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5-YEAR PROGRAMME TO ACCELERATE COUNTRIES' CAPABILITIES IN FOREST MONITORING

To celebrate Earth Day, the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations and the United Kingdom on Saturday launched AIM4Forests, a five-year programme designed to accelerate countries' capabilities in forest monitoring as a part of global efforts to stop deforestation and forest degradation, and restore forests.

- More than 420 million hectares of forest have disappeared since 1990. And although deforestation rates have slowed down significantly, 10 million hectares are still being lost every year.
- Through the pledges made at the UN's climate talks in Glasgow in 2021, world leaders committed to working collectively to halt and reverse forest loss and land degradation by 2030, sustainable land use, and to the conservation, protection, sustainable management and restoration of forests, and other terrestrial ecosystems.



Team Absolute | New Delhi

ne barrier to progress has been a lack of information. Those that are responsible for forests need accurate data to inform the right course of action. In this regard, countries urgently need national forest monitoring systems (NFMS) embedded in government institutions that deliver high-quality data, and provide the critical information needed for domestic forest-related priorities and policies, including on land-use deci-

Well-designed NFMS enable governments to report emission reductions internationally through Measurement, Reporting and

Verification (MRV) processes. This is a key step towards accessing climate finance and raising levels of ambition of international commitments under

the Paris Agreement. To address such challenges, the AIM4Forests programme (Accelerating Innovative Monitoring for Forests) will support domestic forest monitoring based on modern technologies and technical innovation, and also leveraging the UK expertise in academia, research and development and in the use of space data and remote sensing.

"FAO welcomes the partnership with the United Kingdom, which will be fundamental in supporting member countries' efforts to sustainable forest management and restoration, supporting the achievement of their commitments such as nationally determined contributions (NDCs). Forest and land use data are critical for overall land use planning in an integrated manner, to transition to sustainable production, address biodiversity loss and climate change," said FAO Deputy Director-General Maria Helena Semedo.

She added, "This contribution from the United Kingdom will support key areas of FAO's strategies on climate change and biodiversity.

The role of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities (IPLC) in forest management and conservation is increasingly recognised. The programme therefore supports IPLC efforts to monitor forest areas, further strengthening their role as forest stewards. The new 24.5 million pound programme is part of the UK's International Climate Finance commitment to spend 11.6 billion pounds between 2021-22 and 2025-26, including at least 3 billion pounds on solutions that protect and restore nature. The programme will run until 2028 and work with 20 countries across Africa, the Asia-Pacific region and Latin America. The new programme will be implemented by the National Forest Monitoring team of FAO's Forestry Division working in collaboration with UN-REDD and GFOI to coordinate country technical assistance on

India successfully orbits 2 Singapore satellites

was made possible by

NewSpace India Ltd-the

belong to ISRO, Indian

and Technology (IIST),

Astrophysics.

Institute of Space Science

Bellatrix Aerospace, Dhruva

The ISRO uses the final

stage (PS4) of the PSLV rock-

et as an orbital platform for

in-orbit experiments and has

named it as PSLV Orbital

Experimental Module

Space, and Indian Institute of

Sriharikota

India on Saturday successfully placed into orbit TeLEOS-2 and Lumilite-4 satellites both from Singapore.

With this latest rocketing success, the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) has orbited 424 foreign satellites from 36 countries since 1999.

Speaking about the mission Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) Chairman S. Somanath said: "The PSLV rocket has placed the satellites at the intended orbit. The PSLV has demon-

strated its higher reliability.' Adding further Somanath said the ISRO team has done several new things to bring down the rocket's cost as the industry is gearing up manufacture.

He said the rocket's upper stage on which seven nonseparable payloads are fixed will be orbiting for a month and do the experiments.

"For the first time, a deployable solar panel has been fixed on the upper stage," Somanath added.

The PSLV Core Alone variant rocket carrying the 741 kg synthetic aperture radar satellite TeLEOS-2 as the primary passenger and the 16 kg Lumilite-4, a technology demonstration nano satellite as the co-passenger blasted

off from the first launch pad The four stage expendable, at Satish Dhawan Space 44.4 m tall PSLV-C55 rocket Centre (SDSC) here at 2.20 weighing 228 ton slowly rose-up towards the skies The rocketing on Saturday from the first launchpad here

The rocket gained speed commercial arm of India's as it went up while emitting a Department of Space -- by rolling thunder sound.

with thick orange flame at its

contracting with the two par-The PSLV rocket is pow-These two satellites apart, ered by solid (first and third stages) and liquid (second there are seven non-separaand fourth stages) fuels alterble experimental payloads which are part of the rocket's natively. final stage (PS4). They

The PSLV in normal configuration is a four stage/engine expendable rocket powered by solid and liquid fuels alternatively with booster motors strapped on to the first stage to give higher thrust during the initial flight moments.

The rocket that flew on Saturday was the 57th flight of PSLV and 16th mission of the Core Alone variant, without any strap-on motors.

Hyderabad: 10 lakh biryanis, 4 lakh haleem orders on Swiggy this Ramzan



Team Absolute Hyderabad

eople in Hyderabad ordered a whopping 10 lakh biryanis and 4 lakh plates of haleem on leading food-delivery platform Swiggy during the holy month of Ramzan.Ramzan order analysis report released by Swiggy on Friday highlights the food trends in the city during Ramzan.The order analysis reveals that traditional favourites like haleem, chicken biryani and samosas remain the most popular dishes during Ramzan.Living up to

its legacy as the biryani capital of the country, Hyderabad ordered a whopping 10 lakh biryanis on Swiggy this Ramzan. This is 20 per cent higher than the same period last year. Haleem, a Ramzan special dish, saw over 4,00,000 orders placed for more than nine variants, including chicken, palamuru pottel, Persian Special haleem and dry fruit haleem. Mutton Haleem was the city's favourite variant.

Festive specials like Malpua, Firni and Rabdi saw a 20 per cent increase in orders.Crispy and piping hot

samosas and bhajiyas were the favourite for Iftar or breaking the fast. The most popular Iftar items included samosas and bhajia along es made from dates. T was a whopping 77 per cent increase in orders for bhajiyas.

The findings were based on an analysis of orders placed on Swiggy from March 23 to April 18.

Restaurants such as Pista House Haleem, Paradise Biryani, and Mehfil emerged as Hyderabad's favourites during Iftar. Swiggy has also launched an innovative OOH campaign with an LED billboard to celebrate Ramzan's festivities. The billboards with a Haleem handi on a burner have been mounted at Secunderabad and Tolichowki loca-

tions in the city of Hyderabad. Consumers turned to Instamart for the quick delivery of iftar necessities which included dates and other dry fruits to break their fasts. There were close to half a million orders placed for dry fruits and dates this Ramzan with a significant increase in the number of orders placed just

1.5K camera traps to be installed in north Bengal forests to track tiger movement

Kolkata Agencies

n an attempt to track the movement of Royal Bengal tigers reportedly frequentstate forest department has decided to install 1,500 camera traps in three reserve forest zones in the region.

The three reserve forest zones are Mahananda Wildlife Sanctuary in Darjeeling district, Neora Valley National Park in Kalimpong district and Buxa Tiger Reserve in Alipurduar district.

"The installation of camera traps will also give some idea as to whether these tigers are just frequenting these forest zones in search of prey or a few of them have made these areas their permanent habitat," a forest official said.

The forest department believes that tigers are frequenting these forest zones due to three developments. The first is of course occasional capture of tigers by the existing camera-traps. The second is occasional spotting of tiger excreta and pugmarks in these areas. The third is recovery of body parts of large herbivorous animals like bisons, which are not possible for the leopards in these zones to kill.

"So, the forest department has decided to



install 1,500 additional camera traps in these three reserve forest zones to get more information about the big cats. Unlike the ones already installed there, the new camera traps will all be imported high-end ones," the forest official said.

The forest department has already outlined an ambitious plan to reestablish the Buxa Tiger Reserve as an ideal abode for Royal Bengal tigers. An agreement has

been signed with the Assam government to bring a couple of tigers from there and release them in the Buxa Tiger Reserve to increase the big cat population.

Since 1998, there has been no evidence confirming the presence of tigers in the BTR. But in December 2021, a tiger was spotted in the forest reserve zone. It was, however, later confirmed that the big cat had migrated to the zone temporarily.

Salman and Aamir celebrate Eid, treat fans with a picture

Mumbai: Bollywood superstars Salman Khan and Aamir Khan



shirt and matching pants. Aamir wore a blue T-shirt and black jeans. The two smiled for the camera as they got clicked.

picture. In the image, Salman was

seen looking dapper in a black

Salman wrote: "Chand Mubarak."Sangeeta Bijlani took to the comment section and mentioned: "Chaand Mubarak.'

On the work front, Salman's latest Eid offering to his fans is 'Kisi Ka Bhai Kisi Ki Jaan', which is directed by Farhad Samii. It also stars Pooja Hegde, Shehnaaz Gill, Palak Tiwari and Venkatesh

Daggubati in pivotal roles. Meanwhile Aamir was last seen in the film 'Laal Singh Chaddha' opposite Kareena Kapoor.

IPL 2023: RCB to play Green Game on Sunday

Bengaluru Agencies

oyal Challengers Bangalore (RCB) are all set to showcase their commitment towards green initiatives as they will play the "Green Game" of this year's IPL on Sunday at the M Chinnaswamy Stadium.

The Green Game was conceived in 2011 and since then RCB have dedicated one of their home matches to the 'Go Green' initiatives to spread awareness and need for a cleaner and greener environ-

RCB players will also be sporting recycled green jerseys for the blockbuster match on Sunday. These jerseys are made utilising the recycled waste collected at the stadium.

RCB's season opener match alone generated 9047.6 kg waste in the stadium as much as 19488 water bottles were used.

As per estimates, an average of 8 tons of dry waste, food waste, and other recyclable wastes are generated from the stadium after every



match. Implementation of waste segregation practices have helped to gather and segregate dry, food and non-recyclable wastes and process them completely to further recycle and make recycled products like shirts and other sustainable

goods.Working closely with Good Era, Implementation Partner for Go Green Initiative, RCB have uniquely developed a Green Army, a one-ofits- kind sustainability help group that they take copious help to keep the stadium premises clean.

