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Despite populist schemes, only 46% people in favour of Congress in Rajasthan

Team Absolute | New Delhi

About 46 per cent people in Rajasthan feel that the Congress has turned the election mood in its favour by rolling out populist schemes like health insurance, 100 units of free electricity and concession in bus fares ahead of the assembly polls, an opinion poll said on Friday.

The ABP-CVoter opinion poll, which was carried out between June 26 and July 25 in all the 200 assembly seats of the desert state on 14,085 people asked if they feel that the Congress party has turned the election mood in its favour with the help of populist schemes like health insurance, 100 units of free electricity and concession in buses. The survey claimed that 46 per cent people feel that it has turned the tide in its favour, however, 45 per



cent people in the state felt otherwise.

It said that 34.6 per cent of the BJP people, 66.3 per cent Congress people and 42.5 per cent others feel that the Congress has turned the election mood in its favour with the help of these populist schemes.

The opinion poll also said that 56.4 per cent BJP people, 24.6 per cent Congress people and 49.3 per cent others feel that despite the populist schemes, the Congress has not been able to turn the mood in its favour. Meanwhile, 9 per cent people said that they cannot comment.

The assembly polls are scheduled later this year where the Congress is looking to break the tradition of alternate governments in the state. The BJP is also gearing up to make a comeback in the state.

BJP SHOULD PROJECT CM FACE

New Delhi: With barely few months left for the Assembly elections in Rajasthan, people in the poll-bound state feel that the BJP should project a Chief Ministerial face.

As per the poll survey, 61.7 per cent of the BJP members were in favour of projecting a CM face by the party. From the ruling Congress in the state, 46.7 per cent people were of the same view. Assembly elections in Rajasthan are scheduled to be held later this year. The Congress exuded confidence that it will form the government again. The BJP is hopeful that it will oust the Congress government.

Manipur viral videos: Probe transferred to CBI

CENTRE REQUESTS SUPREME COURT TO TRANSFER TRIAL OUTSIDE STATE

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Central government has informed the Supreme Court that investigation has been transferred to the CBI in relation to the disturbing incident where two young tribal women were paraded naked on a road by a large mob in Manipur.

Further, the Centre requested the top court on Thursday to order transfer of the entire case, including trial to any state outside the State of Manipur. Also, it sought a direction that the trial be concluded within a period of six months from the date of the filing of charge sheet by the CBI.

On July 20, the Supreme Court took suo moto cognizance of the disturbing viral videos and asked the Centre and the state government to apprise it about the steps taken by July 28.

"The Central government with the consent of the state government has taken a decision to entrust the investigation to an independent agency, i.e., CBI," said the affidavit filed by the Union Home Secretary, Ajay Kumar Bhalla before the Supreme Court. "It is submitted that 'law and order' is handled



by the state government, however keeping in view the gravity of the incident...the Government of India is keeping a close watch on the proceedings besides providing requisite assistance towards security," it added. The affidavit stated that the state government has formed District Psychological Support teams for providing mental health intervention and legal aid has also been offered to the victim through District Legal Service Authority. "The state government has informed that

during investigation, seven main accused have been arrested and are in police custody for further examination," said the reply further. "Using women as instruments for perpetrating violence is simply unacceptable in a constitutional democracy," said a bench headed by CJI D.Y. Chandrachud on July 20, a day after the viral video surfaced on social media.

The bench told the Solicitor General of India that the top court will be constrained to "step in" if the state government does not take action. "We will give a little time to the government to act otherwise we will take action," it had said.

It directed the Centre and Manipur governments to take immediate steps and apprise the Court of the action taken before July 28. The Indigenous Tribal Leaders' Forum (ITLF) claimed that the two women were also gang-raped in a paddy field after being paraded naked on May 4, and demanded stern actions against the perpetrators.

TWO JOURNALISTS AMONG 27 PEOPLE MISSING

Imphal: At least 27 non-tribal persons, including two journalists, two minors and two women, are missing in violence-hit Manipur, sources said on Thursday.

The two missing journalists of local media are Atom Samarendra Singh, 47, and Yumkhaibam Kirankumar Singh, 48. These 27 persons, some of them remained missing since May, some in June, and remaining from July and they are residents of Imphal West, Imphal East, Tengnoupal, Bishnupur, Kangpokpi, Thoubal, and Kakching districts.

The missing cases were reported in various police stations. The ages of the missing persons ranged between 17 years to 47 years.

Madhya Pradesh shocker: Minor girl gang-raped on temple premises

Team Absolute | Bhopal

A ten-year-old girl was allegedly gang-raped by two men on the premises of the famed "Sharda" temple in Madhya Pradesh's Maihar district on Friday.

According to sources, the girl was recovered in a severely injured state with a wooden stick inserted in her private parts.

Soon after preliminary treatment at a nearby hospital, the survivor was rushed to another hospital for surgery. The barbaric incident took place in Satna district, on the premises of the 'Ma Sharda' temple, a famous Hindu temple in Vindhya region of the state.

As per police, the two accused have been arrested.

"We found the victim lying unconscious on the ground and rushed her to a nearby hospital. Medical report confirmed "brutal rape" leading to serious injuries. She has been referred to Sanjay Gandhi Hospital, Rewa. I am yet to receive final report from the doctors. However, it has been learnt that she has regained consciousness," said a senior police official.

BJP MLA from Maihar (Satna) Narayan Tripathi told reporter that both the accused are around 25-30 years of age and are employ-



ees of 'Ma Sharda' temple committee.

"A shameful incident has occurred on the premises of the Sharda temple, which is revered by Hindus across the country. The two arrested turned out to be the employees of the temple committee. The survivor has gained consciousness, and hopefully her condition will improve," he said. Tripathi said it's a matter of concern that the "shameful" incident occurred within the temple premises and the accused belong to temple committee. "It needs to be investigated in detail and the accused given rigorous punishment," Tripathi added.

According to police, the survivor also lives on the same premises as her parents run a shop of flowers and 'poja samagri' for the devotees visiting the shrine.

State Congress Media in-charge K. K. Mishra said that an inhuman act has occurred in the BJP-ruled Madhya Pradesh and has come as a grim reminder of Delhi's horrific 'Nirbhaya' case," Mishra told reporter over phone.

MIZORAM PEACE TEAM WASN'T ALLOWED TO ENTER MANIPUR IN MAY: SOURCES

New Delhi: In the wake of a blistering attack by Manipur Chief Minister N. Biren Singh against his Mizoram counterpart Zoramthanga, sources in Aizawl have revealed that the Mizo National Front (MNF) government's offer to help bring peace in the violence-hit neighboring state was turned down by authorities in Imphal. "In the first week of May within three days of the violence, the Mizoram government had decided to deploy a peace team led by Law Minister T.J. Lalnunluanga. But the idea was not entertained," one of the sources told reporter.

Mizoram Home Commissioner H. Lalengmawia was tasked by the Chief Minister to ensure the team's travel and visit to Manipur because "Zoramthanga could smell that the trouble could be bigger than a mere clash over Scheduled Tribe (ST) status issue", the source added. Lalengmawia then spoke to the "secretary of the Manipur chief Minister" to convey the Mizoram government's offer but after about an hour, the Mizoram official received a "negative" text message. The MNF is part of the BJP-led NDA and North East Democratic Alliance.

Paris-bound Air India flight returns to Delhi amidst tyre debris scare

Team Absolute | New Delhi

An Air India flight for Paris had to return to IGI Airport shortly after take-off on Friday after sighting of suspected tyre debris on the runway.

The flight crew was promptly informed about the situation by the Delhi Air Traffic Control (ATC) soon after the departure of the flight at 1.22 p.m. The flight had 220 people



on board.

"Flight AI143 operating Delhi-Paris on 28 July 2023 air-returned shortly after take-off, following the Delhi ATC's information to flight crew about suspected tyre debris sighted on the runway after departure," an Air

India spokesperson said.

"The flight safely landed back at Delhi at 2.18 p.m. While the aircraft undergoes necessary checks at Delhi, alternate arrangements are being planned for the passengers of AI143 to get to their destinations.

We regret the inconvenience caused to passengers, but as always, safety of all on board is Air India's foremost priority," the spokesperson added.

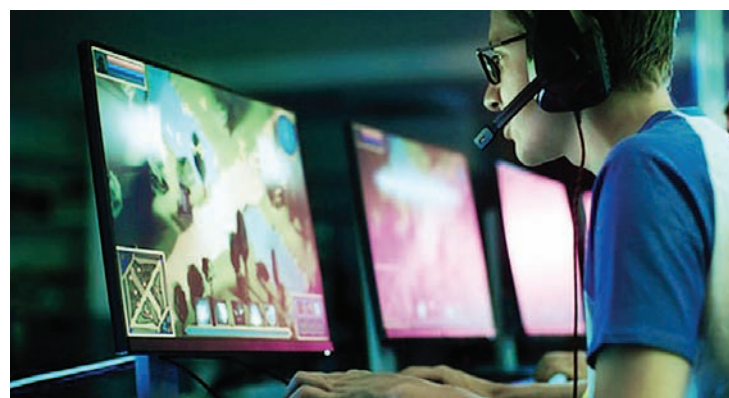
GAMING INDUSTRY PROPOSES NEW GST LEVY FORMULA TO GOVERNMENT

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The online gaming industry has suggested a new formula to the government for levy of 28 per cent GST on its activities, mainly seen as a measure to protect its interests, as per reports.

On July 11, the GST Council, headed by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, had decided to levy the highest slab of 28 per cent GST on the full value of money paid by users to play skill-based games, without any differentiation between games of skill and chance.

As of now, there is an 18 per cent GST levy on gaming platforms.



The decision has come as a rude shock for the gaming industry, which, in an open letter to the government, has urged it to reconsider the deci-

sion.

Now, with the GST council scheduled to meet virtually on August 2 to take a call on the mechanism for implementing the July 11 decision, the industry is learnt to have suggested to the government that 28 per cent GST should be levied on the sum total of net deposits at the company level, rather than on gross deposits, reports said. Industry sources say that 28 per cent GST levy on gross deposits could break the gaming industry's back and seriously impact the real money gaming formats like rummy and poker, as it would result in a major reduction of overall prize money.

Toxic chemicals found in Indian-made cough syrup sold in Iraq: Report

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Cold medication made in India named 'Cold Out', found on sale in Iraq, contains toxic chemicals, a report claimed.

According to a report published by Bloomberg News on Friday, testing showed the cold medication is contaminated with ethylene glycol, a toxic industrial solvent.

"A bottle of Cold Out purchased at a pharmacy in Baghdad in March contains 2.1 per cent ethylene glycol, according to Valisure LLC, an independent US laboratory. That's about 21 times the widely accepted limit," said the Bloomberg report.

"The compound is lethal to humans in small amounts



and played a role in mass child deaths caused by Indian-made cough syrups in Gambia and Uzbekistan last year," it said.

As per the report, till its filing, the Indian Ministry of Health and Family Welfare has not issued any statement in this regard.

Google's new feature to keep you safe from unwanted Bluetooth tracking

San Francisco | Agencies

As announced at this year's developer event Google I/O, the tech giant has started to roll out the "unknown tracker alerts" feature to Android 6.0+ users, which will help keep users safe from unwanted Bluetooth tracking.

The feature will automatically notify Android users if an unknown Bluetooth device is travelling with them, for instance, if someone is stalking them using an Apple AirTag or other Bluetooth tracking device.

"With unknown tracker alerts, you will get notified on your compatible Android device if an unknown Bluetooth tracker is separated from its owner and is determined to be travelling with you," Google said in a blogpost on Thursday.

Users can tap the notification to learn more



about the tracker and view a map of where the tracker was seen travelling with them. They can also tap "Play sound" and the tracker will make a noise to help them locate it without the owner of the tracker knowing.

"Unknown tracker alerts currently work with Apple AirTags. We'll continue to work with tag manufacturers to expand this important protection to other tracking tags over time through our joint industry specification," the company said.

Moreover, the tech giant mentioned that after receiving an alert, users can learn more about the unknown Bluetooth tracker and get tips on how to take action.

When they bring the device near the back of their phone, some Bluetooth trackers may share their serial number or additional information about the owner of the device, like the last four digits of their phone number.

