

absolute india

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World population bomb may never go off



- The study, commissioned by the Club of Rome, projects that on current trends the world population will reach a high of 8.8 billion before the middle of the century, then decline rapidly. The peak could come earlier still if governments take progressive steps to raise average incomes and education levels.
- The new forecasts are good news for the global environment. Once the demographic bulge is overcome, pressure on nature and the climate should start to ease, along with associated social and political tensions, The Guardian reported.

LONDON | Agencies

The long-feared "population bomb" may not go off, according to the authors of a new report that estimates that human numbers will peak lower and sooner than previously forecast, media reported. But the authors caution that falling birth rates alone will not solve the planet's environmental problems, which are already serious at the 8 billion level and are primarily caused by the excess consumption of a wealthy minority. Declining populations can also create new problems, such as a shrinking workforce and greater stress on healthcare associated with an ageing society, as countries like

Japan and South Korea are finding, The Guardian reported. One of the authors of the report, Ben Callegari, said the findings were cause for optimism - but there was a catch. "This gives us evidence to believe the population bomb won't go off, but we still face significant challenges from an environmental perspective. We need a lot of effort to address the current development paradigm of over-consumption and overproduction, which are bigger problems than population." Previous studies have painted a grimmer picture. Last year, the UN estimated the world population would hit 9.7 billion by the middle of the century and continue to rise for several decades afterwards, The Guardian reported.

WHO CALLS FOR COVID BOOSTERS FOR ELDERLY, VULNERABLE GROUPS

New Delhi | Agencies

In the wake of another rise in Covid-19 cases in several countries, the World Health Organization (WHO) has recommended booster vaccination for the elderly and other vulnerable groups. The updated recommendation, issued this week, came after a meeting of WHO's Strategic Advisory Group of Experts on Immunization (SAGE). It revised the roadmap for prioritising the use of Covid vaccines, to reflect the impact of Omicron and high population-level immunity due to infection and vaccination. "Updated to reflect that much of the population is either vaccinated or previously infected with Covid, or both, the revised roadmap re-emphasises the importance of vaccinating those still at-risk of severe disease, mostly older adults and those with underlying conditions, including with additional boosters," said SAGE Chair Dr Hanna Nohynek, in a statement. The revised roadmap outlines

three priority-use groups for Covid vaccination: high, medium, and low. These priority groups are principally based on risk of severe disease and death, and consider vaccine performance, cost-effectiveness, programmatic factors and community acceptance. The high priority group includes older adults; younger adults with significant comorbidities (e.g. diabetes and heart disease); people with immunocompromising conditions (e.g. people living with HIV and transplant recipients), including children aged six months and older; pregnant persons; and frontline health workers. For the high priority group, SAGE recommends an additional booster of either 6 or 12 months after the last dose, with the timeframe depending on factors such as age and immunocompromising conditions. Importantly, the WHO also said that all the Covid vaccine recommendations are time-limited, and should be applied only for the current epidemiological scenario only. Thus, the recommendations for



"the additional booster should not be seen as for continued annual Covid vaccine boosters," the global health body said. "Countries should consider their specific context in deciding whether to continue vaccinating low risk groups, like healthy children and adolescents, while not compromising the routine vaccines that are so crucial for the health and well-being of this age

group," Nohynek said. Meanwhile, India on Saturday logged 2,994 new Covid infections, and the number of active cases increased to 16,354, according to Union health ministry data. The death toll climbed to 5,30,876 with nine deaths -- two each from Delhi, Karnataka and Punjab; one from Gujarat; and two were reconciled by Kerala.

ASEAN to switch to local currency use in region to avoid crisis

JAKARTA | Agencies

Southeast Asian countries have agreed to reinforce the use of local currencies in the region and reduce reliance on major international currencies in an effort to avoid spillover from the global crisis, Indonesia's central bank has said. The agreement came on the last day of a meeting of finance ministers and central bank governors of Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) members, which was held in Indonesia's Bali island on Friday, with Indonesia being this year's ASEAN chair, Xinhua news agency reported. Governor of Bank Indonesia Perry Warjiyo said the organization would establish a task force to formulate the transition process to use ASEAN local currencies in financial transactions as a realization of ASEAN's current local currencies settlement cooperation framework.



"With the use of local currencies in the transactions across the region, we will be able to strengthen our resilience in supporting regional cross-border trade and investment, which now are still relying on major international currencies," Warjiyo said at a virtual press conference after the meeting. Warjiyo said if ASEAN countries could use their local currencies in the region, transactions and all

payments can be conducted faster and able to tackle the global crisis. And if that is successful, their currencies' values will increase. "At the moment, our numbers are small. But that's why we must move forward with this scheme. We must accelerate it," Warjiyo said. He also said that in the meeting, the ASEAN countries have agreed to expand cross-border payment connectivity to more countries in the region.

Infectious and innocent smile of Innocent immortalised in movies



Loved and adored by one and all, the radiant and innocent smile of one of Kerala's most popular film actors Innocent, will now be immortalised through the more than 700 films that he acted in a career that spanned over 50 years. Seventy-five-year-old Innocent, who won millions of hearts with his comedic style, was never tied down due to his deficiencies. He often took pride in his educational career, which got over in Class 8 and every time he spoke about it, ripples of laughter ran through the crowd. He often said it was because of his brief stint as a student, that he was able to win the 2014 Lok Sabha elections from his home con-

stituency Chalakudy in Thrissur district trouncing veteran Congress law-maker P.C.Chacko. Soon after winning the elections, he was felicitated at a school in his hometown-Irinjalakuda. "If you want to become an MP or MLA, you should study in the same class for at least a few years. I owe my victory to the half a dozen schools where I studied and sat in every class for two or three years and hence all my classmates voted for me, as they know me very well," he said, evoking laughter among the students. Another memorable speech that always made the audience laugh out loud was his hilarious account of how the then Lok Sabha Speaker Sumitra Mahajan liked him a lot, while that was not the case with M.B.Rajesh (the

present Kerala State Minister for Local Self Govt). "She was extremely fond of me as I never uttered a word in the House because I had no clue of what to speak as I did not know Hindi, while Rajesh used to speak a lot," he would say. However, in 2019, he could not repeat the winning formula and lost to Congress leader Benny Behanan. Even the diagnosis of cancer in 2014 could not dampen his spirit and he fought the disease bravely only to return to his passion -- acting for sometime. Though he had a relapse, he out-lived that too and returned to acting in 2020. The role that he found more challenging than his stint as an MP was being the president of the Association of Malayalam Movies (AMMA) for an uninterrupted term of 18 years. Handling actors and actresses (known for their massive egos) was never but he his amazing sense of humour always came to his rescue. "I had the knack of lacing the most serious and at times not-so-pleasant decisions with humour, which many a times saved the situation from turning ugly and explosive," he would say. That he was so much loved and adored by his colleagues was established by the tearful farewell by his colleagues at an indoor stadium where his body has been kept. Big and small stars are all making a bee line to bid goodbye to perhaps the most-loved actor.

BENGAL FOREST DEPT TO GROW CROPS FOR TUSKERS TO AVOID HUMAN-ELEPHANT CONFLICT

Kolkata | Agencies

The Forest Department of West Bengal government is planning to grow crops that are favourites of elephants on vested lands adjacent to jungles that connect the forests with the nearby villages. According to Forest Minister Jyotipriyo Mullick, the initiative has been mooted to provide adequate food for the elephants so that they do not enter the villages in search for food. "This initiative, if successful, will bring down instances of human-elephant conflict in these regions to a great extent. The Forest Department has already initiated survey work to identify the vested lands, and once the suitable land is identified, farming will start there under the supervision of the for-



est officials and staff," Mullick added. It is learnt that the survey will be conducted in both the forest belts in North Bengal and South Bengal. A pilot project has already started covering the three districts in North Bengal, namely Darjeeling, Jalpaiguri and Alipurduar. In the next phase, the survey work will start in the forest belts of South Bengal. "This is for the first time

that a survey of this kind has been initiated by us," the minister said. A senior official in the Forest Department said that the idea of farming came to the officials following a somewhat similar and successful model adopted by the residents of Latabari village in Alipurduar district, where the villagers stock a portion of the farm products produced by them as food for the tuskets at the entry points to the village. The incidents of human-elephant conflict, which was frequent in that village in the past, have come down substantially in the recent past. Wildlife experts like former principal chief conservator of forests, Atanu Raha, too feel that this is a very effective and scientific way involving elephant psychology to avoid human-elephant conflict.

Gavaskar, Bhajji give thumbs up to 'Impact Player' rule

New Delhi: The 'Impact Player' in the IPL 2023 has garnered everyone's attention from the day BCCI announced its introduction in this edition. In the opening match of IPL 2023 between Gujarat Titans and Chennai Super Kings, one thing that was on everyone's mind was how the teams are going to use it and who will be the designated 'impact players'. While teams in IPL are taking nascent steps on how to ace it, the experts, meanwhile, have given thumbs up to the 'Impact Player'. Legendary cricketer Sunil Gavaskar believes the teams might need some time to ace this new rule. "You need some time to understand new rules and acclimatise with new playing conditions. The same will be the case with all ten teams in the TATA IPL 2023. They will need some time to ace it," Gavaskar told Star Sports. Former India cricketer Harbhajan Singh, meanwhile, lauded the think tank in IPL for coming up with this innovative rule. "It's a very innovative move as you can now replace a player whom you feel is not suitable or has served his purpose with someone who can make an impact in the current playing conditions. So, kudos to BCCI, it's a very good rule," he added.

1,30,000 TOURISTS VISIT KASHMIR'S TULIP GARDEN IN FIRST 10 DAYS

- Spread over 52 hectares of picturesque land on the foothills of Zabarwan mountains and located by the banks of the Dal Lake, Srinagar's Tulip Garden is the largest tulip garden in Asia.
- Four new types of tulips have been added to the garden this year -- Virgo, Sweetheart, Hamilton and Chrism Dream -- which have been imported from The Netherlands.
- Tulip beds have been created on 200 kanals of land, while parks have been created on the remaining land. More than 15 lakh beautiful tulips of 64 varieties can be seen in the garden.

Zubair Qureshi | Srinagar

The famed Indira Gandhi Memorial Tulip Garden located on the outskirts of Srinagar has become the centre of attraction for tourists these days. Both local and non-local tourists are enjoying the picturesque scenery of the garden. According to Inamur Rahman, who's in-charge of the garden, about 1,30,000 tourists have visited the Tulip Garden in the first 10 days since it was opened for



public. However, he said that there has been a decrease in the number of local tourists due to Ramadan, but tourists from other states are visiting the garden in

droves. "We are getting very good response. While the footfall of local tourists is less due to the ongoing Ramadan, a large number of non-local tourists are visiting the garden," he

said. Last year, it had witnessed a footfall of over 3 lakh people in one month. Rahman expressed hope that this year too the garden will continue to be the centre of attraction for tourists. "We hope to break the record of last year this time because the response we have got in the first 10 days has been very good," he said. The garden, formerly known as Siraj Bagh, was dedicated to the public in 2008 by then J&K Chief Minister Ghulam Nabi Azad.



VIOLENCE IN SASARAM, NALANDA WELL-PLANNED CONSPIRACIES, ALLEGES NITISH KUMAR

Patna | Agencies

After violence erupted in Sasaram and Nalanda, Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar on Saturday claimed that these are well-planned conspiracies to disturb the peace.

"The authorities are looking into every matter and the truth will come out soon," he stated.

"We have never seen any such incidents in Bihar. Why is it happening now? Some people have deliberately conspired wrong things to disturb peace. I have given directions to the authorities to probe the incidents from every angle and find out the culprits. We will not tolerate any such incident in Bihar," Kumar said.

When asked about the law and order situation deteriorating in Bihar, Nitish Kumar said that there is no issue of law and order in Bihar. It is a painful incident.