"RCB is the world's first carbon neutral cricket team and the foremost cricket franchise in the world rallying behind a people's driven movement for greener planet. "Go Green" is not just an initiative for us but an aspiring movement to seek behavioural changes, contributing to solving various challenges related to climate change. It transcends beyond cricket and connects fans at a much deeper level, an engagement with a purpose," said Rajesh Menon, VP & Head of Royal Challengers Bangalore.

This year's mission will also see RCB restore two lakes in South Bengaluru covering 44 acres and close to 200 schools will see the Green School certification roll out.

RCB has created a digital green pledge forum on their official website for the fans to come together, synergize commitment around chosen initiatives on pressing issues of sustainability to complete with contributions/on ground implementation programs/measuring impact and sustenance.

India's first animal birth control centre in Lucknow

he country's first animal birth control centre has been set up in Lucknow and more such facilities will be built across the state soon.

Animal Birth Control centres are intended to be dedicated facilities where stray dogs and cats will be brought for sterilisation, and dropped back to the localities they were picked up from.

In these centres, trained para veterinarians will conduct sterilisation and provide aftercare to the strays. This process was so far being undertaken by the Lucknow Municipal Corporation at

temporary centres. In this context, the 'Dog Matters' seminar, held by the urban development department on Thursday evening, discussed the Animal Birth Control (ABC) project in view of the raging debate over dog

bite cases in the city. Speakers stressed that ani-

mals' aggression towards humans is a responsive action to the aggression meted out to them by humans themselves. Another major reason for dogs straying into residential areas is dumping and littering of food waste on the streets, said experts. Animal rights activists, veterinarians, and several district administration officials were present at this convention to discuss the importance of the ABC project taken up in Lucknow, and the importance of a healthy coexistence of man and animals in society. ABC committees will be formed at the cen-

tral, state, and district levels.

IN ELECTION YEAR 2024, ISRO TO SEND UP UNCREWED **ROCKET AS PART OF GAGANYAAN MISSION**

Venkatachari Jagannathan Agencies

riharikota Ahead of the 2024 General Elections, the Indian space agency ISRO will launch the first uncrewed test rocket Geosynchronous Satellite Launch Vehicle (GSLV) as a part of the Gaganyaan Mission - India's human space mission.

The Chairman of Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) S. Somanath said here on Saturday the space agency is planning to send up the first uncrewed GSLV rocket in February 2024 as part of the Gaganyaan Mission. The human module will land in the sea.

He was speaking to reporters here after the successful launch of two Singaporean satellites -TeLEOS-2 and Lumilite-4, with the rocket Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV).

Somanath said prior that there will a test of Gagayaan Mission in June this year where the rocket will go up to 12-14 km and test its safety sys-

Queried about the next step in ISRO developing a reusable rocket - similar to the USA's Space Shuttle, Somanath said the space agency will send up a Oribital Recovery Vehicle. The vehicle will be in the space for some days and come back.

On forthcoming space missions of ISRO, he said the space agency will send the Aditya L1,



heavier rocket GSLV and a mission with Small Satellite Launch Vehicle (SSLV). According to D. Radhakrishnan, Chairman and

Managing Director of NewSpace India Ltd (NSIL) the commercial arm of Department of Space, there is emerging demand for SSLV rocket for orbiting small satellites. Similarly after the successful launch of 72 OneWeb satellites - for a fee of over Rs 1,000 crore- with ISRO's LVM3 rocket, there is a good business potential for that rocket as well, Radhakrishnan said.

He said the NSIL is planning to build communication satellites and launch the same.

Be that as it may, speaking about the Saturday's successful PSLV rocket mission, Somanath said the space agency did some re-engineering to cut costs without compromising on its performance. The ISRO officials are also upbeat about using the PSLV rocket's upper stage as a stablised orbital platform on which small payloads are fitted to carry out

The upper stage of PSLV-C55 rocket that went up on Saturday had seven experimental payloads.

According to M. Sankaran, Director, UR Rao Satellite Centre (URSC), the thought of using the upper stage came four years ago as it will be in the space for a long time.

Sankaran said the space agency took steps to stabilise the upper stage in space and then upgraded the same.

Somanath said commercial electronics are used in the upper stage to make it as an orbital platform and hence its life span will be short.

Tribal body claims Rs 27.51 crore scam in airport rehabilitation scheme in Arunachal

Itanagar | Agencies

tribal organisation on Saturday alleged that the anti-corruption bureau of 'Arunachal Pradesh Police, the Special Investigation Cell (SIC), is not taking any action against the accused who reportedly siphoned off Rs 27.51 crore allocated for the Hollongi airport rehabilitation scheme.

The Chakma Hajong Rights Alliance (CHRA), an organisation of Chakma and Hajongs tribes, alleged in a statement that no arrest has been made in this case so far despite the registration of an FIR by the SIC on September 6 last year against many offi-

The funds were sanctioned for 156 Chakma families displaced due to the construction of the Hollongi airport under the Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act, 2013.

CHRA spokesperson Krishna Chakma said that the Act is absolutely clear that the rehabilitation and resettlement funds have to be deposited into the bank accounts of each displaced person linked with Aadhaar card.

Instead of transferring the funds to the displaced victims, the project administrator illegally created the Chakma Rehabilitation and Resettlement Committee (CRRC), transferred



the rehabilitation funds to the CRRC which were then misappropriated, Krishna Chakma alleged. President of the Committee for Citizens Rights of the Chakmas and Hajongs of Arunachal Pradesh, Santosh Chakma, said that the lack of action in the Hollongi airport rehabilitation scam poorly reflects on Chief Minister Pema Khandu's government when it comes to tackling corruption in the state.

IMD predicts heavy rains in 'Conspiracy' to reject Cong candidates' nominations, 15 TN districts on Sunday

Chennai Agencies

he Regional Meteorological Centre (RMC) of the Indian Meteorological Department (IMD) has predicted heavy rains in 15 districts in Tamil Nadu on Sunday. The RMC said in a state-

ment, "Nilgiris, Coimbatore, Tirupur, Erode, Theni, Dindigul, Tirunelveli, Tenkasi, Dharmapuri, Salem, Kallakurichi, Vellore, Ranipet, Tiruppatur and Tiruvannamalai districts are likely to receive heavy rains

on April 23." The statement also said that light to moderate rains with thunderstorms will occur at a few places in Puducherry and Karaikkal on April 24 and April 25.



mercury in the next few days in many parts of the state

show. He will then address a

meet up with supreme heads

After staying the night at

Kochi, the next morning, he

will reach the state capital to

flag off the first Vande Bharat

express and then proceed to

he will inaugurate a few proj-

the Central Stadium where

ects and address a public

meeting at around noon.

He will then leave for

Gujarat.

meeting of the youth and

of nine different Churches.

with Chennai and its suburbs set touch a maximum tem-

Bengaluru | Agencies

arnataka Congress President D. K. Shivakumar on Saturday accused the BJP, Chief Minister's office and BJP legal cell of "conspiring" to reject the nomination papers of the candidates of the grand-old party, a charge denied by the BJP.

Addressing a press conference here, Shivakumar said that his nomination paper saw maximum downloads.

"There is a legal team stationed at Kanakapura. Why downloads in such large numbers? This implies that their objective is to get my nomination rejected," he said.

"BJP, Chief Minister's Office and legal cell have conspired. Congress candidates' nominations have been downloaded. The Election Commission should focus on this development. BJP candidates' nomination papers in Savadatti constituency have problems, many BJP candidates' nominations have problems. But, nothing has been done," he alleged.

"They attempted to reject my nomination. If they can do this to me, what would be the fate of common candidates? The Election



Commission should not bog down to any influence. The Chief Minister's office is downloading nominations.

The call details of the Chief Minister's office must be gathered. I am making a direct allegation, please investigate the matter," Shivakumar demanded.

Shivakumar also alleged that Union Minister for State for Agriculture and Farmers Welfare Shobha Karandlaje is "conspiring to finish off" former Chief Minister B.S. Yediyurappa by joining hands with her other party leaders. "I can reveal details of how she is making plans to finish off Yediyurappa," he

Shivakumar claimed that the Lingayat vote bank of the BJP is not with the saffron party anymore. "The dam of Lingayat vote bank has burst. It is flowing towards Congress," he said. Reacting to Shivakumar's charges, Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai said: "No nomination is rejected. Shivakumar is making allegations as he does not have anything to say.

On Lingayat vote bank tilting towards Congress, Chief Minister Bommai said, "Lingayat voters are mature."

Kerala BJP gets letter claiming threat to PM Modi during state visit

Thiruvananthapuram | Agencies

he Kerala unit of BJP has received a letter Prime Minister Narendra Modi during his scheduled two-day visit to the state.

letter that arrived at the BJP headquarters here on April 17, has been handed over to the Kerala Police. It bears the name of one

According to sources, the

Ernakulam resident Joseph Johnny as the sender. Party president K.Surendran has handed over the letter to

However, Johnny, who was traced by police, denied having done any wrong.

Prime Minister Modi is arriving at Kochi on April 24 and will take part in a road



perature of 40 to 41 degrees

AIR INDIA'S HR POLICIES, DRACONIAN, UNETHICAL: PILOT BODIES

Chennai | Agencies

erming the human Air India Ltd as "draconian approach" and "driven by a lack of trust", two pilot bodies have appealed to the Tata Group Chairman N. Chandrasekaran to intervene

and rectify the situation. "Tata has always prided itself on its fair and ethical

practices. However, the actions of the HR department with regard to the pilots are completely contrary to these values. The pilots are being subjected to unfair treatment. It is clear that the HR department is flouting the laws and regulations that are in place to protect the rights of employees. The pilots are being subjected



to a hostile work environment," says a joint letter by the Indian Commercial Pilots' Association (ICPA) and Indian Pilots' Guild (IPG).