HEAVY RAINS WREAK HAVOC IN NORTH TELANGANA, 10 PEOPLE WASHED AWAY

Hyderabad: Ten persons were washed away in separate incidents in Telangana as heavy rains and flash floods wreaked havoc in the state's northern districts, inundating more than 100 villages. Lakes, tanks, streams and canals were overflowing due to unprecedented rainfall in parts of Mulugu and Jayashankar Bhupalapally districts. Breach of some lakes led to submergence of villages and snapping of links to the outside world. People from villages to towns faced the rain fury while road and rail transport was affected. Chief Secretary Santhi Kumari said 10,696 people from 108 villages were shifted to safer places. She said 600 people from Morampalli village of Bhupalapally district and 19 workers stranded in a sand quarry near Gopalpur of Manthani in Peddapalli district were rescued and shifted to safer locations.



MANIPUR UNREST: 'AROUND 700 PEOPLE OF MEITEI COMMUNITY LEFT MIZORAM OUT OF FEAR'

Aizawl/Imphal | Agencies

Around 700 people belonging to the non-tribal Meitei community have left Mizoram out of fear after the issuance of an "advisory" by the Peace Accord MNF Returnees' Association (PAMRA) last week following the emergence of a viral video of two women being stripped and paraded by a mob in Manipur on May 4, an official said on Friday.

According to the police officials in Aizawl, the Meitei people left Mizoram by road through Assam, and by flight on their own arrangements.

Around 2,000 to 2,500 Meitei families from Manipur and Assam have been living in various places in Mizoram, including Aizawl, for many years and are engaged in various government and non-government work, studies, and business.

The Mizoram government earlier assured the Meitei people that it would provide adequate security to them and not to leave the state.

After the issuance of an "advisory" by the Peace Accord MNF Returnees'



Association (PAMRA) last week, Meitei community people in Mizoram started leaving the state for Manipur.

The PAMRA, however, had clarified that they did not ask the Meitei people to leave Manipur but asked them to remain alert in view of the Manipur situation.

All Mizoram Manipuri Association (AMMA) vice president Rambir Singh said that most of the Meitei people are unwilling to stay in Mizoram as they felt "insecure" due to the recent protest rally in Mizoram by a conglomerate of major civil society organisations.

On Tuesday, NGO Coordination

Committee, a conglomerate of five major civil society organisations, including the Central Young Mizo Association (CYMA), organised massive protest rallies in different parts of the state expressing solidarity with the Kuki-Zo ethnic community in Manipur. Mizoram Chief Minister Zoramthanga, his deputy Tawnluia, ministers and legislators cutting across party lines also took part in the protest rally in Aizawl.

Police said that there have been no report of any untoward incidents since the solidarity march.

Last month, Manipur Chief Minister N. Biren Singh talked with his Mizoram counterpart, Zoramthanga, to provide security to the Meitei people in Mizoram and the latter assured Singh to provide adequate security to the Meitei people.

Meanwhile, so far, 12,584 displaced Chin-Kuki-Zo community people from Manipur have fled to Mizoram seeking safer places.

These displaced people are now living in various relief camps, rented houses, community centers and church complexes.

SC issues notice to Centre, states on PIL against alarming rise of lynchings, particularly by cow vigilantes

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Supreme Court on Friday sought responses from the Union and state governments on a PIL filed against the alarming rise in cases of lynchings and mob violence done against Muslims, particularly "done by cow vigilantes".

A bench of Justices B.R. Gavai and J.B. Pardiwala issued notice to the Centre and the Haryana, Madhya Pradesh, Bihar, Rajasthan, Odisha, and Maharashtra governments on the plea filed by the National Federation of Indian Women.

"This is a very serious matter," urged senior advocate Kapil Sibal, who appeared for the petitioner organisation. He submitted that approaching different high courts would not redress the situation and requires intervention of the top court.

The petition, filed through advocate Sumita Hazarika, seeks directions to the Director General of Police of the states concerned to take



immediate action in lynchings and mob violence cases in accordance with the directions laid down by the Supreme Court.

It referred to a recent incident, amongst others, where a 55-year-old truck driver named Jaharuddin was allegedly lynched by a mob on suspicion of carrying beef on June 28 in Saran district of Bihar. The plea prays for a minimum uniform compensation to be determined by the court that should be granted to the victims or their families in addition to the amount determined by the authorities.

"In most cases, minimal action of merely registering FIRs is the only thing that is done by the authorities which seems to be more of a formality than any genuine

initiation of the criminal machinery," it alleged.

The petition said that the lynching and mob violence should be seen as the result of the general narrative of ostracisation of the minority communities through false propaganda that is being spread by means of public events where hate speeches are made targeting the minorities as well as through social media channels, news channels, and films.

Further, it stated that the state has a "sacrosanct duty to protect its citizens from unruly elements and perpetrators of orchestrated lynching and vigilantism with utmost sincerity and true commitment".

"The positive duty of the State to protect the fundamental rights and freedoms of all individuals and the primary responsibility of the State to foster a secular, pluralistic and multicultural social order, have been recognised by this Court in several judgments," the plea contended.

International Students Felicitation Programme at Poornima University

Lalit Sharma | Jaipur

The office of International Relations at Poornima University (PU) organized the International Students' Felicitation and Orientation Programme on Friday. The event celebrated the successful completion of the English Language Program (ELP) by a group of international students, along with all the international students hailing from Ivory Coast, Sudan, Nigeria, Cameroon, and others.

Dr. Swati Gokhru, the Dean of International Relations highlighted various initiatives aimed at creating a holistic and friendly environment for all students, such as the My Buddy program, ELP program, Hindi workshops, tutorial support, monthly



meetings, and open forums.

Dr. Lawan Bulama, the President of AASI (African Association of Students of India), graced the occasion as the Special Guest and encouraged the students to build respectful relationships while focusing on their studies. The event was meticulously organized, thanks to the efforts of the International Student

Coordinators - Ali, Abdullah, Esthelle, and Marc.

Dr. Suresh Padhy, President; Dr. Manoj Gupta, Pro President and Dr. Chandni Kirpalani, Registrar of Poornima University also attended the event. They praised the students' efforts, awarded certificates, and assured them that the university would cater to all their needs and possibilities.

No-confidence motion will be discussed within time period: Pralhad Joshi

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Union Minister for Parliamentary Affairs Pralhad Joshi on Friday said discussion on no-confidence motion will be held within the time period, adding that the government will not have any problem as it has the numbers.

"There is a time period for the discussion of no-confidence motion. The discussion will be held within that time period," Joshi told reporters at the Parliament premises here, referring to Opposition's demand for immediate discussion on the no-confidence motion against the government.

He said, "We will give a reply. We are hopeful that there will no problem as we have the numbers." On Wednesday, Lok Sabha



Speaker Om Birla informed the House that he has received the no-confidence motion from Congress MP Gaurav Gogoi under rule 193.

"Let them go. If they want to discuss, if they want truth to come out. There is no better floor than this. We are ready for discussion. Everything will be clear," Joshi said in response to a question on Opposition MP's visit to strife-torn Manipur.

Notably, ethnic clashes erupted in the northeastern state on May 3 and since then hundreds of people have lost their lives, while thousands have been forced to take refuge in the relief camps.

The Congress and other Opposition parties have been blaming Chief Minister N. Biren Singh for the current crisis in the state and demanded his dismissal.

Delhi woman dies in park after man hits her with rod

Team Absolute | New Delhi

A 25-year-old woman was killed by a man after being attacked with an iron rod near South Delhi's Aurobindo College on Friday, a Delhi Police official said, adding that the accused has been nabbed.

Police have also recovered the rod that lay near the woman's body.

The accused has been identified as Irfan (28), a resident of Sangam Vihar.

The official said that the accused and the victim were relatives. Recently, the victim's family had refused to allow their marriage.

"The victim had stopped talking to him, and Irfan was disturbed due to this," said the official.

The official further said that the



victim completed her graduation this year from Kamla Nehru College, and was doing steno coaching from Malviya Nagar area. Sharing the details, the Deputy Commissioner of Police (South) Chandan Chowdhary said that on Friday at around 12:08 p.m. an information was received in which the caller said that a man had fled away after killing a

woman near Aurobindo College in Vijay Mandal Park.

"Acting on the call, a police team rushed to the spot.

"The dead body of a woman was found in the park beneath a bench. Blood was oozing out from her head, and blood was lying around her head. An iron rod was found near her body," said the DCP earlier.

20 MEMBER INDIA DELEGATION TO VISIT MANIPUR ON SATURDAY

New Delhi: Congress on Friday said that a delegation of 20 opposition MPs from 16 parties will visit the violence hit Manipur to have on the spot assessment of the ground situation.

Addressing a press conference here, Congress Rajya Sabha MP Syed Naseer Hussain said: "Opposition has decided to send one delegation to Manipur. In INDIA party meeting it has been decided that 20 MPs will visit Manipur and will visit the hilly region and valley region during their two-day visit and meet people. They will carry a message that we stand with them."

He accused the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) of not allowing discussion in Parliament under relevant rules, 184 and 267 in Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha respectively, and Prime Minister Narendra Modi has not spoken on Manipur violence inside the parliament despite opposition's continuous demand. Congress Rajya Sabha MP said that the opposition's decision to send MPs delegation there will send a message from the parliament to the affected people of Manipur that there is concern about their plight and the opposition MPs have come to meet them.

Maharashtra doubles financial aid to women's SHGs

Team Absolute | Mumbai

In a major initiative, the Maharashtra government has decided to double the revolving funds available to women's Self Help Groups under the Maharashtra State Rural Livelihood Mission, or Umed Mission, Chief Minister Eknath Shinde said here on Friday.

The free amount is being doubled from the existing Rs 15,000 to Rs 30,000 and would benefit over six million women in the rural areas under the Umed Mission, with an additional expenditure of Rs 913 crore to the state government, he said.

There are around 6,00,000 women's SHGs in the state with more than 60 lakh women involved in them,



plus 30,854 village groups and 1,788 ward units under the Umed Mission, which was launched in 2011.

Usually, three months after they are formed, the SHGs receive a revolving fund for their internal loan transaction and related work and so far, 391,476 such SHGs have received a total amount of Rs 584 crore.

Another 80,348 groups

have been given community investment funds to the tune of Rs 577 crore, and till date, 4.75 lakh SHGs have been disbursed loans worth Rs 19,771 crore, said the CM. In the last fiscal (2022-2023), 238,368 SHGs were given bank loans worth Rs 5,860 crore, 96 per cent of which were repaid on time, with a NPA ratio of barely 4.31 per cent and hence banks readily come forward to lend to such SHGs.

Alongside, Shinde announced doubling the salaries of 46,956 Community Resources Persons (CRPs) working in the rural areas to provide day-to-day guidance and help to the SHGs, from Rs 3,000 to Rs 6,000 per month, which will cost Rs 163 crore to the government.

Fake call centre busted in Gurugram; 12 arrested

Gurugram | Agencies

A team of the cyber crime police station busted a fake call centre here and arrested 12 people including 5 women and the operator in this connection, the police said on Friday.

The fake call centre was operating from house number C-139, Sushant Lok-3, Sector-57 in Gurugram.

The call centre used to cheat US citizens in the name of providing tech support and used to charge \$100 to \$500 as service charges, via gift card, while \$3,000 to \$5,000 were charged through online wire or QR code.

While duping their clients, they used to introduce themselves as service providers of Microsoft. A police officer said that a police team led by inspector



Jasvir Singh raided the call centre following a tip-off.

Police have also seized three mobile phones, 10 laptops and Rs 56,000 in cash.

The arrested individuals have been identified as Harshit Kayshap, Varun Dua, Manmeet Singh (partners); Rahul Singh, Piyush, Sukhmeet Singh, Paras, Sheetal Rawat, Priyanka Rawat, Jyoti Roy, Saloni Gupta and Jayanti Rajpoot.

"We received specific inputs that a fake call centre

had cheated several foreign nationals on the pretext of customer support service.

The accused at the call centre, which was being operated without level documents," ACP Varun Dahiya said.

During questioning, the accused revealed that they were running the illegal call centre for the last seven months. A case under relevant sections of the IPC was registered against the accused.

HEAVY RAINFALL FORECAST FOR EAST AND CENTRAL INDIA, ISOLATED DOWNPOURS IN NORTHEAST

Team Absolute | New Delhi

There will be an increase in rainfall activity over east India including Bihar, Jharkhand, Gangetic West Bengal, and Odisha from Friday and northeastern states with isolated heavy to very heavy rainfall during next five days, the IMD said.

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) also said that enhanced rainfall activity will continue over west and parts of central India with very heavy rainfall over Konkan, Goa, ghat areas of Madhya Maharashtra, Vidarbha, Chhattisgarh, and Gujarat on Friday and significant reduction thereafter.

