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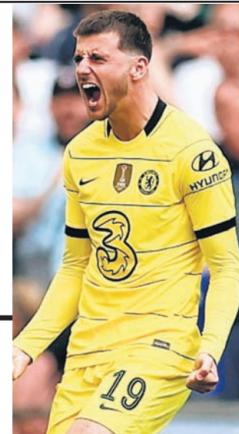
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PUBLISHED SIMULTANEOUSLY FROM NEW DELHI, MUMBAI AND BHOPAL

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## RIISING FUEL COSTS PUSH UP MARCH'S WHOLESALE PRICE INFLATION

# FOUR-MONTH HIGH

- ▶ **THE ANNUAL RATE OF INFLATION, BASED ON WHOLESALE PRICES, ROSE TO 14.55 PER CENT LAST MONTH FROM 13.11 PER CENT REPORTED FOR FEBRUARY 2022.**
- ▶ **ON A YEAR-ON-YEAR (YOY) BASIS, THE WHOLESALE PRICE INDEX (WPI) DATA FURNISHED BY THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY SHOWED AN EXPONENTIAL RISE LAST MONTH OVER MARCH 2021, WHEN IT STOOD AT 7.89 PER CENT.**
- ▶ **THE PRIMARY ARTICLES SEGMENT, WHICH HAS ONE OF THE HIGHEST WEIGHTAGE IN THE WPI, INCREASED AT A FASTER RATE OF 15.54 PER CENT IN MARCH AS COMPARED TO 13.39 PER CENT REPORTED FOR FEBRUARY 2022.**
- ▶ **IN THE FUEL AND POWER SEGMENT, WHICH HAS A WEIGHTAGE OF 13.15 PER CENT, THE RISE IN INFLATION WAS RECORDED AT 34.52 PER CENT FROM 31.5 PER CENT IN FEBRUARY 2022.**
- ▶ **THE COST OF MANUFACTURED PRODUCTS, WHICH HAS A WEIGHTAGE OF 64.23 PER CENT, INCREASED AT A FASTER RATE OF 10.71 PER CENT FROM 9.84 PER CENT.**



Wholesale Price in India' for March. "The high rate of inflation in March, 2022 is primarily due to rise in prices of crude petroleum and natural gas, mineral oils, basic metals, etc., due to disruption in the global supply chain caused by the Russia-Ukraine conflict."

Besides, the month over month change in WPI index for March, 2022 stood at 2.69 per cent as compared to February, 2022.

Similarly, the growth rate of WPI food index, consisting of food articles from the primary articles group and food products from the manufactured products group, rose to 8.71 per cent from 8.47 per cent.

"The WPI inflation recorded a

broad-based and higher than expected increase to a four month high 14.6 per cent in March 2022, following the spike in commodity prices amidst the escalating Russia-Ukraine conflict," said Aditi Nayyar, Chief Economist, ICRA.

According to Suman Chowdhury, Chief Analytical Officer, Acuite Ratings & Research: "Clearly, the data reinforces the presence of stronger inflationary pressures in the manufacturing and the services sector."

### PETROL PRICE TOUCHES RS 123/LITRE IN RAJASTHAN'S SRI GANGANAGAR

**Jaipur:** Petrol prices in Rajasthan's Sri Ganganagar district rose to Rs 123 per litre on Monday morning, making it the costliest in the country. The unprecedented hike has impacted over 80 per cent of petrol pumps bringing them on the verge of closure, confirmed petrol pump owners.

In fact, the price of diesel here is Rs 105.31 per litre, which yet remains one of the highest prices in India.

However, in the neighbouring state of Punjab, petrol and diesel are cheaper by Rs 17 and Rs 11 per litre respectively.

## Why Covid-19 cases are rapidly surging among children in India?

Opening of schools, low vaccination rates among the kids, and most importantly, lack of adherence to Covid measures are the major reasons behind the current surge in infections seen among young children, said health experts here on Monday.

"Covid-19 cases are showing a rapid surge in the paediatric group at the moment especially in our NCR region because the kids have started attending school. They are not vaccinated yet as the vaccine is still under trial for under 12 years of age group."

*Dr. Col. Vijay Dutta, Senior Consultant, Indian Spinal Injuries Centre*



and Noida have instructed schools to follow the Covid protocols strictly and to set up Covid help desks.

Schools have been directed to close down the wing or the school completely even if a single case of Covid is reported among students. Parents have also been asked not to send children to school if they report any symptoms of the viral illness. The doctors pointed out that the typical symptoms include mild cough, cold, fever and headache.

In a few cases the symptoms can be diarrhoea and fatigue. So far, there are no pneumonia cases in the paediatric group, they noted.

Meanwhile, with 2,183 number of infections, India has seen a 90 per cent jump Covid cases in the last 24 hours. While the cases are

rising significantly, "it is too early to call it the fourth wave", Dr. Meena J, Consultant, Paediatrics & Neonatology, Aakash Healthcare, Dwarka said.

According to experts, the BA.2 sub-variant of Omicron is currently the predominant strain in the country.

While Covid cases among children were significantly low worldwide during the last two years of the pandemic, the Omicron wave, which began in late November last year, caused increased infections in kids. Children were majorly affected with multisystem inflammatory syndrome and upper airway infection, such as laryngotracheobronchitis (commonly known as croup) that is characterised by barking cough, and noisy breathing.

Team Absolute | New Delhi

High cost of 'fuel and power' along with those of primary articles pushed up India's March 2022 wholesale inflation to a 4-month high level.

"The annual rate of inflation is 14.55 per cent (provisional) for the month of March, 2022 (over March, 2021) as compared to 7.89 per cent in March, 2021," the Ministry said in its review of 'Index Numbers of

## Stones pelted at cops by Jahangirpuri shooter's family, one detained

Delhi Police have arrested a 28-year-old man, who allegedly fired shots during the communal clashes in north-west Delhi's Jahangirpuri on April 16, an official said on Monday. The accused has been identified as Sonu alias Imam alias Yunus, a resident of C Block in Jahangirpuri.

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The family members of a man, who allegedly fired shots during the communal clashes in north-west Delhi's Jahangirpuri, resorted to stone pelting on Monday when the policemen went to their house for investigation. DCP Usha Rangnani said a video was being circulated on social media since April 17, showing a man (in blue kurta) opening fire during riots in Jahangirpuri area on April 16. To investigate the matter, a police team of north west district had gone to the alleged shooter's house in CD Park road in his search and for examination of his family members. However, when the



police reached there, the family members of the said man pelted two stones on them in retaliation following which the police detained one person from the spot.

"Legal action is being taken and the situation is completely under control,"

the senior official said. The place where the riots took place on April 16 is still under heavy security cover. Even Commissioner Rakesh Asthana said the police will remain there in heavy numbers until and unless the situation is completely normalised.

## 'Victims denied fair hearing' SC cancels Ashish Mishra bail in Lakhimpur Kheri case

SC cancels Ashish Mishra bail in Lakhimpur Kheri case

The bench said: "We are, thus, of the view that this court on account of the factors like (i) irrelevant considerations having impacted the impugned order granting bail; (ii) the High Court exceeding its jurisdiction by touching upon the merits of the case; (iii) denial of victims' right to participate in the proceedings; and (iv) the tearing hurry shown by the High Court in entertaining or granting bail to the respondent/accused; can rightfully cancel the bail."



Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Supreme Court on Monday said the victims, in the Lakhimpur Kheri violence incident, were denied a fair and effective hearing at the time of granting bail to accused Ashish Mishra, and observed that the Allahabad High Court exceeded its jurisdiction by dwelling on the merits of the case and showed "tearing hurry" in granting bail.

A bench headed by Chief

Justice N.V. Ramana and comprising Justices Surya Kant and Hima Kohli said: "In the present case, the victims have been denied a fair and effective hearing at the time of granting bail to the Respondent-Accused (Mishra)." It cancelled bail bonds of Mishra, son of Union Minister and BJP leader Ajay Mishra, and directed him to surrender within a week. Senior advocate Dushyant Dave, representing the victims' families,

### WHEN WILL PM TERMINATE TENI?: CONG

New Delhi: After the Supreme Court on Monday cancelled the bail granted to Ashish Mishra, main accused in the Lakhimpur Kheri violence, and directed him to surrender within a week, Congress stepped up its attack on the Centre and questioned when will MoS home Ajay Mishra Teni be terminated. Congress General Secretary Randeep Singh Surjewala said: "When will PM sack the minister from his council, when will BJP stop protecting people who have ditched farmers?"

submitted that during the course of the online proceedings, counsel for the victims were disconnected, and were not heard by the high court. He said that their application for re-hearing the bail application was also not considered by the high court.

The bench said that the victims certainly cannot be expected to be sitting on the fence and watching the proceedings from afar, especially when they may have legitimate grievances. "Adverting to the case at hand, we are constrained to express our disappointment with the

manner in which the High Court has failed to acknowledge the right of the victims."

The bench observed that instead of looking into aspects such as the nature and gravity of the offence, and severity of the punishment in the event of conviction, the high court adopted a myopic view of the evidence on the record and proceeded to decide the case on merits.

It added that the observations on merits of a case when the trial has yet to commence, are likely to have an impact on the outcome of the trial proceedings.

## Lt Gen Manoj Pande becomes first sapper to be Indian Army chief

New Delhi: Indian Army's Vice Chief Lt Gen Manoj C. Pande was on Monday appointed as the next Chief of the Army Staff - the first engineer to hold the top post. He succeeds Gen M.M. Naravane on April 30, 2022. Born on May 6, 1962, Lt General Pande was commissioned on December 24, 1982 in the Corps of Engineers (The Bombay Sappers), and during his long and distinguished service spanning over 39 years, has served in a variety of command, staff, and instructional appointments.



## Sun spews intense solar flare, sparks radio blackout in Asia, Australia

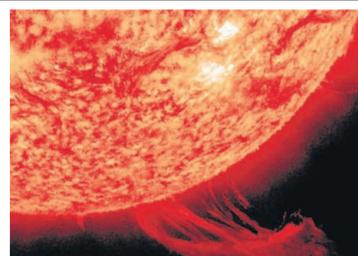
Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Sun has unleashed an intense solar flare, sparking radio blackouts in several parts of Asia and Australia. According to the US Space Weather Prediction Center (SWPC), the solar flare peaked late on April 17 at 3.34 GMT (9.04 IST) and was followed minutes later by a massive sun eruption known as a coronal mass ejection, Space.com reported. The flare registered as an X1.1-class sun storm and lasted about 34 minutes, SWPC officials said.

The flare originated from Regions 2994 and 2993, a cluster of active sunspots that has seen "significant flaring" since it appeared on the eastern limb of the Sun, according to the SWPC.

"Solar activity is expected to be active over the next week as these sunspots migrate across the visible disk," the agency said in an update.

The SWPC stated that the solar flare spawned a brief radio blackout and was classified as a Type II solar radio burst, the report said. "A pulse of X-rays from the flare produced a strong shortwave radio blackout over southeast Asia and Australia," said



NASA's Solar Dynamics Observatory, which recorded the X1-class solar flare. "Mariners, aviators, and ham radio operators may have noticed unusual propagation effects at frequencies below 30 MHz," it added. Coronagraph images from the Solar and Heliospheric Observatory (SOHO) confirm that the explosion hurled a CME into space.

Analysts at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, which oversees the SWPC, modelled the CME's trajectory and deter-

mined that it will miss Earth, passing behind our planet in its orbit around the sun, Spaceweather.com reported. "Such bursts are produced by shock waves in the leading edges of CMEs," astronomer Tony Phillips was quoted as saying. Because the eruption occurred at the very eastern limb of the sun, the coronal mass ejection it spawned is likely not directed at Earth, Phillips said. X-class solar flares are the strongest types of storms on the sun. The weakest sun flares are A-class, B- and C-class storms are also relatively moderate. More powerful M-class storms and above can supercharge the Earth's northern lights displays while the strongest X-class storms can pose a risk to satellites and astronauts in orbit when aimed directly at Earth.

The latest solar flares come on the heels of an X1.3-class solar storm on March 30 and several C-class and M-class flares from different sunspot regions in recent weeks, the report said.

The sun is currently in an increasingly active phase of its 11-year solar weather cycle and the current cycle is known as Solar Cycle 25 which began in 2019.

