

WORLD 6: 2 dead as Russia launches attacks on Ukraine's energy infrastructure. NATION 8: PM 'violating' Constitution, resorting to confrontational federalism: Cong. Challenge BJP to cross even 200 seats; won't allow CAA in Bengal: Mamata.

19 traditional crafts, products of Assam get GI tag. 13 products linked to Bodo people. A big win for state's heritage: Himanta.

GUWAHATI, March 31: As many as 19 traditional products and crafts of Assam, including 'Bihu Dhol', 'Jaapi' and several items of the Bodo community, have been accorded the geographical indication (GI) tag, chief minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said on Sunday.



hat and Bihu Dhol a traditional drum played during Bihu festival. The applications for the GI tags for the six products were filed in the latter part of 2022 and the certifications were announced on Saturday.

nity. This recognition will greatly boost the promotion of the items and in taking forward the legacy of these cultural items," he said. Late Upendranath Brahma, a leader of the community, was honoured with the title of 'Bodofa' (guardian of the Bodos). Sarma also shared a post by Bodoland Territorial Region (BTR) chief Pramod Bodo, which makes mention of the GI tags.

Banned UNLF (P) delaying surrender of cadre, weapons despite ceasefire agreement: Officials.

NEW DELHI/IMPHAL, March 31: The United National Liberation Front (P), a banned terror group, has failed to surrender weapons or provide a list of its members despite signing a ceasefire agreement with the Centre four months ago, officials said on Sunday, amid concerns by security agencies that its cadre were still carrying out violence in Manipur.



Even after three rounds of talks with state authorities, the UNLF, the first Meitei terror outfit to agree to a ceasefire, has not complied with the agreed terms since the agreement was inked on November 29 last. Concerns have been raised by security agencies over the ongoing violence in Manipur attributed to UNLF (P) members despite the ceasefire.

populations, fostering tensions. Despite the ceasefire agreement's intent to halt hostilities, recent incidents show UNLF (P) members are carrying out violent activities with impunity, even looting arms from security forces, the officials said.

HT BRIEFS Passes away

HOWRAGHAT: Well known writer, poetess and assistant teacher of Atigaon MV School, Anuprabha Hazarika passed away on last night at Guwahati Medical College & Hospital. She was 47. She was the writer of 'Amuthi Jonak'. She was Assistant Secretary of Sadou Assam Lekhika Samaroh Samiti and Karbi Anglong Lekhika Samaroh Samiti.

Not 'save democracy' but 'save family', 'hide corruption' rally: BJP

NEW DELHI, March 31: The BJP on Sunday slammed the opposition INDIA bloc's rally at Ramliya Ground here, saying it was not a "save democracy" meeting as projected but a "save family" and "hide corruption" rally.

Indira Gandhi government, compromising the country's national interest and interest of the people of Tamil Nadu, handed over Katchatheevu island to Sri Lanka to benefit the Congress' first family..Rahul Gandhi ji, your family had done a deal-fixing."

gathering at the famous Ramliya Ground here in a show of unity to galvanise people's support amid investigation agencies' action against several constituents of the INDIA bloc. Ramliya Ground once hosted "India against corruption" movement under the leadership of Anna Hazare, Trivedi said, adding that it is now hosting a rally for "everybody with corruption".

Bhupen rues Oppn failure to field common candidates

GUWAHATI, March 31: Assam Congress president Bhupen Kumar Borah has asserted that the opposition parties' attempt to contest the Lok Sabha polls unitletly in the state fell apart "due to national politics".

Sudden rain, storm damage Guwahati airport, flights diverted

GUWAHATI, March 31: A sudden downpour accompanied by a storm wreaked havoc at the Lokpriya Gopinath Bordoloi International Airport here on Sunday, prompting the authorities to briefly halt operations and divert six flights to other destinations, a senior official said.

