

absolute india

VOL. 8, ISSUE 149, BHOPAL | WEDNESDAY, APRIL 12, 2023 | ₹5 | PAGE 08

PUBLISHED SIMULTANEOUSLY FROM BHOPAL, MUMBAI AND NEW DELHI

NATION > 02

'Don't mess around with my authority': CJI Chandrachud ...



HOLLYWOOD > 06

Jennifer Aniston, crush David Schwimmer let 'feelings play out' ...



SPORTS > 07

Asian Wrestling Championships: India's Vikas wins bronze in ...



FORECAST FOR A BELOW-NORMAL MONSOON ADDED RISK TO ECONOMY: REPORT

RAIN DEFICIT!

- The report mentions that the likelihood of El Nino is increasing and that the probability of it becoming the dominant category during the 2023 monsoon is increasing too.
- Geographically, northern and central parts of the country are expected to face rain deficit.
- Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra are expected to witness inadequate rain during July and August, while Punjab, Haryana, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh are likely to observe less than normal rain during the second half of the season.



Centre says normal monsoon expected this year

New Delhi: The India Meteorological Department (IMD) on Tuesday said that the country will witness normal rainfall during the monsoon season, adding that there are 67 per cent chances of normal to above-normal rainfall this year.

Secretary in the Union Ministry of Earth Sciences, M. Ravichandran said that the country will see normal rain during the Southwest monsoon season. He added that there is a likelihood of a 96 per cent of the long-period average of roughly 87 cm.

The government's forecast may come as a relief to farmers even as on Monday, private weather forecaster Skymet had predicted "below normal" rainfall during the monsoon season between June and September, attributing the deficiency to a strengthening El Nino phenomenon.

Team Absolute | New Delhi

A below-normal monsoon, which irrigates more than half of India's farmlands, is an added risk to the economy, raising concerns regarding food production and the ability of the rural economy to prosper, according to a report by Motilal Oswal Financial Services. Skymet expects the upcoming

monsoon to be 94 per cent (with an error margin of +/- 5 per cent) of the long period average of 868.6 mm for the four-month period from June to September this year amid the El Nino threat.

An analysis of Skymet's rainfall predictions in April month of the year does not inspire confidence, Motilal Oswal Financial Services said.

The actual rainfall during the past five years has been either much higher or lower compared to the Skymet first predictions.

The difference ranged from a shortfall of 9.4 per cent in 2018 to an excess of 18.2 per cent in 2019. On an

average, thus, the actual rainfall has been 4.6 per cent higher than Skymet's April projections.

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) has not yet released its monsoon forecast but is likely to do it soon (it was announced on 14th April last year).

Nevertheless, the IMD has forecast above-normal temperatures this summer.



Interest rates likely to fall to pre-Covid levels in advanced economies, IMF says

LONDON | Agencies

Interest rates in major economies are expected to fall to pre-pandemic levels because of low productivity and ageing populations, according to a forecast, BBC reported.

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) said increases in borrowing costs are likely to be "temporary" once high inflation is brought under control.

The Bank of England has been raising interest rates since December 2021, taking them from 0.1 per cent to 4.25 per cent.

This has raised mortgage payments for many homeowners.

Central banks in the UK, the US, Europe and other nations have been lifting interest rates to combat the

rate of price rise, otherwise known as inflation, BBC reported.

In the UK, inflation is at its highest for nearly 40 years because of rising energy prices and soaring food costs. A number of factors are fuelling inflation, including Russia's invasion of Ukraine which has helped drive up energy costs.

However, in a blog the IMF said that "recent increases in real interest rates are likely to be temporary".

It added: "When inflation is brought back under control, advanced economies' central banks are likely to ease monetary policy and bring real interest rates back towards pre-pandemic levels."

The IMF did not say, however, exactly when interest

rates were set to fall back to lower levels, BBC reported.

The Washington-based financial institution said ageing populations would be one factor likely to lower inflation.

Explaining why older people affect inflation, George Godber, fund manager at Polar Capital, said that they tend to spend less.

"The amount that you spend relative to your income is highest when you're in your 20s, 30s and 40s - often that's maybe young families, when you've got households forming, you've got couples coming together, they tend to spend the most when they decorate and buy a car or whatever, and you as you get older in life you slow down your consumption," he told the BBC.

Cow urine unfit for human consumption: IVRI Study

Bareilly (UP) | Agencies

Cow urine, which has been touted as a miracle medicine for decades, has now found to be unsuitable for direct human consumption as it contains potentially harmful bacteria.

Research carried out by Bareilly-based ICAR-Indian Veterinary Research Institute (IVRI), the country's premier animal research body, has found that the urine of buffalo was more effective on certain bacteria.

The study led by Bhoj Raj Singh of the institute along with three Ph.D students, found that urine samples from healthy cows and bulls contained at least 14 types of harmful bacteria with the presence of Escherichia coli, which can cause stomach infections, most commonly detected. The findings of the peer-reviewed research have been published in online research website, Researchgate.

Singh, who heads the department of epidemiology at the institute, said, "Statistical analysis of 73 urine samples of cow, buffaloes and humans suggest that antibacterial activity in buffalo urine was far more superior than cows. Urine of buffalo was significantly more effective on bacteria like S. Epidermidis and E. Rhapontici." He explained, "We collected urine samples of three types of cows --



Sahiwal, Tharparkar and Vindavani (cross breed) from local dairy farms -- along with samples of buffaloes and humans. Our study, carried out between June and November 2022, concluded that a sizeable proportion of urine samples from apparently healthy individuals carry potentially pathogenic bacteria."

The urine of some individuals, irrespective of sex and breeder species, might be inhibitory to a select group of bacteria but the common belief, that cow urine is antibacterial, cannot be generalised. He further said, "In no case can urine be recommended for human consumption. Some people put forth the contention that distilled urine does not have infectious bacteria. We are carrying out further research on it." Notably, cow urine is widely sold in the Indian market without the food safety and standards authority of India (FSSAI) trademark by many suppliers.

Disqualification biggest gift that BJP gave me: Rahul Gandhi

Thiruvananthapuram | Agencies

Former Lok Sabha MP from Wayanad Rahul Gandhi on Tuesday said the biggest gift that the BJP has given him is disqualifying him.

He said this while addressing a mammoth public meeting called at Kalpetta to honour him on his first visit to his constituency after his disqualification following a court verdict.

"My disqualification means nothing as my relationship with Wayanad is going to be a lifelong relationship. This disqualification will only deepen my relationship with you all. The relation is similar to a family one as I am a brother. I assure you I will never go away from you," said Gandhi to thunderous applause.

He arrived at Kannur early in the day along with his sister Priyanka and later flew to Kalpetta in a helicopter.

From the helipad to the meeting venue, thousands had gathered to have a glimpse of him as he was taken in an open vehicle. It



took 30 minutes to cover a small distance.

Gandhi said all that he had done was to ask Prime Minister Narendra Modi about his relationship with Gautam Adani.

"After that in Parliament we all saw for the first time the government itself trying to prevent the session from going forward smoothly.

"This disqualification is the biggest gift the BJP has given me as I did not know if what I was doing was right. But after seeing the BJP attacking me all the time, I knew I was doing the right thing. I am not going to stop as I will continue to ask questions," said Gandhi.

"I was not happy in the house where I lived which they took away as I know there were so many people in Wayanad who lost their homes during the floods. I will continue to raise issues of Wayanad," he said.

Before Gandhi spoke, Priyanka said her brother is an honest person.

Eyewitnesses said this was the biggest crowd Wayanad has seen, beating the crowds which turned up on the day Gandhi came for the first time to the hilly district to file his nomination for the 2019 Lok Sabha polls.

Gandhi had won the Wayanad seat with a margin of over four lakh votes.



GOLD PRICES INCH UP ON TUESDAY

Chennai: Gold prices inched up on Tuesday and at Comex, the metal changed hands at a slightly higher rate, said analysts.

"Gold prices traded up on Tuesday, with spot gold prices at Comex were trading higher by 0.74 per cent at \$2,006.0 per ounce. Gold June future contract at MCX were trading up by 0.80 per cent at Rs 60,580 per 10 grams by noon session," said Saumil Gandhi, Senior Analyst, Commodities, HDFC Securities.

According to Gandhi, the yellow metal prices hovered around psychological level of \$2,000 per ounce as traders await more US macro data for clues on Federal reserve policy path.

Recently gold prices got support from strong investment demand, and exchange traded funds added 3,488 troy ounces of gold to their holdings in the last trading session.



INDIA REJECTS CHINA'S 'OBJECTION' TO AMIT SHAH'S ARUNACHAL PRADESH VISIT

New Delhi: India on Tuesday rejected China's "objection" to Home Minister Amit Shah's visit to Arunachal Pradesh, making it clear that the state is and will always remain an integral part of India.

A statement issued by external affairs ministry spokesperson Arindam Bagchi said: "We completely reject the comments made by the Chinese Official Spokesperson. Indian leaders routinely travel to the state of Arunachal Pradesh as they do to any other state of India. Arunachal Pradesh was, is and will always remain an integral and inalienable part of India." The statement further said that "objecting to such visits does not stand to reason and will not change the above reality".

Humans will soon upload consciousness in computers: Indian-origin scientist

- Dr Pratik Desai has asked people to start recording their loved ones' voices, which will "live" even after their death. In other words, users can create a computerised avatar that resembles their loved one before their death, which can live forever on their screens. "Start regularly recording your parents, elders and loved ones," Desai recently wrote on Twitter. "With enough transcript data, new voice synthesis and video models, there is a 100 per cent chance that they will live with you forever after leaving physical body." This should be even possible by end of the year," he noted.



Team Absolute | New Delhi

Humans will be able to upload consciousness and sensibility in computers by the end of 2023, claims an Indian-origin computer scientist. Desai is not the only one who has claimed this.

Previously, metaverse company Somnium Space offered

an AI-based "live forever" mode. It aims to allow individuals to talk with their loved ones in the metaverse.

In an interview with Motherboard, the company's founder and CEO Artur Sychov said his project will allow people to store the way they talk, move, and sound until after they die, when they can come

back from the dead as an online avatar to speak with their relatives.

"Literally, if I die -- and I have this data collected -- people can come or my kids, they can come in, and they can have a conversation with my avatar, with my movements, with my voice," Sychov was quoted as saying to Vice.

"You will meet the person. And you would maybe for the first 10 minutes while talking to that person, you would not know that it's actually AI. That's the goal," he added.

Another US-based company Deepbrain has also developed a programme called "Re:memory" which allows users the opportunity to walk down a memorial hall dedicated to a late loved one and even interact with the person "through an actual conversation".

Fight against corruption to continue: Sachin Pilot

Lalit Sharma | Jaipur

Former Rajasthan Deputy Chief Minister Sachin Pilot sat on a day-long (11 a.m. to 4 p.m.) fast at Shaheed Smarak in Jaipur, demanding an inquiry into corruption cases during the previous Vasundhara government.

After ending his daylong fast, seeking action from the Gehlot government into alleged corruption during BJP's tenure, Rajasthan Congress leader on Tuesday said that fight against corruption will continue.

Talking to media persons, Pilot said, "After coming to power, we had assured people that effective action will be taken against corruption done by the former BJP government in the state. I want the Congress government to take action against the corruption by the former BJP

government."

Pilot accused the Gehlot government of inaction on the corruption allegations against the then Vasundhara Raj government.

Pilot said: "No action was taken on corruption allegations during the Vasundhara government. While being in the opposition, we had promised that an inquiry would be conducted. As six-seven months are left for the election, questions can be raised if there was any alliance between Gehlot and Raj. Action will have to be taken soon to prove that it is not. Congress workers should also feel that there is no difference between our words and actions."

