget session of the Parliament on Monday.

CONG, OPPOSITION PARTIES ASK BJP TO APOLOGISE FOR REMARKS OVER RAHUL



Mallikarjun Kharge addresses media in presence of Priyanka Chaturvedi, Sanjay Singh, Raghav Chadha, Elamaram Kareem, Binoy Viswam & others at Vijay Chowk, in Delhi on Monday.

On Monday, Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge took out a protest march from Parliament House complex to Vijay Chowk along with MPs of other Opposition parties, including those of the BRS, Left parties and AAP, after the BJP launched an offensive against Senior Congress Leader Rahul Gandhi for allegedly defaming India by his remarks on democracy and demanded an apology from him.

“Rahul Gandhi, who is a member of this House, insulted India in London. I demand that his statements should be condemned by all members of this House and he should be asked to apologise before the House.”

—Rajnath Singh, Union Minister



Union Ministers Rajnath Singh and Piyush Goyal speaking in Lok Sabha on the first day of the second half of the Budget session of the Parliament in New Delhi on Monday.

“I have not taken any names, if they could guess who I was naming to, it clearly shows they are in wrong, but are refusing to accept their blunder. PM Modi is most popular global leader, Oppn defaming India by going abroad.”

—Piyush Goyal, Union Minister

Centre unveils ₹1,18,500 crore budget for J&K

• ₹41,491 crore for devp
• ₹77,009 cr for revenue



Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Monday unveiled Rs 1,18,500 crore budget for Jammu & Kashmir Union Territory for the next financial year. This was the fourth consecutive budget of Jammu and Kashmir to be presented in the Parliament. The budgets of 2020-21, 2021-22, and 2022-23 were also presented in the Parliament in absence of an elected government in the Union Territory.

Digital or e-rupee worth over ₹130 crore is in circulation on a pilot basis as of February 28.

—Nirmala Sitharaman, Finance minister

PLEAS SEEKING RECOGNITION OF SAME-SEX MARRIAGES...

SC refers to 5-judge Constitution bench, hearing on April 18

First India Bureau

New Delhi: The SC on Monday referred petitions seeking recognition for same sex marriages to a five-judge Constitution bench that will start hearing the matter from 18 April. On Monday, Solicitor General Tushar Mehta - arguing for Centre - said right to love, expression and freedom of choice was already upheld & no one was interfering with that right, but that did not mean right of marriage. Mehta said question would arise on adoption, and therefore, Parliament would have to assess the child's psychology.

“We are of the view that it would be appropriate if the issues raised are resolved by the bench of five judges of this court with due regard to A 145(3) of the Constitution. Thus, we direct it to be placed before a Constitution bench.”

—DY Chandrachud, CJI

“The Central government is not against personal freedom and choice of citizens but since the matter involves the institution of marriage, it is a policy matter that merits serious discussion.”

—Kiren Rijju, Union Minister for Law and Justice

OTHER COURT ORDERS OF THE DAY

• The Supreme Court on Monday said the Ministry of Defence cannot take law in its own hands by issuing communication on payment of One Rank-One Pension (OROP) arrears in four installments. A bench of CJI DY Chandrachud sked the ministry to immediately withdraw its January 20 communication, which said OROP arrears will be paid in four installments.

• SC dismissed petitions against Allahabad HC's 2017 judgment directing removal of a mosque from HC. Bench observed that petitioners had no right over disputed land, it was for a public purpose.

• The SC sought a response from Gujarat govt on plea filed by TMC spokesperson Saket Gokhale seeking bail in case related to misuse of money collected from crowdfunding.

BORDER-GAVASKAR TROPHY

INDIA WIN SERIES 2-1 AS 4TH TEST IN A'BAD ENDS IN DRAW; WTC FINAL NEXT

On an uneventful day of cricket, India qualified for the World Test Championship (WTC) final and clinched the Border-Gavaskar Trophy for 4th successive time after 4th and final match against Australia ended in a drab draw, here

on Monday. India's spot in WTC final against Australia was locked before the post-lunch session when Sri Lanka lost the Christchurch Test to NZ by 2 wickets as Williamson's magnificent 100 steered his side to one of most thrilling wins in Test.



India's skipper Rohit Sharma being presented with Border-Gavaskar Trophy 2023 by former cricketer Sunil Gavaskar.

Maha jolt: Thackeray loyalist Subhash Desai's son - Bhushan Desai - joins CM Shinde-led Shiv Sena

Bhushan Desai was inducted into the Shiv Sena fold in the presence of CM Shinde

First India Bureau

Mumbai: Senior Shiv Sena (UBT) leader Subhash Desai's son Bhushan Desai joined Maharashtra CM Eknath Shinde-led faction of the party on Monday, dealing a jolt to the rival camp.

Terming the development as distressing, the Desai senior (80), a key aide of former chief

minister Uddhav Thackeray, said his son's move will not in any way change his loyalty towards the party and Thackeray family.

Bhushan Desai had no role in politics or Shiv Sena (UBT), the octogenarian leader said, seeking to downplay his son's entry into the ruling outfit which has been allotted the party name and the 'bow and arrow' poll symbol by the Election Commission.

Bhushan Desai was inducted into the Shiv Sena fold in the presence of Chief Minister Shinde.



Subhash Desai

The development is being viewed in political circles as a jolt to the Thackeray-led camp because of the Desai senior's closeness to the Thackerays.

“The entry of my son Bhushan Desai into the Shinde group today is painful for me. He has no business in Shiv Sena or politics. That's why his joining any party will not have any effect on Shiv Sena (UBT). My loyalty to Motoshree will remain unwavering.”

—Subhash Desai

“Those who want to go to the washing machine must go. Subhash Desai is with us. He is with Uddhav Thackeray round the clock. He will not leave use. Bhushan Desai has nothing to do with Shiv Sena and let him go wherever he wants.”

—Aaditya Thackeray, Shiv Sena (UBT) leader

“What will I say on Aaditya Thackeray's statement about me? I'm too young. If we get the information then it will be understood whether I have any relation with Shiv Sena or not? I sided with Eknath Shinde because I understood the difference between Thackeray's Shiv Sena and this Shiv Sena. I do not think it is a washing machine, I have joined hands with the development workers.”

—Bhushan Desai

Council adjourned briefly over suspension demand

Members of Opposition bench demanded the suspension of a 'corrupt' state Cooperation Dept official in House

First India Bureau

Mumbai: After an uproar by Opposition bench legislators, the Maharashtra Legislative Council was adjourned for 20 minutes on Monday morning.

The MLCs demanded suspension of a Cooperation Department official facing corruption charges, but state minister Atul Save rejected

the demand citing an ongoing inquiry.

After the Council reassembled after 20 minutes at around 11.50 am, the minister announced that the official is being sent on compulsory leave.

The issue was raised by Shiv Sena - Uddhav Balasaheb Thackeray legislator Narendra Darade alleging that an assistant registrar was allegedly converting a cooperative industrial society into a housing society.

Supporting him, Congress MLC Bhai Jagtap said, "The state government should suspend the concerned official immediately and complete the inquiry against him. (The official) Ashish Deshpande



MVA legislators protesting at the Vidhan Bhavan last week.

—FILE PHOTO

is infamous for bypassing laws. He has faced allegations of corrupt practices during his

various postings." The minister said since inquiries are underway against Deshpande, the state government cannot suspend him.

Unhappy with the response, the Opposition members raised slogans against the government.



The state government should suspend the concerned official immediately and complete the inquiry against him. (The official) Ashish Deshpande is infamous for bypassing laws. He has faced allegations of corrupt practices during his various postings.

—Bhai Jagtap, Congress MLC

"The state government is afraid of an official who is infamous for corrupt practices. Deshpande has even violated the directives

COUNCIL PASSES BILL TO HIKE NUMBER OF CO-OPTED MEMBERS IN CIVIC BODIES

Mumbai (PTI): The Maharashtra Legislative Council on Monday passed amendments to the Mumbai Municipal Corporation Act and Maharashtra Municipal Corporation Act to increase the number of co-opted members in civic bodies. As per the bill tabled by minister Uday Samant, the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation can co-opt as members 10 persons, up from the present five, while other civic bodies will be allowed 10% of the councillor strength or 10 persons, whichever is less. Congress MLC Abhijeet Wanjari opposed the amendments saying the process would be used to lure councillors and influence their decisions.

of the Bombay High Court in the past. Despite his notorious behaviour, why is the state government kneeling before him?" Jagtap asked.