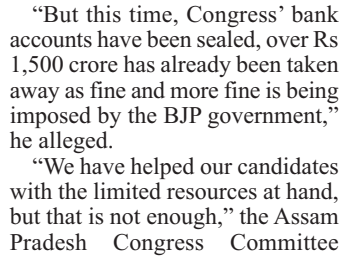
Lightning strike

KHERONI: A lightning strike killed one in West Karbi Anglong on Sunday. The lightning struck Pintu Chauhan (21), son of Rampreet Chauhan and resident of Tilha Basti, PO and PS Kheroni, West Karbi Anglong at around 4 pm, under Donkamukam Revenue Circle, West Karbi Anglong. Chauhan died on the spot.

Congress chief appeals to people for funds to fight polls

GUWAHATI, March 31: Assam Congress president Bhupen Kumar Borah on Sunday appealed to the masses to contribute funds for party candidates contesting the Lok Sabha elections, claiming the organisation was facing an "acute financial crisis" due to the sealing of its accounts allegedly at the behest of the BJP government.

APCC) president said. He said that if the party's accounts could be opened even after taking legal recourse, the situation would further deteriorate. Borah urged all to help the Congress in this "fight to save democracy and constitution, against communalism and against BJP's delivious conspiracy".



'Kickbacks' used in AAP's Goa campaign also detected by I-T, CBI: ED

NEW DELHI, March 31: The money trail of the alleged ₹ 45 crore kickbacks generated from the Delhi excise policy "scam" and used for the 2022 Goa election campaign by the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), as claimed by the Enforcement Directorate, has also been "substantiated" by the CBI and the Income-Tax department in their separate investigations, according to documents filed in court.

Excise 'scam' The party has alleged that statements of other people involved in the case like TDP Lok Sabha candidate Magunta Sreenivasulu Reddy, his son Raghav Magunta and businessman and Aurobindo Pharma promoter Sarath Reddy were changed to implicate Kejriwal and stop his participation in the upcoming general elections.

Strong wind

BOKAJAN: A sudden strong wind destroyed and damaged many houses in Bokajan Sub-Division in Karbi Anglong in the afternoon. The strong wind came at around 12:30 pm. Many houses have their roof blown off in Kargaon Chandra Rongpi; Rajen Rongpi and Longhup Timung villages in Borjan area. Due to the damaged caused by the wind many households have nowhere to cook and their clothing are soiled.

In a video message on X, Borah said the "situation will take a dire turn" if the party's accounts were not opened through legal recourse, which it has sought. Addressing party leaders, workers, farmers, youth and top media functionaries, Borah said the Congress traditionally provides monetary assistance to its Lok Sabha election candidates.

Another senior Congress leader and co-in charge of APCC, Prithviraj Sathe, had said on Saturday that the party has asked its candidates to approach the public for votes as well as funds for the Lok Sabha polls while putting forth before the people how "democracy is at stake" in the country. He maintained that the Congress is facing serious financial problems due to the Income Tax department's actions "at the behest of the ruling party" and doesn't even have adequate funds for fighting the elections.

Gatoonga tea

JORHAT: Barooh and Associates Limited founded by Padma Shri Dr Hemendra Prasad Barooh (late) has acquired Moheema Tea Estate in Golaghat district with the aim to increase its pan India presence and has forayed into the retail tea market by launching Gatoonga tea brand. Dhruba Jyoti Dowerah, deputy managing director, B & A Limited while addressing newpersons at Gatoonga tea estate here on Sunday said that the Gatoonga brand was launched on Sunday to commemorate the 98th birth anniversary of its visionary founder Padma late Dr Hemendra Prasad Barooh by tapping the Assam market and gradually expanding it across India. Barooh and Associates Limited is the ₹ 300 crore Baroohs & Associates Group's listed flagship company and is one of the leading black tea producers of India.