On Monday, hours ahead of Pilot's fast, Congress state in-charge Sukhjinder Singh Randhawa termed the move as against the party interest and an "anti-party activity".



K'TAKA ASSEMBLY POLLS

SENIOR BJP LEADER ESHWARAPPA QUILTS ELECTORAL POLITICS

◆ Weeks ahead of the May 10 Assembly elections in Karnataka, former Deputy Chief Minister and BJP's old warhorse in the state, K.S. Eshwarappa, wrote to BJP President J.P. Nadda on Tuesday to communicate his decision to quit electoral politics.

Team Absolute | Bengaluru



The move came ahead of the party's announcement of its first list of candidates for the Assembly polls scheduled on May 10.

According to party insiders, Eshwarappa has decided to opt out of electoral politics to pave the

way for his son K.E. Kanthesh's candidature from the Shivamogga Assembly constituency.

Interacting with mediapersons here, Eshwarappa said that he is retiring from electoral politics in order to help the BJP secure majority in the upcoming Assembly polls, pointing out that despite forming the government and having several CMs, the saffron party has never secured complete majority on its own.

Expressing confidence that the party leadership would accept his decision, Eshwarappa said that he will take up any new responsibilities that the party leadership gives him.

Last week it was reported that Karnataka BJP is in two minds about giving ticket to Eshwarappa. Some sources in the party had even confirmed that the BJP has already taken a decision not to give him the ticket as it is searching for a new face.

Eshwarappa, who will turn 75 in June, is the face of the Kuruba community in BJP. He is also a staunch Hindutva leader. His statements, such as hoisting 'Bhagwa' flag on the Red Fort, or on Azaan and against Muslim fundamentalism had made national headlines earlier.

The senior leader was reportedly upset over last week's developments and had already started lobbying for his son, Kantesh, for a ticket.

'Don't mess around with my authority': CJ Chandrachud warns lawyer

◆ A bench headed by Chief Justice of India D.Y. Chandrachud everyday usually hears around 100 cases on an average seeking urgent listing before the benches of the Supreme Court. The Chief Justice's court is often packed with lawyers, who mention their matter seeking urgent hearing.

Team Absolute | New Delhi

A bench headed by Chief Justice of India D.Y. Chandrachud everyday usually hears around 100 cases on an average seeking urgent listing before the benches of the Supreme Court. The Chief Justice's court is often packed with lawyers, who mention their matter seeking urgent hearing.

During the mentioning of the cases, the Chief Justice is very soft spoken while engaging with lawyers and has rarely lost his cool during the court proceedings. However, on Tuesday, he got irked and warned a lawyer: "Don't mess around with my authority."

The lawyer had mentioned a case and requested the court for an early hearing in the matter but after the bench told him that his matter will be listed on April 17, he asked the liberty to mention the matter before another bench. "I can mention before another bench,



if permitted," said the lawyer.

The bench, headed by the Chief Justice, and also comprising Justices P.S. Narasimha and J.B. Pardiwala, told the lawyer not to play tricks with him and said: "You can't mention it and then elsewhere for an earlier date."

The lawyer understood that his submissions have irked the Chief Justice and expressed regret and said he should be excused for his submissions.

The Chief Justice told the lawyer, "Yes, you are excused. But do not mess around with my authority", as he proceeded with the mentioning process.

CONSTABLE SHOTS COLLEAGUE TO DEATH IN ASSAM'S TINSUKIA

◆ Guwahati: An Assam Industrial Security Force (AISF) jawan was arrested for allegedly killing one of his colleagues.

The incident happened at the AISF camp at Moliabari in Tinsukia district on Tuesday. They were engaged in Digboi's Indian Oil Corporation Limited (IOCL) security. Superintendent of Police in Tinsukia district, Gaurav Abhijit Dilip told IANS, "One constable of AISF II Battalion in Dibrugarh namely Udesh Majhi, 43-year-old, posted at Digboi IOCL security duty has shot dead his fellow colleague Bimal Oraon by service rifle today." The accused Udesh Majhi was arrested by the police and a case was registered against him in accordance with the pertinent laws. "Reason of firing is a personal dispute between them," Dilip said. The body of the deceased was sent for autopsy. Further investigation in the matter is underway.



HARYANA HIKES PENSION OF MEDIA PERSONNEL

◆ Team Absolute | Chandigarh Taking another decision in the interest of journalists, the Haryana government on Tuesday announced to increase the pension of the accredited media personnel under the Journalist Pension Scheme already being run by the state.

Amit Agrawal, Additional Principal Secretary to Chief Minister, said the Chief Minister has accorded approval to a proposal for an annual increase in the pension amount.

"Now pension amount of journalists will be increased in proportion to the increase in DA according to the norms fixed by the Central government," he said.

He said on October 26, 2017, the Chief Minister started the Journalist Pension Scheme, a monthly pension being given to

accredited media personnel above the age of 60 years.

According to the eligibility criteria for the scheme, journalists must have 20 years of experience and must have media accreditation given by the state government for five years.

Agrawal said the Chief Minister is constantly implementing new schemes for the welfare of journalists. The demand for providing pension to journalists was being raised for a long time, which was fulfilled by the present government. Apart from this, along with an insurance scheme for journalists, free travel facility in Haryana Transport buses and media centres have also been set up in every district to enable the mediapersons to work without facing any inconvenience, added Agrawal.



Punjab CM dedicates renovated Guru Tegh Bahadur Museum

◆ Team Absolute | Anandpur Sahib

Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann on Tuesday dedicated the newly renovated Guru Tegh Bahadur Museum to the people and exhorted them to uphold and emulate the high ideals of secularism and humanitarianism embodied by the ninth Sikh Guru. The Chief Minister, while addressing the gathering after inspecting the ongoing work at Panj Pyara Park here, said the ninth guru of Sikhs, who founded the holy town of Sri Anandpur Sahib, was an epitome of socialism and secularism as he sacrificed his life for the sake of preserving human rights in the country.

Mann urged people to imbibe the spirit of self-sacrifice preached and practised by Guru Tegh Bahadur, who laid down his life to safeguard the freedom of worship, besides upholding the human and secular values. He said the Bani of Guru Tegh Bahadur, which is included in Guru Granth Sahib, preaches the message of oneness of mankind, universal brotherhood, righteousness, valour and compassion, which



need to be followed by one and all.

The Chief Minister said Guru's supreme sacrifice as protector of 'dharma' was unparalleled in the history of mankind and stands out as an example for humanity.

He said this museum is a humble tribute to this great Sikh Guru who made unparal-

leled sacrifices to uphold the value of righteousness, truth and freedom of faith.

Mann said the supreme sacrifice of Guru Tegh Bahadur should always be remembered by one and all and Guru's teachings must be disseminated in every nook and corner of the world.

CBI ARRESTS MES JUNIOR ENGINEER IN BRIBERY CASE

◆ Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) on Tuesday arrested a Junior Engineer (E&M) working in the office of Garrison Engineer, Military Engineering Services, Jaipur (Rajasthan), and his aide for allegedly demanding and accepting a bribe of Rs 16,000 from a man if he wanted to continue working with them on a contract basis, an official said.

A senior CBI official said that the accused was identified as Vinod Kumar, the Junior Engineer, and Santosh Kumar Pandey, HR manager of a Noida-based firm.

The CBI said that a case was registered against the Junior Engineer and a Manager (HR) of a private company



based at NOIDA (Uttar Pradesh) on the allegations of demanding undue advantage from the complainant's salary for continuing his services on a contract basis. "The complainant (a

contractual employee) of NOIDA-based private company was working as electrician helper at Military Engineering Services (MES), Jaipur, and was getting salary for the work

performed by him. Kumar in conspiracy with Pandey demanded a bribe of Rs 26,000 and agreed to accept Rs 16,000 as first instalment for himself and for the said HR Manager from complainant's salary for continuing his services and further contract in MES," the official added.

The CBI laid a trap and caught the junior engineer (E&M) red handed for demanding and accepting undue advantage of Rs 10,000 from the complainant as the first instalment.

Searches were conducted at five places, including Jaipur, Sriganganagar, Ghaziabad and in NOIDA at the premises of the accused which led to the recovery of Rs 3,00,000 along with other incriminating documents from the premises of the said Junior Engineer.

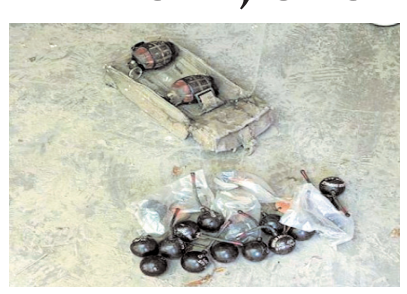
10 country-made hand grenades found in Delhi, one held

◆ Team Absolute | New Delhi

With the arrest of one man and recovery of around 10 country-made hand grenades, the sleuths of Delhi Police have thwarted the possibility of untoward incident in Delhi and its peripherals, an official said on Tuesday.

The accused has been identified as Dilip alias Billi, a resident of Holambi Kalan, Delhi, however, one more accused, who had handed over the grenades to Dilip is still on the run.

According to police, specific inputs were received on Sunday regarding a country-made hand grenade buried in the area of Metro Vihar, Phase-II, Holambi Kalan following which a police team rushed to the spot. "There, a suspected person was appre-



hended and he was identified as Dilip. Upon sustained interrogation, the accused disclosed that he was given around 10 grenades by his friend who is the other co-accused (name withheld) to keep these grenades in safe custody," said Ravi Kumar Singh, Deputy Commissioner of Police (outer-north).

"Thereafter, the country-made hand grenades were recovered at the instance of accused Dilip. It was observed that the recovered hand grenades were put inside a plastic bucket and covered with grass and bushes and kept in the mud near a drain," said the DCP. The concerned intelligence agencies were also informed to interrogate the accused.

IPL betting racket busted in Hyderabad, 10 held

◆ Team Absolute | Hyderabad

Cyberabad police busted an online IPL cricket betting racket and arrested 10 bookies. The arrests were made during a raid on a house in Bachupally on Monday during the IPL match between RCB and Lucknow SuperGiants. Cyberabad Police Commissioner Stephen Ravindra told media persons that the SOT Balanagar Zone and Bachupally team of Cyberabad Police Commissionerate had been watching the illegal activity of Cricket betting rackets. On credible information, they jointly raided a house at Sai Anurag Colony in Bachupally.

He said 10 bookies were arrested and cash of Rs 60.39 lakh was seized. He said along with the amount in the bank accounts of the arrested, value of online cash and seized property, the total value of the case property is about Rs 1 crore.

The seized property include three line boards, 8 laptops, 3 TVs, 8 keypad phones, two CPUs, keyboards, monitor set top box, headsets, WiFi routers, printer, Microphones, 10 smart phones, three two-



wheelers. The bookies were booked under sections 3 and 4 of TS Gaming Act.

Pandu, the main organiser who is a resident of Vijayawada, is absconding. Four of the arrested men are from Andhra Pradesh while the remaining are all residents of Andhra Pradesh.

Police said due to digitalisation and lure to make quick bucks, some people have been lured to cricket betting. This is a vicious cycle which leads to constant addiction to betting money. Ultimately the bookie only makes money while punters lose money. There is scope for Cyber theft of data from bank accounts and other personal data, which may result in unauthorized money transfer and blackmailing using personal photos, data etc, it said.

ELDERLY COUPLE MURDER: DAUGHTER-IN-LAW PLOTTED CRIME TO RUN OFF WITH LOVER, SAYS POLICE

◆ Team Absolute | New Delhi

The daughter-in-law of an elderly couple, who were killed by her boyfriend and his associate had plotted the crime to eliminate all obstacles and run off with her boyfriend with the money she would make after selling their property, Delhi Police said on Tuesday.