In northwest India, the weather forecast predicts light to moderate fairly widespread to widespread rainfall, with isolated heavy rainfall expected in various states.

"On Friday and Saturday, Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh, Haryana, Chandigarh, Delhi, and east Rajasthan are likely to experience these weather conditions. Jammu and Kashmir, Punjab, west Uttar Pradesh, and west Rajasthan are also expected to see similar conditions on



Friday. Moreover, from Saturday to August 1, east Uttar Pradesh is likely to witness this pattern of rainfall," said the IMD. Central India can expect light to moderate fairly widespread to widespread rainfall on Friday and Saturday. However, there may be a reduction in rainfall activity after this period.

On Friday, Chhattisgarh and Vidarbha should be cautious as isolated very heavy rainfall is anticipated in these areas. West India's weather forecast indicates light to moderate fairly widespread to widespread rainfall for the next five days over Konkan and Goa and the ghat areas of central Maharashtra. "On Friday, Gujarat and

Marathwada are also likely to experience this rainfall pattern. Furthermore, on the same day, isolated very heavy rainfall is predicted over Konkan and Goa, ghat areas of Madhya Maharashtra, and Gujarat. Mumbai city and adjoining areas should be prepared for isolated heavy rainfall on Friday," it said.

The weather forecast agency further said that in south India, there will be light to moderate fairly widespread to widespread rainfall on the current day over Telangana and coastal Karnataka. However, a significant reduction in rainfall activity is expected thereafter. East India forecast indicates light to moderate fairly widespread to widespread rainfall over Odisha from Friday to July 31. "West Bengal & Sikkim are likely to experience this rainfall till Saturday, while Jharkhand will witness it from July 30 to August 1. Bihar should also expect this rainfall pattern on July 30 and 31," it said. In Northeast India, light to moderate fairly widespread to widespread rainfall is predicted for the next five days. "On Friday, Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, and Meghalaya may encounter isolated very heavy rainfall," it added.



IT IS NECESSARY TO PROVIDE WOMEN A SAFE ENVIRONMENT TO GIVE EQUAL STATUS TO THEM: CHIEF MINISTER CHOUHAN

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has said that without justice to half the population, neither the country nor the society can progress. The shyness of sisters and daughters may end, their self-confidence and respect get a boost, for this purpose, along with 30 percent reservation for women in the police force, schemes and programmes like LadliLaxmi, KanyaVivah were started. We will not take rest till we do not make our sisters and daughters stand on an equal footing in the society. Women's safety is paramount in this. "AbhimanyuAbhiyan", launched to instill fear among criminals, to make women help desk dynamic by providing vehicles and to develop a sense of respect towards women, will prove to be a milestone in the direction of women empowerment.

Chief Minister Chouhan was addressing a programme organised at Motilal Nehru Stadium to provide two-wheeler vehicles to women police personnel of UrjaMahila Help Desk working in the police stations of the state. Chief Minister Chouhan flagged off the scooter rally of 250 women police personnel. Chief Minister Chouhan also released the booklet "Abhimanyu" of the AbhimanyuAbhiyan, which is run



with the aim of making men aware of crimes against women and to develop a sense of respect for women. Home Minister Dr.Narottam Mishra, Additional Chief Secretary Home Dr. Rajesh Rajoura, Director General of Police SudhirSaxena and senior police officers were present in the programme. Confidence and respect of sisters and daughters will get a boost

Chief Minister Chouhan said that there is a need to change the distorted thinking of discrimination between son and daughter and domestic violence. The recruitment of 30% women in the police has helped the aggrieved women to narrate their grievances in the police stations and get action taken on them. Crimes against women will not be tolerated. We are not cruel, but it is often seen that people of evil nature do not behave properly without strict action, it is necessary to create fear among criminals. Chief Minister Chouhan called upon the women police personnel to awaken their inner divinity and take action against the wicked and be helpful in providing a safe environment to the sisters and daughters. With this, the confidence

and respect of sisters and daughters will get a boost and the fame and reputation of the police personnel will enhance. It is necessary to continuously carry on the campaigns conducted for women's safety

Chief Minister Chouhan said that there is a need to continuously carry on the campaigns conducted for the safety of women like Operation Muskaan. AbhimanyuAbhiyan will be helpful in developing a sense of respect towards women and inculcating values among children and youth.

Flagged off 250 two wheelers to the tunes of the police band

Chief Minister Chouhan flagged off the rally of 250 two-wheelers to the tune of songs "Madhya Pradesh Police Hai Hum", "Yeh Bharat DeshHaiMera" and "SaareJahan Se AchhaHindustaHamara" being played by the police band. At the beginning of the programme, Director General of Police ShriSudhirSaxena presented a memento to the Chief Minister Chouhan and informed about the activities of help desks set up in women's police stations through the Nirbhaya Fund.

Compassion is the fundamental nature of humans: Governor Mangubhai Patel

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Governor Mangubhai Patel has said that sympathy and cooperation towards the weak is the basic nature of human beings.

VasudhaivaKutumbakam, one family and taking everyone along is Indian culture. Exploitation and atrocities are human distortions. It is the responsibility of a civilized society to inspire and encourage control on. He said that the society will have to come forward to make decisive efforts to solve the small challenges faced by the women of the denotified tribes. Work should also be done to change the social attitude towards the deprived class.

Governor Patel was addressing a seminar organized by the National Commission for Women in collaboration with the Race Lab at the R.C.V.P. Noronha Academy of Administration and Management. The theme of the seminar was Challenges of Denotified Tribal Women. At the beginning of the programme, Governor Shri Patel was wel-



comed by being presented with a sapling. He inaugurated the seminar by lighting the lamp.

Governor Mangubhai Patel said that a family's responsibilities centres around a woman. Considering the woman's family and social responsibilities, efforts must be made to solve them. He asked all stakeholders of tribal welfare work to go among the community. He told to understand the challenges and try to solve with one's knowledge and talent. Small efforts will become the motivators of big changes. Mentioning the context of discussion with the jail inmates, he said that the members of the deprived society, who are unaware of the provisions of relief and rescue and are helpless, consideration should be given to the vision and approach of

detaining them in very minor crimes. Referring to the suicide by a student due to lack of fees, he asked should such an incident have happened in a civilized society. This is food for thought. He called upon the educated community to come forward to cooperate in the needs of the underprivileged. Be helpful in changing the outlook of the society. He told the voluntary organizations to deliver the benefits of the schemes to the backmost person of the community. It is necessary to have sensitivity, warm-heartedness in the vision and direction of implementation. For this, he told to create a lively dialogue and contact with the community. Education is a fundamental requirement for progress. Along with the spread of education, make effective efforts to solve the challenges of drop-out.

Some powers attempting to 'block PM Modi's path', says BJP MP BrijBhushanSharan Singh

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Controversial BJP MP from Uttar Pradesh and former chief of the Wrestling Federation of India (WFI) BrijBhushanSharan Singh has said some unidentified "powers are attempting" to block the path of Prime Minister NarendraModi, while the "country needs him for some more time." He made this statement during an interaction with press reporters at Mahakaleshwar Temple in Ujjain on Friday. Singh offered prayers to the Jyotirlinga of Lord Shiva along with state higher education minister Mohan Yadav. Singh said he came here as Mohan Yadav invited him to Ujjain during his visit to Gonda, the home town of



ing of 'KarniSena', saying that "serious allegations were made against him but he did not show a glimpse of embarrassment on his face." A six-term MP - five as a BJP member and once, in 2009, as the Samajwadi Party candidate - Singh has represented Gonda and Balrampur in the past, and now Kaiserganj. His son PrateekBhushan is a two-time MLA from GondaSadar. Meanwhile, on Friday, a Delhi court granted a one-day exemption from personal appearance to Singh in connection with the sexual harassment case. The court had recently granted bail to Singh, and former WFI assistant secretary VinodTomar, who appeared before the court on Friday.

The BJP MP from Kaiserganj, Singh (65), found himself at the centre of sexual harassment allegations by India's most decorated women wrestlers, VineshPhogat and Sakshi Malik. When asked by reporters that he is in trouble due to the sexual harassment charges against him, Singh replied, "mujhe ko problem nahihat" (I have no problem). Singh was on a two-day visit to Madhya Pradesh. On Thursday, he was in Indore where he addressed a gather-

IMC CONTRACTUAL EMPLOYEE HELD FOR RAPING 21-YEAR-OLD WOMAN

Indore: A 31-year-old municipal corporation employee was arrested for allegedly raping a 21-year-old sick woman under Malharganj police station limits in Madhya Pradesh's Indore district, a police official said on Friday. "On Thursday, the police received information that a 21-year-old woman, who was bleeding, was admitted to the hospital by her family members. After that the police reached the hospital, talked to the kin about the matter and came to know that she was raped," Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP) Aaditya Mishra said. The kin told the police that the accused Bhola (31) who is municipal corporation employee and married man, lives in their neighborhood, raped the victim twice in 15 days by taking advantage her illness, DCP Mishra said. The Malharganj police registered a case against the accused under Indian Penal Code (IPC) section 376 (2) (n), 450 and 506 into the matter and arrested the accused. Further investigation in the matter is underway, the officer added.

Ex-DGP's grand-daughter shot dead in Gwalior: Scindia visits bereaved family

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Union Minister JyotiradityaScindia on Friday visited bereaved family of AkshayaYadav, the grand-daughter of former Director General of Police (DGP) Surendra Singh Yadav, who was shot dead at a busy market area named betibachaochauraha, in Gwalior.

Scindia expressed his condolences to the family, saying she (Akshaya) was like his daughter. As local leader of Gwalior, which is the bastion of Scindia family, the minister assured the family that the accused will be punished.

On July 10, around 8:00 pm, Akshaya was returning home along with her schoolmate Sonakshi Sharma when she was chased by a group of four bike-borne assailants and was shot at, leaving the eyewitnesses shocked and panicked.

Both the girls fell on the ground, and subsequently, Sumit, the main suspect, fired a bullet that hit Akshaya in chest. She was rushed to the hospital but was declared brought dead.

Sonakshi had told the police that among the four men who carried out the attack was SumitRawat, a man who had been stalking and harassing her. Sonakshi told the police that she may have been the target of the gunmen, not Akshaya.



Subsequently, the police had arrested two accused within next few hours and two main accused SumitRawat and UmeshRawat were arrested from Delhi and Maharashtra later. Further, the police along with district administration, razed down the house of Sumit.

DOCTORS ARE THE SOUL OF THE MEDICAL SYSTEM: CM CHOUHAN

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has said that doctors are the soul of the medical system. Operation of medical infrastructure like hospitals, medical colleges, primary and community health centers is possible only with doctors. It is only by their presence and spiritedness that a place becomes a sanctum sanctorum. A doctor's job is like a mission. They spend their day and night in relieving the pain of the patient. Due to the tireless work done by them, they get the status equal to God.

Chief Minister Chouhan was interacting with the newly appointed medical teachers of Medical College Satna at SamatvaBhawan, residence office after giving them appointment letters. Additional Chief Secretary Medical Mohammad Suleman and officers of Medical Education



Department were present. Chief Minister Chouhan gave appointment letters to 35 newly appointed medical teachers. Newly appointed medical teachers will make people healthy and will

also do the work of teaching CM Chouhan said that in our culture, a healthy body is the source of happiness. Doctors have an important role in keeping people healthy. The newly appointed medical teach-

ers will also make people healthy and also do the work of giving education. All of you are very important for the state. That's why you have been invited for a dialogue before assuming the responsibility. He said that medical institutions are continuously expanding in the state. After the year 1965, the medical college in the state was started in the year 2006 at Sagar. The number of doctors in the state is very less in proportion to the population. Along with the expansion of medical infrastructure in the state, the process of appointment of doctors is going on. Sufficient arrangements of medicines and equipments are available. The government medical system is continuously getting advanced. CM Chouhan said that we have decided that language will not be a hindrance in medical studies in the state, students who want to study medicine through Hindi medium can study in Hindi.

Cop, Who Shot Senior In Chest At Police Station, Sacked

Team Absolute | Rewa

A sub-inspector who was arrested for allegedly shooting at and injuring his senior inside the Civil Lines police station in Rewa city of Madhya Pradesh was dismissed from service on Friday, an official said.

PSI B R Singh (52) allegedly fired a bullet into the chest of the police station in-charge Inspector HitendraNath Sharma (40) on Thursday afternoon. Surgeons later pulled out the bullet that had got lodged in Sharma's left lung.