"But this time, Congress' bank accounts have been sealed, over Rs 1,500 crore has already been taken away as fine and more fine is being imposed by the BJP government," he alleged. "We have helped our candidates with the limited resources at hand, but that is not enough," the Assam Pradesh Congress Committee

Around 5 lakh unpublished Sanskrit manuscripts preserved at Nepal's Department of Archaeology

Nepal, India to collaborate to promote Sanskrit education

KATHMANDU, March 31: Nepalese and Indian Sanskrit scholars have proposed to organise an International Sanskrit Conference every year and set up a study centre to conduct research and arrange publication of Sanskrit scriptures, especially the manuscripts found in the Himalayan nation.



Nepal's Department of Archaeology. One of the resolutions mentions organising a training programme for Nepali Sanskrit students in India to enhance their Sanskrit learning capability, according to the release issued by Niti Anusandhan on Sunday. As per the resolution, Central Sanskrit University, Delhi, will facilitate libraries of Gurukuls in Nepal and provide necessary books to Sanskrit educational institutions in Nepal.

Want to do action films with SRK, Aamir & Ajay Devgn: Ali Abbas Zafar

MUMBAI, March 31: His upcoming film *Bade Miyan Chote Miyan* features action stars like Akshay Kumar and Tiger Shroff, and going forward filmmaker Ali Abbas Zafar says he wants to direct Shah Rukh Khan, Aamir Khan and Ajay Devgn in separate movies in the genre. In the past, Ali Abbas Zafar has collaborated with Salman Khan on films such as *Tiger Zinda Hai*, *Sultan*, and *Bharat*. "I want to work with all the actors in the industry, but definitely on my wish list are Aamir sir, Shah Rukh sir, and Ajay Devgn. I want to do action with them. It will be a different kind of action with each of them," the director told PTI in an interview here. His primary objective, Zafar said, is to develop a unique kind of action movie that challenges each of these superstars. "Like, *Sultan* is a sports drama, but it also has action. You have to make an action film for every different actor which is customised for them or brings them out of their comfort zone. "It's a dream for any director to work with all those guys. They've been here for 30-35 years, and the kind of fan base that they have is amazing. So, let's see, fingers crossed," he added. Citing the example of *Bade Miyan Chote Miyan*, the filmmaker said the script demanded two action stars, which is why Kumar and Shroff are headlining his latest movie. "What is most important is that you should be honest that you are not making a project but you are making a film that stars will do justice to. The script needs to cast the actors. I work on the script first, then take it to the actors," he said. Zafar also gave an update about his action film *Super Soldier* with Katrina Kaif. He said the movie is presently on hold and he has started production on another action film also starring Kaif, who has appeared in three of Zafar's films: *Mere Brother Ki Dulhan*, *Tiger Zinda Hai* and *Bharat*. "There's something for which I'm in talks with Katrina, it is not 'Super Soldier'. It is a new film. 'Super Soldier' is not happening for a while. If I work with her, it will be an action film," he added. Also starring Prithviraj Sukumaran, Alaya F, Manushi Chhillar, and Sonakshi Sinha, "*Bade Miyan Chote Miyan*" will be released on the occasion of Eid on April 10 in Hindi, Malayalam, Tamil and Telugu. (PTI)



Prithviraj Sukumaran-starrer 'The Goat Life' crosses ₹ 50 crore-mark globally

NEW DELHI, March 31: Survival drama *The Goat Life*, starring Prithviraj Sukumaran, has collected over Rs 50 crore in worldwide gross collections, the makers announced on Sunday.

The Malayalam film follows the real-life story of Najeeb (Sukumaran), a Malayali immigrant labourer who finds himself forced into slavery as a goatherd in the secluded farm of Saudi Arabia.

Directed by Blessy, the movie is based on the 2008 bestselling novel "*Aadujeevitham*" by Benyamin. It hit the screens on Friday.

Sukumaran, who is also distributing *The Goat Life* in Malayalam through Prithviraj Productions, posted the box office update on his official X page.