Save, however, remained firm on not suspending Deshpande.

"If I suspend him, he will go to MAT and obtain a stay. There is no value to such suspension orders," he said.

Amid continuous sloganeering by Opposition members, the Council was adjourned for twenty minutes.

'Farmers committing suicide is not a new issue'

First India Bureau

Aurangabad: Agriculture Minister Abdul Sattar has said that farmers committing suicide is not a new issue and such incidents had been happening for many years.

Sattar made the statement while responding to a query by reporters who sought his comment on suicides committed by farmers in his constituency, Sillod, in Aurangabad district recently.

"The issue of farmer suicide is not new. Such incidents are happen-



ing for many years. I feel suicides by farmers should not take place anywhere in Maharashtra, including my constituency," said Sattar.

According to reports, two farmers in Sillod took their own lives be-

tween March 03 and March 12, allegedly due to financial strain. However, sources suggest that the actual number of farmer suicides in the Aurangabad district of Marathwada during this time frame was six.

In response to these tragic events, a committee led by the Agriculture Commissioner has been established to investigate the root causes. On Sunday, Sattar visited Sillod to assess the damage caused by

recent unseasonal rains on local crops.

The minister said the government will work on the recommendations of the committee once it submits reports on the farmers taking the extreme step.

₹300/100KG AID FOR ONION FARMERS

Mumbai: The government has decided to provide ex-gratia relief of Rs300 per quintal to onion farmers who are facing financial loss due to severe decline in onion prices. The announcement was made by Chief Minister Eknath Shinde in the state Legislative Assembly on Monday. The decline in onion prices is due to an increase in onion production. Onion is an important crop in the state and the state's decision is expected to provide relief to farmers.

Mitkari expresses 'regret' for alarm over 'unknown' man

First India Bureau

Mumbai: Nationalist Congress Party MLC Amol Mitkari on Monday assured the Maharashtra Legislative Council he would be careful henceforth after writing a letter about an unknown person entering the House, who turned out to be Bharatiya Janata Party MLC Ramesh Karad.

He also denied leaking information about the issue to the media. In his letter to Council Deputy Chairperson Neelam Gorhe, Mitkari had claimed an unknown person entered the Legislative Council and sat on a chair.

Later, the images of a person standing near the lift had gone viral.

Gorhe, speaking in the Council, said, "The unknown person was BJP MLC Ramesh Karad. I am surprised Mitkari did not recognize him."

However, BJP MLC



Amol Mitkari —FILE PHOTO

Pravin Darekar, who is also leader of the House, berated Mitkari and sought his apology.

"Mitkari should express regret for unnecessarily causing annoyance to the security and police personnel as well as spreading panic in the state. He has done similar gimmicks in the Nagpur session as well, where he videoed some place and claimed it was the PWD guesthouse," Darekar said.

Assuring the Council about being careful henceforth, Mitkari said, "I honestly did not recognize Karad. He was wearing a blue

He wrote to Council chair and informed her about a man near the lifts; failed to recognize BJP MLC Ramesh Karad

shirt and I asked a couple of other members in the House but none of them recognized him. Hence, I wrote a letter to Gorhe asking her to ascertain the identity of the unknown person."

"I will take extra precaution henceforth when it comes to raising such concerns," Mitkari said in the Council.

Former state minister Hasan Mushrif moves HC against ED PMLA case



First India Bureau

Mumbai: On Monday, Hasan Mushrif, former Maharashtra minister and Nationalist Congress Party leader, filed a petition in the Bombay High Court to dismiss the money laundering case that was filed against him by the Enforcement Directorate.

Mushrif, MLA from Kolhapur's Kagal Assembly constituency, served as rural development minister in the previous Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) government.

The ED alleged that there was a suspicious flow of several crore rupees from two companies to Sar Senapati Santaji Ghorpade Sugar Factory Ltd, where Mushrif's sons Navid, Aabid, and Sajid are directors or stakeholders. This occurred despite the company not having a substantial business, it said.

A division bench headed by Justice Revati Mohite Dere agreed to hear the petition on Tuesday.

In his plea, Mushrif,

seeks quashing of ECIR registered by the agency; alleges conspiracy to 'destroy political career, wreak vengeance'

said he was targeted by his political rivals spearheaded by Bharatiya Janata Party leader Kirit Somaiya.

The petition sought to quash and set aside the ECIR registered by the ED alleging it was "nothing but a result of a motivated conspiracy indicating clear ill-intent so as to negatively affect the ever-rising political career of the petitioner".

"It is common knowledge as to how in recent times the office of Enforcement Directorate is used to wreak political vengeance and either severely damage or completely destroy political careers," the plea alleged.

Farmers-workers march: Delegation set to meet Maha CM Shinde today

Nashik (PTI): Leaders of a farmers-workers march that started from Dindori in Nashik will meet Chief Minister Eknath Shinde in Mumbai on Tuesday, one of the organizers said on Monday.

The march, organised by the Communist Party of India (Marxist), started on Sunday and more than 10,000 partici-



pants reached Sarul here during the day.

"We will meet Chief Minister Eknath Shinde at the Mantralaya to-

morrow. Former MLA JP Gavit who is leading the march, Ajit Nawale, state general secretary of All India Kisan Sabha will be part of the delegation," said Centre of Indian Trade Unions (CITU) national vice president DL Karad.

The protesters met district Guardian Minister Dada Bhuse as well.

UNFORTUNATE

25,681 students across Maha lost their parents in COVID-19 pandemic: Centre

Highest numbers recorded in Kolhapur district, followed by Pune and Mumbai

First India Bureau

New Delhi: The Union Ministry of Education on Monday revealed that as many as 25,681 students across Maharashtra lost their parents during the COVID-19 pandemic till August 2021.

Annurna Devi, Minister of State in the Ministry of Education, in a written response in the Lok Sabha said that out of the 25,681 students, 13,025 students are boys and 12,656 are girls.

On numbers in Mumbai, the MoS said that

2,822 students lost their parents to the pandemic, among whom, 1,405 were boys and 1,417 were girls.

Students in Aurangabad (1,427), Kolhapur (6,833), Latur (453), Amravati (2,454), Nagpur (4,447), Pune (5,776), and Nashik (1,469) also became bereaved during the pandemic.

Devi was responding to a question listed by Member of Parliament from Maharashtra's Osmanabad (now Dhar-

ashiv) constituency, Omprakash Bhupalsingh alias Pavan.

He had also enquired about government's plans to formulate any scheme to provide free education to these stu-

dents under the Right to Education Act.

In response, MoS Devi said, "During the challenging circumstances of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Ministry of Education made efforts to continue the education of the students through multiple alternative ways, while ensuring safety and well-being of the students."

The Ministry, in its response, noted that as per government notification of January 25, 2023, COVID-19-affected chil-

BIG NUMBERS

In Mumbai, the MoS said that 2,822 students lost their parents to the pandemic, among whom, 1,405 were boys and 1,417 were girls. Students in Aurangabad (1,427), Kolhapur (6,833), Latur (453), Amravati (2,454), Nagpur (4,447), Pune (5,776), and Nashik (1,469) also became bereaved due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

dren (whose parents either both or single died due to infection caused in between 1st April 2020 to 31st March 2022) are included in the rule of the Maharashtra Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Rule, 2013.