The elderly couple was found murdered at their home in the national capital's Gokulpuri area on Monday, a Delhi Police official said, adding that the house was ransacked and cash and jewellery were also missing. The deceased were identified as Radhey Shyam Verma, 72, and his wife Veena, 68, residents of Bhagirathi Vihar.

Verma had retired as Vice Principal from a Delhi government school in Karol Bagh. The family had been living in this house since the past 38 years with their son Ravi Rattan, said the official

According to police, on interroga-

tion, the couple's daughter-in-law Monika told police that she had planned and executed the murders with the help of her boyfriend Ashish and his friend.

"Monika came up with the idea to eliminate the old couple in December 2022, and Ashish agreed to help her. After finalizing their plan on February 20, they decided to use secret phone numbers to execute the murders. Ashish arranged for new SIM cards and delivered one to Monika at her parental home," Deputy Commissioner of Police, Northeast, Joy Tirkey said.

Two days before the murders, Monika and Ashish started talking on their secret phones.

"On Sunday (April 9), Monika called Ashish to her place while her family members were away. She led him and his accomplice to the terrace and provided them with refreshments while they waited," the DCP said. At around 1.15 a.m., Ashish called Monika and told her not to come out of her room at any

cost. "He then executed the plan (of murder), and at 2.12 a.m., he called Monika to inform her that he had finished. The next morning, Ravi found the bodies and informed Monika, who then called her family members for help," Tirkey said.

He said that Verma and his family were planning to sell their property to buy a house in Dwarka area. However, they couldn't find a single buyer willing to pay the asking price of Rs 1.5 crore, so they decided to sell the property in parts.

"Monika, the wife of Ravi, was unhappy in her marriage. Ravi and his parents had also found out about her affair with Ashish," the DCP said, adding that several teams have been constituted to apprehend Ashish (29). "In the investigation conducted up till now, all evidence points towards the involvement of Monika, Ashish and Ashish's associate. The bike that was used by the criminals has also been identified," he said, adding that further investigation is in progress.

TWO LASHKAR TERRORIST ASSOCIATES ARRESTED IN J&K'S BARAMULLA

◆ Srinagar: Two terrorist associates linked with proscribed terror outfit Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) were arrested in the Pattan area of North Kashmir's Baramulla district, and a 2-kg IED was recovered from them along with other arms and ammunition, said police on Tuesday. "Acting on specific information regarding movement of terrorist associates, police along with Army (29RR) and SSB (2ndBn) busted a terror module at Pattan Baramulla and arrested two terrorist associates linked with proscribed terror outfit LeT," police said. The two have been identified as Farooq Ahmad Parra, a resident of Par Mohalla Pattan, and Saima Bashir, a resident of Chinkipora, Sopore.

"They have been shifted to the police station where they remain in custody," police said. On their disclosure, arms and ammunition, including a pistol, two pistol magazines, five pistol rounds and IED (approximately 2 kgs) along with remote control and other incriminating material were recovered.

"During preliminary questioning, the arrested duo revealed that they were working as terrorist associates with active terrorist Abid Qayoom Lone of Wussan Pattan linked with proscribed terrorist outfit LeT," police said.



FIRST HEAT, THEN HAILSTORM: MADHYA PRADESH FARMERS SET FOR ANOTHER ROUND OF COMPENSATION BATTLE

Sanavver Shafi | Bhopal

"Sahab, what shall I tell you. These wheat plants portray my destruction and you are still asking how much I have lost?" says Kuber Singh Rajput, a farmer who lost half of his wheat crop on 10 acres of land to the sudden rain and hailstorms that wreaked havoc in over 25 districts of Madhya Pradesh recently.

Hailing from Khajuri Kalan, a village located 30 km from the state capital Bhopal, Rajput cries inconsolably as he examines the fallen plants. "Neither the weather is in our favour nor the government. In early February, we were worried as wheat began to ripen early due to unseasonal heat. The field was irrigated more often to save the crop. All that hard work proved futile in another 15 to 20 days. We have nothing to do now other than pray to gods to spare us from further rain," says a hopeless Rajput.

Ganpat Dodiya cultivates gram and wheat on 22 acres in Khajuri Kalan. He thinks the additional irrigation could have been avoided, had they received prior information on the likely change in weather. The losses would have been less if the moisture content in the fields was minimal.

Backing him, Rajendra Ravi Chauhan says he had mustard, gram and wheat crops on 14 acres of land. "Mustard began to ripen in December itself because of the unseasonal heat. Being way ahead of the usual mid-February schedule, a loss was expected. I pinned my hopes on good yields from wheat



TIMELY ADVICE PROVES BENEFICIAL

Farmers in Kolukhedi village under Berasia block have managed to reduce crop damage because they received timely weather updates via mobile calls from both agriculture and meteorological departments.

"We started receiving these calls after the kharif season. In accordance with the advisories, I sowed wheat and gram ahead of schedule on my seven-acre field. By the time the heat increased in February, my crops were ready for harvest. By month-end, we were informed about the upcoming hailstorm. So, I made quick arrangements to harvest the crops and to protect the produce from rain," says Munshilal.

Meanwhile, Department of Agriculture Joint Director BL Bilaiya tells 101Reporters that farmers are informed about climate change through multiple means, including phone calls and mobile app. "If we find that the information is not reaching them on time, we update the data again in our system. In future, we will also try to increase the number of awareness camps to reach out to more farmers," he says.

and gram to compensate for the loss from mustard, but to no avail."

Chauhan says the agriculture department provided weather updates via mobile phone calls and messages until the Covid-19 period.

"We have raised complaints on the CM helpline many times about the stoppage of service, but we were not heard."

Soon after the rain havoc, the state government instructed the Collectors of affected dis-

tricts to carry out a survey and provide financial assistance as per the provisions of the Revenue Book Circular. It was clarified that the relief amount will be in addition to the insurance payouts for beneficiaries. In an emergency review meeting chaired by Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan, officials informed that the survey was over in places where rain lashed between March 6 and 8, while it was progressing in areas where crops were damaged between March 16 and 19.

However, the farmers in Bhopal's rural areas, including Khajuri Kalan, Dobra Jagir, Padariya Jat, Kolukhedi, Gunga, Samardha and Brickkedi, claim no one has come to survey their fields so far. According to Dr RK Jaiswal, Principal Scientist, Fruit Research Centre, Bhopal, several Central schemes are in progress to deal with climate change, but there are no immediate solutions to the problems of farmers. If a farmer is smart, he will have many tools at his disposal, Jaiswal says. However, Rashtriya Kisan Mazdoor Mahasangh president Shivkumar Sharma of Machhera Khurd in Hoshangabad district says the last two years have been hard on farmers. "Half of the farmers who apply for compensation do not get it. Ideally, the government should waive off the loans of farmers if there is a delay in providing compensation. If this does not happen, we will launch an agitation in a phased manner," Sharma adds.

(Sanavver Shafi is a Madhya Pradesh-based journalist and a member of 101Reporters, a pan-India network of grassroots reporters.)

'WHAT ABOUT CLAIMS?'

Even as his gram and wheat crops on 22 acres lay flattened, Ajay Thakur of Dobra Jagir gets an SMS from the cooperative society reminding him of loan repayment. He took the loan from Reliance General Insurance Company Limited under the Chief Minister's Farmers' Cooperative Loan Assistance Scheme.

Emotions weigh him down as he speaks. "Yes, the crop loss can be forgotten, but what about the loan? I have outstanding dues of Rs 52,480 in my name and Rs 2,59,860 in my mother's name. How will I make money to repay these debts?"

When contacted, Cooperation Department Joint Commissioner Sanjay Dalela tells 101Reporters that messages were sent to remind farmers about loan repayment and to keep up the pressure on them.

"Based on the farmers' request, the government has extended the loan repayment deadline for kharif season from March 28 to April 30. As for the crop loss due to hailstorm and rain, a compensation of Rs 32,000 per hectare will be provided."

He informs that the government was providing relief even when the crop damage was only 25 to 35 per cent. If over 50 per cent of the crop had suffered, compensation would be given for the entire crop.

However, Thakur and other farmers are unamused. "I insure my crops every season. This time, it came to Rs 8,640. But when it is the turn of the insurance firms to release the claim amount following crop damage, they provide a toll-free number (18001024088) and vanish. We were told to register a complaint within 72 hours of crop loss. I have been calling this number regularly for the last three days, but it is either not reachable or busy. How do I claim my crop insurance?"

GIRL FALLS IN HOT DAAL DURING MID-DAY MEAL AT SCHOOL

Team Absolute | Shajapur

A five-year-old girl sustained serious burn injuries after she fell in a utensil full of hot daal being served as mid-day meal at a Madhya Pradesh school, officials said Tuesday.

The incident happened when the daily meal was being served to students at a primary school in Baansla on Monday.

Tejeshwari Tandiya, a class 1 student, was standing in a queue along with other children to receive the food when the children started



pushing and shoving each other to get to the front, officials said. Amid the rush, the five-year-old girl, who was standing close to the utensil filled with hot daal, was suddenly pushed into it.

The child was rushed to a nearby hospital in Bhanupratappur to receive initial treatment and then moved to the district hospital as her injuries were severe. She has sustained 30 per cent

burns on her body, officials added.

As per protocol, students receiving mid-day meals are supposed to be seated while the food is individually served to them.

Pratik Jain, Sub-Divisional Magistrate, Bhanupratappur said a team has been constituted to investigate the gross negligence by school officials. "We are taking appropriate action against the concerned teachers and a show-cause notice has been issued to them. We are trying to ensure that such an incident does not happen again," he added.

4 dead, 1 injured after being hit by speeding vehicle in Dhar

Team Absolute | Dhar

Four people were killed while one person was injured after a speeding vehicle hit them on the National Highway 59 in Madhya Pradesh's Dhar district, a police official said today.

The mishap took place on the Indore-Ahmedabad National Highway under the Sardarpur police station limits in the district on the intervening night of Monday and Tuesday.

Additional Superintendent of Police (ASP) Devendra Patidar said the incident happened when Munna Lal, a farmer was transporting wheat in a tractor to Rajgarh Mandi. "During the journey a pallet broke and the wheat spilled on to the four lane Indore-Ahmedabad highway," the ASP said.

"The farmer informed his son about the incident following which his son reached the spot with another person



and started gathering the spilled wheat from the road. A speeding vehicle hit them. Four people died and one sustained injuries in the accident," ASP Patidar said.

Those who died were identified as Munna Lal (47), his son Navdeep (29), driver of the tractor Luv Kush (28) and one Himmat. The injured has been identified as Sandeep (26), a friend of

Navdeep. On receiving information about the accident, police rushed to the spot and sent the bodies for a post mortem at a hospital in Sardarpur, the officials said.

He said that the vehicle which hit them was seized and its driver was taken into custody. The police registered a case into the matter and further investigation is on.



A NEW ERA HAS TO BE USHERED IN FOR SISTERS AND DAUGHTERS: CM CHOUHAN

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has said that a new era has to be ushered in for sisters and daughters. Sisters and daughters should not depend on others for their small needs, they should not have to extend their hands in front of anyone, and for this the state government is making every possible effort. So far more than 51 lakh sisters have joined the livelihood mission. We will not rest until every poor sister joins this mission. Poverty is a curse and we will not let any sister remain poor. Sisters should move ahead unitedly in the livelihood mission and work together with the state government to make their lives better. The state government is ready to provide necessary cooperation and guidance at every step. The birth anniversary of Mahatma Jyotiba Phule, is very important day for women empowerment. Mahatma Phule worked tirelessly for the education and empowerment of women despite strong resistance. CM Chouhan was interacting with the sisters of cluster organisations of self-help groups today.

