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INDIA'S PEAK POWER DEMAND TOUCHES ALL-TIME HIGH 207,111 MW

POWER CRISIS

The demand for power has risen in April due to heatwave and people in different parts of the country are facing power cuts. The problem has been accentuated by a steep rise in prices of imported coal due to Russia-Ukraine conflict and some power plants not operating to their full capacity. Amid reports of dip in coal stocks with thermal plants, Union Minister Pralhad Joshi has said that the country's thermal plants hold about 22 million tonnes of coal which is enough for 10 days and replenishment will be done continuously. Jharkhand, Haryana, Bihar, Punjab, Maharashtra are among states seeing power outages.

LESS THAN ONE DAY COAL LEFT IN MANY PLACES: DELHI MINISTER

New Delhi: Delhi Power Minister Satyendar Jain on Friday said that there was a severe coal crisis across the country and many places have just one day of reserve left.

Raising the alarm over the ongoing coal crisis, Jain said, "No (power) backup (is there)... (the) coal backup should be for over 21 days, but at many power plants, less than a day's (stock) is left".

The Delhi Power Minister held an emergency meeting on Thursday over the issue and wrote to the Centre requesting it to ensure adequate coal availability to power plants supplying electricity to Delhi.

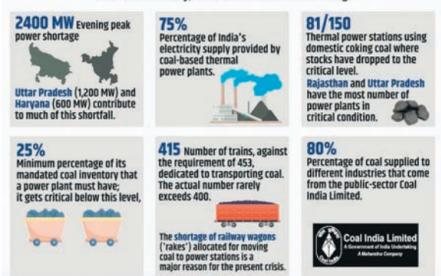
Team Absolute | New Delhi

Amid severe heatwave sweeping across India, the peak power demand in the country touched an all-time high of 207,111 MW on Friday, the Ministry of Power said. "The maximum All India demand met touched 207,111 MW at 14:50hrs today, an all time high so far," the ministry tweeted.

Power demand has been on the rise ever since the onset of the summer season this year. The power demand

COAL CRISIS HITS POWER PLANTS

Even as an unprecedented heat wave sweeps across much of the country and power demand touches an all-time high, thermal plants, the major source of electricity across the country, confront a critical coal shortage



met this month up to April 28 increased by 12.1 per cent to 204,653 GW from 182,559 GW during same period previous year, the ministry said. The maximum all-India demand met on Thursday was 204,653 MW. Meanwhile, Delhi Power Minister Satyendar Jain said on Friday that there is severe coal crisis across the country and many power plants have just one day's coal stocks left.

Raising the alarm over the ongoing coal crisis, Jain said, "No (power) backup (is

there)... (the) coal backup should be for over 21 days, but at many power plants, less than a day's (stock) is left." He added, "If electricity is being produced, and we keep getting it, there's no issue. But if the power plant shuts down, it will be problematic (in Delhi)... There's a coal shortage in the country."

However, the NTPC later issued a statement that read: "All six units of Dadri and five units of Unchahar are running at full capacity and receiving

HEAT WAVE SWEEPS ACROSS INDIA

New Delhi: Banda in Uttar Pradesh recorded the highest maximum temperature of 47.4 degrees Celsius and at least half a dozen places across India recorded maximum temperatures above 46 degrees Celsius as a massive heat wave swept across 14 states and UTs on Friday. Allahabad in Uttar Pradesh recorded the highest maximum temperature of 45.9 degrees Celsius and at least three dozen places recorded maximum temperatures above 45 degrees Celsius, India Meteorological Department (IMD) data showed. Heat wave to severe heat wave swept across Rajasthan, Gujarat, Punjab, Haryana, Delhi, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Chhattisgarh, Odisha, Telangana and even West Bengal. Heat wave conditions are likely to prevail till at least May 1 in northwest and central India and for next three days in east India.



'ARTIFICIAL' POWER CRISIS SHOULD BE RESOLVED: CONGRESS

New Delhi: Congress spokesperson Gourav Vallabh addressing a press conference said: "On Friday morning at 10.45 a.m., the demand of electricity in the energy exchange is 16,035 megawatt and the supply of electricity in these exchanges is only 2,304 megawatt and that too at what price? Rs 12 per unit megawatt and why it is happening like this? Because 72,074 megawatt capacity plants are right now not operating. We demand that this artificial power crisis, which is created due to mismanagement of coal, be immediately resolved and people should be provided relief by providing 24x7 power supply in this summer," Vallabh added.

regular coal supplies. Present stock is 140,000 MT and 95,000 MT, respectively, and import coal supplies are also in pipeline."

It added: "Currently, Unchahar and Dadri stations

are declaring more than 100 per cent rated capacity to the grid. All their units are running at full load except Unchahar Unit#1, which is under annual planned overhaul."

Clash between radical groups in Patiala, Curfew imposed

SINGLA, THE EXECUTIVE PRESIDENT OF THE SHIV SENA, LED THE ANTI-SEPARATIST MARCH FROM ARYA SAMAJ CHOWK TO KALI DEVI TEMPLE. THEY WERE RAINING SLOGANS AGAINST KHALISTAN. "THE SHIV SENA WILL NEVER ALLOW KHALISTAN TO BE FORMED IN PUNJAB OR ANYWHERE IN INDIA," SAID SINGLA. HE ALSO SAID BANNED SIKHS FOR JUSTICE (SFJ) CHIEF GURPATWANT SINGH PANNU HAD GIVEN THE CALL TO MARK THE FOUNDATION DAY OF KHALISTAN ON APRIL 29.



Khalistan sword-bearing sympathizers outside the Kali Mata temple, who were pelting stones at each other and brandishing swords, police said.

Inspector General of Police, Patiala Range, Rakesh Aggarwal told the media the situation was under control and heavy police deployed. "The tension started following rumours that some of the protesters had been attacked," he said.

Eyewitnesses told the police that Nihangs, who gathered in front of the Dukh Niwaran Sahib gurdwara to oppose the Khalistan 'Muradabad March' of the Shiv Sena, marched towards

the temple, raising pro-Khalistan slogans.

A police officer got injured while trying to stop the Nihangs heading towards the temple, the police said.

Terming the incident of clashes as highly deplorable and extremely unfortunate that needs to be condemned by one and all in the strictest possible words, Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann appealed to the people to maintain law and order at all costs besides upholding the long traditional love, peace, brotherhood, and harmony.

As a preventive measure, a curfew has been imposed till Saturday morning.

Chandigarh | Agencies

Curfew was clamped in Punjab's Patiala's town on Friday after police had to fire into the air following a massive clash between members of the Shiv Sena led by Harish Singla and pro-

NO PROVISIONAL CERTIFICATE TO FOREIGN MEDICAL STUDENTS IMPACTED BY COVID PANDEMIC: SC

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Supreme Court on Friday said the Indian medical students from foreign institutes are facing a tremendous challenge amid the Covid-19 pandemic, but granting them provisional registration to complete internship without having undergone clinical training would be compromising with the health of citizens.

The top court dealt with a question "whether the degree granted by the foreign institute even in respect of clinical training is binding on the appellant and the student has to be provisionally registered".

It directed the NMC "to frame a scheme as a one-time measure within two months to allow the student and such similarly situated students who have not actually completed

clinical training to undergo clinical training in India in the medical colleges which may be identified by the appellant for a limited duration as may be specified by the appellant, on such charges which the appellant determines".

The top court said eligibility regulations are to ensure that a student meets the minimum eligibility condition as per the Graduate Medical Education Regulations, 1997, but after completing the curriculum, a candidate has to qualify the screening test, provided the entire duration of the course has been completed at the same institute located abroad.

The top court judgment came on a plea filed by the NMC challenging the Madras High Court orders passed in July and September last year.

Empowered group approves sale of Pawan Hans to Star 9 at Rs 211cr

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Alternative Mechanism, committee empowered by the CCEA, has approved the highest bid of Star 9 Mobility Private Ltd for sale of entire government's 51 per cent of shareholding of Pawan Hans Limited (PHL) and transfer of management control.

PHL is a joint venture of Government of India (GoI) and ONGC providing helicopter and aero mobility services. GoI holds 51 per cent of the shares in the company and ONGC holds the balance 49 per cent.

This is the fourth iterations with request for EOI - Expression of Interest, invited on December 8, 2020. Seven EoIs were received



and four interested bidders were shortlisted as qualified bidders. After detailed due diligence, the qualified bidders were invited to submit financial bids. Three financial bids were received.

As per extant procedure, the Reserve Price for sale of 51 per cent shareholding of PHL was fixed at Rs 199.92 crore, on the basis of val-

uation carried out by experts includes transaction adviser and asset valuer.

Thereafter, the three bids were opened in the presence of the bidders. All three bids were found to be valid. M/s Star9 Mobility Private Ltd, a consortium of M/s Big Charter Private Limited, M/s Maharaja Aviation Private Limited and M/s Almas Global Opportunity Fund SPC; emerged as the highest bidder quoting Rs 211.14 crore, which was above the Reserve Price.

The Committee comprised Nitin Gadkari, Union Minister for Road Transport and Highways, Nirmala Sitharaman, Union Minister for Finance and Corporate Affairs, and Jyotiraditya Scindia, Union Minister of Civil Aviation.

Maoists planning bigger attack: Intel agencies sound alert

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Amid the tactical firing at the security forces' camps in Chhattisgarh since the last 10 days, the intelligence agencies have sounded an alert that the Maoists may execute a bigger attack in the state.

Sources quoting the intelligence inputs said that the ultras have initiated more than 10 incidents of firing and shelling at the security forces' camps, the latest being on the CRPF's Milpa and Amalgunda camps in Chhattisgarh.

Sources also said that the 'Maoists may be planning to execute a bigger attack on the security forces in coming weeks'.

According to the information received from the security forces in Chhattisgarh, the Maoist have fired intermittently at night with grenade launchers from a distance to make their presence felt in the area. "This way, they also want to give a message to the local population that they are still strong and can



attack the security forces at will, this is an old mind game of these ultras," a senior officer of the Chhattisgarh Police said.

The Potakapali camp of the CRPF in Sukma (Chhattisgarh) was targeted by the Maoists last Monday. They fired at the camp but later fled when the CRPF commandos retaliated with heavy firing.

EXPLOSION AT KABUL MOSQUE KILLS AT LEAST 10 PEOPLE

Kabul: A powerful blast targeted a mosque in Kabul on Friday, killing at least 10 people and wounding several others, security officials confirmed, media reports said.

The blast took place in the Darul-Aman area of Kabul and follows a spate of similar attacks around the country in the recent past, Tolo News reported.

A spokesperson for the Ministry of Interior, Abdul Nafay Takor, said that at least 10 people were killed and more than 20 others were wounded in the blast. The casualties were reportedly worshippers.

Earlier, the spokesperson for the Security department, Khalid Zadran, had said that at least five people were killed and more than 20 others were wounded in the blast.

Witnesses said the number of casualties could be higher. No one has claimed responsibility for the blast yet. Meanwhile, the death toll in Thursday's twin blasts at Mazar-e-Sharif has risen to 11.

INDIA REPORTS 3,377 NEW COVID CASES, 60 DEATHS

New Delhi: India on Friday 3,377 new Covid cases, an increase against the 3,303 infections registered the previous day, the Union Health Ministry said.

In the same period, the country reported 60 Covid fatalities, taking the nationwide death toll to 523,753.

Meanwhile, the active caseload of the country also increased to 17,801 cases, accounting for 0.04 per cent of the country's total positive cases.

The recovery of 2,496 patients in the last 24 hours took the cumulative tally to 4,25,30,622. Consequently, India's recovery rate now stands at 98.74 per cent.

- The work focuses on geographic range shifts and the journeys that species will undertake as they follow their habitats into new areas.
- As they encounter other mammals for the first time, the study projects they will share thousands of viruses.
- The team said these shifts bring greater opportunities for viruses like Ebola or coronaviruses to emerge in new areas, making them harder to track, and into new types of animals, making it easier for viruses to jump across a "stepping stone" species into humans.

CLIMATE CHANGE COULD SPARK NEXT PANDEMIC: STUDY

New York | Agencies

As the earth's climate continues to warm, researchers have predicted that wild animals will be forced to relocate their habitats, likely to regions with large human populations, dramatically increasing the risk of a viral jump to humans that could lead to the next pandemic.

A study, published in the journal Nature, suggests that climate change will become the biggest upstream risk factor for disease emergence, exceeding higher-profile issues like deforestation, wildlife trade, and industrial agriculture.

"The closest analogy is actually the risks we see in the wildlife trade," said



lead author Colin Carlson from Georgetown University.