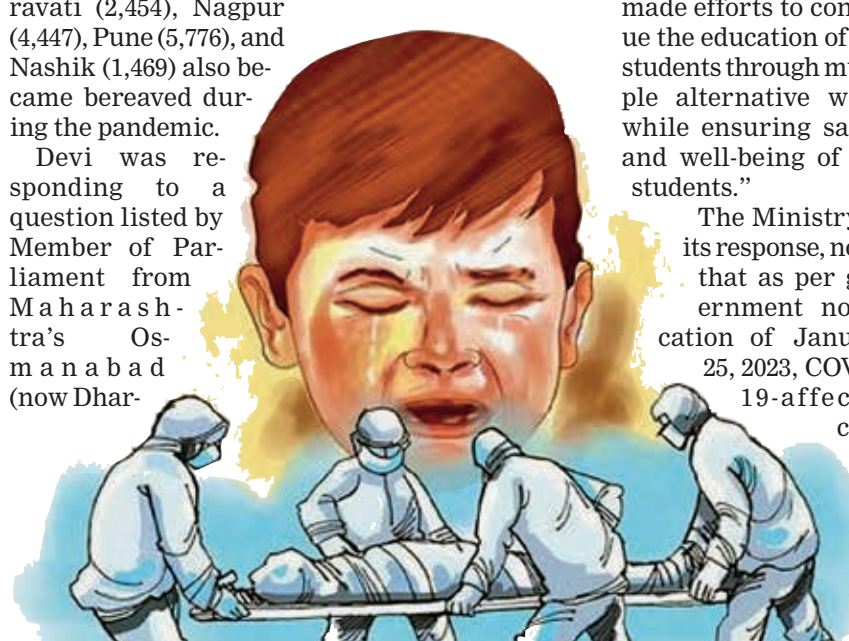
CRUCIAL READ

TEACHER SHOWS OBSCENE VIDEOS TO STUDENTS, HELD

Gondia: A 52-year-old teacher of a primary school in Gondia district has been arrested for allegedly showing obscene videos to girl students in his class, police said on Monday. As per the complaint, the accused had allegedly shown some obscene videos to eight girls studying in Class V and also touched them inappropriately, he said. The girls informed their parents, who approached the school principal, the official said. Based on a complaint, an offence under relevant sections has been lodged against the teacher.

THANE: 9K INMATES IN JAILS DESPITE 3.7K CAPACITY

Thane: As many as 9,284 inmates were lodged in different jails of Thane district, as against their official capacity at 3,794, a report by the state Prisons Department revealed on Monday. The Talaja Central prison has a capacity to hold 1,242 prisoners, but it is currently holding 2,848 inmates, stated a report. Additionally, despite having space for only 60 female inmates, jails are holding 290 women.



Mumbai sizzles at 39.4°C

City records highest temp in country for the second time in March; delayed or absent sea breeze to blame, says IMD

First India Bureau

Mumbai: For the second time this month, Mumbai recorded the highest maximum temperature in the country at 39.4 degrees Celsius on Sunday, said the India Meteorological Department (IMD).

The weather authority attributed the rise in mercury to absent or delayed sea breeze.

Notably, the IMD had warned of a heatwave on Sunday and Monday.

The Santacruz observatory (located in suburbs) and the Colaba observatory (located at the southern tip of island city)—around 19km apart—recorded temperatures of 39.4 degrees Celsius and 35.8 degrees Celsius, respectively, on Sunday.

“This is for the second time this month that Mumbai has recorded the highest maximum temperature in the country. On March 06, Santacruz (observatory) recorded 39.1 degrees Celsius, also the highest in the country (that day). On Sunday, the city recorded 39.4 degrees Celsius,” said IMD scientist Rajendra Jenamani.

According to the IMD, the highest Mumbai temperature in March was 41.3 degrees Celsius recorded at the



On March 06, Mumbai recorded temperature of 39.1 degrees Celsius. —FILE PHOTO

Santacruz observatory on March 17, 2011. Seven years later, the metropolis (Santacruz observatory) had recorded 41 degrees Celsius on March 26, 2018.

The IMD scientist said the temperature recorded in the coastal Konkan region, which encompasses Mumbai,

was four to six degrees Celsius above normal on March 12.

This was also observed between March 05 and 07 when the temperature was five to seven degrees above normal, Jenamani added.

“Normally, Konkan witnesses low tempera-

RECORD TEMP

According to the India Meteorological Department, the highest Mumbai temperature in March was 41.3 degrees Celsius recorded at the Santacruz observatory on March 17, 2011. Seven years later, the metropolis (Santacruz observatory) had recorded 41 degrees Celsius on March 26, 2018.

tures during this time because of the sea breeze between 11.30 am and 1 pm. However, in the last seven to ten days the sea breeze has been absent or delayed because of the dominant easterly winds which have resulted in high temperatures,” he said.

Western Railway finishes Gokhale Bridge demolition reconstruction underway

First India Bureau

Mumbai: The Gokhale Bridge in Mumbai’s Andheri West has been completely demolished three months after the dismantling process began. The Western Railway carried out the last leg of the demolition from Saturday night until early Sunday morning, said officials.

The entire location will be handed over to the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation within days.

The BMC has already started the reconstruction process and plans to make two lanes of the bridge operational



for traffic before the end of May 2023. The entire bridge, which is on one of the busiest routes in the suburb, is expected to be open to the public by September this year.

The bridge was closed in November last year after structural audits declared it dilapidated and beyond repair. The BMC shut it down fully on November 07 due to

The new structure is expected to be open to the public by September this year

safety concerns. The closure has caused heavy traffic snarls in Andheri, and the city’s residents have been demanding that the authorities expedite the work.

HC restrains MSHRC over Mahalaxmi racecourse matter

Mumbai (PTI): The Bombay High Court has restrained the Maharashtra State Human Rights Commission (MSHRC) from hearing a matter pertaining to the lease renewal of Mumbai’s Mahalaxmi Racecourse.

The court observed that it was “prima facie unable to see” how the commission could have taken suo motu (on its

own) cognizance of such an issue.

A division bench of Justices Gautam Patel and Neela Gokhale passed the order on March 08 on a petition filed by the principal secretary of the Maharashtra govt’s Urban Development Department (UDD) against the order passed by the commission on February 17.

The MSHRC in an or-



Mahalaxmi racecourse in Mumbai.

—FILE PHOTO

der had imposed a cost of Rs10,000 each on the state’s chief secretary,

the BMC commissioner, the principal secretary, UDD and others for

their failure to submit facts about the renewal of the lease of the Mahalaxmi Racecourse.

The high court stayed any further enquiry or hearing of proceedings in the matter before the commission, pending the final disposal of the government’s petition.

“We are prima facie unable to see how such an action is maintainable before the State Hu-

man Rights Commission or how it could have been initiated suo motu. We, therefore, grant interim relief,” the court said.

The commission had initiated proceedings on the issue of non-renewal of the lease of the Mumbai Racecourse land.

The racecourse was given to the Royal Western India Turf Club (RWITC) in May 1994 on a lease.

Man accused of smoking and unruly behaviour on Air India flight gets bail

First India Bureau

Mumbai (PTI): A 34-year-old US citizen booked for allegedly smoking on board an Air India flight and unruly behaviour towards the crew was granted bail by a court here on Monday, police said. “The man, who is of Indian origin and holds a US passport, was produced in Andheri court and was granted bail on a surety of Rs20,000. He will be released once he deposits this amount,” the Sahar police station official said.

He was charged under Section 336 (whoever

does any act so rashly or negligently as to endanger human life or the personal safety of others) and other provisions of the Indian Penal Code and Aircraft Act, the official added.

The passenger was found smoking in the lavatory of London-Mumbai flight AI130 on March 10 and behaved in an unruly manner with the crew after they were alerted by the smoke alarm and threw the cigarette from his hand, the official said.

The airline officials handed him over to police when the flight landed in Mumbai.



CRUCIAL READ

HAZARDOUS ITEMS WORTH ₹1.23 CR SEIZED BY COPS

Thane: A police raid on a godown in Thane district resulted in the seizure of hazardous materials worth Rs1.23 crore on Sunday evening. The godown, located in Purna village, Bhiwandi, was found to be storing the materials without the necessary permissions. A Narpoli police station official confirmed the seizure and stated that the materials posed a potential danger. “The godown’s owner has been booked under the Environment Protection Act and The Manufacture, Storage and Import of Hazardous Chemical Rules but is yet to be arrested,” he said.

FLAMES ENGULF FURNITURE GODOWN IN MUM

Mumbai: A level three fire (major emergency call) broke out in a furniture godown situated in Jogeshwari, a suburb of Mumbai on Monday morning. Thankfully, there were no casualties reported. The fire erupted at around 11.00 am in the Ghas Compound in Jogeshwari, according to Fire Brigade officials. At least 12 fire engines, six jumbo tankers, ambulances, and senior Fire Brigade officials rushed to the spot. “The fire is confined to the furniture market,” an official said, adding the cause of the fire is yet to be ascertained.

Return baby to biological mom: Court to adopters

First India Bureau

Mumbai: A civil court has directed adoptive parents to hand over a boy to his biological mother, who was unwed when she gave him up for adoption in 2021.

The mother, who had later married the child’s father, had approached the court to take custody of her then-one-year-old infant.

