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'UNEQUALS CAN'T BE TREATED EQUALLY': SC ON RELEASE OF 11 CONVICTS IN BILKIS BANO CASE

Today Bilkis, Tomorrow... you or me

The Supreme Court on Tuesday, stressing on the gravity of the offence in the Bilkis Bano case and on the remission granted to 11 convicts, said: "Unequals cannot be treated equally" as it noted a pregnant woman was gang-raped and several people were killed and the case cannot be compared with a standard Section 302 (murder) case.

"Today it is this lady (Bilkis). Tomorrow, it can be you or me. Then what standards would you apply... There are objective standards laid down. What is the problem in showing it (files connected with remission of 11 convicts) today?... we said it earlier, bring it next day, you are in contempt, if you have not produced it. What is the difficulty?" he added. "Why fight shy?"



It observed that a pregnant woman was gang-raped and several people were killed and the case cannot be compared with a standard Section 302 (murder) cases. "Like you cannot compare apples with oranges, similarly, massacre cannot be compared with single murder. Crimes are generally committed against society and the community. Unequals cannot be treated equally", it said. The Centre and Gujarat government claimed privilege over files in connection with grant of remission to 11 convicts, with counsel saying that the government is likely to seek review of the court's March 27 order, asking them to be ready with

the original files on remission granted to the convicts. The apex court stressed that the

crime in question was "horrendous" and it is imperative for the Gujarat government to show application of mind in allowing premature release of the 11 convicts, as it several times asked "why fight shy and not show the remissions files to the court". It said the court is interested to see what powers were legally exercised and "for that, if you don't show us the reason", then the court is free to draw a conclusion. Additional Solicitor General S.V. Raju, representing the Centre, submitted that the files came to him on Tuesday only and "let me look at the file and I will come back next week".

'There has been acceptance of same-sex relationships'

New Delhi: The Supreme Court on Tuesday said that from the Navtej Johar judgment, which decriminalised consensual gay sex, till now, there has been an acceptance of same sex relationships and its playing a dialogical role, while adding that the role of the Parliament is indeed relevant here. A five-judge bench headed by Chief Justice of India D.Y. Chandrachud made it clear that it is for time being not stepping into personal laws at all and restricting it to Special Marriage Act by giving it a gender-neutral interpretation and evolving a civil union concept. The bench noted: "From the Navtej Johar judgement till now, there has been an acceptance of same sex relationships in universities." It further added that in this evolving consensus, the court is playing a dialogical role and "we know about our limitations". The top court noted that it has to exercise its interpretative power in an incremental manner since laws are evolving and asked the petitioners' lawyers to confine themselves to the incremental canvas and then allow Parliament to respond to societal evolution. The top court will continue to hear the matter on Wednesday.

Conversation...

Justice Joseph to Raju: "You have done a perfectly legal thing, nothing to fear... the grant of remission in ordinary cases will not be subjected to judicial review."
Raju: "My instructions are, we are claiming privilege and asking for a review."
Justice Nagarathna: "You will be on a better footing if you show the files to us." Raju insisted that his instructions are different and therefore he has to follow them.
Raju: "In the beginning, I said the pleadings are not complete and asked for some time to file a review."
Justice Nagarathna: what will be the basis of the arguments of the government's counsel.

'RISING COVID INFECTIONS, DEATHS NOT A CAUSE OF CONCERN, VIRUS HAS BECOME ENDEMIC'



Team Absolute | New Delhi

The current increase seen in both Covid infections and deaths due to there is no cause of concern, experts said here on Tuesday, contending that we have reached Covid endemicity. India on Tuesday recorded 7,633 fresh Covid-19 cases in the last 24 hours, taking the number of active infections to 61,233, according to Union Health Ministry data. In the last week, the country reported close to 10,000 cases a day six weeks back. The country saw a 79 per cent increase in the number of cases week on week. Talking to reporter, infectious disease expert Dr. Ishwar Gilada said that with waning immunity, we can keep getting more Covid cases. "Given the way, the cases are getting multiplied now, by the end of May, the numbers can go up to one lakh a day, (but) even then I wouldn't call it a wave. "We need to do a lot of surveillance and that is to deduct the periodic ups and lows which is part of the endemicity in which we are already in. As there are no new variants in the last 16 months, we need not worry that there will be a major wave. We should keep our fingers crossed. I don't think there'll be a fourth wave," he said. "Covid-19 seems to have become endemic and like the flu, we may see highs and lows in the near future," added Dr Anita Mathew, Infectious Disease Specialist, Fortis Hospital, Mulund. Along with the infection, the number of fatalities are also rising. The Health Ministry reported 11 deaths - Delhi (4), Haryana (1), Karnataka (1) and Punjab (1), while four fatalities were reconciled by Kerala.

Future wars would need capability of 'seeing' and 'striking' first: IAF chief

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Future wars would need capability of "seeing first", followed by ability to "strike first" and then, "striking the farthest", IAF chief V.R. Chaudhari said on Tuesday. Fighter jets, UAVs, sensors, with long-range missile and manned-unmanned teaming of platforms will define the outcome of air power in future wars, Air Chief Marshal Chaudhari said at a seminar on "Aerospace Power: Pivot to Future Battlespace Operations", organised by The Centre for Air Power Studies (CAPS) in memory of the first and only Marshal of the Indian Air Force, Arjan Singh. According to the IAF, the seminar aimed to explore the changing nature of aerospace power and its role in future



battlespace operations. As technological advancements continue to reshape the landscape of warfare, the aerospace domain has become increasingly important for achieving military objectives, it noted. The seminar examined the 'Peculiarities of Air Power Operations' in the past and

outlined the need for multi-domain operations as an inseparable entity in future battlespace operations. As the world becomes increasingly complex and volatile, military operations require a more integrated and multi-dimensional approach that leverages the full spectrum of aerospace capabilities. Aerospace power will play a critical role in future conflicts, providing key advantages in intelligence, surveillance, reconnaissance, command and control, and strike capabilities, the IAF added. Sessions discussed the evolving nature of aerospace power, including emerging technologies, strategies, and the challenges and opportunities associated with integrating these capabilities into broader military operations.

Pro-Gehlot MLAs pitch for him as 4th time CM

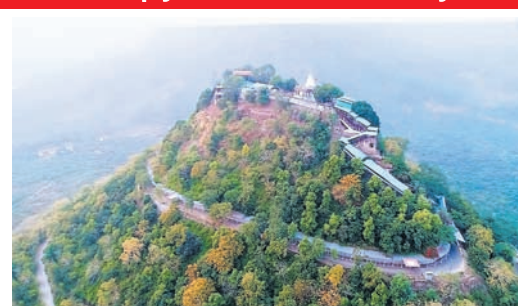
Jaipur: Congress MLAs from Udaipur, Kota, Bharatpur, Dholpur, Karauli and Sawai Madhopur districts were called on Tuesday for collecting their one-on-one feedback on different issues. Tuesday was the second day of collecting this one-on-one feedback from Rajasthan MLAs. On this occasion, the pro-Gehlot MLAs were seen yet again triggering factional war by demanding for Gehlot as the chief minister for the fourth time. The MLAs of the pro-Gehlot tribal area openly advocated to make Gehlot the chief minister for the fourth time. Congress MLA from Dhariawad, Nagraj Meena, said, "Ashok Gehlot will become the Chief Minister for the fourth time, no one can stop him. When Gehlot is doing a great job, then why would the high command make someone else its face."

MP govt orders to remove Muslim staff from Maa Sharda temple in Maihar

The step has been taken following the recommendation of right wing groups, including the Vishva Hindu Parishad. The right wing outfits of Satna district had handed over a letter to Usha Thakur in January this year, following which the Satna district administration was directed to remove Muslim staff associated with the Maa Sharda Devi Prabandh Samiti. The fresh letter has been issued to comply with directive issued by the minister in January.

Bhopal | Agencies

An order issued by the Department of Culture of Madhya Pradesh government regarding the removal of Muslim employees associated with the Maa Sharda Temple in Maihar in Satna district has become the talking point in the state. The department has issued a letter to Satna district administration to comply with the directive issued earlier regarding removal of Muslim employees from the Maa Sharda Devi Prabandh



Samiti. The directive was issued on April 5, but it came to the fore after it surfaced on social media on Tuesday. The development came when the Assembly elections in Madhya Pradesh are just six months away. It has been learnt that there are at least two Muslims who are associated with the Maa Sharda Devi Prabandh Samiti since 1988. The Department of Culture in its order has

also mentioned that a notification regarding the same had been issued earlier also, but no response was received. Therefore, complying with the directive (letter) issued by the department regarding the same, a report should be submitted within three days. The department is headed by senior BJP leader Usha Thakur, who is also the Tourism Minister in Shivraj Singh Chouhan's Cabinet. The department has also said that all meat and liquor shops located near the temple area will be removed.

Assam govt to award Rs 25,000 cash prize to performers for Guinness World Records

Guwahati | Agencies

Assam has created two Guinness World Records - one with the traditional dance of 11,304 Bihu artistes and the other with the largest drumming performance, which included 2,548 participants. Each artiste will receive a cash prize of Rs 25,000 for his/her stellar performance that marked double entries into the Guinness World Records, officials said on Tuesday. The state government has planned a three-day programme to award the prizes to the performers. A top government official said, "Between May 6 and 8, the Bihu performers will be felicitated in their respective districts."



The artists were selected from each district of the state to perform for the world records. Meanwhile, Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said, "The cabinet ministers will travel to the districts to award cash prizes to the artists. I will also personally go to at least five districts to felicitate the performers." The artistes were practising for the last one month, Sarma said.

- On Monday, about 36 weather stations across the country, particularly in central and north India, recorded temperatures above 42 degrees Celsius.
- Adverse effects of heat include lethargy, body aches, weakness, and, in severe cases, kidney function disturbance, fall in blood pressure, and exacerbation of comorbidities for those who suffer from them.
- In response to heat-wave forecasts, several state governments have released guidelines for schools, including closure, no assembly during the afternoon, water breaks, etc.

'Heatwaves can turn fatal for kids, pregnant women, elderly'

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Even as summers have set in, India has started seeing extreme heat waves, which can be deadly especially for children, pregnant women and elderly, doctors said here on Tuesday. Delhi registered a maximum temperature of 40.6 degrees Celsius, four notches higher than normal -- the third consecutive day that the maximum temperature settled above 40 degrees Celsius. Talking to reporter, Dr Anup Latne, Consultant Internal Medicine, Surya Mother and Child Super Speciality Hospital Pune, said: "Extreme heat can be deadly, especially in India, where many lack access to adequate cooling." While the effect of heatwaves on a human body can



differ person to person, "children, pregnant women and senior citizens should take additional precaution to mitigate the effect of severe heat, and avoid going outdoors during the day". These groups "are more likely to experience dehydration

when exposed to extreme environmental temperatures", said Dr Rajiva Gupta, Senior Consultant - Internal medicine at the C.K. Birla Hospital, Gurugram. In children, heatwave can lead to "dizziness, sweating profusely, nausea/vomiting

and muscular cramps. In severe cases, individuals may also face heat strokes resulting in loss of consciousness and seizures", Dr Latne said. Meanwhile, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) has advised the public "to take precautions and stay hydrated during the hot weather". Latne recommended expecting mothers to avoid caffeine as it can make them lose more fluids and worsen the symptoms of heat exhaustion. Instead, consuming beverages such as fresh fruit juice and buttermilk can help. Reducing protein intake, increasing consumption of fruits and vegetables with high water content, and wearing loose fitting clothes are other ways we can lower the effect of heat on our body, the doctor said.



WITH SHETTAR & SAVADI JOINING, CONG WILL WIN 150 SEATS: K'TAKA CONG CHIEF



Bengaluru | Agencies

Karnataka Congress chief D.K. Shivakumar said on Tuesday that with former Chief Minister Jagadish Shettar and ex-Deputy CM Lakshman Savadi joining, the party would win 150 seats in the upcoming Assembly elections.

Speaking to reporters Shivakumar stated that with this development the voters of Veerashaiva and Lingayat community will go with the Congress. "Our survey projected 141 seats. Now, with the joining of Shettar and Savadi we will reach 150," he said.

"After the arrival of these two leaders, the vote share of Congress in Lingayat community has increased by two to three per cent. I am

giving an open invitation to all BJP leaders who agree to the ideology of Congress party to join. Let us join hands and together save Karnataka. Let us bring change," he said.