"On my recommendation, Deputy Inspector General of Rewa Zone MithileshShukla suspended Singh from service," Superintendent of Police

Vivek Singh said over the phone. The SP said Sharma's health is stable. "After arresting the accused and charging him with attempt to murder, we are grilling him," said SP Singh.

Asked about a police official's claims that PSI Singh was drunk at the time, the SP said the cop's medical examination report is not out yet.

"We are going to produce the accused in court today," he said. Singh, who was locked in Sharma's chamber after the shooting, was arrested with two pistols and 18 rounds on Thursday night, an official said. "One is his service firearm and the other is his personal licensed one," he said. "After firing at Sharma, the accused fired three

rounds (randomly)," the official said.

A policeman, who did not wish to be identified, said on Thursday that Singh, before firing at Sharma, spoke something about the inspector getting him shifted to the "police line" (terminology for off-duty line, generally a form of punishment). The written order of Singh being transferred to the police line had not come in though he was verbally informed, the policeman said on condition of anonymity. The official claimed Singh resented taking orders from Sharma, adding that on Thursday the PSI had come to work after four days and straightaway entered the inspector's chamber.

Corruption only system running in Madhya Pradesh: Kamal Nath

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Former Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister and Congress leader Kamal Nath on Friday alleged that corruption is the only running system in the state.

The former CM said that there is no law and order in the state and no one fears the law.

Responding to the incident of rape involving a minor girl in Satna, Kamal Nath said, it is very disheartening to hear about such incidents, especially when it is children. Some get reported. There are many such incidents that are not coming to the fore. Madhya Pradesh, today is infamous in the country for all these crimes. Assault against children, atrocities against women and others. This is the image of the state today. There is no system, no law and order, and neither does anyone fear the law. The only system running here is of corruption...," he alleged.

Earlier today, Madhya Pradesh police arrested two accused for allegedly raping a minor girl in Satna. The police informed that the victim is presently undergoing treatment.



Mehar SDPO LokeshDawar said that strict actions will be taken against the accused. We got information that an 11-12-year-old girl was raped in Satna. Two accused have been arrested in this case. The girl is undergoing treatment. Further investigation underway SDPO Dawar said.

PANIC IN DHARAS VILLAGERS SPOT LEOPARD & CUBS

Team Absolute | Dhar

Panic gripped Dhar after villagers spotted a female leopard with her two cubs near the crematorium on Thursday night. They immediately informed the forest department. On conducting a search in the area, the forest team saw the partial pug marks. Forest officials said the presence of large number of villagers in the area might have forced the big cat to retreat to forest.

Leopard & Cubs Spotted In Sitapat A Fortnight Ago In fact, a fortnight ago, cubs including a female leopard were seen in the same way at Sitapat village, just a few kilometres away from Dhar town. After which the staff of the Forest Department reached, CCTV surveillance was also installed in



the village. Here the leopard had also hunted a calf, after keeping an eye on the leopard for two days, the female had gone to the forest with her children. Now, due to the sighting of a female leopard again near Muktidham, apprehension is being expressed that this female leopard is the same one which was seen in Sitapat. Eyewitnesses said

that the female leopard was seen with her two cubs. Residents have seen a female leopard with two cubs near the godown. Hearing the loud barking of the dogs, the residents went near and saw that the female leopard was roaming near the godown with her cubs. However, till the time of writing the news, the forest department had not installed the cage.

ADITYA BIRLA CAPITAL **ADITYA BIRLA HOUSING FINANCE LIMITED**
Registered Office- Indian Rayon Compound, Varaval,
Gujarat - 382265 Branch Office- Aditya Birla Housing
Finance Ltd. | 3rd floor, Kay Kay Business Centre Plot No
133, M P Nagar Zone-I, Bhopal (MP) - 462011

APPENDIX IV (See Rule 8 (1) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002)
Possession Notice (for Immovable Property)
Whereas, the undersigned being the authorized officer of Aditya Birla Housing Finance Limited under the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 (54 of 2002) and in exercise of powers conferred under Section 13(12) read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 had issued a demand notice dated 09-01-2023 calling upon the borrowers Jaswant Kumar Singh, Vandana Devi Singh mentioned in the notice being Rs. 18,82,734.37/- (Rupees Eighteen Lakh Eighty Two Thousand Seven Hundred Thirty Four and Thirty Seven Paise Only) within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice. The borrowers having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the borrowers and to the public in general that the undersigned has taken Possession of the property described herein below in exercise of the powers conferred on him/her under Section 13(4) of the said Act. read with Rule 8 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 on this 27th Day of July of the year, 2023. The borrowers in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of the Aditya Birla Housing Finance Limited for an amount of Rs. 18,82,734.37/- (Rupees Eighteen Lakh Eighty Two Thousand Seven Hundred Thirty Four and Thirty Seven Paise Only) and interest thereon. Borrowers attention is invited to the provisions of Sub-section 8 of Section 13 of the Act., in respect of time available, to redeem the secured assets.

Description of the Immovable property
All That Piece And Parcel Of Residential Duplex Part Of Plot No. 3/41 Admeasuring 750 Sq.Fts. I.E. 69.70 Sq. Mtrs. Kharsa No. 75, 82, 86/1/1, 86/1/2 & 62/2 Situated In The Village Akbarpur, Patwari Halka No. 39, Tehsil Huzur, Ward No. 83, Dist. Bhopal (M.P.), And Bounded As: North: Other's Property South: Plot No. 3/41 East: Road West: Plot No. 3/40.
Date: 27/07/2023
Place: Bhopal
Authorised Officer
Aditya Birla Housing Finance Limited



EDITOR'S SPECS

BJP projected to win Rajasthan even as Cong also gains vote share

The BJP is set to score a decisive victory in Congress-ruled Rajasthan in the upcoming Assembly elections, as per ABP C-Voter Rajasthan Opinion Poll. The snap poll data with sample size of 1,885 projects that the BJP will win 114 seats in the 200 member Rajasthan Assembly. This is a gain of 41 seats from the previous election where the BJP had got 73 seats. The Congress on the other hand is projected to end up with a tally of 83 seats, down 17 seats from the previous tally of 100. The BJP is riding on a massive 7 per cent vote swing in its favour which will increase the seat tally by 41 seats. BJP is projected to get 45.8 per cent vote share up from 38.8 per cent in the previous election. The Congress is also gaining vote share by 1.7 per cent and is projected to get 41 per cent vote share. It is a two horse race and the BJP and Congress are gaining vote share from BSP and Others category which is seeing a negative swing of 9 per cent. This is where the vote share gains for BJP and Congress are accruing from. The Congress government in Rajasthan led by Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot is seen to be performing badly on the issue of law and order, as per the survey. However, the state government schemes like LPG cylinder for Rs 500 to BPL card holders will help the Congress in the elections.

NOW, CENTRAL FORCES PLAYING KEY ROLE TO HELP FARMERS IN MANIPUR

Nirendra Dev

In the midst of heightened controversy on the deployment of central forces and especially Assam Rifles in violence-hit Manipur, the security personnel and officers are plunging into the aid of local farmers.

"We are providing prophylactic security by way of our presence and Area Domination," said a source in Assam Rifles.

The para-military force which has operational control of army officers but on administrative front falls under Assam Rifles -- which is a renowned anti-insurgency crack-down force in the northeast.

For decades, the force was also called the 'Friends of the Hill People' but from time to time they also faced criticism or came under the scanner of socio-political organisations.

But lately, in violence-hit hamlets in Manipur where even irrigation and water supply projects have been damaged by miscreants, the Assam Rifles officers and personnel have helped restore water supply.

One such case has been reported from Loibol Khunou village. The project was allegedly damaged by miscreants when they burnt the entire village.

"Water supply for another village named Leimaram was also affected but now things have been restored and villagers are getting both drinking water and are able to carry out some farming," the source told correspondent.

The Irrigation channel work on stream was taken up by the civilians and Assam Rifles even at Janglenphai village.

This subsequently helped irrigate paddy fields at Kamong village as well, the source said.

On matters related to farming, notwithstanding all their 'shortcomings', even the N. Biren Singh government is trying its best to help the farmers. The state government



has announced 'cut down' in deployment of forces for escorts and security covers of VIPs including ministers and MLAs.

The state government also deputed at least 2000 state force personnel for protection of farmers.

However, some individuals from hill areas have dismissed the 'move' saying either these things came too late and they are too little.

It must be admitted that the fear of 'famine' or food shortage has struck both Kukis and other Zo tribal people and also the Meitei population in the valley. Hence there is a growing concern of 'potential shortage of locally grown rice'. The farmers and citizens in Manipur, now have apprehension that this could also lead to a food and rice price hike next year.

Old timers recall that the 'rat famine' in 1958-59 had hit Mizos

pretty badly.

"The Zo communities in violence-hit hills of Manipur share ethnic bonds with Mizo people. Everyone is aware of the 'famine' in their history. In fact, the Mizo National Front (MNF) was originally launched as the Mizo National Famine Front (MNF), a senior Zo community leader said.

So, farming operations have resumed in some pockets both in the hills and the valley. Of course, reports say that there has been no report of fresh attacks on farmers living in the peripheral areas of the valley districts in strife-torn Manipur.

The security forces are operating now in a manner that the farming community feels "safe and secured". Reports claim that farmers in Sadu Yengkhuman, Pukhao, Dolaitabi, Leitanpokpi Awang

Leikai (Mairenpat) and Nongshum are "staying away" from paddy fields. Experts say, in Manipur, rice is a dominant kharif crop -- meaning it is mostly produced during monsoon or autumn.

Even in peacetime; farming in Manipur used to be afflicted by the challenges of high cost of chemical fertilizers and pesticides, lack of agricultural credit facility, lack of knowledge about fertilizer management, unavailability of fertilizers on time, lack of awareness of government schemes, irrigation related matters and lack of adequate awareness about rainwater harvesting techniques.

Now everyone seems to realise that in the insane rage, people of both communities have 'damaged water supply/projects' to

each other's villages.

"In some cases even damaged irrigation projects were restored and supply of water was streamlined. Locals have also appreciated the same," sources in Assam Rifles say. It was also suggested by experts last year in presence of Union Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar that an effort to address sustainable rice cultivation in Manipur and other northeastern states should be promoted by popularizing climate resilient agricultural technologies thereby reducing the constraints and increasing sustainability in rice farming.

(Nirendra Dev is a New Delhi-based journalist. Views expressed are personal)

international

TRUMP FACES MORE CHARGES IN CLASSIFIED DOCUMENTS CASE

Washington | Agencies

US special counsel Jack Smith, who is probing Donald Trump's alleged mishandling of classified documents after leaving the White House, has brought on additional charges against the former President in the case.

In an updated indictment on Thursday, prosecutors have alleged that two Trump employees -- aide Walt Nauta and maintenance worker at Mar-a-Lago Carlos De Oliveira -- attempted to delete security camera footage at the former president's Palm Beach resort after the Justice Department issued a subpoena for it, reports CNN.

De Oliveira told the director of IT at the resort "that 'the boss' wanted the server deleted", according to the indictment.

Tump, who had already faced 37 criminal charges, was on Thursday charged with one additional count of willful retention of national defence information and



two additional obstruction counts. According to the indictment, the former President was charged with willfully retaining a top-secret document that was a "presentation concerning military activity

in a foreign country", which CNN had identified as Iran.

New charges were also filed against Nauta. De Oliveira, who was added to the case, was charged with lying to the FBI about moving boxes at Trump's golf club.

Earlier on Thursday, Trump's lawyers, John Lauro and Todd Blanche, had met the special counsel at his office in Washington D.C. over a separate investigation into alleged efforts to overturn the results of the 2020 election, reports the BBC.

Earlier this month, Trump said that he expected to be indicted in that case, but on Thursday, he said his lawyers received no indication of timing.

He dismissed the fresh charges in the documents case in an emailed statement from his 2024 presidential campaign.

"Deranged Jack Smith knows that they have no case and is casting about for any way to salvage their illegal witch hunt," the statement read.

N.Korea showcases drones, ICBMs on armistice anniversary

Seoul | Agencies

North Korea has staged a massive military parade to celebrate the 70th anniversary of the signing of the armistice of the Korean War, displaying its latest intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs) and drones in a show of its military might, Pyongyang's state media reported on Friday.

With senior delegations from China and Russia present, North Korean leader Kim Jong-un took to the reviewing stand to observe the military parade in Kim Il Sung Square late Thursday to mark Victory Day, according to the North's official Korean Central News Agency (KCNA). The Korean War, which started with an invasion by the North in 1950, ended with the armistice on July 27, 1953.