The adoptive parents opposed the plea, but the court observed that they had not provided reliable evidence to establish that the child was validly given in adoption. Their adop-



tion petition was dismissed and they have requested a stay to file an appeal.

The biological mother had said that she had run into a baby-selling racket and was advised to approach an NGO for help. She added that after the adoptive parents refused custody, she was forced to move to court for her child.

Thane court denies default bail to MCOCA accused

First India Bureau

Thane: The Thane district court has rejected default bail to 16 persons, including a man and his two sons, arrested on the charge of attempt to murder and Arms Act and slapped with the stringent Maharashtra Control of Organized Crimes (MCOCA) Act.

Special court judge Amit Shete noted the applicants do not have any indefeasible right of bail.

The copy of the order passed on March 06, was made available on Monday.

He had allegedly attacked a man in Nov last year to stop him from contesting KDMC polls

Lawyers representing the applicants requested default bail saying the charge sheet had already been filed.

Special Public Prosecutor Vinit A Kulkarni opposed the application, saying the accused do not deserve bail as the prosecution had followed all procedures to file a charge sheet in the stipulated period.

‘Most SC/ST IIT-B students wary of mentioning caste’

With a total 388 SC/ST students, nearly one-third of them do not feel comfortable openly discussing their caste identity on campus: Report

First India Bureau

Mumbai: A survey conducted by IIT Bombay’s Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe (SC-ST) student cell last year has revealed that nearly one-third of the 388 SC/ST students did not feel comfortable openly discussing their caste identity on campus.

Details from the Feb-



ruary 2022 survey—which are yet to be released officially by the institution—have not been previously reported.

Around 131 students (33.8%) said they could talk about their caste only among “very close” friends, while only 27 students (7.2%) felt unafraid to discuss caste in their “extended friends” circles.

The term “very close friend” implies someone from the respondents’ own social background. Effectively, this indicates that almost 245 (63.2%) of respondents were not comfortable talking about caste identity openly.

“The number maps how hostile, insensitive and unsafe a place IIT Bombay is for SC/ST stu-

dents,” noted the report.

It further stated that the immediate task before the cell and IIT is to make the institution “a safe and secure space and to build the confidence of students so that they can openly assert their identity and seek redressal in case of discrimination”.

The survey report also noted that 83

MENTAL HEALTH SURVEY

- Of the 134 respondents, almost half (48.1%) said that either the SC/ST student cell or the students wellness centre (SWC) could approach them. However, 22.2% were apprehensive about both.
- Almost one-fourth of the respondents filled in the comments section of the survey. Many students conveyed that they did not fill the survey form because it mentioned SWC, which, they felt, was biased against them.

(21.6%) students responded with a ‘yes’ when asked if they feared any backlash from students/faculty if they spoke about caste discrimination. Ninety-nine (25.5%) responded with a ‘maybe’ while the rest said ‘no’.

Clearly, a significant number of students do not feel safe discussing caste-based discrimina-

tion, a fact that bears repetition in the context of the recent death of Dalit student Darshan Solanki.

Dheeraj Singh, a former research associate at IIT-B who is mobilizing IIT alumni and faculty for SC/ST welfare, said it was clear that 20 to 25% of all students were at risk for mental illness or suicide.



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BUDGET SESSION OF PARLIAMENT

PM MODI HOLDS MEETING WITH TOP MINISTERS TO DISCUSS STRATEGY



New Delhi (Agencies): Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday held a meeting with his top ministers to formulate the government's strategy ahead of the second part of the Budget session.

Later in the day, the parliamentary proceedings were stalled following uproarious scenes in Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha over Rahul Gandhi's "democracy under attack" remarks in the UK, with senior BJP ministers seeking an apology over the comments and the Congress countering it with its JPC demand on the Adani issue.

While in Lok Sabha, Defence Minister and Deputy Leader of the House Rajnath Singh and Parliamentary Affairs Minister Pralhad Joshi led the government's charge against Gandhi, Union minister Piyush Goyal in Rajya Sabha demanded that Gandhi's statements be condemned by the Upper House.

Earlier in the day, a meeting of Congress MPs under the chairmanship of party presi-



Lok Sabha proceedings underway on the first day of second phase of the Budget Session of the Parliament, in New Delhi on Monday.

16 PARTIES TAKE PART IN OPPOSITION LEADERS' MEET CHAIRED BY KHARGE



New Delhi (ANI): Sixteen parties participated in the Opposition party leaders' meeting chaired by Leader of Opposition in Rajya Sabha Mallikarjun Kharge in Parliament on Monday to decide the strategy for Budget session. Indian National Congress; Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK), Janata Dal (U); Aam Admi

Party; Communist Party of India (Marxist); Kerala Congress, Rashtriya Lok Dal; Nationalist Congress Party; Communist Party of India; Indian Union Muslim League; Shiv Sena (Uddhav Thackeray); Marumalarchi Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam, Revolutionary Socialist Party; Rashtriya Janata Dal; Jharkhand Mukti Morcha and the NC.

CONG: PM GOT 'DRUMBEATERS' TO GET PARL ADJOURNED TO AVOID JPC ON ADANI ISSUE

New Delhi (PTI): The Congress on Monday posed fresh questions about Vinod Adani's alleged network of shell companies engaged in "opaque" financial transactions, and claimed that Prime Minister Narendra Modi got his "drumbeaters" to get Parliament adjourned so that the demand for JPC into the Adani issue is not raised. Congress general secretary **Jairam Ramesh** said Adani Group has repeatedly brushed aside questions about Vinod Adani, elder brother of conglomerate's chairperson Gautam Adani, claiming that he is uninvolved with group management and



decision-making, but fresh disclosures show this to be a "laughable deception". The Opposition has been persistent in its attack on the government, weeks after Adani Group stocks took a beating on the bourses in the wake of US-based short seller Hindenburg Research making a litany of allegations, including fraudulent transactions.

MIN GIRIRAJ SINGH DEMANDS SEDITION CASE AGAINST RaGa

New Delhi (ANI): Union Minister Giriraj Singh on Monday urged for a sedition case to be filed against Rahul Gandhi for allegedly insulting the Parliament during his recent visit to the United Kingdom. "Rahul Gandhi in London said that MPs were not allowed to speak in Parliament. This is an insult to Lok Sabha. The Speaker should take action against him on this statement," he said. "A sedition case should be registered against him for insulting our democracy," the minister said.

KHARGE HITS BACK AT MODI GOVT OVER RaGa'S DEMOCRACY REMARKS IN UK

New Delhi (PTI): Congress chief Mallikarjun Kharge on Monday hit back at the govt for raising Rahul Gandhi's democracy remarks in Parliament and demanding apology from him, saying those "crushing" democracy are talking of saving it. Kharge, who took out a protest march from Parliament House complex to Vijay Chowk along with other Opposition MPs, including those of the BRS, Left parties and AAP, charged there was no rule of law and that Prime Minister Narendra Modi was running the country like a "dictator". The protest march was taken out after the BJP launched an offensive against Gandhi.



DELHI EXCISE CASE



BJP Working Prez Virendra Sachdeva, Delhi Oppn Leader Ramvir Bidhuri others protest, in New Delhi on Monday.

BJP demands CM Kejriwal's resignation

New Delhi: Delhi BJP, under its Working President Virendra Sachdeva, on Monday observed a 'maun vrat' (silent sit-in) opposite Rajghat demanding resignation of CM Arvind Kejriwal for his alleged involvement in liquor policy scam.

During the sit-in, a film was also played on the LED screen "exposing" the alleged lies and false promises of the Kejriwal government.

Leader of Opposition in the Assembly Ramveer Singh Bidhuri, MP Dr Harshwardhan and Ramesh Bidhuri, MLAs Om Prakash Sharma and Abhay Verma, State General Secretaries Kuljit Singh Chahal and Harsh Malhotra, co-incharge of Jammu and Kashmir Ashish Sood, Co-incharge of Assam Pawan Sharma, former State President Vijay Goel, National Spokesperson Sardar RP Singh, State Vice President and others were present.

AAP MEMBERS AREN'T AFRAID OF JAIL: CHADHA

New Delhi (ANI): Attacking the BJP over the alleged "misuse" of central agencies, Aam Admi Party (AAP) MP **Raghav Chadha** on Monday said that party members are not afraid of going to jail, as they have emerged out of a movement. Raghav Chadha said, "We have the capability to raise our issues by ourselves. And we are not alone, all the citizens of this country are with us."