Large number of immovable proper-

ties made in the name of the sisters

Chief Minister Chouhan said that it is our mission to improve the lives of sisters. Ladli Laxmi, Mukhyamantri Kanya Vivah-Nikah Yojana and schemes for assistance on child birth were started to change the thinking of the society which differentiates between son and daughter and to end the misconduct towards sisters. To empower women, half the seats in urban bodies and panchayats were reserved for them.

As a result, at present more than 17 thousand sisters have been elected and are holding responsibilities on various posts. To make women economically, socially empowered and to have their own identity, only one percent stamp duty is being charged on the purchase of immovable property by women. Due to this, a large number of sisters own immovable properties

It is important to believe in yourself Chief Minister Chouhan said that this day is a very important day from the point of view of women empowerment. Today is the birth anniversary of Mahatma Phule, the pioneer of social equality and women's education. Mentioning the work done by Mahatma

Phule for women education, untouchability, upliftment of Dalits, Chief Minister Chouhan said that Mahatma Phule believed that believing in one, knowing the truth, removing caste discrimination and empowering people through education is essential to build a healthy society.

We will not let the sister-daughter remain weak

Chief Minister Chouhan said that the life of sisters will change with the Ladli Bahna Yojana. The sisters of Aajeevika Mission should cooperate in filling the forms of all the eligible sisters of their respective areas. Also, ensure that no eligible sister is deprived of the benefits of the scheme. Raise your voice against any kind of misconduct with sisters and oppose such elements by getting organized. The ahatas running along with liquor shops have been closed by the state government for the purpose of protecting the sisters and making their lives better. Ladli Bahna Sena is also being formed in every village and every ward. We will not let our sisters and daughters remain weak.



Along with CM Chouhan citizens plants saplings on their birthday

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan planted saplings of peepal, badam (almond) and mulberry in the garden at Shyamla Hills. Along with CM Chouhan, Sonu Dubey of Ashadeep Jan-Kalyan Seva Samiti planted saplings on her birthday. Abhishek Dubey and child Atharv Dubey accompanied. The

committee is active in environment-protection activities. Vagisha Pandey of TV channel Sudarshan News also planted a sapling on her birthday. Girl child Aakarshika Singh, who came for plantation, presented a self-made sketch to CM Chouhan. Social workers Shrikant Kaushik, Abhishek Purohit and Yogesh Dwivedi also participated in plantation.

Sonu Sood fans in Dewas, make his portrait with 2500 kilos of rice

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Actor Sonu Sood, who is known for his work in films such as 'Yuva', 'Singh Is King', 'Simmba' and several others, is moved by the recent gesture of his fans who made a portrait of the actor from 2,500 kg of rice.

Fans and an NGO made the actor's picture using 2500 kg of rice on over 1 acre of land at Tukoji Rao Pawar Stadium in Dewas, Madhya Pradesh. Expressing heartfelt gratitude, he said, "The love and admiration I get every time is unreal. I love how fans are doing everything in

their capacity to help others. Seeing this makes my heart full and I cannot be more thankful and grateful for this".

The picture will be panned over one-acre land. The rice used for picture will be donated by 'Helping Hands' NGO to households who are in dire need and don't have access to basic facilities. Meanwhile, on the professional front, he is currently shooting for his film 'Fateh' with Jacqueline Fernandez. The actor will be seen doing death-defying stunts without using a body double.

He will also be seen in the upcoming season of 'Roadies'.



RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat to visit Burhanpur on April 16

Team Absolute | Indore

RSS Chief Mohan Bhagwat will be on a two-day stay in Malwa province on April 16 and 17. He will be present for various program in Brahmapur (Burhanpur) district. Vinay Dixit, Publicity chief of Malwa Prant of the RSS, informed here on Tuesday that on the first day of his stay, the RSS Chief will be present in the renovation program of Govind Nath Maharaj Samadhi Sthal located at Mahajana Peth, and along with the Samadhi Sthal, he will also visit the new Shri Ram temple built there. The RSS Chief will also address the devotees of the Nath sect present in the program.



Muslim youths vandalise temple repairs, beat labourers

Indore: A few Muslim youths allegedly vandalised Sheetla Mata temple repairs on Monday night, in Chandan Nagar police station area. When the labourers involved in the temple repairs protested, they started beating them. Police force was deployed on Tuesday morning to avoid any situation of law and order.

Police had registered a case against the accused for damaging place of worship and beating the labourers. IPC sections 295, 294, 323, 506 were inserted, based on the complaint of labourers. According to reports, on Monday night, labourers Mansingh (40) and Chhaganlal (50) were doing repairing on the temple, when three accused identified as Rashid, Imran, and Firoz--who were residents of Rajkumar Nagar, came to them and asked to stop the work.

While the labourers explained that they were sent by the Pujari to do the repairing, the accused allegedly beat them up, vandalised the temple fixes they had done and fled the spot.



EDITOR'S SPECS

Calculations that cost TMC its national party status

While the Trinamool Congress has hinted that it might take to the legal path against the decision of the Election Commission of India (ECI) to cancel its national party status, analysts doubt how far that step will be fruitful in the backdrop of some calculations based on which the party has received the setback. One important condition for retaining the national party status is that the political party concerned should have two per cent of the total Lok Sabha seats and that should be from three Indian states. In case of Trinamool Congress, although it has more than two per cent of the total Lok Sabha seats, they are all from the single state of West Bengal. Another condition is that the party should have the state-party status in at least four Indian states. Now to get the state-party status, the political party concerned should have at least two elected representatives in the state Assembly concerned and six per cent of the votes polled in the last elections in that state. In case of Trinamool Congress, besides West Bengal is only in Meghalaya where Trinamool has five elected legislators and secured 13.78 per cent of total votes polled in the last elections there. Despite Trinamool Congress contesting from Goa and Tripura, neither a single party candidate from any of these two states got elected nor it secured the required percentage of the votes polled. In the last Tripura Assembly polls, the vote percentage in favour of Trinamool Congress was 0.88 per cent which was even lesser than NOTA. In case of the 2022 Goa Assembly polls, the party vote share was 5.21 per cent of the total votes polled.

NATO's expansion

Asad Mirza

Finland formally became a member of NATO on April 4 during a scheduled summit, finalising the fastest accession process in the treaty's history.

Last week, the blue-and-white flag of Finland was raised alongside those of its western partners outside NATO's headquarters in Brussels after the Nordic country formally became the 31st member of the transatlantic defensive alliance.

Guests at the ceremony, including the US Secretary of State, Antony Blinken, and the Finnish President, Foreign and Defence Ministers applauded and shouted "bravo" at the ceremony, which marked a historic realignment of Europe's security landscape.

US President Joe Biden warmly welcomed the completion of Finland's accelerated accession process, saying NATO had shown itself more united than ever after Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

The two Nordic countries, Finland and Sweden's inclusion in NATO was being watched as the war of nerves between the West, represented by the US and its allies and the Communist-Socialist bloc led by Russia.

Though initially Russia showed less apprehension about the inclusion of these two Scandinavian countries in NATO, however, after Finland becoming the latest member to join the alliance, Kremlin's spokesperson, Dmitry Peskov, said that NATO's embrace of Finland was an "encroachment on our security and on Russia's national interests", adding that Moscow would watch closely for any NATO military deployments there.

The Ministry added that the development marked "a fundamental change in the situation in northern Europe, which had previously been one of the most stable regions in the world".

Russia said on Monday it would bolster its military capacity in its western and north-western regions in response to Finland's accession.

Sweden and Finland together share a 1,340 km-long border with Russia, and both submitted simultaneous membership applications last May, abandoning decades of military non-alignment to seek security as NATO members after the Russian invasion.

The Guardian has commented that joining NATO means Finland falls under the



alliance's Article 5, a collective defence pledge that stipulates that an attack on one NATO member "shall be considered an attack against them all".

Finland is one of the few European countries to have retained a conscription army through decades of peace, wary of its eastern neighbour Russia after the former Soviet Union tried to invade the country during WW II.

Finland's ground, naval and air forces are all trained and equipped with one primary aim - to repel any Russian invasion.

Finland has what it calls "Western Europe's strongest artillery" that includes some 1,500 weapons: about 700 howitzers and cannon, 700 mortars and about 100 heavy and light rocket launchers.

By joining the NATO now it can purchase more arms from diverse sources such as Israel.

NATO has an open-door policy, meaning that any country can be invited to join if it expresses an interest, as long as it is able and willing to uphold the principles of the bloc's founding treaty. However, under the accession rules, any member state can veto a new

country from joining.

Turkey and Hungary, presumably at the behest of Russia tried to stall this process for the last one year.

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan accuses Finland and Sweden of housing Kurdish "terrorist organisations", while Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban claimed they were spreading "outright lies" about his country's rule of law record.

However, there was a limit to which both could stall the process and with many behind the scenes manipulations at last they bowed down to the NATO's pressure.

Turkey and Hungary later softened their stance on Finland's accession, opening the door to its membership earlier this month. However, they remain opposed to Sweden joining -- at least for now. Ankara accuses Stockholm of sheltering Kurdish militants, while Budapest has "grievances" about Swedish criticism of the rule of law in Hungary.

Finland joining NATO marks one of the most significant geopolitical consequences of Russia's invasion of Ukraine to date

and represents a dramatic realignment of Europe's security framework. The Nordic country moved to join NATO alongside Sweden as a direct response to Russia's assault on Ukraine in February 2022.

Russia has repeatedly blamed NATO expansion, among other grievances, for what in reality was an unprovoked invasion of Ukraine. Despite Russia's complaints, Ukraine was not on the formal path to join NATO at the time, and there wasn't a big push among the alliance's members to expand. But now, as a result of invading Ukraine, Russia has seen its land border with NATO double in size.

Last week, ministers formally convened in a NATO-Ukraine Commission format - a symbolic move acknowledging Kiev's aspirations for a closer relationship. Hungary, which has long blocked the body from meeting, grudgingly attended the session but vowed to continue opposing Ukrainian integration.

NATO pledged in 2008 that Ukraine would eventually join the alliance, but the process stalled. In the current situation, numerous Western capitals argue that the priority now is helping Ukraine win the war - and that discussion of NATO's political relationship with Kiev should wait. But we cannot discount Ukraine too joining NATO sooner or later.

If and when that happens, that would strategically translate into Russia spreading thin its military resources, which have already taken a strong beating in the on-going Ukraine war. This may add to Russian President Vladimir Putin's headaches, but we also cannot discount its close ties with China and say that Russia has been pushed into a corner.

In case of any direct confrontation with NATO, Russia can always be sure of support from China, and if it really happens that it may not augur well for the global peace.

However, in the whole membership fracas, Russia seems to be the ultimate loser, as now it borders shared with NATO member or aspiring member countries have doubled in two different directions.

Finland's inclusion in NATO indeed means a historic realignment of Europe's security landscape.

international

CALIFORNIA ROLLS BACK CASTE-BIAS CASE PARTIALLY, RIGHT-WING HINDUS CLAIM VICTORY

Yashwant Rajj Washington

California state has dropped its allegations of caste-based bias by two Indian-descent employees of IT giant Cisco but will continue the larger case against the company.

California's Department of Fair Employment and Housing had filed this case in 2020 based on a complaint from an unidentified employee of the company making it the first case of caste-based discrimination reported in the US.

This case went on to be seen as a confirmation of the existence of a typically South Asian form of discrimination in the US and it was subsequently cited in support of moves to add this practice to the list of banned grounds for bias elsewhere in the country such as in Seattle.

The California civil rights department (CRD) filed its request for "partial dismissal" in the Superior Court of California, County of Santa Clara on



Monday. "Only the two individual defendants are being dismissed," said the department's press office in response to a request for clarification. "CRD's case against Cisco remains ongoing. We will continue to vigorously litigate the matter on behalf of the people of California."

