

absolute india

VOL. 9, ISSUE 179, MUMBAI | MONDAY, APRIL 11, 2022 ₹5 | PAGE 08

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IS COVID PICKING PACE IN INDIA?



“We’re seeing 1.5 million new cases each day. Large outbreaks are spreading in Asia. A new wave is sweeping across Europe. And yet one third of humanity remains unvaccinated. We’ve to work better together to deliver vaccines to every person, everywhere - not just in wealthy countries”.

Antonio Guterres, Secretary-General, UN

Joe Biden to hold virtual summit with PM Modi

NEW YORK | Agencies

US President Joe Biden will discuss with Prime Minister Narendra Modi the Russian invasion of Ukraine when they hold a virtual summit just before the diplomatic and defence leaders of the two countries meet for their 2+2 meeting, the White House announced on Sunday.



While the relations between the two largest democracies have been growing at an unprecedented pace, they have been at odds over the Russian invasion of Ukraine with India trying to stay neutral to the consternation of the US.

Austin to discuss a range of issues, bilateral and global, on Monday.

The US has been trying to persuade India to join it in taking a harder line against Russia. Biden's Spokesperson Jen Psaki said: "President Biden will continue our close consultations on the consequences of Russia's brutal war against Ukraine and mitigating its destabilizing impact on global food supply and commodity markets."

Amid the differences between the two countries on Ukraine, the mention of "mitigating" the invasion's impact on global food supply could open the way for cooperation between India and the US to help countries facing a crisis from the rising prices and shortages of wheat. India has a huge stockpile of wheat -- estimated at 100 million tonnes, far beyond its immediate safety net requirements -- that could be deployed to help countries facing a food crisis. Psaki said that further deepening ties "between our governments, economies, and our people", will be on the summit agenda.

prominently in their conversation. The Pentagon announced that Singh and Austin will meet on Monday morning before the 2+2 meeting. Defence Department Spokesperson John Kirby said that at the 2+2 meeting, the four leaders will discuss "defence, science, technology, cooperation, climate, public health, and people-to-people ties".

The virtual meeting will enable both sides to continue their regular and high-level engagement aimed at further strengthening the bilateral Comprehensive Global Strategic Partnership.

Earlier on Sunday, Indian Defence Minister Rajnath Singh said that he would be leaving New Delhi on Sunday night for a visit to the US from April 10 to April 15.

DELHI, HARYANA, AND GUJARAT HAVE SEEN A RISE IN THE SEVEN-DAY AVERAGE OF DAILY CASES. DELHI ON APRIL 7 SAW 176 NEW CASES - THE HIGHEST DAILY RISE SINCE MARCH 10.

GUJARAT REPORTED 34 FRESH CASES ON APRIL 9 - THE HIGHEST DAILY COUNT SINCE MARCH 13, WHILE THE AVERAGE ALSO ROSE TO 15 FROM 9 ON APRIL 4.

THERE IS ALSO A SLOW RISE SEEN IN MAHARASHTRA, KARNATAKA, TAMIL NADU, UTTAR PRADESH, AND WEST BENGAL.

INDIA REPORTS 1,054 NEW COVID CASES, 29 DEATHS

New Delhi: India on Sunday reported a marginal decline at 1,054 Covid cases against 1,150 reported the previous day. In the same period, 29 deaths occurred taking the total number of fatalities to 5,21,685, said the Union Ministry of Health and Family Affairs.

Following the continuous downward trend, India's active caseload has declined to 11,132. Active cases now constitute 0.03 per cent of the country's total positive cases.

A total of 1,258 patients have recovered in the last 24 hours and the cumulative tally of recovered patients since the beginning of the pandemic is now at 4,25,02,454. Consequently, India's recovery rate stands at 98.76 per cent.

Also in the same period, a total of 4,18,345 tests were conducted across the country. India has so far conducted over 79.38 crore cumulative tests. There has been a sustained fall in the weekly and daily positivity rates too. The weekly positivity rate in the country currently stands at 0.23 per cent, however the daily positivity rate is also reported to be 0.25 per cent. On the vaccination front, India's Covid-19 inoculation coverage has exceeded 185.70 crore as per the provisional reports till 7 a.m. on Sunday morning. This has been achieved through 2,24,70,964 sessions.

number of Covid-19 cases has been observed in India over the past 2 months, with the country reporting less than 1,000 daily new cases for the past few days. Further, the weekly positivity rate has remained below 1 per cent," Bhusan said in the letter.

It also reported an increase in weekly new cases - to 826 new cases in the week ending April 8 from 724 new cases in the week ending April 1. It has also seen an increase in positivity in the last week from 0.51 per cent to 1.25 per cent.

Haryana reported a surge in seven-day average - 68 on April 9 from 47 on April 4. Weekly new cases in the state rose to 416 in the week ending April 8 from 367 in the week ending April 1. Haryana has also seen an increase in positivity in the last week from 0.51 per cent to 1.06 per cent.

Meanwhile, about 1.5 million new cases are being reported each day worldwide, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres has said.

The countries seeing new outbreaks in Asia include China, and Hong Kong, and the UK, France, Italy, and the Netherlands in Europe.

Guterres said that some countries are also reporting their highest death rates since the start of the pandemic.

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Amid a global rise in Covid cases driven by BA.2 sub-variant of Omicron, India is also seeing a slow yet steady rise in the number of infections in several states.

This comes as two cases of the new XE variant - a mutant hybrid of Omicron sub-variants BA.1 and BA.2 - have been detected in the country, one each from Maharashtra and Gujarat. The Union Health Ministry has asked five states -- Kerala, Haryana, Maharashtra, Delhi, and Mizoram -- to continue monitoring the spread of infection and undertake prompt steps to manage the Covid spread. Union Health Secretary Rajesh Bhusan has directed these states to conduct regular monitoring and follow up action in emerging areas of concern.

"A sustained and significant decline in the

Imran Khan fell out of favour with Pakistan Army which brought him to power

Islamabad | Agencies

Both sides deny it, but it's widely acknowledged that Imran Khan came to power with the help of Pakistan's powerful army and intelligence services - and now he has fallen out with them, reports said.

The Pakistan Army began to grow increasingly frustrated with Khan's failure to deliver good governance, particularly in Punjab, and perhaps at how they were being publicly blamed for bringing him into power by the opposition, the BBC reported.

Most crucially, a rift began to appear between Army chief, Gen Qamar Javed Bajwa and former ISI chief and current Peshawar Corps



Commander, Lt Gen Faiz Hameed, who was widely seen as hoping to become the next Army chief.

Lt Gen Hameed was apparently so confident of his prospects that he had even previously told officials in neighbouring Afghanistan he would be the next man in

charge of the army, BBC reported. However, one source close to the military said that while Lt Gen Hameed was seen as someone who could handle "dirty jobs" effectively, a reference to manipulating politicians or silencing critics, he was not seen as someone fit "to

lead the institution".

The tension between the two powerful figures was noticed during a private interaction with influential commentators last summer. One journalist asked a question, only to be told by Hameed, then head of the ISI, that time had run out.

"I'm the chief," interjected Gen Bajwa curtly, "and I'll decide when we're done," before proceeding to take the question and answer it at leisure, BBC reported.

Journalist Kamran Yousaf told the BBC that the military had been involved in "managing" Imran Khan's allies and slim majority in government. "Once that support was missing, his downfall was inevitable," he said, BBC reported.

Maharaja Ranjit Singh's statue in Lahore restored to golden shine

Lahore | Agencies

The life-size sculpture of Maharaja Ranjit Singh - the ruler of the Sikh empire during the 19th century - has been restored to its golden shine and is expected to be re-installed at a safer place at Lahore Fort, media reports said.

The nine-foot-tall statue, made of cold bronze, has been repaired by the Fakir Khana Museum, under the aegis of which it was originally sculpted in 2019, the Express Tribune reported.

Ranjit Singh's statue was vandalised in 2020 for the second time since it was placed at Lahore Fort in June 2019 in commemoration of his 180th death anniversary.

A teenager, identified as Zeeshan, who is suspected to have broken an arm of the statue, was also arrested. The accused, reportedly an active member of a religious party, had confessed to his crime. The statue shows the regal Sikh emperor sitting on a horse with a sword in hand in Sikh attire. Singh is sitting

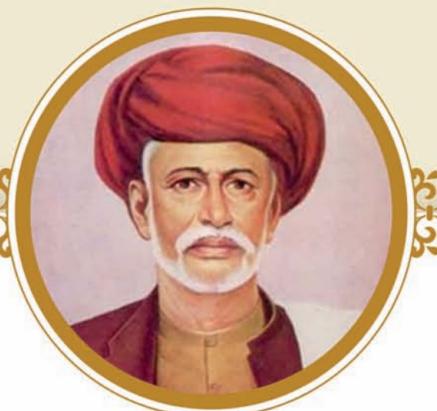


on his favourite Arabic horse named Kahar Bahar which was a gift by then Afghan ruler Dost Muhammad Khan, Express Tribune reported. Maharaja Ranjit Singh ruled Punjab for 40 years in the 19th Century.

MAHILA CONG CHIEF CONFRONTS SMRITI IRANI ON INFLATION DURING FLIGHT

New Delhi: A video of Union Minister Smriti Irani being confronted by Mahila Congress President Netta D'Souza on the issue of inflation has gone viral.

The two were onboard a Guwahati-bound flight and the conversation took place as the plane landed and passengers started disembarking. D'Souza asked the Union Minister about the rising prices of LPG to which Irani replied that the Centre has been helping the poor through various welfare programmes. While the Mahila Congress president kept asking questions, the Minister said that she was blocking everyone.

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CENTRES OF FAITH PLAY KEY ROLE IN SPREADING SOCIAL CONSCIOUSNESS: NARENDRA MODI

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday said along with spiritual dimension, centres of faith play a major role in spreading social consciousness.

On the occasion of Ram Navami, Modi virtually addressed the 14th Foundation Day celebration at Umiya Mata temple at Gathila, Junagadh, in Gujarat.

Gujarat Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel and Union Minister for Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying, Parshottam Rupala were among those present on the occasion.

The Prime Minister greeted the people on the auspicious occasion of the foundation day of the temple and Ram Navami.

He also expressed gratitude for getting an opportunity of dedicating the temple in 2008 and paying his obeisance to Maa Umiya since many years.

Modi expressed happiness that apart from being an important place of spiritual and divine importance, Umiya Mata temple at Gathila has become a place of social consciousness and tourism.

The Prime Minister said as a devotee of Maa Umiya, it is not possible for people to cause any damage to mother earth.

"As we do not need unnecessary medicines to our mother, we should not use unnecessary chemicals on our land too," he added.

Modi spoke about measures to preserve the land with the help of water preservation



schemes like 'Per Drop More Crop'. He recalled the 'Jan Andolan' (people's movement) undertaken during his term as Gujarat's Chief Minister.

"We cannot afford to relax on the movement of water preservation. Mother Earth needs to be protected from chemicals," the Prime Minister said.

He reiterated the need to promote natural farming. Modi added that as he and former Gujarat Chief Minister Keshubhai (Patel) worked for water, the current Chief Minister is working for mother earth.

The Prime Minister also expressed happiness that by the grace of Maa Umiya and other deities and efforts of the Gujarat government, the gender ratio has improved and the 'Beti Bachao' movement showed good results.



He said a large number of girls from Gujarat are representing the country in the Olympics.

He also emphasised the need to be active against malnutrition among children and girls. Modi also reiterated the importance of the 'Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav' and 'Amrit Kaal'.

He asked the people to raise awareness and resolve about the shape of the society, village and the country in their hearts.

He also stressed his vision of 75 'Amrit Sarovars' in every district.

"For the people of Gujarat who had made thousands of check dams, this should not be too big a task but the impact of this effort will be huge," he said.

Modi asked this task to be completed before August 15, 2023, and urged for a social movement on this issue, adding that social consciousness must be the driving force.

Talking about the occasion of Ram Navami, the Prime Minister said, "When we think of Ramchandra ji, we remember Shabri, Kewat and Nishadraj too. They have gained a place of respect in the hearts of people over the years. This teaches us not to let anyone be left behind."

Referring to the efforts during the Covid-19 pandemic, Modi added that the infection is deceptive and we have to remain vigilant against it.