## TENSION IN MAHA'S AMRAVATI DIST; SECTION 144 IMPOSED

Nagpur | Agencies

Tension prevailed in Maharashtra's Amravati district after an altercation between the two communities following which the authorities imposed Section 144, officials said on Monday.

The two groups clashed on Sunday night over hoisting a saffron flag in Dulla Gate area of Achalpur city, and gradually, the atmosphere became heated.

Stones were also pelted during the skirmish.

However, the situation was brought under control when the police rushed to the spot, and dispersed the agitated crowd.

The Achalpur violence

broke out on the heels of the Jahangirpuri communal clash in Delhi on Saturday.

Currently, a curfew has been imposed under Section 144 and a large police contingent has been deployed.

However, tensions are still brewing in Achalpur -- the second most populous in Amravati district after Amravati, after the incident.

Shashikant Satav, the additional Superintendent of Police of Amravati, said three cases have been registered and as many as 16 people have been arrested in connection with the violence. Section 144 was imposed in the affected areas of the district to prevent mass gatherings, he said.



# SC DIRECTS BANKS NOT TO IMPOSE PENALTY ON EMI DEFAULT BY AMRAPALI HOME BUYERS

Team Absolute | New Delhi

In relief for several thousands of Amrapali home buyers who booked their flats under subvention scheme, the Supreme Court on Monday directed the banks not to impose penalties on default of EMI payment.

A bench of Justices U.U. Lalit and Bela M. Trivedi said the accounts of defaulter flat buyers, who had availed the subvention facilities, should not be treated as Non-Performing Asset (NPA) accounts, and also their CIBIL score should not be maintained at zero level. The bench took note of home buyers' difficulties, but made it clear that after getting the possession of the flat, the home buyer was liable to pay the EMI towards the loan as per the agreement. It said the liability of home buyers would come into effect from the date when possession of the flat is handed over, and banks can take action if they do not discharge their liability. The bench said banks should not impose a penalty for default committed by the flat buyers, but, would be entitled to the prin-



cipal as well as interest on it. The top court asked the banks to regularise the accounts of home buyers when they approach the lender concerned. Advocate Kumar Mihir, representing home buyers, said: "It is a huge relief to the home buyers who, on one hand, had not got their houses and on the other hand, had to face recovery proceedings initiated by banks without any fault on their part."

Under the subvention scheme, the home buyer was not required to pay any EMI, during the "No EMI period" till the completion and possession of the flat. Several thousand home buyers in the Amrapali housing projects availed this scheme, however they were burdened with the EMIs without getting possession of the flats. Mihir added that this will also ensure release of more funds on

behalf of the subvention buyers towards their flats which will help the court receiver to complete the Amrapali projects. The bench also noted that a consortium of banks and Greater Noida authority have completed the required documentation and Rs 1,350 crore will be available for the purpose of construction of housing projects. On April 4, the Supreme Court was informed that the first tranche of Rs 150 crore out of the total sum of Rs 1,500 crore, meant for construction of stalled Amrapali housing projects, has been directly paid to the National Buildings Construction Corporation (NBCC). A consortium of seven have granted final approval to infuse Rs 1,500 crore. Senior advocate and court-appointed receiver R. Venkataramani, in a note, said: "In compliance with the order dated March 28, on March 31 the Banks disbursed a sum of Rs. 150 crore, though the actual requirement/request by NBCC was for Rs 540 crore. The disbursement of loan was subject to certain pre-condition compliances, as set out in the sanction letter(s) of each Bank."

# Prashant Kishor again meets Congress top brass to discuss roadmap for 2024



Team Absolute | New Delhi

Political strategist Prashant Kishor on Monday again discussed the roadmap for 2024 general elections with senior Congress leaders, including Sonia Gandhi. This was the second meeting of the Congress

leaders with Kishor in three days. Congress top brass, including Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, Jairam Ramesh, P. Chidambaram, K.C. Venugopal and Randeep Surjewala, were present in the meeting. Sonia Gandhi has constituted a subgroup of senior party leaders to discuss the

roadmap presented by Kishor to the party for the 2024 general elections, which is expected to report back within a week.

On Saturday, Kishor had presented a detailed roadmap for the 2024 elections before interim Congress President Sonia Gandhi and the party's top leaders.

"Prashant Kishor has given a detailed presentation for the 2024 elections and the Congress President has deputed a small group to look into it and report to her within a week. A final decision will be taken after that," Congress General Secretary (Organisation), K.C. Venugopal, said.

According to sources, Kishor said during Saturday's meeting that the Congress must target 370 to 400 seats and work on alliances wherever the party is weak. The sources also said that Kishor is likely to formally join the Congress soon.

# With 501 new cases, Delhi sees Covid positivity rate near 8%

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Delhi on Monday reported 501 fresh Covid infections in last 24 hours, against 517 the previous day, but no death, for the second consecutive day, according to the Health Department bulletin. The positivity rate in the city has jumped to 7.72 per cent from 4.21 per cent reported on Sunday.

While the cumulative case-load has risen to 18,69,051, the death toll continues at 26,160. The Covid fatality rate in capital city stands at 1.4 per cent, as per the bulletin.



With 290 patients recovering in the last 24 hours, the total number of recoveries has gone to 18,41,162. The number of Covid patients being treated in home isolation has also risen to 1,188, as

the number of active cases in the city have surged to 1,729. The number of Covid containment zones stand at 623 in the city. Meanwhile, a total of 6,492 new tests -- 5,219 RT-PCR and 1273 Rapid Antigen - were conducted in the last 24 hours, taking the total to 3,75,68,234. A total of 4,973 vaccines were administered in the last 24 hours - 359 first doses, 639 second doses and 3,975 precaution doses. The total number of cumulative beneficiaries vaccinated so far stands at 3,29,18,944 according to the health bulletin.

# 6 DEAD, 4 INJURED IN JEEP-TRUCK COLLISION IN AMETHI

Amethi | Agencies

Six people returning from a wedding ceremony died while four others got grievously injured after their jeep collided head-on with a truck in Gauriganj area of the district, police said Monday. Superintendent of Police Dinesh Singh said the accident took place near Babuganj Sagra Ashram late Sunday night (around 12.15 am). He said the Bolero jeep was returning from Nasirabad area of Rae Bareilly with people from different villages in Amethi. A spokesperson said in Lucknow that Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has condoled the loss of lives in the accident, and directed officials to provide adequate treatment to the injured persons. SP Dinesh Singh



said the dead had been identified as Kallu (40), his 8-year-old son Saurabh, Krishna Kumar Singh (30), Shiv Milan, Ravi Tiwari and Triveni Prasad. He added that four injured

persons were initially admitted to the district hospital. They were later referred to Lucknow for better treatment, he said. Witnesses said the jeep was shattered under the

impact of the crash. The six bodies have been sent for a post-mortem examination, the SP said, adding the truck has been seized. The driver is on the run, he said.

# BJP TAKES 30% COMMISSION FROM MUTTS TO RELEASE FUNDS: LINGAYAT SEER

Bagalgot (Karnataka): In further embarrassment for Karnataka's ruling BJP, which has suffered a dent in its image following the suicide case of contractor who alleged harassment by a minister over commission, a prominent Lingayat seer on Monday accused the government of taking 30 per cent commission from religious institutions and mutts for releasing funds. Participating in a tractor rally organised by senior Congress leader S.R. Patil, Dingaleshwara Swamiji said: "The ruling BJP not only takes commission from contractors, that it even takes 30 per cent commission from religious seers." The religious mutts will have to pay 30 per cent cuts to get the funds released and projects of mutts will take off, he alleged. "The officers directly tell us about the commission. If an ice cream is granted in New Delhi or Bengaluru, by the time it reaches north Karnataka, only the stick will remain," he alleged. The statement of the seer has created a stir in the political corridors of the state. Opposition party Congress has launched a high voltage attack on BJP, with its Executive Presidents of Congress Satish Jarkiholi and Eshwar Khandre have slammed the ruling party over the issue. "Corruption does not have caste and religion. BJP is using caste and religion to its advantage," said Khandre. However, BJP ministers have taken objection to the statements made by the seer.



# Hubballi violence: Situation still tense, over 100 detained by K'taka police

Hubballi | Agencies

(Karnataka): More than 100 persons have been detained in connection with the large-scale violence following a controversial social media post in the city. The accused would be produced before the court on Monday. Meanwhile, the situation continues to be tense and tight security arrangements have been made throughout the city. Prohibitory orders are clamped in the city till April 20. Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai on Monday said that all the accused have been arrested and investigation is being taken up. The investigation will reveal who is behind this incident and which leader has a role in it. Whoever is found guilty, strict action will be initiated against them, he said. However, police sources explain that as many as eight special teams formed to nab criminal elements who indulged in violence have launched a hunt for them. The police have arrested



88 persons so far in connection with the violence and lodged ten cases. One team is exclusively looking into the CCTV footage and identifying the rioters. The cybercrime team is looking into social media posts and messages in WhatsApp, Facebook and Instagram

accounts that led to the violence. The police department has taken up the case seriously and investigation has been monitored by ADGP Pratap Reddy. Hubballi-Dharwad commissioner Labhu Ram had passed on all the details of the violence to him already.

# RAJ GOVT MOVING FAST IN THE DIRECTION OF 'RIGHT TO HEALTH': GEHLOT

Jaipur: The Rajasthan government is moving fast in the direction of 'Right to Health', Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot said on Monday, as he directed the concerned officials to give final shape to it at the earliest. In January this year, the Rajasthan government had prepared a draft bill of the country's first Right to Health law that defines the rights of patients, their attendants and healthcare providers, and provides for a mechanism to address the grievances of the stakeholders. All necessary provisions should be included in the interest of the patients in this bill, Gehlot said at a review meeting of the health department held at his official residence here. Gehlot also directed to make the 'Mukhyamantri Nishulk Nirogi Rajasthan Yojana' (Chief Minister's Free Healthy Rajasthan Scheme) successful at the ground level. This scheme was started on April 1 with an objective to make the people of the state free from the tension of the expenses incurred due to high treatment costs. "Our government has started an innovative scheme to provide free treatment and testing services in OPDs and IPDs to the people of the state," Gehlot said. Health department officials, doctors and the nursing community should get ready to make this scheme successful with the spirit of service and ensure that the patients do not face any kind of problems in getting free treatment, the Chief Minister said.



# Bengal Guv trying to use Assembly as political platform: Speaker

Bengaluru | Agencies

A fresh spat is in the offing between West Bengal Governor Jagdeep Dhankhar and Assembly Speaker Biman Banerjee with the latter on Thursday accusing the former of trying to use the Assembly premises as his political platform.

"The Governor should know his constitutional limits. He is at liberty to say anything from the Governor's house. But he cannot use the Assembly premises as a platform for expressing his grievances," Banerjee told mediapersons on Thursday. He was referring to an incident on April 14, when Dhankhar came to the Assembly to pay floral tributes to B.R. Ambedkar on his birth anniversary. There he started interacting with the media, criticising



the state government. He described West Bengal as the "gas chamber for democracy". Although the Speaker tried to mildly resist and remind him that the Assembly premises was not the ideal platform for such interactions, the Governor ignored him and continued to fire salvos at the state government. On Monday, Banerjee launched a scathing attack on Dhankhar. "The Governor

should know where to stop. The Constitution of India schedules separate set of duties for the Governor, the Chief Minister and the Speaker. The manner in which he is attacking the state government from within the Assembly premises, it is hurting the sanctity of the House," the Speaker said. Till the time this report was filed, there was no counter-reaction from the Governor on this issue.

# 'Denial of sex' can't be 'exceptional hardship' for divorce within a year: Delhi HC

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Delhi High Court has rejected a plea by a couple who mutually sought divorce before the mandated one-year cooling-off period, observing that though denial of conjugal relationship is a ground for divorce, and tantamounts to cruelty, it cannot be "exceptional hardship".

A division bench of Acting Chief Justice Vipin Sanghi and Justice Jasmeet Singh was dealing with the appeal filed by the couple challenging an order of a family court that dismissed their application under Section 14 of the Hindu Marriage Act as it was filed before the one year time.