"#Aadujeevitham #TheGoatLifeInCinema @DirectorBlessy @benyamin_bh @arrahman @Amala_ams @Haitianhero @rikaby @resulp @iamkrigokul @HombaleFilms @AAFilmsIndia @PrithvirajProd @Red-GiantMovies_ @MythriOfficial @Magic_Frames @ListinStephen," the actor shared a poster stating the film had made Rs 50 crore in worldwide gross collections.

"Thank you all for your love and support," it also read. Produced by Visual Romance, *The Goat Life* also features Amala Paul, K.R. Gokul, as well as Hollywood actor Jimmy Jean-Louis and Arab actors Talib al Balushi and Rikaby in pivotal roles.

Academy Award winners A R Rahman and Resul Pookutty have given music and sound design, respectively. (PTI)

'CREW' RAISES ₹ 41.13 CRORE IN TWO DAYS



NEW DELHI, March 31: Heist comedy "*Crew*" has grossed ₹ 41.13 crore worldwide within two days of its release, the makers said on Sunday. Heist comedy "*Crew*" has grossed ₹ 41.13 crore worldwide within two days of its release, the makers said on Sunday.

Starring Tabu, Kareena Kapoor Khan and Kriti Sanon, the film is directed by Rajesh A Krishnan of "Lootcase" fame. Diljit Dosanjh and Kapil Sharma also round out its cast.

"*Crew*" opened to good reviews on Friday and earned ₹ 20.07 crore at the box office. According to the makers, the film added ₹ 21.06 crore to its global box office (gross) collection on Saturday.

Production house Balaji Motion Pictures shared the box office update of the movie on its official X page.

"The sky's the limit! Join our crew as we soar to greater glory! #CrewInCinemasNow #Tabu #KareenaKapoorKhan @kritisanon @diljitdosanjh and a special appearance by @KapilSharmaK9," the banner said in the post, adding the film's total worldwide gross collection stands at Rs 41.13 crore. "*Crew*" follows the story of three air hostesses -- played by Tabu, Kareena and Kriti -- working for an airline called Kohinoor that is on the verge of bankruptcy and their attempts to keep their head above water. The film also stars Saswata Chatterjee, Rajesh Sharma and Kulbhushan Kharbanda. It is produced by Rhea Kapoor, Anil Kapoor, Ekta R Kapoor, and Shobha Kapoor. (PTI)

Nani to reunite with 'Dasara' director Srikanth Odela

NEW DELHI, March 31: Actor Nani is set to reteam with his "*Dasara*" director Srikanth Odela for his 33rd feature film.

The "*Jersey*" star made the announcement on the first-year release anniversary of "*Dasara*" on Saturday.

"*Dasara* turns one year today. On this occasion.. #Nani33. A Srikanth Odela MADNESS again," Nani wrote on X.

The tagline of the upcoming pan-India film reads: "You don't need an identity to be a leader". It will be produced by Sudhakar Cherkuri, who also backed "*Dasara*".

The project is expected to be released in 2025. Nani, who was last seen in "*Hi Nanna*", is currently filming for his next movie "*Saripodhaa Sanivaaram*", directed by Vivek Athreya. The actor also has another film with Sujeeth in the works. (PTI)



Film music hardly producing big singing stars today, says singer Shaan

MUMBAI, March 31: The Indian music scene is undergoing a change and an artiste today doesn't have to depend on films to become popular, says singer Shaan. The vocalist, who broke onto the indie pop scene in late 1990s with albums *Love-ology* and *Tanha Dil*, said it seems to be the age of rappers or musicians like Guru Randhawa, Neha Kakkar and Badshah.

Arijit Singh is the "last big exponent" to come from films, he said. "All the big names today in music, they are either rappers or they have their own brand of music styles. Arijit Singh was probably the last big exponent who came in from film music. But a lot of them first got popular doing their own non-film music, like Guru Randhawa, Honey Singh, Badshah, King. But today, film music is hardly giving you the big singing star," Shaan told PTI in an interview.