"It is imperative that the spiteful ideology of the Human Resource department (of Air India) be addressed promptly to prevent any potential

adverse effects on the growth prospects of our esteemed air-

Chairman The pilot unions said they were hopeful and excited when the Tata Group bought the Air India as the group was reputed to "have the most phototropic and holistic man-

line," the unions told the

leading organisations of the world".

department of Air India appeared to be focused on dismantling, restructuring, or even replacing the human assets of the airline.

"HR policies characterised by a draconian approach, driven by a lack of trust and aimed at curtailing the autonomy of employees, began to roll out," the unions alleged.

According to the unions, the response of Air India's human resources department to their issues were at odds with the public perception of the Tata Group as a compassionate employer known for their empathy towards their employees.

5 KILLED, 6 INJURED IN MIZORAM ROAD ACCIDENT

Aizawl: Five persons were killed and six others injured on Friday in Mizoram when a pickup truck travelling from Rajiv Nagar to Marpara collided with another truck in West Phaileng town in Mamit district, police said.

According to the police, three persons died on the spot while two others succumbed to their injuries on the way to a government hospital.

The six critically injured persons were brought to

the civil hospital in Aizawl. The deceased have been identified as Dev Kumar Chakma, Bonomota, Ayushi Chakma, Siki Chakma and Kajola.

Members of Mizoram's leading NGO Young Mizo Association came forward to rescue the people.

Police, quoting the eyewitnesses, said that the collision of the two trucks occurred when the vehicles were negotiating a turn on the road. Further details are awaited.

TWO WORKERS DIE AFTER **FALLING INTO** OIL TANKER IN **KOLKATA**

Kolkata: In a tragic incident, two workers died after falling into an oil tanker in Kolkata's Tiljala area on Saturday.

Police sources said that the two workers clibed a oil tanker, probably to measure the oil-level in it, but in that process both fell inside the tanker and

Eyewitnesses told the police that initially one of the two workers fell inside the oil tanker, while the other died trying to rescue

The deceased workers have been identified as Logan Nathan and Kartik Halder. While Halder was a resident of Sonarpur in South 24 Parganas district, Nathan hailed from Karnataka. Both were con-

tractual workers. The police have recovered the two bodies from inside the tanker.

Uttarakhand Char Dham Yatra begins on the occasion of Akshaya Tritiya

Rudraprayagi | Agencies

he Uttarakhand Char Dham Yatra has begun on the auspicious occasion of Akshaya

This time the state government is making every possible effort to make the Uttarakhand Char Dham Yatra smooth and safe for the devotees. The pilgrims will get the best health services on the Yatra route.

On the instructions of Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami and Health Minister Dr Dhan Singh Rawat, Health Secretary Dr RK Rajesh Kumar is taking stock of the health services on the Uttarakhand Char Dham Yatra route.

In this episode, the Health Secretary is inspecting health units at various places by travelling to Kedarnath Dham.

Health Secretary Dr Rajesh Kumar said that the Health Department has made complete preparations during the Uttarakhand Char Dham Yatra.

"Guidelines ie SOP have been issued for the journey. In this, travellers have been suggested to accli-



matize their body to the mountain weather during the journey. If you are facing difficulty then rest for some time and only then travel," he

The Health Secretary said that the government welcomes all the

pilgrims coming for the yatra. But at the same time, there is an appeal that if the devotees above 55 years of age are suffering from any disease like sugar, BP, heart disease etc., then mention it. He said that

such devotees would be monitored

According to the Health Secretary, this time the government has a special focus on the Kedarnath pilgrimage route.

"A medical relief post has been made here at every kilometre. To improve health services in Uttarakhand Char Dham, 130 doctors have been deployed. Doctors, paramedical staff, oxygen cylinders and medicines will be available in this. This time there will be a pointof-care testing device. Testing of 28 types of diseases can be done with this device," he said.

According to the Health Secretary, this time such doctors and paramedical staff have been deployed on the Yatra route and are well-versed in the treatment and diagnosis of heart-related dis-

He said that we are determined to make the Uttarakhand Char Dham Yatra completely smooth and safe. Arrangements have been made for doctors, staff, oxygen cylinders and medicines in the hospitals present on the Yatra

IAF's 44 Squadron to celebrate diamond jubilee in Chandigarh

Chandigarh | Agencies

he 44 Squadron of the Indian Air Force (IAF) is celebrating its diamond jubilee this year in Chandigarh that was previously postponed owing to the pandemic, it was announced on Saturday.

The rich and glorious history of the squadron is a kaleidoscope of military history and military diplomacy of modern-day India and filled with tales of fortitude. courage, daring, devotion and professionalism which encapsulates all that IAF stands for, a statement said.

The squadron was raised on April 6, 1961, and equipped with the AN-12 aircraft. It operated the AN-12 till 1985.A In March 1985, it brought the IL-76 aircraft into India, which was formally inducted into the IAF on June 16, 1985. The aircraft continues to in service today. The diamond jubilee celebrations due in 2021 had to be postponed due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The harbinger of strategic airlift in the IAF, the squadron has been a part of



all major military and HADR

initiatives in the recent history of the nation, which not only saw the IAF and the nation evolve from a tactical to a strategic force, but also enhanced the military might of the sister services. The squadron provided succor in times of need to the citizens of the country as well as people all around the world, in keeping with the nation's belief of "Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam". The squadron has stayed true to its motto of aIshtam Yatnen Sadhyet' which means achieve goals through perseverance. In 1985 the squadron was renamed as the 'Mighty

Since its raising, No. Squadron Sqn has been at the forefront of the airlift activities undertaken by the IAF. The squadron continues to remain ever ready to undertake any task that is entrusted to it.

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FORMER J&K GOVERNOR SATYA PAL MALIK 'DETAINED', DELHI POLICE DENIED

Team Absolute New Delhi

day after he was summoned by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) in connection with an alleged insurance scam, former Jammu & Kashmir Governor Satya Pal Malik Saturday went to southwest Delhi's RK Puram police station after he was refused permission to hold a meeting with his supporters.

While media reports quoted supporters as saying Malik had been detained at the police station, a senior officer denied them.

"We have not detained former Governor Satyapal Malik or his supporters. Malik has come to RK Puram police station himself and we have informed him that he can leave at his own will," the officer told media. According to the police, Malik was scheduled to meet a few of his supporters, including some farm leaders and khap panchayat leaders from Punjab and Haryana at his Som Vihar residence Saturday. Malik decided to host their lunch at a local park but was told not to because no permission was sought

in advance, police said. Malik's supporters, however, claim there were "arrests" - they released videos of them purportedly in a bus under detention, The Indian Express said in a report.

Malik also told reporters outside

the police station that the police

"will not arrest us now". The development comes a day after CBI summoned Malik in connection with an ongoing investigation into alleged improprieties in connection with Reliance General Insurance's 'J&K Employees

Healthcare Insurance Scheme'. In October 2021, Malik had claimed that he was offered a bribe of Rs 300 crore for clearing two files during his tenure as J&K governor between 23 August 2018 and 30 October 2019.

Among the two files, Malik claimed, was a group medical insurance scheme for government employees, and a contract for civil work worth Rs 2,200 crore related to the Kiru hydroelectric power project in J&K's Kishtwar district.

He was summoned days after Malik gave an interview to two web

Opposition backs Malik

Patna: After CBI served a notice to former Jammu and Kashmir Governor Satya Pal Malik in the Reliance insurance scam case, JD(U) president Lalan Singh on Saturday came out in his support and called the Centre a

Those questioning the Centre are being targetted, he added. In a Twitter post, Singh said: "Malik Saheb is fighting but the 'cowards' are using government power to target their opponents. They do not know that the people of the country are watching them. There was an apprehension of action being taken against you on a day when you have disclosed the fact (Related to Pulwama inci-

Targetting the Centre, the Congress has also uploaded a tweet. It said: "Finally, PM Modi was not able to restrain. Satva Pal Malik exposed him in front of entire countrymen and hence CBI has called him. It was expected.

channels criticising Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the current government on several issues, including the 2019 Pulwama attack and bifurcation of the erstwhile I&K state.

'Why was he silent when he was **Governor': Amit Shah**

Union Home Minister **Amit Shah**

on Saturday suggested that the veracity of statements made by former Jammu and Kashmir governor Satya Pal Malik should be examined. Malik, who was the last governor of Jammu and Kashmir before that state was divided into Union territories, had made disparaging statements against the BJP-led government at the Centre in a recent interview with journalist Karan Thapar. "The BIP hasn't done anything that needs to be hidden. The issue should not be discussed in a public forum. If he had information about irregularities, he should have spoken during his tenure. Why is he making such claims now? This calls for a credibility check," said Amit Shah while speaking at the India Today Karnataka

Roundtable 2023 on April 22.

Centre should take points made by Malik seriously: **Subramanian Swamy**

Patna: Former Union minister and BJP veteran Subramanian Swamy said on Saturday that the Centre should take whatever former J&K Governor Satya

Pal Malik had said in connection with the Pulwama terror attack seriously.Malik had recently claimed that after the February 14, 2019 terrorist attack in Pulwama in which 40 CRPF personnel were killed, he, as the J&K Governor at that time, had flagged certain lapses but was asked to stay silent."I know Satya Pal Malik since 1977, and he is a very senior leader. He was a former MP, Union minister and Governor as well. His political status is very high. I never heard him telling lies. Hence, the Centre should take what he said about the Pulwama attack seriously," Swamy said on the sidelines of a conclave of law students here."The probe agencies agency can ask him respectfully about the evidence he has to support his claims so that they could take action in the matter. There should be no threat to him or raids at his house. The Pulwama attack was a very painful incident and if it happened due to some lapses on our part, action should be taken in the matter. So whatever he said needs to be looked into,' Swamv said.

PNB cautions customers about fake message circulating on digital platforms



Team Absolute New Delhi

he Punjab National Bank (PNB) on Saturday issued an advisory to its customers related to fraudulent messages being circulated in PNB's name.

The bank said that a fraudulent message stating "PNB's 130th Anniversary Government Financial Subsidy" is being circulated

across digital platforms. "These are fake messages and PNB brand name is being used to perpetuate different forms of fraud. In some cases, these frauds are attempts at identity theft and financial scams," the bank said in a statement.

PNB advised its customers and the general public to be careful and vigilant while receiving such fake messages, especially those circulated through social media and other channels like WhatsApp.