"We worry about markets because bringing unhealthy animals together in unnatural combinations creates opportunities for this stepwise process of emergence - like how SARS jumped from bats to civets, then civets to people. But markets are not special any-

more; in a changing climate, that kind of process will be the reality in nature just about everywhere," he added.

In their study, the team conducted the first comprehensive assessment of how climate change will restructure the global mammalian virome.

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The team said these shifts bring greater opportunities for viruses like Ebola or coronaviruses to emerge in new areas, making them harder to track, and into new types of animals,

making it easier for viruses to jump across a "stepping stone" species into humans.

Of concern is that animal habitats will move disproportionately in the same places as human settlements, creating new hotspots of spillover risk.

Much of this process may already be underway in today's 1.2 degrees warmer world, and efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions may not stop these events from unfolding.

An additional important finding is an impact rising temperatures will have on bats, which account for the majority of novel viral sharing. Their ability to fly will allow them to travel long distances, and share the most viruses.



ANY PARTY THAT CAN TOIL FOR 50-60 YEARS CAN ONLY COMPETE WITH BJP: NADDA

AHMEDABAD | Agencies

BJP national president J.P. Nadda, who is on a day-long visit to Gujarat, said on Friday that only a party, which can patiently work hard for 50-60 years, can compete with the BJP.

"Any party that has the patience to do 'Sadhna' for 50-60 years can only compete with the BJP...BJP is a party that moves in the right direction with the right ideology, and a party that will take the country forward...this welcome is not for me, it is for the views of BJP. BJP has never had to change its stand since 1952."

He offered flowers at the statue of Sardar Patel. Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel also addressed the gathering. After that they visited Sabarmati Ashram and tried their hands at the Charkha.

Addressing a press conference at the BJP headquarters Kamalam, Nadda said, "I have met senior BJP leaders and all MPs, MLAs, now I will meet all the party workers."



"When it comes to Indian politics, the land of Gujarat has been a laboratory for the party. When Prime Minister Modi was the General Secretary, or the national president, or the Chief Minister of Gujarat, it was seen that Gujarat made a remarkable

image in the world. "BJP has challenged the politics of casteism and family rule with Modi's development policy." In the afternoon Nadda, Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel and state president C.R. Paatil addressed a

huge gathering of party workers at the GMDC ground.

Nadda said, "I have friends in all the political parties, I understand from their experience that everyone is not fortunate to serve the BJP. Modiji did not misuse his power but he made this power the medium to serve this country. He changed the political culture and working style. Earlier, the parties used to come with manifestos and BJP comes with regular report cards. Regional political parties are becoming family parties in this country, BJP is the only national party of the country. The Congress has neither remained Indian nor national, it is a party of a brother and sister."

Nadda also appreciated the management during the Covid pandemic, the vaccination procedure, and the Ganga mission.

He will also attend a religious gathering in Vadodara and will come back to have dinner with core committee and election committee members at the Chief Minister's official residence in Gandhinagar.

Six die after drinking spurious liquor in Bihar's Saran, say kin

PATNA | Agencies

Six persons belonging to different villages under Tarraiya police station in Bihar's Saran district died after they consumed spurious liquor, their family members claimed on Friday.

Police are yet to respond. The deaths had happened on Thursday evening, and the deceased's family members alleged that police officers came on Friday morning and forced them to change their statements to say that the deaths took place due to their consuming "kathal ki sabji" (jackfruit) and rice, a popular food combination in Bihar.

The villagers claimed that the liquor mafia are applying pressure on them to stay silent on the issue as well. The family members of the deceased claimed that they consumed liquor on Wednesday evening and



Thursday morning, followed by their health deteriorated.

The deceased are identified as Darasi Saw and Akhilesh Thakur of Nawarnapur, Vikky Kumar Singh of Tarraiya, Sanjay Paswan of Pokhrera, and Nagina Singh and Madan Mohan of Chainpur village.

IANS tried to contact District Magistrate Rajesh Meena and Superintendent of Police Santosh Kumar but they were not picking their phones.

SHO of Tarraiya police station Rajesh Kumar also refused to comment.

Lt Gen B.S. Raju appointed Indian Army's Vice Chief

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Lt General B.S. Raju, who is currently the Indian Army's Director General of Military Operations, will take over as the Vice Chief of the Army Staff on May 1, it was announced on Friday.

An alumnus of Sainik School Bijapur and National Defence Academy, he was commissioned in the Jat Regiment on December 15, 1984.

He commanded a battalion during Operation Parakram in the Western Theatre and in Jammu and Kashmir. He also holds the



distinction of commanding the Uri brigade along the Line of Control, a Counter Insurgency Force and the Chinari Corps in the Kashmir Valley. He also served as the Commandant,

Indian Military Training Team in Bhutan. During his illustrious career spanning 38 years, he has held many important regimental, staff and instructional appointments in the Army headquarters and in field formation, including in the Military Secretary branch, Brigadier General Staff of the operationally active White Knight Corps, Deputy Director General, Military Operations, and Director General, Staff Duties. A qualified helicopter pilot, he had carried out operational flying in Somalia, as part of UNOSOM II. He is also the Colonel of the Jat Regiment.

FOUR KILLED AFTER BALCONY COLLAPSES IN TELANGANA

Ex-AAP councillor, 16 others get RI for attacking anti-encroachment team

GURUGRAM | Agencies

The court of Additional District and Sessions Judge (ADS) Mona Singh on Friday sentenced a former Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) councillor and 16 others to rigorous imprisonment of 7 to 10 years for attack on an anti-encroachment team of the Haryana Urban Development Authority (HUDA) and policemen in May 2015.

The incident had taken place at Sector-47 Jhimar Basti during an anti-encroachment drive.

During the incident, petrol bombs and explosives were also used by the mob against the HUDA team, in which a duty magistrate and 15 police personnel were injured.

The court of ADSJ also imposed



a fine on 17 people, which included 10 women. While 10 of them have been sentenced to 7 years of rigorous imprisonment, seven of them have been given 10 years in jail.

The court has also imposed Rs 10,000 fine on 10 women, includ-

ing former AAP councillor Nisha Singh and Rs 20,000 on the others. In case of non-payment, their sentences will be increased by two to three years, read the orders.

There were 19 accused in the case. Ratanlal and Ramesh died during the trial.

The court in its order observed that it was a serious action on the part of the culprits to injure the public officers, but there is no reason to believe that they cannot be reformed or rehabilitated and that they are likely to continue criminal acts of violence would constitute a continuing threat to the society.

On May 15, 2015, Junior Engineer (JE) Rajpal and HUDA teams were getting debris removed during an anti-encroachment drive in Sector-47, Jhimar Basti when the incident took place.

Face off between Railways and Chamunda Devi temple management continues

AGRA | Agencies

The anti-encroachment drive by the Railways has run into rough weather as Hindutva outfits in Agra have vociferously opposed the widening of platform number one at the Raja ki Mandi station.

Last week, the DRM office in Agra issued a notice to the management of the Chamunda Devi temple, which had encroached upon the railway land, to vacate so that the platform could be realigned.

The Raja ki Mandi station is sited in the heart of the city and most south bound trains from Delhi pass through this station. Almost every one hour there is a passenger train in addition to goods trains. The railway tracks take a sharp curve because of the temple. The railway officials say that due to the sharp curve speed has to be reduced and there is always a fear of avoidable accidents.

The dispute is over 70 metres of land towards platform number one.

The district officials including the district magistrate and senior police officials have visited the site and are



trying to work out a solution.

Meanwhile, Hindutva leaders have sounded the warning bugle. One group threatened to lie on the tracks before running trains, another threatened to damage the tracks. BJP leader Shabana Khandelwal with scores of Muslims reached the temple on Friday to express solidarity with the temple management.

Shabana said the temple was 150 years old and that she with her Muslim supporters would block the bulldozers.

The Railways have now issued a similar notice to a mosque in the Agra Cantt railway station premises.

The Railways divisional office authorities seem determined to go ahead with their plans. They said

notices were issued and the concerned parties are expected to explain their positions by April 30.

One senior official said Raja ki Mandi railway station will be shut down if the opposition to free railway land from encroachments continued.

The railways are laying a third track on this vital trunk route, for which the station needs more land.

RENAME DELHI AS INDRAPRASTHA: SWAMI CHAKRAPANI

New Delhi:

A day after Delhi chief of the Bharatiya Janata Party Adesh Gupta wrote to Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal to rename around 40 places, Swami Chakrapani Maharaj on Friday demanded to rename the national capital as Indraprastha. Swami Chakrapani, National President, Akhil Bharat Hindu Mahasabha & Sant Mahasabha has urged Kejriwal and Prime Minister Narendra Modi to change the name of Delhi to Indraprastha. He said his organisation would launch a signature campaign in this respect. "The old name of Delhi was Indraprastha. The city has a modern name Delhi. Even in Mahabharata, it has been mentioned as Indraprastha," said Chakrapani. He claimed, "A king during the Tomar era had installed an iron stick which was loose...and people called it 'Dhili' (loose).

Three army personnel injured in mine blast near LoC



JAMMU | Agencies

Three Indian Army personnel, including a major, were injured in a landmine blast near the Line of Control (LoC) in J&K's Poonch district on Friday, police said.

"During a routine patrol along the LoC in Krishna Ghati (KG) sector of Poonch district there was a landmine explosion in which three army personnel were injured. They have been

shifted to command hospital in Udhampur and are being treated now.

"The explosion occurred at around 2.30 p.m. after the soldiers accidentally stepped on a landmine," a police source said, identifying the injured as Major Gurung, Naib Subedar Dalbir, and Havaldar Hukum.

All the injured personnel have sustained multiple injuries, the sources added.

BRIDE SHOT DEAD BY JILTED LOVER IN UP

Mathura: In a shocking incident, a young bride was shot dead allegedly by a jilted lover during her wedding ceremony, police said on Friday. The victim, identified as Kajal, died on the spot.

According to police, the accused had been in a relationship with the woman and was upset with her wedding with another man. In a police complaint, the victim's father, Khubi Ram Prajapati, alleged that his daughter had gone inside her house after the garland ritual around 1.30 a.m. Friday when the suspect, Aneesh, shot her dead with a country-made pistol.

She died on the spot as the bullet hit near her left eye. The accused somehow managed to flee from the spot and a manhunt has been launched to trace him.



4 die in two separate road accidents in Bihar

Four persons were killed in separate road accidents in two districts of Bihar, police said on Friday.

PATNA | Agencies

The first accident occurred in Bihar's Banka district on Thursday night when an interstate luxury bus overturned at Dhaka village located on Bhagalpur-Hansdiha state highway. One person died and more than 25 passengers were injured in the accident.

The deceased was identified as Raju Kumar, driver of the bus. The injured persons were admitted in Banka Sadar hospital. Some of the injured passengers were said to be in critical condition and they were referred to Bhagalpur medical college and hospital.

Three of the injured passengers belong to Banka district



while other injured passengers are from Jharkhand. The bus was on its way from Silliguri to Ranchi and majority of the pas-

sengers were returning after visiting Darjeeling and Gangtok. Silliguri is the place which connects these two hill stations in

the eastern side of Himalayas. According to an official of Dhaka police station, the driver of the bus dozed off for a few seconds which led to mishap.

The second road accident occurred on NH 27 at Bathna Bazar in Gopalganj district when three members of a family riding on a bike met with a hit by an unidentified vehicle around 10 p.m. on Thursday. The impact of the collision was such that all three bikers died on the spot. The deceased were returning from a 'Tilak' function.

The deceased were identified as Guddu Kumar, Chandan Kumar and Chotu Kumar. All are native of Bhorichak village under Kuchaikot police station.

MAN SUSPECTED TO BE INFORMER, SHOT DEAD IN UP

Shamli: Two accused persons, who were arrested and later released on bail, in Uttar Pradesh's Shamli district are now charged with the alleged killing of a 25-year-old youth whom they suspected to be a police informer. The youth identified as Vikas Saini was shot dead in Jhinjhana town when he was returning home from his grocery shop.

He later succumbed to his injuries on Thursday. The police have filed a case under IPC section 302 (murder) against the accused.

Station House Officer of Jhinjhana police station, Rojant Tyagi on Friday said, "Vikas was admitted to the hospital for treatment in an injured condition, but he died during his treatment. The post-mortem report also confirmed the death by shooting."

The victim's father has alleged that the accused identified as Hariom Kashyap and Sunil Kashyap were involved in betting and they were arrested on April 26.