But the North claimed victory in the war, celebrating the date of the armistice signing as Victory Day, reports Yonhap News Agency. In the latest parade, the second in



about five months, the North showcased advanced drones and long-range missiles, such as liquid-propellant Hwasong-17 ICBMs and solid-fuel Hwasong-18 ICBMs.

North Korea had invited Chinese and Russian officials to its celebrations, marking its first known foreign visitors since Pyongyang's tight border closure over the Covid-19 pandemic in early 2020.

A Russian delegation led by Defence Minister Sergei Shoigu and a Chinese group led by Li Hongzhong,

a politburo member of the Chinese Communist Party, arrived in Pyongyang this week to take part in the commemorations.

The North's leader gave Shoigu a tour of an arms exhibition on Wednesday, which showcased new advanced weapons, including ICBMs and an unmanned aerial vehicle that appears to be modeled after the US Global Hawk surveillance aircraft.

North Korea fired a Hwasong-18 ICBM earlier this month following its first test in April.

8 killed in grain silo blast in Brazil

Sao Paulo: Eight people were killed in a grain silo explosion at an agro-industrial cooperative in southern Brazil's Parana state, the local fire department said.

The bodies of six people were found early Thursday by rescuers searching through the rubble of the collapsed structure. The first two victims were found following the blast on Wednesday afternoon at the silo located in the town of Palotina. A dozen people were also injured, according to the Parana Fire Department, which said the fatal victims were in a tunnel that connects different parts of the silo, Xinhua news agency reported.

Employees of the cooperative, the second largest in Parana, were conducting maintenance work when the blast occurred. The cause has yet to be determined.

The sound of the explosion was heard miles away and the impact shattered windows of nearby properties, witnesses told Brazil's Globo news channel.

Nearly 35 firefighters and sniffer dogs were dispatched to search for survivors and retrieve the bodies of the victims.

Wagner chief Prigozhin seen in Russia for first time since failed mutiny

Moscow | Agencies

For the first time since the Wagner mercenaries' failed rebellion against the Russian military in June, the group's chief Yevgeny Prigozhin was seen in St. Petersburg, meeting an African dignitary on the sidelines of a summit, the media reported.

According to accounts associated with the mercenary group, the meeting took place on Thursday and the dignitary is part of the Central African Republic delegation to the Russia-Africa summit, reports CNN.

For several years, Wagner had a presence in the Central African Republic.

A photo of the meeting was also doing the rounds on social media, showing the two men shaking hands.

CNN geolocated the photograph of Prigozhin and the dignitary to the Trezzini Palace Hotel in St. Petersburg.

According to Russian media, the Wagner chief has kept an office in the hotel premises.

The hotel was one of the locations searched by Russian authorities on July 6, after the June 24 rebellion.

Since then, Prigozhin had only been seen in public on July 19, when he seem-



ingly appeared in a video inside Belarus, apparently greeting Wagner fighters at a base in Asipovichy.

During the rebellion, Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko had claimed that he convinced his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin not to "destroy" Wagner and Prigozhin, which led to a halt in the mutiny.

Prigozhin founded Wagner as a shadow mercenary outfit that fought both in Ukraine and, increasingly, for Russian-backed causes around the world.

6 killed, 46 injured in explosion near Syria's Damascus

Damascus | Agencies

At least six people and 46 others were injured in an explosion in a suburb south of the Syrian capital of Damascus, according to state media.

The incident occurred on al-Sudan Street in the al-Sayeda Zainab suburb, where an explosive device planted in a motorcycle near a taxicab was remotely detonated, the state-run Syrian TV reported.

Syrian Health Minister Hassan Al-Ghabbash said that 20 of the wounded had minor injuries and were treated on the scene, while the rest were taken to hospitals, Xinhua news agency reported.

He added that 11 ambulances rushed to the site following the explosion.

The al-Sayeda Zainab suburb is a predominantly Shia area where Muslim Shia, mainly from Iran, usually visit to perform pilgrimage to holy Shia shrines. The Lebanese Hezbollah group has a presence there as well.

The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, a war monitor, reported that the



explosive device exploded near a military outpost used by Iran-backed fighters. It is the second explosion in the area within 48 hours.

On July 25, a booby-trapped motorcycle blast wounded two people, as reported by the observatory.

Since the Army drove out the rebel group from the Eastern Ghouta countryside in May 2018, Damascus has remained relatively peaceful.

However, sporadic explosions continue to occur, targeting seemingly random locations.



Rain, flood havoc

EXTEND ITR DEADLINE, MAHA CONSUMER BODY PLEA TO PM & FM

Quaid Najmi | Nagpur/Mumbai

With just one official working day left (July 31), a consumer organisation has called upon the Centre to extend the last date for filing of Income Tax Returns for the financial year (2022-2023) to bring relief to the people, here on Friday.

The Council for Protection of Rights (CPR) has shot off an appeal to the Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, Ministers of State for Finance, Secretaries and other concerned officials in this regard.

The CPR President Barrister Vinod Tiwari said that large parts of the country are battered by torrential rain, floods, landslides and other natural calamities in different regions in the past over a month.

"The situation is alarming in north India, presently even in eastern and western India. The unprecedented rain has hit masses in all walks of life, including the financial capital of Mumbai, leaving the people desirous of filing their ITR anxious," said



Tiwari. A tax and financial advisor A.N. Desai of Mumbai claimed that in view of the rush to file the ITR by lakhs of assesseees for the assessment year (2023-2024), the official portal is experiencing heavy traffic and consequently slowed down.

"We have already brought it to the notice of the concerned authorities, but the situation is unchanged since the third week of June. We are racing to catch the deadline (Monday, July 31), but are stretched beyond limits and maybe unable to complete the

task within the deadline. If the last date is not extended, many people may have to cough out hefty fines for no fault of theirs," rued Desai.

Tiwari has urged the Centre to extend the time-limit till August 15, but Desai feels that given the traffic and likely assesseees who may miss the deadline, it should be extended till at least 6 weeks (mid-September).

However, ex-President of the influential Bombay Chartered Accountants Society Abhay Mehta feels that extensions should not

become the norm every year and all the ITR-related work should ideally be completed by July.

"People need to be more disciplined, must submit their details to their tax consultants to enable the CA's file their returns in a timely manner, and avoid paying the penalties for late-filing," urged Mehta.

In the recent past, especially during the Covid-19 pandemic times, the government had given generous extensions of one, two or even three months to enable people to comply.

However, this year, the Centre had adopted a tough stance and made it clear that no extensions would be given after July 31, dismaying the assesseees and even sections of fraternity like Chartered Accountants, financial advisors, tax consultants and other bodies.

According to Sitharaman's statement in Parliament this week, last year around 7.40 crore people (6.94 crore in the previous year) filed their ITR of which 5.16 crore had zero tax liability, in the FY-2023.

Maharashtra, with 1.13 crore filing their ITR tops in the country, followed by Gujarat and Uttar Pradesh.

As many areas reel under floods, Maha govt enhances aid to victims

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The Maharashtra government announced enhancement of aid for victims of natural calamities, floods and losses to shops, small businesses and homes during the current monsoon season from June-October, here on Friday.

In many districts, towns and villages, homes, shops, businesses and other properties of citizens have been damaged or destroyed in the ongoing spell of monsoon.

Chief Minister Eknath Shinde informed the Maharashtra Legislature that presently families are entitled to Rs 2,500 for loss of clothes and a similar amount for other household items when their homes are submerged under water, washed away or totally damaged.

The amounts will now be doubled to Rs 10,000 per family by relaxing the conditions of the State Disaster Response Fund (SDRF), he said.

Currently, the SDRF has no provision to provide help to shopkeepers suffering losses during floods or other natural calamities.

Now, if the shops are submerged under water or completely damaged or washed away, they will be extended financial assistance up to 75 per cent of the losses or a maximum amount of Rs 50,000.

Shinde added that a similar helping hand will be given to small businesses, 'tapris' (stalls) run by many individuals or families in small towns.

Since, they are presently not covered under any schemes in such calamities, the state will



provide them a special financial assistance of up to 75 per cent of the actual losses or a maximum Rs 10,000, as per the panchnamas.

For these two categories, only those who are officially registered, licenced tapri holders, local residents with their names on the electoral rolls and ration cards, shall be eligible for the special aid.

In the past, over a week, many districts of the state have been lashed by torrential rains that have resulted in floods, damage to residences, businesses or shops and other properties, bridges, roads and other public infrastructure, agricultural losses, cattle, livestock, etc, besides claiming scores of human lives.

Patna Prof 'molests' Delhi doctor on flight, arrested by Mumbai Police

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The Mumbai Police have arrested a professor from Patna who allegedly molested a woman doctor board a Delhi-Mumbai IndiGo flight earlier this week, officials said here on Friday.

The accused, identified as 47-year-old Rohit Shrivastava, and the 24-year-old woman were seated next to each other on the flight that took off at around 5.30 a.m. on Wednesday morning from New Delhi.

As per the victim's complaint, the accused touched her inappropriately with malicious intent, shortly before the flight was preparing to land in Mumbai.

Taking strong umbrage, the doctor and professor had a loud altercation, and the



victim informed the flight crew.

After the flight landed, they were taken to the Sahar Police Station which registered a complaint of sexual harassment against the professor, invoking IPC Sections. 354 and 354A and arrested him, said the official.

On Thursday, he was produced before a court which sent him to judicial custody and later granted him bail even as further investigations are underway.

An IndiGo official said that the airline is likely to issue a statement on the incident later Friday.

SC GRANTS BAIL TO TWO ACCUSED JAILED SINCE AUG 2018

Team Absolute | New Delhi/Mumbai

The Supreme Court on Friday granted bail to Vernon Gonsalves and Arun Ferreira-accused in Bhima Koregaon case, who were in jail since August 2018.

A bench comprising Justices Aniruddha Bose and Sudhanshu Dhulia granted bail to the duo who were booked under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967 for their alleged Maoist links.

It said that the two accused cannot be kept behind the bars for a period of over five years pending trial, solely on the ground that they are charged for serious offences.

"Considering the fact that almost five years have elapsed, we are satisfied they have made out a case for grant of bail. The allegations are serious, no doubt, but for that reason alone, bail cannot be denied," said the bench while pronouncing the order. The court ordered that the two accused will not be allowed to leave



the state of Maharashtra, while they are out on bail except with the permission of the trial court.

The top court imposed many conditions for grant of bail, like surrendering passport with NIA, sharing of location with the IO, reporting to NIA once a week, etc. The Supreme Court

clarified that in case of breach of bail conditions, it will be open for prosecution to move an application seeking cancellation of bail.

Earlier in December last year, the Bombay High Court had granted default bail to lawyer-activist Sudha Bharadwaj. However, the division

bench of Justices S.S. Shinde and N.J. Jamadar had declined the applications of eight other co-accused in the same case including Dr P. Varavara Rao, Sudhir Dhawale, Rona Wilson, Advocate Surendra Gadling, Prof Shoma Sen, Mahesh Raut, Arun Ferreira and Vernon Gonsalves.

Man stuck on tree in middle of flooded river rescued in Maharashtra

Team Absolute | Kolhapur

A 50-year-old man found stuck on a tree in the swollen Warna river on the border of Kolhapur and Sangli districts in western Maharashtra, was rescued on Friday morning, more than 12 hours after he fell into the water body, an official said.

The personnel of the Kolhapur Disaster Response Force (KDRF) rescued the man, he said. Kolhapur district has been witnessing heavy rainfall over the past few days, due to which the level of water in several rivers, including the Panchganga and the Warna, has gone up.

"A man, identified as Bajrang Khamkar, a resident of Lakhewadi village in Sangli's Shirala, had gone to see the water level of the Warna river from a bridge around 9 pm on Thursday. But he fell into the water after losing balance, and was swept away by strong currents," Prasad Sankpal, Kolhapur district disaster management officer, said.

"Today morning, some people saw him stranded on a tree in the middle of the swollen river and



alerted the local administration," he said.

The KDRF immediately dispatched a team to rescue the man, he said.

"Around 10.30 am, the squad comprising team commanders Krushna Sorte, Sunil Kamble, Shubham Katkar, Jeevan Kubde, Shrawan and Somnath Sutar, rescued Khamkar from the tree using a rescue boat. They also provided him medical assistance," Sankpal said.

Meanwhile, the water level of the Panchganga

river in Kolhapur, which is already flowing above the warning level, has reached 41.2 feet, officials said.

The river's warning mark at the Rajaram weir is 39 feet, while the danger mark is 43 feet, they said.