Reacting to the cancellation of Union Home Minister Amit Shah's rally in Sasaram, Kumar said that he is the



home minister of the country and he can go anywhere. "Why would we have any objection," he said.

"If Amit Shah is coming or not is his decision. I have knowledge about it. I want to ensure that there is no law and order problem in Bihar. Everything will be investigated," Kumar said.

"We learnt about the Nalanda incident at 6 p.m. on Friday. Soon, we have directed authorities to investigate the incident," he said.

Meanwhile, Neeraj Kumar,

JD-U MLC and party's chief spokesperson sharply reacted to the statement of Bihar BJP President Samrat Chaudhary and asked him to reveal the identity of BJP workers with phone numbers who were being attacked by bomb in Sasaram.

Earlier, Samrat Chaudhary claimed that due to failure of state government, violence erupted in Sasaram. Hence, BJP cancelled the event of Amit Shah as section 144 has been imposed there.

Road rage case: Navjot Sidhu walks out of jail after 317 days

Patiala (Punjab) | Agencies

After remaining behind bars for 317 days at a jail in his hometown Patiala in a 1988 road rage case, Congress leader Navjot Singh Sidhu, who lost more than 30 kg weight during the sentence, on Saturday evening walked out of the jail and slammed both the state AAP government and the Central BJP government.

Donning black turban and a Pathani suit with a blue jacket, former Punjab Congress chief Sidhu, who was released prematurely with a remission of 45 days in his prison term, said he was told that he would be released by 11.45 a.m.

He got a rousing reception by his supporters, who had been desperately awaiting his release since morning.

Chanting "Navjot Sidhu zindabad", party senior leaders comprising Amritsar Congress MP Gurjeet Aujla and former MLAs Ashwani Sekhri, Sukhwinder Danny and Sunil Dutt were present among hundreds of fans and sympathisers.

"My release was deliberately delayed," the cricketer-turned-politician, who is hitting the spotlight with a splash of colours, told the media outside the jail. He was released at around 5.51 p.m.

"No government can get stronger by weakening Punjab," said Sidhu, indirectly hitting the BJP-led Central government.

"Whenever a dictatorship came to this country a



revolution has also come and this time, the name of that revolution is Rahul Gandhi. He will rattle the government. Sidhu said there "was no democracy in Punjab and that a conspiracy is being hatched to bring President's Rule in the state." He said minorities were being targeted in the state.

He accused Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann of "giving false hopes" to the people of Punjab. Expressing solidarity with Congress leader Rahul Gandhi, who was recently disqualified as Lok Sabha MP, Sidhu said: "Rahul Gandhi is a protector

of the Constitution and Sidhu is standing with him." Previously, Sidhu was expected to be released under the Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav in January, but the state government had denied his remission of sentence. Sidhu was a one-year sentence by the Supreme Court the road rage case on May 19, 2022.

He surrendered in the Patiala jail the next day after his conviction.

Jail officials told reporter that Sidhu was prematurely released for his good conduct. His scheduled release from jail was May 16. Sidhu was lodged in an ordinary barrack as the government has decided to abandon the special cells in jails for VIP prisoners. The apex court, which reserved the judgment in March, overturned its 2018 judgment, which had reduced the punishment for Sidhu in the case, after a review petition was filed by the family of Gurnam Singh, who had died in the incident.

On December 27, 1988, Sidhu and one of his friends, Rupinder Singh Sandhu, had on December 27, 1988, hit Gurnam Singh, 65, on his head near the Sheranwala Gate crossing in Patiala. Police had said Sidhu fled from the scene after committing the crime. Gurnam Singh was taken to a hospital where he was declared dead.

Sidhu said Gurnam Singh died of a cardiac arrest and not because he was punched in the head.

Amit Shah's Sasaram rally cancelled due to imposition of section 144

Patna | Agencies

Following the imposition of section 144 in Sasaram, BJP on Saturday cancelled the rally of Union Home Minister Amit Shah.

Bihar BJP President Samrat Chaudhary confirmed the development. He said that the district administration has imposed section 144 at the venue and in the entire Sasaram city, how could it be possible to organise an event there?

Chaudhary, however, said that Shah's rally in Nawada will take place at the scheduled time on Sunday.

"It is extremely unfortunate that the Bihar government has failed to provide security to our men. Our supporters are being attacked by a section of people. The district administration has imposed section 144 in the city. Hence, how could it be possible to organise an event there?" Chaudhary said.

The BJP had a pre-scheduled programme at Sasaram to celebrate the birth anniversary of Samrat Ashok. The district has a significant number of people from Kushwaha community and BJP wants to get their support. Kushwaha community is



in the target list of BJP to hurt the Lav-Kush equation of Nitish Kumar-led JD-U. Hence, an event was organised for Union Home Minister Amit Shah in Sasaram city. The district administration imposed section 144 in Sasaram after a massive clash broke out between two groups over Ram Navami Shobha Yatra on Friday afternoon. Two houses, some shops and several vehicles were set on fire after a section of people pelted stones and bricks on the Shobha Yatra.

"Nitish Kumar has not done anything for Samrat Ashok. Due to the BJP, he did some work after 2015. If he has done anything for Samrat Ashok before 2015, he needs to mention it in public domain," he said.

When asked about the Nawada rally, Chaudhary said that section 144 is not imposed in Nawada, hence the pre-scheduled programme of Nawada will take place at the scheduled time. Amit Shah is coming to Patna today and he will go to Nawada to attend the programme," Chaudhary said.

Besides Sasaram, violence also erupted in Nalanda district over Ram Navami Shobha Yatra on Friday.

Maha police fight off daylight attack by Maoists, kill one in gun-battle

Gadchiroli | Agencies

In a brazen attack, around five-six dozen heavily armed Maoists attempted to corner and eliminate a Maharashtra Police commando team in the thick forests of Hedri and in the ensuing encounter, one outlaw was killed, officials said here on Saturday.

The no-holds-barred gun-battle, lasting nearly 45 minutes, took place when the crack C-60 commando teams were engaged in an anti-insurgency operation in the Hikker jungles in Hedri in Gadchiroli district.

At around 11 a.m., some 60-70 Maoists suddenly

opened fire at the C-60 forces and despite appeals to them to stop and surrender, they continued firing, said Gadchiroli Superintendent of Police, Neelotpal.

Left with no options, the C-60 teams returned the fire and the fierce encounter continued for over half-an-hour before the extremists gave up and fled into the dense forest.

Later, a search of the jungle revealed the body of one wanted Maoist, Sadhu Linga Mohanda alias Sameer (31) from Bhamragad, the police said.

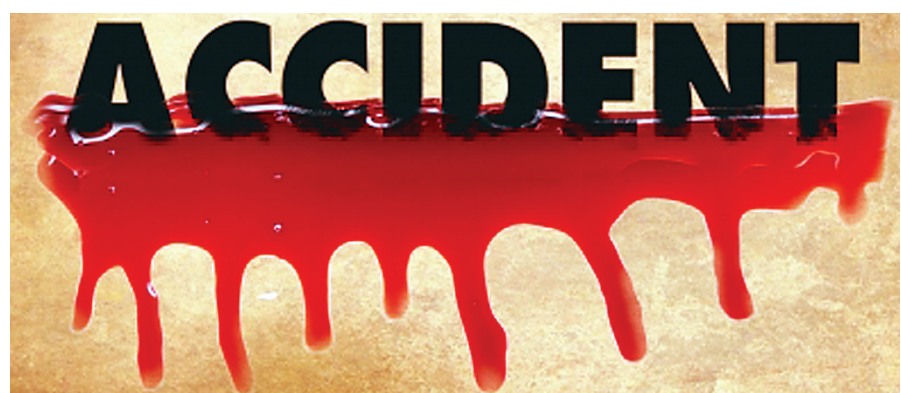
"He carried a bounty of Rs 200,000 on his head and had four serious criminal cases registered against him. He

has been a member of the Chatgaon LOS since 2018," Neelotpal told the media.

The police also recovered a cache of arms including one rifle, one country-made gun, a Bhamra rifle, two SLR magazines with 30 rounds, three rounds of 8 mm rifle, four rounds of 12 bore gun, two pittus, Maoist literature, one Samsung tablet, one radio and cash to the tune of over Rs 38,000, plus other personal belongings of the Maoists.

Neelotpal supervised the entire operation that was executed by the team comprising Anuj Tare, Kumar Chhintha, Yatish Deshmukh and C-60 commandos.

4 killed as truck mows down pedestrians in Bihar



Patna | Agencies

At least four people were killed in Bihar's Purnea district after a truck driver mowed down pedestrians as he was trying to flee from an earlier accident spot, an official said on Saturday.

Following the second accident on Friday night, local residents managed to catch the

driver and brutally assaulted him before handing him over to the police.

The victims were identified as Mohammad Sarbul Alam, Mohammad Hafiz Sabbar, Hafiz Ruvaud and Dipak Kumar. "The driver of the truck met with an accident at one place. He tried to flee from the spot. While doing so, he mowed down half a dozen

persons at different places. The driver was nabbed from Amaur block. We have also seized the vehicle," said Aditya Kumar, SDPO of Bayasi range.

The driver is currently admitted at the Purnea medical college and hospital.

The injured persons are also admitted in the same hospital and their condition are said to be critical.

'DELHI 6' FOOD FESTIVAL HAS BEGUN AT HOLIDAY INN

Jaipur | Agencies

From April 1 to April 9, the event will be held at the "Monarch" restaurant of the Holy Day Inn. There is tremendous enthusiasm among the people of Jaipur for the food festival which lasts for nine days.

Jaipur foodies relish the taste of Delhi on Day 1. A huge crowd is expected on Sunday as well.

Jaipurites will relish the delectable cuisine of Delhi at the nine-day long food festival.

The expert chefs of the hotel and masters of culinary skills demonstrated the art of cooking.

Jaipur. The wait for Jaipurites came to an end on Saturday as the Delhi 6 Food Festival at Holiday Inn made a sputter on the first day of its opening. This festival will run till 9th April.

The capital city of Delhi is a foodie's paradise, with everything from street food to international cuisine. Everyday thousands of people roam the streets of Delhi and enjoy sour, sweet, spicy and delicious street food. Now the people of Jaipur are



also enjoying similar dishes of Delhi in their pink city.

Hotel Holiday Inn Delhi is organizing a nine-day Delhi 6 Food Festival, which will run from April 1 to April 9, so that the people of the Pink City can also enjoy Delhi's famous delicious and spicy dishes and street food. Holiday Hotel's Executive Chef Ramesh Kukreti said that now Holiday Inn Hotel of Pink City is also

smelling of delicious cuisine in the busy streets and lanes of Delhi.

Jaipur's expert chefs and culinary masters are showcasing their culinary skills in making Delhi cuisine and will work to take Delhi's culinary skills to new heights generation after generation. The main delicious dishes of Delhi street food in the menu are Chaat, Paratha, Pav Bhaji, Kebab, Kulfi, Gol Gappa, Puri Aloo, Laddu,

Changeji Chicken, Naan, Kebab, Roll Kebab, Tandoori Chicken, Rice, Pakora, Kachori, Samosa, Paan Apart from this beverages like Chole Kulche, Chole Bhature, Crispy Fried Bread, Dahi Balle, Chole, aromatic and refreshing cold drinks and cold Kulfi in different varieties were also served to the food lovers on the first day of Delhi 6. food Festival.

BSF TROOPS FIRE AT SUSPECTED PAKISTANI DRONE IN J&K'S SAMBA

Jammu: Alert Border Security Force (BSF) troops fired at a suspected Pakistani drone in Jammu and Kashmir's Samba district on Saturday.

A BSF spokesman said that a blinking light of a "suspected" drone was observed around 12.15 a.m. on the international border in Ramnagar area of Samba district. "Alert troops fired towards the blinking light after which the drone was forced to return," a BSF spokesman said.

The spokesman added that over two dozen rounds were fired at the drone but it managed to return to the Pakistan side of the border.