Later, when the accused duo were out on bail, they allegedly killed Saini "suspecting him to be a police informer". Hariom and his partner Sunil were suspecting Vikas of being a police informer, because his grocery shop is located near Hariom's shop and the houses are also in the same locality. Due to this, both of them killed Vikas, said Dildar Saini, the victim's father.



RAJ THACKERAY HOPES TO 'SHAKE' MVA GOVT FROM AURANGABAD

Team Absolute | Mumbai/Pune

Catapulted suddenly to the state political mainstream with a deafening anti-loudspeakers campaign, Maharashtra Navnirman Sena (MNS) president Raj Thackeray reached Pune on Friday for his much-anticipated rally in Aurangabad on Sunday.

Raj, 53, is expected to chart out his fresh political voyage through the Aurangabad rally and hopes to rattle the ruling Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) government, headed by his estranged cousin, Shiv Sena President and Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray, along with Nationalist Congress Party-Congress.

Shiv Sena Chief Spokesperson and MP Sanjay Raut reiterated the MVA stance that the Centre should formulate a national policy on loudspeakers and accused "some abhongsas" (loudspeakers) of attempting to foment strife in the state.

Akin to his uncle, the late Shiv Sena founder, Balasaheb Thackeray, Raj started for Pune sporting a saffron shawl, and he occasionally adopts the patriarch's famed mannerisms and oratory styles that oft bring down the roof, but barely translate into votes at the hustings.

The rally timing is considered strategic, as a series of top civic bodies in Mumbai, Thane, Navi Mumbai, Pune, Pimpri-Chinchwad, Aurangabad, etc are slated to go to polls soon as a run-up to the Lok



Sabha and Assembly elections in 2024, where the MNS hopes to make a killing.

Though cosy with the Opposition Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), the MNS is still shy of openly proclaiming their apolitical dalliance, but nevertheless attempting to grab a piece of the Hindutva cake that is claimed by both the BJP and Shiv Sena.

After a night camp in Pune, Raj will get the blessings of a priest and then leave for

Aurangabad on Saturday morning in a royal motorcade of over 400 vehicles, pay respects at the samadhi of Chhatrapati Sambhaji Maharaj and then reach Aurangabad, where he will spend the night before the Big Rally day.

Figuring on the world tourism map with several major historical monuments like the Ajanta-Ellora Caves, Aurangabad has a substantial Muslim population and is cur-

rently represented in Lok Sabha by All India Majlis-E-Ittehadul Muslimeen's Syed Imtiaz Jaleel.

With Ramzan at the fag-end and Raj spearheading his anti-loudspeakers campaign on mosques with a deadline to yank them off by May 3, the Maharashtra government has geared itself to ensure the MNS rally passes off without untoward incidents.

Raj has also plans to visit Ayodhya and pray at Lord Ram Temple there on June 5. On Thursday, he lavished praise on Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath for dismantling around 11,000 loudspeakers from different places of worship there.

After the May 1 rally got conditional permission, 2,000 police personnel and other forces, CCTVs, dog squads, metal detectors, drone surveillance, etc. shall be on high alert at the sprawling S.M. Ground here. Sena's Raut, ex-MP from Aurangabad Chandrakant Khaire, NCP's Deputy CM Ajit Pawar, MP Supriya Sule and Congress leaders have scoffed at the MNS's much-hyped event, saying there are bigger problems confronting the state and the nation.

In the past, the MVA leaders have openly sniggered at how the mercurial and maverick Raj got scared by "just one Enforcement Directorate notice" (August 2019), or the frequent changes in his hand that relegated the MNS to the state's political footpath for a large part of its 18-year existence.

MUMBAI SUBURBAN AC TRAIN TICKET RATES SLASHED BY 50%

In a major move, Union Minister of State for Railways Raosaheb Danve-Patil announced a 50 per cent reduction in the commuter ticket rates for suburban air-conditioned trains services, here on Friday.



Mumbai: In a major move, Union Minister of State for Railways Raosaheb Danve-Patil announced a 50 per cent reduction in the commuter ticket rates for suburban air-conditioned trains services, here on Friday.

He made the announcement during a function at the Central Railway's Byculla Station.

The move to slash the ticket rates is expected to make air-conditioned local train travel more popular among the Mumbai commuters, ahead of the upcoming BrihanMumbai Municipal Corporation elections.

During a recent survey, the railways said that 98 per cent of the commuters found the AC train tickets rates too steep and 95 per cent wanted more AC trains to be run on the suburban sections.

Bharatiya Janata Party Leader of Opposition Devendra Fadnis welcomed the decision and said it would benefit Mumbai's 85 lakh daily commuters -- who use local trains to commute long distances between Mumbai, Thane, Palghar and Raigad.

Amid loudspeaker row, Maha Cong in-charge meets Sonia

Amid the loudspeaker row and the controversy over 'Hanuman Chalisa' recitation, Maharashtra in-charge of the Congress, H.K. Patil met Sonia Gandhi on Friday and briefed her about the situation in the state where the Congress is a part of the MVA



where the Congress is a part of the MVA government.

Sources said that the issue of the appointment to the Maharashtra Assembly Speaker's post also came up during the meeting. After the Assembly elections of 2019, Nana Patole of the Congress was elected Speaker of the House. But the post fell vacant in February 2021, after Patole resigned and was subsequently appointed president of the state Congress. Patole's resignation had angered the Shiv Sena and NCP, allies of the Congress in the MVA, as they had not been consulted about the

move. Since then the matter has not been resolved.

The state is also witnessing a lot of activity with regards to the loudspeaker and the 'Hanuman Chalisa' issue. Raj Thackeray had recently given an ultimatum to the Maharashtra government to remove loudspeakers from religious places, especially mosques, in the state by May 3. Amravati MP Navneet Rana and her MLA husband Ravi Rana were arrested last week after they gave a call to chant Hanuman Chalisa outside Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray's private residence 'Matoshree' here. Patil met Sonia Gandhi as the Congress is taking feedback ahead of the 'Chintan Shivir' and in Maharashtra the party has just won a bypoll in Kolhapur and is elated over the results.

NEARLY 5,000 EV CHARGING POINTS TO BE INSTALLED ACROSS MAHARASHTRA

Mumbai: Soon, Tata Power will install 5,000 new EV charging points across the state to boost EV adoption in Maharashtra.

Tata Power Limited inked a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the National Real Estate Development Council (NAREDCO) in the presence of Aditya Thackeray, Minister of Tourism & Environment on April 28, 2022. Tata Power will provide a comprehensive EV charging solution for member developers of NAREDCO. The new pack will include the installation, maintenance and upgrade of the chargers. As per the company press release, the chargers will be made available as public or semi-public charging stations based on the nature of the premises.

'We both sell hopes...': Aditya Thackeray on politician-builder nexus in Maharashtra

MAHARASHTRA CONGRESS MINISTERS TO MEET TO DISCUSS POLITICAL SITUATION AMID LOUDSPEAKER ROW

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Maharashtra Minister Aditya Thackeray on Thursday said that there is a politician-builder nexus but it should be seen positively. He said his government in Maharashtra has been able to reduce stamp duty and premiums because of this nexus. "Politicians and developers sell common things. We both sell hopes and dreams," he was quoted as saying by ANI.

Speaking at the Real Estate Forum of the National Real Estate Development Council (NAREDCO), Thackeray said that when something goes wrong, the



media blames the builder-politician nexus. But together, he added, the government has revived the real estate industry. He said reducing stamp duty and development premiums has revived the real estate. "We invite you to work with the government. Politicians and developers sell common things. We

both sell hopes and dreams. The basic hope of people is to have their own house," he said. The minister also talked about the Coastal Regulation Zone (CRZ) clearances for projects and said that he was aiming to digitalise the process so that builders don't have to line up outside a minister's office.

He asked developers to build a better city. He told the builders that when they are constructing a building, they are building the identity of a city. While making a building, he said, builders should think about how the city will look in the next 50 years. "When we go to foreign countries, we see their civic amenities and architecture. We should imagine how India will look at 100," he said.

The minister also touched upon Prime Minister Narendra Modi's request to reduce VAT on petrol and diesel. He said his government was waiting for GST disbursement from the Centre as it's its constitutional right. "Once we receive that money, we can think of reducing VAT," he said.

Pune NGO to PM: Donate discarded loudspeakers for 'distance education' in J&K

In a unique initiative, an NGO has appealed to Prime Minister Narendra Modi to donate all the loudspeakers taken off mosques and other religious places for enabling 'distance education' in far-flung schools and junior colleges in the Union Territories of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh, or other border states.



from many religious places in that state, the Pune-based 'Sarhad' has written to the Prime Minister on the issue. Sarhad Founder-President Sanjay Nahar said that thousands of these public address systems have been removed and may be rendered useless, to finally end up in the 'kabadi' (scrap) shops.

However, in Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh, there are hundreds of schools and even some junior colleges which are situated long distances apart, 5-7-10 kms or even more in some remote forested or mountainous areas. "Through Sarhad initiative 'Ghar Ghar School, Har Ghar School', along with Vande Mataram Sanghatana (VMS), we are finalis-

ing a plan to recycle these discarded loudspeakers for such schools and junior colleges, help 'connect' them, amplify the teachers' classes/lectures to benefit them all, clear the students' doubts, solve problems, etc.," an excited Nahar told IANS. These could also be deployed for certain other common initiatives like relaying the National Anthem daily, morning prayers/pledges or conduct competitions on loudspeakers so all can take part irrespective of the long and tiresome distances involved, he added. Besides, if a particular teacher is on leave or absent, the students can be 'linked' to some other nearby schools to relay the same period to ensure they don't miss out on the days' course education or lag in the syllabus, and relay common instructions during exams simultaneously, saving time and efforts, said VMS President Vaibhav Wagh. VMS' Working President Sachin Jangme said it would be of particular importance during bad weather conditions when many small mountain villages remain practically cut off, but the facility of such 'distance education' would ensure the students feel part of the mainstream and don't miss out on their curriculum.

Maha to redevelop fisherfolks' colony-from where 26/11 terrorists sneaked in

Team Absolute | Mumbai

In a significant announcement, Maharashtra Housing Minister Dr. Jitendra Awhad on Thursday said that the state government would redevelop the sprawling fishermen's colony at Cuffe Parade - from where the 10 heavily armed Pakistani terrorists sneaked into the city and wreaked havoc during the 26/11 Mumbai terror strike.

The area, known as Machchimar Nagar is situated on a prime 21 acres in the posh Cuffe Parade, on the Arabian Sea shores, and the Minister's announcement came at the Real Estate Forum-2022 here. "Out of

these 21 acres, 15 acres are open spaces. The state government plans to involve the Slum Rehabilitation Authority (SRA) to handle the processes and then hand it over to some developer for further redevelopment," said Dr. Awhad. The 10 terrorists had quietly landed in rubber dingies at the porous fishers' colony late in the evening of November 26, 2008, and entered the city virtually unnoticed that cool night.

Then, they fanned out to various key locations like the Chabad House, Hotel Trident, Hotel Taj Mahal, Leopold Cafe, Cama Hospital, Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Terminus, Chowpatty, etc and indulged in bloody mayhem

for the next 60 hours.

Awhad also said that there has been a huge jump in the premium collected by the Maharashtra Housing & Area Development Authority (MHADA) in the past ten years. Compared with a collection of Rs 1,902 crore from 2011-2021, in just one year, 2021-2022, MHADA netted around Rs 1,873 crore as premiums, he said.

Emphasising that the development and beautification of Mumbai is linked with the realty industry, Awhad said that with no open spaces available, all development is possible only through redevelopment on the existing spaces, which benefits all stakeholders.

Who's responsible for Maharashtra power crisis? BJP points to rift in MVA, which blames Centre

BJP HAS ATTRIBUTED LOAD-SHEDDING TO 'INTERNAL ISSUES' BETWEEN COALITION PARTNERS CONGRESS AND NCP. MVA GOVT, HOWEVER, IS POINTING FINGER AT MODI GOVT, AND AN INCREASE IN DEMAND.

Team Absolute | Mumbai

With Maharashtra reeling under the twin effects of a heatwave

and electricity cuts this month, the opposition Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has placed the blame for the power 'crisis' on rifts within the Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA)-led state government.

The BJP has alleged that differences between the Congress, which has the energy portfolio, and NCP, which holds the key to state finances, have resulted in load-shedding and power outages. "The internal issues between the Congress and NCP are the reason why funds are not getting released for the energy department... that's why the (state electricity) company's cash flows have gone for a toss and that's why there is load-shedding," Chandrashekhar Bawankule, who was state power minister in the previous government led by BJP's Devendra Fadnis, claimed earlier this month. He repeat-

ed similar allegations in a press note Wednesday.