ED REMAND OF H'BAD BIZMAN PILLAI EXTENDED

New Delhi (ANI): The Rouse Avenue Court on Monday extended the ED remand of Hyderabad businessman Arun Ramchandra Pillai till March 16, in the Delhi Excise Policy money laundering case. Special Judge Vikas Dhull on Monday allowed ED application for further extensions of the remand of Arun Ramchandra Pillai. ED further informed the court that it has again issued summons to Hyderabad-based chartered accountant Butchibabu Gorantla to confront him.

IN THE COURTYARD

SUVENDU ADHIKARI FILES PETITION IN CALCUTTA HIGH COURT AGAINST SPEAKER'S DECISION

Kolkata: The Opposition leader in West Bengal, **Suvendu Adhikari** on Monday said that he has filed a petition before Calcutta High Court challenging the Assembly speaker's decision rejecting his plea to disqualify BJP legislator **Mukul Roy** under the anti-defection law. "I filed the petition before the high court today. Our lawyers mentioned the matter before the court of the Chief Justice," Adhikari said outside the HC on Monday.

HC NOT HAPPY OVER USE OF WORSHIP PLACES BY PRIESTS

New Delhi: In an order passed recently, the Delhi High Court has expressed concern over conversion of public places of worship into private tenements after which rights are sought to be claimed over the property by priests, pandits, imams, caretakers and their families in an illegal and unauthorised manner.

SC JUNKS PLEA FOR CBI CLOSURE REPORT IN YADAVS' DA CASE

New Delhi: The apex court on Monday dismissed a plea seeking a copy of CBI report on closure of its enquiry into allegations of disproportionate assets against former UP CMs **Mulayam Yadav** and his son **Akhilesh**. The CBI had said in 2019 that since "no prima facie evidence" of commission of a cognisable offence was found.

U'khand Budget session: Cong stages dharna

Chamoli (ANI): The budget session of the Uttarakhand assembly has begun in **Bhararisain**, Uttarakhand. Before the assembly proceedings, the Congress MLAs staged a sit-in protest outside the Vidhan Sabha. Congress MLAs demanded that a CBI inquiry should be initiated into alleged irregularities in several recruitment examinations in the state. Congress MLAs were seen sitting on the steps of the assembly premises holding placards demanding CM **Dhameshwar Prasad** solve the issue of unemployment in the state.

Tripura CM Saha calls on PM Modi

New Delhi (ANI): Newly sworn-in Tripura CM **Manik Saha** on Monday called on PM Narendra Modi here and presented him with a portrait of historic **Ujjayanta Palace**. Saha said that the PM has assured full support for the development of Tripura. "Glad to meet Hon'ble Prime Minister **Shri Narendra Modi Ji** in New Delhi. Hon'ble Prime Minister conveyed warm regards to brothers and sisters of Tripura and also assured for full support in development of State. Grateful to him for his blessings, warm wishes and continued guidance," Saha said in a social media post.



Tripura CM Manik Saha with PM Modi, in New Delhi on Monday.

SHAH MEETS MEGHALAYA, NAGALAND CMS

New Delhi: Meghalaya CM **Conrad Sangma** and Nagaland CM **Neiphiu Rio** on Monday met Union Home Minister **Amit Shah** here on Monday. Shah congratulated them for taking over the charge for another term and hoped the new govt will be successful in fulfilling the aspirations of the

people of their states. "Met Meghalaya CM @SangmaConrad Ji. Wished him all the best in taking office for the second time. May the new government be successful in fulfilling the aspirations of the people of the state under the leadership of PM @narendramodi Ji," Shah tweeted.

K'taka BJP MLA sparks row with 'Azaan' remarks

Bengaluru (Agencies): Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leader **KS Eshwarappa** landed in a soup after he made controversial remark while speaking about **Azaan** and said that if loud-speakers are used for prayers, it suggests that "Allah is deaf". He also said that **Azaan** gives him a headache.

Senior BJP leader and former minister **KS Eshwarappa** was addressing a public gathering when **Azaan** went out from a mosque nearby. "Wherever I go, this (Azaan) gives me a headache," Eshwarappa said.

BIHAR POLITICS

Is action on Lalu family a blessing in disguise for Nitish Kumar?

Sharat K Verma

New Delhi: The investigation of Central agencies against **Lalu Prasad's** family in Bihar has intensified as the noose of two agencies — the CBI and ED — is tightening around the family. In this case, along with **Lalu Prasad** and his wife **Rabri Devi**, his son and Deputy CM of Bihar **Tejashwi Yadav** is also on target. Apart from these, the names of four daughters of **Lalu**

Prasad are also involved in one way or the other. CBI has interrogated **Lalu** and **Rabri** and **Tejashwi Yadav** has been summoned twice. On one pretext or the other, he has been avoiding being present. But soon he will be produced before the CBI and after that the ED will also interrogate him.

CBI had earlier conducted raids in the alleged scam of recruitment in Railways and now ED has raided



Bihar CM Nitish Kumar with his Deputy Tejashwi. —FILE PHOTO

Tejashwi and his sisters. This whole matter is progressing like the liquor scam of Delhi. It cannot be denied that

both the agencies arrested some people in this case. Former MLA **Bhola Yadav**, who was earlier a personal aide

of **Lalu Prasad**, has been arrested by the CBI in this case. It is not known how much political benefit BJP will get from such aggressive action of central agencies, but **Nitish Kumar**, who became Chief Minister with the help of RJD, has got a big relief. After CBI inquiry and ED raids, demand to make **Tejashwi** the CM has come to a standstill as RJD leaders are on backfoot. They are not putting pressure on

Nitish to make **Tejashwi** the CM. Although **Tejashwi** has already said that he is in no hurry and will become the CM when he has to, but first he has to defeat the BJP. But his party leaders were pressing that instead of waiting till the 2025 assembly polls, **Tejashwi** should be made the CM now. **Nitish** is also relieved because if RJD leaders pressurize him, he will get a strong excuse to walk out of the alliance.

"CHANGE SCRIPT & DIALOGUE WRITER": TEJASHWI YADAV TO BJP AFTER RAIDS

Patna: Days after raids on his and his family members' houses in multiple states in connection with the land-for-jobs case, Bihar Deputy CM **Tejashwi Yadav** on Monday again rubbished the allegations, and taunted PM **Narendra Modi** and Home Minister **Amit Shah**. In a dig at the Prime Minister's "entire political science" degree, and **Shah's** "understand the chronology" remark, **Tejashwi Yadav** said they (Yadav family) are real socialists, not "fake entire political science

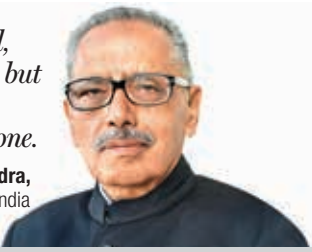


people", and offered a chronology of events leading to the raids. He also questioned what happened to sensational, headline-making claims of recovering thousands of crores in money and properties during earlier raids.



To grow up to your potential, challenge your comfort zone, but to achieve more than your potential, break out of your comfort zone.

—Dr Jagdeesh Chandra, CEO & Editor-in-Chief, First India



Sattar's remark on farmer suicide unintentional: Desai

Sattar's department has prepared an action plan to implement schemes to prevent farmer suicides, he said

First India Bureau

Mumbai: After Agriculture Minister Abdul Sattar's insensitive statement towards the farmers, the atmosphere has heated up in the political circles of Maharashtra. Sattar had said that farmer suicide is not a recent issue and that farmers have been committing suicide for the past several years. Meanwhile, Shambhuraj Desai, leader of the Shinde group, has given an explanation of Sattar's statement while speaking to the media on Monday.

"The statement made by Abdul Sattar is unintentional. He and I had a discussion this morning, where he told that his department has prepared an action plan to effectively implement the schemes to prevent farmer suicides. There is no doubt that farmers' suicides should be prevented. Sattar will explain this in the Legislative Assembly as well," said Desai.

Meanwhile, Chhagan Bhujbal, talking about the onion subsidy, said that the subsidy given by the Shinde government was like wiping the face of the farmers. Desai also responded to this. "Bhujbal should know how much subsidy the farmers got during his time. In fact, we increased Rs. 100 more than them. We did what they couldn't do," commented Desai.