The lawsuit by California's Department of Fair Employment and Housing was filed against Cisco System Inc in 2020 on the basis of a complaint from a Indian-descent Dalit employee of

the company who had alleged caste-based discrimination against him by two of his supervisors - also of India-descent - and alleged retaliation when he complained. The suit was filed against the company - Cisco Systems Inc; and the two supervisors - Sundar Iyer and Ramana Kompella.

The department of civil rights has dropped the allegations against the two supervisors, but said its larger case against the company will continue. "Two Indian Americans

endured a nearly three year nightmare of unending investigations, a brutal online witch hunt, and a presumption of guilt in the media after the CRD sullied their reputation alleging that they engaged in discrimination based on caste," said Suhag Shukla, Executive Director of Hindu American Foundation (HAF), which has opposed the listing of caste among banned ground for discrimination. "We are thrilled that Iyer and Kompella have been vindicated along with our position that the state has no right to attribute wrongdoing to Hindu and Indian Americans simply because of their religion or ethnicity," she added. HAF was among a group of organizations of Hindu Americans who tried to stop Seattle city from adding caste to the banned list of kinds of bias and it is also now part of an effort to stop California from adopting a legislation banning caste-based discrimination, the first American state to do so, when, and if, that legislation

becomes law.

A debate is raging in the Indian American community, joined by other South Asian communities, on the question of adding caste to the list of many kinds of bias banned in the US, with history/origin, religion, color and ethnicity.

HAF, Vishwa Hindu Parishad America and other rightwing Hindu Americans argue that caste-based discrimination is reprehensible, any law banning it here in the US puts a target on the backs of the entire South Asian community, specially Hindus, by portraying them all as purveyors of this practice.

They also argue that discrimination based on caste is covered by existing laws that outlaw all kinds of bias and discrimination and there is no need for a new ban. Their third, and the final argument, is that the caste-bias in the US is rare and not as rampant as it has been made out to be. They have questioned data cited by supporters of the ban.

Volcano erupts in Russia's Far East, posing threat to aviation

Moscow | Agencies

The Shiveluch volcano in Russia's far eastern Kamchatka Peninsula erupted on Tuesday and spewed an ash plume up to 15 km into the sky, posing threat to air traffic. The Institute of Volcanology and Seismology of the Far Eastern Branch of the Russian Academy of Sciences has declared the highest "red" hazard designation for aviation. Xinhua news agency reported.

There was a threat that streams of hot lava could block the road, it warned. The Institute also noted the volcano ash could travel up to 20 km and block the Petropavlovsk-Kamchatsky-Ust-Kamchatsk highway. The sky was covered with a black cloud within a radius of several kilometres from the volcano, with thunder rumbling due to static electricity in the ash cloud.

Ash began to fall in the village of Klyuchi in the Ust-Kamchatsky District of the Kamchatka Territory,



where about 4,000 people live.

The thickness of volcanic ash in Klyuchi village has reached 8.5 cm. Due to the eruption, some schools are closed on Tuesday.

Shiveluch is one of Kamchatka's largest volcanoes, with a height of more than 3,200 meters.

It includes three main structures: the Old Shiveluch volcano, an ancient caldera and the active Young Shiveluch volcano.

The most recent eruption of Young Shiveluch started on August 15, 1999, and continues as of 2021.

On February 27, 2015, Shiveluch erupted shooting ash into the atmosphere about 30,000 ft crossing the Bering Sea and into Alaska.

Shots fired near Sikh temple in UK, three arrested

London | Agencies

Police in the UK have stepped up patrols and arrested three people after shots were fired near a Sikh temple in Wolverhampton in central England.

"We were called shortly before 7 p.m. yesterday (April 9) to Upper Villiers Street, where an argument took place between occupants of two cars and shots were fired," the Wolverhampton Police said on Monday.

One of these cars struck a vehicle being driven by a member of the public, who escaped unhurt.

Following initial enquiries at the scene, police stopped a car involved in the incident and arrested three men, who remain in custody as officers continue with their investigations.

Calling it an "isolated incident", Chief Superintendent Richard Fisher said that the worshippers were safe and there was no reason for concern.

"We are confident this was an isolated inci-



dent and that there is no cause for wider concern in the community, including worshippers at the nearby gurdwara, we will maintain a presence to provide reassurance," Fisher said.

A car park belonging to the Guru Nanak Sikh Gurdwara is currently closed, according to a local media report.

'Not for India...go away'; couple denied free Ramzan treats in Singapore

Singapore | Agencies

A supermarket chain in Singapore has apologised after an Indian Muslim couple was turned away from one of its booths offering free refreshments to those breaking fast during Ramzan.

Farah Nadya and her husband Jahabar Shalih had gone to the FairPrice outlet at Our Tampines Hub on April 9 at around 7 p.m. for grocery shopping when an employee allegedly told them that the freebies were "not for India (sic)", The Straits Times reported.

Nadya, 35, is a Malaysian-Indian and runs her own healthcare company, while her 36-year-old husband is an Indian who works in the technology sector. Shalih told The Straits Times that he was standing at the booth



reading about free refreshments when a FairPrice employee approached him and said: "Not for India, not for India. Further, the employee told the couple not to take anything from the stand, and 'go

away". Sharing her ordeal in a Facebook post, Nadya said that they did not intend to take the free items, and had stopped by the stand "to applaud such an inclusive initiative". The couple said they shared the

experience on social media to "be accountable" to their children, who are of mixed-race.

"I have encountered such things before, but this time I had to explain to my son what had happened," Shalih told The Straits Times.

"I don't think it's the fault of the staff. I just feel that such things (can) happen, this is purely a lack of awareness."

Apologising for the incident, a FairPrice spokesman said "we take this matter seriously", adding that the employee in question has been "counselled".

The initiative by FairPrice Group, launched at the end of March and running till April 21, sees 60 FairPrice outlets giving away free drinks, snacks and dates to those breaking fast during Ramzan.



Maharashtra to celebrate Savarkar's birth anniversary as 'Swatantryaveer Gaurav Day'

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Chief Minister Eknath Shinde on Tuesday announced that the state will celebrate May 28 - the upcoming birth anniversary of the state's Hindutva icon Vinayak D. Savarkar - as the 'Swatantryaveer Gaurav Day', here.



his campaigns for social reforms and abolition of untouchability, all over the state. Proposing the 'Swatantryaveer Gaurav Day', state Minister Uday Samant said that Savarkar played a major role in Maharashtra politics and tributes would be paid to his patriotism, courage and progressive thinking for the younger generations.

Vinayak D. Savarkar, later revered as 'Swatantryaveer Savarkar' was born in Bhagur, Nashik, on May 28, 1883 and passed away on February 26, 1966 in Mumbai. Next month will mark his 140th birth anniversary.

Shinde said that to commemorate the momentous occasion, many events and activities shall be organised to highlight Savarkar's huge contribution to India's freedom movement, propagate his ideology, and focus on

Eknath Shinde Jabs Uddhav Thackeray over BJP Leader's Babri comment

Team Absolute | Ahmednagar

Chief Minister Eknath Shinde on Tuesday took a swipe at Shiv Sena (UBT) leader Uddhav Thackeray over the remarks of state minister and BJP leader Chandrakant Patil who claimed that not a single Shiv Sena worker was present near the Babri masjid when it was brought down in 1992.



Talking to reporters here, Shinde said Patil meant to know the whereabouts of the former chief minister (read Uddhav Thackeray) when the demolition of the structure was carried out. "I spoke to Chandrakant Patil. He meant to ask where were the former CM (Uddhav Thackeray) and the one who is speaking now (a reference to Rajya Sabha MP Sanjay Raut who belongs to Shiv Sena-UBT faction) when the masjid was being razed," Shinde said.

founder Bal Thackeray who had given a call of "Garv se kaho hum Hindu hain" (Say with pride that we are Hindus). "In the Babri case, Balasaheb had gone to the Lucknow court. At that time Lal Krishna Advani, Ashok Singhal, and Uma Bharti were also there. There was no party there (at the site in Ayodhya where the structure once stood), all were devotees of Lord Ram," Shinde added. Earlier in the day, Uddhav Thackeray said Shinde should either step down as chief minister or seek Patil's resignation over his Babri demolition remarks. The former CM also said his party's Hindutva is "nationalism" and the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) should explain what Hindutva is. Shiv Sena (UBT), Nationalist Congress Party, and Congress are constituents of the opposition Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA).

Shah to confer 'Maharashtra Bhushan' on Appasaheb Dharmadhikari

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Union Home Minister Amit Shah will confer the 'Maharashtra Bhushan' Award on renowned social worker and reformer Dattatreya Narayan Dharmadhikari, alias Appasaheb Dharmadhikari on April 16, Chief Minister Eknath Shinde has said.



Shah will come down for a special function at the Corporate Park at Kharghar suburb of Navi Mumbai, in a grand function, said Shinde after a high-level preparation meeting held in Raigad on Monday night.

The CM urged the officials concerned that lakhs of followers of Appasaheb Dharmadhikari, 77, are expected to participate in the event and all arrangements should be made accordingly, including parking for several thousands of vehicles.

In view of the magnitude of the event, Shinde called upon the civic bodies of Panvel and Navi Mumbai, and even the health authorities to

ensure full precautions for the mega-function. On February 8, (2023) Appasaheb Dharmadhikari -- honoured with the Padma Shri in 2017 - was named for the prestigious 2022 'Maharashtra Bhushan Award', comprising a medal, a citation

and Rs 25 lakh. Incidentally, his father and the renowned preacher-reformer, the late Dr. Narayan Vishnu Dharmadhikari, revered as Nanasaheb Dharmadhikari was also conferred the 'Maharashtra Bhushan' 2008 award. Shinde described Appasaheb Dharmadhikari as instrumental in social and society building activities like afforestation, blood donation and medical camps, shunning dowry system, empowering women and tribals, organising training for children and adult literacy centres, holding job fairs, cleanliness, eradicating superstitions, conducting de-addiction, national integration and preaching to the masses on traditional and religious values.

The famed regular gatherings, known as 'Shri Baithaks' were launched by late Dr. Nanasaheb Dharmadhikari in October 1943 in Raigad, and since the past over three decades, his son Appasaheb Dharmadhikari has taken them forward.

COURT DENIES BAIL TO MOTORIST ACCUSED OF RUNNING OVER JOGGER AT WORLI

Team Absolute | Mumbai

A sessions court here on Tuesday denied bail to the motorist who allegedly ran over and killed a 57-year-old jogger in Worli area of south Mumbai last month. Additional sessions judge M S Kulkarni rejected the bail plea of Sumer Merchant, who had claimed that he did not see the victim because of a blind spot.



Rajalakshmi Ramakrishnan, a tech firm CEO, was hit by a speeding car during her morning walk on the Worli seaface promenade on March 19. While opposing the bail plea, the police claimed that Merchant was driving at a speed of 95 to 100 km per hour, and did so, despite knowing that the spot was accident prone. In a written response filed before the

court, the police further cited that according to the blood sample report, the alcohol level in the accused's blood was 137 mg in 100 ml, which is way above the permissible limit. A magistrate court had denied bail to the accused motorist, following which he approached the sessions court. The magistrate had held that though the accused blamed the sharp turn on the road for the accident, from the record and photographs filed on record, there appears no such blind spot.