A massive search operation is going on in the area to find out whether any narcotics or weapons were air-dropped by the drone during its flight on the Indian side of the international border.

Pune Police detain suspect over death threat to Sanjay Raut

Hours after Shiv Sena (UBT) MP Sanjay Raut received a threat message in the name of gangster Lawrence Bishnoi, the Pune Police have detained one suspect for questioning, officials said on Saturday.

Mumbai | Agencies

Raut got the threat in a WhatsApp message on Friday evening, warning that he would be shot dead with an AK-47 in Delhi, with reference to the killing of Punjabi singer Sidhu Moosewala last year.

Soon afterwards, Raut complained to the Mumbai Police Commissioner, and a probe was initiated which led to the detention of the suspect in Pune. The police are questioning him on his links with the Bishnoi gang and also the recent email threats issued to Bollywood actor Salman Khan.

Reacting to the death threat, Raut said he was targeted in similar fashion in the past but he would not be cowed down by such attempts.

"My security and the security of Maha Vikas



Aghadi leaders has been removed and deployed for the 'gaddars' (traitors)... What did the government do about this," Raut asked. He referred to similar threats issued to a prominent NCP leader from Thane (Jitendra Awhad) and accused the government of ignoring such threats faced by the opposition leaders.

Leaders of Opposition Ajit Pawar (Assembly) and Ambadas Danve (Council), NCP MP Supriya Sule, Kishore Tiwari, and Congress leaders expressed serious concerns over the threats and urged the government to take the matter seriously.

The threat to Raut with a reference to Salman Khan said: "Anti-Hindu, I will kill you. Meet me in Delhi, will finish you off with an AK47. Like Moosewala. Treat this as a message from Lawrence Bishnoi."

Raj govt to move Supreme Court against acquittal of 2008 Jaipur blasts accused

Jaipur | Agencies

The Rajasthan government has decided to challenge in the Supreme Court the acquittal of 2008 Jaipur serial blasts case accused.

Late on Friday night, at a high-level meeting, Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot reviewed the acquittal of the four accused. He decided to remove Additional Advocate General (AAG) Rajendra Yadav for the weak prosecution in the case with immediate effect.

Also, Chief Minister Gehlot ordered a Special Leave Petition (SLP) in the Supreme Court at the earliest against the acquitted accused.

Overturning the 2019 district court verdict, the Rajasthan High Court has acquitted all the accused, he said. The state government wants to ensure that the culprits get the harshest punish-



ment, for which it will soon file an SLP in the Supreme Court, the Chief minister said.

He further stated that the state will ensure justice to the victims by engaging the best lawyers.

Chief Secretary Usha Sharma, Head of Home Department Sachin Anand Kumar, DGP Umesh Mishra, ADG SOG-ATS Ashok Rathore, ADG Crime Dinesh MN, among others were present in the meeting.

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'CONSUMER COURTS CAN'T DECIDE CASES INVOLVING TORTIOUS ACTS', SAYS SC

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Supreme Court has said that consumer courts cannot decide complaints involving highly disputed questions of facts or the cases involving tortious acts or criminality like fraud or cheating.

A bench comprising justices Ajay Rastogi and Bela M. Trivedi said: "The proceedings before the commission being summary in nature, the complaints involving highly disputed questions of facts or the cases involving tortious acts or criminality like fraud or cheating, could not be decided by the forum/commission under the said Act."

The bench further added, "the deficiency in service, as well settled, has to be distinguished from the criminal acts or tortious acts. There could not be any presumption with regard to the wilful fault, imperfection, shortcoming or inadequacy in the quality, nature and manner of performance in service, as contemplated in Section 2(1)(g) of the Act".

The bench added that the burden of proving the deficiency in service would always be upon the person alleging it. A complainant had alleged that the City Union Bank had transferred Rs 8 lakh of demand drafts to an incorrect account. The complainant filed a complaint in the State Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission (SCDR) in 1999.



The state commission found the bank and its official guilty of deficient service and ordered the bank to pay Rs 8 lakh along with compensation of Rs 1 lakh towards mental agony, loss and hardship to the complainant.

The chairman and managing director, City Union Bank and others moved the National Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission (NCDRC) against the state commission order, but its appeal was dismissed in February 2007. An appeal was filed by them in 2009 before the apex court challenging the NCDRC order.

The counsel, representing the chairman and managing director, City Union Bank and others, submitted that state commission and the

national commission had committed an error in not appreciating the fact that in absence of any fault, imperfection, shortcoming or inadequacy in the performance, which was required to be maintained by the appellants' bank, it could not be presumed that there was deficiency in service as defined under Section 2(1)(g) of the Consumer Protection Act, 1986.

The counsel further argued that if any fraud was committed, such disputes would not fall within the jurisdiction of the state commission or the national commission to decide.

The counsel for complainant submitted that when the two forums have consistently held the appellants liable for the deficiency in service, the apex court should not interfere with

the same. He further submitted that the bank would be vicariously liable for the acts of its employees and there was a clear deficiency in service on the part of the bank.

The bench said: "So far as the facts of the present case are concerned, even if the allegations made in the complaint are taken on their face value, then also it clearly emerges that there was no wilful fault, imperfection, shortcoming or inadequacy in the discharge of the duty on the part of the employees of the appellants' bank, which could be termed as deficiency in service under Section 2(1)(g) of the said Act."

The bench noted that some disputes were going on amongst the directors of the company and one of the directors, if allegedly had committed fraud or cheating, the employees of the bank could not be held liable, if they had acted bona fide and followed the due procedure.

The bench said: "In the instant case, respondent-complainant having miserably failed to discharge his burden to prove that there was a deficiency in service on the part of the employees of the appellants-bank within the meaning of Section 2(1)(g) of the Act, his complaint deserved to be dismissed, and is accordingly dismissed. The orders passed by the State Commission and the National Commission are therefore quashed and set aside. The appeal stands allowed accordingly."

United over Rahul Gandhi, Bihar Oppn finds an issue to counter BJP



Team Absolute | Patna

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi's disqualification from the Lok Sabha following the Surat court verdict that convicted him in a criminal defamation case has given new hope to Opposition parties in Bihar to corner the BJP.

When asked about Rahul Gandhi's conviction and disqualification, Deputy Chief Minister Tejashwi Yadav said: "We are watching

everything, and will answer (the BJP) in the best way when the time comes."

With his remarks, Tejashwi made it a loud and clear message that he is ready to fight against BJP.

"BJP keeps the Opposition busy in court cases and uses the Hindutva card to win elections. But now, Rahul Gandhi has given a clear message that they (Opposition) do not fear court cases and investigation agencies. And, the Hindutva card of the BJP will be countered through the caste combination," a Congress leader said.

Bihar is crucial for the BJP in the 2024 Lok Sabha elections as this is the state where BJP is not in power. Moreover, the caste equation is also not ideal for the BJP in

the state. When it comes to the caste equation here, Muslims have more than 18 per cent vote share followed by Yadavs (16 per cent), Kushwaha (12 per cent) and upper castes comprising Bhumihar, Brahmins, Rajput and Kayasth have around 15 per cent votes. These are estimated figures and the exact numbers would be revealed after the completion of caste-based census in the state, which is currently underway and the state government has announced that it will be completed in 11 months.

The political parties in the state strongly believe that caste equations are the only weapon to counter the Hindutva politics of the BJP.

GST collection in March rises to over Rs 1.60 lakh crore

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Recording a growth, the gross GST revenue in March rose to Rs 1,60,122 crore as compared with Rs 1,49,577 crore during February this year.

"The Gross GST revenue of Rs 1,60,122 crore comprise CGST of Rs 29,546 crore, SGST of Rs 37,314 crore, IGST of Rs 82,907 crore (including Rs 42,503 crore collected on import of goods) and cess of Rs 10,355 crore (including Rs 960 crore collected on import of goods)," the finance ministry said in a statement on Saturday. It is for the fourth time, in the current financial year, that the gross GST collection has crossed Rs 1.5 lakh crore mark, registering second highest collection since implementation of GST. This month witnessed the highest IGST collection ever.

The government has set-



from these sources during the same month last year. The return filing during March 2023 has been highest ever. 93.2 per cent of statement of invoices (in GSTR-1) and 91.4 per cent of returns (in GSTR-3B) of February were filed till March 2023 as compared to 83.1 per cent and 84.7 per cent, respectively same month last year. The total gross collection for 2022-23 stands at Rs 18.10 lakh crore and the average gross monthly collection for the full year is Rs 1.51 lakh crore. The gross revenues in 2022-23 were 22 per cent higher than last year. The average monthly gross GST collection for the last quarter of the FY 2022-23 has been Rs 1.55 lakh crore against the average monthly collection of Rs 1.51 lakh crore, Rs 1.46 lakh crore and Rs 1.49 lakh crore in the first, second and third quarters respectively.

Trump won't be handcuffed when he surrenders: Lawyer

Arul Louis | New York

When former US President Donald Trump surrenders to authorities in New York on April 4 he will not be handcuffed, according to his lawyer Joe Tacopina.

"The (former) resident will not be put in handcuffs," he told ABC News on Friday.

He will be accompanied by Secret Service Agents who are required to protect him as a former President making the surrender complicated.

"I don't think they're going to allow this to become a circus, as much as humanly possible," Tacopina said. On a CBS TV pro-



gramme he said that Trump is "not worried at all", but added, "he's upset, angry he is being persecuted politically". Trump will be produced in a New York State Supreme Court, which despite its name is the first-level judicial body in the state. Acting State Supreme Court Justice Juan Merchan, who is expected to preside over the case, can either release him with or without bail, or order him held in custody. Trump faces

charges relating to hush money paid to adult film star Stormy Daniels who alleged he had an affair with him in 2006.

A grand jury indicted him in the case on Thursday, but the charges will be announced only when he surrenders and it is unsealed in court.

The \$130,000 payment and the affair -- which Trump has denied -- are not illegal, but he faced allegations of bookkeeping irregularities in recording the payments and of violating election finance laws.

The payments were allegedly recorded as fees to his former lawyer Michael Cohen who had given Daniels the money.

Amul hikes milk price by Rs 2/ltr in Gujarat

Ahmedabad:

The Gujarat Cooperative Milk Marketing Federation (GCMMF) on Saturday hiked the Amul milk price by Rs 2 per litre in the state.

This marks the first increase in milk prices since the state Assembly elections in December 2022.

The GCMMF, which is the apex body of milk cooperatives in the state, typically announces milk price hikes in advance but did not do so this time. Sources suggest that the rise in cost of milk production due to increasing fodder and transportation prices has led to the price hike.

After the price revision, the cost of Amul buffalo milk is now Rs 68 per litre, while Amul Gold is priced at Rs 64 per litre, and Amul Shakti at Rs 58 per litre. Amul Cow Milk is now priced at Rs 54 per litre, Amul Tazaa at Rs 52 per litre, and Amul T-special at Rs 60 per litre.

While the prices of different brands of Amul milk were hiked twice across India by GCMMF in the last six months, Gujarat was exempted. However, ahead of the Assembly elections in the state, Amul had raised prices by Rs 2 per litre in October 2022, and then by another Rs 3 in February 2023 for all markets, except Gujarat.