"Once the Parliament, in its wisdom, has legislated that denial of cohabitation/ conjugal relationship over a period of one year, or more, would tantamount to cruelty, it cannot be said that denial of sex simpliciter within the period of one year, would be a case of exceptional hardship. Thus we reject the submission of the appellant that the denial of conjugal relations by both parties is such, that it causes 'exceptional hardship or exceptional depravity' to either or both of them," said the order which was reserved on April 13 and delivered on Monday.

During the course of the hearing, various judgments have been referred including the Punjab &



Haryana High Court verdict in Shivani Yadav vs Amit Yadav case which had stated: "Since the couple had stayed together only for two days, this is the sufficient ground to allow their application filed under Section 14 of the Act for waiving off the mandatory period of one year." Another case of Ratheesh M. vs Dhanya K.V. in the Kerala High Court was also referred, in which the court had noted that there is a denial of sex from the part of the petitioner and it would amount to cruelty falling under section 13(1)(ia) of the Hindu Marriage Act. While dismissing the arguments, the Delhi High Court said: "We reserve the right of the parties to move the appropriate court

independently, after the expiry of one year of separation." As per the plea, the marriage of the couple was solemnised on April 4, 2021, as per the Hindu rites and ceremonies at Ram Nagar, Uttarakhand. The bride after marriage shifted to the matrimonial home in Faridabad, Haryana. Soon after the marriage, marital differences cropped up between the parties, and from April 14, 2021, onwards, they started living separately in the same house. On July 29, 2021, the appellant left her matrimonial home and went to her parental house at Rohini, Delhi. The couple hardly lived together as husband and wife, and no child has been born out of the wedlock.



# URBAN BODIES SHOULD STRIVE FOR HIGHEST RATING IN CLEANLINESS: CM CHOUHAN

Rs 931.50 crore of Finance Commission transferred by single click. CM congratulates Urban Development and Housing Department on 35 pc more revenue than last year

Team Absolute | Bhopal

We must make efforts to get the highest star rating in the survey. Better implementation of infrastructure development works must be ensured in urban areas. We must make efforts to bring better results in Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana and PM Street Vendors Scheme. Chief Minister Chouhan said this while releasing the Rs.931 crore 50 lakh of the 15th Finance Commission's for the financial year 2021-22 to the urban bodies of the state with a single click from the Mantralaya. An amount of Rs 432 crore 50 lakh was transferred to million plus cities and Rs 499 crore to non million plus cities of the state. Chief Minister said that most of the cities have done excellent work in revenue collection. This year the civic bodies have got about 35 percent more revenue than last year for which it deserves to be congratulated. Urban bodies and officers will be rewarded for their outstanding performance.

Chouhan said that the Urban Development Department is engaged in efforts to transform the cities. Urban development works are being



undertaken at top speed. There are two categories of cities in the state. The first category is of cities with million plus population. Bhopal, Indore, Jabalpur and Gwalior are included in the cities with a population of more than 10 lakhs in the state. The second category includes cities with a population of less than 10 lakhs. The grants given to million plus cities can improve air quality, drinking water, sanitation and solid waste management. Basic grants have been given to non-million cities, which they will be able to use for development works. Urban Development and Housing Minister Bhupendra Singh said that many achievements were made during his last

tenure under the leadership of Chief Minister. In the last two years also, many important works have been done in the urban development sector. Madhya Pradesh is leading in many schemes in the country. With the amount being released today, better facilities will be developed for the citizens in the urban bodies of the state. The cleanliness work of cities has been undertaken very well in Madhya Pradesh, as a result of which Madhya Pradesh is getting various categories of awards. Madhya Pradesh is leading in the country in the works of welfare of street vendors. Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana and water conservation for which Chief Minister

Chouhan deserves to be congratulated. He has taken steps to effectively control mafia in the state. The encroached land is being made free, which will be reserved for the houses of the poor. Our cities will continue to progress like this under the leadership of Chief Minister Chouhan.

### Funds received for different works

An amount of Rs. 131 crore 50 lakh was released to million plus cities for air quality improvement and Rs. 301 crore for drinking water, sewerage and sanitation. An amount of Rs 199 crore 60 lakh has been released to non-million plus cities for local development works and Rs 299 crore 40 lakh for sanitation, sewerage, drinking water and conservation.

### CM's major instructions to urban bodies

Adequate amount is available in Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana. We must make efforts to ensure that the beneficiaries should not face any difficulty in getting installment on time. Special attention must be paid to ensure that there is no drinking water crisis in any district. Necessary preparations should be made for this.

### Roads must be repaired before the onset of monsoon.

All the cities of the state have added to the pride of the state with excellent work under the Pradhan Mantri Swanidhi Yojana. Street vendors of urban areas who have repaid the loan of Rs 10 thousand, should now be motivated to take a loan of Rs 20 thousand.

## First death reported in Khargone violence

Eight days after communal clashes broke out in Madhya Pradesh's Khargone, the first death was reported on Monday.



Team Absolute | Bhopal

The body of a person identified as Ibarish Khan, who was reported missing since April 10, was found in Indore's MY hospital morgue.

The family of the deceased identified the body at the morgue, which is around 120 km from Khargone. The family alleged that the police tried to hide the death.

The family claimed that the deceased had been missing since the day violence erupted in Khargone. A missing complaint was also lodged at the police station, family claimed.

According to the local police, Ibarish Khan was murdered by seven-eight men on the night of the clashes.

"An unidentified body was found a day after communal violence in the Anand Nagar area of Khargone had occurred," senior Khargone police officer Rohit Kashwani told reporters on Monday.

He added that Khan died of a head injury and his body was identified by his family on Sunday night.

Khan's body was kept in a freezer at Indore's MY Hospital. His family was taken to the hospital on Sunday night and that was when the body was identified as that of the missing man.

The body was handed over to the family and brought to Khargone early Monday, police said.

Ibarish Khan was a local municipality employee in Khargone and leaves behind a wife and a young son.

Deceased's family alleged that he was killed by the police and local residents when he had gone to a mosque to arrange food for iftar. The family also claimed that Ibarish Khan was last seen in police custody at Khargone police station on April 10 evening. "The people in Anand Nagar attacked my brother with weapons and crushed his head with a stone," said the deceased's brother Iqhlak Khan. According to him, the police finally told him about Ibarish Khan's death only after he threatened to go to the media. "A policeman came to me on Sunday night and told me that Ibarish's body is kept in Indore," he said.

The condition of the body indicated a brutal attack, Iqhlak said. "His one eye was damaged, there were cuts on his face and legs," he added.

On April 10, communal violence erupted in Madhya Pradesh's Khargone during the Ram Navami celebrations. Stones were hurled at the procession, triggering incidents of arson wherein some vehicles were set on fire, prompting authorities to clamp curfew in three areas and section 144 of CrPC in the entire city. Police fired tear gas shells to control the situation.

## CM PLANTED SAPLINGS OF PEEPAL, PARIJAT AND KARANJ

Bhopal: Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan planted saplings at Smart City Park with Union Minister of State for External Affairs and Culture Meenakshi Lekhi, Archaeologist Padmashri KK Mohammed and NCC cadets of BSSS College.



Chouhan planted saplings of Peepal, Parijat and Karanj. NCC cadets Aarushi Rai, Anuj Agarwal, George Musa, Divyanka Kulhare, Vaibhav Pardeshi and Prerna Ammana also planted saplings along with Chouhan. Peepal is a shade giving tree and purifies the environment. It has religious and Ayurvedic significance. According to natural science, Peepal tree releases oxygen day and night, which is important for the environment. Apart from this, Peepal tree is also called Akshay tree. Parijat plant is also called Harsingar, which is also a good medicine. Karanj plant is also used for religious purpose.

## OVER 150 BOOKED FOR DISTURBING PEACE IN MP'S NEEMUCH

OVER 150 PEOPLE HAVE BEEN BOOKED FOR ALLEGEDLY ATTEMPTING TO DISRUPT PEACE IN MADHYA PRADESH'S NEEMUCH DISTRICT.

Team Absolute | Bhopal

The development came two days after members of the Muslim community in Neemuch protested against the BJP-led state government accusing it of biased action in Khargone and Barwani districts following communal violence.

As per the official information, on Friday (April 15) after offering Namaz, a large group of people staged a protest against the Shivraj Singh Chouhan-led state government. They raised slogans against the chief



minister the state Home Minister Narottam Mishra. Meanwhile, they also allegedly called Mishra a 'terrorist' during the protest. The district police registered a case against the protesters and

booked them for disrupting peace in the town (Neemuch). Out of total, 11 have been booked by name whereas, others are unidentified, as per the police.

"Protesters have been booked under section 188 (disobedience to order dully promulgated by public servant) for violating prohibitive orders under section 144 of the CrPC," said Neemuch district police. The police said action has been taken to get the bond filled by the protesters to ensure that such incidents would not be repeated in the district. "We are monitoring the situation day and night to ensure peace in the town," police official added.

The protest was against the state government's demolition drive wherein several houses have been bulldozed following communal clashes that broke out in Khargone and Barwani districts on April 10. Since then, the state police have imposed curfew in riot-hit areas and also 144 imposed in other parts of the state.

## CMPAYS TRIBUTE TO MARTYR TATYA TOPE



Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan paid floral tributes to martyr Tatya Tope on his martyrdom day. Chouhan also garlanded the picture of

Amar Shaheed Tatya Tope in the auditorium at the residence office. Tatya Tope was the chief general of India's first freedom struggle.

His role in the Great Revolt of 1857 was significant, inspirational and

unmatched. The great revolutionary, patriot and immortal martyr Tatya Tope, the best operator of guerrilla warfare, was martyred on 18 April, 1859 in the revolution of the first freedom struggle.

## Creating Optimum Employment Opportunities Is Top Priority of State Government: Chief Minister

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has said that creating maximum employment opportunities in the state is the top priority of the state government. For this purpose, all possible cooperation and encouragement will be given by the state government to the units keen to invest in the state. Chouhan said this during a meeting with the Director of M/s Chiripal Group, Jyoti Prasad Chiripal and President Deepak Jain at Mantralaya on Monday.

Chiripal Group is willing to set up a unit of Solar Cell, Solar Glass and PV Module production in Ratlam with a capital investment of Rs. 4 thousand 600 crore in an area of about 250 acres, which will create employment opportunities for about 3 thousand people. Similarly, this group will set up a textile unit in Ratlam itself in an



area of 30 acres with an investment of Rs 800 crore, which will provide employment to 900 people. At pres-

ent 9 production units of 6 subsidiaries of Chiripal Group are operational, whose annual turnover is Rs 8

thousand crore. The unit is working in the field of education, textiles, polyfills and petrochemicals.

## HOUSE RAZED, GOVT TO REHABILITATE KHARGONE FAMILY

On Saturday, officials visited Hasina Fakhroo and her family who have taken shelter in an abandoned mosque nearby. After providing them ration, the officials took their thumb impressions, and informed them they would be moved into a multiplex.

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Days after Hasina Fakhroo's house built under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana was demolished by the district administration in the Khaskhaswadi locality of Madhya Pradesh's Khargone, the government reached out to the family over the weekend, providing them ration and exploring rehabilitation options.

Media reports printed the fact that 60-year-old Fakhroo's was one of the 12 houses demolished in the locality as part of a drive against illegal properties following clashes nearby during a Ramnavami procession a day earlier.

On Saturday (April 16) afternoon, officials from the district administration along with those from the Nagar Nigam visited Fakhroo and her family who have taken shelter in an abandoned mosque nearby. After providing them ration, the officials took the thumb impressions of family members, and informed them they would be moved into a

multiplex.

Hasina Fakhroo's son Amjad Khan said, "They (the officials) first told us they will shift us to a multiplex, but that building is in a communal area, so we refused. Then the team asked us where our old house was. We told them we have been living in Khaskhaswadi for three decades, but they still went around with locals searching for our house in different localities."

When contacted, Khargone District Collector, Anugraha P said, "The government will rehabilitate the family."

While district administration officials said the plot occupied by Hasina Fakhroo's family belonged to the revenue department, Amjad Khan showed tax receipts and electricity bills from 2017-18 based on which his father Fakhroo Pathan had applied for benefits under the PM Awas Yojana. He said the family had been living in the kuchha house on that plot in Khaskhaswadi for three decades.