Shambhuraj Desai

Sattar has no sympathy or concern for farmers: Jadhav

First India Bureau

Mumbai: Shiv Sena (Thackeray group) MLA **Bhaskar Jadhav** has criticized Sattar over his statement. While interacting with the media on Monday, Jadhav said, "Abdul Sattar makes absurd statements. They have no love, affection, sympathy, or concern for farmers. He knows that he will not become famous in Maharashtra for his work. That's why sometimes they talk disrespectfully about women, farmers, ask officials why they drink alcohol."

"There is such a big crisis for the farmers. Was Abdul Sattar seen on any banknote after the unseasonal rain? Sattar always does the business of gossiping, mocking the farmers,



Bhaskar Jadhav

and rubbing salt in the wound. The Chief Minister does not stop him. Therefore, his absurd statements are increasing day by day," criticized Jadhav.

NCP state president Jayant Patil has also commented on Sattar. "Abdul Sattar and the state government are insensitive. The Agriculture Minister has shown insensitivity from time to time, and his language towards the farmers is not comforting," said Patil.

People who have no shame, mock the dead: Awhad

First India Bureau

Mumbai: Recently, some parts of Maharashtra have been affected by unseasonal rains. Farmers have suffered huge losses due to heavy rains accompanied by strong winds. On the one hand, while the agricultural produce is fetching high prices, the unseasonal rains have left the farming community reeling. Therefore, the farmers of Maharashtra are demanding help from the government.

When asked by the media in Mumbai about Abdul Sattar's statement, Awhad said, "People's loss of life, its pain and suffering is known only to their family members. When a bread winner commits suicide, the whole house is in chaos. But a minister in the desensitized government

brazenly says that farmer suicides happen all the time, so what's the big deal?"

"People who have no shame, mock the dead and bring their insensitivity to the people of Maharashtra by saying that this happens every day. The people of Maharashtra are watching all this. I will show the people here that the pride of power is not good," added Awhad.

Three farmers have committed suicide in the Sillod constituency of minister Sattar in the past few days. In this regard, when a question was asked to him, he gave an insensitive answer. Sattar commented, "Farmer suicide is not a today's issue. Farmers have been committing suicide for the past several years."



Jitendra Awhad

CM forms panel as employees firm on OPS related strike

First India Bureau

Mumbai: Maharashtra Chief Minister Eknath Shinde on Monday announced a panel comprising senior bureaucrats to look into the demand of state government employees to revert to the Old Pension Scheme even as their unions have decided to go ahead with the strike from Tuesday.

The panel will give its report in a time-bound manner, officials said.

Shinde and Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis also appealed to the government employees not to go ahead with the strike, which can potentially paralyse the functioning of the administration.

A meeting was chaired by Shinde, which was also attended by Fadnavis, Leaders of Opposition in the Assembly and Council Ajit Pawar and Ambadas



Maharashtra Chief Minister Eknath Shinde

Danve, respectively, Chief Secretary Manu Kumar Srivastava, Additional Chief Secretary (Finance) Manoj Saunik and various unions of the state government employees.

Acknowledging the role of employees in the state's growth, Shinde said the solution for their social security will be found through dialogue.

Shinde said there was no road map by the states that have implemented OPS.

Meanwhile, the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) has extended its support for the restoration of OPS as its

(Bhagwant Mann) government has done in Punjab.

Under OPS, the pension amount is provided by the government, which increases its liability, whereas the NPS has a contributory mechanism from the employee as well as the government.

While the BJP at the Centre has steadfastly refused to go back to the OPS, parties like the Congress have been battling for it.

Several employees' groups have been protesting across the country for reintroduction of the OPS.

'No one will get relief from budget'

First India Bureau

Mumbai: On Monday, NCP leader Ajit Pawar opposed the state budget in the Legislative Assembly terming it to be 'a barrage of unfulfilled announcements.'

"I don't think anyone will get relief from this. The finance minister should have taken care that the provisions and schemes made in the budget should go ahead. Last year, the budget was presented on the basis of 'Panchasutri'. This time Fadnavis gave the name 'Panchamrit'. Wherever they go, they give a little 'panchamrit'. After that, they give prasad. Mahaprasad was given to the BJP, prasad to Eknath Shinde, and we were given a little, 'Panchamrit'. This was not expected from Fadnavis. The fiscal policy requires consistency and clarity to enable any economy."

Deputy CM Fadnavis 'gifts' 25,000 houses to Dhangar community

First India Bureau

Mumbai: The budget session is currently going on in the Maharashtra Legislative Assembly and post budget, the opposition has targeted the ruling Shinde-Fadnavis government. Meanwhile, on Monday, Fadnavis gave a big gift to the Dhangar community by announcing to give at least 25,000 houses for them.

Addressing the Dhangar community, Fadnavis said, "We prepare different housing schemes. However, the Dhangar community is not getting the desired benefit from it. So, we clearly decided that houses have to be built. But 25,000 of these houses should be given to the Dhangar community. This number is a minimum, not a maximum. It is better if we get more houses than this. People will gradu-



Deputy CM Devendra Fadnavis

ally understand the schemes, and they will take advantage of these schemes. We have to take these schemes to the people, it is our responsibility."

"In fact, a Rs. 10,000 crore scheme has been announced to provide interest-free loans to the Dhangar community. Some people think, how is this possible? But we have been working on it for the past few months. The state government can borrow through the National Cooperative Corporation (NCCDC). In this regard, our minister Radhakrishna Vikhe-Patil and I both met Amit Shah," added Fadnavis.

Maha Cong holds protest on Adani, submit memo to Guv

First India Bureau

Mumbai: Maharashtra Congress on Monday held a protest in Mumbai and shouted slogans against PM Narendra Modi and industrialist Gautam Adani.

The rally started at Girgaon and ended at Raj Bhavan, with state unit chief Nana Patole, former chief ministers Prithviraj Chavan and Ashok Chavan in attendance.

A delegation later submitted a memorandum to Governor Ramesh Bais.

"When Adani was looting the money of SBI and LIC, what was our 'chowkidar' doing? It is highly unfortunate the demand of Congress leader Rahul Gandhi to conduct a probe into allegations against the Adani group has been expunged from official records (in Parliament)," Patole alleged.

The term 'chowkidar' (watchman) was at the centre of a Bharatiya Janata Party

campaign in the 2019 general elections to highlight Modi's zero tolerance towards corruption and wrongdoings.

"There is a fear that investments made by LIC and SBI in Adani firms may be lost. Those who try to raise their voice against the Centre are facing legal action and jail. If the Modi government continues in this manner, democracy will end soon in India," Patole claimed.

Those who join the BJP under pressure (of probe agencies) do not face legal action from thereon, Patole added.

The group has denied all Hindenburg allegations, calling them "malicious", "baseless" and a "calculated attack on India".

Incidentally, the Lok Sabha was informed on Monday that the government has not set up any committee to probe these allegations, but stock market regulator SEBI was investigating market allegations against the Adani group.

HC dismisses AI union's plea against eviction

First India Bureau

Mumbai: The Bombay High Court on Monday dismissed petitions filed by three Air India Employees' Unions challenging the airline's decision to evict them from the staff quarters at suburban Kalina noting accommodation is not provided as a matter of right and was not a term of employment. A division



bench also said monetization of lands and properties of Air India Limited was one of the essential terms of the airline's disinvestment process.

The court said if em-

ployees continue to hold on to flats then Air India Asset Holding Company would not be able to monetize the land to reduce the burden of Air India's debt.

The bench, however, stayed its order for two weeks to let the unions appeal in the Supreme Court.

"It is not that every employee is granted accommodation as a matter of right," HC said.

SEEKING RELIEF

Parab moves HC against ED's money laundering case

First India Bureau

Mumbai: Former Maharashtra minister Anil Parab on Monday moved Bombay HC seeking to quash the money laundering case lodged by Enforcement Directorate (ED) in connection with the Sai Resort at Dapoli in Ratnagiri.

Parab also sought interim relief of no coercive action being taken against him pending the hearing of his plea.

A division bench headed by Justice Revati Mohite Dere will hear the plea on Tuesday.

Parab moved HC after ED arrested his business partner and aide Sadanand Kadam on March 10.

ED had claimed the value of the Dapoli land is around Rs 2.74 crore and on the said land the resort valued at Rs 7.46 crore was proceeds of crime.