Kolhapur's district guardian minister Deepak Kesarkar visited the city on Thursday and took stock of the situation.

He said that after five automated gates of the Radhanagari dam were opened on Wednesday, there was an estimate that the water level of the Panchganga river would rise by 5 to 6 feet, but as the intensity of rain reduced, the water level did not rise as anticipated.

"I asked the district administration to take a review and send the people, who were evacuated and shifted to safer places, back to their places," Kesarkar said on Thursday evening.

The overall situation is likely to improve as the weather department has not issued any 'orange alert' for the district on Friday and water is also being released from Karnataka's Almatti dam, he added.

Dogs chase away Leopard outside home in Nashik

Team Absolute | Nashik

A leopard was chased away by two dogs in the Adgaon Shivar area of Nashik when it tried to attack the two sleeping animals. The incident was caught on CCTV camera.

The CCTV footage showed that a leopard slowly sneaked into the lawn area of a residence and tried to attack the dog sleeping outside the main door of the house. However, another dog woke up and started barking at the leopard and both the dogs chased the wild cat away. Later, the big cat returned to the spot but was again chased away.

Vrishali Gade, Forest Department officer, speaking to ANI, said, "In the Adgaon Shivar area, the compound area of the bungalow in which the leopard entered, belongs to a person named Prabhavkar Manude. The leopard was shown entering the compound of the bungalow and attacking the dog. But dogs attacked the leopard and chased him away."

"There is a possibility that the leopard came from the field area nearby the residence. In cooperation with the forest department, we



have begun the procedure to put up a cage. However, there is no information on the leopard harming any citizen in the area", said Gade. Further details are awaited. In a separate incident, a leopard on Wednesday evening entered the sets of a Marathi TV serial "Sukh Mhanje Nakki Kay Asta" in Film City in Mumbai's Goregaon district, triggering panic and havoc.

A viral video showed a wild cat walking up above one of the structures of the set while panic-stricken people running for safety. Some people even recorded the footage.

The incident took place at 4:00 pm on Wednesday.

Fisherman dies as boat capsizes in Arabian Sea

Mumbai: A 32-year-old fisherman from Palghar died after a boat capsized in the Arabian Sea.

"Bupendra Ambre and another fisherman ventured into the sea off the Dahanu coast on Wednesday," said Vivekanand Kadam, chief of the district disaster management cell.

"While the second fisherman swam to the shore, Ambre could not," he said.

According to the official, a search to trace Ambre was launched. Ambre's body was found on Thursday morning.

Palghar district has been receiving heavy rains this week.

On Thursday, it recorded a rainfall of 153.1 mm, the highest in the state for the day, followed by Thane at 140.4 mm. As low-lying areas got waterlogged in Thane, 153 people were evacuated and moved to camps, said officials.

UDDHAV THACKERAY DARES BJP TO FINISH HIM

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Shiv Sena (UBT) chief Uddhav Thackeray dared the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) to finish him and asserted he has the blessings of his late father Bal Thackeray and the people.

In the second part of the interview, which was published in Saamana on Thursday, the former Maharashtra chief minister said it was the Supreme Court, which resolved the Ram temple issue.

"If you want to finish me then do that. Let us see. I have the blessings of my father and the people," said Thackeray, attacking the BJP.

Thackeray also asserted that his country is his family, underlining that "this is his Hindutva".

Thackeray said he disagreed with rebel Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) leader and Maharashtra deputy CM Ajit Pawar that NCP supreme Sharad Pawar should retire due to his age.

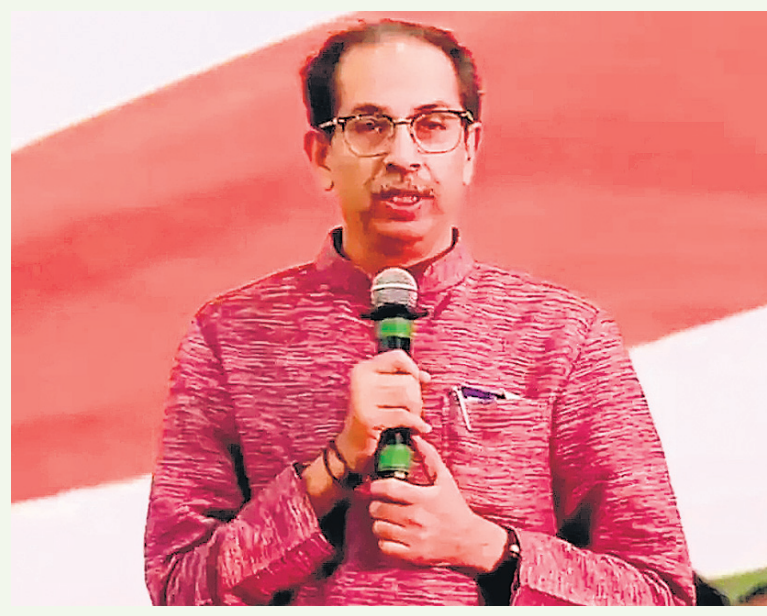
"We always respect elders and this respect should be maintained. What if someone has aged. Whom should we take blessings from. I did not like his (Ajit Pawar) remark (on Sharad Pawar)," Thackeray added.

The Shiv Sena (UBT) chief asserted that such statements went against the tradition of Maharashtra.

Ajit Pawar and eight MLAs, including Chhagan Bhujbal, Hasan Mushrif and Dilip Walse Patil, had joined the Eknath Shinde government on July 2.

The Shiv Sena (UBT) chief also claimed his father and Shiv Sena founder late Bal Thackeray had saved Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Home Minister Amit Shah and sought to know if this (attacking him) was how one repaid a favour.

The Shiv Sena (UBT) routinely claims it was Bal Thackeray who saved Modi from being removed as Gujarat chief minister after the 2002 riots there by

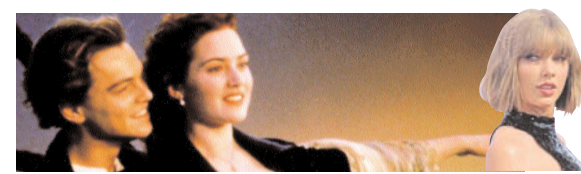


speaking to then deputy prime minister and BJP stalwart LK Advani.

Earlier, taking a dig at the Bharatiya Janata Party, Shiv Sena (UBT) chief Uddhav Thackeray had claimed the Enforcement Directorate, Income Tax department and the CBI are the "only three strong parties" in the National Democratic Alliance (NDA).

In an interview to Rajya Sabha member Sanjay Raut, who is the executive editor of Shiv Sena (UBT) mouthpiece "Saamana", Thackeray also slammed the Centre over the ethnic strife in Manipur and said Prime minister Narendra Modi is not even ready to visit the north-eastern state.

Taking an aim at a recent meeting of the BJP-led NDA, Thackeray claimed when elections approach, for the BJP its government is the NDA government. After the polls are over, it becomes the Modi-government, he added.



\$1 million copyright lawsuit filed against Taylor Swift dropped

Los Angeles | Agencies

A \$1 million copyright lawsuit filed against Canadian singer Taylor Swift has been dropped.

The 'Cruel Summer' singer was facing legal action from author Teresa La Dart, who alleged the pop star's 2019 book 'Lover', which accompanied her album of the same name, was ripped off from her own self-published collection of poetry, which was also named 'Lover'.

As per Billboard, in a motion filed in a Tennessee federal court, La Dart's lawyer said she would permanently drop the case.

The sudden voluntary dismissal, which appears to be unilateral and not the product of any kind of settlement, came after Swift's lawyers harshly criticised the lawsuit in their last filing. Demanding the case be dismissed, they said it was "legally and factually baseless" and "never should have been filed".

In her original claim, which was filed in Tennessee in August 2022, La Dart alleged "design and textual elements" from her 2010 literary collection were copied into Swift's book, which sold 2.9 mil-

lion copies in the US, and thus infringed her copyright, so she sought "in excess of one million dollars" in damages.

La Dart also said that Swift borrowed a number of visual elements that mimicked her book and that both had "substantially the same format of a recollection of past years memorialised in a combination of written and pictorial components".

As for the alleged similarities, they consisted of covers that both featured "pastel pinks and blues", as well as an image of the writer "photographed in a downward pose".

Taylor's lawyer Doug Baldrige said: "This is a lawsuit that never should have been filed. These

allegedly-infringing elements, each a generic design format, are not subject to copyright protection. Thus, defendants could not possibly have infringed plaintiff's copyright."

DC superheroes to lock horns with monster legends in 'Godzilla vs Kong vs Justice League'

Los Angeles | Agencies

The DC cinematic universe may not be doing that well, but DC comics is certainly raring with new ideas and stories and has released a new trailer for their upcoming comic book crossover 'Godzilla Vs Kong Vs Justice League' as the iconic DC superheroes battle the two monster icons, in a dark and destructive battle.

The comic will be a seven issue limited series where the DC heroes Batman, Superman, Wonder Woman, Green Lantern, Flash, Aquaman will face off against the monster duo as DC now connects itself to the 'Monster Verse'.

The trailer features some really cool artwork with Superman hearing the monsters approaching as Lois Lane screams. This is followed by Wonder Woman, Flash and Green Lantern attacking the monsters while shocked at their strength as Superman heads off to battle the monsters. But these monsters will prove too much for even the Kryptonian to handle, so Aquaman will also jump in and use his aquatic powers while Batman uses a powerful mech-suit to battle them. Indeed, the King of Monsters aka Godzilla has a bright future, because apart from getting his own features in Hollywood, the angry Kaiju monster will be getting his new Japanese live action film 'Godzilla Minus One' which will show the monster in all its dangerous glory. While Godzilla is indeed a monster, he is not some mindless raging creature who kills for the fun of it. Rather he has been described as a destructive force to ensure balance of nature, so upon witnessing that there are so many powerful metahumans out there, Godzilla is visibly upset so essentially makes it his mission to kill them, in order to restore order. Kong's own motives are unknown, but he has a rivalry with Godzilla so he is likely simply taking to the DC universe.



CARDI B RUBBISHES RUMOUR THAT PUBLIC FEUD WITH OFFSET WAS PROMOTIONAL STUNT

Los Angeles | Agencies

Rapper Cardi B has set the record straight after social media chatter alleged her public feud with husband Offset was nothing more than a stunt to promote new music.

A month after the 'Up' rapper, 30, and the Migos member, 31, argued over cheating allegations online, the couple seemingly put that aside and announced the release of their new collaborative single 'Jealousy', reports 'People' magazine. Earlier this week, Offset released a

teaser, where he parodies James Brown's bizarre CNN interview from 1988 and used the clip to address rumours about "drama" between him and his wife.

The video also featured an appearance by actress Jamie Lee Curtis, who interviewed Offset as she took on the role of CNN host Sonya Friedman. Shortly after the teaser, fans on social media began wondering if the rappers' fight was staged.

"It wasn't no STUNT (sic)", she said on Instagram, according to the Screenshot shared on Twitter. "Tasha K made some ish up and you

all were laughing about it and happy ass hell about it. Now that we putting it in the music is a stunt ... Naaa baby be mad at the one who started trolling with it (sic)", Cardi B wrote.

She added on Twitter: "They c****ie was so wet when the lie was going around."

Now, it's a different narrative when we put it in the music ...OOOO IM POPPIN IT ON THIS SONG!!!! (sic)" In her tweet, Cardi was referring to her defamation lawsuit against blogger Tasha K, which she filed in 2019 after the blogger made a series of negative claims about her. Ultimately, the court sided with Cardi B.



Kylie Minogue announces first residency in Las Vegas

Australian pop star Kylie Minogue has announced her first residency in Las Vegas. Minogue has not toured the US since 2011.

Los Angeles | Agencies

The three-month residency in Sin City begins in November this year, and will take place at The Venetian Resort's new nightclub, Voltaire.

Minogue's Vegas residency will begin on November 3 and is expected to include about a dozen shows. Tickets go on sale on August 9.

The pop icon, 55, will be the first headliner at Voltaire, a new nightclub venue at the Venetian Resort.

The pop star, whose latest album 'Tension' is due for release in September, has been performing since the late 1980s, and is known for her incredible costumes. Her first Las Vegas residency comes hot on the heels of the singer's runaway hit single 'PadamPadam'.

The Voltaire reportedly seats around 1,000 people, which will make the shows smaller and more intimate affairs than many other high profile Vegas residencies. The singer has promised extravagant costumes and dances, saying that at this point in her career she has "earned the right to" play in Las Vegas.