Soon after the construction was completed under the PM Awas Yojna, Hasina Fakhroo

received a notice from the Khargone tehsildar on September 17, 2021, stating the plot was on government land. Asking her to submit an explanation by September 29, it also said they could face legal action including eviction. In the reply submitted to the tehsildar's office on behalf of his mother, Amjad Khan stated, "The woman (Hasina) is a widow who has constructed the house under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana. She does not have any other plot apart from this. If required, this can be investigated and verified. We request justice."

While the third and final instalment under the Awas Yojana was credited to Hasina's bank account on April 4, 2022, she received a notice on April 7 stating the house was built on encroached land and hence should be vacated. It asked them to submit a response within three days or face demolition.

A team of district officials accompanied by a police force visited Hasina Fakhroo's family at Akram Khan's cowed and took photographs and videos.

After Fakhroo Pathan - the primary applicant under the PM Awas Yojana - died in September 2020, his wife Hasina became the beneficiary. The first instalment of Rs 1 lakh under the scheme was credited into Hasina's bank account on October 28, 2020. "We moved to a makeshift shed in the plot and began constructing our house in place of the kuchcha house. We received the second instalment of Rs 1 lakh on March 31, 2021. We too spent our savings of Rs 1 lakh towards construction. We received the final instalment of Rs 50,000 on April 4, 2022," said Amjad Khan, showing the bank passbook. Meanwhile, Amjad Khan also received a call from the corporation officials to come and take a certificate dated December 31, 2021, issued by Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan congratulating his family on construction of the house under the PM Awas Yojana.

## Stop liquor sale rather than bulldozing houses: Ajay Vishnoi

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Vishnoi said in a tweet on Monday that if Madhya Pradesh has to follow Uttar Pradesh, then stop the sale of liquor from village to village. It will get more support than bulldozer and more votes.

It is to be known that for the past few days, bulldozers are going on in the state on the constructions of those who indulge in criminal activities and encroachment. In such a situation, different explanations are being discovered for the arrival of this tweet of Vishnoi. Tagging Vishnoi's tweet, Congress state president Kamal Nath's media coordinator Narendra Saluja has written, Salute to the honesty of the former minister of the state.

He accepted the fact that under Shivraj government in the state, illegal liquor is being sold indiscriminately in every village.

FORMER MADHYA PRADESH MINISTER AND BJP MLA AJAY VISHNOI IS ALWAYS IN DISCUSSIONS FOR HIS IMPECCABLE STATEMENT. ONCE AGAIN, THROUGH ONE OF HIS TWEETS, HE HAS INSTRUCTED THE GOVERNMENT TO STOP THE SALE OF LIQUOR INSTEAD OF RUNNING A BULLDOZER. CONGRESS HAS ALSO APPRECIATED THIS OUTSPOKEN STATEMENT OF VISHNOI.



EDITOR'S SPECS

## Air travel hurdle for Indians

Schengen visa is a short-term visa that allows its holder to travel freely throughout the Schengen area, which covers 26 EU countries or "Schengen States" without border controls between them. The move took place on January 1 last year. Indian citizens, without transit or regular Schengen visas, are unable to fly to the UK through European Union airlines like Lufthansa, KLM and Air France as they are stopped at the origin airports in India itself. As the UK is no longer part of the European Union, it has, post Brexit, made mandatory of for non-EU citizens to get a transit Schengen visa in order to fly to the UK on transit flights operated by its airlines. Non-EU citizens can fly to the UK without transit or regular Schengen visa only through non-stop flights or by one stop flights only through Gulf countries or Switzerland. The EU rule does not apply for Switzerland as it is not a member of the Union. However, there are several services which fly directly to the United Kingdom. After India resumed scheduled international flights, foreign airlines have started offering one-stop connections between India and the rest of the world. Following the Russia-Ukraine conflict, this one-stop business has also increased significantly. Last year, Air India had announced non-stop flights between India and the UK.

# TOUGH DAYS AHEAD FOR INDIA?

Asad Mirza

The regional economic and political developments may have a near-immediate effect on the Indian economy, apart from the internal pressures. The recent regional economic and political crises in south Asia, most of them in immediate neighbours of India, have raised concern amongst the Indian establishment. The economic turbulence in Sri Lanka, Nepal and Maldives and the political turmoil in Pakistan may affect India manifold. The economic impact of the various crises is expected to begin manifesting themselves soon, if governments of those countries fail to address the crises quickly. To accord priority to India's neighbours in their international activities, programmes and projects, was stressed at the first ever Inter-Ministerial Coordination Group (IMCG) meeting organised on April 12 in New Delhi. **Sri Lanka's economic woes** The economic turmoil in Sri Lanka is currently viewed as the most pressing foreign challenge by the MEA with diplomatic and trade ramifications. Over the years the Sri Lankan economy has failed to attract much foreign direct investment or spread its export basket, though it has transitioned into an upper-middle income country. For most part, Sri Lankan growth was sustained through international sovereign bonds and expensive short-term external borrowing. These funds were channelled into education, infrastructure, and healthcare, besides maintaining financial liquidity and promoting better macroeconomic policy. However, by April 2021, Sri Lanka's external debt had touched \$35 billion. In March, inflation zoomed to 17.5 per cent, the highest since 2015, and forex reserves dwindled to \$1.9 billion, enough only for a month's imports. Its debt-to-GDP ratio stands at an alarming 120 per cent. Not surprisingly, on April 12, the government defaulted on all its outstanding foreign dues. The country has to repay \$4 billion in debt this year. Deep political and economic mayhem has followed, as there is no money to pay for food and fuel imports. Protests have broken out countrywide. While India is under pressure to continue supporting the island country through a series of lines of credit, political dialogue with the administration of Sri Lankan Prime Minister



Mahinda Rajapaksa has not yielded results. While protests rock Sri Lanka demanding Rajapaksa's resignation, he has resisted both political as well as economic change by spurring plans of urgent economic reforms. **Nepal's economy falters** Nepalese finance minister Janardan Sharma on April 16 asked fellow Nepalese citizens living abroad to deposit funds in domestic banks as part of efforts to ensure the financial system has enough liquidity and to preserve foreign exchange reserves. By depositing their savings in Nepal, overseas Nepalese would continue to "maintain their link as well as benefit from 6 to 7 per cent interest" offered by Nepali banks, Sharma said. Though Sharma maintained that the Nepalese economy did not face a crisis and Nepal's situation could not be compared with Sri Lanka, the fact is that the Himalayan kingdom is facing its worst economic crisis in decades and increasing anti-government protests. In Nepal, remittances by overseas workers, which constitute nearly a quarter of the economy, are crucial for external payments, they fell 3 per cent to US\$5.3 billion between mid-July to mid-March, compared with a 5 per cent increase in the same period a year earlier.

**Pakistan politics** The political turmoil in Pakistan has caused a stir in India's MEA, yet many believe that it may prove to be a positive development. The country's new prime minister, like his elder brother and former prime minister, is essentially a businessman and he may try to salvage the ties between the two countries by boosting trade amongst them, as his brother tried in the past. Reports speak of a large section of the traders favouring reopening bilateral trade ties with India. Pakistani importers, especially of cotton, textiles, pharmaceuticals and chemicals and exporters of dry fruits and handicrafts are keen on the border being open once more, officials said. They added that the government expects the thaw in bilateral relations to begin from this if they happen at all. **Is China to be blamed?** Currently many theorists have blamed Sri Lanka's economic relations with China as the main driver behind the crisis. This has been called "debt-trap diplomacy" by the US. However, in reality loans from China accounted for only about 10 per cent of Sri Lanka's total foreign debt in 2020. In addition, defaults over China's infrastruc-

ture-related loans to Sri Lanka, especially the financing of the Hambantota port, are being cited as factors contributing to the crisis. But the facts don't add up. The Chinese Exim Bank financed the construction of the Hambantota port. As it was running in losses, the Sri Lankan government leased out the port for 99 years to the Chinese Merchant's Group, which paid Sri Lanka US\$1.12 billion. So in reality it actually bolstered Sri Lanka's foreign exchange reserves by US\$1.12 billion. The situation turned bad due to two economic shocks in 2019. First, there was a series of bomb blasts in churches and luxury hotels in Colombo in April 2019. These led to a steep decline in tourist arrivals, a major source of foreign exchange earning for the country. Second, the new Gotabaya government carried out irrational tax reforms. About 2 per cent of the gross domestic product was lost in revenues because of these tax cuts. Thirdly, ill thought out agricultural policies led to a drastic fall in agricultural production making more imports necessary. Due to lower export incomes, there was less money available to import food and food shortages arose. Lastly, Sri Lanka might be forced to follow a deflationary fiscal policy, which may further limit the prospects of economic revival. Though the situation in every country may seem different, yet they may have a cumulative bearing on India in the near future. It might be looked up to, to act as a big brother by Sri Lanka and Nepal. As regards to Pakistan it may prove to be a case for caution both militarily and politically, but indeed the times ahead seem to be challenging for the Indian foreign policy deliverers. Though the Indian economy overall seems resilient to external forces, yet a word of caution to some Indian states. Some of these states may have the makings of a crisis, due to their populist policies. A recent report states that most of the non-BJP ruled states, such as Punjab, Andhra Pradesh and West Bengal may end up wrecking their economies, which are under strain due to the populist policies being implemented there. So, in the near future Indian government may have to deal with both external and internal financial woes.

(Asad Mirza is a political commentator based in New Delhi. The views expressed are personal)

## international

## 41 civilians mainly women & children dead in Pak airstrikes in Afghanistan

Kabul | Agencies

Afghanistan has reported a death toll of at least 47 after Pakistani military air strikes hit the provinces of Khost and Kunar provinces, Pajhwok News reported.

Pakistani security forces carried out airstrikes on Waziristan refugees in Sperai district of southeastern Khost province and in the Shaltan district of eastern Kunar province, inflicting casualties on people.

"Forty-one civilians, mainly women and children, were killed and 22 others were wounded in air strikes by Pakistani forces near the Durand line in Khost province," Shabir Ahmad Osmani, director of information and culture in Khost told Pajhwok. Twenty-four people were killed from one family itself, reports said.

Jamshid, a tribal leader from Khost, also confirmed



that more than 40 people had died. "I went yesterday with several people to donate blood for treating the wounded in the Khost strike," Jamshid said. Another government official in Khost on condition of anonymity said he saw "42 graves" of people killed, adding that a few people were missing. "Faces and

bodies of some were charred and beyond recognition," Abdul Wahab, a religious scholar from Khost, who helped bury some victims, said. Afghanistan strongly condemned the attack and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs summoned Pakistan's ambassador to Kabul, Mansoor Ahmad Khan, in response to the attacks.

## US NUKE ENVOY ARRIVES IN S. KOREA FOR TALKS

A senior US nuclear envoy arrived in South Korea on Monday for talks to denuclearise the Korean Peninsula, according to the South Korean Foreign Ministry.

Seoul: A senior US nuclear envoy arrived in South Korea on Monday for talks to denuclearise the Korean Peninsula, according to the South Korean Foreign Ministry.



Sung Kim, US special representative for the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (North Korea), met Noh Kyu-duk, South Korea's special representative for Korean Peninsula peace and security affairs in Seoul, Xinhua news agency reported. During the meeting, Kim was quoted by Yonhap news agency as saying Washington shared Seoul's concerns about "the DPRK's escalatory actions". The US envoy noted that the US and South Korea will continue to work closely to respond "responsibly and decisively to the provocative behavior in the united context and beyond." Regarding the DPRK's recent test-firing of a new tactical guided weapon, Noh said close cooperation between Seoul and Washington will be significant to go through the critical situation. The South Korean envoy added that the allies would need to prepare for and guard against all possibilities although a door to dialogue should be left open. The DPRK's official Korean Central News agency reported Sunday that top DPRK leader Kim Jong Un observed the successful test-launch of a new-type tactical guided weapon. The US envoy is slated to stay here until Friday to meet with South Korean government officials as well as officials from the presidential transition team of President-elect Yoon Suk-yeol who is set to take office on May 10.

## Bangladesh points out discrepancies in US human rights report

The Bangladeshi government said there has been a lot of confusion in the US human rights report released recently.



Dhaka | Agencies

The Bangladeshi government said there has been a lot of confusion in the US human rights report released recently.

In a reaction to the US Department of State's 2021 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices, Bangladesh State Minister for Foreign

outright reject, things which are unacceptable," he said, Xinhua news agency reported.