The 51-year-old playback singer, known for film songs *Musu Musu Haasi Deu*, *Woh Ladki Hai Kahan*, *Chand Sifarish*, and *Jab Se Tere Naina*, said it's difficult to make fans listen to his non-film music.

"The only thing is that a singer like me, who's branding has become that of a Bollywood singer, it's very difficult to get out of that and for people to start listening to my non-film songs. But for others like Neha Kakkar, who came in from social media and then started get-

ting their film songs... Today, it's changing, a singer doesn't have to really rely to become popular through film music," he added.

Shaan also said he feels "under-utilised" in Bollywood. "Sadly, in the last 10 to 15 years, I've been much under-utilised and not been a part of those big Bollywood songs, like I used to be. But at the same time, this could be of help. When you are constantly on a roll, there's no time to introspect, no time to work on your skills. You tend to keep going with the flow. At some point, you realise you're becoming mechanical, redundant. So I take this break, this little getaway as a good thing, that I get to work on my skill sets."

The singer recalled a recent instance when his song from Rajkumar Hirani's *Dunki*, starring Shah Rukh Khan, was dropped by the makers.

"I was thrilled that I got to sing a Shah Rukh Khan song, but for some reason, it was replaced by another song. So, these things. The song, *O Maahi* got on to become the popular song of that soundtrack, which is where my song was supposed to be slotted in," he said.

Instead, Shaan said he got the opportunity to collaborate with renowned percussionist Bickram Ghosh on his latest single *Tanhaaiyyan*. "I sang this beautiful song with Bickram Ghosh da. The music carries on, whether it's a film or not, and

every other day I'm recording a beautiful song."

Tanhaaiyyan, featuring Shaan and Ghosh, is produced under the latter's music label *Eternal Sounds*. The singer said his goal is to build a memorable discography. "It's a legacy that you leave behind, the idea is to keep making good music... that will hopefully transcend time. I'm glad we have *Eternal Sounds*, the name eternal itself says it all, it means we got to create something that is timeless and not something that people are listening to at clubs, or are dancing to at parties," he added.

Ghosh described Shaan as a fantastic singer who is in "tremendous" form. "We keep talking and sometimes I vent with him, and a bit of that he does too about what we should do to justify music because music has been under the baton of films for too long. Music should have its own life, and that's happening today with indie music," he added.

Singing, regardless of platform, brings him happiness, said Shaan. "For a singer, the biggest thrill is when you are behind the mic creating music. Nothing excites me more than that. I'm getting opportunities to do that a dime a dozen. So, I'm happy about it. That childlike passion and excitement, that fire in the belly is now more than ever before." (PTI)



Look yourself in mirror and ask 'did I do my best': Bindra tells Paris-bound shooters

NEW DELHI, March 31: "Look yourself in the mirror before going to bed and ask 'did I do my best?'. This is what Olympic champion Abhinav Bindra told shooters aspiring to excel at the upcoming Paris Games during an interactive session here on Sunday.

During the session, India's first ever individual Olympic gold medalist answered queries and shared his experiences about competing at sport's grandest stage.

The session was held at Dr. Karni Singh Shooting Range, as the team entered the crucial final three months of preparation. Bindra reminded the squad that "success is not a one-off event".

"Doing the right things consistently day in and day out is what leads to success."

On a query on how to maintain self-discipline, Bindra said, "You have to be brutally honest with yourself and everyday look yourself in the mirror before you go to sleep and ask yourself - did I do my best? If the answer is yes you will find you will have the result eventually."

India have won a total of 19 quota places in shooting for the Paris Olympic Games across rifle, pistol and shotgun disciplines, their highest quota haul ever. The session was organised by the National Rifle Association of India (NRAI), ahead of the first batch of

shooters departing later in the day, for equipment testing to Europe. Three such batches will leave in succession in April, besides a three-member women's air pistol squad and the shotgun squad competing at the final Olympic qualifiers in Rio and Doha respectively.