"India has performed an amazing feat of administering 185 crore doses of vaccines," he said and credited social awareness for it and other movements like 'Swachhta' and single-use plastic reduction.

Inauguration of the Umiya Mata temple was also done by Prime Minister Modi in 2008 when he was the Chief Minister of Gujarat.

Based on suggestions given by him in 2008, temple trust has expanded its scope into various social and health-related activities as well such as free cataract operations and Ayurvedic medicines for economically weaker people.

TN MAN COMMITTING CRIME IN DELHI FROM 25 YRS HELD IN CP AREA



New Delhi: A 47-year-old man, who is a member of the infamous "Thak-Thak" gang of Connaught Place, has been arrested, police said on Sunday.

The accused has been identified as Ranganathan, a resident of Tiruchirappalli in Tamil Nadu.

According to the Deputy Commissioner of Police Amrutha Guguloth, a police constable during patrolling in Connaught Place on Saturday, came across a suspected person. "When the suspect was questioned about his identity, he was not able to give a satisfactory reply," he said.

On cursory search, a switchblade knife was recovered from his possession. Accordingly, the police registered an FIR under section 25, 54 and 59 of the Arms Act and began their probe. During sustained interrogation, the accused disclosed that he is a member of the "Thak-Thak" gang and has been previously involved in 18 cases of theft. It was also revealed that he has been involved with the gang for over 25 years. "He used to commit crimes as part of a gang and robbed people of their bags etc by distracting them. The accused is a habitual criminal and used to return to Tamil Nadu after the commission of offences," the official said.

Every assembly segment to have 100-bed hospital: Yogi

LUCKNOW | Agencies

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Sunday inaugurated a state-wide health campaign, and said each of the 403 assembly segments in the state will have a 100-bed hospital.

Launching the Jan Arogya Mela in the state from the Jungle Kaudia primary health centre in Gorakhpur, the chief minister said his government is focusing on strengthening the health infrastructure.

"Every assembly segment in the state will have a 100-bed well-equipped hospital and the Jan Arogya Mela will be organised every Sunday at all primary health centres," he said.

People will get free consultation and medicines during the drive, he said.

The chief minister said the campaign was started in 2020 but discontinued due to the coronavirus pandemic. He also claimed that



the deadly encephalitis, which took lives of more than 50,000 children from 1977 to 2017, came under control due to joint efforts of the Union and state government. "Encephalitis came under control in the past four years. The deadly encephalitis will be eradicated forever in one to two years," he said.

KENYAN HELD AT IGI WITH 18 KG HEROIN

New Delhi: A Kenyan national was arrested at the Indira Gandhi International Airport here on Sunday for smuggling 18 kg heroin valued at Rs 27 crore, Customs officials said.

The accused had arrived from Nairobi via Doha this morning.

"The Kenyan national was intercepted on suspicion. We recovered 18 kg approx of white powder which tested positive for heroin. It was detected concealed in two pieces of his checked baggage," said the official, adding that he was charged under various sections of the NDPS Act and arrested, while the drug was seized.

The Kenyan national was sent to Tihar jail after customs official produced him before a court and sought that he be sent to judicial custody, as he was not required for further interrogation.

Jagan Reddy to induct 14 new faces in revamped Cabinet

AMARAVATI | Agencies

Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy's revamped Cabinet will have 14 new faces while he has decided to retain 11 ministers who were part of the previous Cabinet.

The new Cabinet, which will be sworn in by Governor Biswa Bhusan Harichandan on Monday, will be a mix of experienced and fresh faces.

All 24 ministers had submitted their resignations to the chief minister on April 7 to enable him to reconstitute the Cabinet. There was one vacancy due to the death



of Mekapati Goutham Reddy in February. In the revamped cabinet, Jagan

Mohan Reddy has given 68 per cent representation to Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, Backward Classes and minorities. Out of 25, a total of 17 ministers are from SCs, STs, BCs and minority communities. In the previous Cabinet, these sections had 56 per cent representation.

In the previous cabinet, there were 5 SCs, 1 ST, 7 OBCs, 1 minority, and 11 Other Castes (OCs) MLAs as ministers. This time, the representation has been increased by 17 - 11 BCs, 5 SCs, 1 ST and 8 OCs. Out of the 10 ministers retained from the previous cabinet, 3 are from SC, 5 from BCs and 2 from OCs.

2 PAK TERRORISTS KILLED IN KASHMIR GUNFIGHT

▶ TWO TERRORISTS WERE KILLED IN A GUNFIGHT WITH THE SECURITY FORCES IN CENTRAL KASHMIR'S SRINAGAR DISTRICT, OFFICIALS SAID ON SUNDAY. BOTH HAVE BEEN IDENTIFIED AS PAKISTANI NATIONALS AND WERE INVOLVED IN AN ATTACK ON CRPF PERSONNEL.



incriminating materials recovered," Jammu and Kashmir Police quoting Inspector General Police Kashmir zone Vijay Kumar, tweeted. "Today's encounter in Srinagar is one of the best example of how an investigation of terror-crime, in which we lost one CRPF personnel on 4/4/22, led to anti-terror encounter. A big success to Srinagar Police."

The gunfight took place after a joint team of the police and the security forces cordoned off the area and launched a search operation on the basis of specific information about the presence of terrorists. As the security forces zeroed in on the spot where the terrorists were hiding they came under a heavy volume of fire that triggered the encounter.

SRINAGAR | Agencies

Two Pakistani terrorists who were involved in recent terror attack on CRPF Personnel, neutralised in Srinagar Encounter. Arms and ammunition, other

FACTORY MANUFACTURING COUNTERFEIT COSMETICS BUSTED IN FARIDABAD, TWO HELD

Chandigarh: The Haryana Food and Drug Administration Department has busted a factory in Faridabad that was manufacturing counterfeit products of multinational companies and arrested two people, Home Minister Anil Vij said on Sunday. Poor quality illegal products of Hindustan Unilever Ltd, namely brands like Lakme and Fitme, were seized. Vij said that based on the information received about a factory manufacturing cosmetics without a license, the Commissioner of the Department, Bazir Singh Goyat, constituted a team, which raided the factory and recovered many counterfeit products. According to Vij, representative of the company confirmed that the items being manufactured were fake and illegal.

Products valued at Rs 20 lakh were recovered by the team. The fake factory was being run by two brothers, Amit Mittal and Vipul Mittal.

Third term for Sitaram Yechury as CPI-M general secretary

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM | Agencies

CPI-M General Secretary Sitaram Yechury will continue in the post for a third term. This was announced at the party's 23rd party Congress venue on Sunday.

Yechury was re-elected as the general secretary along with a 17-member politburo and an 85-member central committee during the 23rd party Congress.

Sitaram Yechury was first elected as the party general secretary during the 21st party Congress at Visakhapatnam in April 2015. He was re-elected to the post at the 22nd party Congress at Hyderabad on April 18, 2018.

He succeeded Prakash Karat as the general secretary of the party who held the post from 2005 to 2015.

LDF convenor and Kerala CPI-M former acting secretary, A. Vijayaraghavan has been made the new politburo member from Kerala. All India Kisan Sabha president Ashok Dawale and Dalit leader Ram Chandra Dome are also



the two new entrants to the party's highest decision-making body, Politburo.

Apprehending infiltration from PoK, intel agencies ask forces to enhance vigil in J&K

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Following intelligence inputs that a large number of terrorists have assembled in Pakistan Occupied Kashmir's Abbaspur and Daukhan, the intelligence agencies have sounded an alert to keep a strict vigil on the International Border (IB) and Line of Control (LoC) in Jammu and Kashmir.

Sources in the security setup deployed in the J&K, quoting intelligence inputs said that after melting of snow, these terrorists have planned to sneak into the Union Territory of J&K and they will attempt to cross the International Border (IB) or the LoC through the unconventional routes crossing through the mountain terrains and riverine belts.

The security officials also said that after melting of the snow, the border guarding forces are monitoring the IB closely round the clock to avert any misdeed at the bor-



ders. "To keep eye on the mountain terrains and riverine belt, the forces have been using drones for surveillance at the borders while patrolling on those patches has been increased," the officials further said.

Meanwhile, the Border Security Force (BSF) has already stepped up the security arrangements along the borders in close coordination

with the Indian Army after March onwards under the standard operative procedure, a senior official in the BSF said. Sources also said that the Pakistani handlers are under tremendous pressure by the Pakistan's ISI for executing a bigger terror incident in Jammu and Kashmir, therefore, they are putting all efforts to destabilise the peace and the process of development there.

MOVE TO MAKE HINDI COMPULSORY SUBJECT IN NE STATES OPPOSED

Guwahati/Imphal:

Political parties and apolitical organisations in the northeast on Sunday expressed opposition to the move to make Hindi a compulsory subject up to Class 10 in the northeastern states. Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Thursday while chairing the 37th meeting of the Parliamentary Official Language Committee had said Hindi should be accepted as an alternative language to English but not to local languages. "The nine tribal communities of the northeast have converted their dialects' scripts to Devanagari while all the eight states of the northeast have agreed to make Hindi compulsory in schools up to Class 10. There is a need to give elementary knowledge of Hindi to students up to Class 9, and pay more attention to Hindi teaching examinations," the Home Minister had reportedly said in the meeting.

Despite lockdown, pollution levels soared during second Covid wave: Study

The second Covid-19 wave not only unleashed unprecedented devastation of human life but also some worst air pollution episodes in Delhi despite the lockdown during March-May 2021, a new study has revealed.

Team Absolute | New Delhi

According to the study in journal 'Chemosphere' published by SAFAR, experts say that the biomass emissions of carbon rich tiny particles and rapid flow of distant dust were found to be primary reasons for the pollution.

The study also made some shocking revelations that an "unaccounted emission source" was playing a leading role after balancing of the impact of curtailed lockdown emissions.

"The hidden source of emission is believed to be associated with additional carbonaceous biofuel burning related to crematories



whose emissions could not be accounted for in the model," an excerpt of the research paper read.

The steep surge in infection counts and the peak mortality (400 deaths/day) period was directly coinciding with peak levels of PM2.5. The study modelled the emission as per the wood required

for cremation (around 300-400 kg/pyre) for open pyre and accounted for the chemistry of crematoria flue gases which contain higher percentage of organic, inorganic matter and particulate dust material. According to the study, the increased carbon rich PM2.5 and PM10, aggravated the severity of Covid

patients and vulnerable population, further adding to the misery.

Researchers also found that other peaks in the later part of lockdown were related to the north-westerly winds which often brought dust particles from the desert region to Delhi. The frequency of such dust storms was unusually higher than normal, probably due to free and faster flow of dust without much resistance under this lockdown period.

The paper concluded that since both Covid-19 and the dust storms can cause overlapping respiratory symptoms, a suitable strategy needs to be worked out during such emergencies.



FADNAVIS DARES MAHARASHTRA GOVT TO SLASH TAX ON FUEL

Addressing an election rally for Satyajit Kadam, BJP candidate for the Kolhapur north assembly segment, Fadnavis also slammed the state government for cutting taxes on liquor.



Team Absolute | Kolhapur

Senior BJP leader Devendra Fadnavis on Saturday dared the Shiv Sena-led Maharashtra government to slash the tax on fuel, saying the state earns Rs 52 per litre by levying tax. Addressing an election rally for Satyajit Kadam, BJP candidate for the Kolhapur north assembly segment, Fadnavis also slammed the state government for cutting taxes on liquor.

"They (the Maha Vikas Aghadi) protest against price rise but they have not been able to slash fuel rates. The government earns Rs 52 per litre from fuel," the former chief minister said. He said the BJP is in the fray to save the saffron flag. Fadnavis said it is necessary to

elect BJP if the Panchaganga river has to be rejuvenated. "Those who oppose (nullification of special provisions of Article 370) are opposing 'The Kashmir Files' because it reveals the truth," Fadnavis said, slamming the Congress. Fadnavis said it was he, along with former minister Chandrakant Patil, who abolished the toll in Kolhapur. Kolhapur north goes to polls on April 12. The Congress has given tickets to Jayashree Jadhav.