Alam pointed out a number of discrepancies in the report, saying that in one section of the report, they said that in 2018, 275 extrajudicial murders took place in Bangladesh. But in another section of the report it was written that during that period 606 extrajudicial murders took place in the country, he noted.

There are major problems with the information used in the report, he said, adding that the countries that have responded have said that there are some fundamental errors.

"...The sources used in the US report are quite weak. In the recent past, we have seen that all of them have political agendas," Alam said.

## CPEC TO ADVANCE UNDER SHEHBAZ'S WATCH: PAK SENATOR

Beijing: Pakistan Senator Mushahid Hussain Sayed has said that the country's Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif will take the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) forward with new vigour and vitality, and in a rejuvenated manner, ensuring multifaceted development of the flagship project of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), Express Tribune reported. Discussing the future of bilateral relations and cross-border collaboration, the senator said that the newly-elected premier met the acting Chinese envoy on his first day in office to reiterate the importance of Pakistan's relationship with China and to express conviction to take CPEC ahead. Mushahid said that China had a very old and long-standing relationship with Shehbaz because when BRI was launched with CPEC as its centrepiece, it was taken forward by then Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif and then Chief Minister Shehbaz, Express Tribune reported. "China is number one, in terms of foreign policy priority, which the prime minister made clear when he listed the list of countries, and his formulation has been warmly welcomed in China, so we have no doubt," he added. The senator said that China is the only country for which there is across-the-board national consensus, and the entire political leadership considers it to be Pakistan's number one friend. Responding to a question about continued momentum of CPEC projects, he said that the first phase of the flagship project was completed while Nawaz was still in power.

## Turkey launches new cross-border operation in northern Iraq

Turkey said on Monday it has launched a new air and ground cross-border operation against its outlawed Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) in northern Iraq.

Ankara | Agencies

Turkey said on Monday it has launched a new air and ground cross-border operation against its outlawed Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) in northern Iraq. Turkish air forces first hit the PKK's shelters, bunkers,



troops and special forces, supported by helicopters and drones, entered the region by land, Akar said. "So far, our operation continues successfully as planned. The targets set in the first phase were achieved," he said. In a separate statement, the Turkish

Defence Ministry said the "Operation Claw-Lock" was launched after the security forces determined that the PKK was planning to initiate a large-scale attack.

The operation is in line with Turkey's self-defence rights arising from Article 51 of the UN Charter, the ministry said. Turkey regularly conducts cross-border operations on PKK bases in northern Iraq. Iraq has condemned previous airstrikes by Turkish aircraft in its northern region, stressing its rejection to the violation of sovereignty. The PKK, listed as a terrorist organisation by Turkey, has been fighting against the Turkish government for over 30 years.

## SRI LANKA TO TAKE STEPS TO STABILISE ECONOMY

Colombo: Sri Lankan Treasury Secretary Mahinda Siriwardana said on Monday that the country will take steps to stabilise the economy, including strengthening public finance. Siriwardana made the remarks as the Sri Lankan government sent a delegation to the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to seek assistance. Figures show that around 125 billion Sri Lankan rupees (\$384 million) of banknotes were printed in April and the government expenditure has also increased despite escalating foreign exchange shortages, Xinhua news agency reported. The government has to carefully manage resources and reduce the budget deficit as it has caused many problems across the economy, Siriwardana said. The official added that the government does not have enough revenues and that it is no longer in a position to get foreign loans. "The entire deficit has to be financed domestically. Given that there are limited domestic resources, the central bank is compelled to find the money," he told reporters. The Sri Lankan government decided last week to suspend repayment for all debts for an interim period till it has an orderly and consensual debt restructuring programme supported by the IMF.





# POLICE NOD COMPULSORY FOR LOUDSPEAKERS AT ALL RELIGIOUS PLACES

Team Absolute | Mumbai

In a significant move, the Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) government has made police permission compulsory for using loudspeakers at all religious places in the state, Home Minister Dilip Walse-Patil said here on Monday.

Any unauthorised use of loudspeakers at all religious places or religious functions would invite strict punitive action against the violators, he added.

Walse-Patil said that a detailed notification on the proposal with the guidelines would be issued in the next couple of days by the home department.

The MVA decision comes amid a raging controversy over the use of loudspeakers at mosques raked up last week by the Opposition Maharashtra Navnirman Sena (MNS) President Raj Thackeray and endorsed by activists of the Bharatiya Janata Party.

Among other things, Raj Thackeray had issued an 'ultimatum' of May 3 to the state government to ensure all mosques' loudspeakers are "silenced or dismantled", failing



which the MNS workers would blare out Hanuman Chalisa on loudspeakers outside mosques in retaliation, raising apprehensions of a law-and-order situation.

Under fire from various quarters, Raj Thackeray on Sunday clarified that he was not against religious activities but only opposing the use of loudspeakers which had social and health implications for all people.

## LABELLED A WITCH, WOMAN STRIPPED AND PARADED NAKED

Mumbai: A woman in Maharashtra's Nandurbar district was allegedly stripped and paraded naked by locals who suspected her of practicing witchcraft. The incident was caught on camera and the video uploaded on social media, where it went viral. Taking cognizance of the video, the Maharashtra stripped and paraded naked by locals who suspected her of practicing witchcraft. Andhashraddha Nirmoolan Samiti (MANS) has requested the district administration in Nandurbar to conduct an inquiry. Police is also investigating the incident. A MANS spokesperson said the organisation will complain about the incident to the state and central Women's Commission.

# Nawab Malik's Jail Custody Extended Till April 22

Maharashtra minister Nawab Malik was arrested on February 23 by the Enforcement Directorate in a money-laundering probe linked to the activities of fugitive gangster Dawood Ibrahim and his aides.

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Special court on Monday extended the judicial custody of Maharashtra minister Nawab Malik till April 22 even as the Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) leader complained of ill health.

Malik was produced before Special Judge RN Rokade, designated to hear cases related to the Prevention of Money Laundering Act.

The NCP leader stepped into the witness box and told the court that he has been unwell due to kidney ailments and that he has a swelling in his legs.



Malik further said that whenever he complained of pain in his legs, the jail authorities only gave him painkillers. "I want a permanent solu-

tion to my medical problems," Malik said. Malik's lawyer Kushal Mor told the court that the minister's plea filed before the Supreme Court chal-

lenging his illegal arrest and seeking immediate release is likely to be heard on April 22.

Special Judge Rokade then extended Malik's judicial custody till April 22. Malik was arrested on February 23 by the Enforcement Directorate in a money-laundering probe linked to the activities of fugitive gangster Dawood Ibrahim and his aides.

The NCP leader was in ED's custody till March 7 before he was sent to judicial custody till March 21, which was later extended till April 4. On April 4, his custody was extended again till April 18.



Governor of Maharashtra, Bhagat Singh Koshyari, released a Commemorative Postage Stamp on Dr. Pandurang Vaman Kane at Raj Bhavan.

## 'Power crisis in Maharashtra due to MVA govt mismanagement...': BJP

SPEAKING TO REPORTERS HERE, BJP LEADER GIRISH MAHAJAN SAID THE MVA GOVERNMENT WAS HARASSING PEOPLE, FARMERS AND INDUSTRIALISTS BY CREATING AN "ARTIFICIAL POWER CRISIS" AND WAS THEN BLAMING THE CENTRE FOR IRREGULAR COAL SUPPLY.

Team Absolute | Mumbai

BJP leader Girish Mahajan on Monday said the power crisis in Maharashtra was caused due to mismanagement of the MVA government and the previous Devendra Fadnavis dispensation had ensured the state did not face load-shedding even for a day. Speaking to reporters here,



Mahajan said the MVA government was harassing people, farmers and industrialists by creating an "artificial power crisis" and was then blaming the Centre for irregular coal supply.

Not a single power plant has stopped functioning due to shortage of coal as the Centre was ensuring regular supply, Mahajan claimed.

"The power crisis is taking place due to shoddy planning and mismanagement by the state government. When demand is at its peak, power plants generating 2000 MW are undergoing maintenance work, whereas such procedures should be done during low demand," he said. "Power plants are

being kept shut deliberately, an artificial power shortage is being created, then electricity is bought at higher rates to earn commission, cuts. Portray a picture that there is coal shortage and then buy coal from private firms at higher prices and earn cuts," Mahajan alleged.

Talking about the alleged conspiracy mentioned by special public prosecutor Pravin Chavan to "finish" BJP leaders in the state, Mahajan said the issue must be probed by the Central Bureau of Investigation as it looks like a conspiracy of the state government, its ministers etc and a probe by the CID would not ensure justice

## RAPIST GETS SEVEN-YEAR RI

Mumbai: A 31-year-old man from Bhiwandi city in Maharashtra was convicted by a special POCSO court for raping a teenage girl in 2018 and sentenced to rigorous imprisonment for seven years. Special judge V Virkar also imposed a fine of Rs 8,000 on the convict, identified as Saddam alias Guddulstrail Ansari. The prosecution examined a total of nine witnesses during the trial. Ansari had asked the 16-year-old girl to accompany him on his motorcycle on April 17, 2018, when she stepped out of her house, the prosecution said. He held her captive until the parents of the girl traced her to the room on April 18, the court was told. The court convicted Ansari under various charges, including rape and wrongful confinement, of the Indian Penal Code and the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act.

# Experimental art and architecture space launched in Mumbai

'IF.BE' recently launched their new experimental architecture and art space in a re-fashioned and conserved Ice Factory.

Team Absolute | New Delhi

'IF.BE' recently launched their new experimental architecture and art space in a re-fashioned and conserved Ice Factory.

Situated in Mumbai's oldest dockyards in Ballard Estate, 'IF.BE' has been revamped into a space that blends its past and the future and houses exhibition spaces, a library, a restaurant, a cafe and a performance venue. It has been launched with a two-week exhibition titled

'Refraction: The (Re)Making of the Ice Factory', curated by Arjun Malik and Parul Thacker, which features the past and present architecture of the Ice Factory. Partners Kamal Malik, Abhijit Mehta and Amardeep Singh hope that this initiative will enable them to preserve Ballard Estate's industrial heritage by offering glimpses of the building's past, be it the ice freezing apparatus preserved under glass at the entrance or maintaining the building's functioning overhead crane. 'IF.BE', designed by architects Arjun and Kamal Malik, will be made up of five spaces. 'The Substation' will be used as a reading room for art, architecture and design material; 'The Cathedral' will function as an exhibition space; 'The Banyan Tree Cafe' situated under the shade of an ancient banyan tree is an all-day



cafe committed to wholesome and healthy eating; 'Native Bombay', a restaurant and bar, will offer a contemporary spin on regional Indian cuisine; and 'The Ice Factory' will be a performance venue which will be used for architecture-led exhibitions, film screenings and performances to conferences, workshops and private events.

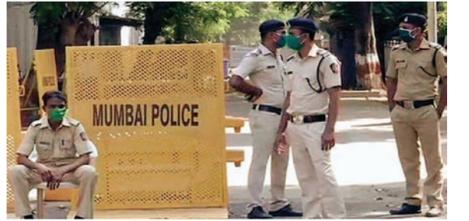
IFBE has been designed to be fluid so the spaces can be easily reconfigured depending on the nature of the event or performance. Kamal Malik says, "The acronym IFBE was coined to pay homage to the location's rich heritage. It also alludes to the independent words 'IF' [suggestive of endless possibilities and a sense of wonder] and 'BE' [a counterweight that provides balance and (re)solutions]. IFBE represents a platform where existing behaviours and perceptions are challenged, where open dialogue moves from the currently trending to the truly relevant, where pluralism, self-expression and innovation abound, where architecture, design and the arts finally move beyond their own aesthetically bound definition to becoming instruments that drive holistic and enduring change."

## CURFEW IMPOSED IN ACHALPUR AFTER TWO GROUPS CLASH OVER REMOVAL OF RELIGIOUS FLAGS

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Owing to the violence that erupted after members of two communities pelted each other with stones over the removal of religious flags, the authorities on Monday clamped curfew in Achalpur city in Amravati district of Maharashtra. According to the officials, police had to resort to firing tear gas shells to control the situation.