"Our candidates are being raided and threatened. We are not scared of the ED and I-T. We are going to teach them a lesson in this election. Not only candidates of Congress party are targeted, the industrialists who are in touch with us also are raided. They are scaring those who are in touch over phone as well," Shivakumar claimed. "It is being told not to support the Congress party. People are scared to receive our calls. But, no one is touching the BJP leaders as if they are upright and honest to the core. We know what is happening and we will face it," he maintained.

'CONGRESS A SINKING SHIP': K'TAKA CM ON BJP MEMBERS EXITING PARTY

Bengaluru:

Karnataka Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai on Tuesday, reacting to some BJP leaders' decision to switch to the Congress, said the grand old party is a sinking ship, and "had they stayed with the saffron party, would have reached the shore".



Bommai said this while referring to the exit of former chief minister Jagadish Shettar and ex-deputy chief minister Lakshman Savadi.

Both the former BJP leaders would be contesting the May 10 Karnataka Assembly polls on Congress ticket. Addressing a public meeting in Bagalkot after holding a roadshow in support of the BJP candidate and cabinet minister Govind Karjol, he said the people's response towards the BJP has been tremendous.

The chief minister said the Congress leaders made promises on the Krishna River issue but did nothing. "They cheated the people of the northern Karnataka region. Differentiation was done in the payment of compensation to those who lost land. Govind Karjol had to come as Water Resources Minister to pay the compensation to farmers. "The Cabinet Sub-Committee constituted by him had resolved to pay equal compensation to everyone and something had been followed. The development of Mudhol taluk has been taken up through the implementation of lift irrigation schemes," Bommai said.

Viveka's murder a case study for police officers: Chandrababu Naidu

Kadapa | Agencies

Telugu Desam Party (TDP) national President N. Chandrababu Naidu said on Tuesday that the murder of Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Jagan Mohan Reddy's paternal uncle Y.S. Vivekananda Reddy is a case study for police officers.

The former Chief Minister felt that those who murdered Vivekananda Reddy should be punished sooner than later.



Addressing the TDP Zone-5 meeting at Kadapa, he said that it is the responsibility of everyone to punish in the people's court those who resort to killings and try to escape from punishment. "How peace rallies can be taken out when those who are involved in murder are summoned for inquiry," the TDP supremo asked, referring to a rally organised in Pulivendula town on Friday when Kadapa MP Y.S. Avinash Reddy's father Y.S. Bhaskar Reddy was arrested in the case.

He said that the entire murder case of the brother of a former Chief Minister, who is also a former MP and MLA and the paternal uncle of

Chief Minister Jagan Mohan Reddy, is a mystery. "When the daughter of the victim wanted a post-mortem on the body, then the blame was passed on me in the name of Narakasura Raktha Charitra. Every attempt was made to escape from the murder case even by resorting to caste politics and this culture started only in Pulivendula," Naidu said.

Recalling how the gag order was obtained from the court and how a CBI probe was demanded into the murder, the former Chief Minister said that ultimately Jagan Mohan Reddy used this in the last Assembly polls as a weapon besides the "chicken

knife" drama. Now those involved in the murder are stooping so low that they are even threatening the CBI, he remarked.

Terming Jagan Mohan Reddy "a demon haunting the state", Naidu claimed that he is minting money in the name of pressing buttons. The total amount of corruption of Jagan Mohan Reddy, his cabinet ministers and his party MLAs is a whopping Rs 4 lakh crore, the TDP supremo alleged and said that the financial burden imposed on the people in the past four years is Rs 5 lakh crore while the state's total debt burden is Rs 10 lakh crore.

Many people will join BJP after PM's Kerala visit: Surendran

Thiruvananthapuram | Agencies

Kerala BJP President K. Surendran on Tuesday said that after Prime Minister Narendra Modi returns from the state on April 25, a huge number of people cutting across parties and economic status will join his party.

A reason why Surendran is upbeat is the response to the trial run of the Vande Bharat train on Monday when it travelled from here to Kannur and returned. Thousands arrived at the various railway stations where it stopped and pro-Modi slogans were heard.

Modi will flag off the first commercial trip from here on April 25.



"Just wait and see, a good number of people from various political parties and economic status will be joining the BJP after the visit of the PM. And that has already begun at Kottayam when on Tuesday around 80 people from a leading family

joined the BJP," said Surendran.

"The stage has come that in Kerala the minority communities have started accepting the BJP. Just like in Kottayam, a good number of people at Pathanamthitta are waiting to join the BJP. In general the BJP's acceptability has increased hugely," he claimed. Modi is arriving at Kochi the same day to inaugurate a youth meeting in which its new recruit Anil K. Antony, son of country's longest serving Defence Minister A.K. Antony, will be showcased for the first time after joining the BJP. The BJP does not have a single member in the 140-member Kerala Assembly or in the 20 Lok Sabha seats.

Jaishankar asks Siddaramaiah not to politicise issue of K'taka tribals' evacuation from Sudan

Team Absolute | New Delhi

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar on Tuesday expressed displeasure at Congress leader and former Karnataka chief minister Siddaramaiah, asking him not to politicise the incident of evacuation of 31 tribals from the state, who are stuck in violence-hit Sudan.

Replying to a series of tweets earlier in the day by the Congress leader, who blamed the central government for not doing enough to ensure the safe return of the tribals stuck in the African nation, Jaishankar said that he was "appalled" at his response.

"Simply appalled at your tweet! There are lives at stake; don't do politics. Since the fighting started on April 14th, the Embassy of India in Khartoum has been continuously in touch with most Indian nationals and PIOs in Sudan," the External Affairs Minister tweeted while tagging Siddaramaiah's earlier comments on Twitter. "Plans regarding them have to take into account a very complicated security scenario. The Embassy is in constant touch



with the Ministry in that regard. It is grossly irresponsible of you to politicise their situation. No electoral goal justifies endangering Indians abroad," Jaishankar tweeted further, adding that "Their (tribals) details and locations cannot be made public for security reasons. Their movement is constrained by fierce fighting that is ongoing."

Congress leader Siddaramaiah had earlier appealed to the Centre, seeking safe return of a group of 31 tribals from the state, who are stranded in violence-hit Sudan.

"It is reported that 31 people from the state belonging to Hakki Pikki tribe are stranded in Sudan which is troubled by civil war," Siddaramaiah had said in a series of tweets.

"I urge Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Union Home Ministry, Ministry of External Affairs and Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai to immediately intervene and ensure their safe return," Siddaramaiah said.

"Hakki Pikki in Sudan are left stranded without food since the last few days and the government is yet to initiate action to bring them back. BJP government should open diplomatic discussions and reach out to international agencies to ensure the well-being of Hakki-Pikkis," he had posted.

"It is also unfortunate to know that we have lost one Indian and 60 others in the ongoing civil war in Sudan. My deepest condolences to their families and pray for the peace in the region,"

General Secy B.L. Santhosh will 'destroy BJP in Karnataka', Shettar lashes out

Hubballi | Agencies

Former Karnataka Chief Minister Jagadish Shettar, who quit the ruling BJP to join the Congress, on Tuesday lashed out at the BJP's national General Secretary B.L. Santhosh, squarely holding him responsible for his exit.

Addressing reporters here, Shettar said that the BJP is losing leaders one after the other and is not sure whether it wants to come to power.

"B.L. Santhosh was made in-charge of elections in other states... nowhere could the BJP win. In spite of it, he had been made in-charge of Karnataka. This is only being done to rout the party in the state," he alleged.

"In the BJP, they say that individual is not important. But, one individual has become important and he had kept everything under his control. Santhosh will ruthlessly trample those who are not in his league. His protegee Mahesh Tenginakayi has got the ticket for my constituency from the



BJP. He could have been made a Rajya Sabha member... to get him ticket, I was humiliated and

thrown out by Santhosh," Shettar alleged.

He questioned "why it was necessary to humiliate him and unleash drama for one single individual whom Santhosh considers as his close associate". It was a pre-planned move of Santhosh, he said.

"There is a conspiracy to finish off BJP in the state. Even (veteran leader B.S.) Yediyurappa is in a helpless state. There is suffocation in all district offices. State President Nalin Kumar Kateel is a close associate of Santhosh. Kateel will act as per his directions," Shettar claimed.

The statements of Shettar has assumed importance in the wake of Congress making an attempt to project that Lingayat leadership in BJP is being finished off.

Meanwhile, Tenginakayi said that he got the ticket for being loyal worker of the BJP and not because he is close to Santhosh. He claimed he was Shettar's protegee in the last three decades in the BJP and he saw Shettar as his guru.

Former ED staff held for issuing fake summons

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Kolkata zone of Enforcement Directorate has arrested a person named Sukumar Kamaliya, a head constable with the Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB), who earlier worked with the ED as a sepyo on deputation, for allegedly sending fake summons and conducting search operations to extort money from people.

An ED official said that Kamaliya was found to be involved in conducting unauthorised search operations (by way of impersonation) in Kolkata, besides issuing fake summons to



people.

In one case, Kamaliya obtained information about the investigation being conducted against a person during his posting in the ED. After his repatriation, as a part of his extortion plan, Kamaliya issued a fake summons to the said person in order to extort money from him. "The said summons was sent via WhatsApp so that the victim could contact him

directly. In another case, Kamaliya conducted unauthorised search operation at a coffee shop in Kolkata and demanded Rs 10 lakh from its owner," the ED official said.

The owner of the coffee shop later lodged a complaint with the ED against Kamaliya.

The ED took cognisance of the matter and raided Kamaliya's residence from where incriminating documents and electronic gadgets were seized. "He was arrested on April 16, after which a special PMLA court in Kolkata remanded him to ED custody till April 29," said the official.

Punjabi Zaika, 12-day long food festival starting today at Marriott

Master Chefs of Jaipur Marriott Hotel will showcase their culinary skills, Punjabi Zaika food festival

Lalit Sharma | Jaipur

A Punjabi food festival, Punjabi Zaika, is being organized from April 19th to April 30th at the Jaipur Marriott Hotel in the capital of Rajasthan, Jaipur.

Govar Arora, General Manager, Jaipur Marriott says, "Localities will enjoy Punjabi flavors in this twelve-day long festival. Everything from food to ambience will be inspired by 'the Land of Five Rivers'." Govar explains, "Jaipurites relish Punjabi street food and we are delighted to simulate authen-



tic Punjabi experience in Pink City. Jatinder Dhaliwal,

Executive Chef, Jaipur Marriott Hotel told the press, "The spices for the food festival have been specially sourced from Punjab. The main delicacies on the menu are Bhatti Da Murg, Amritsari Macchi, Tandoori Soya Chaap, Patiala Panner Tikka, Maa Ki Daal, Pindi Chana, Pudina Laccha Paratha, Amritsari Kulcha and more. Highlights from the desserts section are Pinni and Gur Ka Halwa. I invite everyone from the beautiful pink city of Jaipur to come and dine with us at our award-winning restaurant Okra."

DIVYA NEHRA FROM CHANDIGARH WINS MISS VOGUESTAR INDIA

Amrita Kumari Keshari form Goa and Sangeeta Pacchani form Assam claim Mrs VogueStar India title

Jaipur | Agencies

Divya Nehra from Chandigarh was crowned as Miss VogueStar India while Amrita Kumari Keshari from Goa and Sangeeta Pacchani from Assam won Mrs VogueStar India title at Le Meridien Hotel on Sunday. The all-India beauty pageant and fashion show was organized by VogueStar, an inclusive platform of the women and by the women supporting them create their distinctive identities. The much awaited Ms VogueStar India and Mrs VogueStar India and Fashion Week 2023 kicked off on Friday where 80 state level winners showcased best of their skills



on the dais while competing with each other to win the competition. The glam show saw the who's who of Jaipur fashion industry and was lit up by the presence of many celebrated personalities like Abhimanyu Tomar, Founder, Styleskool, Anjali Gupta, Director, HIFT and Swati Kumar, Ex- Crown Holder to name a few. Divided into two categories, the contest crowned three national winners under Miss VogueStar

India and Mrs VogueStar India. The Mrs VogueStar India was further categorized into two groups where in the group one married women of 18-35 age group while group 2 represented the women belong to 36-60 age group. The idea behind this categorization was to ensure fair competition and inclusion of women across the age groups and relationship status to perform with best of their real abilities. The grand finale of Miss and Mrs VogueStar India 2023 and VogueStar Fashion Week witnessed the participation of 700 participants from across the states who were groomed for six months by a team of beauty, fitness and grooming experts.