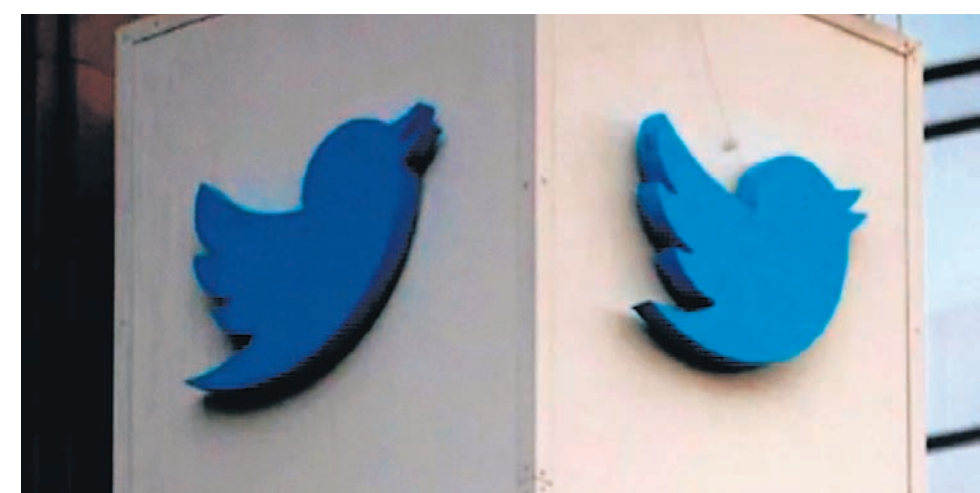


Emergency declared at Delhi Airport following a bird-hit incident



New Delhi: Authorities at the Delhi Airport declared emergency on Saturday after a Dubai-bound FedEx aircraft suffered a bird hit soon after take off. Officials said that the step was initiated so that the aircraft could land and technicians could check the plane for any technical glitch before clearance. The flight landed safely and proper inspection was carried out. Sources said that bird-hit incidents are not uncommon, but they pose major technical challenges and can prove to be fatally dangerous. In October last year, a Bengaluru-bound Akasa Air flight was diverted back to Mumbai due to a bird hit.

TWITTER BANS RECORD OVER 6.8 LAKH ACCOUNTS IN INDIA AMID MAJOR OVERHAUL



Team Absolute | New Delhi

Struggling to become profitable under Elon Musk as it takes drastic decisions which have infuriated users, Twitter banned a record 682,420 accounts promoting child sexual exploitation and non-consensual nudity in India between January 26 and February 25.

The micro-blogging platform, going through a churning under Musk, also took down 1,548 accounts for promoting terrorism on its platform in the country. Twitter, in its monthly report in

compliance with the new IT Rules, 2021, said that it received just 73 complaints from users in India in the same time-frame through its grievance redressal mechanisms. In addition, Twitter processed 27 grievances which were appealing account suspensions. "We overturned 10 of these account suspensions after reviewing the specifics of the situation. The remaining reported accounts remain suspended," said the company. "We also received 24 requests related to general questions

about Twitter accounts during this reporting period," it added. Under the new IT Rules 2021, big digital and social media platforms, with more than 5 million users, have to publish monthly compliance reports. The report came as Twitter was set to remove all legacy verified Blue check marks from April 1, and the users will have to pay either Rs 900 a month or Rs 9,400 a year to carry the Blue Badge with verification, with some additional benefits like an ability to edit tweets and post longer text/videos.

WhatsApp rolling out feature to disable multiple answers within polls on Windows beta

San Francisco | Agencies

Meta-owned messaging platform WhatsApp is rolling out a feature on Windows beta which disables multiple answers within polls.

A new option is available within the poll creator which allows users to force other people to select only one answer, reports WABetaInfo.

As respondents are forced to select the option they firmly believe in, this new feature will result in more accurate polls.

Moreover, this feature can be especially helpful for queries that only need one response as the poll will be more relevant. Some WhatsApp beta testers have already received this functionality for Android and iOS. The ability to disable multiple answers within



polls is currently available for some beta testers that install the latest WhatsApp beta for Windows update available on the Microsoft Store, and is expected to roll out to more users over the coming days, the

report said. Meanwhile, last month, it was reported that the messaging platform was rolling out a new "multi-selection" feature for messages on Windows beta. With the new feature,

users can select multiple messages after clicking on "Select" within the context menu of a conversation. Also, they can click anywhere within a conversation and then the "Select messages" option will appear.



MIDNIGHT MOB ATTACK ON DALIT SCHOLARS AT GANDHI VARSITY, 5 HURT

Quaid Najmi | Wardha

In a shocking incident, over two activists of a right-wing group and some goons barged into the Mahatma Gandhi Antarrashtriya Hindi Vishwavidyalaya (MGAHV) around midnight and attacked a PhD Dalit student sitting on an indefinite protest there, student leaders said here on Saturday.

The PhD scholar, Rajneesh Kumar Ambedkar, 37, and his classmates were attacked by the horde of miscreants who raised slogans of 'Jai Shri Ram' and attempted to break the five-day protest at the prestigious 25-year-old Central university named in honour of the Father of the Nation, Mahatma Gandhi.

According to scholar activists like Chandan Saroj, though there was security at the campus and the main gate was closed, some outsiders and miscreants managed to sneak inside, joined their associates of a right-wing student union on the campus and indulged in violence on the scholars sitting on protest there.

A Dalit researcher, Ambedkar and



others are on an indefinite sit-in strike against the MGAHV, demanding the evaluation of his PhD thesis, but the varsity management has not responded in the matter.

Saroj said that on the night of Friday-Saturday, the 'saffron goons' stormed inside the campus, started slapping, beating, kicking and punching the protestors, and hurled obscene, casteist abuses at them throughout the fracas.

When other students tried to click pictures and videos of the incident, they grabbed their mobiles and del-

ed them, and even threatened with consequences if they continued to record the ruckus in the darkness.

Some students summoned the Wardha Police which soon rushed a team there and brought the situation under control around 4 a.m.

Ambedkar said that at least five students were hurt in the scuffle and a few more sustained minor injuries even as the attackers fled away after the police entry.

When contacted, an official Spokesperson for MGAHV told IANS that some students had taken an 'unauthorised' religious procession on the campus late last night and were raising the 'Jai Shri Ram' slogans.

The Spokesperson also confirmed that later, they attacked the Dalit students holding their protest though it was dispersed later.

He added that the situation is "fully under control now, though other top varsity officers were not available for comments despite repeated attempts".

"We strongly condemn this dastardly attack by saffron group's thugs on Dalit researchers and scholars

who are fighting for their legitimate demands and against caste bias perpetrated by the university administration," said Ambedkar.

He and others have demanded that the Wardha Police take note of this "terror" strike on the students and book the culprits on charges of attempted murder forthwith.

Soon after the attacks, the varsity administration urged Ambedkar and others to call off their indefinite protest in view of the delicate situation, but they were spurned and the agitation continues for the sixth day today (April 1).

The students have called upon the Wardha Police and other Dalit and democratic organisations to identify the 'masterminds behind the attack' and the alleged role of the varsity behind the attacks that has rattled the campus residents.

A Central University set up by an act of Parliament, the MGAHV was established in 1997 on a 200-acre campus in Wardha, fulfilling the cherished dream of Mahatma Gandhi to promote Hindi as the national language and give it a status of an international language.

Mumbai CGST detects Rs 14-cr tax fraud by Rao IIT Academy

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The Mumbai CGST Commissionerate has stumbled upon a new modus operandi of tax evasion of Rs 14-crore from the academic coaching sector, an official said here on Saturday.

Following specific intel, the CGST Mumbai East Division VIII sleuths swooped on Rao Edusolutions Pvt. Ltd., known as 'Rao IIT Academy', which was suspected to be indulging in the tax frauds.

The Rao IIT Academy was reportedly collecting 18 per cent GST on tuition fees from its students but actually was declaring unrelated and exempt services in the returns filed with the department.

The department apprehended that the tuition fees collected was misappropriated by the company and arrested two directors.



They were charged under CGST Act, 2017, Sec. 69 for violating provisions of Sec. 132(1)(d), and produced before a designated court which remanded them to 13 days custody.

Investigations so far have revealed that the suspected tax evasion was over Rs 14 crore, making the offence

cognisable and non-bailable as per the CGST Act.

The Rao IIT Academy imparts coaching to thousands of students aspiring for JEE, Medical-UG and other popular courses through its branches across Maharashtra, Gujarat, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Rajasthan and Delhi.

ED attaches 8 assets of Magnum Steels' partners in Maharashtra

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Friday said that they have attached eight immovable properties, worth Rs 6.69 crore, at Mumbai, as well as Maharashtra's Panvel, Pune, Raigad, and Ratnagiri of Kunal Gandhi, partner of Magnum Steels, Mumbai, and his family members in bank loan cheating case.

The ED initiated investigations under the PMLA on the basis of an FIR registered by the CBI against Magnum Steels and others for defrauding Bank of Baroda to the tune of Rs 95.97 crore.

The ED learnt that partners Kunal Kishore Gandhi and Kishore Kantilal Gandhi, instead of repaying the out-



standing loan, diverted the money through various accounts of their associates' entity to acquire the three immovable assets consisting of shop-cum-office at Andheri in Mumbai, flat at Panvel, and agricultural land in Ratnagiri by making payments totalling to Rs 1.45 crore during the period from 2010 to 2015.

"Kishore Kantilal Gandhi

and his son Kunal Gandhi (partners of Magnum Steels) also purchased five immovable properties in Pune by making payments totalling to Rs 5.24 crore. A provisional attachment order under the PMLA was issued attaching all these 8 assets which were acquired by making payment totalling to Rs 6.69 crore," an ED official said.

Drunk elderly Swede molests IndiGo hostess on Bangkok-Mumbai flight, nabbed

Team Absolute | Mumbai

In another case of unruly behaviour in the mid-air, an inebriated elderly Swedish national was arrested late on Thursday for allegedly abusing and molesting an IndiGo crew member on a Bangkok-Mumbai flight, officials said here on Saturday.

The accused, identified as one Klas Erik H. J. Westberg, 63, was nabbed after the IndiGo flight (6E-1052) landed at the Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport here, for alleged indecent behaviour on board the four-hour long journey.

On Friday, he was produced before the Andheri Metropolitan Court and released on bail of Rs 20,000, and the Sahar Airport Police are probing the matter.

According to the eyewitness accounts recorded by the police, the



accused ran amok during meal time demanding sea-food and he continued the fracas with the crew till the flight landed in Mumbai.

The airhostess informed that there was no seafood available and served him chicken, but when she later asked him to pay through his card,

he allegedly caught her hand. She pushed him off back to the seat and asked him to complete the transaction, but he got up and openly started molesting her in front of the other passengers, as she shouted for help.

The man again got up, entered into a verbal duel with another crew member, hurled the choicest abuses, and even hit another passenger on the next seat who tried to intervene.

The victim, a 24-year-old airhostess, then alerted the flight captain, plus warned the passenger of seat No. 28-E of the possible consequences of his behaviour, but to no avail.

After the flight landed, the IndiGo security staff and CISF were informed and they took charge of him and later handed him over to the Sahar Airport Police Station, which is further probing the case.

Sanjay Raut gets death threat in Lawrence Bishnoi's name

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Shiv Sena (Uddhav Balasaheb Thackeray) MP Sanjay Raut today received death threats through text messages on his mobile phone. Speaking to NDTV, Raut said he notified the Mumbai police about the threat on Friday night. The texts were on behalf of gangster Lawrence Bishnoi, who is currently in a Punjab jail. The police have arrested one person and are interrogating them about it.

"I received a threat on my phone, and I have informed the police about it. But this government is not serious. I was threatened earlier as well, but the state's Home Minister called it a stunt," Raut said, adding that the state is not serious about the security of opposition leaders.

Calling Raut "Hindu virodhi (anti Hindu)", the text message read, "Delhi me mil to ak 47 se uda dunga. Moosewala tyep. Lawrence ke or se msg he soch ke... Salman aur to Fix. Tyatil karke rakhna



(sic)."

Sanjay Raut said it doesn't bother him, and he didn't write any letter when his security was withdrawn.

"Sanjay Raut received death threats stating that he will meet Sidhu Moose Wala's fate. He got the threat from the Lawrence Bishnoi gang. The message said that if you met in Delhi, will kill you with AK-47. He

wrote a letter to the police complaining about the matter," the police said.

Mumbai police sources, however, said there is no connection with Lawrence Bishnoi, and the person who sent the message is a young man from Pune who did it under the influence of alcohol.