AADITYA THACKERAY VISITS T-HUB, MEETS KTR

Hyderabad: Shiv Sena-UBT leader Aaditya Thackeray on Tuesday visited T-Hub in Hyderabad and met Telangana's Information Technology and Industry Minister K.T. Rama Rao. Accompanied by Rajya Sabha member Priyanka Chaturvedi, he went around the T-Hub premises in Hitec City and was impressed with the facility set up by the Telangana government as innovation hub and ecosystem enabler. The Shiv Sena leader later tweeted that it is always fantastic and encouraging to meet KTR and connect over "our common interests over sustainability, urbanism, technology and how it will help fuel India's growth". He wrote that he visited T-Hub and witnessed the amazing work that's happened there for start ups, innovators, and ideators. "Pleasure reconnecting with you Aaditya Ji after our meeting at Davos last year. Look forward to more conversations in future," tweeted KTR. The two leaders had met in May last year in Davos on the sidelines of the annual meeting of the World Economic Forum (WEF). Thackeray was then Maharashtra's Tourism and Environment Minister.

Mumbai man, 69, throws acid on wife, 56, suspecting extramarital affair



Mumbai: A 69-year-old man allegedly threw acid on his wife suspecting her of having an extramarital affair in suburban Sion here, police said today. The 56-year-old victim sustained minor injuries in the attack that took place at her residence in Pratikshanagar in the early hours of Monday, an official said. The accused suspected his wife of having an affair and the couple got into a scuffle around 1.30 am, he said. In the fit of rage, the accused grabbed a bottle of acid and threw the liquid on his wife's face and injured her, the official said. Based on the victim's statement, the police were registering an FIR in this regard, he said, adding that the accused has been detained.

Arjun Kapoor to sponsor a promising girl cricketer's dream of playing for India

Mumbai | Agencies

Bollywood actor Arjun Kapoor has turned into a real-life hero for an 11-year-old girl cricketer named Anisha Rout as he has come forward to sponsor her entire equipment cost till she turns 18.

Anisha Rout travels 80 kms a day for eight hours of cricket training seven times a week, as she pursues her ambition to emulate her hero, Indian batting legend Sachin Tendulkar, and become a professional player.

Anisha's father, Prabhat, who works as a supervisor is doing whatever it takes to give wind beneath her wings so that she can fulfill her dreams. However, he needs support to provide Anisha with all the best facilities and equipment so that she can give her best shot to play for India. Anisha's father Prabhat says, "As parents, we want the best for our child but training to become a world-class cricketer is expensive. Anisha wants to earn the India cap and bring glory to our country like Sachin Tendulkar.



The father added: "As a father, I need to empower her so that she can try to do that and become an inspiration for others like her for generations to come. "This help from Arjun Kapoor is godsend." "It takes a lot of load off my shoulders and I can't thank him enough. It is important for Anisha to get the best equipment as a cricketer and now she will have everything till she turns 18!"

Residing in Panvel, Maharashtra, Anisha trains eight hours a day to chase her dream. She was inspired to play cricket after watching the film 'MS Dhoni: The Untold Story'. At the age of 10, she played Under-15 Women's Cricket for Raigad District, Maharashtra. She has scored three half-centuries in her previous matches. Anisha is currently playing for MIG Club under 15. She opens the batting for her team.

CALLER THREATENING TO KILL SALMAN KHAN ON APRIL 30 DETAINED

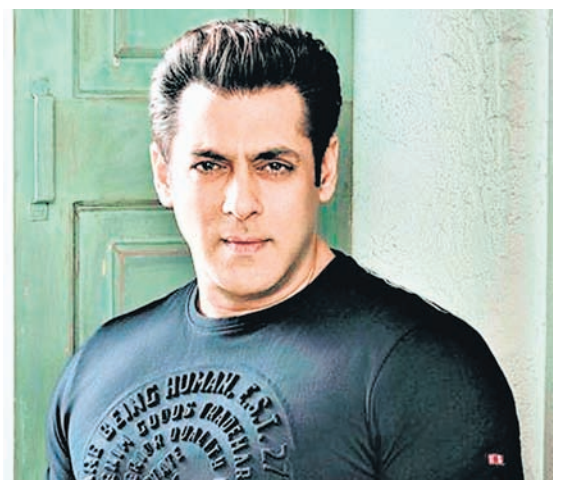
Mumbai | Agencies

The Mumbai police have tracked and detained a person who threatened "to kill Bollywood megastar Salman Khan on April 30", top officials said here on Tuesday.

On Monday evening, the Mumbai police control room received a call from one unidentified person who conveyed a terse message: "On (April) 30, I shall kill Salman Khan. You can inform him," and disconnected.

When the police control room staff called him back on the mobile number, he identified himself as 'Rocky bhai', a 'gaushala rakshak', speaking from Jodhpur in Rajasthan.

Swinging into action, several police teams fanned out to track and identify the caller, who was traced to Dolkhamb village in Thane, nearly 50 km north of



Mumbai. A police team reached there and attempted to catch him, but with the help of his friends, he managed to escape on a motorcycle. After a chase of some distance, the police team managed to intercept him and subjected him to questioning. He admitted to having made the threat call to the actor, and thereafter, he was handed over to the Azad Maidan police station in Mumbai, which detained him and is investigating further. The caller is reportedly said to be a minor hailing from Rajasthan and his identity has not yet been revealed, and police suspect it may be a prank.

BNHS pats Rajasthan govt for Lesser Florican reserve in Ajmer

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The Bombay Natural History Society (BNHS) on Tuesday lauded the Rajasthan government for declaring a 931-hectare of lush grassland as a 'Lesser Florican Conservation Reserve', in Ajmer district yesterday.

The smallest of the bustard family, the Lesser Florican is renowned for its spectacular leaping breeding display, but currently faces severe threats and stands on the verge of extinction.

The Lesser Florican is found only in India and as per current estimates barely 700 mature birds are now left, and the BNHS is actively working for the conservation of these feathered creatures.

"The Lesser Florican is the smallest bird of the bustard family which was formerly a common game bird of Indian grasslands. But now its global population is 250-300 males confined in the states of Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Karnataka, Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, and Rajasthan, with an IUCN status of CR



(Critically Endangered)," said Kishor Rithe, Hon. BNHS Secretary. The Ajmer landscape of Rajasthan is one of the last remaining breeding grounds where it is surviving in a human-dominated landscape, he added.

The BNHS started working with the Rajasthan Forest Department on its conservation project in 2017, and their scientific teams collected data regarding its status, distribution, behavior, habitat, etc. in the desert state with the help of local communities.

"We identified 26 sites (73 locations) spread across 50 villages in the Ajmer district and recorded many important observations on its strong site fidelity; its movements in the grasslands and croplands before settling down in its breeding site," said scientist Dr Sujit Narwade, BNHS Assistant Director, project head working in Rajasthan and other parts of India.

The data and observations recorded by BNHS teams are now helping Rajasthan Forest Department to take policy decisions to save this species

from extinction. Among these are the changes from traditional crops like Jowar, Moong, and Urad growing up to a height of 50-100 cm to irrigated cash crops and the use of heavy machines and music systems on tractors that affect the birds in this landscape, said Narwade.

An increase in free-ranging dogs, land use changes, chemical sprays, uncontrolled tourism, and unavailability of grasslands was recorded as threats to be addressed immediately, but after the Rajasthan Government's notification, the conservation efforts shall be expedited, said Rithe.

Lesser Floricans mainly breed in the North-west part of India in monsoon and then fly to spend winters in the Deccan plateau, said the BNHS experts.

Hence the participation of locals is essential for the survival of the species which requires mosaics of the grasslands and crop fields plus inter-state and inter-departmental coordination, to save the Lesser Floricans from being snuffed out forever.

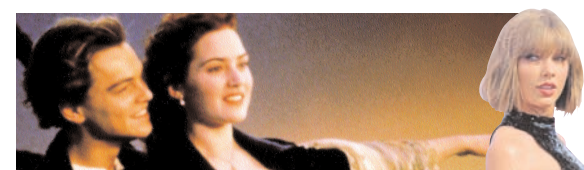
28 lakh siphoned off from bank account of thane man who died in 2021

Thane: An

offence has been registered in Maharashtra's Thane city against unidentified persons who allegedly siphoned off more than Rs 28.3 lakh from the bank account of a man's bank who had died in 2021, police said on Tuesday.

Based on a complaint, the police have registered a case under relevant provisions of the Indian Penal Code and the Information Technology Act, an official said. The man had died in September 2021, and his father went to a private bank, where he had an account, to intimate them about the death in February 2022, he said. The bank statement of the man's account revealed that more than Rs 28.3 lakh had been siphoned off between September 2021 and April 2022 by way of transactions to unidentified persons, the official said, adding that a probe is underway.





Los Angeles | Agencies

Tampa Mayor Jane Castor has invited singer Taylor Swift to take over her responsibilities for a day during The Eras Tour. Cities that have hosted the singer during The Eras Tour have changed their names, illuminated landmarks, and even created street signs in honour of Taylor Swift and her fans, but Florida city has decided to up the ante, according to an official statement by Tampa government.

"We know Glendale changed its name, Arlington made a street sign, and Vegas illuminated their Gateway Arches. But here in Tampa we've got a reputation to uphold... and we want to go BIG-GER," the statement quoted the Mayor

as say-

ing. In videos shared to the City of Tampa's Instagram, Twitter, Facebook, and other social media platforms, Castor presents a key to the city to Swift and invites her to be Myor for the day.

The city is asking Swift's fans everywhere to help share the video and tag the singer on social media to help grab her attention and invite her to be "Mayor Swift".

In addition, the Old City Hall, Tampa Riverwalk, and downtown bridges will shine "Taylor Swift Red" from sundown to sunrise on Thursday.

Taylor Swift invited to be Tampa Mayor for a day during The Eras Tour



RADCLIFFE EXPLAINS WHY HE ACTED LIKE 'ABSOLUTE D**K' DURING 'HARRY POTTER' KISSING SCENE

Los Angeles | Agencies

Hollywood star Daniel Radcliffe acted like an "absolute d**k" during a crucial 'Harry Potter' kissing scene.

The actor has offered an apology to his cast-mates Emma Watson, and Rupert Grint after the movie star confessed he wasn't on his best behaviour when the pair were called on set to film a smooch between their characters Hermione Granger and Ron Weasley for 'Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows: Part II', reports aceshowbiz.com.

Speaking in HBO special 'Harry Potter 20th Anniversary: Return to Hogwarts', the 33-year-old explained: "I did not make this (awkward situation) better, because I've been told significantly that I was just being an absolute d**k about this and was like, 'I'm gonna come on set and watch you guys kiss. I'm sorry about that, guys.'"

During the reunion show, Emma revealed she felt uncomfortable kissing Rupert because he felt like a brother to her after they all grew up working on the films together.

She said, "Obviously us kissing was the most horrifying thing either of us have ever had to go through... (It) felt wrong... Everyone wanted to be on set for it. Cause everyone was like: 'This is gonna be good, guys.'"

She also opened up about having a crush on her co-star Tom Felton, who played Draco Malfoy in the wizard movie series and was three years older than her.

Emma recalled: "I walked into the room where we were having tutoring. The assignment that had been given was to draw what you thought God looked like, and Tom had drawn a girl with a backward cap on a skateboard." "And I just don't know how to say it - I just fell in love with him. I used to come in every day and look for his number on the call sheet, it was number seven, and if his name was on the call sheet, it was an extra exciting day," she continued.



Jeremy Renner recounts snow plough accident

Los Angeles | Agencies

Hollywood star Jeremy Renner made his first late-night appearance since his snow plough accident, guesting on 'Jimmy Kimmel Live!' to discuss the traumatic incident and his forthcoming series

'Rennervations'. Renner was met with a standing ovation by the talk show's crowd, taking the stage with the help of a cane, reports 'Variety'.

A big grin on his face, the actor performed a small dance before taking his seat.

"If there was any question as to who the toughest Avenger is, that's settled now, right?" Kimmel asked.

Renner shut him down quickly, retorting "Scarlett Johansson."

Renner offered a detailed account of his accident in an interview with ABC News' Diane Sawyer last week.

Renner explained that he and his 27-year-old nephew were attempting to tow a Ford Raptor out of the snow with his snow plough.