Additional Superintendent of Police, Shashikant Satav, said that 22 persons from both the groups have been taken into custody after the incident which occurred around Sunday midnight and the situation is under control



now. The exact number of injured persons is not known yet. Police said residents put up flags of various religions atop the Khidki Gate and the Dulha Gate at the main entrance of Achalpur, located 48 km away from Amravati district headquarters, every year during various festivals. "On Sunday midnight, some anti-social elements

removed flags of religion, leading to an altercation which escalated into stone-pelting. Police used tear gas shells to disperse the crowd," a police inspector said. However, the timely intervention by SRPF (State Reserve Police Force) and local police brought the situation under control, he added.

## Bombay HC seeks step-wise report on tackling child marriages from Maharashtra govt

The Bombay High Court on Monday asked the Maharashtra government to explain the steps it has taken to prohibit child marriage.

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Observing that there were hardly any First Information Reports (FIRs) registered against prevailing child marriages, the Bombay High Court on Monday asked the Maharashtra government to explain the steps it has taken to prohibit the practice.

The high court was hearing a petition filed by Advocate Ajinkya Udane,

who stated that many child marriages go unreported and that the actual number of such marriages is much higher than the official figures. The Public interest litigation (PIL) had sought the implementation of the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act (PCMA). During the hearing on Monday, the Bench of Justices AA Sayed and Abhay Ahuja was informed by Advocate Asim Sarode, appearing for the petitioner, that about 1 lakh child marriages of minor girls were done in Maharashtra. In this context, it was important to involve the State Child Rights Commissions to implement the law in all 36 districts, he argued. Sarode also cited an article in a regional newspaper which stated that in the

last two years, there had been 1,500 instances of child marriage stopped in one district of the state. "There hardly seems to be any FIRs registered," the Bench remarked, asking the Maharashtra to apprise it of the steps taken by the state to ensure that the practice of child marriage is curbed. Additional Government Pleader Reena Salunkhe, appearing for the respondent-authorities, informed the Court that rules under the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act have been formulated and a committee had been instituted to look into its effective implementation. The Bench directed the government to submit an affidavit outlining the steps taken and those proposed to be taken by June 13, 2022.

## Bombay HC appoints committee to curb malpractices in Maharashtra Education Department

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The Aurangabad bench of Bombay High Court has formed a committee to investigate the Maharashtra government's Education Department's malpractices. The committee will be led by retired justice PV Hardas. The bench of justices RD Dhanuka and SG Mehare was hearing a Public interest litigation (PIL) filed by a person named Brijmohan Mishra who sought an order and direction against the 'State of Maharashtra' to initiate administrative action, including recovering the salary paid to those appointed as against inadmissible posts vis-a-vis criminal action. The complaint was filed on the basis of the Deputy Director of Education's report against the Education Department's fraudulent wing, private management, and its head teachers who were directly

responsible for creating forged and fraudulent student databases. Mishra's allegation was that on the state government's record, a large number of students are alleged to have been admitted to various schools granted aid by the state government, and a large number of teachers and other staff are appointed by such schools. According to the petitioner, the number of students allegedly admitted by various schools is inflated by a large number of such schools working in connivance with some of the state government officers who are authorised to grant sanction for grant-in-aid and other facilities to these schools for the purpose of imparting education to these students. The bench noted that the state government had not disputed some of the malpractices brought to light by the petitioner in Public Interest Litigation and had already taken certain steps to

control the malpractices occurring in the Education Department. The culprits who benefit from said malpractice by diverting public money by inflating the number of students in various aided schools should be penalised with appropriate action," said the bench. The court observed that the affidavits filed by the state government indicated that certain amounts were recovered by the Education Department from some of the schools, but "the action taken by the state government is not even to the extent of 5 per cent," the court stated. During the hearing, the court suggested that a committee be formed to look into the serious allegations of malpractices raised by the petitioner in the PIL and to recommend remedial measures to overcome the problems of malpractices in the Education Department and to prevent such malpractice in the future, and the learned counsel for

both parties fairly suggested a few names without recording their consent. "We accordingly appoint a committee of Justice PV Hardas [Retired], High Court Justice Bombay, Aditi, Ekbote, Scientist NIC Pune and Mr AB Girase, Counsel of this Court, as members of the committee. It is made clear that the committee shall be headed by Justice Hardas," ordered the bench. In its report, the committee will consider whether any of the stakeholders can be held accountable for the alleged malpractices. The Registrar (Administration), High Court Bench at Aurangabad will provide all necessary facilities for the committee. The committee's honorarium and reimbursement of expenses, if any, will be considered at a later stage. The court ordered the committee to submit its report in a sealed envelope on or before July 31. The court will next hear the PIL on August 1.



## CARA DELEVINGNE MEETS QUEER COMMUNITY AT LGBT PUB

Los Angeles | Agencies

**M**odel Cara Delevingne recorded a show called 'Planet Sex' at one of London's oldest and most treasured LGBT venues - the Royal Vauxhall Tavern. The visit might even have inspired the star to get into drag.

Openly bisexual Delevingne, snuck in to the venue to interview members of the queer community as part of her six-part investigation into human sexuality.

An insider reveals: "The Royal Vauxhall Tavern - affectionately known as the RVT - is famous for being very inclusive. It celebrates drag kings as well as drag queens and makes a huge effort to increase visibility for some of the most marginalised individuals in the LGBTQ+ community."

"Cara was thrilled to visit such an iconic venue in a professional capacity and learn more about its history as she's had a few nights out there herself in the past. Since landing the presenting gig, which is somewhat out of her comfort zone, Cara has been learning more about those who are playing with gender as part of their art and performances." It's inspired her to incorporate more gender-bending elements into her own work. She might even be getting into drag herself."

The model-actress happily posed for pictures with pub staff while filming the programme. She even took a photograph with the pub manager.

## BTS to drop new album, 'We Are Bulletproof', on June 10

Seoul | Agencies

**K**-pop sensation BTS is ready to drop a new album in June. According to Yonhap, BTS's agency here said this on Sunday.

"BTS will be back with another new album on June 10, 2022," Big Hit Music said in a statement posted on BTS's fan community Weverse.

"Details on the new album will be provided in a separate notice at a later date."

The septet's next release has been predicted

vacation.

Moreover, the group unveiled the schedule on the last day of its 'Permission To Dance On Stage - Las Vegas' concerts held Saturday, showing the tagline 'We Are Bulletproof' on the screen at the very end of the event, with the date '2022.6.10'.

The upcoming album will be BTS' first official release since its second English single

'Butter' in July last year, which sold nearly 2 million copies in its first week of release.

If the new album contains a Korean-language song, it will be the first one since its last full-length album 'BE' in November 2020.

Also, the scheduled release of the new album roughly coincides with the septet's

ninth debut

anniversary on June 13.

The group has annually celebrated its debut anniversary with fan meetings, concerts and other special events for one or two weeks.



as Big Hit Music said in December last year that the group was planning to focus on preparations for a new album and a concert after the months long

Los Angeles | Agencies

**A**ctress and comedienne Rebel Wilson has shared the secret behind her remarkable weight loss transformation. Since embarking on her self-titled "year of health" in 2020, she has lost more than 34.9 kgs and has also managed to keep the weight off since reaching her goal, reports mirror.co.uk.

The 42-year-old has shared that alongside a gruelling exercise regime, her new healthy look is partially down to following the Mayr Method diet plan.

The diet encourages good eating practices like chewing food thoroughly, eliminates snacking and reduce gluten and dairy intake, while focusing on high-alkaline foods such as vegetables and fish.

The 'Pitch Perfect' actress starts each day with a big breakfast, with meals getting smaller in portion size throughout the day as part of the plan. Breakfasts might include a vegetable omelette or an avocado cream with smoked salmon, reports mirror.co.uk.

An ideal lunch would be two vegetables with some fish or carbohydrate (not both), at around 3 p.m. The diet promotes a smaller portion of protein and veggies for dinner or no dinner at all. Her plan also encourages drinks of water or green tea.

The Australian actress kick-started her weight loss at a wellness centre in Austria where sugar, alcohol and caffeine are banned, dinner is frowned upon and guests chew every mouthful 40 times.

Rebel Wilson reveals daily diet that helped her shed 34.9 kgs



## JENNIFER ANISTON TURNS TO PROFESSIONAL HELP TO DEAL WITH DECADES OF INSOMNIA

Los Angeles | Agencies

**A**ctress Jennifer Aniston should no longer have any problems falling asleep. The "Friends" alum revealed that she had turned to professional help after decades of dealing with horrible insomnia.

In an interview with People, Jennifer talked about her struggle with insomnia throughout the years. It had become a huge problem that it affected her daily lives.

According to aceshowbiz.com, the superstar actress finally sought help from a doctor which is something she "absolutely recommends people do." She also joined a new campaign, "Seize the Night and Day", to advocate about the importance of getting help for insomnia and where people can find advice to deal with their own sleep issues.

"The Morning Show" star confessed that she did not consider her sleeping problem as a priority in the past, resulting in her putting off to get medical treatment. However, in the last few years, she realised that she needed to fix it.

"It became something that I really was struggling with. It used to be the last thing on the list," she told the outlet, "but you can't really abide by the three pillars of health -- which are diet, exercise and sleep -- if you can't really exercise and you can't really eat right if you haven't slept well because your body clock is so completely thrown off."

In addition to professional help, Jennifer found a nighttime ritual that helps her sleep better at night.



## Due to global boom of Korean content 'Yaksha' is hit: Hae-soo

Seoul | Agencies

**A**ctor Park Hae-soo has credited the rising popularity of his latest Netflix film 'Yaksha: Ruthless Operations' to the recent worldwide reception of Korean pop culture led by 'Squid Game' and BTS.

'Yaksha' is an action-packed spy thriller, revolving around Kang-in (Sul Kyung-ku), a notorious leader of a secret operation team, dubbed Black Ops team, in the northeastern Chinese city of Shenyang, and Ji-hoon (Park), an ambitious prosecutor assigned to inspect the Shenyang team. According to Yonhap, released on April 8, the Netflix movie debuted at No. 3 on the streamer's official weekly viewership chart for non-English films for the week of April 4-10.

"It is a unique spy movie made in Korea and set in the Chinese city of Shenyang," Park said in an online media interview.

"Many Korean pieces have well met demand of global audiences and 'Yaksha' benefited from it, I think."

## Hybrid documentary 'Like an Island' wins top award at Visions du Reel

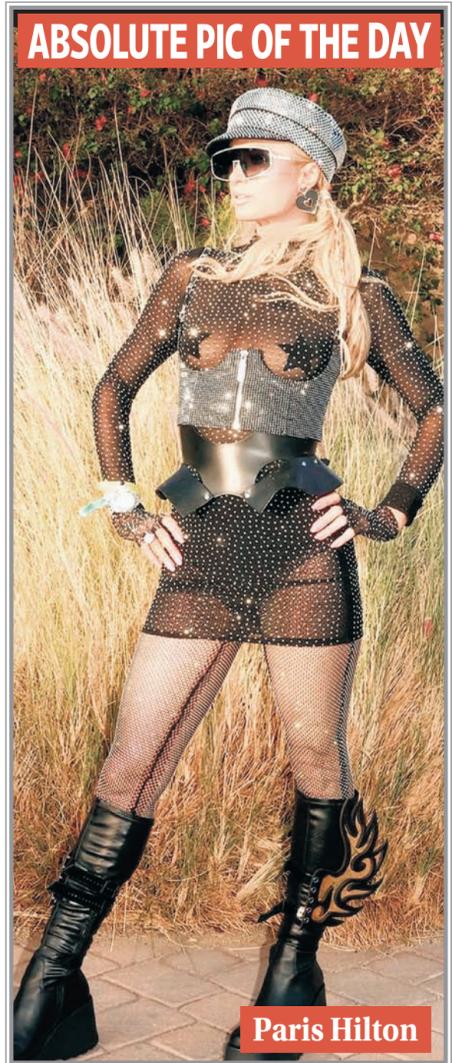
Los Angeles | Agencies

**L**ike an Island, a hybrid documentary fable tinged with magical realism by Swiss director Tizian Buchi, has won the Grand Jury Prize at international documentary film festival Visions du Reel in Nyon, Switzerland. According to 'Variety', the debut feature had its world premiere at the festival, bearing testimony to the event's reputation as a launchpad for new talent and its tradition for hybrid fiction-reality films.