"As a precautionary step,

we also urge our customers not to divulge any confidential/personal/financial information via phone calls or emails and not to click/download any suspicious links, even if they appear legitimate," the bank cautioned.

As digital banking surges in India, scammers are targeting people to rob them of their hard-earned money via a wave of fraudulent messages. The messages such as "Dear customer, your bank account will be suspended today. Update your KYC/ PAN now to avoid deactivation. Click on the link below to update," have been circu-

lating via SMSes for long. At least 40 bank customers of a private bank in Mumbai, lost lakhs in just three days after they clicked on a link sent to them via a fake bank SMS.

The SMS alerted them to update their KYC and PAN or their bank account will be

India records 12,193 fresh **Covid cases**

New Delhi: India has recorded 12,193 fresh COVID-19 cases in a span of 24 hours, with the number of active cases of the infection going up to 67,556, the Union health ministry said on Saturday.

The death toll due to the viral disease has climbed to 5,31,300 with 42 more fatalities, including 10 reconciled by Kerala, according to the ministry's data updated at 8 am. The tally of Covid cases was

recorded at 4,48,81,877.

per cent of the total caseload, while the national COVID-19 recovery rate was recorded at 98.66 per cent, according to the health ministry's website.

The number of people who have recuperated from the disease has gone up to 4,42,83,021, while the case fatality rate was recorded at 1.18 per cent.

According to the ministry's website, 220.66 crore doses of anti-Covid vaccines have so far been administered to people across the

ANGKITA DUTTA EPISODE: ASSAM POLICE TEAM LEAVES FOR KTAKA TO APPREHEND SRINIVAS B.V.

Guwahati | Agencies

team of Assam Police on Saturday left for Karnataka to apprehend the national president of Indian Youth Congress Srinivas B.V. based on the harassment complaint lodged against him by the suspended Assam unit youth Congress chief Angkita Dutta, an official said.A case has been B.V. in Dispur police station under Sections 509, 294, 341, 352, 354, 354A, and 506 of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) along with Section 67 of the

Information Technology Act. According to sources, a four-member team of Assam Police has been sent to

Karnataka to apprehend Srinivas. Assam DGP G.P. Singh has confirmed the development. However, he refused to divulge any further details.

Earlier, on the sidelines of a programme in the national capital, Assam



Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma asserted that Congress' handling of the situation was dismal and said that the law will take its own course on this issue.

The way Assam Congress has handled this matter is sad. They ought to have established an inquiry committee and worked things out among them-

If no appeal filed after an ex parte divorce within allotted time, any party may remarry: Delhi HC

Team Absolute New Delhi

he Delhi High Court said that a divorce separates married couples, who lose their identity as husband and wife and even if the divorce is ex parte, either party may lawfully remarry if no appeal is filed within the allotted time.

A division bench of Justices Sanjeev Sachdeva and Vikas Mahajan observed it while considering a petition filed by a woman who contested a 2003 divorce order by a lower court in her absence based on her then husband's plea, who has since re-married.

On the grounds that she was unaware of the proceedings, the petitioner initially unsuccessfully challenged the divorce before an additional district judge 18 months after the date of the

The former husband opposed the petition against the district judge's order before the high court, stating that he had remarried 17 months after the ex parte order and that he now has two children from that second marriage.

The bench observed as per section 15



Hindu couple becomes "competent to contract another marriage" in the absence of a duly filed appeal. Since in the present case, no appeal was preferred within the period of limitation, there was no merit in the petition.

"It is trite that the dissolution of marriage is complete once the decree is made. A decree of divorce breaks the marital tie and the parties forfeit the status of husband and wife in relation to each other," the bench said.

divorce is not different from a contested one. Therefore, in case of an ex parte decree of divorce also it shall be lawful for either party to the marriage to marry again if no appeal is filed against such decree within the period of limitation," the court added.

According to the court, the petitioner was legally served with summons related to the divorce proceedings, and the former husband did not commit any

"Price For Speaking Truth": Rahul Gandhi after vacating Delhi bungalow



New Delhi | Agencies

ongress leader Rahul Gandhi said on Saturday that he was ready to pay any price for speaking the truth, after he vacated his official residence in New Delhi following his disqualification as a member of Parliament

Gandhi, 52, who had been living in a government bungalow at 12 Tughlaq Lane since 2005, was disqualified from the lower house of Parliament last month after he was convicted and sentenced to two years in prison by a court in Surat, Gujarat, in a defamation case for a comment seen as insulting to Prime Minister Narendra Modi and those who share his surname during an election rally in 2019.

Today was the last date for Rahul Gandhi to vacate his bungalow after being disqualified from parliament. Gandhi, who had appealed the verdict in a court in the state and lost on Friday, said he was targeted by the ruling BJP for his forceful attacks on PM Modi. The former Wayanad MP will now have to appeal in the Gujarat High Court or the Supreme Court against the Surat court's order to retain his Lok Sabha membership.

"People of Hindustan gave me this house for 19 years, I want to thank them. It's the price for speaking the truth. I am ready to pay any price for speaking the truth...," Mr. Gandhi told reporters outside his bungalow before leaving in a car.

XBB.1.16 is now a Covid 'variant of interest': WHO

- ■XBB.1.16 is a descendent lineage of XBB, a recombinant of two BA.2 descendent lineages. XBB.1.16 was first reported on January 9, this year and designated a variant under monitoring (VUM) on March 22.
- ■So far, 3,648 sequences of the Omicron XBB.1.16 variant have been reported from 33 countries, including India, on open research platform GISAID, the global health body,
- □Driven by XBB.1.16, India on Saturday recorded 12,193 fresh COVID-19 cases in a span of 24 hours, with the number of active cases of the infection going up to 67,556, according to the Union health ministry.



Team Absolute New Delhi

he World Health Organization (WHO) has upgraded Omicron subvariant XBB.1.16 to a Covid-19 "variant of interest" (VOI) due to its "sustained increase" and "growth advantage" reported from several countries.

"Following a sustained increase in the prevalence of XBB.1.16 and growth advantage reported from several countries, WHO classifies XBB.1.16 as a VOI," said Maria Van Kerkhove, technical lead for Covid-19 response at WHO on Friday. Van Kerkhove noted that XBB.1.16 has

shown "growth advantage and immune escape". While "no changes in severity have been reported, it can cause full range of disease", she said, adding for the need to "be vigilant".

The WHO noted that although there has been a "slight increase" in XBB.1.16related hospitalisation in India and Indonesia, the levels are "much lower than seen in previous variant waves".

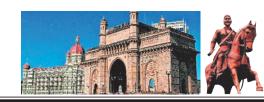
Further, "available information does not suggest that XBB.1.16 has additional public health risk relative to XBB.1.5 and the other currently circulating Omicron descendent lineages, a the WHO said.

"However, XBB.1.16 may become dominant in some countries and cause a rise in case incidence due to its growth advantage and immune escape characteristics, it added. Meanwhile, some experts nicknamed XBB.1.16 as Arcturus, after the brightest star in the northern celestial hemisphere. However, the WHO has not named it yet. WHO assigns Greek labels only for variants of concern (VOC), and not for VOIs.

"We are not using nicknames for these sub variants, and I would kindly encourage you not to. Please," Van Kerkhove



maharashtra



SC DISMISSES MAHA GOVT'S REVIEW FOR 2021 VERDICT QUASHING MARATHA QUOTA

Team Absolute New Delhi/Mumbai

he Supreme Court has dismissed a plea by the Maharashtra government seeking review of its May 5, 2021 judgment, which struck down a state law providing a 12 to 13 percent quota for Maratha communi-

A five-judge bench comprising Justices M.R. Shah, Sanjiv Khanna, B.R. Gavai, S. Ravindra Bhat and V. Ramasubramanian declined to entertain the plea by the state government seeking a relook at the judgment.

The bench, in its order, said: "Permission to file the review petition is granted. Delay condoned. Applications for listing of the review petitions in the open court are rejected. Having carefully gone through the review petitions, the judgment under challenge and the papers annexed therewith, we are satisfied that there is no error apparent on the face of the record, warranting reconsideration of the judgment impugned. The review peti-



tions are, accordingly, dismissed. Pending applications stand disposed of." The matter was considered inside the judges' chamber as per the Supreme Court Rules with regard to review petition and the top court took decision on the matter on April 11. However, the order was uploaded on the apex court website only on April 20.

The apex court had earlier dismissed a plea by the Central government to reconsider the May 5, 2021 judgment. The apex court had declared that states do not have the power to prepare lists for socially and educationally backward classes. The decision had also

deprived states of their power to declare OBCs for the purpose of reservation in jobs and education, and the court had conferred the President with the sole power to identify a community as backward.

The top court struck down the Maharashtra Socially and **Educationally Backward** Classes (SEBC) Act, 2018, for having breached the 50 per cent cap fixed by a nine-judge bench in 1992 in Indra Sawhney case (Mandal Commission). The top court had said that for allowing a 12-13 per cent quota for Marath community, it could not find any exceptional circumstances or extraordinary

Why 2024, ready for Maharashtra Chief Minister's post now: Ajit Pawar

Team Absolute Pune

mid speculation over his next political move, senior Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) leader Ajit Pawar on Friday said his outfit can stake a claim to the post of Maharashtra's Chief Minister "now" instead of waiting for 2024 when assembly polls are due in the state. The Leader of Opposition in the Assembly also said that he will '100 per cent" like to be Chief Minister of

In an interview to Sakal Media Group in Pune, Pawar said he had heard that Chief Minister Eknath Shinde, before his rebellion against the Shiv Sena leadership in June 2022, was unhappy and something was going in his mind.

Pawar revealed his colleague late RR Patil would have become Chief Minister in 2004 when the NCP had won more Assembly seats than its ally Congress, but a message came from Delhi that his party will get the Deputy Chief Minister's post.