Shiv Sena has become pseudo-secular, says Fadnavis citing calendar in Urdu

Fadnavis condemned the MSRTC staffers' protest outside NCP chief Sharad Pawar's home on April 8 but also attacked leaders from some parties for blaming the BJP for the incident.

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The ruling Shiv Sena has become "pseudo-secular" as a worker from that party has printed a calendar in Urdu in which founder Bal Thackeray is addressed as "janab", Maharashtra BJP leader Devendra Fadnavis said on Sunday. He was talking to reporters while campaigning for Kolhapur North Assembly bypoll scheduled for April 12.

"The Shiv Sena has become pseudo-secular. However, we are not against any religion or their beliefs," the former chief minister claimed. Fadnavis condemned the MSRTC staffers' protest outside NCP chief Sharad Pawar's home on April 8 but also attacked leaders from some parties for blaming the BJP for the incident. "Every party has brainless people who make some or the other statement. The BJP will attack



from the front, not in this manner, if at all it has to. Since the media knew about the attack and not the police, some ruling parties are trying to divert attention by blaming the BJP," Fadnavis said.

He said the BJP would win the Kolhapur North bypoll as the party was banking on its chemistry with people rather than poll arithmetic.

He also accused the MVA of "terrorising" people in north Maharashtra and wondered if this area had become like West Bengal, a state that has, of late, seen many incidents of political violence, including several people being burnt to death in Birbhum there.

The former CM hailed wrestler and Kolhapur resident Prithviraj Patil for winning the 'Maharashtra Kesari' tournament and said his party will provide Rs 5 lakh for the latter's training.

MNS leader detained for playing Hanuman Chalisa in front of Shiv Sena Bhavan

AS PER THE ALERT ISSUED BY THE INDIAN METEOROLOGICAL DEPARTMENT (IMD), A FEW DISTRICTS ARE FACING HEATWAVE ISSUES



Team Absolute | Mumbai

The Mumbai police Sunday detained Maharashtra Navnirman Sena (MNS) leader Yashwant Killedar and a taxi driver after they were found playing Hanuman Chalisa over a loudspeaker installed on a cab in front of the Shiv Sena Bhavan in Dadar.

The Shivaji Park police said they have not registered a First

Information Report (FIR) against anyone yet and are inquiring if Killedar and the driver had the requisite police permission to play the loud-

speaker on the taxi at a public place. "They were taken to the police station for inquiry and no FIR has been registered," said Pranay Ashok, the deputy

commissioner of police (Zone 5). According to the police, the incident took place early on Sunday as Ram Navami is being observed across the country. The police said the taxi with the loudspeaker and an MNS flag stopped in front of the Shiv Sena Bhavan and started playing Hanuman Chalisa.

The police said as soon as a policeman on duty spotted the taxi, they were stopped and taken to the police station. Appropriate action would be taken after checking the documents and permissions they have, the police added.

MNS leader Sandip Deshpande and a few other party workers gathered at the police station and started chanting Hanuman Chalisa to protest the detention of Killedar and the driver. Officials said the situation is under control and the workers have left the police station.

Maharashtra govt to curtail school timings due to ongoing heatwave

As per the alert issued by the Indian Meteorological Department (IMD), a few districts are facing heatwave issues



Team Absolute | Mumbai

As parts of Maharashtra and a few neighbouring states have been reeling under extreme heatwave conditions, the Education Commissioner of Maharashtra State on Saturday issued directions to all district education officers to curtail or change school timings in affected areas, after discussing it with the district's collector/CEO. "As per the alert issued by the Indian Meteorological Department (IMD), a few districts are fac-

ing heatwave issues. It is being clarified that in the event of a heatwave warning, the EOs have been directed to discuss with the district collector/CEO and take a decision at the district level to curtail or change school timings suitably," said Suraj Mandhare, Commissioner (Education) Maharashtra state. The temperatures in

parts of Maharashtra, including Vidarbha, Madhya Maharashtra and Marathwada have touched 40 to 44 degree Celsius, daily. Akola, Chandrapur, and Jalgaon have even topped the list of the world's hottest places for several days in a row. Temperatures have crossed 45 degrees Celsius in the neighbouring states.

Sharad Pawar releases book on 100 unsung heroes of Maharashtra Kabaddi titled 'Kabaddi che 100 Mahayoddhe'

Team Absolute | Mumbai

To celebrate the success of the sport and also acknowledge the contribution of Kabaddi Maharshi Late Shankarrao (Buwa) Salvi and 99 Shiv Chhatrapati Award winners, Maharashtra State Kabaddi Association (MSKA) decide to release a memoir - 'Kabaddi che 100 Mahayoddhe' - and also launch the 'Kabaddi Mahayoddha' Gratitude Award for those who did not get the deserved recognition.

The book conceptualised by Arjun Awardees Shantaram Jadhav and Raju Bhavsar takes a look at the journey of the 99 Shiv Chhatrapati awardees, 8 of whom were also conferred with the prestigious Arjuna Award. Explaining the



rationale behind launching the 'Kabaddi Mahayoddha' Award, Tatkar said, "Kabaddi is a team sport and in every team sport there are some star performers who get all the accolades and rewards. But none of them can achieve that height without the contribution and sacrifice of their teammates who work equally hard. "These 'unsung heroes'

mostly go unrecognised and hence we thought that we should show them the gratitude by felicitating two such players - one male and one female - every year.

And there could be no better occasion than the launch of the book celebrating the journey of the sport," said Tatkar, who is also the Member of Parliament from Raigad.

Maharashtra sugar production all-time high this year: Official

He said 1,187 lakh tonnes of sugarcane has been crushed in the state till date this year, while about 90 lakh tonnes of the crop is still lying uncut in fields, mostly in the Marathwada region, he said.

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Maharashtra has recorded an all-time high sugar production of 132 lakh tonnes this year, state sugar commissioner Shekhar Gaikwad has claimed. But, despite the high production, there is less possibility of the sugar prices coming down, the official told PTI on Saturday while speaking about issues related to excess sugarcane production and steps being initiated to tackle the situation.

He said 1,187 lakh tonnes of sugarcane has been crushed in the state till date this year, while about 90 lakh tonnes of the crop is still lying uncut in fields, mostly in the Marathwada



region, he said. "Maharashtra had a record of all-time high sugar production of 107 lakh tonnes in 2019-20. This year, it has reached nearly 132 lakh tonnes, which is again an all-time high record for the state, while Uttar Pradesh has so far produced 80 lakh tonnes of sugar so far this year," Gaikwad said.

Various companies in the state have also earned Rs 9,000-10,000 crore from the production of 130 to 140 crore litres of ethanol (a by-product of molasses generated on crushing of sugarcane), which is also an all-time high, he claimed. The sugarcane crushing season in

Maharashtra generally lasts for 120 to 140 days, and maximum 145 days. This year, around 20 sugar factories in the state will run for 160 days due to the high sugarcane production, he said.

"Around 90 lakh tonnes of sugarcane, including 60 lakh tonnes in Marathwada, is yet to be crushed. We expect that the sugarcane in Marathwada will be crushed by May 31 this year," the official said. The factories in Solapur are taking nearly 20,000 tonnes of sugarcane from Marathwada for crushing, he said. The official said there is high availability of sugarcane cutting labourers

in Beed, hence vehicles loaded with the produce are crowding outside factories for the crop crushing.

In contrast, Jalna is facing lack of such labourers, hence there is less crop cutting there and factories have to wait sometimes for getting the produce for crushing, he said. "We have handed over a list of harvesters to factories in Marathwada and the latter are negotiating with them for cutting of the sugarcane crop lying uncut in fields," he said. The official said they have also come across cases of high charges being sought from farmers for cutting or transportation of their produce. "If a farmer has paid an extra amount for the transportation of sugarcane to a factory, he can give us a written complaint. I have so far received 75 such complaints and we shall recover that amount from the persons concerned and give it back to farmers," he said. The official also said that the sugar produced in Uttar Pradesh is utilised in the domestic market, while the sugar produced in Maharashtra, which has areas close to sea ports, is preferred for export.

Eight-hour load-shedding in Nashik, Marathwada regions

THIS IS PART OF THE MSSEDCL STRATEGY TO IMPLEMENT A FEEDER-WISE LOAD-SHEDDING SYSTEM WHERE TRANSMISSION AND DISTRIBUTION LOSSES ARE MORE THAN 60%.



Many parts of rural Nashik, Ahmednagar and different parts of Marathwada including Aurangabad have been subjected to load-shedding.

This is part of the MSSEDCL strategy to implement a feeder-wise load-shedding system where transmission and distribution losses are more than 60%. In these loss making areas, the power utility has decided to adopt a system, whereby higher the transmission and distribution loss, more the load-shedding.

Feeders through which consumers are provided electricity are grouped in to different categories based on revenue collection efficiency and power thefts. MSSEDCL authorities pointed out that the customer base (feeder wise) has been categorised from A-G depending on the distribution and commercial losses of the consumers on the respective feeder.

Team Absolute | Pune

AS THE demand for power outstrips the supply, the Maharashtra State Electricity Distribution Company Limited has zeroed in on certain locations in the state to impose load-shedding for even up to eight hours.

However, Pune zone is unlikely to face load-shedding because of various factors, one of them being higher recovery of power dues.

College students express concern over offline University exams

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Students in Maharashtra are apprehensive about the mode of examination as university examinations approach. Universities around the state have the option of conducting exams in either an offline or online mode. As a result, universities differ in their examination methods, and students are concerned about getting decent scores.

The majority of the syllabus is covered online, and students are now attending college in the offline mode, making it difficult for them to work on projects and assignments while studying for the offline exams. Amit Kumar, a student from Mumbai stated, "80% of syllabus completed online then why are exams being conducted offline? Informing about offline exams at the last moment is not the correct thing. I am an engineering student, and we have a lot of projects, assignments, submissions, and practicals, but now, after the shift of classes to the offline mode, it has become so hectic for us to study and complete assignments at the same time." Some students live outside of Mumbai but attend Mumbai University-affiliated colleges. These stu-



dents are now travelling significant distances, and there is still a lack of adequate transportation. Tanuj A, a final year student, stated, "Only a month remains and travelling and accommodation are difficult, and getting it at the end moment is even harder. We have a mini-project, a final year project, submissions, and an end-of-semester exam, and we only have a month to complete them all." Many of them believe there would be discrepancies between traditional and professional course students, resulting them in gaining an unfair advantage as Mumbai University is conducting online exams for traditional courses, but taking offline exams for professional course students. Highlighting all these issues, various student unions and activists are voicing over the lack of uniformity in the state for the examination. They are receiving com-

plaints from across the state regarding the issues faced.

Though the academic year had been in a hybrid mode no one could deny the fact that learning majority was through online medium. We have multiple complaints from students that professors showed the least concern in teaching online rather they were just dictating the concepts," said Faisal Shaikh Vice President, NSUI (National Students' Union of India) Mumbai. "If learning was online why cant the exams be held online? we firmly say and believe in Jaisi Sikhsha Waisi Pariksha," he added.

Another activist had a similar viewpoint, "Some universities are conducting online exams, and others offline," said Saurav Saha, a student rights activist. "Why there is no uniformity across the country? students' concerns are legitimate, and a fair decision should be taken regarding the examination. They all deserve equal treatment." With all the students and unions voicing their worries, Principals and institutes think that offline mode is the only viable option in the current scenario. Minu Madhani, Principal of K.P.B. Hinduja College of Commerce stated, "In all fairness, I feel exams should be offline only.

WOMAN KILLED, 2 OTHERS INJURED AFTER HOUSE COLLAPSED IN BHIWANDI AREA



Mumbai:Thane (Maharashtra) [India], April 10 (ANI): A woman was killed and two other persons were injured when a slab of a house collapsed in the Bhiwandi area of Maharashtra's Thane district on Sunday, civic officials said.

According to Thane Municipal Corporation, the deceased was identified as Gulshan Sagir Ansari (45). Two others Sagir Khalil Ansari (45) and Mehtab Ansari (30) suffered injuries during the accident and were shifted to the hospital. As per the officials, the incident took place in the Shanti Nagar area near Gausia Masjid in Bhiwandi. The fire brigade and police were present on the spot. Further details are awaited.