SHOW STOPPER JIGYASA JOLLY DESIGNED SPECIAL COLLECTION FOR NATIONAL WINNERS

In the final day, Jigyasa Jolly was the showstopper designer who curated a special collection for the National Winners with her exclusive label Modo Caldo. She led the entire VogueStar Fashion Week and has crafted exclusive themes for every designer according to their brand aesthetic. Out of these 30 Fashion designers; Naina Thakur Chandwani and Bharti Mittal got shorlisted as the top 2 designers for VogueStar Fashion Week and created exclusive collections for the Finalists of Miss/Mrs. VogueStar India, 2023. Moreover, Amin Farista's exclusive fashion show was another highlight as it was a beautiful amalgamation of Khadi with couture for VogueStar Fashion Week. Their collection was adorned by the National Finalists too.





STATE RECORDS 57 FRESH COVID-19 CASES IN 24 HOURS

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Madhya Pradesh reported 57 fresh cases of Covid-19 infection in the last 24 hours, according to a daily released by the state health department on Tuesday.

With this, the numbers of active cases in the state have gone up to 322, it said. "57 new patients of COVID-19 were reported in the last 24 hours and the total number of active cases in the state stands at 322.

Speaking to reporter, Medical Education Minister Vishwas Sarang said, "We are keeping a check on each and every patient. We are providing them better treatment."

"We have also conducted mock drills in the past to look after the arrangement and facilities to deal with any surge in Covid-19 cases. We



have all possible arrangements in place for the same," Minister Sarang added. Bhopal district hospital superintendent Dr Rakesh Shrivastava said, "The

COVID-19 cases are continuously increasing in the state capital."

"40 new cases were reported in the past 48 hours here," he added.

How morphed photo made Dindori teen world cup-winning star

Team Absolute | Bhopal

On April 11, the tribal-dominated Dindori district of Madhya Pradesh woke up to the news that India won the World Junior Kabaddi Championship in March.

In a cricket-crazy nation, the fact that India defeated reigning champions Iran to lift the trophy did not occupy much news space, however, in Dindori the late realisation ushered in euphoria as Sachin Kushram, a local, was reportedly part of the team.

Former state Cabinet Minister and Dindori MLA Omkar Markam showered praise on Sachin while district Collector Vikas Mishra described him as a "genius". A photograph of Sachin, with the winners' medal around his neck and the trophy in his hand, went viral on social media.

However, there was a catch. Sachin was not actually a part of India's World Cup-winning squad, and the viral photograph was morphed, NDTV reported.

Sachin, 19, arrived at Dindori on April 12 just a few hours after informing his father, teachers, and well-wishers that he scripted history in Iran. Greeted by a rousing reception, Sachin was even accompanied by Markam in his own car to his



native village Rusa as the sitting MLA wanted to be a part of the celebrations.

Meanwhile, Dindori-based cricketer and lawyer Abhinav Katare thought something was amiss. Katare scanned through dozens of footage from the tournament, probed the viral photo and went through news reports to come to the realisation that Sachin was not part of India's squad that played the tournament from February 26 till March 5. "I watched the entire video of the final match but could not find Sachin Kushram anywhere. I then scanned the Amateur Kabaddi Federation of India (AKFI) website, but couldn't find anything to establish that Sachin Kushram

was representing any of the Indian states. Importantly, no player from Madhya Pradesh could be found in the entire junior national squad in Iran," Katare said. "Then I checked the authenticity of the picture shared by Sachin Kushram in which he is seen holding the junior world championship trophy. I inquired about it from Facebook and Instagram and came to know that it was an edited picture in which the face of the actual world championship winner team's member Yogesh Dahiya (native of Sonapat-Haryana) was changed to fit in Sachin Kushram's face," he added.

Dindori district police superintendent Sanjiv Kumar Sinha said, "We've received a complaint from local advocate Abhinav Katare on April 13, about the allegedly fake story of local youth being part of the Indian Kabaddi team which won the junior world title in March. Entire matter is being investigated." Sachin's father Manoj Kushram, a government school teacher, alleges a conspiracy to frame his son. "My son is innocent, possibly there is a gang that could have hatched the entire conspiracy and got him trapped," he said.

Dindori Collector Vikas Mishra said the police have received complaints and a detailed probe has been initiated for appropriate legal action.

Independent councillor Ashfaq arrested under NSA in Khandwa

Team Absolute | Bhopal

The Madhya Pradesh Police have arrested independent councillor Ashfaq Khan and his associate Umed Khan on charge of inciting communal violence in Khandwa. They have been booked under the National Security Act (NSA), state Home Minister Narottam Mishra said on Tuesday.

The police have also booked as many as 16 people for allegedly pelting stones and creating tension following the police action on an incident in which a mob thrashed a Muslim girl for sitting with her Hindu friend in a hotel in Khandwa on Sunday. On the basis of a complaint of the girl, police had arrested two persons for allegedly thrashing her girl and her male friend on Sunday. Later on in the night, a mob shouting slogans barged into a local police station and accused the police of biased action. In the meantime, mobs started pelting stones, due to which three per-



sons were reported injured. The incident had prompted district administration to impose Section 144 in the tension as later some right wing groups had also staged a protest. Heavy police force has been deployed since then. "Asfaq and his associate have been booked under NSA. It has been found that Ashfaq has a criminal history.

Police have been directed to take strict action against all those involved in inciting violence in Khandwa. I have directed the police to find out the involvement of Ashfaq in other such incidents in the past. There is no room for violence in Madhya Pradesh and those who try to disturb peace and harmony will be punished," Mishra said. As per the police, in 2020, Ashfaq was booked under Section 302 (murder) and 307 (attempt to murder). He was also booked under ST/SC act earlier. Besides these, in 2021, he was booked under various sections of IPC - 294, 323, 324, 147, 148, 452, and 506 in different cases. Khandwa collector Satendra Shukla has appealed to the people living in the violence-hit area to avoid gathering outside and to maintain calm. He has also requested people not to believe any rumours. He said police personnel have been deployed at the area and the situation was under control.

MP Cong to increase leaders' engagement to strengthen booth-level committees

Team Absolute | Bhopal

In a bid to strengthen its booth-level committees for the upcoming assembly elections likely to be held later this year, the Madhya Pradesh unit of Congress has planned to include national and state-level party leaders as members of booth committees.

Senior Congress leaders, including Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha MPs, would be included as members of the committees in their respective booths.

A decision in this regard was taken by Pradesh Congress Committee (PCC) Chief Kamal Nath. A notification was also issued on April 16.

"This step has been taken to strengthen and also to formulate our primary pillar (booth committees). I believe that involvement of national leaders in their respective booth committees will create greater importance and it will pave the way for party victory in 2023 assembly elections," Kamal Nath said. Further, he has also directed



all Congress leaders and office bearers to ensure that they are included as members of booth committees in their respective areas.

"Party workers are the main pillar of the Congress and we are all the primary members of the party. Therefore, we are all accountable to discharge our

duties as booth level workers," Nath mentioned in a notification issued on April 16. Notably, the top leadership of the state Congress unit has been relentlessly conducting meetings of booth level workers across Madhya Pradesh.

The importance of booth committees can be understood in a way that even national leaders of the Congress are chairing meetings and reviewing the party's poll preparations.

Veteran leader and two-time Chief Minister Digvijaya Singh has been regularly chairing the meetings of booth committees.

Singh, a Rajya Sabha member, during the meetings, has been noting down points suggested by workers.

Meanwhile, on Congress' step to strengthen its booth committees, senior BJP leader and state Home Minister Narottam Mishra took a jibe at the opposition, saying, "How will the Congress strengthen its booth committee when it has no workers on the ground!"

'Maharaj will always be in my heart' Congress leader Jayshreeram praises Jyotiraditya Scindia on stage

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Congress' Jayshreeram Baghel stunned everyone as he praised Jyotiraditya Scindia while addressing a program in Bhopal.

"Congress is my ideology. And no power can distract from my ideology. But Maharaj will always remain in my heart as the Scindia family uplifted me," he said. Jyotiraditya Scindia had reached Bhopal to lay the foundation stone of some works related to the energy department and unveil a statue of late Hari Singh Narvariya, a close aide of his father Madhavraj Scindia. Former Congress district president Jayshreeram Baghel was also present at the event. When Baghel got a chance to speak on the stage during the statue unveiling program, he said, "I am

a staunch Congressman. Congress is my ideology. I challenge that no power can distract me from my ideology but, Maharaj will always remain in my heart because this family has raised me. Bade Maharaj (Madhavraj) made me the district president and gave me the ticket." Even though Baghel did not join BJP along with Scindia in 2020, he is said to be very close to the Scindia clan. Scindia's reply, "We are connected by heart"

Interestingly, Scindia also did not fail to take advantage of this opportunity. During his address, with a smile on his face, he said, "Even though Jayshreeram Baghel is left on the other side (Congress), we are still connected by heart. I have united Congress and BJP on this platform."

CM CHOUHAN PLANTED SAPLINGS IN MADHAI CORE AREA



Bhopal: Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan today planted a sapling of Kadam at the Forest Rest House premises located in Madhai Corps area under Satpura Tiger Reserve. Forest Minister Dr. Kunwar Vijay Shah, Field Director Satpura Tiger Reserve L. Officers and employees including Krishnamurthy were present. Chief Minister Chouhan is planting saplings daily as per his resolution.

On May 13th National Lok Adalat will be exempted from surcharge on property, water and other taxes

Team Absolute | Bhopal

In the National Lok Adalat to be held in the state on May 13, 2023, property tax, water tax, consumer charges and other taxes will be exempted. Urban Development and Housing Minister Shri Bhupendra Singh has urged the citizens to take advantage of the exemption available in the National Lok Adalat.

In such cases of property tax, in which the outstanding amount of tax and surcharge is up to Rs 50,000, exemption of up to 100 percent will be given only in surcharge. In cases of property tax where the amount of tax and surcharge is more than Rs 50,000 and up to Rs one lakh, a rebate of up to 50 percent



will be given. In cases of property tax where the outstanding amount of tax and surcharge is more than one lakh rupees, exemption of up to 25 percent will be given only in surcharge.

In such cases of water tax/consumer charge, in

charge is more than Rs 10,000 and up to Rs 50,000, up to 75 per cent exemption will be given in surcharge. In such cases, in which the outstanding amount of water tax/consumer charges and surcharge is more than Rs 50,000, 50 percent exemption will be given in the surcharge. This discount will be given only once.

This exemption in Lok Adalat will be payable on the outstanding amount till the financial year 2022-23. After the discount, the amount can be deposited in maximum 2 installments. Out of this, it will be mandatory to deposit at least 50 percent amount on the day of Lok Adalat and the remaining amount within a maximum of one month.

PEOPLE OF THE STATE SHOULD TAKE A PLEDGE TO PROTECT THEIR PRICELESS HERITAGE- CM CHOUHAN

Bhopal: Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has greeted the people of the state on World Heritage Day. In a message released on social media, Chief Minister Chouhan has said that "our heritage connects us with our history, knowledge and culture. On World Heritage Day, let us all take a pledge to preserve our priceless heritage sites like Sanchi, Bhimbetka and Khajuraho, which boost the pride of the state and the country." Chief Minister Chouhan said that experts, educationists and intellectuals from Bangladesh, Bhutan, Maldives, Nepal and Sri Lanka, who have arrived for the high level regional conference of World Heritage in Bhopal organised by UNESCO, are warmly welcomed in the state. The findings of this conference will give new direction and impetus to the goal of conservation and promotion of heritage.