While Congress ministers and legislators have complained about not receiving sufficient funds from the NCP-controlled state finance department, the two parties have rejected the BJP's charges, blaming the Centre for a coal shortage instead.

The Maharashtra government had, in 2012, declared the state to be free of load-shedding, except in places where consumers fail to pay their bills regularly.

The Maharashtra State Electricity Distribution Company Limited (MSEDCL) has, however, been resorting to some planned and temporary power outages over the past month, citing the early onset of summer, inadequate coal supply, and a huge jump in the demand for power post the Covid-19 lockdowns.

Maharashtra man Undertakes Inter-State Walk To Sensitize People About Various Issues

JOSHI, WHO COMPLETED HIS SCHOOL EDUCATION IN CHIPLUN TEHSIL, LATER STUDIED AT MODEL ART INSTITUTE IN MUMBAI'S DADAR AND AT BHARATI VIDYAPEETH IN PUNE.

Team Absolute | Pune

A 25-year-old man from coastal Ratnagiri district of Maharashtra has embarked on an over 1,800-km journey on foot across a few states in India to interact with people over issues like farm-



ers' suicide, water scarcity and increasing use of plastic, and to raise public awareness on these topics. Ashutosh Joshi, a resident of Narvan village in Ratnagiri, began his journey on April 10, when Ram Navami was celebrated. His walking expedition, which started from native Narvan beach, will end at Puri in Odisha, covering a distance of 1,850 km. Walking through places including Chiplun (Ratnagiri district),

Koyna, Patan, Umbraj (Satara district), Solapur, Pandharpur (Solapur district), Joshi reached Latur on Thursday morning. He will continue his journey through Nanded, Parbhani, Chandrapur and Gadchiroli districts in the state before proceeding to Odisha. He said that on his way, he has been interacting with people on issues like farmers' suicide, water scarcity, increasing use of plastics, global

warming, among others. "I decided to travel on foot to create public awareness about these issues," he said.

Joshi, who completed his school education in Chiplun tehsil, later studied at Model Art Institute in Mumbai's Dadar and at Bharati Vidyapeeth in Pune. He later went to England and completed his further education in fine arts. After that, he worked in Scotland, Spain and England in the field of photography and maintaining the balance of nature. He said he loves walking and mountaineering and has completed a trek to Nepal's Annapurna Circuit in 17 days. "I practised walking for the last 6 to 7 years and prepared myself for this tour for the last six months after I returned to India from England," Joshi added. During his journey, he meets sarpachans of villages, who organise a meeting of villagers, where he interacts with them on various topics.



EDITOR'S SPECS

Uttarakhand winners have their weight

The winners in the recent Uttarakhand state assembly elections have won with an average of 31 per cent of the total registered voters. This implies that the winners represent on an average, 31 per cent of the total electorate. According to an analysis report released by Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR), among the major parties, out of 47 winners of BJP, 36 have won with less than 35 per cent of votes of the total registered voters in the constituency. In the Congress, 12 out of 19 winners and two out of two in BSP have also accomplished a similar feat. Independent winners have won less than 35 per cent of votes of the total registered voters in the constituency. Five winners in Uttarakhand have won with the margin of victory of less than 1,000 votes while four winners have won with more than 25 per cent margin of victory. Ten out of 19 winners with declared criminal cases have won against a runner up with a clean background. Among these 10 winners, 4 winners have won with more than 10 per cent margin of victory. Among these, Daleep Singh Rawat (BJP) from Lansdowne constituency won with 24 per cent margin of victory. Eleven out of 58 crorepati winners have won against non-crorepati runners up. Among these 11 winners, 6 winners have won with more than 10 per cent margin of victory. Among the 70 winners, eight are women and all of them won with 35 per cent and above of vote share in their constituencies. Among the women winners, Savita Kapoor (BJP) from Dehradun Cantt. Constituency has won with the highest vote share of 59.2 per cent in her constituency. Out of total 35 re-elected winners, none have won with less than 35 per cent vote share in their respective constituencies.

THIS YEAR'S AMARNATH YATRA WILL BE A BLOCKBUSTER EVENT

After two years of postponement, the Amarnathji Yatra is expected to be the party of the year in the lap of the Himalayas. The Jammu and Kashmir administration is anticipating six to eight lakh pilgrims, who will trek through the Himalayas in south Kashmir to catch a glimpse of the momentary stay of Lord Shiva in the form of an ice Lingam. J&K Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha is personally supervising all the Yatra arrangements. The pilgrimage will begin on June 30 and continue for 43 days till August 11, the day of Raksha Bandhan, as per tradition. This year it will be a historic pilgrimage with top-notch facilities in place -- safe drinking water, lodging, sanitation, skywalks, spiritual theme parks -- and the administration is ready for all challenges. Jammu and Kashmir has undergone an unprecedented transformation in just the last 1.5 years. With the help of the leadership at the Centre and the enterprising youth of the state, JKUT has signed investment proposals worth Rs 52,088 crore in one year. In the past six months, 80 lakh tourists visited the Valley, a number that suggests people have started feeling secure and welcome in the Union Territory. Rather than "negotiating" for peace, the UT administration has uprooted the very ecosystem of terrorism. This historic Yatra is the best representation of the composite culture of Kashmir that extremists do not want to popularise in the media. Every year the pilgrimage is welcomed with open arms in the Valley and the Kashmiris have always had their doors and hearts open towards the travellers. Their generosity and hospitality are well-known. With a five-tier security cover in

place, recently upgraded roads, 75 new tourist destinations, and renovation of religious and historic structures in Kashmir, the UT administration is hoping to retain at least half of the Yatris for an extra 3-4 days' stay in the Valley. The pilgrimage will give people across the nation a chance to experience heaven in its best phase in three decades. The Naya Kashmir has much to offer and an organic narrative from the Yatris will help spread the word to the rest of the country. Many new Yatri Niwas are being raised -- some temporary arrangements and some with hotel infrastructure. Environmental welfare is also a major priority of the administration this year, so cleanliness and waste disposal will take the front seat. To publicise the Yatra to a larger audience across India, the UT administration is distributing short films showcasing the journey to Shiva-Parvati's abode paired with a heavenly, fulfilling holiday in Kashmir, the land of saints and peers. This year the pilgrim vehicles will have RFID-based (Radio Frequency Identification) tracking and surveillance which will note each person's movement on the route. During registration, all pilgrims will receive a wristband fitted with microchips connected to satellite towers. This is the first time that pilgrims will be on such close watch; the government wants to rubbish the rumours about the Yatra being unsafe and dangerous. The registration for the Yatra began two weeks back at the designated 566 bank branches across the districts and on the online website of the Shri Amarnathji Shrine Board (SASB). The journey will take two courses - the traditional 48-km from Nunwan to the cave shrine from Pahalgam in south Kashmir's



Anantnag, and the more challenging 14-km Baltal route in the Ganderbal district in central Kashmir. Eight base hospitals have been set up on the Baltal route and 20 on the Pahalgam route, along with medical camps on the way. The insurance cover has been increased from Rs 3 lakh to Rs 5 lakh. The Shrine Board will also provide free-of-cost battery car service for pilgrims on the 2.75 km-long Baltal-Domel stretch. The National Disaster Response Force (NDRS) and the State Disaster Response Force (SDRF) are undergoing specialised training to be a part of the Mountain Rescue Teams (MRTs) of JK Police. They will be deployed at a few difficult terrains on the Yatra routes. CRPF companies will be deployed to ensure incident-free pilgrimage. Other companies will include BSF, ITBP, Sahasra Seema Bal (SSB), CISF, and of course the

Indian Army. Media units will be set up along the tracks to deliver advisories to the tourists and motivate them to complete the journey with a sense of security by amplifying the success stories of the UT administration in terms of development works. The J&K Director General of Police has reviewed additional security measures being taken along the Jammu-Srinagar National Highway. He has taken stock of all Yatri Niwas stays and transit camps enroute the National Highway. Checkpoint functioning has been enhanced and traffic control has been given special impetus so it does not interfere with general public's convenience. The newly-built Navvug Tunnel connecting Banihal in Jammu with Qazigund in south Kashmir is under review for

security measures. On Wednesday, the UT administration re-constituted 21 tourism development authorities keeping in view the Yatra and tourist footfalls during the summer season. Valley dwellers have converted their homes into homestays with the help of the Indian Army to boost tourism and economy. In the wake of spiritual tourism in the country, the Department of Tourism has started organising cultural events during major festivals. With the surrection of the Pracheen Pandava Gufa, Parshuram Temple, Raghunath Temple, Sheetal Nath Temple, Ziyarat of Hazrat Sheikh Dawood etc., the administration is hopeful to attract tourists and increase Indians' confidence in the Valley.

international

TO END POLITICAL IMPASSE, SL PRESIDENT AGREES TO INTERIM GOVT WITHOUT BROTHER AS PM

Colombo | Agencies

To end the current political deadlock, Sri Lankan President Gotabaya Rajapaksa has agreed to form an interim, all-party government with a fresh cabinet, dropping his elder brother Mahinda Rajapaksa as Prime Minister, former President Maithripala Sirisena announced on Friday. Sirisena, who met President Rajapaksa, along with representatives of 11 political parties who supported Rajapaksa to come to power but decided to stand independent following the recent political crisis, informed the media of the development. The 11 parties which had insisted on removing PM Mahinda Rajapaksa and the cabinet as a solution to the ongoing political impasse, had also demanded that Friday's meeting could only be with President Gotabaya Rajapaksa



but not with anyone else.

According to Sirisena, appointment of a new PM and the Cabinet of the interim government is to be done by the national Assembly consisting of the leaders of all political parties. "President Gotabaya Rajapaksa is ready to form an interim government, if all the political parties represented in Parliament agree to do so," he said. At Friday's discussion, the

President has also agreed to establish a National Council, which will decide on the appointment of a Prime Minister, Cabinet of Ministers, Inspector General of Police, Attorney General, and the Ministry Secretaries. The interim cabinet of ministers would be limited to 15 or 20, Sirisena told media. However, neither President Gotabaya Rajapaksa nor PM

Mahinda Rajapaksa have officially announced the outcome of the meeting or what their positions are. Referring to Gotabaya Rajapaksa's invitation to political parties for a discussion to form an interim government, PM Mahinda Rajapaksa on Thursday said that his brother would never ask him to step down and insisted that whatever government would be formed, would be under his leadership. Facing the worst-ever economic crisis in its history, the Indian Ocean island nation is suffering long hours of daily power outages, seeing long queues for gas and fuel and many essential items, including food and medicine have gone out of stock. With soaring inflation and existing dollar reserves limited to \$1 billion, the country's Central bank announced a default of external debt. Sri Lanka is facing a massive external debt of around \$51 billion with \$7 billion due in 2022.

UKRAINE SEEKS TO SEIZE RUSSIA'S ASSETS FOR POST-WAR RECOVERY: PM

Kiev: Ukrainian Prime Minister Denys Shmyhal said his country is willing to seize Russian assets to finance Kiev's post-war recovery. "The funds of the Russian government and oligarchs will be one of the main sources for filling the Fund for the Reconstruction of our country," Shmyhal wrote on Telegram. Ukraine is in talks with G7 countries over the seizure of Russia's assets, Shmyhal said, adding that Canada has already prepared legislation for such actions, reports Xinhua news agency. Earlier, Shmyhal said that his cabinet has set up a recovery fund for Ukraine's long-term reconstruction and estimated that the country's full-scale recovery will cost around \$600 billion. Russia has over \$600 billion worth of foreign currency reserves held in dollars, gold and other currencies, with about half of them believed to be frozen by the restrictions imposed by Western governments on its central bank. The head of Russia's central bank has said it was preparing to take legal action to challenge the freeze.

Mexican President proposes overhaul of electoral system



Mexico City | Agencies

Mexican President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador said he plans to submit a bill to Congress to overhaul the country's electoral system. The proposed reforms include replacing the autonomous National Electoral Institute, the body that organises polls, eliminating proportional representation in Congress, and reducing the cost of up to 24 billion pesos (\$1.2 billion), reports Xinhua news agency.

The Constitutional Reform on Electoral Matters will create the National Institute for Elections and Consultations, and federalise elections by scrapping the regulatory bodies currently in charge of organising elections in each state, the President told reporters here. The reforms will end "electoral fraud" and guarantee "the full application of democracy", said Lopez Obrador. According to the proposal, the number of legislative seats in the lower house will be reduced from 500 to 300, and the number of Senate seats will be cut from 128 to 96. Also, the method of appointing deputies, senators and city councillors will be changed from indirect proportional representation to direct voting. Since taking office in December 2018, Lopez Obrador has spearheaded reforms in several sectors, including energy.