After his nephew stepped out to chain the two vehicles, the snow plough began to slide on the ice. Renner lost his footing as he stepped out of the plough to look back at his nephew, but neglected to set the parking brake. Attempting to re-enter the vehicle, Renner was run over.



Michelle Dockery to star alongside Tom Hanks in Robert Zemeckis' 'Here'

Los Angeles | Agencies

Four-time Emmy nominee Michelle Dockery has joined the cast of 'Here', filmmaker Robert Zemeckis adaptation of Richard McGuire's graphic novel. The project reunites Zemeckis with writer Eric Roth, Tom Hanks and Robin Wright for the first time since their collaboration on 'Forrest Gump' earned six Oscars including Best Picture.

Paul Bettany also co-stars. Based on McGuire's novel, 'Here' is a breathtaking and revolutionary odyssey through time and memory.

The innovative story is centered on a place in New England where from wilderness and then, later, from a home - love, loss, struggle, hope and legacy play out between couples and families over generations.



Jennifer Aniston, crush David Schwimmer let 'feelings play out' on 'Friends'

Los Angeles | Agencies

They could've been each other's Lobsters! 'Friends' stars Jennifer Aniston and David Schwimmer are the Hollywood couple everyone would have loved to have seen hook up off-screen.

However, despite the 'Friends' stars' apparent crushing on each other, it just never materialised - and instead they "let their feelings play out" on screen, reports 'Mirror.co.uk'.

That's the thoughts of Jennifer, 54, who has further opened up on the pair's relationship in the 1990s.

They both confessed that they could have made a go of things if circumstances were different, but the timing just never fit.

'Mirror.co.uk' further states that, while chatting on 'Live with Kelly and Ryan', Jennifer discussed her crush on David, who played on-screen on-off lover Ross Geller.

Hosts Kelly Ripa and Ryan Seacrest asked the actress how she dealt with her feelings at the time. She responded: "We just let it play out on TV".

And when

Seacrest further probed on the subject, he asked if the pair's first kiss was ever caught on camera.

"Yes," was the response, before she gushed "it was quite enjoyable actually" after Ripa asked if it was weird.

Jennifer and David were fresh-faced stars when the world watched as their on-off relationship evolve over the seasons.



'STRANGER THINGS' ANIMATED SERIES IN DEVELOPMENT AT NETFLIX

Los Angeles | Agencies

Streaming giant Netflix is continuing to build out the 'Stranger Things' franchise, digital platform ordering an animated series set within the world of the show.

Nearly all details about

the show are being kept under wraps, aside from the fact that it was developed by Eric Robles and Flying Bark Productions, reports 'Variety'.

Robles has previously created the animated shows 'Random! Cartoons', 'Fanboy & Chum Chum',

and 'Glitch Techs'.

'Stranger Things' creators the Duffer brothers executive produce via Upside Down Pictures along with Robles of Flying Bark as well as Shawn Levy and Dan Cohen of 21 Laps. Upside Down Pictures and 21 Laps are currently under overall deals at Netflix.

"We've always dreamed of an animated 'Stranger Things' in the vein of the Saturday morning cartoons that we grew up loving, and to see this dream realised has been absolutely thrilling," the Duffer brothers said in a statement.

"We couldn't be more blown away by what Eric Robles and his team have come up with -- the scripts and artwork are incredible, and we can't wait to share more with you! The adventure continues..."

'Stranger Things' has proven to be a global hit and one of Netflix's most popular original series since it originally debuted in 2016. It was renewed for a fifth and final season in February 2022. Netflix announced plans for a live-action spin-off series and a stage show in July 2022, with the Duffers forming Upside Down Pictures at that time. No details are available about the live-action spinoff, though the Duffers have previously said it would not focus on characters like Eleven or Steve Harrington.



ABSOLUTE PIC OF THE DAY



Katie Maloney



IPL 2023: Mumbai Indians Vs Delhi Capitals

MUMBAI EARNED FIRST TWO POINTS IN LAST-BALL THRILLER

Niharika Raina | New Delhi

Mumbai Indians skipper Rohit Sharma led the way with a 45-ball 65, his first half-century in the IPL after 25 innings, as the five-time champions beat Delhi Capitals by six wickets on the last ball in a thrilling match at the Arun Jaitley Stadium on Tuesday.



over wide long-on.

Rohit and Ishan took two boundaries each off Axar Patel and Lalit Yadav as Mumbai finished power-play with 68 for no loss, with the Mumbai captain being innovative in his reverse-sweep off the left-arm spinner.

The opening partnership came to an end when Ishan was run-out at the non-striker's end in the eighth over. Rohit produced the shot of the match by pulling Anrich Nortje high over deep mid-wicket for six in the ninth over, before getting his fifty in 29 balls. Tilak Varma got some applause

from Rohit when he danced down the pitch to slam a fabulous lofted drive over long-off for six off Kuldeep Yadav. Rohit then ended the 12th over by sweeping Kuldeep hard through deep backward square leg for four. Suryakumar Yadav dismissed for a golden duck.

With 18 needed off nine balls, Cameron Green and Tim David slogged Mustafizur for a six each over deep mid-wicket and long-on, as 15 runs came off the 19th over.

David was dropped by Mukesh in the final over when two runs were needed off the final ball and Mumbai were able to break their winless run in IPL 2023.

Brief scores

Delhi Capitals 172 in 19.4 overs (Axar Patel 54, David Warner 51; Piyush Chawla 3/22, Jason Behrendorff 3/23) lost to Mumbai Indians 173/4 in 20 overs (Rohit Sharma 65, Tilak Varma 41; Mukesh Kumar 2/30, Mustafizur Rahman 1/38) by six wickets

Asian Wrestling Championships

India's Vikas wins bronze in Greco-Roman category

Astana (Kazakhstan) | Agencies

Greco-Roman grappler Vikas won a bronze medal to take India's tally to four on the second day of the Asian Wrestling Championships 2023, here.

Vikas defeated China's Jian Tan by 8-0 technical superiority in the men's 72kg Greco-Roman category, within a remarkable time of 1 min 41 secs on Monday.

The Indian started his campaign strongly with an 11-0 technical superiority win over Korea's Ji-yeon Lee in the qualification round. However, he suffered a 6-1 loss to Iran's Sajjad Imentalab in the quarter-finals.

Vikas made the bronze medal bout after Sajjad Imentalab advanced to the final, an olympics.com report said.

Three other Indian wrestlers -- Sumit Durdy'ew (60kg), Rohit Dahiya (82kg) and Narinder Cheema (97kg) -- were in contention for the medals. However, all three of them lost in the bronze medal match.

Sumit, who defeated Turkmenistan's Umit Durdy'ew by 9-0 technical superiority in the qualification, lost 0-10 in the quarter-finals to Kyrgyzstan's world champion Zholaman Sharshenbekov, who went on to win the gold. In the bronze medal match, Sumit lost 6-14 to Japan's Maito Kawana.

Meanwhile, Rohit Dahiya lost 5-1 to Iran's Alireza Mohmadi in the bronze medal match.



Rohit had defeated Singapore Aryan Azman 12-4 in the first round, but lost 1-7 to eventual gold medalist Akybek Talantbekov of Kyrgyzstan in the next.

In the 97kg category, Narinder Cheema reached the semi-finals where he lost 0-9 to Kyrgyzstan's Uzur Dzhuupbekov. In the bronze medal match, Narinder suffered a 4-1 defeat to Kazakhstan's Olzhas Syrylybay.

India finished the Greco-Roman campaign with four medals. On Sunday, Rupin bagged a silver in the 55kg category while Neeraj (63kg) and Sunil Kumar (87kg) claimed bronze medals.

Zverev back to clay court in style at Monte-Carlo

Monte Carlo | Agencies

Alexander Zverev of Germany came from one set down to overcome Kazakhstan's Alexander Bublik 3-6, 6-2, 6-4 to reach the second round at the ATP Monte-Carlo Masters on Tuesday.

The former world No.2 cracked his right ankle at the French Open semifinal against Rafael Nadal last year and had never played on the red muddy surface, reports Xinhua.

It took the 13th seed one hour and 58 minutes, during which he fired 21 winners to pass through Bublik to secure his first victory over the world no. 53 in their three head-to-head meetings.

The 25-year-old, who reached the semifinal at the



Principality tournament two times in 2018 and 2022, will next face Spaniard Roberto Bautista Agut.

Another two-time semifinalist, Bulgaria's Grigor

Dimitrov also needed three sets to advance as the Monte-Carlo resident held off a fight-back from Ben Shelton to beat the American young gun 6-1, 3-6, 6-3.

BARCA HELD BY GIRONA BUT EXTEND LEAD TO 13 POINTS

Madrid | Agencies

FC Barcelona failed to open a 15-point lead over Real Madrid at the top of La Liga but nevertheless extended their advantage to 13 points after a 0-0 draw at home to Girona on Monday night.

Despite the lack of goals, it was an entertaining game, although Barca clearly missed the injured Ousmane Dembele and Pedri once again.

The first half may not have produced any goals, but it had plenty of entertaining football, with both sides creating chances.

Viktor Tsygankov fired just wide for Girona in the opening minute, while Robert Lewandowski and the lively Ansu Fati had efforts just wide at the other end before Girona goalkeeper Paulo Gazzaniga had to react quickly after Santiago Bueno's loose back-pass looked to be heading into the net, a Xinhua report said.

Taty Castellanos then fired into the Barca side-netting with the match only in its 12th minute, while at the other end, Raphinha dragged his



effort wide.

Neither side had the game under control, with the best chance of the half falling to Ronald Araujo, whose header was clawed off the line by Gazzaniga - although it needed a VAR review to show the ball hadn't crossed the line.

Franck Kessie replaced Sergi Roberto at the start of the second half to try and give Barca more creativity in midfield, but Girona had the first chance of the second half when Castellanos was put clean through only to slice his effort wide with only Ter Stegen to beat.

Gazzaniga was then out of his area fast to frustrate Raphinha, who then saw an effort blocked by David Lopez.

Both sides made changes, with Jordi Alba and Ferran Torres on for Barca and Ricardo Riquelme for Girona, but the game continued to be a succession of 'ooohs' and 'ahhs', rather than clear chances in the closing minutes until the fifth minute of injury time when Gavi headed just over and Lewandowski saw a backheel scrambled away from the line.

INDIA'S DOMESTIC CRICKET SEASON 2023-24 TO BEGIN WITH DULEEP TROPHY FROM JUNE 28

Mumbai | Agencies

India's full-fledged domestic cricket season 2023-24 will kickstart with the Duleep Trophy from June 28, 2023, the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) confirmed on Tuesday while announcing the schedule for the cycle.

The season will see a total of 1846 matches being played between the last week of June 2023 and March 2024, a BCCI media release said.

The coveted Duleep Trophy will end on July 16, 2023 and it will be followed by the Prof. Deodhar Trophy -- to be played from July 24, 2023 to August 3. Both these tournaments will be played across six zones -- Central, South, North, East, West and North-East.

On the other hand, the Irani

Cup, which will see Saurashtra taking on the Rest of India side, will commence on October 1, 2023. The three multi-day tournaments will be followed by Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy and Vijay Hazare Trophy. While the former will begin from October 16, 2023 and run until November 06, the latter will be played in the period of November 23, 2023 to December 15. Both the white-ball tournaments will witness 38 teams, divided into two groups of seven teams and three groups of eight teams.

One of the premier domestic cricket tournaments in the world of cricket -- the Ranji Trophy -- will kick off from January 5, 2024 and will run till March 14.

The 38 teams will be split into five groups, where four Elite Groups will have 8 teams each and Plate Group will comprise 6

teams. The teams in Elite Group will play 7 league-stage matches each and two teams from each group will make it to the quarter-finals.