Cheetah Oban strays out of KNP, ventures into tiger territory at Madhav National Park

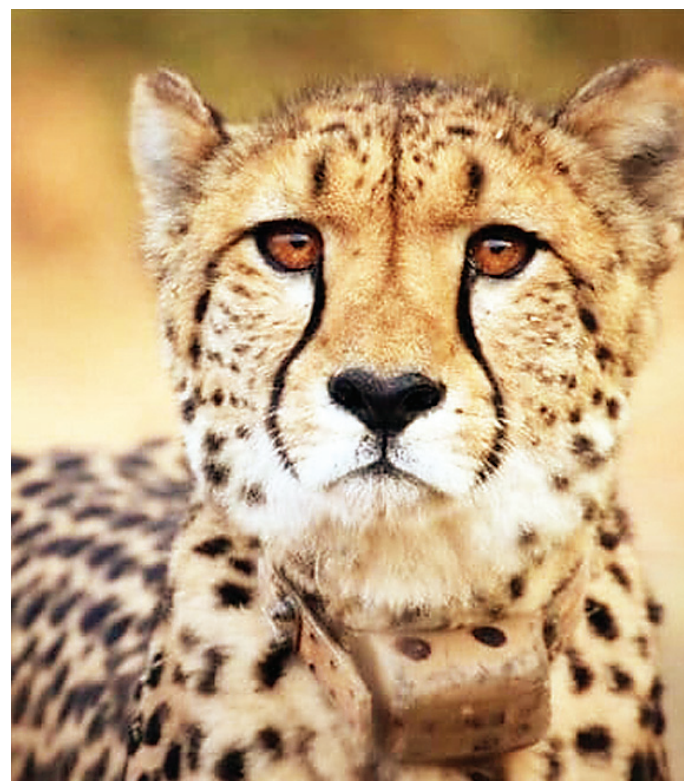
Team Absolute | Bhopal

Male Namibian cheetah Oban, which reportedly strayed out of Kuno National Park (KNP) on Sunday, made its way to Madhav National Park located in neighbouring district Shivpuri, forest officials said on Tuesday.

KNP, which is now new habitat of 19 cheetahs translocated from Namibia and South Africa, and four newborn cubs, is located in Sheopur district around 35 kms from Madhav National Park in Shivpuri district.

The forest officials taking Oban's move into Madhav National Park as a positive note asserted that a potential interaction between the two different species is possible there. They believe that if all goes well, Madhav National Park may be the second home for Oban.

Recently, three tigers were released to Madhav National Park, adding more excitement to the possibility of an encounter



between the different species.

According to forest officials at KNP, the male cheetah (Oban) has moved out of enclosures for the second time within two weeks. Last time, Oban was brought back to KNP from a nearby village farm after five days of efforts by forest officials and was tranquilised. He had moved out of KNP on April 2 and was brought back on April 6.

Officials claim that Oban does not pose a threat to humans, nor do humans pose a threat to it. So there will be no need for tranquilisation to bring him back. They added that Oban's movements are being constantly monitored to locate his whereabouts.

Notably, 20 cheetahs were released at KNP in two phases, but unfortunately one female cheetah - Sasha (translocated from Namibia) died due to illness on March 27. But, in a good note, another Namibian female cheetah - Siyaya gave birth to four cubs, just two days after Sasha reportedly died at KNP.

32 VILLAGERS INJURED AFTER WOLF ATTACK IN KHARGONE

Khargone: Panic gripped three villages, Limmedia, Gadgyam, and Khadkiya Nandi, all inside the Chenpur police station jurisdiction in Khargone district, when 32 residents were reportedly attacked by wolves. Nine people were hospitalised at the Khargone district hospital, while 12 others were taken to the Jalgaon hospital in Maharashtra. The incident occurred between Monday and Tuesday night, while they were sleeping outside their homes.

After getting the information, a team from the Forest Department reached the village on Tuesday along with the police team and met the families of the injured in Limmedia, Gadgyam and Khadkiya Nandi villages. All these are border villages in Maharashtra.

According to preliminary information, the entire village was gripped into fear as villagers claimed that the wolf was mad. Forest Department officials have confirmed that 32 people have been injured, including 16 of them who are seriously injured and were admitted to hospitals in Khargone and Jalgaon. The first incident was reported at Bondar Falia of Haran Kundiya at around 11:30 pm on Monday. The wolf first attacked Sur Singh, son of Noora Bhilala who was sleeping outside the house. After this, at around midnight a middle-aged Jugdiya tribal of Samudra Falia and 40-year-old Master Magan were injured in an attack. Later, many other villagers from different villages were injured in an attack. Titranian forest range officer Piyush Kumar Chowdhary met the injured admitted to Khargone Hospital. On his instructions, Vanrakshak Vani reached Khargone with five injured people who were undergoing treatment at Kasba Pal in Maharashtra. District Hospital surgeon Dr Vinay Vaskale told that nine injured have been brought to the district hospital. Everyone's condition is now out of danger. The wolf has bitten them. Villager Daugar Singh told that he was sleeping outside the house, the late night the wolf attacked, after which panic spread in the village.



EDITOR'S SPECS

BJP to begin 2024 preparations in Assam

While the opposition parties in Assam are still struggling to put their house in order, the ruling BJP has started to tighten its belt with a target of winning most of the Lok Sabha seats in the state in the 2024 general election. Union Home Minister Amit Shah and BJP national president J.P. Nadda are scheduled to visit the state in May for meetings with party workers. The BJP has set a target to win 12 of the 14 Lok Sabha seats. According to sources, the party however may face a stiff challenge in four constituencies -- Dhubri, Kaliabor, Barpeta, and Nagaon. The state BJP president, Bhavesh Kalita, claimed that the party will win 12 seats. According to Kalita, the BJP has already started sharpening its tactics with an eye on the Lok Sabha elections. Once the Rongali Bihu celebrations are over, they will start preparing for 2024 in full force. He said that a meeting of 1,000 core members of the party will be held on April 23. As Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Mann Ki Baat programme will complete 100 episodes this month, the Assam BJP has planned a mega event that will witness the presence of at least 1,000 party workers at each booth. Kalita said that Shah and Nadda will join the 'Lok Sabha Prabas Yojana' after the Karnataka Assembly elections. According to a top party leader, Nadda will probably visit the state on the second week of May to begin the party's poll campaign for 2024. The BJP has aimed to defeat Congress in the Kaliabor constituency which has long been a Congress stronghold. Late Chief Minister Tarun Gogoi's son Gaurav Gogoi is currently the Kaliabor MP. According to party sources, the saffron camp is desperate to win the seat this time.

THE CHINESE CHALLENGE AND INDIA'S GROWING GLOBAL CLOUT

Anil Trigunayat

China will be an ongoing challenge for the Indian foreign and security policy establishment. Its hegemonistic ambitions are clearly evident from the fact that its territorial ingress and disputes are with more countries than it shares a border with. After the perfidious war of 1962, India became wiser and focussed on creating stronger defences against Chinese designs which have become far more robust during the past few years as greater focus on creating state of the art border infrastructure and quick response mechanisms have been created. The unwritten peace for decades broke down when Galwan happened in 2020. But India's firm and determined counter-action and eyeball-to-eyeball response made Beijing pause and think if it could push its luck further. Despite India and China cooperating in multilateral and regional formats like G20, SCO, BRICS and RIC and even 18-19 meetings between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and China's President Xi Jinping, the loud and clear message was conveyed that border incursions and nefarious designs on India's sovereignty and territorial integrity will not be tolerated at any cost. As India prefers dialogue and Diplomacy and perhaps China would also not like to indulge in foolhardy and MAD (Mutually Assured Destruction) syndrome, painfully slow border talks and discussions in the WMCC have continued to contain the situation from further escalation. Even then repeat incursions in Tawang and psy-ops in Arunachal and elsewhere have

continued unabated but have met with firm response. India has followed a policy of Competition with Cooperation but China has added another C of Containment of India through its 'String of Pearls' strategy, Belt and Road Initiative and pivoting an unstable Pakistan and its terrorist designs against India. The iron-clad Sino-Pakistan nexus will be a profound challenge that would have to be understood and factored in India's proactive comprehensive response and including a readiness to confront a two front war, if imposed. With Indo-Pacific emerging as a new theatre of Sino-US competition, India's maritime power and prowess especially in the Indian Ocean will come under stress. It is imperative that the SAGAR doctrine and Indian Ocean initiatives will need to be further accentuated as the relationships with other major powers in QUAD and other formats provide greater heft to Indian response potential in the event of her interests are challenged by the Chinese hegemonistic ambitions. Like rest of the world, India's trade and economic engagement has moved apace crossing over \$125 bn with huge trade deficit in China's favour with critical dependencies still inherent which would need to be addressed both through futuristic policy refinements in a dynamic manner and alternate credible partnerships to enable India to be a trusted part of the global and regional value and supply chains. India has taken some actions like banning apps and calibrating the FDI and FII policies with regard to



China. Beijing, despite having a five times larger economy, considers India a credible competitor of consequence and hence wishes to undermine and contain it within the neighbourhood and its Asian periphery. But India does not seem to mind this challenge and is ready to accept it head-on since the world is its oyster. The G20 Summit expanse, Vaccine Maitri, growing soft power, increasing hard power, top performing fifth largest economy and functional largest democracy or even mother of democracy and becoming a Voice of the Global South as well as her strategic autonomy and leadership in fighting injustice, climate change and terrorism have added up to make

India a global power to be reckoned with in every major strategic calculation and announcements and explicit recognition of this fact by major global powers. One area in which China has mastered is the art of deception and 'Grey Zone' and disinformation campaigns and warfare which would pose India a major challenge going forward especially as it enters the election year. Hence it is essential to have a proactive, dynamic and comprehensive communication strategy with sharpened toolkits. Indian External Affairs Minister Dr S. Jaishankar has often reiterated that while border tensions

continue, "business as usual" can't be the model for interaction with Beijing. His 3Ms prescription of Mutual Respect, Mutual Interest, and Mutual Sensitivity could provide the matrix going forward provided Beijing is on board - which is unlikely as the global order remains in transition. Caution is the buzzword and capacity to inflict costs is a way out. (Anil Trigunayat is India's former Ambassador to Jordan, Libya, and Malta and a Distinguished Fellow at the Vivekananda International Foundation)

international

US CRACKS DOWN ON CHINESE 'POLICE STATION', HARASSMENT OF DISSIDENTS

Arul Louis | New York

Washington has cracked down on a Chinese 'police station' and harassment of dissidents in the US, arresting two persons and filing charges against 40 Beijing officials revealing the long arm of the police state stretching into this country. The Monday early morning arrests of the two by federal officials brought to an end the saga of a Chinese "police station" operating brazenly in New York City. "This prosecution reveals the Chinese government's flagrant violation of our nation's sovereignty by establishing a secret police station in the middle of New York City," said Breon Peace, the federal prosecutor for the Eastern District of New York. Thirty-four officers of China's Ministry of Public Safety were charged in a federal court here with "transnational repression schemes" to harass dissidents in the US and six officials with silencing dissidents online, US officials said. The executive of an American telecommunications company and a civilian were also charged in connection with silencing dissidents, they said.



None of them has been arrested and may be in China or elsewhere. Assistant Attorney General Olsen said: "These cases demonstrate the lengths the PRC (People's Republic of China) government will go to silence and harass US persons who exercise their fundamental rights to speak out against PRC oppression, including by unlawfully exploiting a US-based technology company." Officials did not identify the technology company, but media reports have said it was

Zoom, which runs the premier teleconferencing platform. The Chinese government officials and their collaborators allegedly blocked dissidents from the platform, officials said. The 34 staff of the MPS ran "a campaign of threats, harassment and intimidation directed at critics of the PRC government and the CCP (Chinese Communist Party) in the US and around the world", officials said. They worked from a "troll mill", creating thousands of fake accounts, including some purporting to be of Americans, to intimidate dissidents and critics while putting out government propaganda, officials said. The two who were arrested, "Harry" Lu Jianwang, 61, and Chen Jinping, 59, worked with the Beijing government to set up the first Chinese "police station" in the US, officials said. The "police station" was set up as an extension of the Fuzhou City Public Security Bureau in the Chinatown neighbourhood of New York that is home to many immigrants from the Fujian province as a parallel entity to police Chinese citizens and people of Chinese descent, while also providing them police and Chinese government services.

8 injured, scores missing after massive landslide hits Pakistan

Islamabad: Eight people were injured and scores of others went missing following a massive landslide that hit the Torkham border area in Pakistan's Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province on Tuesday, rescue sources said. The incident took place at about 3:50 a.m. at the border area near Afghanistan, sources from the state-owned Rescue 1122 told Xinhua news agency. "It was a massive landslide, and part of a mountain caved in when it was struck by lightning, trapping dozens of trucks waiting to cross the border," the sources added. Earlier in a statement, Rescue 1122 said that several vehicles caught fire after the landslide, adding that initially three ambulances were dispatched to the site. The statement said that judging from the magnitude of the incident, ambulances and firefighters from other parts of the province have also been called in. About 60 rescue workers are taking part in the operation, and all resources are being used to recover the trapped people from the rubbles, the statement added.