Asked whether the NCP will stake a claim for the Chief Minister's post next year when assembly polls are due in Maharashtra, he remarked, "Why 2024, we are ready to stake a claim for the Chief Minister position now also." He, however, did not elaborate

Pawar on Friday skipped a meeting of his party's Mumbai unit, raising eyebrows in political circles as speculation about his next political move refuses to

He played down the buzz saying he was unable



to attend the NCP convention as he had to attend some other programmes happening at the same time. He insisted nothing much should be read into

During the interview, Pawar was asked whether he would like to become Chief Minister. To this, he promptly replied, "Yes, I would 100 per cent like to be." Asked why the NCP has an affinity for the Deputy Chief Minister's position as the party has got that post on multiple occasions in the last 20 years, the veteran politician said in 2004, the NCP and the Congress fought Assembly elections in an alliance and the former had won more seats.

"We got 71 seats, while the Congress won 69. Everyone, including the Congress, thought Chief Minister would be from the NCP. However, some decisions were taken at the highest level and a message came from Delhi that the NCP will get the Deputy Chief Minister position and the Chief Minister post went to Congress," he said.

Pawar said his colleague Patil was chosen as the

Leader of the House (Assembly), and he would have become Chief Minister in 2004 if the top post

In the subsequent Assembly polls, the Congress Scored more seats than the NCP and naturally kept the Chief Minister's post with itself, he said.

Asked whether he liked working with Congress Chief Minister Prithviraj Chavan or Shiv Sena (UBT) leader Uddhav Thackeray, who held the top post from November 2019 to June 2022, Pawar said they worked with the latter "happily", but working with the former was out of choice.

On Shinde's revolt and subsequent split in the Shiv Sena, the former deputy Chief Minister said they used to hear that Mr Shinde, then his Cabinet colleague in the Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) government, was unhappy and sensed something was going in his mind.

'We had alerted Pawar saheb (NCP president Sharad Pawar) and Thackeray was also apprised about it. The BJP had been trying to pull down the MVA government since the first day of its formation. The wife of a key politician confessed later that her husband used to go out in disguise, and later some ministers said Shinde and a particular leader used to meet," Mr Pawar said without taking any names. He said during the MVA government, Thackeray had given full control of Thane district to Shinde, then a Cabinet Minister, and some officials appointed by him had helped rebel Shiv Sena MLAs to sneak out of Mumbai and reach Surat on

news keeps coming that his bail plea is on another

Adopting the opposition Maha Vikas Aghadi

(MVA) stance, Pawar demanded a probe into the

Navi Mumbai tragedy of April 16 that left 14 dead

after the 'Maharashtra Bhushan Award' 2022 was

Shah."It was a state government function and there

was negligence in organising the event. An official

tion, only a probe by a retired judge can bring out

the truth," said Pawar. Referring to former Jammu

and Kashmir Governor Satya Pal Malik's com-

ments, the NCP supremo alleged that so far no

February 2019 that killed 40 CRPF personnel in

Pulwama. Flanked by top NCP leaders, Pawar

inquiry has been ordered into the terror strike of

appealed to his party workers to start preparations

will not give a report against his own administra-

Dharmadhikari by Union Home Minister Amit

conferred on reformer Dattatreya Narayan

date, Pawar pointed out.

Man cleans chicken with national flag in viral video, arrested

Team Absolute | Silvassa

adra and Nagar Haveli: A man from Silvassa in the Union Territory of Dadra and Nagar Haveli was arrested after a video purportedly showing him "cleaning" chicken with the Tricolour went viral on social media, an official said on Saturday.

An official from Silvassa police station said the man was seen "insulting" the national flag by using it as a piece of cloth to clean chicken at a poultry shop where he worked.

"We booked the person on the basis of a complaint and arrested him under Section 2 of the Prevention of Insults to National Honour Act, 1971," the police official said.

sent to judicial custody on Friday, police said. The official said the man was arrested under Section 2 of the Prevention of Insults to National Honour Act which deals with people burning, mutilating, defacing, defiling, disfig-

uring, destroying, or trampling upon the

The man was arrested on Thursday and



national flag in a public place or in any other place within public view.

If found guilty, he can be imprisoned for up

Acquittal of Naroda Gam riots accused 'murder of judiciary, Constitution': Pawar

Team Absolute | Mumbai

ationalist Congress Party (NCP) President Sharad Pawar on Friday termed the recent acquittal of 69 accused in the brutal Naroda Gam (Gujarat) riots of 2002 as a "murder" of the judiciary and the Constitution".

Addressing a party meeting, Pawar said that the riots had taken place, there were deaths (11) and the accused ranged from ruling party leaders, MLAs and ministers, many of whom were arrested and enlarged on bail.

"Now, the court verdict has come, acquitting all the 69 accused in that incident. Along with the killings of the victims in those communal riots, even the judiciary and the Constitution have been murdered," Pawar said.

Slamming the misuse of the central investigation agencies, he said that even in small villages for local disputes, people are now being threatened with ED. "The ED or CBI have become household names,"



Continuing in the same context, he referred to a senior NCP leader, Anil Deshmukh who was arrestbribe, he spent 13 months in jail and the chargesheet mentioned barely donations of Rs

Similarly, in the case of another NCP leader,

ed by the ED in late 2021 on charges of Rs 100-crore

for the upcoming civic, Lok Sabha and Assembly elections, and strengthen 'booth-level', and

XBB.1.16 variant of COVID-19 no cause for Man stabs another to death over suspicions concern, says Maharashtra health minister

Maharashtra Health Minister Dr Tanaji Sawant on Saturday said the current XBB.1.16 variant of coronavirus was no cause for concern and citizens should not panic about the rise in cases.

Team Absolute | Mumbai

he present wave will come down to an endemic stage by May 15 and a downward trend will be seen next month, the minister said while urging citizens not to

Maharashtra on Friday reported 993 COVID-19 cases and five deaths, which took the tally to 81,60,499 and the toll to 1,48,497. According to the state health department,

the XBB.1.16 is the dominant variant of Omicron that was driving the case surge in the state. So far, 681 cases caused by this variant have been detected, and five persons have succumbed.



The minister was speaking at the 'bhoomi poojan' ceremony of the new 900-bed district civil super-speciality hospital in Thane, which was performed by Chief Minister Eknath

Speaking on the occasion, Shinde said the Thane District Civil Hospital had a major role in the development of the Shiv Sena in Thane and surrounding districts.

The new super-speciality hospital will be constructed on the same land where the existing medical facility stands.

The 900-bed hospital will be a modern one equipped with all super-speciality facilities such as an air ambulance, he said.

of having illicit relationship with his mother

Team Absolute | Mumbai

umbai Police has booked a 27-yearold man in Shivaji Nagar for allegedly killing a 34-year-old man over suspicions of having an illicit affair with his mother. The incident occurred on the evening of April 21, Friday.

Ansar Ilias Sayyed, 30, in his statement to police has identified the accused as Musheer. He said that on the fateful evening, he called his brother Sattar, 34, to inquire when he would be home. Sattar told Ansar to reach to Hakkani Chinese Centre at Road no. 10, Bainganwadi. Upon his arrival at the spot at around 6.55 PM, Ansar saw Musheer Manjar Khan, 27,



laden with a knife yelling at his brother, Sattar.

Although Ansar tried to save his brother but Musheer charged towards him. Scared, Ansar rushed home to seek help. After reaching home he narrated the incident to his brother, Gaffar, The brotherduo rushed to the spot again

where people told them that some auto drivers shifted their brother to Rajawadi Hospital in an injured condition. At the hospital, the brothers were informed that their brother passed away due to excessive bleeding. Sattar had been stabbed in his chest and hand.

One killed, four injured in car accident on Samruddhi Expressway



Team Absolute | Mumbai

50-year-old doctor from Mumbai was killed and four others injured when their car rammed into a truck on Samruddhi Expressway in Jalna, police said on

The accident took place on

Friday morning, when Dr Abdul Khalique was travelling to his hometown Amravati with his wife and two children to celebrate Eid with his family, an official

The car reached Samruddhi Expressway in Jalna, when the driver rammed into a truck, killing the doctor who was sitting in the front, he said.

"Preliminary information suggests that the accident had occurred due to the negligence of the truck driver. The four other occupants of the car are recuperating at a hospital in Jalna," inspector Keshav Wagh of Sindhkhed police station said.

Current Covid strain mild, 5-6 Million Covovax doses made: Adar Poonawalla

Team Absolute Pune

he prevalent strain of COVID-19 is mild and the Serum Institute of India (SII) has already produced five to six million doses of the Covovax vaccine, said the company's chief executive officer Adar Poonawalla.

Poonawalla was talking to reporters amid rising cases of coronavirus infections in the country since March.

India has recorded 12,193 fresh COVID-19 cases in a span of 24 hours, with the number of active cases of the infection going up to 67,556, the Union health ministry said.

"Currently, the COVID strain is not severe, it's just a mild strain. Just for precautionary measures, elderly people can get the booster dose, but it would be their choice whether



or not to take it. Five to six million doses of Covovax are avail-

We will also produce the same amount of Covishield doses in the next two to three months," said Poonawalla.

As per a health bulletin of the Maharashtra government on Friday, the XBB.1.16 variant of Omicron is currently the

dominant strain in the state. The Centre on Friday asked eight states, Uttar Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Maharashtra, to maintain a strict watch and take preemptive action in any area of concern to control any emerging spread of infection.

"We are providing Covovax in the US and Europe. It is the only COVID vaccine made in India which is approved in the US and Europe. Currently, the demand is very small," Poonawalla added.



madhya pradesh



BHOPAL WAKES UP TO CLOUDY SKY, THUNDERSTORM LIKELY IN SEVERAL PARTS OF MP

Team Absolute Bhopal

hopal woke up to a cloudy morning on Saturday and the weather department has predicted thunderstorm and lightning in parts of Madhya Pradesh later in the day.

According to the regional meteorological department, Bhopal, thunderstorm along with lighnting is likely in several other parts of the state including Indore, Jabalpur, Shahdol, Dewas, Narsinghpur, Shajapur and in some more districts.

The maximum temperature during the day time in Bhopal is likely to settle between 22 degrees Celsius and 39 degrees Celsius.

and 39 degrees Celsius.

As per the data received from the weather depart-



ment, Seoni district recorded 4.8 mm rain in the last 24 hours. While, in the last three days, at least three people were have been killed due to lightning in Sehore district, adjoining Bhopal.