Later in April the first of four national Olympic selection trials for rifle and pistol shooters are scheduled at the same venue. This will be the first time a national trial for the sole purpose of picking the rifle and pistol Olympic squads will be conducted.

When asked what advice he would give a young Abhinav going back in time he surprised all by saying, "You



know I strongly believe that I could not achieve my full potential. I wish I had more balance in life and could have other hobbies. I almost dehumanised my pursuit.

"I would definitely tell myself to be kinder to myself. I feel I didn't pat myself on the back too often after I had achieved the goals I had set out to achieve.

"I feel that then you could recover better when you go

back to the shooting range and be mentally stronger in competition. If you have several pillars in your life, your base is stronger."

Small bore coach Manoj Kumar asked what tools he had developed to counter Olympic expectations to which the champion said, "You have to increase your self-awareness as a shooter. The changes that are happening around you, you have to acknowledge them."

On specific preparations ahead of the Beijing Olympic Games he said, "You know by that time it was my fourth Olympics and I had managed to totally detach myself from the outcome."

"I was totally focussed on the process. I wanted to do my best with every single shot. I never thought of winning or losing. I managed to stay at the present moment because the truth is in the present moment." He signed off by asking shooters not to train to get better in training, but to get better in competitions.

He urged them to not get into comfort zones in training and to challenge themselves constantly and make it harder.

The session was coordinated by the team High Performance Director Pierre Beauchamp. Also present was Sultan Singh, secretary general at National Rifle Association of India (NRAI). (PTI)

Bopanna-Ebden clinch Miami Open title, return to world No. 1 ranking

MIAMI (US), March 31: Ace Indian tennis player Rohan Bopanna rewrote his own record to continue to be the oldest ATP Masters 1000 champion as he and his Australian partner Matt Ebden clinched the men's doubles crown at the Miami Open here.

Continuing their fine run this year, the 44-year-old Bopanna and Ebden fought back from a set down to pull off an exhilarating 6-7(3), 6-3, 10-6 win over Croatia's Ivan Dodig and American Austin Krajicek at the Hard Rock Stadium on Saturday.

With the win, Bopanna surpassed his record created last year when he won the Indian Wells title at the age of 43, and also reclaimed the top spot in the doubles ranking.

"It's amazing. As long as you are doing well in these big events, it's what we play for," Bopanna said after the win.

"I want to do well in the Masters 1000s and the Grand Slams. It's good to keep that record going and keep giving everyone else a run for their money," added Bopanna, who won his maiden doubles Grand Slam title at the Australian Open earlier this year.

This was Bopanna's 14th ATP Masters 1000 final. Overall, it was the veteran Indian player's 63rd ATP Tour level final and 27th doubles title.

Bopanna also achieved a rare



feat as he became the second Indian after Leander Paes to reach the final of all nine ATP Masters events. Bopanna and Ebden, the top seeds for the tournament, tapped into their deep reservoir of experience to fetch the final six points of the summit clash. They had three set points on serve at 6-5 in the opening set but their second-seeded opponents ward off all three to

force a tiebreaker before taking a 1-0 lead.

"It's tough. These guys, they fight back in tough moments," said Ebden.

"Last time we played them it was similar, it's a bit of a saw-saw. They return so well, make so many balls and we missed one or two shots when we were up [at the end of] the first set. They played a great tie-break,

and then we just reset."

Bopanna and Ebden then staged a comeback as they broke their opponent early in the second set which helped them level the game.

Like the opening two sets, the tiebreaker was also fought on an even keel with the reigning Australian Open champions emerging victorious.

Following the Australian

Open triumph, Bopanna climbed to the world No. 1 spot in the ATP rankings, becoming the oldest player to do so. But slipped to the second spot in the doubles rankings after a quarter-final loss at the Dubai Championships and a round-of-32 exit at the Indian Wells Masters.

But with the win here, the pair will be back to the top spot. (PTI)

Mirabai to return to action after 6-month injury layoff with eye on Olympic berth

PHUKET (THAILAND), March 31: Tokyo Olympics silver medalist lifter Mirabai Chanu will return to competitive action after a six-month injury layoff when she participates at the IWF World Cup to confirm her Paris Games berth here on Monday.