PUTIN MAKES 'SURPRISE' VISIT TO FRONTLINE, REVIEWS STATUS OF OPERATIONS



Moscow | Agencies

Russian President Vladimir Putin has made an unannounced visit to two command posts in the "newly incorporated territories" from Ukraine, where he reviewed the progress of military operation against Ukrainian forces, the Kremlin said on Tuesday. Putin travelled to the command centre of the 'Dnieper' battleground located "in the Kherson area" and received reports from the group's commander, Colonel General Oleg Makarevich, and Colonel

General Mikhail Teplinsky, the commander of Russia's airborne troops, a Kremlin statement said, RT reported. The President also made a trip to the Lugansk People's Republic, where he visited the 'Vostok' (East) command centre of the National Guard, and discussed the situation in the area with top military officials, including Colonel General Aleksandr Lapin. Putin's surprise visit comes as Kiev prepares to launch a counter-offensive in which Western-supplied heavy tanks and new armored vehicles are expected to be involved. Ukrainian Prime Minister Denis Shmigel said on Monday that Kiev will start the operation "in the nearest future". The recent months of the Ukraine conflict have been marked by fierce fighting for the Donbass mining city of Artyomovsk, known to Ukrainians as Bakhmut.

AFTER PRESUMED DEAD, INDIAN WOMAN CLIMBER FOUND ALIVE ON MT ANNAPURNA



Kathmandu | Agencies

Renowned Indian climber who was presumed dead earlier on Mt Annapurna in Nepal, has been found alive, an expedition organiser said on Tuesday. Earlier on Tuesday morning, the organiser

had declared 27-year-old Baljeet Kaur dead after she was reported missing. The record-holding Indian woman climber, who was left alone below the summit point, remained out of radio contact till this morning. An aerial search team has located Kaur, who scaled the world's 10th highest peak without using supplemental oxygen on Monday, above Camp IV, Chairman at Pioneer Adventure Pasang Sherpa said. The aerial search mission was initiated this morning only after she managed to send a radio signal asking for "immediate help". According to Sherpa, Kaur's GPS location has indicated an altitude of 7,375m (24,193ft). She climbed Mt Annapurna along with two Sherpa guides at around 5.15 p.m. on Monday. At least three helicopters have been mobilised to trace Kaur. Meanwhile, chances of finding another Indian climber Anurag Maloo, who went missing after falling from 6,000m into a deep crevasse while descending from Camp IV on Monday, are slim, said base camp officials.

S.Korea again warns N.Korea over its unauthorised use of joint complex

Seoul | Agencies

South Korea's Unification Ministry warned North Korea on Tuesday against its unauthorised use of a now-shuttered joint industrial park, saying it will take necessary measures even if it takes time. The Ministry's call came amid a media report that the North has resumed the operation of some 30 factories at the Kaesong Industrial Complex in the North's namesake border city without permit, reports Yonhap News Agency. "It is true that more North Korean workers are commuting, compared with the past," a Ministry official told reporters, without elaborating on the details. The official said the government is "thoroughly" reviewing legal actions against the North's infringement on



South Korean companies' property rights. "Even if it takes time, the govern-

ment will hold the North accountable for (its unlawful) act and demand necessary compensation,"

he added. Last week, Unification Minister Kwon Young-se voiced "strong" regret over the North's unlawful use of South Korean assets left behind in the factory zone, and vowed to take "all possible measures" to hold the secretive regime accountable. Signs of the North's unauthorised operation of the industrial complex have continued to be detected. South Korean commuter buses used to transport the North's workers to the factory zone before its 2016 closure were seen operating in the streets of Pyongyang and Kaesong in the latest photos and video footage carried by the North's state media. South Korea shut down the joint industrial park, once a symbol of inter-Korean reconciliation, in February 2016 in response to North Korea's nuclear and long-range missile tests.



"TOTAL NONSENSE, I AM WITH NCP TILL MY LAST BREATH: AJIT PAWAR

Team Absolute | Mumbai

In a categorical declaration, Nationalist Congress Party's Leader of Opposition Ajit Pawar termed "utter nonsense" all speculation of his plotting a "political earthquake" and vowed to remain with NCP till his "last breath", here on Tuesday.

Dismissing the rumours circulating since the past few days, he aggressively countered to the volley of questions from mediapersons: "How many times do I have to deny all this... Should I now give you an affidavit?"

"Let me make it clear once and finally... I am with the NCP... Never have I indicated that I will support the Bharatiya Janata Party. Some people are spreading these canards to mislead the NCP rank and file. I shall remain and work under the guidance of our President Sharad Pawar Sahab till my last breath," Pawar asserted.

His statement came after some leaders of the ruling Shiv Sena and BJP dropped hints over the past few days over certain major "political



upheavals" expected to rock the state politics in the next few days, and further fuelled by media speculation.

A visibly annoyed Ajit Pawar appealed - "Now, please now rest this chapter... there are other bigger prob-

lems before the state and we have to concentrate on them".

Pawar also rubbished reports alleging that he had purportedly carved out a separate group of 40 MLAs within the NCP, acquired their signatures of support and would make his move at the appropriate moment.

"I have not called any meeting of MLAs as claimed... Some MLAs come to meet me for party work, their constituencies or other official work, that cannot be interpreted in such a manner," said Pawar, trying to draw the curtains on the debate.

Earlier today, Sharad Pawar defended his nephew and said: "There's no truth in the talks about Ajit Pawar... He has not called any (MLAs') meetings today... We are all working unitedly to strengthen the NCP."

"What's in your mind is not in our thoughts," added Pawar for added effect, amid reports that Ajit Pawar was preparing to trigger a "political earthquake" and commanded the loyalty of at least 40 NCP MLAs.

MVA demands probe by retired judge into Maha-Bhushan post-event tragedy

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Tightening the screws on the government, the Opposition Maha Vikas Aghadi on Tuesday demanded a judicial probe into the Maharashtra Bhushan Award post-event tragedy that left 13 dead and enhanced compensation for all the victims.

Nationalist Congress Party's Leader of Opposition Ajit Pawar has shot off a letter to Chief Minister Eknath Shinde seeking a probe into the incident by a retired judge.

Shiv Sena (UBT) National Spokesperson Kishore Tiwari has demanded a compensation of Rs one crore to each victim who succumbed to sunstroke after sitting for hours in the open during the event on Sunday, April 16.

Not mincing words, Pawar said that the deaths were due to a 'disaster' created by the state government in which the innocent followers fell victims of poor planning of the event in which reformer Dattatreya Narayan Dharmadhikari -- revered as Appasaheb -- was conferred the 'Maharashtra Bhushan Award' 2022 by Union Home Minister Amit Shah.

"This tragedy should be probed by a retired judge and a case of culpable homicide should be lodged against the culprits. The victims should be given a compensation of Rs 20 lakhs each and the injured in hospitals should get Rs 5,00,000 plus free treatment," Pawar said in his tough single-page to the CM.



Tiwari said that the state government spent Rs 13 crore from the state exchequer for the grand function, and now 13 poor persons have lost their lives, so each of the victims must be given Rs one crore each.

The Sena (UBT) leader pointed out that at least four local civic bodies were involved in making the preparations but a lot was ignored, specially erecting tents or a marquee for the crowds, adequate drinking water supply, sufficient number of exit points, proper crowd control and other safety measures. "Around 20 lakh followers attended the event and 13 have perished due to the scorching temperatures of up to 42 C degrees that afternoon. I was numbed by the shrieks of the relatives of the dead victims," said Pawar in the letter. Now, many have questioned the need for organising such a mega-event in the open and the loss of lives could have been prevented if it was held in a closed venue as in the past, he said.

Now, Supriya Sule speaks of 'two political earthquakes' as Apple debuts India retail store

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Amid the turmoil gripping the Nationalist Congress Party (NCP), Baramati MP Supriya Sule on Tuesday hinted at "two political earthquakes" in the next 15 days.

When asked about Vanchit Bahujan Aghadi President Prakash Ambedkar's predictions of a "political earthquake" in two weeks in the state, Sule went a step further.

"There will be two political earthquakes, one in New Delhi and another in Maharashtra," Sule said, but did not elaborate, saying "you know what explosions".

A party leader here explained that her possible references could be firstly to the upcoming Supreme Court verdict on the disquali-



fication of the 16 Shiv Sena MLAs, including NCP chief Sharad Pawar, and secondly its potential ramifications on the state government here.

While refusing to comment on the rumours surrounding her cousin and Leader of Opposition Ajit Pawar that he was planning to split the NCP and join the

Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), Sule said that "he is an extremely hard working person".

Sule firmly declined to join any of the "gossip-mongering" around Ajit Pawar, saying she has a lot of other important work as an elected public representative without getting into such discussions.

Team Absolute | Mumbai

An 'excited' Apple CEO Tim Cook on Tuesday greeted a huge crowd of people and first customers amid desi drum beats as he opened the company's first branded retail store in the country.

Cook came out from the Mumbai retail store and took selfies with the first Apple buyers who came in big numbers.

He welcomed customers at Apple BKC, located at Mumbai's bustling Bandra Kurla Complex (BKC) financial, arts, and entertainment district, at the Jio World Drive Mall.

The new Apple flagship retail stores in Mumbai, followed by one in New Delhi and backed by aggressive sales initiatives, will fuel Apple's growth in the year ahead.

"Apple BKC is a reflection of Mumbai's vibrant culture and brings together the best of Apple in a beauti-



ful, welcoming space for connection and community," said Deirdre O'Brien, Apple's senior vice president of Retail. Apple BKC will offer a special Today at Apple series, 'Mumbai Rising', running from Tuesday

through the summer.

Bringing visitors, local artists, and creatives together, these free sessions featuring Apple products and services will offer hands-on activities that celebrate the local community and cul-

ture. Apple BKC is designed to be one of the most energy-efficient Apple Store locations in the world, with a dedicated solar array and zero reliance on fossil fuels for store operations.

The store is operationally carbon neutral, running on 100 percent renewable energy.

Each tile is made from 408 pieces of timber, forming 31 modules per tile with a total of 1,000 tiles that make up the ceiling.

There are over 450,000 individual timber elements, all of which were assembled in Delhi.

Upon entering the store, customers are greeted by two stone walls sourced from Rajasthan and a 14-meter-long stainless steel staircase connecting the ground level and the cantilevered mezzanine.

Apple BKC features more than 100 team members who collectively speak over 20 languages.

"DOSTI NAHI, RISHTA": UDDHAV THACKERAY AFTER MEETING WITH CONGRESS LEADER

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Congress General Secretary KC Venugopal met Sena chief Uddhav Thackeray in Mumbai on Monday, where they discussed opposition unity ahead of the national election in 2024 and alleged misuse of central agencies by the BJP government to target opposition leaders.

"I came here to meet Uddhav ji and to convey the message of Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge, Sonia Gandhi and Rahul Gandhi. The message is very clear - in the current political situation in India and Maharashtra, Uddhav ji is fighting against anti-democratic forces. Democracy has been completely sabotaged by Narendra Modi and Amit Shah, we have seen that. The ED and CBI are being used to target Uddhav ji's and other parties," Venugopal told reporters after the meeting.

Venugopal called for a "broader opposition unity", which is why Kharge and Gandhi met Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar, his deputy Tejashwi Yadav and Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) chief Sharad Pawar last week. The two Bihar leaders had also met Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, who was questioned



by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) as a witness in the Delhi liquor policy case.

"The opposition will together fight the dictatorship of Narendra Modi. There may be differences in opinion. The Congress, Sena and NCP have their own ideology, but the country is facing bigger issues which we never faced. That's why we discussed all these issues and we are all in agreement that we all have to get

together and fight these people," Venugopal said. Gandhi will meet Uddhav in Mumbai sometime, and the Sena chief will also visit Delhi soon, the Congress General Secretary said. Agreeing with the visiting Congress leader, Thackeray said everyone has their own ideology; however, their battle is to save democracy. "Hum jab dosti nibhate hai, wo dosti nahi, rishta hota hai (for us, friendship is family)," Thackeray told

reporters. "We supported the BJP for 25 years, but they never really understood who is a friend and who is an enemy," he added.

The BJP has often taken swipes at the opposition's attempt to unite when there are disagreements and even outright hostility between some of them. On Monday, Congress leader Ajay Maken asked the party not to "support" and "show any sympathy" to Kejriwal as doing so would "confuse" the Congress cadre and "benefit" the BJP. Maken's comment comes a day after Congress chief Mallikarjun Kharge dialled Kejriwal and discussed the need for opposition unity to face the BJP in the national election next year. A week before that, Pawar, whose NCP is an ally of the Congress in Maharashtra, shredded some opposition parties' high-pitched campaign for a Joint Parliamentary Committee (JPC) probe into the Adani Group-Hindenburg Research row, which stalled all business in the country's most important legislative body. Information and Broadcasting Minister Anurag Thakur on Wednesday last scoffed at the efforts of the opposition parties to defeat the BJP in 2024 and called their attempt at an alliance a "thugbandhan" (alliance of thugs).