ARGENTINE PREZ UPBEAT ABOUT POST-COVID ECONOMIC GROWTH, JOB RECOVERY



Buenos Aires | Agencies

Argentine President Alberto Fernandez expressed confidence in his country's economic prospects after the Covid-19 pandemic, saying economic growth is very strong, employment recovery is real and consumption is

growing. "We have a very well-defined economic program, with production as one of our targets, that is working well because the economy continues to grow, production continues to rise, and installed capacity utilization continues to increase," the President said in a speech at the closing

ceremony of the annual assembly of the Argentine Confederation of Medium-Sized Companies. Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) "are a major driving force in the Argentine economy and have a great opportunity to grow more if we give them the attention they deserve", Xinhua news agency quoted Fernandez as saying. If SMEs improve their performance, employment will increase, and "Argentina will be in a better position for future development", he added. Argentina's gross domestic product (GDP) increased 10.3 per cent in 2021, after registering a growth of 8.6 per cent in the fourth quarter of that year, according to the National Institute of Statistics and Censuses.

TALIBAN FACE RISING ARMED RESISTANCE FROM FORMER GOVT FORCES

Kabul | Agencies

Factions of the fallen Afghan republic are claiming attacks on the Taliban in many provinces in what seems to be an uncoordinated spring offensive, media reports said. Those groups are tapping into vast reserves of potential guerrilla fighters from among the hundreds of thousands of Western-trained security forces that served the former government but lost their jobs after the Taliban takeover of Afghanistan in August last year, RFE/RL reported. Former leaders of the West-backed republic hope the rebellion will eventually turn into a national uprising against what they view as Taliban rule that has repressed women and alien-



ated ethnic and religious minorities. They are also banking on attracting help from Afghanistan's weary neighbours and global powers concerned by the return of terrorist groups to the country, which is already reeling from rising violence by the radical Islamic State-

Khorasan (IS-K). The Taliban, however, consider the resistance small and insignificant. "There is nothing that has improved since the Taliban seized power," said a former official of the Afghan Foreign Ministry close to the emerging resistance, requesting anonymity because of secu-

city fears. "I am sure we will see a much bigger uprising against the Taliban," he added, RFE/RL reported. One of the most visible anti-Taliban groups is the National Resistance Front led by Ahmad Masud, son of Northern Alliance leader Ahmad Shah Masud who successfully prevented the Taliban from overrunning Afghanistan until he was killed by Al-Qaeda assassins two days before the September 11 terrorist attacks of 2001, the report said. Former Vice President Amrullah Saleh, who like Masud hails from the northern province of Panjshir, is a close ally. The two left Panjshir in September last year, just weeks after the Taliban takeover of Kabul

the previous month. But their supporters are still launching sporadic attacks against the Taliban in remote Panjshir valleys. Supporters of former Interior Minister Masud Andrai have offered the most formidable resistance with somewhat regular attacks on the Taliban in Andrab, a high-altitude valley in the northern province of Baghlan. One of the most significant attacks was in the northern city of Mazar-e-Sharif last week when supporters of former warlord Atta Mohammad Noor clashed with the Taliban. His nephew, Sohail Zmarai, was reportedly killed in an intense firefight that was acknowledged by the Taliban, RFE/RL reported.



SANJEEVANI 108 AMBULANCE PROVES TO BE SANJEEVANI IN SAVING LIVES: CM

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan said that Sanjeevani 108 Ambulance actually works like Sanjeevani. A sick, injured person or an accident victim can be saved if timely treatment is given to the hospital. Sanjeevani 108 Ambulance is proving to be a Sanjeevani by saving lives of people. The launching of the operation of new ambulances today is actually a campaign to save lives. Chief Minister Shri Chouhan was addressing the dedication programme of 108 Sanjeevani ambulance and Janani Express in Integrated Referral Transport System for expansion of emergency ambulance services at Lal Parade Ground Bhopal.

Chouhan inaugurated the programme by lighting the lamp. Shri Chouhan also launched the 'MP 108 Sanjeevani' app with a single click. A short film on ambulance service was screened at the event. Chouhan flagged off 2052 ambulances for different districts and handed over the keys of ambulance to drivers Ram Pandey, Shivam Kushwaha and Sachin Agarwal.

Chouhan said that CT scan machines have started functioning in 38 district hospitals of the state. The campaign for the appointment of doctors is going on in the state. Recently 374 doctors have been appointed. He called upon the doctors to serve in rural areas. He said that under the Mukhya Mantri Medhavi Vidyarthi Yojana, financial assistance is being provided by the state government to the stu-



dents for medical studies. These students will have to serve in rural areas for three years. Chouhan said that free dialysis facility is being provided through 196 dialysis machines in the state. Digital X-ray facility has been provided in district hospitals and civil hospitals. By the coming year, the facility of digital X-ray will also be made available at the primary health center level.

Chief Minister said that there can be no greater virtue than saving lives of people. Chouhan while expressing gratitude to Prime

Minister Narendra Modi said that he initiated the Ayushman Yojana, through which treatment up to Rs. 5 lakh can be provided free of cost in government and private hospitals. Chouhan said that the Madhya Pradesh government is constantly working on improving the health sector. It is our endeavour that no poor and low class person of the state should remain without treatment. The state government is committed to give new life to patients and make the state disease free. The work of doctors, nurses, paramedical staff associated

with health services is not only a job, they are like God for patients and their families.

Chouhan said that health camps were organized in 313 development blocks of the state. After the summer season, two-day health camps will be organized in all the districts and the patients suffering from serious diseases will be examined. Free treatment will also be provided for patients. Chouhan said that free of cost facility of pathology is being provided in district hospitals. ICU wards have been started in all district hospitals. Children's wards have also been made in each district hospital. The budget of the health department has been increased by 29 percent this year. Mukhya Mantri Sanjeevani clinics will be started for every 25 thousand population. Chief Minister Shri Chouhan said that the target is to make the state TB free by 2025 and malaria free by 2030.

Public Health and Family Welfare Minister Dr. Prabhuram Choudhary said that under the guidance of Chief Minister Chouhan, changes were made in the ambulance service and their functioning. Madhya Pradesh has come out of the category of BIMARU state due to the efforts of the Chief Minister. The public-participation model of the state has become exemplary in the country. Medical Education Minister Vishwas Sarang said that today is a historic day for the state. Keeping the health services updated is the top priority of a welfare state. The expansion of ambulance services will also help in providing health facilities to the people living in remote areas.

CM EXTENDS BEST WISHES TO THE STUDENTS OF CLASS 10TH AND 12TH

- ▶ Students should not worry about being unsuccessful
- ▶ Ruk Jana Nahi Yojana Is Being Conducted In the State



Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan while addressing the students of the state has said that the results of classes 10th and 12th are going to be declared today. Chouhan said that many congratulations to the students who will be successful, but those students who were unsuccessful should also not worry. Despite the circumstances of Covid-19, the students have worked hard for good results in the examination. But sometimes success and failure, passing or not passing depends on many circumstances. So even if you were unsuccessful, don't get disheartened, don't get discouraged. Chief Minister said that "Ruk Jana Nahi Yojana" is now in operation. After making preparation, you can give the exam again this year. Your year will also not be wasted, stay equally poised in both success and failure. If you don't get success then try better for the next time. While congratulating and extending best wishes to the students, Chouhan said that there is no need to worry about being unsuccessful. Do not be disappointed, you have to work hard for future success. He said this in a message issued to the media at the residence office.

Mission Madhya Pradesh: BJP Brainstorms To Regain Lost Assembly Seats

The BJP has set itself an ambitious target to increase its vote share by 10 per cent -- taking it from the 41 per cent in the last election to 51 per cent.

Team Absolute | Bhopal

BJP has started a detailed strategy session for next year's assembly elections in Madhya Pradesh, with an eye to gaining back the seats it lost to the Congress in 2018.

The party has set itself an ambitious target to increase its vote share by 10 per cent -- taking it from the 41 per cent in the last election to 51 per cent. The Congress won the 2018 election with 114 of the state's 230 seats, wresting the state from the BJP after a decade. The BJP got 109 seats. But two years later, the BJP came to power when the Kamal Nath government collapsed as Jyotiraditya Scindia crossed over from the Congress to BJP with 22 loyalist MLAs.

Most of the Congress gains in 2018 had been on the seats dominated by the Scheduled Castes and Tribes -- seats the BJP has vowed to get back. The state has a chunk of Scheduled Castes and Tribes -- around 37 per cent -- and of the 82 reserved seats for the Scheduled Castes and Tribes

in the state, the BJP could win only 33 in 2018. Ground-level feedback gleaned by the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh -- the BJP's ideological mentor -- indicates that a lot of work will be required to bring back the votes of the Scheduled Castes and Tribes. At a meeting between the senior BJP and the RSS leaders today to discuss the roadmap for Madhya Pradesh, it was decided that the party should reach out to the Scheduled Castes and Tribes.

The four-hour meet in Delhi was attended by BJP President JP Nadda, Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan, state BJP president VD Sharma, General Secretary Organisation BL Santosh, party in-charge for Madhya Pradesh Murlidhar Rao, national general secretary Kailash Vijayvargiya, Union minister Narendra Singh Tomar, state minister Narottam Mishra and senior leaders from the RSS.

A similar exercise has been conducted for Chhattisgarh and Rajasthan -- the two other states the BJP lost to the Congress that year.

Convicted man cannot continue as notary: MP High Court

Team Absolute | Bhopal

The Madhya Pradesh High Court observed that a man who has been convicted, would not be entitled to continue as a Notary.

The Division Bench of Chief Justice Ravi Malimath and Justice Purushaindra Kumar Kaurav dismissed the Petition challenging the order dated 03.09.2021 passed by the state (Department of Law) whereby, his Notary certificate has been cancelled. The petitioner has also sought for quashing of the order dated 11.09.2021 passed by the Administrative officer of Session Judge, Tikamgarh intimating him that his Notary certificate has been permanently cancelled and his name has been removed from Notary register.

The case of the petitioner is that he was granted a Notary certificate from the concerned authority. The said certificate is being granted to him ever since the year 1994. The latest certificate was granted vide order dated 11.12.2015 which was said to expire on 15.12.2020. Therefore, the petitioner on 04.06.2020 applied to the concerned District & Sessions Judge for renewal. Thereafter, in the month of August, 2020, the application was sent to the Law and Legislative Department, Madhya Pradesh, Bhopal.

However, by the impugned orders his Notary certificate has been cancelled on

the ground that the petitioner has been convicted for the offence punishable under Sections 420 and 471 of the IPC and sentenced to undergo imprisonment with fine as mentioned in the judgment of conviction and order of sentence dated 07.06.2019 passed by the Second Additional Sessions Judge, Tikamgarh.

Counsel for the petitioner contended that against the judgment passed by the trial Court, the petitioner has preferred an appeal before the High Court. The jail sentence was already suspended by the Trial Court till 07.07.2019 and in appeal, the High Court vide order dated 29.08.2019 has enlarged the petitioner on bail during pendency of the appeal. Therefore, pending consideration of the appeal, the impugned order may be set aside and he may be permitted to continue as a Notary.

However, on hearing the counsels, the Court do not find any merit in the petition.

It is observed by the Court that the license has been withdrawn in view of the conviction that the petitioner has suffered in a court of law. Therefore, a man who has been convicted, would not be entitled to continue as a Notary. Whether the appeal is allowed or not is of no consequence so far as renewal is concerned. Hence, the Bench find no good ground to entertain the petition. Accordingly, the writ petition is dismissed.



CM PLANTED PEEPAL AND SAPTAPARNI SAPLINGS

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan planted Peepal and Saptaparni saplings in the Smart City Garden. Members of Vardhman Green Park Colony Jan-Kalyan Vikas Samiti, SarvshriRaghunandan Sharma, Hiralal Thakur, LalchandBharke, Hemendra Malviya and A Khan also planted saplings.

The 100 saplings planted by the Samiti along with their upkeep are lush and green according to the name of the colony that is "Green Park." There is also a water harvesting system in the colony. Continuous cleanliness

drive is conducted in the colony premises. From time to time, awareness camps are organised and information is given about the programmes of public interest being run by the administration.

Peepal planted today is a shady tree. It is also called Akshaya tree. It purifies the environment. It has religious and Ayurvedic significance. Peepal tree releases oxygen day and night, which is important for the environment. Saptaparni is an evergreen medicinal tree, which has great importance in Ayurveda. It is used in the manufacture of various medicines.