In 2011, Pune resident



Anil Parab

Vibhas Sathe purchased agriculture land at Dapoli and then sold the plot to Parab in 2017 for Rs 1.80 crore, although the sale deed was exe-

cuted in 2019.

The agency claimed, out of total amount, Rs 80 lakh was paid in cash, which was handed over to Sathe by Kad-

am on behalf of Parab. Subsequently, Sai Resort was constructed on the plot and Parab sold it to Kadam.

ED alleged Parab and Kadam had made Sathe make an application to convert the land usage from agricultural to non-agricultural.

"Kadam had pressurised revenue department officials and obtained illegal permission on September 12, 2017," the ED said.

Apart from this, ED

claimed "Kadam, in connivance with Parab, had caused detrimental damage to the environment by constructing Sai Resort".

The absence of any sewage and other municipal or such outlets for the safe discharge of effluents, owing to the illegal construction of the said resort, was causing great damage to the environment and ecology of the seashore, the ED has claimed.

MUMBAI | TUESDAY,
MARCH 14, 2023

First India

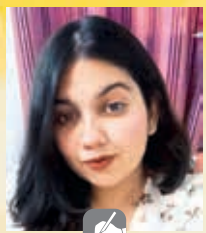
City First



(L-R) Khushi, Yashvini, Harshita, Varunavi, Shweta, Sheena, Soni and Disha

A NIGHT FULL OF GLAMOUR!

City First brings to you glimpses from the dazzling pre-party of the Jaipur Couture Show 2023 held at 'The Palace', Bhakrota on Sunday!



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PHOTOS BY SANTOSH SHARMA

A dazzling pre-party and First Event Glimpse program of Rajasthan's biggest and most prominent fashion festival 'Jaipur Couture Show 2023, season 11' presented by First India and Bharat24, Vision of New India and curated by Gaurav Gaur, Director Elite Miss Rajasthan took place at 'The Palace', Bhakrota on Sunday was a cosy bash with a select set. During the occasion, a glimpse of the exclusive designer collections of 26 fashion designers from across the country was showcased. Show patron JD Maheshwari along with show's founder Gaurav Gaur, directors Ajit Soni, PN Doody, Ankur Jain, Ronnie Sharma, and Nakul Vijay were present. While addressing the media, Gaurav Gaur said "We are getting into the zone of celebration and festivities. So keeping that in mind, this night set the mood for the day. So yes, it will surely be a regular affair for events that demand bespoke experiences." He further said "The event will bring together a medley of fashion designers showcasing their vivacious and latest collections. The event will see glimpses of nine TV and Film stars as showstoppers on the stage. On the second day of the event, Bollywood actress Mugdha Godse, Zoya Afroz, Liza Malik, Bollywood actor Anirudh Dave, Bigg Boss fame television celebrity Tina Dutta, television actress Soni Singh, Akash Chaudhary will be present on the ramp as showstoppers for well-known designers. On the third day of the program, actress Chitrangada Singh and TV actress Tania Chatterjee will participate as showstoppers in the



Sheena, Gaurav Gaur and Soni



Akanksha Bhalla

closing program of the show." Anoop Chowdhary, Shivayu, Neerja, Krishna Singh, Craft Council of Artisans and Weavers, House of Skull Baba, Ankit Bagra, Daksha, Seema Kalavadia, Heena Balani, Hashtag Blunt, Ruchi Pathak, Khushi Chauhan, Sarte, Bannadi, Mukesh Dubey, Itisha Jain, Saisha Rajput, Vipin Agarwal, Nazim Ali, Rekha Bhimsariya, Kingshuk, Prashant Mazumdar; Fuchsia will showcase their best designs on stage." Various who's who of the city including Supermodels, Elite Miss Rajasthan Winners and Influencers were present during the bash.



Anticlockwise: Radhika, Harshita, Krishna and Yashvini

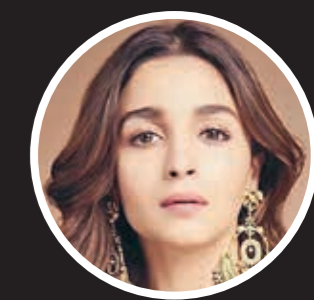


Oscars 2023

LET'S 'NAATU NAATU'



SRK wrote, "Big hug to @guneetm & @EarthSpectrum for Elephant Whisperers. And @mmkeeravaani #ChandraBose ji @ssrajamouli @AlwaysRamCharan @tarak9999 thank u for showing us all, the way to do it. Both Oscars truly inspirational!!"



Alia Bhatt, who is also a part of the film, gave a shout out to the team through her Insta story. She also wished The Elephant Whisperers' team as she wrote, 'uff what a visual! Historic! Congratulations @guneetmonga and the whole team'.



Vicky Kaushal took to his Insta story and wrote, 'Getting ready for Shoot. Put on the Oscars in the van and see the most magical smiles!! Congratulations @guneetmonga and team #TheElephantWhisperers #Oscars95'.

City First highlights the glorious victory of Indian Movie RRR and the documentary The Elephant Whisperer, at the Oscars 2023!



UTTAKARSHA SHEKHAR
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The Oscars, the greatest and most prestigious awards show in the world, presented prizes in 24 categories, including best film, best actress, original screenplay, cinematography, production design, costume design, makeup and hairstyling, and others. In the same episode, India celebrated two big wins at the Oscars marking the historic win of 'RRR' and 'The Elephant Whisperers', which has been etched in golden letters in the history of Indian cinema. The iconic dance song from SS Rajamouli's big-budget film "RRR," "Naatu Naatu," won Best Original Song at the 95th Academy Awards, beating heavyweights like Lady Gaga and Rihanna, giving India a significant representation at the Oscars.

rywhere All At Once' both shone at the 95th Academy Awards, where 'Best Original Song' went to RRR's Naatu Naatu, and 'Best Documentary Short film category' went to The Elephant Whisperers. The documentary, which tells the story of a couple who care for an injured baby elephant after it gets separated from its herd, is the first Indian production to win in this category. However, India's big win remained Naatu Naatu (a Telugu word which means raw or rustic), a thumping song that has got people around the world grooving to its beats.

In January, the single made history by winning a Golden Globe for best original music, a first for India. It also received the Critics' Choice award for best single the same month. Not only this, Indian diva, Deepika Padukone attended as a presenter and looked stunning in black Louis Vuitton and . She introduced the live performance of Naatu Naatu, which featured Lauren Gottlieb dancing and singing alongside Rahul Sipligunj and Kaala Bhairava. After Persis Khambatta and Priyanka Chopra, Deepika is the third Indian to present at the Oscars and captivated viewers with her appearance. She graced the red carpet



Glimpse from the LIVE performance of Naatu Naatu



(L-R) NT Rama Rao Jr, SS Rajamouli and Ram Charan



Lady Gaga during the OSCARS



Rihanna during the OSCARS

"An irresistibly catchy chorus, electrifying beats and killer dance moves to match have made this song a global sensation. It plays during a pivotal scene in 'RRR', a movie about the friendship between real-life Indian revolutionaries Alluri Sitarama Raju and Komaram Bheem. In addition to being sung in Telugu and illustrating the film's anti-colonialist themes, it's also a total banger!" She added, "It's earned millions of views on Youtube and Tik Tok. Has audiences dancing in movie theatres all around the world and is also the first song ever from Indian production to be nominated for an Oscar. Do you know Naatu? Because if you don't you're about to. From the film RRR this is Naatu Naatu."
—DEEPIKA PADUKONE

Global star Priyanka Chopra, who has supported RRR and this song from the start, shared a video of the special performance on Instagram. The actress along with Anjula Acharia hosted the South Asian Excellence Pre-Oscars Celebration on Thursday on the Paramount Studio lot invited South Asian industry changemakers and recognised Oscar nominees of South Asian descent. Everything Everywhere All At Once won five of its eleven Oscar nominations, and Team RRR, which included director SS Rajamouli, actors Ram Charan, and Jr. NTR, attended the ceremony.