EDITOR'S SPECS

SP in trouble

After facing trouble from allies, the Samajwadi Party is now facing trouble from within. A number of leaders - many of them on condition of anonymity - have started to openly criticise the party leadership and SP president Akhilesh Yadav's manner of handling issues. SP MP Shafique-Rehman-Barq has openly stated that he is not satisfied with the working of his party. Barq's grandson Ziaur Rehman recently won the Kundarki seat from Moradabad. Though the SP MP is known to speak his mind, this is the first time after the assembly elections when he has criticised his own party. Trouble is also brewing in Azamgarh where SP MLA Ramakant Yadav is the MLA. His son Arunkant Yadav was the BJP candidate in the just concluded legislative council polls. Local SP leaders claim that Ramakant Yadav flouted party discipline and openly sought voters for his son who is in the BJP. "We informed the party high command but no action was taken against Ramakant who happens to be among the powerful leaders of the constituency. We have been told that Ramakant will soon be contesting the Lok Sabha by-elections in Azamgarh on a BJP ticket. The Azamgarh Lok Sabha seat has fallen vacant with the resignation of Akhilesh Yadav who has opted to retain his Karhal assembly seat. In another pointer to the simmering discontent within the Samajwadi 'Parivar' (family), Abbas Ansari, the Suheldev Bhartiya Samaj Party (SBSP) MLA, did not cast his vote in Saturday's council polls. Sources said that the SP leadership had pulled up Abbas Ansari for his controversial statement during the assembly polls and hence the newly-elected MLA did not vote for SP candidate. Meanwhile, sources said that at least half a dozen SP MLAs are upset with Akhilesh Yadav for 'lack of direction' and 'inability to act against his disloyal cronies'.

'NAYA PAKISTAN': HOW IT REMAINED OLD AND THERE WAS NO MILK AND HONEY

Narendra Dev

As you rise so shall you fall. One must have heard such a maxim with some variations here and there. Imran Khan had promised moon to Pakistanis. The helpless citizenry believed him. But the fact of the matter is Pakistan's "Prime Minister till midnight of April 9, 2022" had banked and exploited a lot of his cricket field image and the making of a cancer hospital. "Imran Khan worked relentlessly for decades at self-promotion. His growing cult swallowed story after story: corruption would end in 90 days; the national treasury would overflow...and never again, would Pakistan see the dirty politics of horse trading," says a piece in the Dawn newspaper. But all that has failed. He even could not ensure a cordial and formal bilateral relationship with India despite being a popular 'cult' like figure among thousands of cricket fans in both the countries. Some Foreign Ministry officials in Delhi did not mind confessing that a few of them grew up trying to emulate Khan's bowling gestures. Others preferred Kapil Dev but there was no dearth of Khan's popularity. Khan's exit was messy and un-cricketer like approach. Reportedly, he and his left National Assembly post midnight, but there was no word of his stepping down. One thing was clear, he had lost numbers in Parliament long back. Reportedly, Khan said he will not accept an "imported" new government. This may sound bravado, but it does not augur for common people in Pakistan. Democracy was never its pride possession but Imran should have made the exit with a parting smile! Cricketers are well known for playing the gentlemen game like "gentlemen". But here was a Pathan, madly in love for power and he has his dosage of ego too. No less than Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi once lamented about the "failure" of Khan. On February 23, 2019, at Tonk in Rajasthan, Prime Minister Modi had dared his Pakistan counterpart to stick



to his own words as a 'Pathan' and dedicate all efforts to fight poverty and illiteracy in the two countries. "Aaj Pakistan ke pradhan mantri ke shabdoan ko kasauti pe kasne ki jarurat hai... (Time has come for him to prove his own words) Let me see whether he can prove to be truthful to his own words," Modi had said addressing a rally. Recalling his first phone conversation with Khan after his poll victory in 2018 and said: "I had told him you are from the world of sports... Come let India and Pakistan get their act together and fight poverty and illiteracy." "In response, he had told me that he (Imran) is a son of a Pathan and he will always speak the truth and also do things in the right manner... Thus time has come for him to prove his own words," Modi said amid escalated tension between two neighbours in the wake of the Pulwama attack. But all those talks came a cropper. Khan failed to host SAARC Summit and so his last minute batting during the slog over trying to applaud India's "for-

eign policy" does not make much sense. Khan also failed to give his country an effective government. He believed in army machinations and perhaps presumed lot of things from Kartarpur corridor and cricket star of India - Navjot Singh Sidhu. Sidhu himself lost the polls recently and now his "yaar dildar" Imran may vanish into oblivion too. But according to some, Imran tried to fight back when the no-trust motion was not taken up and the National Assembly was dissolved. The Speaker, Deputy Speaker and even the President sided with him, but the Supreme Court of Pakistan did not. Strategic expert C. Raja Mohan writes: "Khan has qualities that his predecessors lacked, except Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, whose charisma moved the Pakistani masses in the early 1970s. He is deeply aware of Bhutto's defiance which ended with execution in 1979. He now invokes Bhutto's name and the dangers he faces from the system that he has

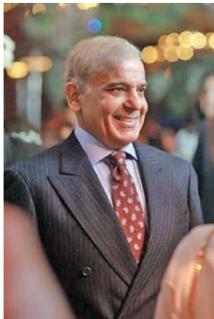
challenged". Nevertheless his major failures were essentially three-fold. In January 2022, Transparency International announced that perceptions of corruption had taken a quantum leap under "honest captain". Dependency on the US was "traded" for equal and critical dependency upon China. "Today, the Pakistani passport is no more desirable than before and the only foreign tourists are intrepid mountain climbers," says Islamabad-based writer Pervez Hoodbhoy. His articulate statement highlights the obvious. "To save his sinking ship, Captain Khan has invented the cock-and-bull story of an American conspiracy to oust him. This, he said, owes to his independent stand on Ukraine. So why hasn't Narendra Modi, also ambivalent on Russia's aggression, alleged the same? Khan's groupies cannot explain why this weeks-old 'revelation' came only after a no-confidence motion threatened his survival." What happens next? Well, Imran still remains a popular figure. "The truth is, price rises have been significantly sharper in Pakistan than in most of its neighbours. Yet however disgruntled many may be with Khan's policies, the move to oust him is not based on a sudden wave of popular sentiment. It's down to elite political manoeuvring," says a BBC report. One understanding is also that Imran Khan would show preference to "power" as did the likes of Adolf Hitler, Mao Zedong and Joseph Stalin. The xenophobic nationalism and radical religious sentiment could be his next few cards - up in the sleeves. "Imran Khan wins out on this. Chasing money is not his first priority," says Pervez in reference to public perception that Pakistani politicians are generally corrupt. (Narendra Dev is a New Delhi-based journalist and author of "The Talking Guns: North East India" and "Modi to Moditva: An Uncensored Truth". The views are personal)

international

SHEHBAZ SHARIF SUBMITS NOMINATION PAPERS FOR PAK PM'S POST

Islamabad | Agencies

Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) President Shehbaz Sharif on Sunday submitted his nomination papers for the Prime Minister's post after the seat fell vacant following Imran Khan's ouster from power through a vote of a no-confidence motion. In accordance with the deadline of the submission stipulated by the National Assembly (NA), Sharif submitted nomination papers for the new leader of the house, while the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) nominated former Foreign



Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi for the post, The Express Tribune reported. PML-N senior leaders

Khawaja Asif and Rana Tanveer will act as endorsers for Sharif. Meanwhile, PTI members Amir Dogar and Ali Muhammad Khan will serve as endorsers for the party's vice-chairman. The NA Secretariat had earlier announced the time for the submission of nomination papers and scrutiny for the election of premier and leader of the NA. According to the spokesperson, the submission and scrutiny of nomination papers for the election of the premier and leader of the NA shall be in accordance with the times announced in the House.

'Zelensky will only meet Putin after Ukraine's victory in major battles'

Kiev | Agencies

Top Ukrainian official said that President Volodymyr Zelensky will only meet his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin after the country's victory in major battles, especially in the separatist eastern region of Donbas. In a televised address, presidential adviser Mykhailo Podoliak said: "Ukraine is ready for major battles, Ukraine must win these battles, including the battle over Donbas. After that Ukraine will have a more substantial negotiating position to dictate certain terms. "After that, the Presidents will meet. It may take two weeks, it may take three." According to Podoliak, Russia is yet to fully understand the necessity "to talk to Ukraine on an equal footing at the very least, and at the most, to hear Ukraine", reports Ukrayinska Pravda.



"I think they (Russians) will come to this understanding in a week or two, while this great battle in Donbas goes on. Russia wants to win some situational victory there. It will most certainly not get it,

but it wants to inflict some sort of defeat upon us. And then we can move on to actual step-by-step negotiations from which we will emerge with a concrete security formula for Ukraine," the adviser said. Podoliak went on to say that Ukraine is paying a very high price for victory, losing people and infrastructure every day as Russia's war rages. "We will do everything to obtain certain, very powerful security guarantees for Ukraine, to close its borders forever from the imperial ambitions of countries like Russia. "The President will enter the talks when we have absolutely clear positions for this," he stressed. Just hours before the adviser's statement, Zelensky had said his country had no other choice but to sit down at the negotiating table with Putin, because only he can stop the war, Ukrayinska Pravda reported.

OFFICER PROBING MONEY LAUNDERING CASES AGAINST SHEHBAZ SHARIF, SON GOES ON LEAVE

Islamabad: Anticipating a change of government, the chief Pakistan's Federal Investigation Agency's (FIA) Lahore unit, who is probing into the money laundering cases against the joint oppositions nominees for the slots of the Prime Minister and Punjab Chief Minister, Shehbaz Sharif and his son Hamza Shehbaz, respectively, has gone on leave for indefinite period. According to a notification, FIA Lahore Director Mohammad Rizwan has gone on leave on full pay with effect from April 11, onward. A source in the FIA told Dawn news on Saturday that Rizwan had gone on leave anticipating his "certain transfer" if there is a change in the federal government. "The first order the new government may pass will be the transfer of Rizwan with whom Shehbaz Sharif was not happy for, what he (Shehbaz) called, taking dictations from (former accountability adviser to the premier) Shehzad Akbar in the cases instituted against him and his family members at the behest of Prime Minister Imran Khan," the source said. A special court (Central-1) of FIA is likely to indict Shehbaz and Hamza in 14 billion PKR money laundering case on Monday. Last year, giving in to the demand of the lawmakers belonging to Jahangir Tareen group, the PTI government had removed Rizwan from heading the investigation against Tareen and his son Ali Tareen in the sugar scam.

SKOREAN PRESIDENT-ELECT NAMES 8 CABINET NOMINEES

South Korean President-elect Yoon Suk-yeol on Sunday announced eight new Cabinet nominees.



Seoul | Agencies

While Rep. Choo Kyung-ho was nominated as Deputy Prime Minister for the economy, former Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) Vice Chairman Lee Jong-sup was named the Defense Minister, reports Yonhap News Agency. Lee Chang-yang, a professor of the Korea Advanced Institute of Science and Technology, was named Industry Minister, while former Jeju Gov. Won Hee-ryong was named Land Minister. Lee Jong-ho, chief of Seoul National University's semiconductor research institute, was named Science Minister, while Chung Ho-young, former chief of Kyungpook National University Hospital, was nominated for Health Minister. Park Bo-gyoon, former

vice president of the JoongAng Ilbo newspaper, was named Culture Minister, and former Rep. Kim Hyun-sook was named Minister of Gender Equality and Family. Addressing the media here, the President-elect said his only criteria in picking the eight people were whether they were the best people to take charge of their respective areas and lead them in the interest of the country and the people. The other nominees will be announced as soon as the vetting process is completed, he added. The nominations came a month before Yoon takes office. On April 3, the President-elect named former premier Han Duck-soo as his First Prime Minister. The nominations are subject to a parliamentary confirmation process, but only the Prime Minister requires Parliament's approval.