"I've performed a couple of times at Vegas, but as part of a tour, and particularly when I did the Showgirl tour in 2004 - at that time we said, 'oh, this feels like a Vegas show'", the Australian pop star said at a Los Angeles news conference, as per Deadline. She also promised fans a glamorous and extravagant show featuring old hits, tracks from her upcoming album 'Tension' and unheard "reinterpretations" of songs.

"I want it to be the essence of what a Kylie show has become, enough glamour and abandon. I've got some versions of songs that have not been heard, like reinterpretations of songs, which is exciting. Live bed dances, amazing costumes."

Michelle Yeoh marries long-time fiancée Jean Todt after 19 years

Los Angeles | Agencies

Oscar winning actress Michelle Yeoh has married ex-Ferrari CEO Jean Todt, 19 years after he proposed to her in June 2004.

Yeoh, 60, and her long-time beau Todt, 77, married in an intimate ceremony in Geneva on Thursday. The news was confirmed by Brazilian racing driver Felipe Massa, who posted about the happy occasion on Instagram. He shared a card that was displayed at the wedding which detailed the couple's love story. The card read: "We met in Shanghai on 4th June 2004. On 26th July 2004, JT proposed to marry M.Y and she said YES".

"Today after 6992 days in Geneva, surrounded by loving family and friends, We are so happy to celebrate this special moment together!" Massa captioned the post: "Happy marriage #JeanTodt & #michelleyeoh love you so much."

Massa also shared a selection of photos of the happy couple and their loved ones, including a selfie that showed him with the bride



and groom, and Yeoh's 2023 Best Actress Oscar statuette for her role in 'Everything Everywhere All at Once', as per 'People' magazine. Another image showed the actress in a cream silk shirt and tasseled cream skirt standing next to her husband, Massa, and other wedding guests inside an ornately decorated Genevan building. In one snap, the newlyweds embraced each other, both seemingly teary-eyed, in a doorway of a lavish venue with a chandelier lighting up the room behind them. The bride donned an off-white corset with dazzling beaded embellishments across the front of her waist and highlighting her curves. Todt is a former rally co-driver and racing director who has won several championships for Peugeot and Ferrari.

ABSOLUTE PIC OF THE DAY



Kimberley Garner



FIFA Women's World Cup

ENGLAND INCH CLOSER TO KNOCKOUT STAGE

Sydney | Agencies

European champions England edged Denmark 1-0 on Friday, inching closer to the knockout stage of the ongoing FIFA Women's World Cup.

However, the victory in Sydney may have come with a significant toll for the Lionesses, viewed as title favorites. Star player Keira Walsh seemed to sustain a severe knee injury just before halftime.

The Barcelona midfielder twisted awkwardly while trying to intercept a pass, and she was visibly distressed as she was stretched off the field, a Xinhua report said.

After a lackluster 1-0 opening win against Haiti, where a penalty kick was



the only differentiator, there were doubts about England's ability to put points on the board. But a proactive England responded to the critics with a high-energy start, punctuated in the sixth minute by a remarkable goal from Lauren James, who shot a

bullet from outside the box. The Lionesses displayed fluid passing skills, with James targeting a second goal, but Denmark remained resilient. Having successfully warded off multiple attacks, Denmark finally had an opportunity in the 24th

minute. However, Rikke Marie Madsen's shot missed the target. Denmark found their groove, pressuring England's defense, but they failed to equalize.

England surmounted Walsh's absence to control the second half, but they couldn't put Denmark away. Alessia Russo came close in the 71st minute with a determined run, but her shot drifted wide.

Denmark had late chances for an equalizer, their best effort being from Amalie Vangsgaard, who had previously scored a late winner against China in Perth, but her header struck the post. A draw in the later Group D fixture between China and Haiti on Friday would be sufficient for England to advance to the round of 16.

SOUTH AFRICA SQUANDER TWO-GOAL LEAD, HELD 2-2 BY ARGENTINA

Dunedin (New Zealand): South Africa fumbled a 2-0 lead against Argentina and had to settle for a 2-2 draw in Group G of the FIFA Women's World Cup here on Friday.

Both teams had suffered defeats in their opening group matches. Argentina had lost to Cristiana Girelli's last-gasp winner against Italy, while South Africa had been turned around 2-1 by Sweden, reports Xinhua.

In Friday's clash, South Africa took the lead in the 30th minute and doubled the lead in the 66th minute. Argentina fought back and got back on level terms. Both sides have thus kept their last 16 hopes alive before their final Group G fixtures on Saturday in Wellington.

Japan Open

Lakshya storms into third semis of the year; Prannoy, Satwik-Chirag crash out

Tokyo (Japan) | Agencies

Canada Open 2023 winner Lakshya Sen stormed into his third successive semifinal on the BWF World Tour but India suffered twin setbacks as top singles player H.S Prannoy and the in-form men's doubles pair of Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty crashed out in the quarterfinals of the Japan Open here on Friday.

Lakshya, who reached the semifinals of the US Open before losing to All-England 2023 champion Li Shi Feng, defeated Koki Watanabe of Japan in straight games, 21-15, 21-19 in a 47-minute clash on Court 2 at the Yoyogi 1st Gymnasium in the Japanese capital.

Prannoy failed to take advantage of 15-12 in the second game after winning the first and lost a hard-fought battle with top seed Viktor Axelsen of Denmark as he went down in the quarterfinals, 21-19, 18-21, 8-21 in 76 minutes.

In the men's doubles quarterfinal, the third-seeded combine of Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty went down to Lee Yang and Wang Chi-Lin of the Chinese Taipei, losing in three sets 15-21, 25-23, 16-21 in a 70-minute encounter.

The world No. 13 Lakshya Sen, who defeated China's Li Shi Feng in the final to win the Canada Open a couple of weeks back, kept the Indian flag flying in this BWF World Tour Super 750 event with a commanding performance against home-favourite Koki Watanabe. The Commonwealth Games gold medalist continued his superb run on the tour and will face the winner between



Thailand's Kunlavut Vitidsarn and Jonatan Christie of Indonesia for a place in the summit clash.

Prannoy, the other Indian shuttler to reach the men's singles quarterfinals, stunned top-seed and former World Champion Axelsen of Denmark by winning the opening game of their quarterfinals clash.

Prannoy trailed Axelsen 1-5 after the Dane won four points in a row in the first game. Prannoy reduced the margin to 3-6 but maintained the edge of 17-12 before Prannoy won five consecutive points to tie the score 17-17. Axelsen surged ahead to 19-17 before Prannoy won four points in a row to win the first game. The 31-year-old Prannoy jumped to a 5-0 lead in the second game and extended it to 7-1 as he maintained his advantage and looked on course to win the match and improve his 2-6 head-to-head disadvantage against Axelsen. However, the Danish shuttler fought back to reduce it to 7-5 and then went on to level the scores at 15-15. Axelsen won four points in a row from 17-1 to win the second game 21-18.

The Hundred

Jemimah Rodrigues replaces injured Heather Graham at Northern Superchargers

London | Agencies

India batter Jemimah Rodrigues will be returning to Northern Superchargers for a third successive season at The Hundred after she was signed as late replacement for injured Australian allrounder Heather Graham on Friday.

Jemimah was Superchargers' leading run-getter in the inaugural season, in 2021, aggregating 249 runs in seven innings. However, she missed the majority of last year's competition for the franchise with a wrist injury.

Superchargers opted not to retain the 22-year old Indian ahead of March's draft but have now brought her back as a replacement.



"I'm so excited to be back in The Hundred," Rodrigues was quoted as saying in the franchise's media release. "It's a world-class competi-

tion and I've had so much taking part in it previously. I was very disappointed to have to withdraw last year through injury so it's great to be back. Headingley is a brilliant ground to play at, with great fans, and I can't wait to be back out there," she added.

Jemimah's late entry now makes her the fourth Indian in this year's competition after Harmanpreet Kaur (Trent Rockets), Smriti Mandhana (Southern Brave - retained) and Richa Ghosh (London Spirit).

Meanwhile, Cricket Australia have pulled out senior duo of Alyssa Healy and Ellyse Perry from this season after they sustained injuries in the second ODI of the ongoing series in Ireland.

PAPUA NEW GUINEA CLINCH QUALIFICATION FOR 2024 MEN'S T20 WORLD CUP

Port Moresby: Papua New Guinea (PNG)

have clinched their berth in the 2024 Men's T20 World Cup, to be held in West Indies and the USA, after beating the Philippines by 100 runs, which guarantees a first-place finish for them in the ongoing East Asia-Pacific Qualifier.

PNG, led by Assad Vala, played in the first round of the 2021 Men's T20 World Cup in Muscat, Oman. Now, in the ongoing competition, the hosts maintained a clean slate with wins in each of the five games played so far -- twice against Vanuatu and the Philippines and once against Japan.

With their latest win against the Philippines, the PNG now have 10 points from five wins, meaning their place in the 2024 T20 World Cup is confirmed with one game to go, against Japan, on Saturday.



Mary Waldron, Ireland's most-capped female cricketer, retires from international cricket

Dublin | Agencies

Wicketkeeper-batter Mary Waldron, Ireland's most-capped female cricketer, has announced her retirement, bringing an end to an international career of 13 years that included 184 appearances and 148 dismissals.

Mary was to retire after the third ODI of the current series against Australia, but an unfortunate injury sustained during the second ODI on Tuesday led to her being ruled out of the playing eleven for Friday's match.

"To my family and Roxane, thank you for your support -- and for giving me a roof over my head whenever I needed it. More specifically, to Mum and Dad the best supporters in the world - thank you for everything. Finally, to my teammates, I will miss you so much, but can't wait to follow your journey over the years ahead," said Mary in a statement issued by Cricket Ireland.

Born in Dublin, Mary, 39, was late to cricket, having first forged a football career that led to senior international representation for Ireland. It wasn't until her mid-20s that she committed to cricket and quickly began to establish herself as the number one wicketkeeper in Ireland's women's team.



Mary played 56 ODIs and 88 T20Is for Ireland, but was more renowned for her quick hands and agile footwork behind the stumps. She captained the senior side 10 times, with a 60% win rate and was a central part of Ireland Women's senior leadership team, being influential off and on the field. Aside from dominating the Ireland women's wicketkeeping records, Mary finishes as the 10th highest run-scorer for the team with a top-score of 55 not out against West Indies.

Ashes 2023, 5th Test

BOWLERS GIVE AUSTRALIA ADVANTAGE AGAINST ENGLAND ON DAY 1

London | Agencies

Australia had a productive outing on day one of the fifth and final Ashes 2023 Test at The Oval, bowling out England for 283 before openers Usman Khawaja and David Warner made a solid start with the bat, here on Thursday.

Khawaja (26 not out) and Marnus Labuschagne (2 not out) were unbeaten at the crease, with Australia ending on 61/1 at stumps on Day 1, trailing England by 222 runs.

Winning the toss and opting to bowl first, Pat Cummins and his men had to face a slog at the start, with England coming out all guns blazing. Ben Duckett and Zak Crawley took the aggressive route, attacking the Australian pacers.

Australia got their first breakthrough with Mitchell Marsh dismissing Ben Duckett for 41 in the 12th



over. The next over saw Cummins dismiss Crawley for 22. Australia continued building on their momentum, with Joe Root being dismissed by Hazlewood in the 16th over.

Moeen Ali and Harry Brook continued to attack, building a counter-

attacking partnership, as the sides headed to lunch at 131/3.

The 111-run stand finally came to an end when Todd Murphy dismissed Ali on 34. This brought a flurry of wickets for Australia as they made the most of the helpful overhead condi-

tions. England skipper Ben Stokes was the next one to perish with Mitchell Starc dismissing him for 3 with a peach of a delivery. Jonny Bairstow (4) then followed the England skipper back into the pavilion. Brook's sizzling knock of 85 finally came to an end too as Starc was again the man to do the damage, with England in trouble ahead of tea. Chris Woakes and Mark Wood played out the remainder of the session but England were on the backfoot.

Wood (28) and Woakes (36) though made crucial contributions before being dismissed by Murphy and Starc respectively. This was sandwiched by the wicket of Stuart Broad in the middle as England's first innings would come to an end at 283.

The Australian openers -- Warner and Khawaja walked out in challenging conditions but were determined in their effort to stay at the crease.

World University Games

Indian women's compound archery team beats China to reach final

Chengdu (China) | Agencies

Indian women's compound archery team defeated hosts China to reach the final at the FISU World University Games, here on Friday.