PHD COLLOQUIUM-2022

Participate in development by doing better research

PH.D. SCHOLARS PRESENT RESEARCH PAPERS IN DISCUSSION HELD IN ACADEMY OF ADMINISTRATION

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Agricultural scientists and researchers held a discussion in the Ph.D. Colloquium organized at Noronha Academy of Administration, Atal Bihari Bajpai Institute of Good Governance and Policy Analysis (AGPA). A discussion was held on agriculture and rural development in the session in which 11 Ph.D. scholars presented their research papers.

Discussion was held on increasing production in agricultural sector, which is the basis of rural economy and reduce costs at Academy of Administration. In the session, agricultural scientists and research scholars also discussed the use of latest technologies through research in the economic empowerment of farmers. Presiding over the session, Director of Jawaharlal Nehru Agricultural University, Jabalpur, SBNahatkar asked the researchers to participate in the development of Madhya Pradesh through research. He told to conduct research in a scientific way and tell what we should do to make agriculture more profitable? He said that a comparative study of the techniques adopted in different fields of agriculture should be done.

He told to study the effective measures to be taken for necessary changes to be made in the methods to be adopted. Prepare a research paper by studying the changes and effects of welfare schemes run by the government in the lives of farmers.

Research work will prove to be an effective step in the changes in social life, rural development and development of agriculture. In the discussions held in the Academy, agricultural scientists hoped that the research work done by Ph.D scholars will prove beneficial in making farmers financially empowered and prosperous by improving agriculture.

Among those who shared their research related information in the discussion were M Lakshmi Durga, Pradeep Kumar Yadav, Babita Bobby Chauhan, Raju Singh Bhande, ShivkumarRakkasagi, Namita Aahake, Ganesh Malgaya, Bharti Parmar, Hemlata Yadav and Nirmala Jamra.

MoU Signed Between AGPA, Centre for Innovations in Public System and Academy of Administration

A tri-partite MoU was signed on the second day of Ph. D. Colloquium-2022 organised by Atal Bihari Vajpayee Institute of Good Governance and Policy Analysis (AGPA) between AGPA, Centre for Innovations in Public Systems established at Administrative Staff College of India, Hyderabad and RCVP

Noronha Academy of Administration and Management Bhopal. The objective of the MoU is to identify and promote innovations in public systems, capacity building through training programmes, seminars and serve as a platform to share and disseminate knowledge of new enterprises and best practices in governance. In the Combined Session of the Colloquium, the CEO of the Institute, Smt. G.B. Rashmi presented the report of the sessions held on the first day. She said that I am sure that it would have proved very useful for Ph. D. scholars.

Director Center for Innovations in Public System C.Achalender Reddy said that the country is rich in biodiversity, it should be used positively. He stressed on convergence and meaningful use of digital technology. Reddy informed that projects like "Make in India" and "Start-up India" have been started to promote start-ups. "Start-up Ranking Framework-2020" has been created for the ranking of start-ups. Development, efficiency and delivery are keys to innovation. Sri Reddy said that make efforts to save the nature and become "needy not greedy."

Vice Chancellor of Vikram University Ujjain Prof. Akhilesh Kumar Pandey said that tribal culture has to be protected. Their knowledge of water conservation and Ayurvedic medicines will have to be brought before everyone. Efforts have to be made together for the conservation and promotion of medicines. He said that due to global warming, glaciers are melting, which is a big warning for human life. Pandey said that during urbanization it is necessary to keep the eco-system balanced. He stressed on adopting traditional agriculture and green technology.

At the conclusion of the Ph. D. Colloquium, AGPA CEO Rashmi, ACEO Lokesh Sharma, Reddy, Prof. Pandey and other guests rewarded Ph. D. scholars on the basis of excellence in the synopsis presented by them in various sessions. Nakshatra Chatterjee in theme Urbanisation, Mattaparthi Lakshmi Durga in Agriculture and Rural Development, Shivam Singh in Natural Resources and Management, Meenakshi Pal Baghel in Health and Ayush, Amitabh Shukla in Trade Industries and Financial Inclusion, Shobha Elizabeth in Tribal Development, Pratiti Roy in Biodiversity and Traditional Knowledge System and Muzamil Khan in Technical Category were awarded with trophy and certificate. Second and third prizes were also distributed in these categories.



RESEARCH IS REQUIRED TO DO JUSTICE TO TEACHING - PROFESSOR SISODIA

Director Madhya Pradesh Institute of Social Science Research Yatindra Singh Sisodia has said that research is necessary to do justice to teaching. He said that study, teaching and research are complementary to each other. It is very important to develop research eco system and research culture. Sisodia was addressing the research students on the topic of Research Methodology on the second day of Ph. D. Colloquium organised by Atal Bihari Vajpayee Institute of Good Governance and Policy Analysis.

Sisodia said that institutions have to take responsibility for ensuring our educational standards. Students and faculty should present their research at the highest level. He said that the most important point for doing research is that we should have questions, willingness to know something new and should be ready to create new ideas. Sisodia said that to move ahead in research, keep yourself mentally free. He said that no top approach can lead to revival of research. Starting from the bottom up approach will give a new direction and impetus to creative research.

Sisodia said that there are unlimited possibilities for research in Madhya Pradesh. The amount of work that has been done on this so far is very little. There is now a need to come out of the traditional way to explore those possibilities. Researchers need to have the understanding to explain, describe and understand the assessment of their research. It is also necessary to have questions and inquiries in your mind, to be aware of what is happening around us. He said that after Covid, we have to face many difficulties like mental, physical, financial. The research scholars should do research on these issues positive way and give their report to the government. Sisodia said that knowledge of communication with quality and skill, information technology, organisational skills and patience are the most important qualities for good research. Research proposal prepared uncaringly causes harm in the future. Research cannot be given momentum without intellectual power. He said how we communicate is important. Good research requires knowledge of limitations along with action-plan feasibility and consistency.

IMPORTANCE OF YOGA IN HEALTH MANAGEMENT

Research students presented research papers on the topic "Health Management and Health Technology" on the second day of Ph. D. Colloquium-2022 organised by Atal Bihari Vajpayee Institute of Good Governance and Policy Analysis. The chairperson of the session was Director BMHRC Dr. Prabha Desikan, Deputy Chairperson Ravindra Kumar NIRTH Jabalpur, Resource Person Microbiologist Soumya Dhawan and MANIT Bhopal's Associate Professor Usha Chouhan guided the research students. Shweta Nema and Kiran Purohit presented research papers on the topic of Yoga in Health Management. Shweta Nema presented the research paper on "Prevention and Promotive Health Care Concepts in Ayurveda Yoga and Buddhism" and Kiran Purohit on "Yogic Management of Examination Stress among Medical and Engineering Aspirants." Pooja Mehta told in the research paper about the impact of corona epidemic on healthcare workers. Vikram Poonia presented research paper on "Molecular Detection and Characterization of Babesia Species in Canine," Anushree Tiwari on "Pathology and Molecular Characterization of Infectious Bronchitis Virus from Poultry", Arpit Maheshwari on "Computational Investigations of Dysmorphic Disorder Based on Various Modalities" and R Karim presented the paper on "Synthesis Characterization and Application of Lead Free Heavy Metal Oxide Based Glass Systems."



MEGAN FOX: WAS AHEAD OF #METOO, 'GOT RIDICULED' FOR CALLING OUT HOLLYWOOD MISOGYNY

Los Angeles | Agencies

Actress Megan Fox spoke candidly about the "ridicule" she endured after speaking out against Hollywood misogyny early in her career.

The actor, who was speaking to Glamour UK, often spoke out about being objectified on Michael Bay sets, including one infamous 'Jimmy Kimmel Live' interview where she called out how creepy it was to have to dance in a bikini under a waterfall at age 15 while shooting a small part in 'Bad Boys II', reports 'Variety'.

Fox said bringing attention to Hollywood misogyny long before the #MeToo movement only made her a bigger punchline.

"I think that I was ahead of the #MeToo movement by almost a decade," Fox said.

"I was always speaking out against some of the abusive, misogynistic, patriarchal things that were going on in Hollywood back in 2008 and 2009, way before people were ready to embrace that or tolerate it. And I actually got ridiculed for doing it. I think people just have had time to review that, in retrospect."

Even when Fox tried to take on more feminist work, such as her role in Karyn Kusama's cult classic horror movie 'Jennifer's Body', she was still met with bad press and reviews that called her character "shallow."

"I've never felt completely included in the feminist community and I do still think that it's tricky in an awful way," Fox said.

"Whatever I provoke in them is not something that they can digest very well. And so that comes back on me, as they reject me for those reasons. And I just don't think that I was a very sympathetic victim."

'Top Gun: Maverick' blows CinemaCon away

Los Angeles | Agencies

Tom Cruise-starrer 'Top Gun: Maverick' blasted off at CinemaCon, where Paramount Pictures held the tentpole's first public screening and generated rave first reactions.

Journalists in attendance are hailing the long-awaited 'Top Gun' sequel as "the perfect blockbuster" and "terrific in every conceivable way," reports 'Variety'.

The film will screen at the Cannes Film Festival in May before Paramount releases it in theatres over Memorial Day weekend.

Paramount Pictures president Brian Robbins introduced the CinemaCon screening of the film and said star Tom Cruise has earned his reputation as the most daring actor in Hollywood.

Cruise was not in attendance but did send along a pre-recorded video in which he told the audience: "Please enjoy, and hey, let's try to have a great summer!"

Several moments in the film had the audience cheering, and Paramount executives were thrilled

with the way theatre owners were responding to the movie. Cruise reprises his role of test pilot Captain Pete 'Maverick' Mitchell, who is now put in charge of training a group of younger Top Gun graduates played by the likes of Miles Teller, Glen Powell and more.

Teller stars as Bradley 'Rooster' Bradshaw, a pilot trainee who is the son of Maverick's late best friend Nick 'Goose' Bradshaw. Also starring in the film are Jennifer Connelly, Jon Hamm, Lewis Pullman, Ed Harris and Val Kilmer, the latter of whom reprises his role of Tom

"Iceman" Kazansky from the original movie.

Paramount and Lady Gaga stirred up buzz for 'Top Gun: Maverick' ahead of CinemaCon by confirming the Oscar and Grammy winner wrote an original song for the movie.

The single, titled 'Hold My Hand', will be released May 3.



'John Wick: Chapter 4' first look gets resounding applause

Los Angeles | Agencies

The first look of the Keanu Reeves-starrer, 'John Wick: Chapter 4' was unveiled at the recently-concluded CinemaCon 2022 where it acted as the closing piece to the event which saw a slew of announcements, reports 'Variety'.

Appearing during the Lionsgate presentation at the annual exhibition trade show, Reeves was greeted with lusty applause and chants of "you're the man!" from attendees, as quoted by 'Variety'. The next instalment once again teams Reeves with stuntman-turned-director Chad Stahelski.

Lionsgate has high hopes for 'John Wick: Chapter 4' considering each chapter in the franchise has outgrossed its predecessor.

As per 'Variety', the original 'John Wick' minted \$86 million worldwide in 2014 followed by \$171.5 million for 'John Wick: Chapter 2' in 2017 and \$327.3 million for 'John Wick: Chapter 3 - Parabellum' in 2019.

In the footage screened, Wick is on his perpetual revenge tour - this time taking on a decidedly lone ninja vibe - seen punching a wooden post to the point of his knuckles bleeding as co-star Laurence Fishburne acts as his hype man.

London | Agencies

Actress Rose Leslie said that she won't put 'pressure' on herself to ensure her husband Kit Harington, who went to rehab in 2019, continues to stay sober because she knows it's something he has to continue to deal with himself. Leslie said: "I've learnt a lot about addiction and it's something Kit is forever going to be aware of, but it's on him whether he chooses to drink again."

"No amount of nannying is going to be able to stop him from doing what he decides to do... I don't choose to put that pressure on myself. The responsibility of his behaviour is on him. It's not on me to guard him from it." Leslie and Harington welcomed their son into the world in February 2021 and she praised her former 'Game of Thrones' star for how he stepped up as a parent when she was busy filming 'The Time Traveler's Wife'. She told the new issue of Harper's Bazaar magazine: "He wore the Baby Bjorn loud and proud. And there were many satisfying moments; we had an understanding that, when our son cried in the middle of the night, it was on Kit to go and look after him, as I would have to wake up early to work - it was kind of glorious." Leslie found going back to work for the first time "brutal".

Rose Leslie won't 'guard' Kit Harington against his addictions



Julia Roberts, George Clooney pair up for romantic comedy 'Ticket to Paradise'

Los Angeles | Agencies

Frequent co-stars George Clooney and Julia Roberts toss back shots and break out funky dance moves in 'Ticket to Paradise', a romantic comedy in which they play hostile exes.