Rishi Sunak demands inquiry into wife Akshata Murty's tax leak

London | Agencies

UK Chancellor Rishi Sunak is demanding a Whitehall inquiry into who leaked details about his wife Akshata Murty's tax arrangements. Murty has said she will pay UK taxes on her overseas income, following a row over her non-domicile status, the BBC reported. Downing Street has rejected newspaper reports that its staff leaked damaging stories about Sunak to the media. It has been a bruising week for the Chancellor, and now he has asked senior civil servants for a full investigation to establish who divulged his wife's tax status. His allies say very few people had access to the personal information, which Sunak declared to Whitehall officials when he became a minister in 2018, the BBC reported. Some Conservative MPs say he was naive to think the details would remain private, and that he should have predicted that the tax arrangements would be criticised as inappropriate, despite being legal. Sunak's team has dismissed suggestions of a rift with Downing Street and say the prime minister has been "incredibly supportive". The Chancellor's brand, vigorously promoted since he came to office, has been damaged, with some members of



the ruling Conservative Party questioning his judgement. Opposition MPs have said Sunak's family is benefiting at a time when he is putting up taxes for millions of others, the BBC reported. Opposition Labour Party MP Louise Haigh said: "I think the question many people will be asking is whether it was ethical and whether it was right that the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whilst piling on 15 separate tax rises to the British public, was benefiting from a tax scheme that allowed his household to pay significantly less to the tune of potentially tens of millions of pounds."



ELECTRICITY BILLS TO RISE AS 2.64% HIKE COMES INTO EFFECT

As per the new tariff plan post the hike, a consumer using up to 30 units of electricity per month will have to pay Rs 3.34 per unit against Rs 3.25 earlier, while those in the 32-50, 51-150 and 151-300 unit slabs will also have to pay more.

Team Absolute | Bhopal

The 2.64 per cent hike in electricity rates that was cleared by the Madhya Pradesh Electricity Regulatory Commission (MPERC) on March 31 has come into effect, officials said on Sunday. The three power distribution companies (discoms) had, incidentally, sought an 8.71 per cent hike to tide over revenue deficit, MPERC secretary Gajendra Tiwari told Absolute India.

The mandatory public notices were issued on April 1 by the discoms, and after seven days of such publication of notices in newspapers etc, the hike is deemed to have come into effect. In this case, it has come into effect from April 8," he explained.

The date of the hike coming into effect was confirmed by Pankaj Swamy, Public Relations Officer of MP Power Management Company, which is the holding company of the three discoms. As per the new tariff plan post the hike, a consumer using up to 30 units of electricity per month will

have to pay Rs 3.34 per unit against Rs 3.25 earlier, while those in the 32-50, 51-150 and 151-300 unit slabs will also have to pay more. "A consumer who uses more than 300 units a month will have to pay Rs 6.74 per



per unit, against Rs 6.65 earlier. There is no hike in rates for Low Tension (LT) industrial category consumers," Tiwari said. There are around 1.66 crore electricity consumers in Madhya Pradesh.

Public welfare state with good governance is a symbol of Ramraj: CM

- Everyone must take a pledge to establish Ramraj on Ram Navami
- Kanya Bhoj organized on Ram Navami at Chief Minister's residence

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan said that Ramraj is imagined for a good state. An Atmanirbhar (self-reliant) Bharat is coming up with the establishment of good governance and public welfare state under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Prime Minister Shri Modi is engaged in building a glorious, magnificent and prosperous nation. It is also



the resolve of the Madhya Pradesh government to realize the dream of Ramraj under the leadership of the Prime Minister, in Madhya Pradesh also. For this, development works are being done at a fast pace along with public welfare schemes. Along with this, the work of suppression of the wicked and the evildoers is also going on in the state. Today, on Ram Navami, we must resolve to develop our state together. Following the ideals

of Parhit Saras Dharam Nahi Bhai....., everyone should work together for welfare. Chouhan started his participation in programmes on Ram Navami from the Chief Minister's residence today. In the morning, programme began with kanya puja and kanya bhoj along with puja archana. Chief Minister Chouhan and Sadhna Singh Chouhan distributed prasad to the girls. Many hymns were recited in the praise of Lord Ram on Ram Navami at

the Chief Minister's residence. Chouhan also sang bhajans. These include Ram Naam Sukhdai....., Bhajan Karo Re Bhai, Yeh jeevan do dinon ka....., bhayepkratKripala..... and Shri Ramchandra Kripalu Bhajman..... The bhajans were followed by aarti. Sadhna Singh, officers-employees and devotees were present on the occasion.

Shivraj Singh Chouhan said that the festival of Ram Navami is being celebrated with full devotion. In Chitrakoot, Orchha and other places in the state, programmes are being held in different temples. Congratulating the people's of the state on the occasion of Ram Navami, Chief Minister Chouhan said that Lord Shri Ram resides in us in our every breath. Lord Shri Ram is our God.



Women perform Garba with LPG cylinder to protest price rise

A group of women in Madhya Pradesh chose the occasion of Navaratri to express their annoyance towards the rising prices of LPG -- Liquid Petroleum Gas, and rocketing prices of vegetables, pulses and milk.

Team Absolute | Bhopal

A group of women in Madhya Pradesh chose the occasion of Navaratri to express their annoyance towards the rising prices of LPG -- Liquid Petroleum Gas, and rocketing prices of vegetables, pulses and milk.

In a video that surfaced on the social media on Saturday, a group of women could be seen performing 'Garba' dance with a 'mini' LPG cylinder on their head.

The incident has been reported from Madhya Pradesh's Rewa district.

The women are associated with the Congress party, and they were protesting against rising prices of LPG and other commodities of daily usage. They had come to a temple and had carried LPG cylinders to cook meals for 'Kanya Bhojan.'

"We cooked meals for 'Kanya Bhojan' and fed 51 Kanyas (girl children). In the meantime, women were singing songs and chanting for Goddess Durga and performing dance also. Later, we decided to do a dance... and we did Garba dance with LPG cylinders," said Kavita Pandey, a former councillor

of Rewa municipal corporation. Pandey told IANS that Garba with LPG cylinders was a part of their protest against rising prices of daily usage goods and items.

Notably, the Madhya Pradesh unit of the Congress on April 1 launched a week-long anti-inflation campaign in the state. The protest was launched by state Congress chief Kamal Nath.

Nath had asked the party cadres to carry out anti-inflation campaigns across the state with beating of dholak (drum), and thalis (plates) and with sounds of 'majeera' (cymbal) songs, and dance.

Ex-Army men stop convoy of Union Minister Scindia in Gwalior

Union Civil Aviation Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia's convoy was stopped by a group of protesting former soldiers at his hometown in Madhya Pradesh's Gwalior district, and he came out to give them a patient hearing.

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Union Civil Aviation Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia's convoy was stopped by a group of protesting former soldiers at his hometown in Madhya Pradesh's Gwalior district, and he came out to give them a patient hearing.

The former Army personnel on Saturday staged a protest against the Madhya Pradesh government's decision to abolish 10 per cent reservation in police for former army personnel.

"Recently, the state government has announced plans to recruit police constables wherein it has not mentioned to provide 10 per cent reservation for ex-armymen. We have been getting the benefit of

10 per cent reservation since 1999, but the state government has stopped it," said Sunil Singh, a retired soldier, who lives in Gwalior.

The former Army personnel blocked the road and protested before Scindia's convoy raising slogans such as 'Go back Scindia'.

The police personnel deployed for his security tried to clear the way but a large gathering did not pay any heed and continued their protest.

Later, the Union Minister came out of his car and heard their grievances.

Scindia spoke with protesting former Army personnel for nearly 30 minutes and assured them that he will speak to the state government on the matter.

After getting assurance from the Union Minister,



the former Army personnel cleared the way for his convoy. "He has assured us that our demands will be fulfilled. He said he will talk to Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan on this matter," Singh told IANS. Scindia, who visits his hometown Gwalior on a regular basis, had arrived this time to meet the farmers whose wheat crop burnt in a fire incident a few days back.

BRITISH-ERA BRIDGE COLLAPSED, TRAILER-TRUCK FALLS ON DRY RIVER BED



The bridge collapsed when a trailer-truck was crossing the narrow bridge, leading to the vehicle falling on the dry river bed, police said.

Team Absolute | Bhopal

British-era bridge on the dry Sukthwa river in Madhya Pradesh's Narmadapuram collapsed while a trailer-truck was crossing on Sunday, leading to traffic disruption on the Bhopal-Nagpur national highway, a senior police official said. The incident took place when a 138-wheel trailer-truck was crossing the narrow bridge, leading to the vehicle falling on the dry river bed. Additional Superintendent of Police Awadhesh Pratap Singh told news agency PTI over phone, adding that there were no report of injuries.

"The driver complained of some minor injury to the spleen but he left the spot soon after. Five more people who fell along with the vehicle are fine. The multi-axle vehicle was bringing transformers from Hyderabad to Itarsi in Narmadapuram," ASP Singh said. Traffic was being diverted via Harda to Betul following the accident at Sukthwa, some 70 kilometres from the district headquarters, he said. An official said the driver has been traced to a health centre in nearby Betul district and more information on what led to the accident will be had after he is spoken to. Sources said some 5,000 vehicles use the 25-foot high bridge daily.

Court notice to MP Jaya Bachchan on land deal case

A district court in Madhya Pradesh has issued a notice to Bollywood actress-turned-politician Jaya Bachchan -- a Rajya Sabha MP, over a land deal issue. The notice was issued by a Bhopal district court on April 7, and she has been asked to appear before the court to submit her reply by April 30.

Team Absolute | Bhopal

A district court in Madhya Pradesh has issued a notice to Bollywood actress-turned-politician Jaya Bachchan -- a Rajya Sabha MP, over a land deal issue. The notice was issued by a Bhopal district court on April 7, and she has been asked to appear before the court to submit her reply by April 30.

The notice has been issued on the basis of a criminal case filed against Samajwadi Party MP Bachchan by Anuj Daga -- son of former BJP



legislator Jitendra Daga, accusing her of cancelling a land sale deal, even after receiving a portion of the payment.

Daga's lawyer Enosh George Carlo, talking to IANS on Saturday said that in the complaint, Jaya Bachchan has been accused of demanding a higher price than the agreed amount.

According to Carlo, Daga was in an agreement to buy land by paying Rs 1 crore as advance to Jaya Bachchan.

"The amount was deposited in Jaya Bachchan's account. However, after a few days, the money was returned to Anuj Daga's account. Later, they demanded a higher price than the negotiated amount -- Rs 2 crore per acre of land, and then broke the agreement."

"When an offer is made under the Indian Contract Act, it is accepted. Once the consideration is paid, the contract is completed. The agreement between my party and Jaya Bachchan was done digitally, and Rs 1 crore was paid into the bank account as agreed under the agreement," the lawyer said.

Carlo claimed that Bachchan has 5 acres of land in Sevania Gaur in Bhopal district that she had bought around 12 years ago. The lawyer said she had authorised Rajesh Hrishikesh Yadav to sell the land. "The court has accepted the suit for consideration, and a notice has been issued. The next hearing will be on April 30. Jaya Bachchan has been asked to present before the court," Daga's lawyer said.

Palm Sunday observed in all the City Churches

Team Absolute | Bhopal

The climax of the Holy week began in all the city Churches on Sunday 10 April 2022. The lenten season of 40 days of fasting, praying ends with Holy Week when Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday and Good Friday are observed in all the city Churches.

Archbishop AASDuraij SVD said in his homily at Seva Sadan Church, Tulsi Nagar that Holy Week is God given week to help us to become divine persons to share our love with our neighbours, Archbishop further said that "The mighty Roman emperors marched with the horses, but Jesus marched in humility by sitting on a donkey. Jesus was a king without any worldly power while Roman kings were full of power and might." Jesus was a symbol of power in powerlessness, he

added. The Archbishop asked the people not to seek worldly power but to become one in Jesus to experience the true king of peace.

According to the Bible, when Jesus entered Jerusalem, the crowd greeted him by waving olive branches and by covering the path en route with olive and palm branches. To mark this event, Palm Sunday assumes the significance of distribution of palm leaves to the worshippers in churches to enter the Holy Week as Jesus entered Jerusalem to die for all humanity.

The Catholic Christian community offered special prayers on Palm Sunday in Bhopal. The celebrations at different Churches of the city began with a gathering of devotees at the Church Premises at 8 am. Large number of people took part in a procession holding palm leaves all through the Holy Eucharist.