A total of seven first features are among the winners. It is the first time since 2013 that a Swiss film has picked up the festival's top prize. "A small urban island becomes the metaphor of contemporary Europe and lends itself to a deep reflection about the absurdity of borders, rules, fences and barriers." A brilliant observation, a surprising wondering, that rewrites the coordinates of geo-

graphical spaces in universal terms," said the jury, composed of filmmaker Jessica Beshir, the winner of last year's Grand Prix, Beatrice Fiorentino, general delegate of the Venice Film Festival's Critics' Week, and Jovan Marjanovic, director of the Sarajevo Film Festival.

The runner-up Special Jury Award went to 'Bitterbrush' by Emelie Mahdavian, a doc about two female range riders in the American West, which made a splash when it premiered in Telluride, for its cinematically triumphant, raw, yet tender, portrayal of two women's nomadic existence in this rewrite of the classic Western genre," the jury said. Russian director Marusya Syroechkovskaya's debut feature, 'How to Save a Dead Friend', received a Special Mention, for its "punk rock attitude in skillfully piecing together a story of another lost generation in Russia, according to the jury.



Paris Hilton



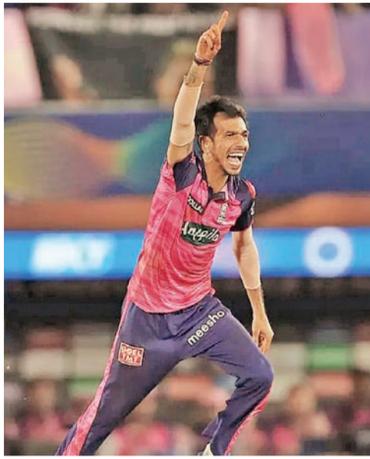
## IPL 2022

# CHAHAL'S HAT-TRICK, BUTTLER'S TON HELP RAJASTHAN ROYALS BEAT KKR BY 7 RUNS

Mumbai | Agencies

Out of favour Indian spinner Yuzvendra Chahal claimed a hat-trick after Englishman Jos Buttler had blasted a century as Rajasthan Royals defeated Kolkata Knight Riders by 7 runs in a topsy-turvy encounter in Match 30 of IPL 2022 at the Brabourne Stadium here on Monday.

Chahal overshadowed some brilliant batting by Shreyas Iyer (85) and Aaron Finch (58) to claim the wickets of Shreyas, Shivam Mavi and Pat Cummins off successive deliveries in the 17th over and turned the match on its head. He ended with 5/40 in his four overs. But there was some more drama in store in the match as Umesh Yadav and Sheldon Jackson dragged KKR to the verge of victory, 11 runs off the last six deliveries before they fell short by seven runs in the edge-of-the-seat thriller. It looked like KKR were cruising to victory after opener Aaron Finch struck a quick-fire 58 of 28 balls and skipper Shreyas Iyer, who hammered 85 off 51 deliveries. Both Finch and Shreyas shared a partnership of 106 runs for the second wicket in quick time. But Chahal turned the match on its head by claiming the 21st hat-trick of Indian Premier League (IPL) as he dismissed Shreyas Iyer, trapped lbw trying to whip a delivery pitching on the middle. On the next delivery of the 17th over, Chahal had Shivam Mavi caught by Riyan Parag and completed his hat-trick when Pat Cummins edged back to Sanju Samson -- going off for a lengthy celebration. That completed



a five-wicket haul for Chahal as he had claimed the wickets of Nitish Rana and Venkatesh Iyer earlier -- the pencil-thin spinner ending with 5/40 off his four overs.

Just when it looked like Rajasthan Royals would wrap up the innings with KKR needing 38 runs off 18 balls and two wickets in hand, Umesh Yadav

blasted 20 runs off the 18th over bowled by Trent Boult and raise KKR's hopes again. He and Sheldon Jackson took made it 11 needed off six balls but could not complete the task as both of them were out in the last over bowled by Obed McCoy as the Knight Riders ended with 210 all out, falling short by seven runs.

Earlier, Englishman Jos Buttler (103) struck his second century of IPL 2022 to help Rajasthan Royals post a massive 217/5 in 20 overs.

Buttler, opening the innings, blasted nine boundaries and five sixes as he shared vital partnerships of 97, for the opening wicket with Devdutt Padikkal (24), and 67 for the second with skipper Sanju Samson, who played a superb cameo of 38 off 19 balls, to put Rajasthan Royals on course for a big total. Shimron Hetmyer (26 not out off 13 balls) hammered fellow West Indies star Andre Russell for 18 runs in the 20th over, including sixes of successive balls and a four, as Royals set Knight Riders 218 to win the match. But in the end, Rajasthan Royals held their nerves to secure a narrow win, thanks to Chahal and Obed McCoy's heroic efforts.

### Brief scores:

Rajasthan Royals 217/5 in 20 overs (Jos Buttler 103, Sanju Samson 38; Shimron Hetmyer 26 not out; Sunil Narine 2/21) beat Kolkata Knight Riders 210 all out in 19.4 overs (Aaron Finch 58, Shreyas Iyer 85, Umesh Yadav 21; Yuzvendra Chahal 5/40, Obed McCoy 2/41) by 7 runs.

# I-League: Rajasthan United secure playoff spot

Kolkata | Agencies

Rajasthan United secured their spot in the Championship Playoff after a 0-0 draw against Sreenidi Deccan, at the Naihati Stadium here on Monday.

Rajasthan dominated the game and it seemed they would come out on top but eventually they had to settle for a third consecutive draw.

Just forty seconds into the game, Rajasthan United stated their intent as Pritam Singh was picked perfectly in the box by Pedro Manzi. Singh's effort was blocked and it flew out for an early corner. Minutes later, Manzi had the opportunity to put his side ahead in the game after a quick 1-2 with Sardor Jakhonov. Unfortunately for the striker, the final pass was a tad too heavy.

Sreenidi Deccan striker David Munoz was having a lonely game up top as the opening ten minutes were dominated by Rajasthan United. However, the



Columbian pounced on a poor pass from Shilton D'Silva and registered his side's first proper attack. His shot, eventually, flew off-target. Moments later, the ball was back in the other half and Hamza Kheir blocked Jakhonov's attempt at goal.

Both teams had plenty of opportunities to draw first blood but poor finishing let them down. Sreenidi were forced into making a substitution to take half-time substitute Rosenberg Gabriel off after an unfortunate injury to the winger. Midway through the second half, substitute

Louis Ogana sprinted down the right and played it in towards Phalguni Singh. Singh's effort sailed over the bar again. Sreenidi Deccan's best chance of the second half fell to Lal Chungnunga. The defender smashed the ball on-target from a free-kick close to the box but it was cleverly headed out for a corner by Pedro Manzi who was tracking back towards the goal line. That was the Spaniard's last contribution to the game as he was taken off and replaced by youngster Gyamar Nikum.

# Umran Malik is knocking at Team India doors, say cricket greats



Former West Indies cricketer Ian Bishop has been watching Umran Malik since his IPL debut last year and the legendary pacer believes if he keeps himself fit, he'll play for India. "I've been excited about this guy since I saw him bowl last year. Genuine pace, you cannot go to a supermarket and buy that. You can train someone to master line and length but can't teach someone how to bowl fast. If he stays fit, he's going to play for India and international cricket," Bishop said on Cricket Live on Star Sports. Former India captain Sunil Gavaskar is impressed with Umran's pace and accuracy. The batting great claimed the right-arm quick is going to play for India.

Mumbai | Agencies

Sunrisers Hyderabad fast bowling sensation Umran Malik is leaving everyone impressed with his express pace and accuracy in the IPL 2022.

Cricket greats like Ian Bishop, Sunil Gavaskar and Dale Steyn are excited to watch this seamer from Jammu and Kashmir do so well in the tournament, and everyone is of the view that he has a bright future ahead.

Umran started his IPL stint as a net bowler for Sunrisers Hyderabad is now a vital cog in the team's pace attack. While giving a peek at his formative years, the right-arm quick revealed that he earned a reputation in his neighbourhood with his natural ability to bowl at a genuine pace.

"Umran Malik has been very-very impressive with his speed but more than his speed, it's his accuracy (that's impressed). A lot of guys who bowl at that speed tend to spray the ball around but Umran bowls very few wide deliveries. If he can control the wickets down the leg side, he will be a tremendous bowler because that will mean he'll be attacking the stumps all the time, and with his pace, it's not easy to hit straight.

# RAYUDU BECOMES 10TH INDIAN CRICKETER IN IPL TO CROSS 4,000 RUNS

Pune: Four-time IPL champion

Chennai Super Kings player Ambati Rayudu's 46-run efforts against the Gujarat Titans might have gone in vain at the MCA Stadium here on Sunday night, but the right-hand batter managed to cross the magical figure of 4,000 IPL runs in the thrilling match.

The 36-year-old Rayudu became the 10th Indian batter overall to achieve the feat in the IPL. Rayudu, who has played 55 ODIs and averages a commendable 47.05, was picked up by the Super Kings in 2018 and was once again picked by the team ahead of IPL 2022. He has scored 1,628 runs for the Super Kings at a strike rate of 127.88. Rayudu scored his 46 off 31 balls in a losing cause. Two other Super Kings who have managed the feat are Suresh Raina (5529) and former skipper Mahendra Singh Dhoni.



# Chelsea vs Liverpool in FA Cup final; Arsenal, Tottenham give Man Utd top-four hopes

London | Agencies

Chelsea will play Liverpool in the FA Cup final after a deserved 2-0 win against Crystal Palace on Sunday night.

Liverpool booked their place with a 3-2 win against Manchester City, who paid for first-half mistakes on Saturday afternoon.

In the Premier League, Tottenham missed a chance to strengthen their grip on fourth place when Leandro Trossard's last-minute goal condemned them to a 1-0 defeat at home to Brighton, who had last weekend won away to Arsenal.

Arsenal slipped to sixth in the table after Jan Bednarek's 44th-minute goal and a series of excellent saves from Fraser Forster condemned them to a 1-0 defeat away to Southampton.

Manchester United leapfrog Arsenal thanks to Cristiano Ronaldo's hat-trick in a 3-2 win at home to bottom side Norwich City, Xinhua reports. Ronaldo opened the scoring in the seventh minute and doubled his side's advantage just after the half-hour, but United still lacked cohesion and Kieran Dowell



and Teemu Pukki drew Norwich level before Ronaldo struck a 76th minute free kick through their defensive wall.

Burnley's first game since Sean Dyche's surprise sacking on Friday ended in a 1-1 draw away to West Ham, which does little to help their battle against relegation. Tomas Soucek levelled for West Ham in the 74th minute

and the home side would have gone on to claim all three points but for some excellent saves from Burnley keeper, Nick Pope. Bruno Guimaraes' 95th-minute header sealed Newcastle's fight-back after conceding an Ademola Lookman opener at home to Leicester City.

# Delhi Capitals under quarantine following Covid scare; cancel travel to Pune: Reports

Mumbai | Agencies

IPL 2020 runners-up Delhi Capitals had to cancel their scheduled travel to Pune ahead of their match against Punjab Kings on Wednesday due to a Covid-19 outbreak scare in their camp, says a report in Cricbuzz.

The report also said that the whole team is under quarantine with tests to take place on Monday as well as Tuesday after an unnamed player tested positive for Covid-19 on Rapid Antigen Test (RAT) and would undergo an RT-PCR test to confirm the result.

Delhi have been staying at The Taj Mahal Palace Hotel in Mumbai for playing in IPL 2022.

"They will be quarantined in their rooms with door-to-door Covid-19 tests scheduled for today and tomorrow. It is understood that another player has now tested positive on the Rapid Antigen Test and will undergo further RT-PCR test to confirm the result," said the report.



Previously on Friday, the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) said that Delhi's physiotherapist Patrick Farhart had tested positive for Covid-19 and was under isolation. "Delhi Capitals physio Patrick Farhart has been tested positive for COVID-19. He is being closely monitored by the DC Medical Team at the moment," stated the release.

With another Covid-19 scare in the Delhi camp, the report said that the team's next course of action is being discussed with the BCCI, especially with their match against Punjab scheduled for Wednesday at MCA Stadium.

# Tactically Joe has not got it and never had it: Geoffrey Boycott

London | Agencies

Former England cricketer Geoffrey Boycott feels that Joe Root never had the tactical nous to be an efficient Test skipper.