INDIGO PLANE SUFFERS TAIL STRIKE WHILE LANDING AT NAGPUR AIRPORT

Mumbai: An Indigo flight (6E-203) from Mumbai suffered a tail strike while landing at the Nagpur airport last Friday.

"On 14th April 2023, flight 6E 203, from Mumbai had a tail strike while landing at Nagpur. The aircraft was declared grounded at Nagpur airport for assessment and repairs. The incident is being investigated in detail," IndiGo said in a statement.

No injuries were reported in the incident, the airlines said.

A tail strike occurs when the tail or empennage of an aircraft hits the ground or any other stationary object during take-off or landing.

MAHARASHTRA TO BUY 2 LAKH VIALS OF COVID VACCINE FROM BHARAT BIOTECH

Mumbai: The Maharashtra government will buy two lakh vials of COVID-19 vaccines from Bharat Biotech amid a rise in cases, an official said on Monday.

As an exceptional case, the state government issued an order relaxing some conditions for the procurement of the vials of the vaccines, he said.

"As per the order, the Maharashtra government will buy two lakhs of vials of COVID-19 vaccine from the Hyderabad-based Bharat Biotech at the rate of Rs 341.25 per vial.

Administrative approval has been given for the procurement of the vials at total cost of Rs 6.82 crore," he said.

Human trafficking more dangerous than murder: Devendra Fadnavis

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Human trafficking is more dangerous than murder, and social awareness coupled with a strong legal framework was needed to curb it, Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis said on Tuesday.

Fadnavis, who also holds the Home portfolio, was speaking virtually at a panel discussion on "Prevention of commercial sex trafficking of women", organised jointly by the Maharashtra State Women Commission and 'Alliance against Centres for Trafficking' here.

"Human trafficking is a very big challenge before us. It is said that drugs trade is the biggest trade in the world but unfortunately human trafficking is to some extent, along with drugs trade, becoming a big trade. Women and children are most vulnerable to it," he said. Its victims suffer a lot, and it is a



far more dangerous crime than murder, the deputy CM added.

Human trafficking is an issue transcending boundaries, and social awareness and a people's movement along with a strong legal framework were needed to curb it, he said.

In 90 to 95 percent of cases of sexual exploitation or abuse, people who are known to the victim or victim's family are the culprits, Fadnavis noted. Earlier, victims of such offences did not approach police due to societal stigma or pressures, but

now this situation is changing and victims are coming forward to register police complaints, he said.

Police in the state have been instructed to submit charge sheets in rape cases in 90 days, and this norm is being complied with in 65 per cent of cases, Fadnavis said.

"But we need to go up to 90 percent and create an efficient justice system which ensures that those committing such crimes get punished and we get to see a deterrent effect of it," he added.

As per a 2019 report of the Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS), 1,291 women were able to leave sex work in 2015 in Maharashtra. As many as 1,020 women managed to do so in 2016 and almost the same number quit the flesh trade in 2017, Fadnavis said.

Every year, 700 to 800 children and women are rescued from forced labour, but many more cases go undetected, he said.

3 WOMEN, 1 MINOR CHARRED IN CANDLE FACTORY FIRE

Dhule: Three women and a minor girl were charred to death and two others injured in a sudden fire that broke out in a candle-manufacturing unit in Nizampur area of the district in (Maharashtra), officials said here on Tuesday.

The tragedy took place this afternoon when the victims were working in the unit which manufactures special sparkling candles popular in birthday celebrations and other occasions. "Three women and one minor working there were unfortunately burnt in the incident and two others have been seriously injured. The injured have been rushed to a specialist hospital in Nandurbar district," Superintendent of Police Dhule Sanjay Barkund said.

The victims have been identified as: Asha B. Bhagwat, Rajshree B. Bhagwat, Naina S. Mali and Sindhu D. Rajput, according to police.

Preliminary investigations pointed to a short-circuit leading to the tragedy and the police have detained one suspect for questioning in the matter. Local eyewitnesses said that the blaze quickly sparked through the liquid wax and other inflammable materials stored there and the victims had no time to rush out to safety. The victims were screaming for help but the flames prevented others from rushing inside to their aid, leading to the casualties. The Dhule Police are also ascertaining whether the unit was authorised and had proper fire-fighting and other safety measures in place or not. On learning of the tragedy, top district and police officials rushed to the village for a spot assessment and ordered a probe into the matter.



JUSTIN DEFENDS FRANK OCEAN AFTER 'DISAPPOINTING' COACHELLA HEADLINE SET



Los Angeles | Agencies

Let Me Love You' hitmaker Justin Bieber has rushed to defend Frank Ocean after the singer has come under fire following his headline set at Coachella. The Canadian singer posted a gushing tribute to Ocean where he confessed that after watching the 'Novacane' singer on stage in California, he feels compelled to keep working hard on his music and "get better as an artiste", reports 'Mirror.co.uk'. Ocean's set left many festival-goers underwhelmed and disappointed with the musician's first live performance in six years. His performance was also several years in the making due to the fact he was originally cherry-picked to headline the star-studded festival in 2020 before the pandemic hit and was eventually rescheduled on stage again for 2023.

'Mirror.co.uk' further states that Ocean's headline set ultimately left hundreds of fans scratching their heads as they took to social media to slam the singer for his lack of enthusiasm and the overall lack of 'atmosphere' and 'excitement' during his long-awaited set. However, Bieber appeared to have had a musical and creative awakening as he watched the talented songwriter onstage. Sharing a photo of Ocean's set - which featured a documentary-style photo of his face enlarged on a screen - the 'Love Yourself' singer backed the headline set all the way as he gushed over how much it meant to him. "I was blown away by Frank Ocean's Coachella performance," the singer penned. "His artistry is simply unmatched, his style, his taste, his voice, his attention to detail. I was deeply moved. It made me want to keep going and get better as an artist. He continues to set the bar high and gave me a night I will never forget. Thanks Frank."



Los Angeles | Agencies

Jessica Chastain plays psychiatrist in audio series 'The Space Within'

Academy Award-winning actress Jessica Chastain, who is known for her work in 'Interstellar', 'The Eyes of Tammy Faye' and 'George & Tammy', will soon be heard lending her voice to the sci-fi series 'The Space Within'.

The series follows the life of Dr. Madeline Wyle (essayed by Chastain), who is an internationally acclaimed psychiatrist specialising in trauma and PTSD. When she discovers a string of patients with the same, seemingly supernatural, repressed memories, she is forced to risk her reputation and career to confront the possibility that the memories of alien abduction might be real. Jessica will be joined on the mic by Emmy winner Bobby Cannavale, Academy Award-winner Ellen Burstyn, Michael Stuhlbarg, Shea Whigham and Carmen Ejogo. Produced by Topic Studios, in association with Freckle Films, Solaris Productions, and Ramble Road. Written by Greg O'Connor & Josh Fagin, and directed by Stephen Winter, 'The Space Within' is an eight episode scripted sci-fi mystery and will premiere on Audible from June 15.

'Stop settling and start living'

Matthew McConaughey turns into self-help guru for online seminar



Los Angeles | Agencies

Hollywood star Matthew McConaughey is becoming a self-help guru. The 'True Detective' actor teams up with life coaches Tony Robbins and Dean Graziosi to run 'The Art of Livin' online seminar which also offers users the chance for a one-on-one Zoom call with the team for \$47 a ticket, reports aceshowbiz.com.

A release for the virtual event to be held on Monday 24 April said it was being launched because Matthew thinks it's time for people to "stop settling, and start livin". The promotion adds, "It's time to become the person you are meant to be."

It goes on, "It's simple - a live one day virtual event like nothin' you've ever experienced... to show you the roadmap to livin' again. This is a coming together... a movement you and the world need right now... a chance for you to draw a line in the sand, put the last three years behind you and shape your life with trust, joy and a little more outlaw logic."

"It's McConaughey. It's guests like Tony Robbins and Dean Graziosi. It's one day, live, virtual and free. And it's only happenin' once. So be cool to your future self and show up. See you there."

The star appears in a video for the event congratulating anyone who has already signed up and urging them "not to let life get in the way" of going, even if that means "tattooing the date on the inside of your eyelids". He adds the \$47 "VIP Fastpass" access for the event will let guests stay on after the main event for a one-on-one hour with the actor, Tony and Dean.

A site for the talk says about the paid-for tickets, "This is like drivin' fast in the left lane... it's reserved for a special type of person. This Fast Pass gets you on Zoom for the entire event with McConaughey, Tony Robbins, Dean Graziosi and the rest of our guests - plus it gets you the virtual 'backstage pass' to hang out after the event for the Q and A session."

The site adds buying a "fastpass" is "also a way to give back" as "when you sign up for the Fast Pass, McConaughey is gonna donate 25 meals in your name through Feeding America."

The name of the event appears to be inspired by the "just keep livin'" mantra Matthew adopted to keep himself going after the death of his dad Jim five days into shooting his first film 'Dazed and Confused' 30 years ago.

'IT'S JUST SO OVERWHELMING'

'THE WHITE LOTUS' STAR HALEY LU RICHARDSON RECALLS 'OVERWHELMING' MARVEL AUDITION

Los Angeles | Agencies

Actress Haley Lu Richardson is opening up about auditioning for Marvel and how "overwhelming" it was for 'The White Lotus' star the time she tried to enter the superhero world.

During an appearance on the 'Happy Sad Confused' podcast, the star of 'The Edge of Seventeen' recalled doing a screen test for a Marvel project that she ultimately didn't end up booking, reports 'Deadline'.

"I did do a big screen test for

a Marvel character, and there was like real cameras there, and they did our hair, and makeup, and stuff," she said (via Comic Book). "But they just directed us in what kind of street clothes to wear, like what colours and stuff. We didn't actually get in a superhero costume."

Richardson added, "But yeah, it's just so overwhelming, because you're just committing to something, and you haven't even seen a script."

Richardson elevated her notoriety after starring in the second season of 'The White Lotus' on HBO where she played the role of Portia, the assistant to Jennifer Coolidge's Tanya. In 2016, Richardson starred in Fremont Craig's directorial debut 'The Edge of Seventeen' where she shared the screen with Hailee Steinfeld, Woody Harrelson and Kyra

Sedgwick.

Next up for Richardson is 'Love at First Sight', which Netflix acquired in 2022. The film directed by Vanessa Caswill also stars Ben Hardy, Jameela Jamil, Rob Delaney, Dexter Fletcher and Sally Phillips. The movie is based on the 2011 novel 'The Statistical Probability of Love at First Sight' by Jennifer E. Smith, and Richardson also serves as an executive producer for it.



Mischa Barton joins new season of 'Neighbours' as guest star

Los Angeles | Agencies

Actress Mischa Barton is joining the new season of the iconic Australian soap 'Neighbours'.

Barton will guest star in the role of Reece, an American new to Erinsborough who's not quite who she appears to be, reports 'Deadline'.

Freevee rescued the series following its cancellation in 2021. The daily series had bowed out on Network 10 in Australia and long-time British home Channel 5 after 37 years, after the Paramount-owned UK network pulled its funding from the show.

Original series cast Stefan Dennis, Alan Fletcher, Ryan Moloney and Jackie Woodburne



are reprising their roles in the new chapter.

'Neighbours' ran for nearly 9,000 episodes, and became a cult hit in the UK, where it initially aired on the BBC before switching to Channel 5, since its launch in 1985. The show acted as the launchpad for several global stars, including singer Minogue, Memento and L.A.

Confidential's Pearce and Wolf of Wall Street and Tonya star Margot Robbie.

Barton became known for her role on The O.C., which aired for four seasons on Fox. She most recently wrapped production on crime thriller 'Invitation To A Murder' for ACE Entertainment.

The new season of Neighbours is set to launch in the fall.

ABSOLUTE PIC OF THE DAY



Hailey Bieber



IPL 2023: ARJUN TENDULKAR CLAIMS MAIDEN SCALP AS MUMBAI INDIANS BEAT SRH BY 14 RUNS

Hyderabad | Agencies

After Cameron Green's fine batting display, Arjun Tendulkar paced the final over as Mumbai Indians claimed their third win on the trot, beating Sunrisers Hyderabad by 14 runs in the Indian Premier League (IPL) 2023 match at the Rajiv Gandhi International Stadium here on Tuesday.