The weather department has predicted that the temperature in the state would further go up from the next wook

The weather scientists in Bhopal regional office have also predicted thunder and high velocity winds in Morena, Guna, Bhind, Ashok Nagar, Anuppur, Sidhi, Mandla, Tikamgarh, Singrauli, Dindori, Balaghat and Seoni

"JYOTIRADITYA SCINDIA ISN'T A TRAITOR, HE'S SELF-RIGHTEOUS": SHIVRAJ CHOUHAN

Team Absolute Bhopal

adhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has slammed the Congress party for continuously making remarks against Union Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia and has said that Mr Scindia is not a traitor but a selfrighteous leader. Chief Minister Chouhan made the remark while talking to news agency in the state capital Bhopal on Saturday.

"Scindia is not a traitor, he is self-righteous. After all, how much insult he tolerates from the Congress party. The Congress fought the election in the name Scindia but made elderly Kamal Nath the Chief Minister of the state. Even the government was also being run by former Chief Minister Digvijay Singh and Nath was just a face only," Chouhan said.

Time and again Scindia (when he was in Congress party) and his com-



panions were drawing attention of Kamal Nath towards the public problems, but Nath's arrogance was so high that when Scindia said to do work or else he would protest, then where Nath did not paid attention to it, the Chief Minister said. He added that Nath's ego was such

that he would drop him (Scindia) in another party by car. How could Scindia tolerate it? After all, how much he would get humiliated? he asked "I want to say one more thing that if they (Scindia and his companions) were wrong then how would the public make them win by thousands of votes in by elections. Those who won by 1000 or 2000 votes by staying in Congress, they won by 50 to 60 thousand votes in the by-poll. We are not running the government because of someone's favour, they resigned, contested elections and came back victorious," Chouhan said.

There is a competition of pettiness going on in Congress, the Chief Minister said. "Every congress leader wants to make a statement to belittle the other leader and even Kamal Nath and Digvijay Singh are also involved in it. God knows what will happen to the Congress," the Chief Minister added.

2 Maoists with bounty of Rs 14 lakh each killed in Balaghat

Team Absolute Balaghat

State Hawk force and police team killed two women Maoists carrying a reward of Rs 14 lakh each in an encounter in Madhya Pradesh's Balaghat district in the early hours of Saturday.

The Maoists were gunned down in Kandla forest under Garhi police station of the district. The women Maoists were identified as Sunita (Bhoram Dev Area Committee Member) and Sarita (Khatia Mocha Area Committee Member). Both of them were active in Maoist activities for the past many years. The police team also recovered rifles, live cartridges, weapons, edible stuff and other materials from the spot. After the killing of the Maoists during the night, Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan on



Saturday morning congratulated the state police, hawk force and district police force for the same.

district police force for the same.
"Two dreaded Naxalites were killed, who were carrying a bounty of 14 lakh each on their heads, in an encounter in Balaghat in the night. Weapons and many other things have also been recovered from them. I congratulate the soldiers for the same," Chief Minister Chouhan

said.

The Chief Minister further said that it was the fourth encounter in the last one and half years. The bravery and alertness of the police is that they are continuously killing the Maoists. A total of eight dreaded Maoists killed so far in the 1.5 years on whom a reward of about ? 1.5 crore were announced.

"Our resolution is the rule of law. We will not allow any dacoits to flourish or Naxalites to spread their wings in the state. After Students' Islamic Movement of India (SIMI), we are engaged in eliminating Popular Front of India (PFI) people involved in terror activities from the state. We will not spare the goons and miscreants who disturb the peace and tranquillity of the public. It is the commitment of the MP Government," Chouhan added.

CHIEF MINISTER CHOUHAN PLANTED SAPLINGS OF JAMUN, MANGO AND SATPARNI



Bhopal: Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan today planted saplings of Jamun, Mango and Satparni in the garden located at Shyamala Hills. Darshan Singh Chaudhary, Purushottam Sharma, Pramod Chaudhary, Brijesh Tiwari, Vivek Ahirwar, Mahesh Malviya and Ashutosh Jat also planted saplings along with Chief Minister Chouhan. Chief Minister Chouhan along with Senior Editor of News 18 news channel Sudhir Dixit including Shailendra Bhadauria, Anurag Srivastava, Basu Choure, Jitendra Sharma, Ranjana Dubey, Anumita, Adhira Dixit, Ramakant Dubey and social workers Prarthana Chauhan, Durga Chauhan, Vanshika Chauhan, Aryan Chauhan also planted saplings.

"Blot On India": BJP slams Digvijaya Singh for dig at Jyotiraditya Scindia

Team Absolute Bhopal

Senior Congress leader
Digvijaya Singh's dig at his
former party colleague
Jyotiraditya Scindia has triggered a war of words, with
leaders from the ruling BJP
calling the grand old party's
Rajya Sabha member a "blot"
on the country and wishing
that he is born in Pakistan in
his next life.

Digvijaya Singh on Friday visited Ujjain city in Madhya Pradesh, where the famous Mahakaleshwar temple is located. Responding to a query about what he would seek from the deity, Singh had told reporters, "Hey Mahakal, a second Jyotiraditya Scindia should not be born in the Congress." Scindia, who was once considered to be a close aide of former Congress chief Rahul Gandhi, quit the grand old party in March 2020, ending his nearly two-decade-long



association with the organisation. He then joined the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and was made a union minister. Following Singh's swipe at him, Scindia had on Friday tweeted that Lord Mahakal should ensure an "anti-national" like Mr Singh, who also greatly harmed Madhya

Pradesh, is not born in India.
When asked about the
Congress veteran's remark
against Scindia, BJP leader and
Minister for Panchayat
Mahendra Singh Sisodia said,
"I pray to Lord Mahakal that a
person like Digvijaya Singh,

Chief Minister Chouhan sent the youth who met with

an accident on VIP road to the hospital for treatment

who ruined the entire Congress and Madhya Pradesh, should be born in Pakistan in his next life." Minister for Medical Education Vishvas Sarang, who also belongs to the BJP, reacted sharply to Singh's remarks as he termed him a "Pro-Pakistan" leader and accused him of insulting the country's army and soldiers.

"Leaders like Digvijaya Singh are a blot on this country.
Jyotiraditya ji has rightly tweeted. Such people who speak pro-Pakistan language, talk about giving protection to terrorists and dividing this country, such people have no place in India," Sarang said.

The Congress government under Kamal Nath in the state, which came to power in December 2018 after 15 years of BJP rule, collapsed in March 2020 after 22 MLAs loyal to Scindia joined the saffron party following his rebellion in the grand old party.

65 new cases were found in Madhya Pradesh



Team Absolute Bhopal

n the last 24 hours, 65 new cases of corona have been found in Madhya Pradesh. Among these, Bhopal has the maximum number of 17 cases, while 13 people were found infected in Gwalior, 9 in Indore and 11 in Sagar. Corona cases have also been reported in Rajgarh, Khandwa, Agar-Malwa, Satna, Sehore and Raisen. 42 patients have recovered, but there are still 369 active cases in the state. Earlier on Friday, 107 new corona

patients were found in the state. Out of these 44 patients were from Bhopal only. On Saturday, the figure of the infected gave some relief and the figure came down. No infected person has died in the last 24 hours. It was a relief.

Corona cases are continuously increasing in the state. Worry has also increased due to this. In such a situation, people also need to take precautions. The mask has to be brought into practice once again. In case of cold or fever, see the doctor immediately.

A huge building will be built for devotees in the cave temple complex: Chief Minister Chouhan

Brahmin Welfare Board will be established in Janapav, the birth place of Lord Parshuram, the biography of Shri Parshuram Lok Parshuram ji will now be in the textbook, encouragement on Sanskrit studies. Chief Minister Chouhan participated in the birth anniversary of Lord Shri Parshuram

Team Absolute Bhopal

hief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has said that a huge building will be constructed in the cave temple complex for the convenience of the devotees. Brahmin Welfare Board will be established in the state. Lord Parshuram was the god of justice. They took up arms to destroy the terrorists. With his inspiration, strict action is being taken against goons, miscreants and Naxalites on the land of Madhya Pradesh. Inclusion of life-character of Lord Parshuram in class 8th syllabus in the state, Arrangements have been made to give scholarship to the students studying Sanskrit and rituals and hon-



orarium to the priests. Work will be done to appoint Sanskrit teachers in the state if required. Along with this, necessary rights will also be there in relation to the land of the temples. Chief Minister Chouhan was addressing the Akshayaotsav-2023 on the birth anniversary of Lord Parshuram in the company of Swami Dhirendra Krishna Shastri Maharaj of Bageshwar Dham in the cave temple complex, Bhopal today. Chief Minister Chouhan said that

Parshuram Lok will be constructed at Janapav, the birthplace of Lord Parshuram. Chief Minister Chouhan said that Brahmins have made a special contribution in the work of protecting religion and culture. Educated and initiated Brahmins fulfill their obligations for the necessary rituals on various occasions. 3547 Sanskrit teachers have been appointed in the state. Keeping in view the need of Sanskrit teachers in government schools, more appointments will be made. Chief Minister Chouhan said that the state government will take necessary steps as per the suggestions given by Dhirendra Krishna Shastri Maharaj.



the hospital immediately.
Chief Minister Chouhan
got his convoy stopped and
made arrangements to send
Sajib, a resident of
Khanugaon, and another
youth to the hospital by
ambulance for treatment.
After this he left for his pro-

gram.
A car going at a high speed

from Lalghati intersection towards Khanugaon on Bhopal's VIP Road overturned on the road due to loss of balance. There were two youths in the car. On the instructions of Chief Minister Shri Chouhan, immediate action was taken to take 100 to the hospital by ambulance. The Chief Minister himself reached the injured in a pilot vehicle and arranged for their treatment and wished them a speedy recovery. The Chief Minister sent instructions regarding their treatment to the hospital. During this, Chief Minister Chouhan also congratulated the Muslim brothers present on Eid.