Indian team consisting of Purvasha Sudhir Shende, Pragati and Avnit Kaur registered a 229-224 win over the Chinese team to set a final date with South Korea. The semifinal win assured India at least a silver medal.

However, the men's compound team of Aman Saini, Sangampreet Singh Bisla and Rishabh Yadav suffered a narrow 227-228 loss at the



hands of China in the semifinal. The men's team will now take on South Korea in the bronze medal play-off.

In the men's individual event, Saini got the better of compatriot Rishabh by a narrow margin of 147-146 in the quarterfinal. He will next take

up against Cho Sua of Korea. on fellow countryman Sangampreet, who defeated Frenchman Cadronet Nathanin 148-142, in the semifinal. In the women's individual, Avneet defeated Pragati 145-144 to enter the semifinal, where she will be up against Cho Sua of Korea.

UEFA Conference League

Maccabi Tel Aviv down Petrocub Hincesti; Hapoel Beer Sheva beat Penevezys in qualifiers

Jerusalem (Israel): | Agencies

Israel's Maccabi Tel Aviv secured a 3-0 win over Moldova's Petrocub Hincesti in the first leg second qualifying round of the UEFA Conference League.

Maccabi dominated most of the first home game under new head coach Robbie Keane on Thursday evening. They took the lead in the 13th minute from Dan Biton's free-kick from the right. The home side had several other scoring chances during the first half, but Moldovan goalkeeper Cristian Avram was equal to all of them.

Former Guangzhou R&F and PSV Eindhoven striker



Eran Zahavi doubled the lead for Maccabi in the 62nd minute with a long-range left-footed effort. Dor Peretz added another in injury time to secure the victory for Maccabi after an assist from Serbian striker Djordja Jovanovic, reports Xinhua.

The second leg on August 3 will be played in Moldova's capital Chisinau, as Petrocub Hincesti's pitch is too small for a UEFA game. Israeli side Hapoel Beer

Sheva achieved a 1-0 home win over Lithuania's FK Panevezys in the first leg second qualifying round of the UEFA Conference League on Thursday evening. The home team got on the scoreboard in the 35th minute thanks to midfielder Shay Elias, who slotted home after good work from Ramzi Safuri.

Beer Sheva came close to doubling the score in the second half, but Lithuanian goalkeeper Vytautas Cerniauskas prevented efforts by Safuri and Helder Lopez in the 59th and 67th minutes respectively.

Panevezys almost scored a dramatic equaliser in the 89th minute, but Jefferey Sarpong's shot just missed the target.

'If you can't pick him, you can't play him'

SAYS WASIM JAFFER ON WEST INDIES' STRUGGLE AGAINST KULDEEP

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Former India batter Wasim Jaffer opined that West Indies struggled to handle Kuldeep Yadav's bowling as they were unable to read the left-arm wrist-spinner's variations, length and lines effectively in the first ODI at Kensington Oval in Bridgetown.

Kuldeep produced a brilliant performance in the first ODI, returning with impressive figures of 4 for 6 in three overs as India bundled out West Indies for 114 in 23 overs at the Kensington Oval. In response, India chased down the target in 22.5 overs with five wickets in hand.

Speaking to ESPNcricinfo, Jaffer pointed out that Kuldeep proved to be too formidable for the West Indies, as their batters were completely baffled by the unpredictable spin of the



ball. "That's what wrist-spinners can do (run through the tail). If you can't pick him, then you can't play him. Sometimes, to a finger spinner, you know what's coming out. But, with wrist spinners, the ball can go both ways. That's what happened."

"Other than Shai Hope, the other guys couldn't pick him - couldn't pick the line, couldn't pick the spin. Wrist-spinners can break partnerships and run through the tail and that's what Kuldeep is good at. When he gets going, he can run through a side, and can get you that double or triple strike in quick time. That's exactly what he did today," Jaffer said.

In addition to Kuldeep, experienced spinner Jadeja also made a strong impression with the ball, registering excellent figures of 3/37 from six overs.



Saba Azad is on a vacay with Hrithik in Argentina; calls him 'hippo heart'



Team Absolute | New Delhi

Bollywood superstar Hrithik Roshan is currently on a vacation to Argentina, with his girlfriend, actress-singer, Saba Azad.

Saba took to her Instagram Stories, and shared some love-struck photos with her beau.

The photos were clicked in a restaurant in Buenos Aires. Saba shared a solo picture of Hrithik, wherein he is seen donning a sleeveless black T-shirt, and a matching cap.

The 'Greek God' of Bollywood as Hrithik is referred to by his fans, is gazing right into the camera, and is relishing some yummy desserts. Saba

captioned the post as, "My hippo heart".

Saba also shared a selfie with Hrithik, which seems to be from a different location. In the click, the lovebirds are flaunting their smiles for the camera, while twinning in a beanie cap.

Hrithik wore a black jacket, with matching beanie, while Saba is donning a pastel blue sweater with a grey beanie.

She captioned it as, "Buenos Dias", and gave a geotag of Buenos Aires, the capital of Argentina.

Saba is one half of Mumbai-based electro funk duo Madboy/Mink. She made her Bollywood debut as one of the leads, Raaga in the indie film 'Dil Kabaddi' in 2008.

She is also known for her leading role in the romantic comedy film 'Mujhse Fraaandship Karoge'. She also played the role of Dingo in the 2016 Y-Films web series, 'Ladies Room'. She was last seen in the web show 'Rocket Boys'.

Saba also sang the title track 'Sab Farzi', for the Shahid Kapoor starrer crime thriller 'Farzi'.

While Hrithik married Sussanne Khan on December 20, 2000, the two got divorced in November 2014. The couple has two sons Hrehaan and Hridhaan. Hrithik and Saba are dating for more than a year now. On the work front, Hrithik has the aerial action drama 'Fighter' in the pipeline.

Sonali Bendre offers rose to Harrdy Sandhu as he croons 'Soch'

Team Absolute | New Delhi

On a special demand from the 'India's Best Dancer 3' judge Sonali Bendre, singer Harrdy Sandhu will serenade the crowd with his super hit song 'Soch'.

The song happens to be Sonali's personal favourite. Harrdy's soulful rendition of the song is sure to resonate with the audience.

In the upcoming 'Andaaz Undekha' special episode, contestants will be challenged to showcase their never-seen-before talents, taking the competition to new heights.

The evening promises to be unforgettable as renowned choreographer Marzi Pestonji steps into the shoes of Terence Lewis, adding his dance prowess and a fun element to the show.

To add to the excitement, the stage will be graced by the melodious presence of the nation's heartthrob, Harrdy Sandhu. Harrdy will be promoting his upcoming song 'Psycho', and he is set to captivate the audience with his performance. Following his mesmerising performance, Sonali couldn't contain her admiration and joined Harrdy on stage, presenting him with a beautiful rose.

She expressed, "I'm a huge fan of yours. This song is my absolute favourite, and expressing love in Punjabi always holds a special place in my heart, which is why I married a Punjabi."

In response, Harrdy humbly



shared his journey, stating, "This song could have been my last one as I had no money to make another, but luckily, the song became a massive hit."



Rajveer Deol, Paloma shine in new poster of their debut film

Team Absolute | New Delhi

After treating the audience with individual posters of debutant actors Rajveer Deol and Paloma, the makers of sweet love story 'Dono' on Friday unveiled a new poster, showcasing their chemistry. Rajveer is the younger son of Bollywood star Sunny Deol, while Paloma is the daughter of Poonam Dhillon. It also marks the directorial debut of Avnish S Barjatya, son of veteran director Sooraj R Barjatya.

The teaser and individual posters opened to waves of love and warmth for the debutant artists. Paloma's old-world grace and contemporary flair as Meghna charmed the audience, while Rajveer as Dev made his captivating screen presence felt. In the new poster, together they bring an effortlessly sweet and genuine

chemistry to the screen, making their debut a promising experience to look forward to. The poster shows Rajveer's character Dev completely lovestruck, and in awe of Paloma's character Meghna. Dev is wearing a blue shirt, paired with beige coloured pants, flaunting his sweet smile, and giving the feels of the next chocolate boy of the B-Town.

While Paloma as Meghna is wearing a red dress with balloon sleeves, with several bracelets in one hand. She has kept her hair open in a wavy style. The look was completed with nude pink eyeshadow, nude pink lips and thick eyebrows. She is blushing, with her eyes closed, and her one hand is placed on Dev's leg. Dev gazing at Paloma with all the love, is the proof that the tale is about innocence, and romance between the two strangers, who are bound to have one destination.



'ROCKY AUR RANI...' CAPTURES HEARTS WHEN IT'S NOT INDUCING EYE ROLLS



TEAM ABSOLUTE

Film: Rocky Aur Rani Kii Prem Kahaani Duration: 168 minutes

Director: Akaran Johar

Cast: Dharmendra, Jaya Bachchan, Shabana Azmi, Ranveer Singh and Alia Bhatt Cinematography: Manush Nandan Music: Pritam

Ratings: ***1/2



Mumbai: Family, love, differences between the couple and lots of drama have always been at the core of umpteen love stories. So what's new about Karan Johar's 'Rocky Aur Rani Kii Prem Kahaani'?

There isn't any, and yet there is some!

It's so much that it's 'old wine in a new bottle', and yet, there is a huge difference too. Besides the presence and the unique combination of veterans such as Dharmendra, Shabana Azmi and Jaya Bachchan, there's the chemistry between Ranveer Singh and Alia Bhatt that is easily the highlight of this nearly three-hour-long family entertainer.

And yes, there's Pritam's foot-tapping music too, though what the audience seems to be enjoying the most are some of the most popular Hindi film hits from the '60s through the '80s -- these have them singing

along loudly. That's not all that makes this film special. For once, Johar takes several leaps forward and tries to wedge in many life lessons into the script that would make people sit and take note of. After all, we love bittersweet doses of messaging in glossy packaging -- these are far easier to swallow.

It looks earnest and determined to make audiences have fun all the way. It is an unabashed family drama (though, thankfully, not a tearjerker) that will capture hearts when it isn't inducing eye rolls. It clearly states, "For lovers, the steering wheel may be in their hands, but it's the family navigating as backseat drivers."

Delhi boy Rocky Randhawa (Singh) is a loud and flamboyant Punjabi young man who has the onerous task of living up to the expectations of his

father, Tijori (Aamer Bashir), and tyrant grandmother Dhanlakshmi (Bachchan) as the "eklaunta waris" who would take up the reins of the huge mithai business that seems more like an empire.

He also charms his way into the heart of Rani, a fire-brand no-nonsense young woman whose feminist views and fearless approach to the age-old patriarchal views has a minister she interviews live on television fuming.

Love may have a towering presence and conquer all, but the Chatterjees and the Randhawas are poles apart: their culture, their political views, their lifestyle and even language are colossal barriers. The Chatterjees are refined, classy and have a keen sense of poetry and music, for the Randhawas, it's money power and 'Khandaan ki izzat' that holds sway.

Guru Randhawa says 'You Talking to Me?' is an ode to Hollywood legend Robert De Niro

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Punjabi singer Guru Randhawa, who is known for tracks like 'Lahore', 'Morni Banke', 'Suit Suit' and 'Ban Jaa Tu Meri Rani', on Friday dropped another banger titled 'You Talking to Me?'

The song is Guru's ode to the legendary actor Robert De Niro and his iconic dialogue "You talking to me?" from the Martin Scorsese cult classic 'Taxi Driver'.

For the song, music producer Trip Beats has combined Guru Randhawa's signature style with elements of trap music doling out an addictive and irresistible sound. He said, "Blending Guru's unique style with the trap music influence allowed us to craft a track that pushes the boundaries of contemporary music. I'm confident that the audience will be blown away by the non-linear composition and the infectious energy of this track."

Talking about the song, Guru Randhawa said, "Robert De Niro has been one of my favourites. When I decided to create 'You Talking to Me?', it felt like the perfect opportunity to pay tribute to the legend himself while also delivering something fresh and exciting for my fans. The song has an unconventional feel and vibe to it right from the first beat drop. The track exudes a sense of raw energy, making it an ideal anthem whether you're blasting it on a massive speaker setup or vibing on a drive."

The music video of the song is directed by Leo Brthr and features fast cars, racing tracks, and all things cool and dope. Producer Bhushan Kumar said, "Guru is one of the finest artists we have in the music industry. He always has something unique to offer to his listeners and this time too he has taken his music a notch higher with 'You



'Talking To Me?' and I'm sure the music lovers will enjoy this track."

INSTAGRAM PIC OF THE DAY



Fatima