The six teams in Plate Group will play five league-stage matches each, with the top four making it to the semi-finals.

Meanwhile, the women's domestic cricket season will begin with the Senior Women's T20 Trophy, which will be played from October 19, 2023 to November 9. It will be followed by the Senior Women's Inter Zonal Trophy -- to be played from November 24, 2023 to December 04.

The 2024 will begin with the Senior Women's One-Day Trophy, which will commence on January 4, 2024 and the final of the same will be played on January 26.

Official chant launched to mark 100-day countdown to FIFA Women's World Cup

Geneva (Switzerland) | Agencies

The official chant "Unity Beat" was released on Tuesday to mark the 100 days countdown to the FIFA Women's World Cup Australia & New Zealand 2023, while the tournament's Last-Minute Sales Phase opened.

The world's biggest women's football event will take place from July 20 to August 20, with the opening match to feature hosts New Zealand against Norway at Eden Park, Auckland. The final match will be held at Stadium Australia in Sydney, a Xinhua report said.

FIFA Secretary General Fatma Samoura was quoted as saying in a press release: "With just 100 Days to Go until the tournament kicks off, we are thrilled to be unveiling the Unity Beat, a



sound that we believe will become synonymous with the FIFA Women's World Cup Australia & New Zealand 2023." "When the Unity Beat plays in each of the tournament's nine welcoming host cities, fans from all over the world will know that it's time to join in and create a truly unforgettable atmosphere.

From the streets to the stadiums, the Unity Beat will be a call to action for supporters to unite and remember the one thing that has brought them all together - football," Samoura added.

Fans need to register for a FIFA Ticketing Account to buy tickets on the official website FIFA.com.

Expect a good crowd throughout the Super Cup: IM Vijayan

New Delhi | Agencies

Indian football legend IM Vijayan who built his way as a footballer in Kerala, the venue for the Super Cup expects the tournament to witness packed stadiums throughout the duration of the competition.

Vijayan who is regarded as one of the greatest players in India feels hosting the tournament in Kerala and especially in the Malabar region was a big boost to the football-crazy people there.

"There had been no tournaments here for a long time. Now, AIFF has decided to host a big one here, the



Super Cup. The best clubs in India - from the Hero ISL and the Hero I-League participate here," Vijayan told AIFF. "What makes me happy is that it's being hosted in the Malabar region - in Manjeri and Kozhikode. I expect a good crowd throughout the tournament.

For both home teams - Kerala Blasters and Gokulam Kerala - it's a great chance to play some good games and be valuable players for the future," he added.

Kerala Blasters FC got off to a winning start with their 3-1 win over Hero I-League champions RoundGlass Punjab FC. However, Gokulam Kerala endured a tough evening against reigning Hero ISL champions ATK Mohun Bagan who ran out 5-1 winners. Vijayan, though, believes the Hero Super Cup will help the I-League sides gain experience by playing against their ISL counterparts.

Rohit Sharma reveals Zinedine Zidane as one person he would like to meet

New Delhi | Agencies

When Rohit Sharma was bought by Mumbai Indians for INR 9.2 crore in 2011, little did the 'Paltan' know that that he would grow into becoming the most successful captains in IPL history.

After spending 12 years with the franchise, Rohit has become a stalwart of the Mumbai Indians team and has become a crowd favourite among the Mumbaikars.

Speaking to Star Sports, Rohit mentioned the one person who he wants to meet this lifetime.

"Zinedine Zidane. There is lots to ask him, how did he headbutt in that game? What made him do that? As a



manager to Real Madrid how did he manage to pull those championship

titles back-to-back with a lot of guys in his team at the end of their career.

How did he manage to keep the consistency and get the best of the team in all the matches? These are the things I would ask him and maybe something more."

Rohit further spoke on the places he likes to hang out at when he is in Mumbai "I use to hangout in a place at Borivali, not known to the world, but there's a place in Borivali" he further spoke on which place has the best street food in Mumbai. "The place I like the most is Khau Galli which is between Cross Maidan and Aazad Maidan. I've spend so much time playing at Cross Maidan and Azad Maidan, that is the place we used to go a lot as kids and eat everything that was available there."



SALMAN'S UPCOMING FILM'S TRAILER GETS BRUTALLY TROLLED

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The trailer of the upcoming Salman Khan-starrer film 'Kisi Ka Bhai Kisi Ki Jaan' was unveiled recently. While Salman Khan fans are in a state of ecstasy as they will get to see their favourite superstar on the silver screen after a gap of almost four years, a section of people on the Internet are not pleased with the trailer and have trolled it heavily calling the scenes and sequences nonsensical, over the top, cringe and unbearable. The trailer, which is over three minutes in length, features many sequences that serve as a reminiscent of older Salman Khan hits like 'Wanted', 'Jai Ho' 'Dabangg' and several others.

The trailer is being criticised for loose narration, poor editing, Salman's look in the film and action sequences that have no regard for reality.

One user commented, "Another kachra reloading." Another wrote, "Salman Khan's hair has more volume than his acting. PATHETIC."

Another user commented, "This film is still stuck in early 2000s, it seems".

'Kisi Ka Bhai Kisi Ki Jaan, directed by Farhad Samji, features an ensemble cast of Pooja Hegde, Venkatesh Daggubati, Palak Tiwari, Siddharth Nigam and Shehnaaz Gill.

The film will bow in theatres on April 21 on the occasion of Eid.

Shreyas Talpade finds dubbing for the trailer of Allu's next

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Shreyas Talpade, who is known for his work in the Marathi and Hindi film industry, talked about the challenges of dubbing the dialogues in Hindi for the Telugu blockbuster 'Pushpa: The Rise' and also for the trailer of its sequel, 'Pushpa: The Rule'.

Written and directed by Sukumar, 'Pushpa: The Rise', stars Allu Arjun and Rashmika Mandanna. The story is about a labourer Pushpa Raj, who smuggles red sandalwood in the Seshachalam Hills of Chittoor district in Andhra Pradesh. Shreyas recalled working with the team of 'Pushpa: The Rise' and said: "When I dubbed for the first part, I had never imagined for the film to go so big, and this time when I returned to dub, I knew how huge a project this was. But that particular line, in the end, was what hit me hard, it gave me goosebumps, and that nostalgia of my journey with 'Pushpa' was just amazing to revisit."

Shreyas has been part of several movies such as 'Om Shanti Om', 'Golmaal Returns', 'Welcome To Sajjanpur', 'Golmaal 3', 'Housefull 2', 'Golmaal Again', and many more. He also did Hindi dubbing in 2009 for the English film, 'The Lion King'. Shreyas will be seen playing the role of former late prime minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee in Kangana Ranaut-starrer 'Emergency'.

He has recently also done the dubbing for the trailer of 'Pushpa: The Rule' and said that it is quite a challenging job.



Self-love is more important than Salman Khan: Shehnaaz Gill

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Punjabi actress-singer Shehnaaz Gill, who is awaiting the release of 'Kisi Ka Bhai Kisi Ki Jaan', her big-ticket film, has declared with her characteristic candour that self-love matters most to her. Gill, who became popular after 'Bigg Boss 14', especially because of her reported off-screen romance with the late Sidharth Shukla, said she has known Salman Khan for many years and shares a good camaraderie with him, but nothing trumps self-love for the actress.

Gill also appeared on 'Bigg Boss' as a guest star in seasons 15 and 16.

Speaking to the media at the film's trailer launch, Shehnaaz said: "I didn't feel nervous at all while working on the film. In fact, I love how I look in the final output of the film."

She said: "Khud ko dekh ke achcha lagta hai. Pehle apne aap se pyaar karna chaahiye na, baaki baad mein Salman sir aur baaki sab (How good it is to look at oneself. It's so good to love oneself. For me, I'm my most favourite person, then comes Salman sir and everyone else)." Scheduled to hit the big screen on April 21, coinciding with Eid, 'Kisi Ka Bhai Kisi Ki Jaan' is a Hindi action drama directed by Farhad Samji and produced by Salman Khan Films.

Eisha Singh

My four feline cuties taught me that love knows no boundaries

Team Absolute | Mumbai

'Bekaaboo' actress Eisha Singh believes that pets are the best friends, and on Pet Day, she has shared how she is attached to her four cats and enjoys playing different games with them.

She said: "I always thought I was a dog person until I met my four feline cuties who stole my heart and taught me that love knows no boundaries. It's true what they say, one cat always leads to another. That's how I have a full-fledged cat family now. Amongst the four, Ginni and Simba are the mom and dad of little bundles of fluff, Gucci, and Prada. My cats are all very gentle and they don't claw people who hold them."

At the age of 17, Eisha made her TV debut in 2015 as Dhaani Tripathi in the show 'Ishq Ka Rang Safed'. Later, she acted in 'Ek Tha Raja Ek Thi Rani', 'Ishq Subhan Allah', 'Pyaar Tune Kya Kiya', 'Sif Tum', among others.

The actress, who is busy shooting for her show, makes sure to pay attention to their needs. She also added that the cats have certain traits similar to dogs and despite being fond of dogs now she has become a cat lover.

"They have dog-like traits. This is true, especially for Simba and Prada. Simba loves to go out often and meet

new

people and Prada is very emotional. This is because they receive a lot of attention from everyone, especially from my mother who keeps talking to them and that's why they think of themselves as dogs. Life without cats? I don't think so. For me, they're not just pets, they're family. I wouldn't have it any other way," she concluded.



GOLDEN AGE OF INDIAN CINEMA HAD CERTAIN INNOCENCE:

WAMIQA GABBI

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actress Wamiqa Gabbi, who is receiving a lot of appreciation for her work in the recently released streaming series 'Jubilee', feels that there was a certain kind of innocence in the Golden era of the Indian cinema which seems to be lost in current times.

'Jubilee', which also stars Aparshakti Khurana, Aditi Rao Hydari, Prosenjit Chatterjee, Sidhant Gupta, Nandish Sandhu, and Ram Kapoor, is set against the backdrop of the golden age of Indian cinema and explores the evolution of Hindi cinema.

Wamiqa, who is plays the role of a yesteryear actress, said, "There's a splendid innocence about the golden age of cinema and its actors, which is lost today and it needs to be touched upon. Even if things were not perfect, it was all part of learning".

She further mentioned, "Being an actor or showbiz during that time was a profession without any frills attached to it. I am glad I was able to live that time through 'Jubilee'".

The series, helmed by Vikramaditya Motwane of 'Lootera' fame, is currently streaming on Prime Video.



SSR's sister Priyanka drops cryptic post after Rhea Chakraborty 'Roadies' announcement

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Late Bollywood actor Sushant Singh Rajput's sister Priyanka took to social media where she wrote a cryptic post saying "tum kiyu darogi" (why will you be scared) after actress Rhea Chakraborty was announced as a gang leader for the upcoming season of 'Roadies'.

It was on Monday, that Rhea was named as one of the gang leaders in the 19th season of the youth-based reality show 'MTV Roadies'. She had shared a promo on Instagram.

Rhea was heard saying: "Aapko kya laga main wapas nahi aungi, darr jaungi? ab darne ki baari kisi aur ki."

Taking to Twitter, Priyanka Singh wrote: "Tum kiyu darogi? Tum to vaishya thi aur rahogi! Prashna yeh hai ki tumhari upbhogta kaun hai? Koi Sattadhari hi ye himmat de sakta hai. Who responsible 4delays InSSRCs is obvious (sic)."

Sushant Singh Rajput died in 2020 in mysterious circumstances which created a nationwide uproar. He was found hanging in his flat in Juhu. Days after his death, the actor's father filed a case against Rhea, the actor's then girlfriend, accusing her of abetment of suicide and money laundering.



INSTAGRAM PIC OF THE DAY



Disha Patni