AL PACINO SAYS HE GAVE 'I turned down Star Wars' **HARRISON**

Los Angeles | Agencies

ollywood legend Al Pacino opened up about turning down the role of Han Solo in 'Star Wars' because he "didn't understand the script" and said that he "gave Harrison Ford a career." The actor opened up about being a "new kid on the block" at the time of inception for the now-cultural phenomenon and explained that although they "offered him so much money" he just "didn't understand" the storyline. "Well, I turned down Star Wars," he told David Rubenstein as part of the 92nd Street Y, New York's People Who Inspire Us series, reports mirror.co.uk.

"When I first came up, I was the new kid on the block; you know what happens when you first become famous.

"It's like, 'Give it to Al,' they'd give me Queen Elizabeth to play," Al recalled. "They gave me a script called Star Wars."

"They offered me so much money," he revealed. "But I didn't understand it, I read it. So I said I couldn't do it. I gave Harrison Ford a career." Harrison Ford took on the role as

TURNING DOWN Han Solo in the original film, which grossed for **ICONIC ROLE** \$775.8 million at the worldwide box office with just an \$11 million budg-

et. Al looked back on a role he did accept as Michael Corleone in The Godfather and stated that he rewatched the movie after not watching it for 25 years. He added that at the time of filming the cult classic, studio executives were underwhelmed with his performance and were initially planning to replace him. In a meeting with the movie's director Francis Coppola, Al remembers him saying: "'You know, I had a lot of faith in you. And you're failing me,' I'm standing there thinking

FORD A

CAREER'

AFTER

'What the f**k, what did I do?'' 'The Sollozzo scene, where Michael shoots the cop. Coppola pushed that up, because he thought Paramount was about to fire me," Al said. "I do the scene, they liked it, and they kept me in because I shot someone." Al's role in his most "gratifying film," Scarface, came with a few downsides and the actor recalled one of his many injuries from being on set.

DREW STARKEY TO STAR ALONGSIDE DANIEL CRAIG IN LUCA GUADAGNINO'S 'QUEER'

Los Angeles | Agencies

uca Guadagnino will next direct the William S. Burroughs adaptation ■ Queer' with Hollywood star Daniel Craig and Drew Starkey.

Craig will be seen playing the renowned counterculture author's alter ego, an outcast American expat who lives in Mexico, and Starkey starring as a younger man with whom he becomes madly infatuated, reports

'Queer' will also topline Lesley Manville, frequent Wes Anderson collaborator Jason Schwartzman; and Henry Zaga, according to inside sources.

The boldly ambitious indie film is set to start shooting this month at Rome's refurbished Cinecitt Studios where the Mexico City-set movie will be filmed in its entirety.

Lorenzo Mieli's Fremantle-owned Italian company The Apartment the internationally expanding shingle behind Guadagnino's Bones and Alla and Sofia Coppola's upcoming 'Priscilla' - is lead producing 'Queer' in tandem with Guadagnino's own

Frenesy Film. Fremantle North America is also on board.

American playwright Justin Kuritzkes, who penned Guadagnino's upcoming sexy comedy 'Challengers' starring Zendaya, Josh O'Connor, and Mike Fast which has now completed post - has adapted the Burroughs novel for the big screen, continuing his collaboration with the Italian director.

British designer Jonathan Anderson, who has shaken up the fashion world with his creations for Loewe and his subversive signature JW Anderson label, will also continue to collaborate with Guadagnino as costume designer on 'Queer' after handling the costumes on Challengers.'

"It is one of my all time favourite books. And the film has everything - Mexico, lots of drugs, and Daniel Craig, a Anderson recently





ARSHDEEP'S FOUR-FER OUTSHINES GREEN, SURYA KUMAR FIFTIES; HELPS PBKS BEAT MI BY 13 RUNS

Team Absolute Mumbai

ameron Green and Suryakumar Yadav struck blazing half-centuries but could not propel Mumbai Indians across the line as they went down to Punjab Kings by 13 runs in Match 31 of Indian Premier League (IPL) 2023 at the Wankhede Stadium, here on Saturday.

After their bowling unit conceded 109 runs in the last six overs to allow Punjab Kings to post 214/8 after being asked to bat first by Rohit Sharma, Green blasted 67 off 43 deliveries and Suryakumar Yadav hammered 57 off 26 balls as Mumbai Indians could only manage to score 201/6 in 20 overs as they fell short despite a brave chase. Skipper Rohit Sharma smacked a 27-ball 44 but in the end, that effort went in vain. Arshdeep Singh claimed 4-29 runs as PBKS came back strongly in the second half of both innings to register their fourth win in seven matches as they moved to fifth position on the points table.

Mumbai lost their way in the last two overs, needing 31 runs off the last 12 deliveries. Tim David and Tilak Varma blasted 15 runs off the 19th over bowled by Nathan Ellis with David hitting a huge six and both doing some hard run-

With Mumbai Indians needing 16 from the last over, Arshdeep bowled brilliantly, using the slower yorkers castled Tilak Varma and Nehal Wadhera off successive deliveries to snuff out Mumbai Indians' hopes,

Though Ishan Kishan (1) got out early, skipper



Rohit Sharma kept Mumbai on course with a 27ball 44 as he and Cameron Green raised 76 runs for the hosts as they chased a stiff target of 215 in

Matthew Short for four and tapped Arshdeep Singh past the vacant deep third-man area. He smashed his first six off Arshdeep in the fourth over with a lap shot and then pulled Sam Curran over the boundary off a slower one. After being kept quiet in the next couple of overs, Rohit Sharma hammered Rahul Charar for a big six and paddled the spinner for a four in the ninth over. But just when it looked like Rohit Sharma had set himself perfectly to go berserk, the Mumbai Indians skipper got out tamely, spooning an easy catch to Liam Livingstone off his own bowling to be out for 44 off 27 balls, hitting four boundaries and three maximums.

Cameron Green and Suryakumar Yadav then raised 75 runs for the third wicket partnership, starting cautiously and then unleashing some power-packed strokes all around the ground. Green smacked Harpreet Brar over long-on for his first six and then edged Arshdeep Singh past the vacant first slip for a streaky four in the fourth

Brief scores

Punjab Kings 214/8 in 20 overs (Sam Curran 55, Harpreet Singh 41, Jitesh Sharma 25; Piyush Chawla 2-15, Cameron Green 2-41) beat Mumbai Indians 201/6 in 20 overs (Rohit Sharma 44, Cameron Green 67, Suryakumar Yadav 57, Tim David 25 not out; Arshdeep Singh 4-29) by 13 runs.

Decisive match for Barca and Atletico Madrid

C Barcelona play arguably their most important and difficult game between now and the end of the La Liga season when Atletico Madrid visit the Camp Nou Stadium today afternoon.

However, Barca's recent performances have given cause for worry, with Xavi Hernandez's side unable to score in their last three matches - a 4-0 defeat at home to Real Madrid in the Copa del Rey, a 0-0 draw in La Liga at home to Girona and a 0-0 draw away to Getafe last weekend, a Xinhua report said.

Failing to score in three consecutive matches is something that hasn't happened to Barca for almost 20 years, and happens just as they receive the most inform side in La Liga.

Atletico travel to Barcelona third in the table after a run of ten wins from 12 that has virtually ensured them of a



Champions League and lifted them to with two points of Real Madrid.

Antoine Griezmann has been in excellent form for Atletico since the World Cup, as he showed with his two goals against Almeria last weekend, while Rodrigo de Paul and Marcos Llorente look comfortable in midfield and Mario Hermoso finally looks settled as part of a back-three with wing backs.

There is no doubt Barca's injury problems have not helped them, with Pedri, Ousmane Dembele and Frenkie de Jong all injured since their defeat against Real Madrid at the end of

March, and Andreas Christensen suffering a calf injury in the international break

Sergi Roberto tore a hamstring at Getafe last Sunday and will miss the rest of the season, but there is a chance Pedri and De Jong will be able to play some part today.

That should allow Xavi to introduce some spark into midfield for a decisive game. Barca's 11-point lead looks unassailable and a win, or perhaps even a draw, would probably be enough, but defeat would set some alarm bells ringing and give Real Madrid some hope of a mira-

World Transplant Games

Ankita makes India proud with three-medal haul

Perth | Agencies

ndia's Ankita Shrivastava bagged three medals at the World Transplant Games

The 29-year-old athlete's impressive performance has earned her a gold medal in the Long Jump event with a jump of 3.06 meters, and two silver medals in the 3,000-meter Racewalk (power walk) for women and the Shot-Put event, with a throw of 28.31 meters.

The World Transplant Games is a prestigious international sporting event held by the Olympics Association. The Games are open to those who have received heart, lung, liver, kidney, pancreas, stem cells, and bone marrow transplants.

Ankita performed exceptionally well and managed to secure a spot in the top three in all three events that she took part in.

Her journey to the World Transplant Games has not been easy. She has unflinchingly overcome gigantic challenges including physical and emotional barriers to get to here she is today. It all began in 2007 wh her mother was diagnosed with liver cirrhosis, which eventually led to liver failure.



Despite being on a waitlist for a donor. the list was too long, and Ankita, whose blood group matched her mother's, decided to donate 74 per cent of her liver to save her

Ankita's dedication and perseverance have een instrumental in her success, and she credits her friends and family for their unwa-

Our immediate goal is to win Gold at Asian Games & qualify for Paris Olympics: Sumit

Team Absolute New Delhi

he Indian Men's Hockey Team is currently sweating it out at the ongoing national coaching camp which is being held at SAI, Bengaluru and will conclude on May 21 ahead of the team's trip to Europe where they will take on Belgium, Great Britain, Netherlands, and Argentina in the remaining season of the FIH Men's Hockey Pro League

The 39-member Core Group for the national coaching camp includes midfielder Sumit, who contributed to the Indian Men's Hockey Team winning a bronze medal at the Tokyo Olympics.

Talking about the upcoming FIH Men's Hockey Pro League 2022-23 matches in Europe, Sumit said that they will be crucial for the team as it will serve as the preparatory event leading up to the highly anticipated Hero Asian Champions Trophy at home in Chennai in August and the Hangzhou Asian Games 2023 in September this year.