Mumbai police have arrested the man, 23-year-old Rahul Talekar, who runs a small restaurant in Pune. He has no criminal or political connections, Deputy Commissioner of Police Purushottam Karad said, adding that he first called Raut and then sent the message when he wasn't able to speak to him on the phone.

Police said Rahul confessed that he mentioned Lawrence Bishnoi's name because he had watched his videos recently.

Lawrence Bishnoi, a notorious criminal, is said to be the mastermind behind the murder of Punjabi singer Sidhu Moose Wala. He has also allegedly threatened the singer's father, Balkaur Singh, and actor Salman Khan.

Police seize properties in Dahisar, Gujarat worth over 2.56 crore in drugs seizure case

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Mumbai Police on Saturday said that the Worli unit of its Anti-Narcotics Cell have seized properties worth crores of a prime accused in last year's 2,400 kgs of drugs seizure case. According to the Mumbai Police, the properties in Dahisar, Gujarat and Nallasopara areas valuing over Rs. 2.56 crore were seized by the police. The properties allegedly belong to the prime accused in the 2022 major drug bust by Mumbai Crime Branch's Anti-Narcotics Cell.

The police said, during the course of investigation in the case, the police



found that the prime accused in the case, Premprakash Singh had allegedly bought the seized properties during the period while allegedly being involved in illicit drugs business, suspected to be purchased from the illegal money and hence the seizure was followed.

"The seized properties include two offices in Dahisar, a 5-thousand sq feet plot in Gujarat and a

unit in Nallasopara," said an official. The seizure in the case comes months after, the Mumbai Police had first seized properties of the accused involved in the case of the manufacturing and supply of Mephedrone (MD).

The police had earlier said that eight people were arrested in connection with the case in March last year. The Anti-Narcotics Cell had initially seized 250

grams of MD on March 29, 2022 from one of the alleged drug peddlers in Shivajinagar area of eastern Mumbai. After questioning him about his supplier, the team had nabbed another accused and Mephedrone weighing more than 2 kg was seized from the house of the second accused.

Following further investigations in the matter, a total of eight accused were arrested and MD weighing more than 2,400 kg worth over Rs 2,500 crore was seized by the police.

During the investigation in the matter, the prime accused, Premprakash Singh, was also nabbed by the cops.



Boat joyride drowns two persons in Nagpur lake

Nagpur: Two persons drowned in a lake in Parseoni in Nagpur after climbing on to a boat they found at the water body, a police official said on Friday.

The incident took place on Thursday afternoon and the deceased have been identified as cousins Bhavani Jangid (24) and Pankaj Jangid (22), the Parseoni police station official said.

"The two were passing by Bareja Panch Committee lake on a motorcycle when they spotted a boat. They climbed on to it but it soon capsized. Their bodies were fished out later in the evening by divers," he added.

Amruta Fadnavis threat case: Mumbai court denies bail to 'bookie' Anil Jaisinghani

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Sessions court here on Saturday rejected the bail application of suspected bookie Anil Jaisinghani in a case of alleged attempt to blackmail and bribe Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis's wife Amruta Fadnavis.

Jaisinghani was arrested by the Mumbai police from Gujarat on March 20. The accused had sought bail on the grounds of parity as his daughter, Aniksha Jaisinghani, a co-accused in the case, has been granted bail.

His lawyer, Manan Sanghai, had also cited Anil Jaisinghani's medical condition while arguing for his bail.

Special public prosecutor Ajay Misar had opposed the bail plea saying that the entire conspiracy was planned for Anil Jaisinghani.

Amruta Fadnavis had claimed in her complaint that Aniksha offered a bribe to her for intervening in the cases against her father. The SPP said there was a need to consider the role of the applicant. "Can't say that since one accused has been grant-



ed bail, he, too, should be released on bail," he said.

The prosecution had further argued that the accused was absconding in many of the offences registered against him and hence his nature also needs to be considered. On Jaisinghani's health, the SPP argued that his medical report says his health condition is fine.

After hearing both sides, additional sessions judge D D Almale rejected the bail plea. It, however, allowed the bail plea of another accused Nirmal Jaisinghani.

The Malabar Hill police station in south Mumbai had on February 20 registered a first information report (FIR) against Anil Jaisinghani and his daughter Aniksha for allegedly threatening to make public certain audio and video clips that purportedly show Amruta Fadnavis accepting favours from Aniksha.

The accused have been booked for offences under sections 120B (criminal conspiracy) and 385 (extortion) of the Indian Penal Code and sections 8 (induce public servant using corrupt means) and 12 (abatement) of the Prevention of Corruption Act.



PM FLAGS OFF BHOPAL-DELHI VANDE BHARAT TRAIN

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Prime Minister Narendra Modi today flagged off the Bhopal-Delhi Vande Bharat Express train, Madhya Pradesh's first Vande Bharat Express, at the Rani Kamalapati station. The train between Bhopal and the national capital, the country's 11th Vande Bharat Express, will cover 708 km distance in 7.45 hours. Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw, Madhya Pradesh Governor Mangu Bhai Patel, and Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan were in attendance.



The PM said that Vande Bharat is a symbol of the new developments in India and there's a demand for it in every corner of the country. Taking a jibe at rival Congress, the PM said the grand old party will say "Modi will pull an April Fool's prank" during this event, but the Vande Bharat will be flagged off. "In previous governments, they thought only one family is India's first family and didn't pay any attention to the needs of the middle-class families of India, Indian railways is the biggest example of this. Indian

rail is the common man's ride. In the last 9 years, we have been making efforts to make the Indian railway the best in the world," he said, adding CCTVs have been installed in 900 stations. "Vande Bharat has become a super-hit," he added. Onboard the train, the PM interacted with more than 300 school-children who were selected through a drawing and essay competition on the theme 'Bharatiya Rail', officials said. The Prime Minister claimed travelling by train has become safer

now, and the trains are cleaner and on time. "The new Vande Bharat will bring new employment opportunities and development," he added. Rs 13,000 crore railway budget allotted for Madhya Pradesh railways, unlike only Rs 600 crore railway budget allotted earlier, the PM said. "I am happy that Madhya Pradesh is leaving the old days behind and is heading towards development," he said. PM Modi, who arrived in Bhopal in the morning, attended the Combined Commanders'

Conference before flagging off the train. Assembly elections in the Bharatiya Janata Party-ruled Madhya Pradesh are due by the end of this year. The indigenously designed train set of Vande Bharat Express is equipped with state-of-the-art passenger amenities. It will provide a faster, more comfortable and more convenient travel experience for rail users, boost tourism and promote economic development in the region.

In MP, Cong banks on anti-incumbency, BJP on 'Modi Magic' for 2023 state polls

Praveen Dwivedi | Bhopal

The state of Madhya Pradesh is gearing up for a nail-biting Assembly poll, scheduled to be held towards the end of this year. Politically, the state stands at the crossroads and a close contest between the traditional rivals -- the Congress and the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) is on the cards. Though, the leaders in the ruling BJP would officially rule out the anti-incumbency of nearly two decades (except for 15 months of Kamal Nath-led Congress government), but at time, they also mention that foot soldiers of the party are already at work in all earnestness to beat the anti-incumbency of four terms under Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan. The Congress on the other hand has positioned itself on voter fatigue while raising public issues on which the BJP may face the heat. The grand old party would be more reliant on its counter strategies with polls drawing nearer, and tall promises being made that the 'Bachan Patra' (election manifesto) would be unique and will comprise all sections of society. Senior Congress leader Rajendra Kumar Singh, who is also head of 'Bachan Patra' committee of MP Congress, during an exclusive conversation with correspondent claimed the ruling BJP would lose at least three to five per cent votes due to decreasing popularity of Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan, and that will be an extra edge for the Congress. Singh noted: "The BJP would also accept this point that Shivraj Singh Chouhan's popularity has decreased at least up to some extent and a clear evidence of this was seen in the



2018 Assembly elections. In 2018, the BJP had got 0.6 per cent more votes against the Congress, but in total number of seats, they (BJP) were five seats behind. This time, there would be a huge difference in both -- total number of seats and the vote percentage. We are confident that the Congress will get four to five per cent more votes against the BJP this time." In 2018, out of total 230 Assembly seats in the state, the Congress had won 114 while the BJP had won 109 seats. BSP and SP had won two and one seats respectively, while Independent candidates won four seats. In terms of vote share, the BJP, with 41.02 per cent votes, had upper hand against Congress' 40.89 per cent. However, the Congress argue that it fielded candidates on 229 seats, leaving one seat - Jatara in Tikamgarh district - for the Sharad Yadav-led Loktantrik Janata Dal (LJD), and thus there was this difference in the vote share.

Chief Minister Chouhan planted neem, amla and guava plants

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan planted saplings of neem, amla and guava in the garden located at Shyamala Hills. Dr. Durgesh Keshwani, Kapil Tulsani, Sunil Jain, Yash Keswani and Suresh Shukla of Jagrut Hindu Manch family also planted saplings. The members of Jagrut Hindu Manch presented a sparrow house made of wood to Chief Minister Chouhan. The Chief Minister said that this initiative of conservation of birds is commendable, he will also participate in this campaign of conservation of birds by setting up a sparrow house in the Chief Minister's residence.



'MADHYA PRADESH RECORDED 300% GROWTH IN AIR CONNECTIVITY'

Civil Aviation Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia on Friday said that Madhya Pradesh has witnessed a significant development with regard to air connectivity since the year 2014.

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Minister said that in 2014, the state of Madhya Pradesh had air connectivity with only eight cities in the country, but now it is connected to 26 cities, which is a 300 per cent growth. The weekly air traffic movement from the state was 500 aircraft, and in 9 years, it has increased to 840. Madhya Pradesh was given 60 routes under the RCS UDAN scheme, 33 of them are already operational and 12 will be operational soon. Recently, Reva airport's foundation was laid and Rs 50 crore will be invested in its development. In Gwalior, a new integrated terminal building is being developed at a cost of Rs 500 crore. A new integrated terminal building costing around Rs 475 crore is being developed in Jabalpur also, said the Minister. The



Minister on Friday inaugurated a direct flight between Indore and Sharjah. The new route will enhance connectivity with the Middle East and promote trade, commerce and tourism in Madhya Pradesh. It will operate three days a week commencing from March 31, 2023. Scindia said that after Indore to Dubai, Indore to Sharjah will be Indore's second air connectivity with the UAE. This will not only boost trade and commerce but also connect families living in two different countries. Speaking on connectivity and infrastructure development, Scindia said that in 2013-14, Indore was connected to only 6 destinations. "In the 9 years of Prime Minister Narendra Modi-led government, it has increased to 24 including 2 international destinations, which is a 400 per cent growth. Earlier, weekly air traffic movement from Indore was 320 which has now increased to 500 which is a 52 per cent growth," Scindia said.

12 PERCENT INCREASE IN PROPERTY TAX COLLECTION IN URBAN BODIES

Bhopal : An increase of 8 percent in the collection of revenue/non-revenue taxes and 12 percent in the recovery of property tax has been recorded by the urban bodies this year as compared to the previous year. Urban Development and Housing Minister Bhupendra Singh has said that this will improve the financial condition of urban bodies. Along with this, more development works can be done in the urban bodies. In the financial year 2021-22, the urban bodies received revenue of about Rs 2354 crore from various sources of income. At the same time, in the financial year 2022-23, there has been an income of about Rs 2532 crore. In property tax of urban bodies, recovery of Rs 1206 crore has been registered in this financial year as against Rs 1083 crore last year. An increase of 11 per cent has been recorded in property tax in municipal corporations as compared to last year. On the other hand, an increase of 10 per cent has been recorded in Municipal Councils as compared to last year. An increase of 21 per cent has been recorded in city councils as compared to the previous year. Ujjain, Singrauli, Chhindwara and Gwalior are among the municipal corporations which have shown maximum increase in revenue in the state. In these, an increase of more than 20 percent has been recorded in revenue receipts. On the other hand, municipal councils and city councils include bodies like Kothari, Machhalpur, Ichhawar, Ambah, Shivpuri, Aron, Barasivmi, Barghat and Dindori, which have registered a significant increase in revenue receipt.