CM PLANTED GULMOHAR AND KACHNAR SAPPLINGS

Bhopal: Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan today planted Gulmohar and Kachnar saplings in Smart Garden. Along with Chouhan, Ritika Shrivastava, Vandana, Madhu Nigam and Abhinav Pradhan of Ashirwad Jan-Uthana Seva Samiti, Bhopal also planted saplings. The organisation has been doing the work of poor-welfare, tree plantation and education development for a decade.

Kachnar is a beautiful

flowering tree. Its small and medium height trees are found all over India. Kachnar is full of medicinal properties. Gulmohar is considered one of the most beautiful trees in the world. Flowers blooming in large clusters among the leaves give a distinct attraction to this tree. In summer, Gulmohar trees are laden with flowers instead of leaves. The mind gets a feeling of coolness on seeing them. It is also rich in medicinal properties.

MORE POWER TO WOMEN!

Team Absolute | Bhopal

After Panchayat members failed to collect water tax from villagers, the Madhya Pradesh government has entrusted the task to women Self-help groups so that the 'Har Ghar Jal' under the Union government's Jal Jeevan Mission can be implemented effectively and efficiently.

The main reason the scheme could not be implemented properly was that Panchayat members were unable to collect water tax as the former do not get expected support from the villagers.

Under the state government's initiative, from collection of tax on water to the control of its supply, everything has been entrusted to women working in self-help groups operating in the state. Umakant Umrao, Principal Secretary, MP Panchayat and Rural Development department, says his department has taken the help of self-help groups to strengthen and maintain the water supply in rural areas.

These self-help groups have given women the responsibility of collecting water tax as well as ensuring better water supply to villages. This initiative has been successfully working and is being implemented in the whole state.

There are various rural areas where women have to wait in queues for several hours to get water. While in many other areas, for a girl getting water is more important than going to

Unable to collect water tax in rural areas, MP govt falls back on woman power



school. In rural areas, the primary responsibility to collect water for families lies with the women and they often suffer the most due to its scarcity.

Several schemes have been launched by the state government to provide access to tap water connections but due to non-recovery of water tax, there are severe electricity cuts and such schemes fail to benefit the people.

This initiative has been introduced because the members of these self-help groups are women and they understand the

problem of water scarcity much better. They also recover water tax from people more effectively.

Abhilash Mishra, Chief Executive Officer of the Betul district panchayat, says that the recovery of water tax is tough for the panchayat workers in the villages since they face protests from the locals and even complaints are registered against them.

Therefore, the work of recovery of water tax has been given to self-help groups which has been hugely beneficial. The process of recovery of water tax is working smoothly due to which it has become easy for locals to deposit electricity bills, including several other bills.

As a result, people are availing of the benefit of 'Har Ghar Jal Se Jal Yojana'. The financial condition of women has greatly improved due to these self-help groups receiving upto 10 per cent of the total water tax recovery amount.

There are nearly 15,000 tap water projects operating in the state, of which about nearly 4,000 projects are being handed over to self-help groups. Earlier, up to 10 per cent water tax used to get collected but now it has reached up to 100 per cent. The women associated with these self-help groups, who are responsible for collection of water tax, are now being imparted further training by the state government so that they become able to ensure timely water supply, repair water pipelines, among others.



BRIE LARSON JOINED 'FAST AND FURIOUS 10' CAST

Los Angeles | Agencies

Actress-filmmaker Brie Larson has been signed for the tenth part of the action franchise, 'Fast and Furious'. The news came after Vin Diesel announced Brie Larson's addition to the 'family' on his Instagram, reports 'Variety'.

As per 'Variety', Diesel wrote on Instagram, "Yeah yeah yeah! 1/2 you see this angel over my shoulder cracking me up, you say to yourself 'That's Captain Marvel.' Clearly there is love and laughter in this image. What you don't see however, is the character you will be introduced to in 'Fast 10'."

He further wrote, "You have no idea how timeless and amazing she will be in our

mythology. Beyond her beauty, her intellect! 1/2 her Oscar, haha is this profound soul who will add something you might not have expected but yearned for. Welcome to the FAMILY Brie."

Announced earlier this year, Jason Momoa and Daniela Melchior on-boarded the all-star cast of 'Fast and Furious 10', adding to the ranks of superhero stars that have joined the Fast Family. In addition to Larson suiting up as Captain Marvel, Momoa stars as Aquaman in the DC Universe and Melchior played Ratcatcher II in James Gunn's 'The Suicide Squad'.

'Fast and Furious 10' will be the penultimate chapter for the current cast of characters; an 11th movie, also directed by Lin, is set to be the final film in the Fast Saga.

'Always loved' Johnny Depp: Amber Heard

Los Angeles | Agencies

American actress Amber Heard, the ex-wife of 'Pirates of the Caribbean' star Johnny Depp, is taking a break from social media while saying that she has "always maintained love for Johnny", reports 'Variety'. Taking to her Instagram, Amber shared a long note with regards to her ongoing legal battle with her ex-husband where she also thanked her supporters. She wrote, "I'm going to go offline for the next several weeks. As you may know, I'll be in Virginia where I face my ex-husband Johnny Depp in court." Listing out the details of a defamation case filed against her by Johnny, she further shared in the note, "Johnny

is suing me for an op-ed I wrote in the Washington Post, in which I recounted my experience of violence and domestic abuse. I never named him, rather I wrote about the price women pay for speaking against men in power. I continue to pay that price, but hopefully when this case concludes, I can move on and so can Johnny."

"I have always maintained a love for Johnny and it brings me great pain to have to live out the details of our past life together in front of the word," the post continues. "At this time, I recognize the ongoing support I've been fortunate to receive throughout these years, and in these coming weeks I will be leaning on it more than ever", she concluded.



Jack White marries fellow rocker Olivia Jean on stage at tour opener

Los Angeles | Agencies

Jack White, the lead singer and the guitarist of the Detroit rock duo, 'The White Stripes' married fellow rock musician Olivia Jean, on stage at a concert.

Jean worked as a singer on his Third Man label and had served earlier in the evening as his concert's opening act at the Masonic Temple Theatre, a storied venue in the

pair's mutual hometown, reports 'Variety'.

As per 'Variety', the surprise marriage proposal itself had come just minutes earlier, in the middle of a rendition of 'Hotel Yorba'. Third Man's top man, Ben Swank, presided over the nuptials, in which White's and Jean's bass players served as best man and maid of honor.

Eighty minutes into his set, Jack brought Jean out on stage to sing background vocals on 'Hotel Yorba', as per the account of

'Detroit Free Press' writer Brian McCollum. When the show took a detour, introduced her as his girlfriend and said, "And I love her very much," an unusual PDA for White, although things were about to get more unusual.

The song has a line, "Let's get married," the approach of which was White's cue to have the band drop out and to get his assistant to start filming the proceedings on a cell phone. I've got a little question for you, Olivia Jean. Will you marry me?" he said.

MARK MOLLOY TO DIRECT 'BEVERLY HILLS COP 4'

Los Angeles | Agencies

Australian filmmaker Mark Molloy has replaced the director duo of Adil El Arbi and Bilall Fallah on the long-awaited fourth instalment of the buddy cop action comedy, 'Beverly Hills Cop', reports 'Deadline'.

As per 'Deadline', Eddie Murphy is expected to reprise his role of Axel Foley, with Netflix on board to distribute. Jerry Bruckheimer is back to produce. Will Beall penned the script. Adil El Arbi and Bilall Fallah parted ways with the project to focus on the Warner Bros film 'Batgirl', which recently wrapped production and is set to make its debut on HBO Max.

Insiders add 'Beverly Hills Cop 4' is still in development and no production start date has been set. 'Deadline' further reported that the franchise moved from Paramount to Netflix in the winter of 2019 and follows the adventures of Detroit cop Foley, who first appeared in the 1984 smash hit that followed him to Beverly Hills to solve the murder of a friend.

The film became one of the year's biggest hits and solidified Murphy's movie star status. It was followed by two sequels. As for Molloy, the project would mark his first feature film for a major studio. The rising star has gained acclaim on the commercial circuit specifically with Apple spots.

Los Angeles | Agencies

Sci-fi action-adventure comedy 'Sonic the Hedgehog 2' is poised to top the US box office charts with an impressive opening of \$67 million to \$69 million.

However, the Jake Gyllenhaal-starrer R-rated actioner, 'Ambulance' will most likely fail to clear double digits, reports 'Variety'. As per 'Variety', 'Sonic' went off the mark on the box office to the tune of \$6.3 million in previews and has been on an upward curve since, playing in 4,234 locations. The sequel is outperforming its 2020 predecessor, which opened to \$58 million at a time when COVID-19 was still a nebulous threat to most North Americans.

'Sonic the Hedgehog 2' stars funnyman Ben Schwartz as the voice of the titular video game character, with Idris Elba joining the series as the voice of the villain Knuckles the Echidna. Colleen O'Shaughnessey, who has regularly voiced Tails in the Fox in the video game series, reprises the role of Sonic's sidekick for the film.

Talking about the film's live-action cast, Jim Carrey stars as Dr. Robotnik with James Marsden as Sheriff Tom Wachowski, as well as Tika Sumpter, Natasha Rothwell, Adam Pally, Shemar Moore, Lee Majdoub and Tom Butler.

'Ambulance' had plenty of factors in its favor heading into its opening. The film boasts a diverse lead cast of popular stars - Jake Gyllenhaal, Yahya Abdul-Mateen II and Eiza Gonzalez - as well as some of the strongest reviews of Michael Bay's career. Audiences have largely been approving, bestowing an "A-" CinemaScore rating, and the film has locked down IMAX format auditoriums for the week, opening up the opportunity for premium ticket pricing. Even so, an opening beneath \$10 million indicates that adult audiences are going to be more discerning about what releases to roll out to theaters after the age of pan-



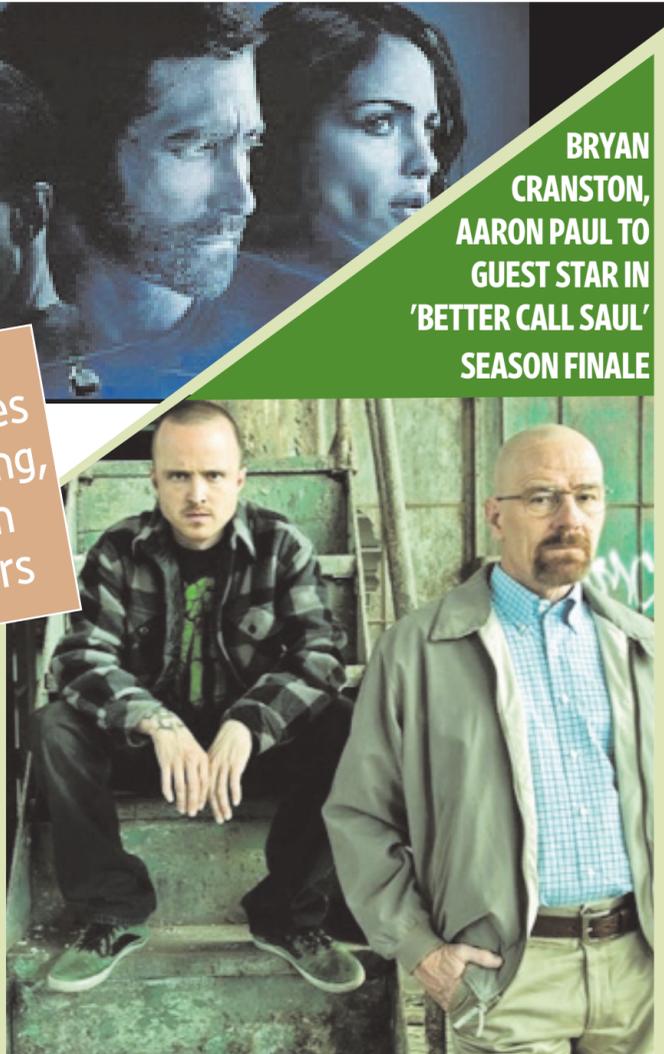
'Sonic the Hedgehog 2' races to \$69 mn opening, 'Ambulance' in troubled waters

Los Angeles | Agencies

'Breaking Bad' stars Bryan Cranston and Aaron Paul have been confirmed to guest star in the final season of 'Better Call Saul', which is the spinoff of 'Breaking Bad'.