With SRH needing 20 off the last over to win, Arjun Tendulkar bowled brilliantly and claimed his maiden IPL wicket, getting rid of Bhuvneshwar Kumar as Mumbai Indians beat the Sunrisers Hyderabad by 14 runs.

Chasing 193, SRH got off to a slow start as they were reduced to 25/2 within four overs. Sunrisers suffered an early blow as Jason Behrendorff got the big fish Harry Brook, the centurion from the last game, in the second over. Brook went for the pull but he hit the splice of the bat and the ball went straight up. Suryakumar Yadav ran in from cover to take a catch. Behrendorff claimed his second in the fourth over, dismissing Rahul Tripathi cheaply for 7. With 16



runs off the next two overs, SRH took the Power-play score to 42-2.

After the Power-play, Mayank Agarwal and Aiden Markram steadied the ship with their calculated batting, before Cameron Green removed Markram for 22 in the 9th over, ending a 46-run stand for the third wicket.

The next over, Piyush Chawla sent Abhishek Sharma packing for 1. Halfway through the chase, SRH was reeling at 76-4.

Then, Mayank Agarwal along with Heinrich Klaasen got into a rebuilding act as the duo established 55 run fourth wicket partnership, which

Chawla broke in the 14 over.

Klaasen hit Chawla for a boundary and back-to-back maximums followed by another four. But Chawla was quick to revert as he sent Klaasen back to the hut on the next delivery, reducing SRH to 127/5.

Riley Meredith got the big breakthrough in the next over as he denied Agarwal a half-century after dismissing the set batter for 48 in the 15th over and made the task tougher for the hosts as half of the side went back to the pavilion.

MI bowlers were keeping the SRH run rate in check with their economical bowling. Meredith piled up further misery on Sunrisers as he picked up his second wicket in the 16th over in the form of Jansen.

Brief scores

Mumbai Indians 192/5 in 20 overs (Cameron Green 64 not out, Tilak Verma 37; Marco Jansen 2-43) beat Sunrisers Hyderabad 178 all out in 19.5 overs (Mayank Agarwal 48, Heinrich Klaasen 36; Riley Meredith 2-33, Jason Behrendorff 2-37, Piyush Chawla 2-43) by 14 runs.

National shooting

Manavjit, Rajeshwari win Trap trials; Sarabjot, Anuradha win in Pistol

Team Absolute | New Delhi/Bhopal

Former World Champion and four-time Olympian Manavjit Singh Sandhu, drew on all his experience to win the Men's Trap competition in the T3 Shotgun National Selection Trials, which concluded at the Dr. Karni Singh Shooting range in the national capital region.

India international and national record holder Rajeshwari Kumari also won the women's trap T3 trials at the same venue to boost her confidence ahead of the International Shooting Sport Federation (ISSF) World Cup Shotgun in Cairo, Egypt, to be held from April 25, 2023.

At Bhopal's M.P. State Shooting Academy range, where the T3 and T4 Rifle/Pistol trials also concluded on Tuesday, India's most recent ISSF World Cup gold medal winner Sarabjot Singh of Haryana, clinched the Men's 10m Air Pistol T4 Trial while staminate Anuradha Devi won the Women's Air Pistol T4 match. In the final, he was the first to miss and he missed early, but that by self-admission led to enhanced focus and he finished with 14 straight hits to snuff out the challenge of Lakshjeet Singh Sindhu with three targets to spare. Manav got 29 hits in the first 32-targets in the final to Lakshjeet's 25. Another Olympian Kynan Chenai was third.

Rajeshwari too had to endure shoot-offs, a



couple of them in fact en route to her final. First to determine rankings in qualification where she finished seventh and then in the semifinal where she overcame former Commonwealth Games champion, Shreyasi Singh.

In the final, however, she was the composure and focus personified, hitting 30 targets to second-placed Manish Keer's 27 to seal victory. In the Junior Men's and Women's Trap Classifications, Bakhtyaruddin Malek and Aashima Ahlawat emerged on top with scores of 117 and 114 respectively.

In Bhopal, Sarabjot Singh continued with his winning form at the venue where he had won his first career ISSF World Cup gold a month back, defeating Punjab's Arjun Singh Cheema 16-12 in the men's 10m air pistol T4 trials gold match.

Barca's Sergi Roberto to miss rest of season with hamstring injury

Madrid | Agencies

FC Barcelona's injury problems worsened after it was confirmed that Sergi Roberto will miss the rest of the season with a hamstring injury.

The 31-year-old, who can play in midfield or at right back, was forced out of Sunday's 0-0 draw away to Getafe in the 15th minute, after feeling a problem in his left hamstring and was replaced by Eric Garcia.

After tests in Barcelona on Monday, the club published a medical report, informing that "the tests carried out this morning have shown that the first team player, Sergi Roberto, has an injury in the femoral biceps of his left leg. He is out and his progress will determine when he is available."

Roberto had struggled with hamstring problems in recent years, and the injury, which came after 12 consecutive appearances, means he will almost certainly not play again before the league ends on the weekend of June 4, a Xinhua report said.

He has become the fifth player on Barca's injury list, with Andreas Christensen, Pedri,



Ousmane Dembele and Frenkie de Jong all sidelined.

Dembele, Pedri and De Jong did, however, train with the rest of the first team squad for part of Monday's session and could play some part in next Sunday's La Liga match at home to Atletico Madrid.

PRABATH JAYASURIYA'S HEROICS HELP SRI LANKA TO A MASSIVE WIN

SL vs IRE 1st Test

Galle (Sri Lanka) | Agencies

Left-arm spinner Prabath Jayasuriya picked up his second ten-wicket haul in a Test match as Sri Lanka defeated Ireland by an innings and 280 runs in the first Test here on Tuesday.

Unbeaten hundreds from Dinesh Chandimal (102*) and Sadeera Samarawickrama (104*) after Dimuth Karunaratne (179) and Kusal Mendis' (140) massive knocks had given Sri Lanka a big total of 591/6 declared on Day Two.

Prabath Jayasuriya then went on to dominate the Ireland batters, taking a five-wicket haul on day two and ending with a seven-fer (7-52) in the innings. Bowled out for 143, Ireland couldn't do much better following on, finishing on 168 with Harry Tector, Curtis Campher and George Dockrell getting starts.

In the second innings on Tuesday, Jayasuriya claimed 3-56 in 24.1 overs.



Ramesh Mendis was the wrecker-in-chief in the second innings, claiming 4-76 in 20 overs while Vishwa Fernando claimed 2-3 in four overs.

For Ireland, Harry Tector top scored with 42 off 95 balls while George Dockrell scored 32 off 54 and Curtis Campher contributed 30 off 76

deliveries. The innings and 280-run victory give Sri Lanka a 1-0 lead in the two-match Test series. Prabath Jayasuriya took the honours in the bowling department.

In six Tests thus far, Jayasuriya has five five-wicket hauls in an innings and two match hauls of 10 wickets or

more. The left-arm spinner, who won the Player of the Match award, finished with figures of 10/108. He has already raced to 43 Test wickets, 39 of those coming in Galle alone, where he has now played four Tests and taken five five-wicket hauls.

His tally of 43 wickets after six Tests is the joint-third-best in Test cricket history. Only Charles Turner (50) and Vernon Philander (45) have more after the first six Tests.

The second and final Test begins in Galle on April 24.

Brief scores

Sri Lanka 591/6d beat Ireland 143 & 168 all out in 54.1 overs (Harry Tector 42, George Dockrell 32, Curtis Campher 30; Ramesh Mendis 4-76, Prabath Jayasuriya 3-56, Vishwa Fernando 2-3) by innings and 280 runs.

National-level events

Priyanka Goswami, Shaili Singh among athletes feted for winning medals

Bangalore | Agencies

Athletes from the Sports Authority of India (SAI) National Centre of Excellence (NCOE) were felicitated for their medal-winning performances in recent national-level athletics events here on Tuesday.

They were recognised for their medal-winning achievements, in the event named "Recent Significant Achievers", during the recently-concluded Indian Grand Prix 1-4 held in Trivandrum and Bengaluru, Race Walking Championships and Jump Competitions as well as other National-level athletics tournaments.

The evening began with the felicitation of the outstanding athletes,



who have been training at the NCOE Bangalore. The Medal winners included the Athletes of NCOE Bangalore & Athletes training under the National Coaching Camp at SAI Bangalore.

Having recently qualified for World Championships in Budapest and Paris 2024 Olympic Games, Priyanka Goswami, Akshdeep Singh, who created a new nation's men's 20km race walk record at the

National Open Race Walking Championships in Ranchi this year, Vikas Singh and Paramjeet Singh Bisht were a part of the felicitation ceremony, the SAI informed in a release on Tuesday.

Shaili Singh, 19, who recently produced an all-time second-best long jump effort with a mark of 6.76 metres at the IGP 4 in Bengaluru last week, was also felicitated.

The mark was only behind the record held by Anju Bobby George at 6.83 metres. Shaili has been a part of NCOE Bengaluru for three years.

Shaili, who qualified for the Asian Games, to be held later this year, trains under Dhronacharya Awardeed coach Robert Bobby George, the High-Performance Coach of SAI.

Argentina to host 2023 FIFA U20 World Cup

Geneva (Switzerland) | Agencies

Argentina will host the 2023 Under-20 World Cup, taking the place of Indonesia, which was removed by FIFA, the world football governing body announced.

The Bureau of the FIFA Council on Monday confirmed the decision after the Argentinian Football Association (AFA) submitted a subsequent bid and a FIFA delegation inspected the South American country last week.

The FIFA U20 World Cup will kick off on May 20-June 11, and it will be the first time Argentina has hosted the tournament since 2001, a Xinhua report said.

The official draw of the FIFA U20 World Cup will take place on April 21 at FIFA's headquarter in Zurich.



'It feels great to be here': Djokovic excited for Banja Luka Open

Banja Luka | Agencies

Novak Djokovic was clear that he wanted to quickly move on from his third-round defeat at the Monte-Carlo Masters last week against Lorenzo Musetti. The World No. 1 will have his chance to do so in Banja Luka and he is excited for the tournament.

The Serbian superstar is the top seed this week at the Banja Luka Open. He explained in a press conference that he has enjoyed the atmosphere in Bosnia & Herzegovina since he first visited the country more than a decade ago.

"It feels great to be here. I've been to Banja Luka several times in the past, once to visit the president and to receive a medal of honor and then the second time was in 2009, I played with Viktor Troicki in an exhibition



match in an indoor facility here," Djokovic said. "So I remember those couple of visits really fondly," he added.

At practice on Monday, it was clear how thrilled the local fans were to simply get a look at Djokovic. There was a big crowd of fans behind the barricades to watch the Serbian prepare for the ATP

250. "The people welcome me wholeheartedly with great reception and so much love and support. So I'm super excited to be here because I think it's one of the best places for us Serbian tennis players and athletes in general to be able to perform where we have so much love and support from local people," Djokovic said.

Super Cup

Chennaiyin look to secure semifinals berth against Mumbai City

Manjeri (Kerala) | Agencies

Chennaiyin FC take on Mumbai City FC in a high-voltage Group D clash between two ISL teams at the Payyanad Stadium here today aiming to seal their place in the Hero Super Cup 2023 semifinals.

Having secured a win and a draw in their two group games so far, Chennaiyin currently occupy the top spot in the table with four points. NorthEast United FC and Mumbai City are placed second and third respectively with three points each whereas Churchill Brothers (1 point) are in last place in a group, which is currently wide open with three of the four teams having a chance to progress.

A win against Mumbai City will earn Chennaiyin direct qualification but, in case of a draw, they will have to rely on the result of the match



between NorthEast United and Churchill Brothers, also scheduled on Wednesday. The Marina Machans, the only remaining unbeaten team in Group D, could not convert the chances against Churchill Brothers in

their last game, which eventually ended in a goalless draw. However, Brdaric put his weight behind his men and further added: "We did a lot of things right. Yes, in games it happens that you create a lot of chances

and don't convert. It happens in all leagues in the world. In the last match, we showed that we can score. We need to be determined and I am convinced that we can score against Mumbai City."