He added that though Root won universal admiration for his behaviour, he could never leave an impact as a Test captain for England with his cricketing tactics.

On April 16, Root stepped down as England's Test captain after captaining the side in 64 matches, registering 27 wins, the most by any men's Test captain from the country in the longest format of the game. But with England winning just one out of its last 17 Tests and losing men's Ashes 4-0 followed by a 1-0 series



defeat in the West Indies last month, calls for Root's resignation increased and culminated with him stepping down on Saturday.

"Tactically Joe has not got it and never had it. If it's not there I don't believe you can

learn it. It is instinct, a feel for the changing situations of a match and some experience helps. Setting fields and getting bowlers to bowl to them is crucial to any chance of winning. Having different plans for every opposition batsman is vital," wrote Boycott in his column for The Telegraph on Monday.

"Captaincy is tactical awareness and man management of players. The players and public all like Joe so a dressing room with Joe in charge is bound to be a good place, but that alone doesn't win matches. Being smart and clever with a cricket brain has more impact," added Boycott, who played 108 Tests for England.

# Made a big embarrassment of myself here: McCullum recalls path to unbeaten 158 in IPL's first match

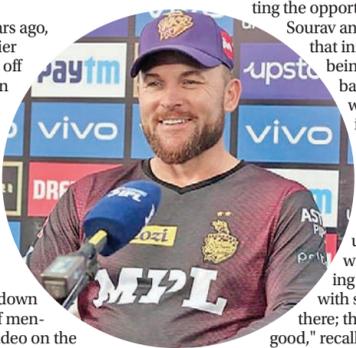
Mumbai | Agencies

On this day, 15 years ago, the Indian Premier League (IPL) got off to a blistering start when Brendon McCullum blasted an unbeaten 158 off 73 balls for Kolkata Knight Riders to set the tone for the league to change the cricketing world forever.

Cut to now, McCullum, the head coach of Kolkata, went down memory lane with chief mentor David Hussey in a video on the league's official website, recalling events which led from his circumspect start making way for a breath-taking one-man onslaught over Royal Challengers Bangalore (RCB) in the inaugural match of IPL.

"Look I don't have too many memories, to

be honest. It's a bit blurry but I remember getting the opportunity to bat with you, Sourav and Ricky throughout that innings. I remember being on zero off eight balls to start. My mind was ticking by thinking, 'really made a big embarrassment of myself here'. "Then, it was a little bit of fate and things were written under the stars. I think with a little bit of fighting and luck on my way with swinging here and there; thankfully it came off good," recalled McCullum. Post the blistering knock, McCullum's value as a big-hitter and later as a leader soared incredibly in the cricketing world. The former New Zealand skipper was happy in playing a minuscule role into making IPL the brand it currently is.



# No better player than Sehwag who could play my spin: Sunil Narine

Mumbai | Agencies

The West Indian mystery spinner, who will play his 150th game for KKR later on Monday completing 10 years with the franchise, when asked who he thought played him best, said, "I will probably have to say Virender Sehwag. I always found it tough because he was a guy who always kept the game going no matter what situation the team was in, he kept batting the way he did."

Even though KKR are placed in mid-table in the IPL following three wins and the same number of losses, Narine has so far in the season emerged the most economical bowler, with an economy of around five runs per over. He has also conceded the second fewest boundaries for any bowler to have bowled a minimum of 15 overs this season.



Kolkata Knight Riders all-rounder Sunil Narine has said that in all the years of playing IPL for his franchise, he has not come across a better cricketer than Virender Sehwag who could play his spin.

Asked how he manages to bog down the hard-hitters in a tournament like the IPL, the 33-year-old said that it basically comes down to keeping things simple.

"It's basically if I bowl a bad ball and get hit for a six, obviously I have to bowl a better ball. If I bowl a good ball and the batter hits it for a six, I don't try to read too much into it. I try to bowl maybe the same ball because batters don't quite the same shot consistently, they try something else. I try to keep it as simple as possible."

Quizzed about a reported request made by Sachin Tendulkar to the broadcasters of the 2012 Champions League T20 tournament to provide him with the footage of his bowling, Narine said it felt nice knowing that the greatest batter ever wanted to study his deliveries.



## KAJAL PISAL: A CAREER IN ENTERTAINMENT IS NEVER EASY

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actress Kajal Pisal, currently seen in TV show 'Sif Tum', says people should be mentally healthy to achieve a successful career in showbiz while dealing with different barriers.

She says: "A career in entertainment industry is never easy. To pursue a career here one needs to be ready to accept insults, partiality, body/age shaming, sexual remarks and also discouragements. If one can happily ignore such barriers and keep working hard and flaunt their skills to win audience hearts that can only make you successful else the situation can make you fall into depression."

"You may face financial crisis, stay jobless for long is a huge risk of our showbiz. One needs to be strong to deal with all such circumstances."

As April is celebrated as Stress Awareness Month since 1992 to raise awareness of the causes and cures for our modern stress epidemic.

Kajal highlights the ways that she manages to keep herself happy.

She adds: "One needs to be aware that nothing is permanent everyone experiences good and both time. Everyone in the world deals with stress, and many people have overcome stressful situations. You are not alone."



## SAMANTHA'S ADVICE TO HER YOUNGER SELF: NEVER GET TATTOOED

Team Absolute | Hyderabad

Actress Samantha Ruth Prabhu recently had a question-and-answer session on Instagram.

One of her fans had asked the 'Majili' actress to reveal what kind of a tattoo Samantha wants to see herself inked with.

The 'Rangasthalam' actress bluntly replied saying that she now dislikes getting inked. "My advice to my younger self would be not to get a tattoo."

Ever!! Never ever get tattooed", the actress stressed. Samantha is known to have three tattoos, all of which are

related to her ex-husband Naga Chaitanya. Samantha's first tattoo reads 'YMC,' which is an abbreviation for Sam and Naga's first film together, 'Ye Maaya Chesave'. The second tattoo, which reads 'Chay,' is inked on her right rib, while the third tattoo is more unique, as both Chaitu and Samantha inked the same tattoo of two arrows on their forearms. On the work front, Samantha will be seen in 'Shakuntalam' and 'Yashoda' next.

South Indian cinema is an inspiration to all of us: Anil Kapoor

## Yet to get my due despite acting in popular shows: Piya Valecha

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actress Piya Valecha, who was previously seen in popular shows like 'Choti Sarrdaarni' and 'Imlie', feels analysing the character before acting is important for actors. She says: "No matter how many years an actor works or working from. It's so important to get that one right role to change the career graph. When I started I kept getting shows and I kept doing my work. I never strategise my career or work. I was new to showbiz. But now I understand the fact that it's very important to analyse the role you are acting for."

Piya says for an actor it is important to play an iconic role once in their career to get recognition.

She continues: "As an actor you definitely need that one right role or character to boost your career and make it recognised. Unless you do this no matter how many years you work you never get that satisfaction of being an actor and after getting that one hit successful show or role you recreate yourself."

Piya, known for featuring in shows such as 'Saam Daam Dand Bhed', 'Baalveer', 'Bahu Hamari Rajni Kant' and 'Dilli Wali Thakur Gurls', says she is yet to get her due.

"I'm grateful to be associated with popular shows but I'm yet to get my own due. I'm waiting to act for a well-written role. A good script and good content is only key for a successful acting career. I want to act in the right direction by randomly taking up any show from now on," she concludes.



Team Absolute | Mumbai

Bollywood star Anil Kapoor recently shared his views on the success that south Indian cinema has been witnessing of late with film like 'Pushpa: The Rise', 'RRR' and the most recent 'K.G.F: Chapter 2'.

Talking at the trailer launch of his upcoming film, 'Thar' in which he stars alongside his son Harshvardhan Kapoor, Anil said, "South has always been making exceptional films, they have been always at the forefront of changing the dynamics of Indian cinema. I'm happy that they're breaking into new territories."

He maintained that south Indian cinema serves as an inspiration to Bollywood and has been a pillar of strength for the Indian cinema.

"I started my career with films down south and it gives me immense pleasure to see them doing so good. They're an inspiration, the more Bollywood imbibes from them, the better it will be for Hindi cinema at large", he further said.



## ALIA BHATT'S MEHENDI LEHENGA BY MANISH MALHOTRA TOOK 3,000 HOURS TO MAKE!

Team Absolute | Mumbai

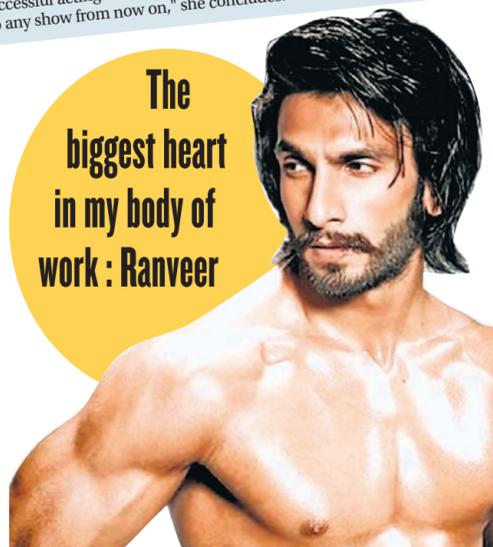
Celebrated fashion designer Manish Malhotra has revealed on social media that the fuchsia pink lehenga for actress Alia Bhatt's mehendi ceremony took 3,000 hours to make and that it featured 180 textile patches. Reminiscing about the work that went into creating this masterpiece, Manish wrote: "A treasure of traceability and trust. The very beautiful #ManishMalhotraBride. The very beautiful #ManishMalhotraBride chose to personalise her Mehendi ensemble with a sustainable approach, where approximately 180 textiles patches come together to mark her momentous occasion, the most special one indeed."

Malhotra said that the "custom touches reminisce about her journey and depict symbolic elements of her memories. Inscribed through Kashmiri and Chikankari threads, the passionate 3,000-hour intricate handwork of #Mijwan women features a fuchsia pink Lehenga and a blouse embellished in real gold and silver nakshi and kora flowers, and vintage gold metal sequins from kutch." Talking about the technique, the designer shared: "The patches are woven together using a couture technique of cross-stitches with three tar and six tar anchors. Edged in real gold zari and appliques, this handwoven silk ensemble also carries Banarasi brocades, jacquard, bandhani, Kachha Resham knots, and some scraps from brides' earlier outfits and detailing from #ManishMalhotraArchives."

"Every love story is unique, and @manishmalhotra05 beautifully narrates her beginning tale of a joyous forever," added Manish.

Ranbir and Alia got married in an intimate wedding on April 14. The marriage was followed with a party on Saturday night which was attended by celebrities such as Gauri Khan, Aditya Roy Kapur, Karan Johar, Ayan Mukerji, Shakun Batra, Malaika Arora and Arjun Kapoor, Aadar Jain with girlfriend Tara Sutaria, Anushka Ranjan with husband Aditya Seal, and Akansha Ranjan Kapoor.

The biggest heart in my body of work : Ranveer



Team Absolute | Mumbai

Ranveer's next is Yash Raj Films' upcoming, a big screen Hindi entertainer that will present a new brand of hero and heroism that is rare in Indian cinema. The actor is making a huge statement by saying that the highly anticipated 'Jayeshbhai Jordaar' is a film with the biggest heart' in his stellar body of work in which he has collaborated with the biggest directors of the country! Ranveer says, "I have been blessed and fortunate to have found remarkable scripts that have stood out and touched people. I'm grateful for them and I'm also proud of the work that I have done to bring those roles to life on screen. It has taken everything out of me but I have always believed that if I

have to be the best actor-entertainer of the country, then I have to do things that no one would attempt doing."

Ranveer further says, "Hopefully, Jayeshbhai will change the definition of heroism on screen and hopefully leave an important message to people in the most entertaining and hilarious fashion. It will make people laugh, cry, ponder and feel really, really warm when they see a feel-good film whose hero is the most innocent and honest person that you have met in a long, long time."

The much-awaited Yash Raj Films' Jayeshbhai Jordaar, also starring Shalini Pandey, who debuts on Bollywood's big screen opposite Ranveer, has been directed by debutant Divyang. The film is releasing on May 13, 2022 worldwide.

INSTAGRAM PIC OF THE DAY



Neha Sharma