The show's co-creator Peter Gould officially confirmed the news, reports 'Variety'.

As per 'Variety', Gould announced the news on Saturday (Pacific Standard Time) at PaleyFest LA on a 'Better Call Saul' panel moderated by Variety television editor Michael Schneider. However, Gould didn't exactly reveal as to when Cranston and Paul will appear in the show or in what capacity. Gould said on the panel, "I don't want to spoil things for the audience, but I will say the first question we had when we started the show was, 'Are we gonna see Walt and Jesse on the show?' Instead of evading, I'll just say yeah. How or the circumstances or anything, you'll just



BRYAN CRANSTON, AARON PAUL TO GUEST STAR IN 'BETTER CALL SAUL' SEASON FINALE

ABSOLUTE PIC OF THE DAY



Lori Harvey



IPL 2022

KULDEEP TAKES FOUR, KHALEEL THREE AS DELHI BEAT KOLKATA BY 44 RUNS

Team Absolute | Mumbai

A fantastic four-wicket haul from left-arm wrist-spinner Kuldeep Yadav combined with left-arm pacer Khaleel Ahmed taking three wickets helped Delhi Capitals snap their two-match losing streak with a 44-run win over table-toppers Kolkata Knight Riders at the Brabourne Stadium, here on Sunday.

After Delhi posted a gigantic 215/5 in their 20 overs, thanks to fifties from David Warner, Prithvi Shaw and some blazing knocks from captain Rishabh Pant, Axar Patel and Shardul Thakur, Kolkata needed similar knocks from their batters. But barring a 54 from captain Shreyas Iyer, there weren't many substantial contributions as Kolkata crashed to 171 all out in 19.4 overs.

Kolkata began their chase by losing openers Venkatesh Iyer and Ajinkya Rahane to Ahmed in power-play. While Iyer pulled straight to deep square leg, Rahane, who was



lucky in surviving two lbw calls on first two balls of the innings, miscued a slog and was caught by Shardul Thakur running back from mid-on. Iyer and Nitish Rana got off to a good start by taking boundaries off Axar and Kuldeep. The duo then took 17 runs off Rovman Powell's part-time pace in the tenth over to bring up fifty of their partnership. Just as the 69-run partnership began to take a more threatening look, Lalit Yadav's off-spin took out Rana as the left-hander

smacked a low full toss straight to long-on just after hitting a six. In the next over, Iyer danced down the pitch to hit Kuldeep over long-on for six and bring up his first IPL fifty in Kolkata jersey. But on the very next ball, Kuldeep had the last laugh, stumping Iyer with a googly. Am Billings took a four and six off Axar but was caught by fine leg off a slog sweep, becoming Ahmed's third victim of the match. Pat Cummins' hope of repeating the stunning 14-ball fifty

heroics against Mumbai came to a premature end when he missed a wild slog off Kuldeep and was trapped plumb lbw in front of leg-stump.

One brought two for Kuldeep on successive deliveries in the 16th over as Sunil Narine miscued a heave to long-off, followed by the spinner running to mid-on to complete a terrific caught and bowled dismissal of Umesh Yadav.

Andre Russell was uncomfortable in his 21-ball 24 and sliced uppishly to point off Thakur in the final over. A ball later, Thakur finished off the match by having Rasikh Salam holing out to long-on to end Delhi's two-match losing streak.

Brief scores:

Delhi Capitals 215/5 in 20 overs (David Warner 61, Prithvi Shaw 51; Sunil Narine 2/21, Andre Russell 1/16) beat Kolkata Knight Riders 171 all out in 19.4 overs (Shreyas Iyer 54, Nitish Rana 30; Kuldeep Yadav 4/35, Khaleel Ahmed 3/25) by 44 runs

IPL 2022

Rajasthan Royals humble Lucknow Super Giants

Team Absolute | Mumbai

A clinical bowling performance spearheaded by spinner Yuzvendra Chahal (4/41) and pacer Trent Boult (2/30) helped Rajasthan Royals beat Lucknow Super Giants by three runs in a low-scoring thriller in Match 20 of IPL 2022 at the Wankhede Stadium here on Sunday.

Boult struck two mighty blows in the first over, sending back skipper KL Rahul (0) and Krishnappa Gowtham (0) off the first two deliveries of LSG innings and Chahal took over the good work in the middle overs, as LSG slumped to 5-74 in the 12 over and though Quinton de Kock (39) held one end up for some time and Marcus Stoinis (38 not out off 17) landed some lusty blows in the last couple of overs, they could not drag Lucknow across the victory line.

LSG needed 13 runs off the last six deliveries but debutant Kuldeep Sen, a young right-arm pacer from Madhya Pradesh, bowled superbly to deny Stoinis the chance to become the hero.

Earlier, a brilliant late onslaught by Shimron Hetmyer (59 not out off 36 balls) and a tactical switch by R Ashwin, who became the first player in IPL history to get retired out, helped Rajasthan Royals reach a modest 165/6 in 20 overs. Hetmyer and Ashwin came together



with Rajasthan struggling at 67/4 and raised 68 runs in the partnership for the fifth wicket to take their team to safety.

With just 10 deliveries to go, Ashwin got 'retired out' after giving the strike to Hetmyer. The West Indies batsman struck three sixes, two of them off successive balls of Avesh Khan, as Royals raised 78 runs in the last five overs. They went on to defend that small total

thanks to their bowling depth.

Brief scores:

Rajasthan Royals 165/6 in 20 overs (Devdutt Padikkal 29, Shimron Hetmyer 59 not out, R Ashwin 28; K Gowtham 2/30, Jason Holder 2/48) beat Lucknow Super Giants 162/8 in 20 overs (Quinton de Kock 39, Deepak Hooda 25; Yuzvendra Chahal 4/41, Trent Boult 2/30) by 3 runs.

Easy for Real Madrid as Betis and Sevilla also win in Spain

Madrid: | Agencies

Real Madrid continued their march towards the La Liga title with a routine 2-0 win at home to Getafe.

Real Madrid coach Carlos Ancelotti rested Luka Modric and Toni Kroos for the game on Saturday night, but his side never looked to be in much trouble after Casemiro headed home Vinicius Jr's cross in the 38th minute.

Lucas Vazquez scored a second in the 66th minute after good work from Rodrigo down the right wing.

Gareth Bale replaced Karim Benzema with around 15 minutes to play, making his first home appearance for Real Madrid in almost two years -- and he was booed onto the pitch by the fans in the Santiago Bernabeu Stadium, Xinhua reports.

Two late goals keep Betis fifth and leave Cadiz in trouble as Betis claimed a 2-1 win with Cristian Tello's



77th minute goal and Borja Iglesias's 84th minute penalty cancelling out Ivan Alejo's opener for Cadiz.

That result had consequences at the top and bottom of the table as Javier Aguirre claimed his first win as Mallorca coach thanks to Vedat Muriqi's 69th-minute penalty against Atletico Madrid. Atletico were off the

pace, perhaps focusing more on next week's Champions League return leg at home to Manchester City and after the defeat they are just one point above Betis in the table.

Seventh place Villarreal and eighth place Athletic Club drew 1-1 in Villarreal's Estadio de la Ceramica in a game in which both sides had their

chances.

Raul Garcia put Athletic ahead shortly before halftime and Alfonso Pedraza levelled for the home side, who made 11 changes ahead of their trip to play Bayern Munich next Tuesday. Sevilla ensured they will remain in the top-four at the end of the weekend when they claimed a hard-fought 4-2 win at home to Granada, which was tougher than the final score implies.

Darwin Machis fired Granada ahead in the 22nd minute, but Diego Carlos' powerful header levelled for Sevilla 10 minutes later.

Lucas Ocampos got Sevilla ahead in the hour, but it looked as if Victor Diaz's 87th minute strike had saved a point for Granada. However, there were nine minutes of injury time and that was enough for Raf Mir to score at the far post and Papu Gomez to finish off a neat break with the last kick of the game.

Commonwealth Games weightlifting: Mirabai Chanu's 55kg entry rejected

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Indian weightlifter Mirabai Chanu's entry in the women's 55kg category at the 2022 Commonwealth Games has been rejected, which means she will move back to her pet 49kg division to compete at the quadrennial meet in Birmingham.

The Indian Weightlifting Federation (IWLFF) had earlier planned to enter Chanu in the higher 55kg division to maximise India's medal chances at the CWG, to be held from July 28 to August 8.

The Manipuri ace, who had already qualified for the CWG 49kg event courtesy of being the top-ranked Indian weightlifter in the division, accepted the proposal. She then made the 55kg cut by winning gold at the Singapore Weightlifting International in February, which was the final CWG qualifying event.

However, a change in entry rules by the International Weightlifting Federation (IWF) closed the Tokyo Olympics silver medalists' prospects of competing in the 55kg at CWG 2022. According to the new rule, a country's top-ranked weightlifter in a category qualifies for the CWG but if they withdraw, the next best lifter doesn't get the berth automatically. As per the old rule, the spot would have gone to the next



best or qualified lifter. Mirabai Chanu's fellow Manipuri lifter Bindaryani Devi is the top-ranked Indian lifter in the 55kg division. Bindaryani was supposed to move up to the 59kg division if Mirabai could have participated in the 55kg as per the IWLFF's initial plans, an olympics.com report said on Sunday. Jhilli Dalabehera was expected to take up Chanu's spot in the 49kg division while Poppy Hazarika was to be India's entry for the 64kg event. After the latest development, former world champion Mirabai Chanu will move back to her 49kg for the Commonwealth Games while Bindaryani Devi and Poppy Hazarika will compete in the 55kg and 59kg, respectively. India will have no entry for the women's 64kg now.

Leclerc takes dominant F1 Australian GP win as Verstappen retires again

Melbourne | Agencies

Ferrari's Charles Leclerc took a lights-to-flag victory in Sunday's F1 Australian Grand Prix to seize the initiative in the 2022 title race, as Red Bull's Max Verstappen once again retired with mechanical issues.

Starting from his pole position, Leclerc looked comfortable at the front all afternoon long, and was never headed as he also set the fastest lap on his way to his second win in three races so far in 2022.

"It's the first win where we have controlled the gap," said a jubilant Leclerc afterwards. "Honestly, what a car today. Of course I did a good job all weekend but it was not possible without the car." Especially in the race pace, we were extremely strong. Tyres felt great -- from the first lap to the last lap we were managing the tyres extremely well. I am just so happy." Leclerc's joy stood in stark contrast to the misery of Verstappen, Xinhua reports. The Dutchman appeared unable to live with the pace of the Ferrari, and ended up pulling



off on lap 39 with an apparent engine issue. After having also retired from the first race of the season, Verstappen already has a 46-point deficit to his would-be title rival Leclerc, and rued his poor reliability so far in 2022.

Chelsea recover in style as Spurs take big step towards Champions League spot

London | Agencies

Chelsea recovered from painful home defeats against Brentford and Real Madrid with a 6-0 win away to Southampton.

Thomas Tuchel's men looked like a team with something to prove and led 2-0 after the 16th minute with goals from Marcos Alonso and Mason Mount late on Saturday.

Timo Werner made it 3-0 in the 21st minute and Kai Havertz all but ended the match when he added a fourth just after the half hour, Xinhua reports.

Both Werner and Mount scored again in the 49th and 54th minutes before Chelsea took the foot off the gas to save their legs for next Tuesday's Champions League quarter-final in Madrid and after this display they will believe they have a chance of overturning their 3-1 first leg defeat.



Anthony Gordon's deflected first half strike gave Everton three vital points in their battle against relegation against a hapless Manchester United, who produced another chaotic display that puts their hopes of playing in Europe next season in severe doubt.

Arsenal's hopes of a top-four finish also suffered a big setback as they suffered a shock 2-1 defeat at home to Brighton -- a team with six defeats and a draw from their last seven matches. Leandro Trossard on 28 minutes and Enoch Mwepu's 67th minute half-volley put Brighton 2-0

up before Martin Odegaard's late consolation for Mikel Arteta's side.