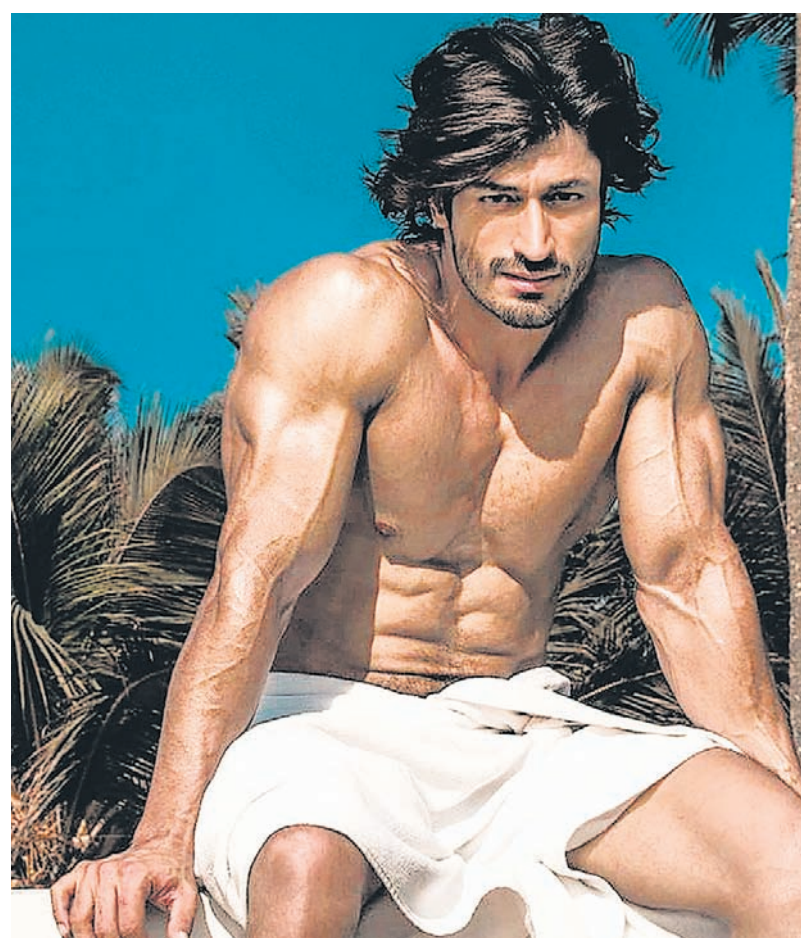
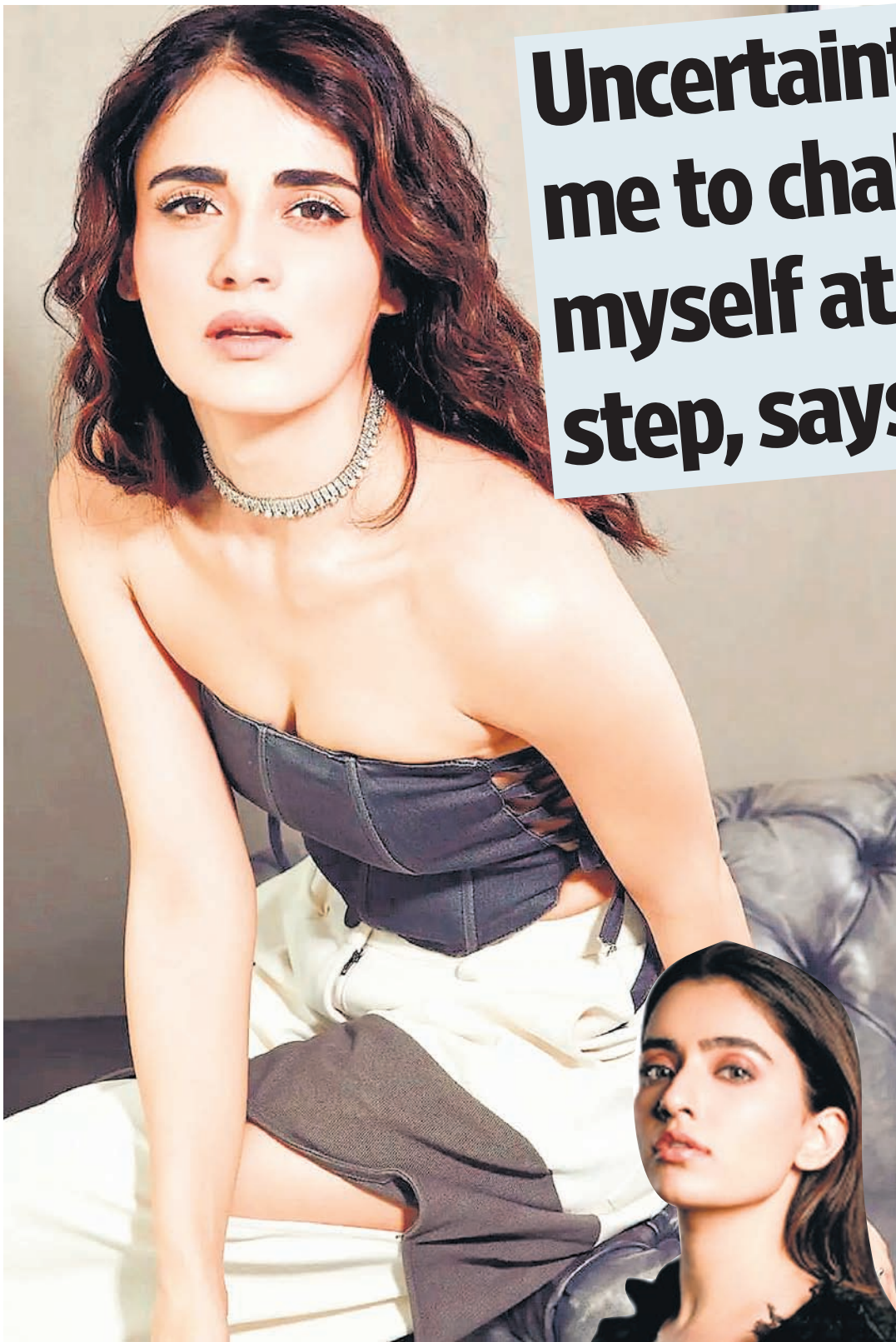
Uncertainty drives me to challenge myself at every step, says Radhika

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actors may struggle to embody their characters and detach from them, especially when the role is similar or dissimilar to their personality. Actress Radhika Madan shares her experience of playing Shanta in show 'Saas Bahu aur Flamingo' and how the character was different, yet similar to her in real life. Talking about this, she added, "My character Shanta and I are poles apart in our approach, but I think the only similarity we have is we are both passionate and eager, however, apart from that, we are really very different. Shanta is much more calm, composed, self-assured, confident and calculative when it comes to her words, and being an actor, I do crave for the uncertainty, which drives me to challenge myself at every step and explore the uncharted territories, pushing the envelope further and further."

"I am a learner, excited to see things from the different perspectives of my characters and take back new lessons from each role and their journeys. So, I guess I lack the clarity like Shanta because as an actor we need to have more uncertainty to explore new avenues and I am more energetic and expressive than her, but I had a great time playing Shanta and now when I think of it, I do miss her."

Produced by Maddock Films, the series is directed by the uber-talented Homi Adajania and stars Dimple Kapadia, Radhika Madan, Angira Dhar and Isha Talwar in pivotal roles along with a talented cast, Ashish Verma, Varun Mitra, Udit Arora, Deepak Dobryial and Monica Dogra amongst others.



Was my personal urge to bring stories of unsung heroes to the world: Vidyut

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Bollywood action star and producer Vidyut Jammwal is all set to don the uniform for his upcoming spy thriller 'IB 71'. He says being an army kid he has seen the lives of the unsung heroes up-close and it was his personal urge to bring their stories to the world.

Vidyut said: "Being an army kid I have seen the lives of our unsung heroes up-close and it was my personal urge to bring their stories to the world. Producing a

film that puts the intelligence bureau at the centre of the narrative is my way of paying tribute to their sacrifices and contributions."

The film talks about how our Indian Intelligence Bureau in a secret mission, outwitted the entire enemy establishment and gave our armed forces the required advantages to face the 1971 India-Pakistan war.

"The Ghazi Attack" director Sankalp Reddy shares: "Vidyut was keen that we make the film exactly the way we had envisioned it. Moreover, even though he is a first-time producer, it never felt like that."

"The entire crew was impressed with the way Vidyut not only fleshed out his role but

also slipped into the role of a producer seamlessly."

'IB 71' is presented by Gulshan Kumar, T-Series Film and Reliance Entertainment. The Action Hero Films production stars Vidyut Jammwal, Anupam Kher and Vishal Jethwa in pivotal roles and is produced by Bhushan Kumar, Action Hero Films and Reliance Entertainment.

Produced by Vidyut Jammwal & Abbas Sayyed, co-produced by Aditya Shastri, Aditya Chowksey and Shiv Chanana. The film is directed by national award winner Sankalp Reddy with the story by Aditya Shastri and the screenplay by Storyhouse Films LLP.

AFTER HINDI & TELUGU FILMS, RUKSHAR DHILLON GOES BACK TO PUNJABI CINEMA

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actress Rukshar Dhillon, who has worked prominently in Hindi and Telugu films, is all set for her next Punjabi film 'Tufang' alongside actor-singer Guri. Talking about being part of the film and working in the Punjabi film industry, Rukshar said, "The role I'm playing is the strongest character in my career so far. Deep's story drives the film. The way she thinks, her morals, and her values are all very different and unique. The character has so many different emotions, which gave me the opportunity to do something different. Compared to all the girl next door characters I've played so far, this is a character that is very strong and impactful."

Rukshar has been part of the films like 'Run Antony' (Kannada), 'Krishnarjuna Yudham' (Telugu), 'Bhangra Pa Le' and 'Jugaadistan' (Hindi), among others.

The shooting for the film started in February and was wrapped up by March 24. 'Tufang' also features Harpreet Bains, Baljinder Bains, Mahavir Bhullar, Mintu Kapa, Balwinder Bullet, and Karanveer Khullar, among others.

'Ranbir is a great co-star'

Bobby Deol, Ranbir Kapoor wrap up upcoming movie's shoot

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The filming of the upcoming film 'Animal', starring Bobby Deol and Ranbir Kapoor, was wrapped up recently. In a video that has surfaced online, the two actors were seen cutting a cake at the wrap-up party on the sets.

The video also shows the entire team celebrating in the outdoors and braving the cold weather.

Wrapping up the shoot, Bobby said, "Every moment spent on the set was amazing. Ranbir is such a great co-star to work with and the entire team of 'Animal' has been a delight. I am excited and looking forward for the release". Bobby's new look has him in a rugged and muscular avatar. From his chiseled abs to his broad shoulders, Bobby has perfectly adapted to the physicality of his character.

'Animal' is produced by Bhushan Kumar and Krishan Kumar's T-Series, Murad Khetani's Cine1 Studios and Pranay Reddy Vanga's Bhadrakali Pictures. The film also stars Anil Kapoor and Rashmika Mandanna. It is slated to release on August 15.



'SHAAKUNTALAM': SAMANTHA WRITES CRYPTIC NOTE ON INSTAGRAM

Mumbai | Agencies

Actress Samantha Ruth Prabhu, who was recently seen in the film 'Shaakuntalam', shared a cryptic post on her social media on Tuesday.

The film was hugely anticipated by the fans of the actress but, it failed to deliver and entertain the audience. After the film tanked, a Telugu film producer named Chittibabu has criticised Samantha saying that her career is 'finished'. He told a YouTube channel that the days of stardom are over for the actress and she should do whatever offers she gets from now on.

But it seems Samantha is unfazed by the failure of her highly anticipated film as she took to her Instagram on Tuesday to share a picture of herself with a caption in Sanskrit quoted from Bhagavad

Gita -- the foundational text of Hinduism. She seemed to have addressed the underwhelming response to the film calling that she can only do her duty, and can't control the outcome. She wrote, "Karmanye vadhika raste Ma phaleshu kadachana Ma karma phala he tur bhuh Ma te sangotsva karmani (You can only do your karma, and can't be the authority of it. One should not perform karma with the desire for reward)". Samantha will be next seen in upcoming Telugu romantic drama 'Kushi', in which she will share the screen with Vijay Deverakonda. She also has the Indian counterpart of 'Citadel' with Varun Dhawan in the pipeline.

INSTAGRAM PIC OF THE DAY



Shehnaaz Kaur Gill