"We are confident of giving our best performance in the upcoming FIH Hockey Pro League games in Europe as they will be crucial for our ments like Hero Asian Champions Trophy and the upcoming Asian

Games," Sumit said.

"FIH Men's Hockey Pro League 2022/23 in Europe will help us finetune our team structure and strengthen bonds among players. It will help us reckon the aspects of our game which need to be improved," he

added. Sumit also revealed the Indian Men's Hockey Team's immediate goal, saying, "We want to win a gold medal at the Hangzhou Asian Games 2023, which will ensure our direct qualification for the Paris 2024 Olympics.'

SABALENKA, SWIATEK SECURE SEMIS SPOTS WITH COMEBACK WINS

WTA 500 Stuttgart GP

Stuttgart, Germany | Agencies

orld's top two tennis players Iga Swiatek of Poland and Aryna Sabalenka of Belarus both reached the semifinals after 2-1 comeback wins here at the WTA 500 Stuttgart Grand

Second seed Sabalenka came from a set and a break down to defeat wildcard Paula Badosa of Spain 4-6, 6-4, 6-4 and reach the semifinals for the third straight year. The 2023 Australian Open champion is seeking her first Stuttgart title after two consecutive runner-up showings, reports Xinhua.

It's Sabalenka's fourth semifinal



in six tournaments so far this year. She will next face 24-ranked Russian Anastasia Potapova, who upset fourth seed Caroline Garcia of France 4-6, 6-3, 6-3.

Potapova, 22, had never gone beyond the quarterfinals at WTA 500 level or above.

Defending champion Swiatek will face third seed Ons Jabeur of Tunisia in the semis after beating 2018 champion Karolina Pliskova of the Czech Republic 4-6, 6-1, 6-2. Taking advantage of a slow start from Swiatek, Pliskova raced out to a 4-0 lead after just 17 minutes. But Swiatek gradually found her rhythm and took advantage of Pliskova's serve to overturn the

Mbappe hits twice to power PSG closer to title

Paris | Agencies

ylian Mbappe scored a brace as Paris Saint-Germain defeated bottom side
Angers 2-1 to move another step
towards a record 11th French top-flight title.

The defending champions sit atop the standings with 75 points after 32 games, 11 ahead of second-placed Marseille who have one game in hand and will travel to Lyon on Sunday, reports Xinhua.

Mbappe put PSG in front in the ninth minute, bundling Juan Bernat's cross over the line. The French international added another before the break, latching on to a Messi through ball before rounding Paul Bernardoni and finishing into an empty net.

The 24-year-old, who had won the league

Smriti Mandhana ranked among



golden boot in the past four seasons, is leading the scorers' list again with 22 goals. Despite everything going well for PSG in the first half, the underdog Angers pushed hard and even terrified Christophe Galtier's team in the second as Sada Thioub managed to pull one back for the hosts in the 89th

FIFA announces draw for 2023 U20 World Cup

Geneva | Agencies

ootball's world governing body FIFA held the draw for the 2023 Under-20 World Cup with the hosts Argentina kicking off the tournament against Uzbekistan on May 20.

The ceremony was held at the FIFA headquarters in Zurich, Switzerland and FIFA confirmed the match schedule and the host cities as well, reports Xinhua.

Twenty-four teams will compete in six groups across four cities, La Plata, Mendoza, San Juan and Santiago del Estero. The opening match between



Argentina and Uzbekistan will be played at the Santiago del Estero Stadium, with three more matches to be

played on the opening day. La Plata Stadium will host the semifinals, play-off for third place and final

Team Absolute New Delhi

mriti Mandhana, the ace Indian women's cricket team opener, has been ranked among the top 10 athletes in the world by sponsorship value on social media, according to a recent study released by Sportico and

Social media performance across her digital platforms saw more than 61 million engage ments in 2022 and the swashbuckling batter has combined following of more than 14.8 million, securing the 9th spot for her among all female athletes in the world, making her the only



Women cricketer to be in top 10

Smriti has been a prominent figure in the Indian cricketing circuit for several years and has represented the country in several international tournaments. She has won several accolades for her performances, including the Arjuna Award in 2019, Women's Cricketer of the Year 2019 & 2021, the Wisden Woman Cricketer of the year 2019, ICC Women's ODI Cricketer of the year 2018. Most recently the Indian Opener was also sold to RCB for USD 413K, the highest bid for any player in the first edition of the Women's Premier League 2023.

entertainment

Second Front Page

Twitter CEO Elon Musk in his own





'Women still have a long way to go for egastar Amitabh Bachchan thanked great opportunities' says Alaya F unique way after his blue tick on the

Team Absolute | Mumbai

ctress Alaya F is currently seen playing the lead role of Radhika, a reporting intern in the supernatural thriller movie

Her character has been given an assignment to investigate accidents that are happening at the U-turn on a particular flyover. She said that there is a lot of pressure of playing the lead role in any project as a lot is expected from the actor by the makers so there is an added pressure. Alaya also added that she is happy to be part of a cinema with more and more projects being made around female protagonists.

She said: "There is a lot of pressure, it is scary I won't lie but sometimes you need to just jump in. I used to be concerned about this but then you remind yourself that you are working with someone like Ekta Ma'am who has been such a strong and powerful boss lady in this industry. Gender bias or roles have never affected her personality. It doesn't apply to her.'

The actress added further that things are changing in the industry and now-a-days, many films are made with women actors as the protagonist. "Right from my first film I have been really grateful for being offered wonderful characters and neat parts in every film I have done. It is a real blessing because as an actor I have to say very honestly that this is the best generation where films are being made," she added. "I definitely enjoy this era of cinema better because it is something which connects with me. I think we still have a long way to go when it comes to women having great opportunities, but we have definitely started off towards incredible begin-

KRITI SANON

OPTS FOR BUDGETED FLIGHT, FLIES ECONOMY CLASS TO INDORE

NSTAGRAM PIC OF THE DAY

Team Absolute Mumbai

itching the luxury of a first class in an airplane, actress Kriti Sanon channelled her inner 'aam aadmi' as she took a budgeted flight and flew economy class to Indore. Celebrity paparazzi Viral Bhayani posted a video of Kriti from the economy Indigo 6E flight. Kriti was seen in a white dress and a pink shawl over her shoulders Another video showed her sitting as she played with a toddler sitting in front of her. The toddler and Kriti were seen holding hands and playing and Kriti even blew kisses to the kid. On the work front, Kriti will be seen next with Shahid Kapoor in an untitled romantic movie. She also has 'Adipurush' with Prabhas. Kriti also has 'Ganapath' with her 'Heropanti' co-star Tiger Shroff. The lated for release this year



OF STARDOM: ADITI RAO

Aakruti Baqla Mumbai

outed to be the 'Queen of Period Dramas', actress Aditi Rao Hydari recently blew our minds with her series Taj: Divided by Blood and Jubilee. She has been receiving adulation for the portrayal of Sumitra Kumari.

In an exclusive chat with Absolute India News, the actress opened up about what intrigued her, working with Prosenjit Chatterjee and much

Aditi Rao Hydari essays the character of a successful vestervear heroine Sumitra Kumari. Talking about what aspect intrigued her most, the actress shared, "What I noticed is whether it's now or then, what she goes through as a human being is so relevant. Many people called her 'lady superstar' because she commanded the position her male counterparts would do. Overall, what drew me towards the character was that goddesslike quality coupled with fragile human emotion.

We further asked the actress whether believes that people tend to forget even actors are human beings. To which she averred, "Absolutely! People forget it because we as actors ourselves don't realise it. We start believing our myths, but that happens naturally. Sushri Mishra once advised me that when you become a star, don't do that. I truly agree that is so signifi-

Aditi Rao Hydari's character is seen at loggerheads with Prosenjit Chatterjee's character. Talking about whether she was intimidated, Aditi said, "I feel like sometimes the legend of an actor can take over. But I always feel like actors are also human beings. Prosenjit Da is a very kind and loving human being. Only when the camera is rolling, you get to see the actor he is."

When we asked Aditi to share with us what she believes from that era should exist today, she said, "We have grown in the social media-driven generation and so we don't know professional life without it. But it depends on how one uses it. I believe there is a point where it gets too much. Secondly, I wish we didn't have to promote



AALIM HAKIM RECOUNTS HOW HE STYLED PRABHAS' HAIR IN 'BAAHUBALI'

elebrity hair stylist Aalim Hakim recalled a behind-the-scenes moment from the set of 'Baahubali: The Beginning'.

He recalled hairstyling of South superstar Prabhas for the 2015 film, which was directed by S. S. Rajamouli. Along with Prabhas, it also features Rana Daggubati, Anushka Shetty, Tamannaah, Ramya Krishna, Sathyaraj, and Nassar. He said: "In 'Baahubali', we added hair extensions for Prabhas. Since there were many

him play badminton to see how much his hair can bounce while running and how it would

look in slow motion while shooting."

Aalim added further that he styled his hair in such a way that it looked perfect for the character: "I set his hair in such a way that it would look perfect when he rode the horse and his hair would bounce appropriately.'

The celebrity hairdresser talked about his journey in the industry and remembered his days of struggle on Kapil's show.



do under-

stand it, but the

extent to which it happens today, I wish we

She added, "I also want we didn't have

so much perception build-up. I wish there

was more real sense of talent and longevity

of stardom which wasn't so dependent on

Team Absolute Mumbai

us screaming from the rooftop.'

didn't have to do it."

elevision actress Tina Datta is currently seen on the show 'Hum Rahe Na Rahe Hum' and spoke about how the audience today is open to new genres when it comes to the content on small screen. Tina became a household name after starring in the show 'Uttaran' which revolved around the concept of class divide as Tina's character was a daughter of a maid and her best friend was the daughter of businessman employer of her mother. Talking about whether the audience is looking for new genres on the small screen after shows on social messages and 'saas-bahu' dramas took the spotlight, Tina said: "I think people are looking for new genres because how much can vou watch the same thing on television? We all move on with time and adapt to new things and people like watching new things." "So, this story ('Hum Rahe Na Rahe Hum') is very refreshing, it is a very new age story in today's world. Yeah, change is the only thing that is constant and the audience also looks forward to such a refreshing vibe to see that element on screen."





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