The World Cup is not only the final Olympic qualifying event but also a mandatory qualifier for the Paris Games.

Chanu, who has been recuperating from hip tendonitis she suffered during the Asian Games in September last year, has all but qualified for the Paris Olympics.

An appearance at the World Cup on Monday will be enough for her to seal her passage to Paris as the former world champion is ranked second in the women's 49kg

Paris in their weight category. The best three performances at the qualifying events will be taken into account for final assessment and Chanu's came at the 2022 Worlds where she lifted a total of 200kg (87kg+113kg).

The Manipuri lifter, who has struggled with injuries in the past two years, has registered an entry weight of 185kg, far from her personal best of 207kg (88kg+119kg).

Based on that she has been placed in Group B of the competition and is unlikely to be in medal contention. The lifters who register the highest entry weight are placed in group A, followed by B and so on.

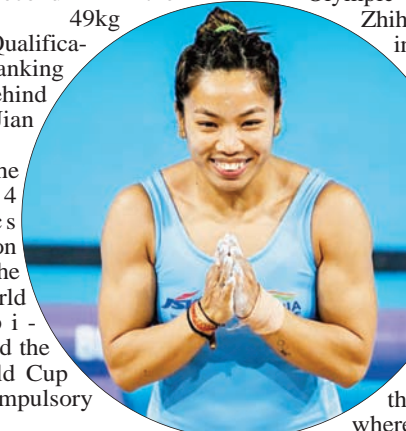
China's Huihua and Tokyo Olympic champion Hou Zhihui, who are fighting amongst themselves for a Paris berth, have entered the highest entry weight of 210kg alongside Ri Song Gum of North Korea.

The last time Chanu competed was at the Asian Games where her campaign ended in agony. The two-time Commonwealth Games champion suffered a dramatic fall on her back while attempting a clean and jerk lift, leading to her hip injury. She had to be carried out of the platform.

Coming off a long injury layoff, the 29-year-old is unlikely to attempt the much-awaited 90kg snatch lift or improve her clean and jerk effort.

"She is coming back from an injury, we will take it slow. She has already qualified so no point stretching her here. We want her to peak at the right time," head coach Vijay Sharma told PTI.

Chanu, who struggles with a back issue that affects her snatch, has been trying to breach the 90kg-mark since 2020. (PTI)



Hardik Pandya can survive fans' anger: Boult, Chawla back embattled MI skipper

MUMBAI, March 31: Rajasthan Royals' pacer Trent Boult on Sunday backed his former teammate Hardik Pandya to 'block out white noise' after the Mumbai Indians skipper found himself at the receiving end of crowd's booing at Ahmedabad and Hyderabad in the ongoing IPL.

Pandya has taken over MI captaincy from Rohit Sharma this season upon his return from Gujarat Titans and the whole saga of change of leadership has not gone down well with the fans.

"It is something you cannot control, as professional sportspeople it is what you are exposed to in a way. You have to block out the white noise and focus on the job, (but) it is easier said than done," Boult told the media here at the Wankhede Stadium.

Boult said the booing will eventually die down and backed Pandya to not get bogged down.

"There are a lot of passionate fans in this country and speaking of Hardik specifically, he is one of my favourite Indian cricketers and I do not think the booing will hold out for too long. I am sure, he is one of those guys who can put it aside and focus on the job," Boult added. Meanwhile, Mumbai Indians' veteran spinner Piyush Chawla said the situation will change once the team, which has again made a disappointing start to the IPL losing the first two games, gets a

win in their kitty.

"Well, that you can't really help because you know, they are a crowd and whatever they are doing is beyond our control so we can't really say what they are doing," Chawla said.

Chawla claimed that Pandya has remained unaffected.