BAR SHOPS CLOSED IN STATE

Bhopal : Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has said that April 1 is a historic day for Madhya Pradesh. From today, all the premises for drinking liquor adjacent to liquor shops have been closed. He said that earlier people used to drink liquor in the courtyard from the liquor shop, used to reach their homes in a state of intoxication, and if they used to drive then there was a danger of accident. Many times people used to do such things due to intoxication, due to which the safety of mother, sister and daughter was in danger. By closing the premises, such activities will end now. This is a kind of moral control on intoxication. Chief Minister Chouhan said this to the people of the state through the media.

Self-reliant Madhya Pradesh will be built only with the determination, dedication and capability of the youth : Chief Minister Chouhan

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has said that he is well aware of the power of determination, dedication and capability of the youth of the state. Swami Vivekananda believed that there is no work that we cannot do. This fully applies to the youth of the state as well. In this sequence, the youth can make their every possible contribution to create a self-reliant Madhya Pradesh.

Team Absolute | Bhopal

For this purpose, the State Youth Policy has been prepared for the youth of the state by incorporating their suggestions. The youth have been kept at the center in the policy. It is our endeavor to provide opportunities to the youth to learn various skills and prepare themselves for employment by not giving them unemployment allowance. Our campaign to train youth for youth policy and employment will be helpful in realizing the dreams of youth power and together we will build a new Madhya Pradesh. Chief Minister Chouhan was addressing the program organized at the Chief Minister's residence complex to enlighten the youth on the state's youth policy and the Chief Minister's Skill Earning Scheme. Highlighted the points of youth policy as a teacher. As a teacher, Chief Minister Chouhan gave a point-wise presentation to the youth on the vision, objectives and scope of the youth policy. He also discussed in detail with the youth on various aspects of Mukhyamantri Kaushal Earning Scheme. Member of Parliament V.D. Sharma, Rajya Sabha Member Kavita Patidar, State Incharge Murlidhar Rao and Organization General Secretary Hitanand Sharma were present. In the incident in Indore, 2 minutes silence was observed to pray to God for the peace of the souls of the departed and to give strength to their acquaintances and family members to bear this deep sorrow. Only youth will lead the state towards development and progress



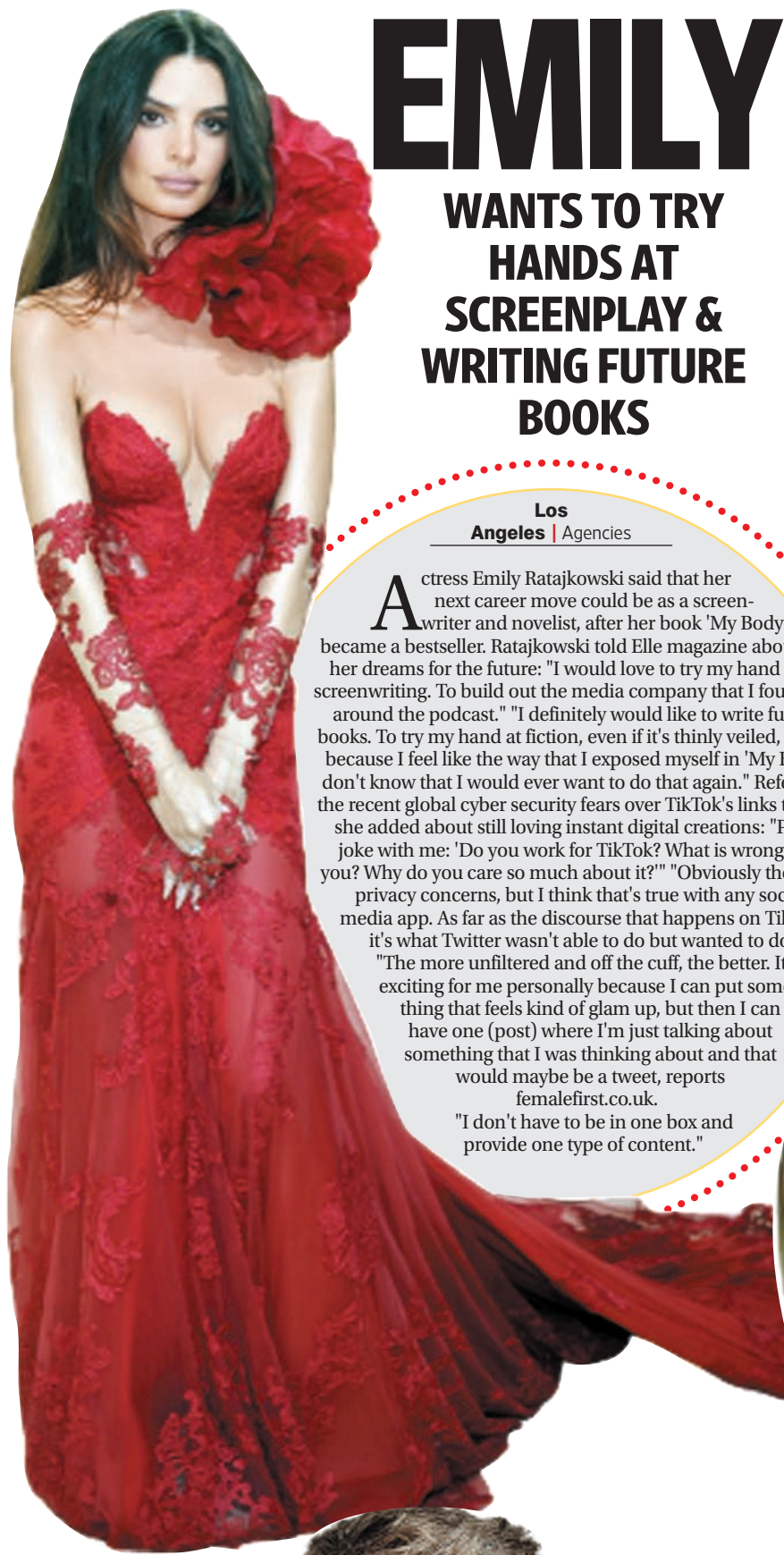
Chief Minister said that in order to contribute effectively in the economic and social upliftment of the state, the youth policy has been implemented with the aim of providing opportunities to the youth of the state to fully develop their skills. The objective of the policy is to create such young entrepreneurs, who are ready to take risks with self-confidence, aware of the economic and financial system and structure, mentally and physically healthy, responsible towards agriculture and environment, inclusive and justice should be complete and imbued with the spirit of participation. Chief Minister Chouhan said that

capable of taking rational decisions based on facts, having respect for their culture and values, devoted to nation building and their duties, able to provide leadership in future and capable of employment by acquiring education and skills. Youth, Scope of Youth Policy Chief Minister Chouhan said that education and skills, employment and entrepreneurship, health, youth leadership and social work, sports, art, literature, culture, heritage should be developed in the field of youth policy to develop the sense of 'my state-my pride'. Awareness for sustainable environment protection and being



committed to and conducting activities for inclusion and equity. Chief Minister Chouhan informed about employment for youth, reorganization of Youth Commission, establishment of Vivekananda Youth Resource Centers at district level, organization of Khelo MP Youth Games every year, Yuva Anubhav Yatra, lifestyle for environment and other announcements of youth policy. Gave. Chief Minister Youth Skill Earning Scheme While discussing about the Mukhyamantri Yuva Kaushal Earning Scheme, Chief Minister Chouhan said that training and stipend will be pro-

vided to the youth for better earning in the scheme. A provision of one thousand crore rupees has been made for the implementation of the scheme. 12th, ITI, Diploma holders, degree and domicile of Madhya Pradesh of 18 years or more age are eligible for the scheme. A minimum stipend of Rs 8,000 per month will be made available under the scheme. Youth can take advantage of the scheme in engineering, management, service sector, IT, financial services, media and arts and legal sector. Chouhan also informed about the implementation process of the scheme.



EMILY WANTS TO TRY HANDS AT SCREENPLAY & WRITING FUTURE BOOKS

Los Angeles | Agencies

Actress Emily Ratajkowski said that her next career move could be as a screenwriter and novelist, after her book 'My Body' became a bestseller. Ratajkowski told Elle magazine about her dreams for the future: "I would love to try my hand at screenwriting. To build out the media company that I founded around the podcast." "I definitely would like to write future books. To try my hand at fiction, even if it's thinly veiled, simply because I feel like the way that I exposed myself in 'My Body', I don't know that I would ever want to do that again." Referencing the recent global cyber security fears over TikTok's links to China, she added about still loving instant digital creations: "People joke with me: 'Do you work for TikTok? What is wrong with you? Why do you care so much about it?'" "Obviously there are privacy concerns, but I think that's true with any social media app. As far as the discourse that happens on TikTok, it's what Twitter wasn't able to do but wanted to." "The more unfiltered and off the cuff, the better. It's exciting for me personally because I can put something that feels kind of glam up, but then I can have one (post) where I'm just talking about something that I was thinking about and that would maybe be a tweet, reports femalefirst.co.uk.

"I don't have to be in one box and provide one type of content."

SAM ASGHARI REPLIES TO RUMOURS OF SPLIT FROM BRITNEY SPEARS



Los Angeles | Agencies

Pop icon Britney Spears's husband, Sam Asghari, has hit back at the speculation about their marriage being on the rocks. The model and actor has been married to Britney since 9 June last year - but lately, they have both been spotted out and about without their wedding rings on, reports Mirror.co.uk.

While tongues have been set wagging further due to the fact that Britney is currently holidaying with her longtime friend and manager, Cade Hudson - while Sam has been left behind. But now, Sam has hit out at headlines and speculation that his marriage to Britney could be in trouble - taking to social media to set the record straight. Mirror.co.uk further states that Sam has been posing on Instagram in ways to make it absolutely clear that his wedding band is being kept firmly on. He posed in a gym while clutching a bench bar with his ring clearly in view for the camera - and a subsequent image showed him raising just his wedding finger as his ring shone in the daylight. He has also hit out via his spokesperson - with Brandon Cohen, telling Entertainment Tonight: "Sam is not having marital issues. He simply took off his ring because he is filming a movie."



JANE SEYMOUR HAS DEVISED 'IGLOO' LIGHTING TO LOOK YOUNGER

Los Angeles | Agencies

Actress Jane Seymour makes use of a special lighting trick to knock years off her. Known for her youthful looks, the 'Live and Let Die' star now said she gets a little extra help looking good, thanks to a trick of the light she's developed over the years which she's named 'Jane's igloo' and insists on using whenever she appears on screen, reports aceshowbiz.com.

"Nobody else needs one (a lighting trick) because they're fewer than 30. Basically, the minute you take the top light off me I don't have bags under my eyes. If you have top light, my eyes become very baggy. So, I need something straight at me," she explained in an interview with Definition magazine, reported by the Daily Mail's Richard Eden.

She added: "Mercifully, I can take a lot of light. I've done so many films where I understand the light for me, I'm also an artist and like to do photography as well, so I understand what makes good and bad light for myself - what will and won't work. I never have to ask, though. They figure it out, usually on the first day."

Jane previously insisted she's been growing old gracefully without using any cosmetic procedures to reverse the ageing process - and said that her looks are a blessing because she can play both younger and older roles.

Speaking to Radio Times magazine, she said: "No (I haven't had any cosmetic surgery)! No! I don't see any reason to be a much younger version of myself."

"When they put a wig on me, I can easily play younger. And with a different wig and bad lighting, I can be older. You can't change faces without distorting things - if you change the nose, that throws out the mouth, so you fix that and it's a never-ending cycle. I'm perfectly happy to play a little old lady."



HUGH GRANT WISHES TO REMOVE A FILM FROM HIS 'RESUME'

Los Angeles | Agencies

Actor Hugh Grant has revealed that one film project he wishes to erase from his filmography.