Universal Pictures brought a sneak peak of the film, which opens in theaters on October 21, to CinemaCon, the annual exhibition trade show currently underway in Las Vegas, reports 'Variety'.

The two A-list stars were not present at the Caesars Palace to promote their film 'Ticket to Paradise', but theater owners in the audience still appeared to be entertained by their on-screen reunion.

Clooney and Roberts play a divorced couple who fly to Bali to stop their lovestruck daughter (played by Kaitlyn Dever) from marrying a man she barely knows. The trailer, which hasn't been released yet to the public, showcases several funny moments, including Clooney's character drinking everyone on the island under the table and playing beer pong, which later prompts him to do the wave



and the funky chicken.

Another moment that tickled the funny bone of the crowd was Roberts and Clooney's characters refused to sit next to each other on the plane and hurled insults until a flight attendant lets them switch.

"Worst 19 years of my life," Clooney says, to which Roberts replies, "We were only married for five."

"I'm including the recovery," he replied back.

They attempt to set aside their differences and call a truce in the name of scaring their daughter out of marrying a person who is essentially a stranger.

'Hunger Games' prequel returns with 'Ballad of Songbirds and Snakes'

Los Angeles | Agencies

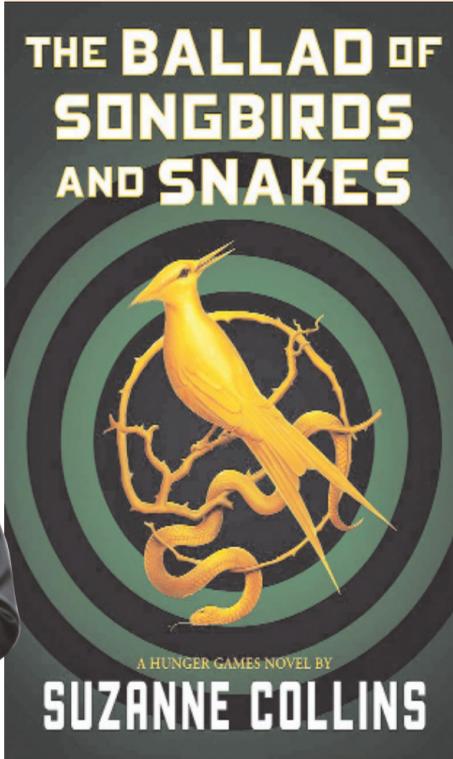
The teaser of 'Hunger Games' prequel 'The Ballad of Songbirds and Snakes' was unveiled at the CinemaCon and showcased for the annual trade show for theatre owners.

The clip didn't show any footage from the movie, which is currently in production, nor did it reveal the cast of the film.

Instead, the clip panned over striking shots of icy tree branches and a eye-catching gold as text scrolled that reads: "The world will discover who is a songbird and who is a snake," reports 'Variety'.

Lionsgate also announced the movie will be released in theaters on November 17, 2023.

'The Ballad of Songbirds and Snakes' takes place decades before the adventures of Katniss Everdeen and centers on young Coriolanus Snow, who eventually becomes the tyrannical president of Panem. In 'The Ballad of Songbirds and Snakes', he's no bark and no bite.



ABSOLUTE PIC OF THE DAY



Bianca Gascoigne



IPL 2022

MOHSIN KHAN, KRUNAL PANDYA LEAD LUCKNOW TO CLINICAL 20-RUN WIN OVER PUNJAB

Pune | Agencies

The ultra-aggressive and big-hitting batting line-up of Punjab flattered to deceive yet again to slump to a 20-run defeat at the hands of Lucknow Super Giants at MCA Stadium here on Friday.

After Kagiso Rabada's 4/38 restricted Lucknow to 153/8 on a sticky pitch, Punjab lost their way after captain Mayank Agarwal fell in power-play and Liam Livingstone was dismissed in the middle overs, eventually making 133/8 in their 20 overs.

Tall left-arm pacer Mohsin Khan took three wickets for 24 runs, keeping Punjab on the backfoot while Krunal Pandya was miserly in his spell of 2/11. Dushmantha Chameera (2/17) and Ravi Bishnoi (1/41) provided strong support for Lucknow to execute an excellent defence of 153.

After starting slow, Agarwal hit back with two sixes and two fours to score 25 off 18 balls. Both of his sixes came by backing away and creating room to carve the maximums over off-side. Agarwal attempted to do the same off Chameera but K.L. Rahul at mid-off timed his jump well to take a brilliant catch in the fifth over. Jonny Bairstow slammed two fours off Avesh Khan in the final over of power-play as Punjab signed off with 46/1. Post power-play, Lucknow made a mini-comeback through Bishnoi and Pandya. While Shikhar Dhawan was castled by



Bishnoi in an attempt to slog-sweep, Bhanuka Rajapaksa tried to play for the turn but got a leading edge to point running from left off Pandya.

Livingstone danced down the pitch twice to hit Bishnoi for successive sixes in an over which yielded 18 runs. Just as it felt like Punjab would run away with the match, Lucknow fought back as Livingstone shuffled across to scoop and could only glove behind to keeper off

Mohsin. In the next over, Pandya trapped Jitesh Sharma lbw after Lucknow took the review.

Bairstow waged a lone battle with the bat, taking two fours off Bishnoi. But Chameera delivered the knock-out blow, forcing Bairstow to play a full, wide delivery and edged to the third man. Mohsin came back in his final over to take out Kagiso Rabada and Rahul Chahar. Though Rishi Dhawan slammed boundaries off

Avesh Khan in the final over, it wasn't sufficient to deny Lucknow a well-deserved victory.

Brief scores:

Lucknow Super Giants 153/8 in 20 overs (Quinton de Kock 46, Deepak Hooda 34; Kagiso Rabada 4/38, Rahul Chahar 2/30) beat Punjab Kings 133/8 in 20 overs (Jonny Bairstow 32, Mayank Agarwal 25; Mohsin Khan 3/24, Krunal Pandya 2/11) by 20 runs

Badminton Asia C'ships

Sindhu reaches semifinals with win over He Bing Jiao

Manila (Philippines) | Agencies

Ace Indian shuttler PV Sindhu assured herself of at least a bronze medal at the 2022 Badminton Asia Championships after reaching the semi-finals with a win over China's He Bing Jiao in the women's singles quarter-finals, here on Friday. Sindhu, a former world champion, defeated the two-time world championship bronze medalist Jiao 21-9, 13-21, 21-19 to reach the semi-finals at the Muntinlupa Sports Complex.

The Indian settled quickly into the match and raced to an 11-2 lead at the first break in the opening game. Jiao, on the other hand, made a series of unforced errors as Sindhu wrapped up the first game convincingly.

The second game saw the world No. 9 He Bing Jiao tighten her defence and come back strongly after the scores were tied at 10-all. The Chinese shuttler won 11 of the next 14 points to stretch the match into the decider.

The two-time Olympic medalist Sindhu used her experience well and took six straight points early in the third game. However, Sindhu conceded five points on the trot before confusion over scores halted the game. Jiao continued to mount attacks after the short break and even struck three straight points



despite trailing 20-16. Sindhu, however, kept her composure to take advantage of an early lead and book a spot in the semi-finals.

World No. 7 Sindhu came into the match trailing 7-9 in head-to-head encounters but it was her third straight win over her Chinese rival. The last time the duo played each other was at the Tokyo Olympics bronze medal match which Sindhu won in straight games. The 26-year-old Sindhu will now face the world No. 2 Akane Yamaguchi of Japan, who

eliminated world No. 10 Pornpawee Chochuwong of Thailand 9-21, 21-15, 21-17 in her quarter-final clash.

However, the men's doubles pair of Chirag Shetty and Satwiksairaj Rankireddy, seeded third, lost 21-12, 14-21, 16-21 to fifth-seeded Aaron Chia and Massoh Woi Yik of Malaysia in their quarter-final clash, which lasted for 53 minutes.

Top Indian badminton players Saina Nehwal, Kidambi Srikanth and Lakshya Sen were knocked out in the earlier rounds.

Is Rashid Khan perfecting the 'snake shot' to be a finisher like MSD?

Mumbai | Agencies

While criticism has mounted over spinner Rashid Khan's inability to provide the sucker-punch with his bowling for his franchise, Gujarat Titans, in the current edition of the Indian Premier League (IPL), there is no denying that what he has been unable to achieve with his bowling, the 23-year-old is trying to achieve with the bat this year.

The 23-year-old has played match-winning knocks for Gujarat against CSK (40 off 21) and SRH (31 not out off 11) under tremendous pressure situations. However the premier leg-spinner has picked only eight wickets in eight matches with an economy of 7.09 in the ongoing IPL season



for the Hardik Pandya-led side.

Rashid said that while his primary role will continue to remain as that of a bowler, he has been upgrading his batting skill for the last 2-3 years, especially as a finisher much like Mahendra Singh Dhoni, to lend solidity to his franchise down the order. Facing his former franchise, Rashid showed how devastating his batting could be, slamming an unbeaten 31 off just 11 balls as Gujarat completed an improbable chase of 195 to halt SRH's winning streak.

BORIS BECKER SENTENCED TO TWO AND HALF YEARS IN JAIL FOR TAX EVASION

London: German tennis legend Boris Becker has been sentenced to two and a half years jail term for hiding 2.5 million pounds sterling worth of assets and loans to avoid paying debts. Becker, 54, was on Friday handed the two and a half years jail term after being found guilty by a British court of charges relating to his 2017 bankruptcy. However, the former Wimbledon champion had denied breaking UK insolvency laws after he was declared bankrupt in 2017, owing creditors almost 50m.

But he was found guilty of four charges by a jury under the Insolvency Act. He was cleared on 20 counts. The court was told that the six-time Grand Slam champion sent almost 390,000 in payments from his business account to others. The case centered on Becker's bankruptcy in June 2017 resulting from an unpaid loan of more than 3m on his luxury estate in Mallorca, Spain, the BBC reported on Friday.



KIUG 2021

JETLEE SINGH STRIKES GOLD; UPSETS GALORE IN SHOOTING AND ARCHERY

Bengaluru | Agencies

Guru Nanak Dev University's Chingakhem Jetlee Singh lived up to his billing in the men's epee, beating his teammate Shubham to strike gold in the fencing competition at the Khelo India University Games (KIUG) 2021 here on Friday.

Jetlee, a TOPS athlete, was one of four GNDU medallists -- the most by any -- in fencing on Friday. Jetlee was one of the few who held on, on a day of upsets.

The biggest upset came from the SAI NCOE Centre in the city, where the shooting events are underway.

Lovely Professional University's Sartaj Singh Tiwana beat Olympian Aishwary Pratap Singh Tomar in the final of the 50m 3 position for men to take gold. Tomar, representing Guru Nanak Dev University was top of the pile at the end of the qualification.

With one eye on the athletics extravaganza set to begin on Friday, a day of



high action concluded at the KIUG 2021 on Thursday. At the end of the day, 42 universities had won at least a gold while 92 had made their presence felt on the medal table. In all, 13 medals were up for grabs in the competition on Thursday, with the action centered on the piste, as fencing kicked off at the games. Archery stayed true to form, the curse of topping qualification is looming strong, and there were upsets aplenty on the menu. In the first knockout round of the men's

recurve, Lovely Professional University's Aditya Choudhary, who had topped the qualification, bowed out to Ch Charan Singh University's Nishant.

It took the women's recurve to break the curse courtesy of Adamas University's Ruma Biswas. Biswas had topped the women's qualification, and progressed through the knockouts with relative ease, before falling in the semi-finals to Guru Jambheshwar University's Bhavna.

As evening fell -- along with a light shower over the city -- the Kanteerva burst into life with track and field athletes from over forty disciplines hitting the warm-up track. Among them were some of the best young athletes in the country -- the undoubtedly star Asian Games silver medalist Dutee Chand. In addition to Dutee, 400m runner Priya Mohan and long jumper Ancy Sojan have also entered into their respective events. "A lot of athletes participating at the KIUG 2021 have a tremendous amount of international exposure," Priya Mohan said.

KL RAHUL PLAYS TEXTBOOK STROKES, NOTHING 'AGRICULTURAL' ABOUT THEM: GAVASKAR



Mumbai: Former India cricketer Sunil Gavaskar is in awe of Lucknow Super Giants skipper KL Rahul's free-flowing batting, with the legendary player saying there is "nothing agricultural about his shot-making, which makes him a special player".