"The way Hardik has taken it...he is just focusing on the game, he is not even worried about what the crowd is doing and once we get a win under our belt, things will be totally different." The right-arm spinner said MI have also looked to focus on the job at hand rather than focussing on what the fans have been doing inside the stadium.

"You get used to it, because you know, whatever is happening, whatever people are doing in the crowd, you can't really help it because it's beyond our control."

"We just have to focus on our game and whatever they are doing, let them do. We just have to focus on our cricket," he said. However, Chawla hoped that the 'true' Mumbai fans would show up on Monday at the Wankhede Stadium to support the team in their first home game of the season. "At the end of the day it's about the team; it's not about the individual. I am really hoping when the crowd comes in tomorrow, they will support the team after the kind of start we had," he said. (PTI)

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Speed thrills and excites new pace sensation Mayank Yadav who found inspiration in jet planes

LUCKNOW, March 31: Speed thrills and excites India's latest fast-bowling sensation Mayank Yadav, a passion he cultivated since childhood when the sleek lines of jet planes, awe-inspiring force of rockets, and the raw power of superbikes captured his imagination.

The 21-year-old's 150kmph thunderbolts amazed one and all during his side Lucknow Super Giants' 21-run win over Punjab Kings here on Saturday.

Mayank (3/27) stole the limelight with his searing pace. In the 12th over of Punjab's innings, he bowled the season's fastest ball at 155.8 kmph.

His extra pace rattled Jonny Bairstow, Prabhsimran Singh and Jitesh Sharma and led to PBKS' downfall. He consistently clocked 150kmph and above on the speedometer dur-

ing his four-over spell, to be adjudged the player of the match.

"Even in normal life, apart from cricket, I love things which have speed with them. Whether it is a rocket, aeroplane or superbike, speed excites me. In my childhood, I liked jet planes and would get inspiration from them," said Mayank at the post-match press conference.

"I have never bowled 156kmph before this. I clocked 155kmph during Mushtaq Ali, but this is my fastest ball," added the pacer from Punjab Bagh in New Delhi.

Mayank had played just two List A games before he was picked by LSG ahead of IPL 2022. He did not play a single match in the first season and was ruled out of the next season with a torn hamstring.

After he recovered from the



injury, he played for North Zone in the 50-over Deodhar Trophy where he knocked out Rahul Tripathi's middle stump with a ripper. "Injuries are part of fast bowlers' life, they are your friends. I had two-three major injuries in the past one or one and a half years. Those were my setbacks."

"Last season also, I missed playing in IPL because of injury. I had side strain injury with rib fracture and that happened after Vizay Hazare. My effort is to give more attention to recovery and to myself, in training and physically."

It's natural that Mayank would get inspiration from a speed merchant -- South African great Dale Steyn.

"I look up to only one fast bowler, and that is Dale Steyn. He is my idol and I idolise him a lot."

Talking about his game plan on Saturday, he said, "JL (head coach Justin Langer) or even Morne Morkel (bowling coach) did not say anything particular on what I need to work on. They know that along with pace my hard length ball is good."

"They just told me to keep the plan simple, use pace and bowl hard length balls as many as possible as well those which can be finished on stumps."

He said he did not feel any pressure or nervousness during his debut match.

"A lot of excitement was there in my debut. For the last two years, I have been visualising just one thing that, that is when I make my debut what will I feel when I bowl my first ball. Everybody said there would be some pressure or nervousness

but I did not feel it at all. "When my captain told me to bowl the first over, I felt inside me that I belonged to this place and there was a lot of confidence."

Highlighting his goals, Mayank said, "My aim is to always remain consistent and give away less runs to help the team. Pace is a plus point for me which I try to use in a good way."

Asked how he came to the limelight, he said, "Two years back, before the mega auction of the IPL, I was with Delhi team for Vijay Hazare against UP side, our assistant coach Vijay Dahiya sir saw me there."

"There he showed interest in me, he asked me videos of my bowling before IPL auction. From there he picked me, I think." (PTI)