Grant is out flogging his appearance in 'Dungeons & Dragons: Honor Among Thieves', appearing on 'The Late Late Show with James Corden' alongside costar Chris Pine, reports Deadline.

Corden enticed Grant into a spirited game of "Spill Your Guts or Fill Your Guts." The task: name a film Grant would remove from his resume, or eat a slice of worm mayonnaise shepherd's pie,

Grant didn't find that task challenging, admitting he's "specialised in being bad for decades."

Grant finally tabbed 'The Lady and the Highwayman' as a mistake. The 1988 made-for-TV film saw Grant as Lord Lucius Vyne in a swashbuckling tale.

"I'm a highwayman. I'm meant to be sexy," Grant said.

Instead, the film was "Low-budget, bad wig, bad hat. I look like Deputy Dawg. When I'm tense, my voice goes up two octaves. Deputy Dawg would come leaping out of trees when a carriage would come past and go, 'Stand and deliver!'"

'A mother's love knows no judgment'

Jamie Lee Curtis celebrates daughter Ruby on Transgender Day of Visibility

Los Angeles | Agencies

Actress Jamie Lee Curtis is taking a moment to recognise daughter Ruby on International Transgender Day of Visibility.

The day commemorates the lives and experiences of transgender people while raising awareness of the violence and discrimination the transgender community faces. The 'Everything, Everywhere All at Once' actress posted a photo on Instagram Friday of herself and her daughter sharing a laugh as they joke around, reports People.

"Love is love. A mother's love knows no judgment," the Oscar winner wrote. "As a mother, I

stand in total solidarity with my children as they move forward in the universe as their authentic selves with their own minds and bodies and ideas." Curtis concluded: "On this trans visibility day my daughter and I are visible. #transvisibilityday."

Ruby, who tied the knot with her partner Kynthia in May 2022, came out as Trans to Curtis and her dad, Curtis' husband Christopher Guest, in 2020. In addition to Ruby, the couple also shares daughter Annie.

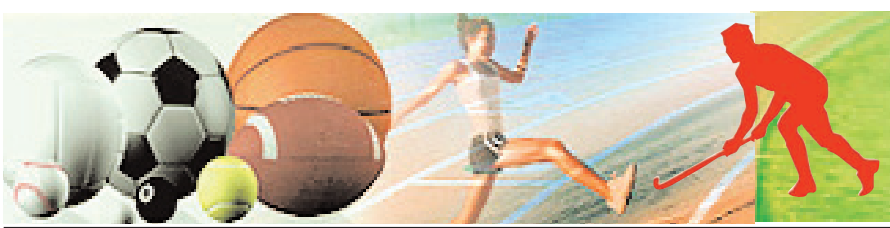
When Ruby first tried to tell her parents she was Trans, she found herself unable to in person and texted Curtis after a visit to the family's Los Angeles home in 2020.



ABSOLUTE PIC OF THE DAY



Hailey Grice



IPL 2023

LSG HAND DELHI CAPITALS A 50-RUN DEFEAT



Lucknow | Agencies

Two morale-shattering blows by English pacer Mark Wood in his first five-wicket haul (5-14) as Lucknow Super Giants rode on some disciplined efforts by their bowlers to overpower Delhi Capitals by 50 runs in their first match of IPL 2023 here on Saturday. Lucknow skipper K.L. Rahul brought Mark Wood in the fifth over and the English pacer made an immediate impact as he bowled Prithvi Shaw (12) and Mitchell Marsh (0) off successive deliveries, beating the batsmen with sheer pace. He came back to claim the wickets of Sarfaraz Khan (4), Axar Patel (16) and Chetan Sakariya (4),

getting his first fiver for Lucknow Super Giants as they restricted Delhi Capitals to 143/9 after Kyle Mayers had slammed a 38-ball 73 to help the hosts reach 193/6 in 20 overs. Skipper David Warner, who won the toss and elected the bowl first, waged a lone battle for a 48-ball 56 as Delhi Capitals struggled to get going. Warner had expected the wicket to ease out in the second innings with the dew coming into play. But the pitch had a lot to offer to the bowlers and the LSG bowlers, especially Mark Wood bowled beautifully as they romped to victory. Chasing 194 to win the match, Delhi Capitals could manage only 143/9 in 20 overs

as Mark Wood scorched them with searing pace and movement, setting an early benchmark for the bowlers. After they had pulled LSG back a bit after a rampaging Kyle Mayers had blasted 73 off 38 deliveries on his IPL debut, Delhi got off to a good start as they scored 40 runs in the first four overs. However, a double-strike in two deliveries by English pacer Mark Wood, who rattled the stumps of Prithvi Shaw (12) and Mitchell Marsh, for a first-ball duck, beating both batters for pace with deliveries that nipped back in. Delhi slumped to 41/2 in the fifth over and got bogged down by the mounting asking rate as they lost Sarfaraz Khan (4) in quick succession.

Brief scores

Lucknow Super Giants 193/6 in 20 overs (Kyle Mayers 73, Nicholas Pooran 36; Khaleel Ahmed 2-30) lost to Delhi Capitals 143/9 in 20 overs (David Warner 56, Rilee Rossouw 30; Mark Wood 5-14, Ravi Bishnoi 2-31, Avesh Khan 2-29) by 50 runs.

Rajapaksa, Arshdeep star as Punjab Kings beat Knight Riders by 7 runs

Mohali | Agencies

Bhanuka Rajapaksa timed the ball well to slam a delightful half-century, while Arshdeep Singh picked three wickets as Punjab Kings opened their IPL 2023 campaign with a seven-run win via DLS method against Kolkata Knight Riders at the L.S. Binda PCA Stadium on Saturday.

On a flat pitch and fast outfield, Punjab was threatening to score upwards of 200, reaching 100 runs in the first ten overs. But Kolkata, whose bowlers majorly struggled, picked four wickets in the second half as Punjab could make only 91 runs to end up at a score nine short of 200.

All of Punjab's batters got starts after being asked to bat first, but only Rajapaksa could reach his half-century, with the help of five fours and two sixes at a strike rate of



156.25. In reply, after the floodlights failure caused a delay of 25 minutes in the chase, Arshdeep started with short balls to leave Kolkata at 29/3 in five overs. Despite late blows from Andre Russell, they reached 146/7 in 16 overs, only for rain to make an appearance. Kolkata were seven runs behind the DLS par score as rain caused a premature end to the game,

resulting in their loss.

Brief scores

Punjab Kings 191/5 in 20 overs (Bhanuka Rajapaksa 50, Shikhar Dhawan 40; Tim Southee 2-54, Varun Chakravarthy 1-26) beat Kolkata Knight Riders 146/7 in 16 overs (Andre Russell 35, Venkatesh Iyer 34; Arshdeep 3-19, Rahul Chahar 1-12) by seven runs (via DLS method).

Williamson's knee injury has NZ worried over availability for WC

Auckland | Agencies

Kane Williamson's knee injury while playing for Gujarat Titans in the opening match of the Indian Premier League (IPL) 2023 against Chennai Super Kings in Ahmedabad has the New Zealand team management worried over his availability for the entire season.

Williamson got himself in a tangle while trying to save a boundary during the Titans' opening match in IPL 2023 against the Chennai Super Kings at the Narendra Modi Stadium. Williamson, New Zealand's white-ball captain had to leave the field, after which Sai Sudharsan was roped in as an Impact Player.

"I just messaged him and I don't know about the update. He has gone for the scans. So, once he comes back after the scans and the doctors' checks, then exactly



ly we will be able to know what exactly it is. It is knee for sure, but I don't know how serious it is or how much time it will take," Hardik said.

The experienced Williamson is expected to be a crucial figure for New Zealand in the 50-overs World Cup in India in October-November. Therefore the Black Caps will be worried till the seriousness of his injury and the length of his absence is known.

MI BEGIN PRACTICE IN BENGALURU AHEAD OF THEIR SEASON OPENER

Mumbai | Agencies

Mumbai Indians will begin their journey in the 2023 edition of the Indian Premier League (IPL) on Sunday, facing the Royal Challengers Bangalore at the M Chinnaswamy Stadium.

The players from MI reached the garden city on Friday and had their practice session in the evening at the stadium. Captain Rohit Sharma, Ishan Kishan, Suryakumar Yadav, Jofra Archer and others were putting in the long yards. The new signing of the team Sandeep Warrier also joined the squad and following a conversation with the coaches had a bowling session in the nets.



WE MAY GET TO SEE A 600-RUN SEASON FROM SHUBMAN: PARTHIV PATEL

New Delhi | Agencies

Defending champions Gujarat Titans got their 2023 IPL campaign off to a flying start with a five-wicket win over the Chennai Super Kings.

Patel complimented Gujarat on their win and said Shubman Gill may be in for a massive scoring season. "The way the Gujarat Titans started their chase. We saw Wriddhiman Saha get the license to use the first six overs to his advantage as much as he could." He added, "On this wicket, the target was below par, so a strong start is essential. I think the Gujarat Titans got that and kept the momentum."



RUTURAJ IS AN OUTSTANDING TALENT, WE RATE HIM SO HIGHLY: STEPHEN FLEMING

Ahmedabad | Agencies

Chennai Super Kings head coach Stephen Fleming showered praise on opener Ruturaj Gaikwad, saying the right-handed batter is an outstanding talent who is highly rated by the team think-tank.

Gaikwad set the stage alight in the 2023 IPL opener at the Narendra Modi Stadium in Ahmedabad, scoring a scintillating 50-ball 92 against Gujarat Titans.

"He (Ruturaj) is an outstanding talent. We rate him so highly and we think he is an absolute class player. He has got power, he has got touch and only good things will happen to him," said Fleming in the post-match press conference. "Ruturaj played a great hand. We just did not quite capitalize. They bowled well from the 12th to the 16th over and we could not get that final push. But still, 180 was a good score. We were looking at what tempo to play."



Khelo India WHL

HAR Hockey Academy beat HIM Hockey Academy by 7-3



Lucknow | Agencies

HAR Hockey Academy and SAI BAL Team registered victories in their respective games on the fourth day of the Khelo India Women's Hockey League (U-21-Phase 2). In the first game of the day, HAR Hockey Academy defeated HIM Hockey Academy 7-3. Bhatnagar (4', 47') opened the account for HAR Hockey Academy followed by goals from Pooja (14', 18'),

Seema (23'), and Shashi Khasha (35', 52'). The goal scorers for HIM Hockey Academy were Subham (22'), Simranjeet Kaur (32'), and Rajni (59'). In the final game of the day, SAI BAL Team defeated Salute Hockey Academy 9-0. The goals were scored by Team Captain Priyanka (25'), Ritu Devi Laishram (27', 29', 43'), Seema Anandrao Pawar (35', 37', 53'), Nilam Kachhap (37'), and Dechamma P.G (51').

I AM SURE THIS AUSTRALIA TEAM WOULD BACK WARNER: ROSS TAYLOR

New Delhi | Agencies

New Zealand batting great Ross Taylor believes veteran batter David Warner has it in him to break his indifferent form and claim a spot in Australia's playing eleven ahead of the World Test Championship Final in June.

Warner would be aiming to push for selection in the Australia side for the WTC Final against India at The Oval in England from June 7-11.

Warner averages only 26.04 in Tests in England. He made just 26 runs in three innings in the Border-Gavaskar Trophy series in India, before a concussion and hairline fracture of the elbow resulted in him being ruled out for the rest of the tour.

"Davey's played a lot of cricket, over 100-odd Test matches. You give these guys a little bit more leeway than you would a youngster. He's been playing cricket all over the world and has had success, and I am sure this Australia team would back him." "If he can score some runs and lead from the front for Delhi, I am sure that would give him a lot of confidence leading into the WTC Final and the Ashes as well," Taylor was quoted as saying by the ICC.



Miami Open

SINNER BEAT ALCARAZ IN SEMIS, ENDS SPANIARD'S NO. 1 REIGN

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Jannik Sinner roared back in his budding rivalry with Carlos Alcaraz with a statement semi-final win on Friday night at the Miami Open.