Rahul has scored a whopping 368 runs in eight matches and has remained unbeaten on two occasions this IPL season. He averages more than 61 and has scored two centuries besides having a healthy strike rate of nearly 148. The 30-year-old is only second behind Rajasthan Royals' Jos Buttler on the IPL 2022 scorers list (Orange cap), and it's because of some of Rahul's peerless innings that Lucknow are currently placed fourth on the IPL points table. Rahul's unbeaten 103 was the key to LSG's 36-run victory over five-time IPL champions Mumbai Indian at the Wankhede on April 24.

"He's been outstanding. The best part about KL Rahul's batting is that nothing is agricultural in his cricketing shots. Every shot that he plays is a proper textbook stroke. So what he has actually told you with his shot-making skills is that you don't have to manufacture shots. If you've got the shots, use them and the selection of his shots has been outstanding," Gavaskar said on Star Sports.

Jr men's academy nationals

TOP FOUR TEAMS TO BATTLE IT OUT FOR SPOTS IN FINAL

Army Boys Sports Company will take on SAIL Hockey Academy while Naval Tata Hockey Academy will meet Roundglass Punjab Hockey Club Academy in the semi-finals of the 2nd Hockey India Junior Men's Academy National Championship 2022 here on Saturday.

Jamshedpur | Agencies

Army Boys Sports Company the highest goal-scoring team in the tournament are coming off a hard-fought 3-1 win in a shootout against Smart Hockey Academy, Raipur in their quarterfinal match. They will hope to continue the same momentum against SAIL Hockey Academy.

Speaking about the team's semifinal match against SAIL Hockey Academy, Army Boys Sports Company coach Chandrashekhar Khalkho said, "We will be facing a tough team, they are slightly more experienced than us, so it will be challenging for us. We will have to play more attacking hockey and convert our chances tomorrow. If we reach the final, it will be a great achievement for the team, and I am confident that we will do well."

On the other hand, SAIL Hockey Academy, won their quarterfinal match by a comprehensive 7-2 margin against Markandeshwar Hockey Academy.

"Reaching the semi-finals is an achievement in itself and I feel very proud of all our players. I am expecting a tough fight from our opponents, the Army Boys Sports Company in the upcoming match but we are confident and hopeful of doing well in the match," said SAIL Hockey Academy team manager Raju Kant Saini ahead of their semi-final match.

In the second semifinal, the hosts Naval Tata Hockey Academy- Jamshedpur will be up against Roundglass Punjab Hockey Club Academy. The home side is coming off a thrilling 3-1 win against Madhya Pradesh Hockey Academy in the quarterfinal. Their coach, Himanshu expressed, "We have performed well in the tournament so far because of our hard work and perseverance. We have to continue giving our best and the boys are only focused on reaching the final."

Meanwhile, Roundglass Punjab Hockey



Club Academy, who registered a clinical 5-2 win in their quarter-final match against SGPCC Hockey Academy, will look to keep the momentum going in the semi-final to seal a spot in the final of the tournament.

Ahead of their semifinal game, Roundglass Punjab Hockey Club Academy coach Balwinder Singh said, "The boys have put in

their heart and soul into the tournament and reaching the Semi-Finals is a proof of that. The team always goes into every match with zeal and proper structure whether it's the first match or the Finals." "I am very grateful to Hockey India for such an amazing platform as it gives more players a chance to reach the National Camp," he concluded.

PANT HAS THE POTENTIAL TO CAPTAIN THE NATIONAL SIDE IN FUTURE: WV RAMAN



Team Absolute | Mumbai

Former India women's team coach WV Raman believes that Delhi Capitals' skipper Rishabh Pant has the potential to captain the national side in future but added that the 24-year-old has to still learn the ropes of captaincy for the next couple of years.

In Delhi's four-wicket win over Kolkata at Wankhede Stadium on Thursday, Pant had to face criticism from former cricketers Aakash Chopra and Michael Vaughan on not completing Kuldeep Yadav's full quota of overs despite the left-arm wrist-spinner taking four wickets for 14 runs in his three overs. Instead, Pant brought in off-spinner Lalit Yadav, who was hit for 32 runs in his three overs over two scalps, allowing Nitish Rana to get a gritty 57.

"Rishabh Pant has a great cricketing mind, but he is on a learning curve; and the last couple of years who has been working on his keeping and fitness and has shown remarkable improve-

ment. I believe Rishabh Pant will go on and captain the national side, and as to when, we will wait and see. For now, he has to learn the ropes in the next one and two years as far as captaincy is concerned," Raman was quoted as saying by cricket.com.

Though Delhi completed the chase in 19 overs, they had a scare when they slipped from 82/3 to 84/5. Raman thinks that Delhi needs to think about the make-up of middle-order ahead of their next match against Lucknow Super Giants on Sunday.

"I think they will need to give a bit of thought about their middle-order and how it is going to shape up. They look like a well-balanced side, and the important thing is what happens at the advanced stage when the openers fail." Raman, a former India cricketer, was impressed by the lack of application from Kolkata's batters which resulted in them reaching a below-par score of 146/9 after being 83/6 at one point.



AMRUTA

KHANVILKAR: FIRST MARATHI ACTRESS TO HAVE POSTER ON AN AIRCRAFT!

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actress Amruta Khanvilkar is currently gearing up for her big release with Chandramukhi this Friday and is leaving no stones unturned when it comes to promoting her film. She has taken all the steps to make sure her film, which she has worked on so closely, gets to garner all the necessary eyeballs.

It is now confirmed that Amruta will become the first Marathi actress to have her poster on an aircraft. "Chandramukhi is really really special, not just for me but for my entire team as well. We want to show the world how rich our country is in terms of content that we create," added the ecstatic Amruta Khanvilkar.

"When somebody suggested this idea of taking our film to a national level with having posters pasted across aircrafts, we thought why not. What if nobody has done it before in Marathi cinema, there is always a first time," exclaimed the actress.

Chandramukhi also stars actors Addinath M Kothare, Radha Sagar, Ashok Shinde, Surbhi Bhawe, and Sameer Chaugule amongst others. The film is based on the life of a lavni dancer who faces an unexpected incident in her life that gives her life a different turn. The film is directed by National award actor-director Prasad Oak.



JATIN PANDIT: LATAJI HAD A GREAT SENSE OF HUMOUR

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Legendary Singer Lata Mangeshkar left for heavenly abode on 6 February 2022, leaving a void in the music industry that surely cannot be filled. Fondly known as the Nightingale of India, her songs never ceased to leave an indelible mark in every Indian's mind.

To cherish her fond memories, India's notable singers will come together to pay tribute to the legendary singer Lata Mangeshkar via an exclusive series 'Naam Reh Jaayega'.

Ahead of series, a virtual press conference was held. Notable singers like Sonu Nigam, Shaan, Sadhana Sargam, Javed Ali, Jatin Pandit, Nitin Mukesh, Aishwarya, Anwesha, Sneha pant were present at the conference. They spoke about how excited they are for the show, what will it be all about and reminisced fond memories with Lata Mangeshkar while they shot for the show.

While reminiscing good times with Lataji, Jatin Pandit revealed that she had a great sense of humour. He said, "Lataji's melodious voice, perfect diction and



knowledge of low and high notes were commendable. Apart from being a fantastic singer, Lataji had a great sense of humour. Lataji will never be

replaced." For the unversed, produced by Gajendra Singh the 8 episode, hour-long series will be out on 1st May 2022.

Shweta Tiwari's daughter opens up on her mom's struggles in married life

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actress Shweta Tiwari's daughter Palak Tiwari is all set to make her Bollywood debut with 'Rosie: The Saffron Chapter'. Palak has seen her mother facing a lot of hardships in her married life.

Shweta got married to Raja Chaudhary in 1999. Palak was born a year later. They were separated in 2007. The actress later married Abhinav Kohli in 2013 but that marriage also ended in 2019 on a bitter note.

Recently, Palak spoke to the media and recalled how her mother handled all the prob-

lems in her married life. She said that one should not be in a hurry to get married and take time before making any decision: "We keep justifying things for our partners because we want to see the good in people. It's a great quality, but it will come back to bite. That's not love or at least that's not the kind of love I want - not now, not ever. Women struggle with that the most and I have seen that with not just my mother, but women from around the world." She also shared how rumours and gossip always keep going around Shweta. On the work front, Palak was seen in the music video of Harry Sandhu's song 'Bijlee Bijlee'.



'It's an exciting time at work right now'

Team Absolute | Mumbai

'Gully Boy' actor Vijay Varma is currently in a happy phase as three of his projects were recently announced. The actor has podcast series 'The Sandman', which is the Hindi audio adaptation of Neil Gaiman's graphic novel series of the same name, he also has 'Dahaad' directed by Reema Kagti and then 'Mirzapur 3' on the horizon in addition to a Sujoy Ghosh directorial, where he stars along with Kareena Kapoor Khan and Jaideep Ahlawat. Talking about so many announcements coming back to back, Vijay shared, "It's a really exciting time at work right now with so

many of my announcements coming out in this short span of one month and that too three of them happening on the same day right before I leave for the shoot of the Sujoy's film."

He plays the lead of Lord Morpheus in 'The Sandman', in 'Dahaad', he will be seen sharing the screen with Sonakshi Sinha, Sohum Shah and Gulshan Devaiah and in 'Mirzapur 3' he will return as one of the identical twin brothers, Bharat Tyagi and Shatrughan Tyagi.



HEROPANTI 2: A FLOP SHOW



FILM REVIEW

BY SHACHI CHATURVEDI

Directed by: Ahmed Khan
Runtime: 2 hours 15 minutes
Cast: Tiger Shroff, Tara Sutaria, Nawazuddin Siddiqui, Amrita Singh.
Rating: 1.5/5

Heropanti 2 is a Hindi-language romantic action film released in India in 2022. It is a sequel to the 2014 film Heropanti. Ahmed Khan directs the film, which was written by Rajat Arora and produced by Sajid Nadiadwala.

The film opens with Laila (Nawazuddin Siddiqui) performing magic in his show when one of his men arrives to summon him for a meeting. Later in the film, it was revealed that Laila was a crook who planned to hack the Banks and transfer all of the money in his account on March 31.

The mother of Tiger was played by Amrita Singh in this film. Tiger has been shown to be a great hacker who can break into any system.

The plot centres on Bablu (Tiger Shroff) assisting the Indian government by backstabbing Laila, and now Laila seeks vengeance.

Tara Sutaria was seen playing Inaaya, a lead actress who assists her boyfriend Bablu in finishing Laila (Her brother). Despite the fact that she is the leading lady in the film, her part does not justify her presence.

Despite having a stellar cast, Heropanti 2 falls short of public expectations. The first half of the film was unnecessarily drawn out, while the second half was illogical. The film was a disappointment for the audience since it established some impossible goals for a human being to achieve.



TECHNICAL ASPECTS:

Regarding the technicalities, this film established a good example for the use of appropriate background music at the appropriate time. However, when it comes to camera and vocal synchronisation, it falls short. There were occasions when the camera was shaking and the lip-sync was off.

It can be stated that with this cast. It is possible that the director could have done a better job. There was also a necessity to concentrate on the plot. The film may cast a spell on Tiger or Tara fans. Otherwise you won't regret missing it.

RANVEER'S GRATITUDE FOR WIFE DEEPIKA, MOM AND SISTER THROUGH HIS FILM

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actor Ranveer Singh says he is showing gratitude to the strong women in his life - his mother Anju, his sister Ritika and actress wife Deepika Padukone through his upcoming film 'Jayeshbhai Jordaar'.

Ranveer says, "Whatever I am today, I am because of the women in my life, I have been surrounded with very strong feminine forces and energies right from my childhood and throughout my life. I wouldn't call them my support system; they are literally the centre of my universe.

"They are my very spirit, they are my very source of energy and power. And so, to be a part of a film that is a tribute to the women in my life is a very special thing for me." He adds, "My mom means everything to me, my sister is like a second mother to me, my wife is the wind beneath my wings and even my team is constituted by mostly women and they are the reason I am able to do what I am able to do. So, more than just about anyone else, I want them to see this film and experience it." Ranveer says he is really happy that he got this opportunity, where he could, "through my art, express my gratitude to all the women in my life for making me who I am." A hilarious satire on society - 'Jayeshbhai Jordaar', produced by Maneesh Sharma, also stars 'Arjun Reddy' fame Shalini Pandey, who debuts on Bollywood's big screen opposite Ranveer. The film has been directed by debutant Divyang Thakkar and is releasing on May 13.



INSTAGRAM PIC OF THE DAY



Amyra Dastur