Tottenham took full advantage of Arsenal's slip up with a 4-0 win away to Aston Villa. The win had two heroes, Heung Min Son, who scored a hat-trick, with the first goal coming in the third minute. Hugo Lloris made a series of first half saves as Villa peppered the Spurs goal after Son's opener, but after Dejan Kulusevski doubled the lead five minutes into the second half, Son netted twice more to seal the win. Leeds United look safe from relegation after Raphinha, Rodrigo and Jack Harrison gave Jesse Marsch's men a 3-0 away win to condemn Watford to their eighth successive home league defeat, while lifting Leeds 9-points clear of the bottom three. Newcastle United also look safe as Chris Wood's second half penalty gave them a 1-0 win at home to Wolverhampton.

Jr Women's Hockey World Cup NETHERLANDS BEAT INDIA 3-0 IN SEMI-FINALS

Potchefstroom (South Africa) | Agencies

Fighting Indian Junior Women's hockey team went down to the Netherlands 3-0 in the semi-finals of the FIH Hockey Women's Junior World Cup, here on Sunday.

The Netherlands scored through Tessa Beetsma (12th min), Luna Fokke (53rd min) and Jip Dicke (54th min) to book their berth in the final and set themselves up for a shot at winning their third title.

India had made a good start and had early possession but they could not score any goal. For India, Mumtaz Khan's early shot on goal



gave a positive start in the last-four encounter. The forward has been quite impressive in the tournament so far, however, she could not find the

right deflection as her shot hit the crossbar, denying India an early lead.

Meanwhile, the Dutch came up with a brilliant 18-pass goal that was

patiently executed, beating the Indian defence to the goal. It was the Player of the Match Tessa Beetsma, who opened the scoring for the Dutch with a fine goal in the 12th minute. Though India showed their abilities with attack, creating eight circle penetrations at half-time, with five shots on goal which included a couple of penalty corners, they were unable to find success. The Netherlands next play the winner of the match between Germany and England with India taking on the loser to settle for the bronze medal. India junior women had won their maiden bronze medal in the 2013 edition.

I-LEAGUE: RAJASTHAN UNITED STAGE LATE FIGHTBACK TO EARN A POINT AGAINST REAL KASHMIR

Kalyani: Pedro Manzi scored an equaliser in the dying embers as Rajasthan United held Real Kashmir for a frustrating 2-2 draw in the I-League at the Kalyani Stadium, here on Sunday. Mason Lee Robertson notched up a first-half brace to put his side ahead but they squandered it once again as Rajasthan managed to steal a draw from the jaws of defeat, courtesy of goals from Alocius and Pedro Manzi. The second I-League game of the day started with Real Kashmir exerting pressure on their rivals from the first minute of the game. They were also rewarded for the same as the team from Kashmir got their very first chance in the fourth minute in the form of a free kick. All eyes were on Mason Robertson to deliver as he came forward to take the free kick. The Scottish attacker did not disappoint, converting from a set-piece to put Real Kashmir ahead early in the encounter.

Kohli meets Tendulkar following RCB's win over Mumbai Indians

Pune | Agencies

Former India and Royal Challengers Bangalore captain Virat Kohli interacted with legendary batter Sachin Tendulkar following RCB's seven-wicket win over Mumbai Indians in the IPL 2022 match.

Inspiring knocks from Anuj Rawat and Kohli helped RCB defeat Mumbai Indians by seven wickets at the Maharashtra Cricket Association Stadium on Saturday.

Kohli on Sunday shared a picture with Tendulkar and said it is always a pleasure to see the former India batter. "Always a pleasure to see you paji. #SachinTendulkar," Kohli captioned the picture on the KOO app. Kohli scored 48 runs to



help RCB secure a thumping win. However, the RCB star vented his frustration as he walked off the ground following a debatable LBW dismissal in the match.

While this was Mumbai Indians' fourth successive loss in the IPL 2022, RCB jumped to the third spot in the points table after three consecutive wins.



Hansika's promises laugh riot with her web series

Team Absolute | Chennai

Director M Rajesh's upcoming web series, which will feature actors Hansika Motwani, Mugen Rao, Shanthanu and Ashna Zaveri in the lead, has been titled 'MY3'. The rom-com series is a unique robotic love story and is to be streamed on the OTT platform Disney+ Hotstar. Karthik Muthukumar is the cinematographer of this series, which will have music by Ganesan and editing by Ashish. The series is being produced by Trendcloud.

Says Hansika, "It's an honour to be a part of this series. It's a sweet and delightful moment to be working with director M Rajesh. I am excited to be collaborating with him after our movie 'Oru Kal Oru Kannadi'. "Being My first web-series, I am excited and eager to be working with powerhouse talents like Mugen and Shanthanu. This series will be a 100 per cent laugh-riot for the audience. Get ready to witness a unique and one-of-its-kind rom-com from director Rajesh."

Actor Mugen Rao said, "I am a great fan of director Rajesh sir and his works. I have laughed a lot watching his movies and wanted to do something like that and fortunately, I had the opportunity given to me by Disney+ Hotstar. This is a huge offer for me. This series will offer a delightful and entertaining experience for the audience."

HIMANSHI KHURANA: FITNESS FOR ME IS BEING FLEXIBLE AND COMFORTABLE IN MY OWN BODY

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actress and model Himanshi Khurana went on to become a household name after her stint in season 13 of the show 'Big Boss'.

The actress is a fitness enthusiast herself who opened up about what fitness means to her.

She says: "Fitness for me is being flexible and comfortable in my own body. Unfit people tend to face a lot of health problems and difficulties in carrying day to day activities, therefore being fit is very important"

She furthermore adds how important working out is to her. Talking about the same, the actress shares: "Working out for me is very important. I work out regularly no matter what, even in my busy schedule I take out time to work out. I tend to skip my workout only when it is literally impossible but I try to make it up by following a proper diet."

The actress further briefs about her diet and says: "My diet mostly consists of Indian food because Indian food is very nutritious. We can get all the required nutrition and protein from our Indian food."

Lastly, the actress concludes by giving out a message to the youngsters.

"My only advice to motivate youngsters is to stay persistent and consistent. Make fitness a habit and not an option by exercising regularly."



AZMA FALLAH HAS AN 'UNFILTERED ATTITUDE' LIKE ME: KANGANA

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Bollywood actress and host Kangana Ranaut praised 'Lock Upp' contestant Azma Fallah by saying "You and me are unfiltered."

During the judgement day episode, Kangana started the day saying there are two types of people in this badass jail: "Left v/s right block and wild card v/s old kaidis, let us hear from you guys your thoughts on who's strong and weak."

To this Munawar Faruqui said Vinit Kakar is the weakest as he's not able to create bonds. On the other hand Kaaranvir added Vinit because is not a performer.

Azma said Munawar is a strong player and he's very smart. To which Kangana replied "Azma I've noticed you are very upfront like me, you don't think twice and do what your heart says, to be honest, you and I have an unfiltered attitude! You're like me."

Ranbir Kapoor-Alia Bhatt wedding: Preparation for the big day begins

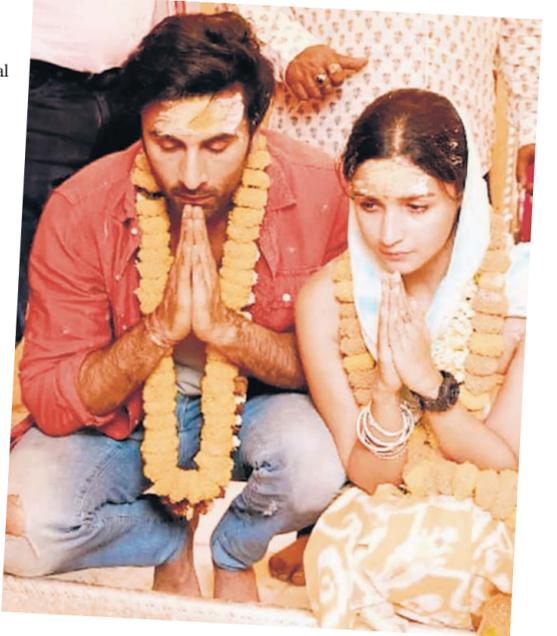
Team Absolute | Mumbai

Alia Bhatt-Ranbir Kapoor are currently grabbing all the headlines because of the wedding announcement. Several dates surfaced regarding the couple's wedding date. Reportedly, Ranbir and Alia's pre-wedding festivities will be kick-starting from April 13 and the two will tie the knot on April 15. As per reports, the two will be throwing a grand reception after their wedding. Their wedding will be an intimate affair with only close friends and family members in attendance.

The celebrity couple will reportedly take nuptial vows at RK family house in Chembur. According to new pictures and videos doing rounds on the internet, the preparation for the big day has begun at Kapoor's Krishna Raj Bungalow and at Ranbir Kapoor's residence.

In the videos that have surfaced online, we spotted several workers cleaning the building. Some people can be seen taking out big flowers plans from the truck and keeping them outside RK's house. Not only this, lights are also being installed at Krishna Raj bungalow ahead of the big fat wedding.

While Ranbir is busy fulfilling his work commitment, shooting for Luv Ranjan's film with Shraddha Kapoor in the city, Alia is overseeing the wedding arrangements. Alia Bhatt was spotted outside her house.



Team Absolute | Mumbai

Karan Kundrra needs no introduction. The popular actor has been hosting a number of reality shows and has been a part of the entertainment industry for quite long.

Now, he has again worn the hat of a host but this time not of any youth

Focus on growth of kids not just as dancers but as individuals: Karan Kundrra

show rather he will be handling the kids on 'Dance Deewane Juniors'.

When asked how excited he is about his new venture and how the journey has been so far, he told IANS: "I think my journey has been pretty fantastic. But most importantly, my journey has been on my own terms. I've always done what I wanted to do. I've never taken any pressure."

"I did whatever I've liked, or whatever I've been excited about. When I was doing daily soaps, 'Gumrah' was offered to me and many people asked why at this age I would host a crime show. But it was fabulous. Same thing happened with 'Roadies'. So, thankfully I have done what I just enjoy doing."

Karan has been part of every medium, be it television or digital or films and he never wants to confine himself to any one medium or new genre. He loves to experiment, so when 'Dance Deewane Juniors' was offered to him, he accepted it because of its new format.

He shares: "I've never done a major big budget, general entertainment category big show like this before. It's a very different concept altogether than what I've been doing. As soon as the idea was thrown to me that Colors is interested in making me host of a show. And look how a person who hardly knows how to dance is being asked to host a dance reality show. So, I think it was a challenge and a new thing for me and I had to take it."

On the challenges of being a host on the kids reality show, he adds: "See till now I have done youth-based reality shows such as 'Love School' or 'Roadies' or for instance now 'Lock Upp', but here there are kids. And it is never easy to handle them. At one point if you look at them on stage they are like professional dancers but as soon as the performance ends they will find the same kid. If you select them they are super excited but on rejection it is not easy to make them quiet if they are crying."

NEETU KAPOOR OPENS UP ON HER TV DEBUT

Team Absolute | Mumbai

At the age of 63, veteran actress Neetu Kapoor nowhere lacks in her charm and beauty. Ask her the secret and she replies smiling: "I am now more cautious about myself and giving more time to my look."

During a conversation with reporter, she shares her excitement over her television debut with 'Dance Deewane Juniors'.

"I was very excited initially when makers approached me for this as it is a kids show and I have a special affection for them. Moreover, the entire atmosphere of television is new to me so I was really happy."

For Neetu the show is more close to her as she started working on March 31, when her late husband Rishi Kapoor's last movie 'Sharmaji Namkeen' was released. "It was quite challenging for me emotionally as Rishi ji's last movie was released on the same day I started shooting for this show. It was quite ironic where his journey ended and mine again started."

Neetu, who made her debut with 'Suraj' and later went on to play a dual role in 'Do Kaliyaan' had been part of the industry for many years and given a number of hits. Now, with her television debut she is going to have an altogether new experience. As she says: "It's quite a challenge and very new for me. Similarly 'Jug Jugg Jeeyo' was also a challenge. When I did the movie my confidence level was zero as my husband had just passed away. But slowly it gave me confidence. First day was not good, but with every passing day I started getting my confidence back."

INSTAGRAM PIC OF THE DAY



Urvi Javed