The Italian's 6-7(4), 6-4, 6-2 victory will end Alcaraz's reign atop the ATP Rankings, with Novak Djokovic set to take over as World No. 1 on Monday, reports ATP.

The result also gives Sinner a measure of revenge after his loss to Alcaraz two weeks ago in the Indian Wells semis.

Despite leading early in all three sets, Sinner was on the brink of defeat as he stared down two break points at 3-4 in the second. But the 21-year-old won 19 of 21 points to snatch the set and open up a 2-0 lead in the decider, with Alcaraz struggling physically at the start of set three. The Spaniard regrouped to bring up a break point at 3-2, but Sinner fought it off and powered through the finish after three hours of show-stopping tennis of the highest quality.

With NBA stars Luka Doncic and Jimmy Butler among those lucky enough to be in attendance,



Sinner and Alcaraz traded high-light-reel attacks, with few of the many extended rallies staying neutral for long. At 4-2 in the opening set, Sinner won what must be a frontrunner for point of the year, whipping a backhand beyond a diving Alcaraz to cap a 25-ball rally in which both men showed sublime skill in both attack and defence.

Shockingly, Sinner's heroics only served to fuel an Alcaraz charge. The Spaniard edged in front 6-5 and, though he failed to serve out the set, he won the final five points of the tie-break from 2/4. Alcaraz seemed destined to complete another comeback from 0-2 in set two, only for Sinner to find his form at the crucial

moment to turn the match back in his favour this time for good. Sinner finished with 28 winners to his opponent's 22 and won 16 of 25 net points in an engrossing all-court display that earned him his first win against a current World No. 1. Sinner will face Daniil Medvedev in Sunday's final, when the Italian will play for his first ATP Masters 1000 title.

Shakib, Litton Das picked in BAN squad for one-off Test against Ireland

Dhaka | Agencies

All-rounder Shakib Al Hasan and wicketkeeper-batter Litton Das have been picked in Bangladesh's Test squad for the one-off Test against Ireland starting on April 4 in Dhaka.

It means that the duo will join their IPL franchise Kolkata Knight Riders for the 2023 season of the tournament after the Test against Ireland ends. On the other hand, left-arm fast bowler Mustafizur Rahman has arrived in India to turn out for Delhi Capitals.

There have been numerous changes to the Bangladesh Test squad named for the Ireland Test from the one which played two Tests against India last year in December. Tamim Iqbal, who missed Tests against India due to a groin injury,



returns to the side. Pacer Ebadot Hossain, who missed the second Test against India at Dhaka last year due to an injury, is also back in the squad, along with Shadman Islam, and Shoriful Islam.

Shadman, the left-hand opener, replaces Zakir Hasan, who hit a Test century on debut against India and is down with a left thumb injury. Other omissions from the Test squad include Nasum Ahmed, Yasir Ali, Nurul Hasan, Anamul Haque and Rejaur Rahman Raja. Bangladesh has already won the ODI and T20I series against Ireland by 2-0 and 2-1. It will be the first time they will play a Test match against Ireland. Ireland have played three Tests so far and lost all of them. Bangladesh Test squad: Shakib Al Hasan (captain), Litton Kumer Das (vice-captain), Tamim Iqbal, Shadman Islam, Najmul Hossain Shanto, Mominul Haque Showrab, Mushfiqur Rahim, Mehidy Hasan Miraz, Taijul Islam, Taskin Ahmed, Syed Khaled Ahmed, Ebadot Hossain Chowdhury, Shoriful Islam, Mahmudul Hasan Joy.

ITF Mysuru Open 2023

Mukund Sasikumar-Vishnu Vardhan pair bags doubles title

Mysuru | Agencies

India's Mukund Sasikumar and Vishnu Vardhan showed admirable enduring powers on their way to the doubles title in the Cycle Pure Agarthi ITF Mysuru Open 2023 at the Mysore Tennis Club on Saturday.

In the final on Saturday, they defeated the top-seeded Indian pair of B. Ritvick Choudary and Nikki Poonacha 6-3, 6-4 in 1 hour and 10 minutes.

Mukund and Vishnu ward-off seven break points in the match while they converted two opportunities to break their opponents to ease their way to the title.

It was the second match of the day for Mukund and Vishnu and they showed great powers of concentra-



tion to stay focused on the task. They also won more than 80 per cent of points on both first and second serves, indicating the consistency in their game.

Earlier in the day, Mukund and Vishnu romped into the doubles final upsetting the second-seeded Australia-Ukraine pair of Blake Ellis and Vladyslav Orlov 6-4, 7-5.

The USD 25,000 event is being hosted by the Karnataka State Lawn Tennis Association (KSLLTA).

In the singles, India's campaign ended when Mysuru lad S D Prajwal Dev went down fighting to George Loffhagen of Britain 5-7, 4-6 in a tight semifinal match that lasted precisely two hours. Loffhagen will face eighth seeded Australian Blake Ellis, who shocked second seeded American Oliver Crawford 7-5, 6-3 in the other last four clashes. The final will be played on Sunday.



DEEPIKA PADUKONE IS 'DEAD' AFTER SEEING SRK'S BLACK SUIT LOOK



Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actress Deepika Padukone had an epic reaction on seeing Bollywood superstar Shah Rukh Khan's look from the Nita Mukesh Ambani Cultural Centre event.

Shah Rukh suited up in a black V-neck t-shirt, black pants and a black blazer, paired with a diamond pendant for the event. He was joined by wife Gauri Khan, daughter Suhana Khan and son Aryan Khan at the event. Stylist Shaleena Nathani shared a pic-

ture of SRK's look for the event. She wrote: "DEADDDDD !!!! iamsrk today for the opening of nmacc.india."

Soon after, Deepika Padukone commented on the post: "Me Too!" SRK and Deepika were seen sharing screen space in this year's blockbuster

'Pathaan', which also stars John Abraham, Dimple Kapadia and Ashutosh Rana.

On the work front, SRK has 'Jawan' and 'Dunki'. Deepika will next be seen in 'Fighter' starring Hrithik Roshan.



'DUMB'

Gauahar Khan calls Justin, Hailey Bieber 'dumb' and asks them to 'get an education'

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actress Gauahar Khan has called celebrity couple Justin Bieber and his model wife Hailey "dumb" and asked them to "get an education" after they made a comment on fasting during Ramzan. The couple was recently caught laughing over the aspect of fasting during Ramzan, where the 'Baby' hitmaker had also said that it "deprives your body of nutrition." Gauahar took to her Instagram stories, where she gave a piece of her mind over the comment. She shared the interview shared by a page on Instagram, where Justin and Hailey discuss the concept of fasting and how it doesn't make sense for them to fast. "I gotta really think about that, I have never really done it...I think our bodies need nutrition to think properly," Justin said.

Hailey then said how fasting off food never really "made sense to her," and said: if you want fast off the TV, fast off your phone, I think I believe in that more, but fasting off food... it never really made sense to me... or if you are fasting sweets or fasting sugar." She concluded: "We're totally like yeah, that's why you are stupid!" Gauahar posted the video on her Instagram Stories and wrote in the caption: "Just proves how dumb they are. Only if they knew about the science behind it. And the health benefits from it! Get an education Justin Bieber and Hailey Bieber. It's okay to have an opinion btw! But be intelligent enough to put forth correctly."

AKSHAY KUMAR USES HIS OWN MEME FOR 'PRANK' VIDEO ON APRIL FOOL'S DAY



Team Absolute | Mumbai

Bollywood's Khiladi star Akshay Kumar is known for his prank and this time he took it a notch higher by using his own meme for a prank video on April Fool's Day.

Akshay took to Instagram to share a hilarious video of pranking his clothing brand FORCE IX's co-founder Manish Mandhana. However, what caught the eye was the ending of the clip, where he shared a glimpse of his character Bunty from the film 'Bhagam Bhag'. The video, which seems to have been shot inside a studio, shows Akshay and the crew members of his clothing brand. In the clip, Akshay lifts up Mandhana with his arms, however, the impossible task is done by help, which the co-founder is not aware of. Akshay then asked Manish to lift him in the same manner, asking him to take all the weight on his arms. When Manish failed to do so and said it was difficult, Akshay did the task twice and Mandhana was impressed with Akshay's "impossible" strength. The entire unit was seen chuckling as Mandhana seemed confused. Akshay captioned the clip: "Here's some prank inspo for you all to try today. Tell me how it went. April Fool's Day." On the work front, Akshay will next be seen in 'Bade Miyan Chote Miyan' directed by Ali Abbas Zafar. He also has 'OMG 2', Hindi remake of 'Soorarai Pottrru', 'Capsule Gill' and 'Hera Pheri 3'.



Sehban Azim & Niyati Fatnani gets emotional after finishing the shoot

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The streaming show 'Dear Ishq' wrapped up its shoot recently leaving the cast members emotional. The crew shot for 60 episodes before the curtains came down on the first season.

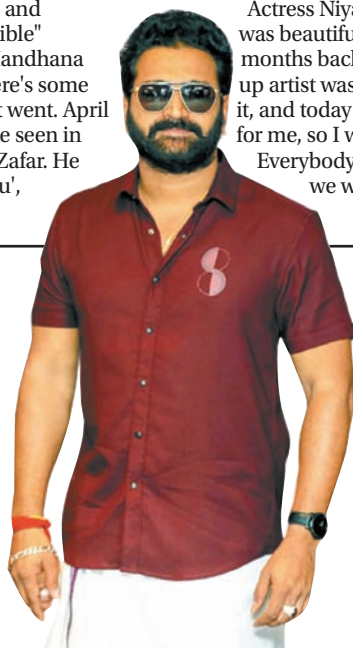
The cast including lead actor Sehban Azim is hopeful that the show will soon return with its second season.

Speaking about the wrap, Sehban said: "It's been a wonderful experience; it feels like it's been too less time for us. I wish it was longer. Didn't realise how 60 episodes passed by, a little overwhelmed, a little sad also, but hoping for the second season, I hope it happens soon. I'm gonna miss the entire team and crew, direction team, wonderful team, I want to work with each of them again."

Directed by Atif Khan and produced by Yash Patnaik and Mamta Patnaik, Beyond Dreams Entertainment Private Limited, the show tells the story of blossoming love between a best-selling author and a lady who works in a publishing house, both of whom find themselves at the opposite ends of the spectrum when it comes to love.

Actress Niyati Fatnani said: "I'm feeling very emotional, it was beautiful, and I was just recollecting that a couple months back, I came for a mock shoot and the same make-up artist was there and he was telling me that he thinks I'll get it, and today on our last day, he was the one doing make-up for me, so I was just thinking how time passes so fast.

Everybody is so emotional and we all know that tomorrow we will all miss coming to the set."



'SUPPORT MY CINEMA, I WILL NOT ENTER IN POLITICS,' SAYS RISHAB SHETTY OF KANTARA

Team Absolute | Bengaluru

Kantara fame Rishab Shetty has clarified his stand on joining politics on social media and said that he is not joining politics. He also appealed to fans to support his cinema.

Rishab Shetty, reacting to a tweet by a journalist that he is joining politics, stated: please state that it is false news. Say clearly that today is April 1. "Few people have already pro-

jected me as a supporter of a certain party. I will never go into politics," he underlined.

One of his fans had reacted that he should join politics and he will support him. Rishab Shetty asked him that he does not need his support in politics. "Please support my cinemas, that is more than enough," he stated.

Rumours spread following the release of the Kantara movie that he will join a certain political party. His appeal to

movie goes to not mock the screams of God shown in Kantara movie and his temple visits also indicated that he would support and come to politics.

However, Rishab Shetty has pulled curtains on all rumours and categorically stated that he would not enter politics. Sources close to him said that Rishab is seriously working on the Kantara franchise as the expectations are very high at pan India level.

INSTAGRAM PIC OF THE DAY



Pooja Hegde