STARRY NIGHTS IN THE CITY



Jagdeesh Chandra addressing the audience



Jagdeesh Chandra walks the ramp with (L-R) Aarzo, Karishma, Sheena, Shrishti, Sneha, Soni, Jui, Rewati, Rishika and Shivangi

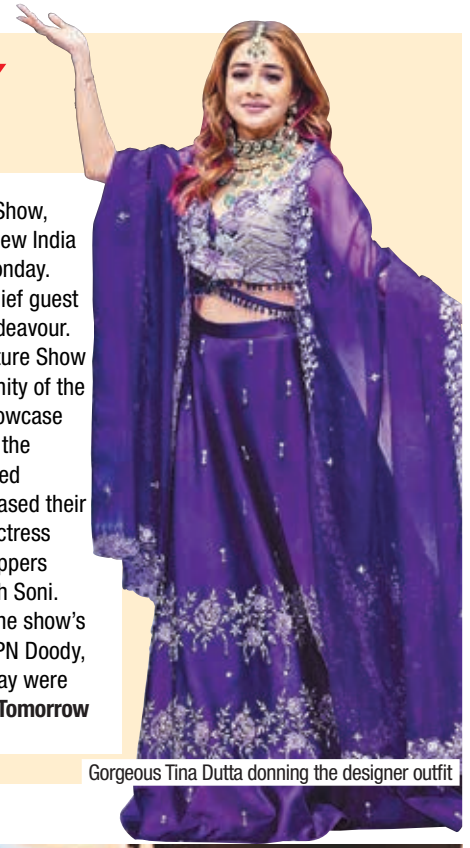
—PHOTOS BY SANTOSH SHARMA & MUKESH KIRADOO



Stunning Akanksha Bhalla showcasing the designer collection

The second day of the three-day Jaipur Couture Show, presented by First India and Bharat24-Vision of New India organised at The Palace on Ajmer Highway on Monday. Jagdeesh Chandra graced the occasion as the chief guest and congratulated Gaurav Gaur for his great endeavour. He said "This is the 11th chapter of Jaipur Couture Show 2023 and with each passing year, the magnanimity of the fashion show is expanding as the platform to showcase brilliant beauty and talent. We are happy to see the enthusiasm in the participating girls." Renowned fashion designers from across the city showcased their collections on the second day of the show. Actress Tina Dutta walked the ramp as the showstoppers for the label Shivayu by Shivani and Aayush Soni. Show Patron JD Maheshwari along with the show's founder Gaurav Gaur, directors Ajit Soni, PN Doody, Ankur Jain, Ronnie Sharma and Nakul Vijay were present.

More in City First Tomorrow



Gorgeous Tina Dutta donning the designer outfit

HRITHIK RISES ABOVE FEAR AND UNCERTAINTY

Setting new bars, Superstar Hrithik Roshan has always strived to be the best version of himself, be it in terms of exploring new genres and characters or pushing the boundaries in physical transformations. In his latest post, the



Hrithik Roshan

actor yet again rises above his inhibitions, personifying commitment and dedication offering the ideal Monday motivation to netizens.

One of the fittest actors in the Indian film industry, Hrithik Roshan has maintained the tag for over two decades with his disciplined approach towards his health and continues to inspire, encourage and support everyone with his rigorous workout regime. Despite undergoing critical medical conditions at different stages of his life, Hrithik has bounced back with utmost vigour and

passion, making him the inspiring icon he is, been ever since the beginning of his career.

With his latest post, the superstar has once again motivated his fans and followers drawing from his own experience. The actor shared a video from his gym, laughing away at the triumph of rising above fear and uncertainty saying, "Laughter wasn't on the agenda that morning. I remember waking up weak, it was back n bicep day I think. Both are precarious for my injuries. Dreading the number of sets and reps, the target was set at the highest intensity by Kris. My left bicep tendon injury felt like it was acting up, I just

didn't want to work out that morning. I felt fear and uncertainty. The decision was left to me. The choice was to take the day off or to train. This is how I saw it in my head - If I made it thru it will feel good and set a precedence. If I didn't make it thru, it will feel good to have tried failed and learnt - and that would set an informed precedence which would keep me injury free in the future as well. Either way, getting started was a win-win. I decided to go for it. The visual tells the rest of the story."

Hrithik Roshan has been

offering insights into his workout routines regularly since August 2022 as he underwent an impressive transformation for his upcoming film fighter.

Recently, the actor also shared a throwback picture flexing his biceps to reinstate the importance of basic yet pivotal things like diet and sleep, which was inundated with comments showering love and support. Continuing his hustle, Hrithik Roshan has recently wrapped the third schedule of 'Fighter' directed by Pathaan fame Siddharth Anand. Marking a hat trick, Fighter will be Hrithik and Siddharth's third association, preceded by Bang Bang and War.

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Glimpse of the event

The Hero of the Indian TEXTILE INDUSTRY

Piyush Goyal, Union Minister of Commerce & Industry, Textiles, Consumer Affairs, Food & Public Distribution, Govt of India awarded Balkrishan Goenka, Chairman of the Welspan Group with the prestigious Exemplary Contribution Award 2021-2022 by the Synthetic and Rayon Textile Export Promotion Council (SRTEPC).

Goenka has been recognized and honoured with this award for his outstanding performance. This award is for

the financial year of 2021-2022 for his valuable contributions to the Indian Textile Industry. This year the council organised its Award Function for the excellent performance of its member-exporters for the financial year 2021-22. SRTEPC was set up in 1954 and it is the only Council in India for the export promotion of Technical textiles and Manmade fibre textiles. The Annual Export Award Function was held on March 9, 2023, at the National Centre for Performing Arts, Mumbai. The function was at-

tended by over 300 people, including some of the most senior Government officials like Roop Rashi, Textiles Commissioner, and R. K. Mishra, Additional DGFT, Mumbai, Consul Generals of the Republic of Turkey, UAE and Kenya were also present at the SRTEPC Award Function.

Commenting on this development, B.K Goenka, said, "I am extremely pleased today on receiving this award as our efforts have been recognized. I think that the Indian textile will not just sustain itself but become a leader globally."

Kiara Rocks

Adding yet another feather to her cap, Kiara Advani bags her highest rank ever on the Ormax Stars India Love list, receiving a

special shout-out for her extraordinary achievements. Bollywood's golden girl and most loved Superstar Kiara Advani undoubtedly has the most impressive career trajectory. From emerging as the most bankable star currently with a consecutive streak of successful films to winning the hearts of the masses with her endearing and lovable personality, Kiara Advani has scaled the most commendable journey to Superstardom in a very short period.

Ranking third only after seasoned and senior actors like Alia Bhatt and Deepika Padukone, Kiara Advani is the epitome of a success story.



Kiara Advani

Shehnaaz calls herself smarter than a dolphin

Shehnaaz Gill's chat show Desi Vibes with Shehnaaz Gill has been enjoying popularity since its launch in November last year. The show, which streams on her YouTube channel has welcomed several Bollywood actors and prominent personalities of the entertainment world. Recently, comedian-turned-actor Kapil Sharma came to promote his upcoming film Zwigato.

In a recently released teaser in the video, the two were presumably talking about mimicking or copying someone, as Shehnaaz said, "Nakal karne mein bhi akal lagti hai, jo sabke paas nahi hai (You need smartness to copy someone too)." Referring to the word akal, which means in-

telligence, she added, "Mera Dolphin se bhi zyada hai. As a confused Kapil asked her if dolphins are intelligent, she replied, "Haan, jaanwaron mein uska dimag sabse zyada hota hai, par mera usse zyada hai."

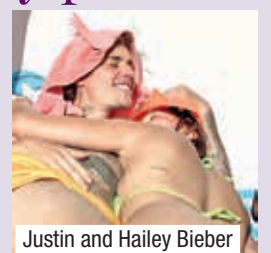


Shehnaaz Kaur Gill

JUSTIN & HAILEY share cuddly pictures

Justin Bieber dropped photos with their wife Hailey Bieber amid the ongoing alleged cold war between the model and his ex-girlfriend Selena Gomez. It has been a while now since the online feud between Hailey Bieber and Selena Gomez began, and it only seems to escalate with every passing day.

The latest photos shared by the singer feature him and his wife Hailey Bieber cuddling on a yacht. While



Justin and Hailey Bieber

Justin was shirtless and only wearing orange-coloured shorts, Hailey wore neon swimwear. The two smiled in the first photo while in the next, they appeared to be sun-soaking.

Netizens did not take time to claim that it was Hailey Bieber who shared the post and wrote the caption. An Instagram user wrote, "Can tell from the caption its not really his style of captions."