

# absolute india

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## SC APPROVES CBSE ASSESSMENT PLAN FOR CLASS 12, RESULTS BY JULY 31

# RATIO 30 : 30 : 40

The CBSE said for Class 12, marks based on unit test/mid-term/pre-board exam will have 40 per cent weightage; Class 11, marks based on the theory component of the final exam will have 30 per cent weightage; and Class 10 marks based on average theory component of the best three performing subjects out of the main 5 subjects will have 30 per cent weightage. The CBSE informed the top court that results for Class 12 will be declared by July 31.

► **Attorney General K.K. Venugopal, representing the CBSE, contended that the CBSE finalized the formula after obtaining feedback from 229 Sahodaya School Complex comprising of 7,734 schools and a 13 member committee of experts, comprising of IAS officers and education experts, constituted on June 4.**

► **According to the policy, a result committee under the principal of the school will be formed in each school comprising of two senior most PGT from the same school and two PGT from the neighbouring schools. The committee has been given liberty to prepare the result by following the policy.**



Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Supreme Court on Thursday accepted the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) formula for the assessment of Class 12 students. CISCE counsel J.K. Das informed the Supreme Court that it will take the performance of students in the last six years while awarding the final marks to Class 12 students.

The top court suggested there should be an inbuilt mechanism in the scheme to address grievances of students after the declaration of results. The AG said that he would consult the authorities. The top court said the two boards can go ahead and notify their evaluation schemes after incorporating the suggestions of the court.

The top court said it would hear the

### DISCREPANT OPTION

CBSE said in affidavit that, in case where any candidate is not satisfied with the assessment done, based on the policy, such candidates will be given an opportunity to appear in examinations to be conducted by the Board, when conditions are conducive for holding the examinations. As per this policy, marks scored in the later examination will be considered as final.

matter on June 21 again to find out whether any other suggestion could be placed before the CBSE for consideration. The Supreme Court also agreed to hear petitions for the cancellation of state board examinations for Class 12 in the states of Assam, Punjab, Tripura and Andhra Pradesh.

### CRITERIA OF THE ASSESSMENT

The computation of theory marks for Class 12 will be based on performance in one or more Unit Test(s)/Mid-Term/Pre-Board(s) theory examination. The result committee of the school may decide weightage to be given to each exam based on the credibility and reliability of the assessment. For example, if the committee may be of the considered view that only the Pre-Board exams may be taken into consideration, then full weightage can be given to that component. Similarly, another school result committee may decide to give equal weightage to Pre-Board exams and Mid-Term exams.

Computation of Class 10 theory marks shall be based on average theory marks obtained by the student(s) in best three performing subjects out of the main 5 subjects. This average will be uniformly awarded to all the Class 12 subjects based on theory weightage.

## Twitter in trouble



Team Absolute | New Delhi

Two days after Ghaziabad Police booked Twitter Inc, Twitter Communication India Pvt Ltd and others, more troubles are brewing for the US-based social media giant as a complaint has been filed against it, it's India MD Manish Maheshwari, Bollywood actor Swara Bhaskar, journalist Arfa Khanum Sherwani and others for giving communal colour without fact checking truthfulness of an incident. The complaint has also named Mohammad Asif Khan and was filed on June 16 at Tilak Marg police station by an Advocate Amit Acharya. An official said they are certifying the complaint and they will register a case only after that. In his complaint Acharya alleged that some people had posted a video on social media of a man identified as Abdul Samad Saifi, who was beaten, thrashed and his beard was chopped off. "It was also contended that the miscreants were from Hindu community and they made Saifi to chant Vande Matram and Jai Shei Ram against his wishes," Acharya alleged. He further alleged that Khan, Sherwani, Bhaskar, who have their social media account "got inspired from the incident and started a propaganda to spread hate amongst the citizens, they gave communal colours to the incident without fact checking the truthfulness of the incident". Acharya in his complaint also mentioned the findings of the Ghaziabad Police and said, "Saifi and the other miscreants already

### SPECIAL CELL QUESTIONED TWITTER MD

New Delhi: The Delhi Police Special Cell questioned Twitter India MD Manish Maheshwari in connection with alleged Congress toolkit case on May 31, senior officials of the Special Cell con-



formed. A team went to Maheshwari's house on May 31 in Bengaluru to record his statement, an official said, adding that the Twitter MD was asked how the social media site tagged the tweets of BJP spokesperson Sambit Patra as manipulated media. The Congress has accused BJP of forgery and cheating and had approached the Delhi Police with a complaint against Patra, BJP national President JP Nadda, Union Minister Smriti Irani and several others.

knew each other. Saifi had sold a 'tabeez' to them guaranteeing positive results. And when it did not show positive results the miscreants beat him up. The police took cognizance and arrested three persons in connection with the incident." He said that the Ghaziabad Police also issued a statement on the intervening night of June 14 and 15 on its Twitter Handle regarding their findings.

## SII to conduct clinical trials of Novavax for children

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Serum Institute of India is likely to launch clinical trials of the Novavax Covid-19 vaccine for children in July, sources said. SII is likely to introduce the Novavax vaccine, to be known as Covavax in the country, by September. This week Novavax Inc announced that its vaccine has turned out to be more than 90 per cent effective in clinical trials conducted in the US. Bharat Biotech has already begun clinical trials of Covaxin for children in the 6-12 age group. Novavax Inc had announced that NVX-CoV2373, its recombinant nanoparticle protein-based Covid-19 vaccine, demonstrated 100 per cent protection against moderate and severe disease, 90.4 per cent efficacy overall, and met the primary endpoint in its PREVENT-19 pivotal Phase 3 trial.



### Eka.Care integrates with CoWIN for vaccination booking

Bengaluru: Eka.Care, a connected healthcare platform, has gone live with CoWIN-approved vaccination slot booking to help people get vaccinated in an efficient and orderly manner. The 'eka.care' platform's integration with CoWIN offers a bouquet of services including seamless slot booking, pre and post-vaccination tele-consultation. The users on eka.care platform can search for slots by location, type of vaccination, and cost to fit their needs, said a company statement. Post-vaccination, users will also be able to download the certificate and receive a reminder for the second dose.

## Satya Nadella steps in as Microsoft Chairman too

San Francisco | Agencies

Microsoft has elected CEO Satya Nadella as Chairman of the tech giant, a first in two decades when Microsoft's chairman will also be its CEO. Bill Gates was the only other Chairman and CEO of Microsoft who stepped down as CEO in 2000. Gates stepped down as chairman in 2014 and the board then elected John Thompson as independent chairman. In this role as Chairman, Nadella will lead the work to set the agenda for the board, leveraging his deep understanding of the business to elevate the right strategic opportunities and identify key risks and mitigation approaches for the board's review, the company said in a statement late on Wednesday.



## Validity of documents related to MV Act extended till Sept 30

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Union Ministry of Road Transport & Highways on Thursday extended the validity of the documents related to Motor Vehicles Act, 1988, and Central Motor Vehicle Rules, 1989, till September 30. It was advised that the validity of fitness certificate, permit (all types), licence, registration or any other concerned document(s) might be treated to be valid till June 30, 2021. This has now been extended up to September 30. This covers all documents whose validity has expired since February 2020 or would expire by September 30, 2021. The enforcement authorities have been advised to treat such documents valid till September 30. This will help citizens avail transport related services, while maintaining social distancing, the ministry noted.

## Now, common format PUC across India

Ministry of Road Transport and Highways issued the notification on Monday under Central Motor Vehicle Rules 1989. Under the new format, the Ministry has introduced uniform PUC format across the country by linking the PUC database with the National Register. The concept of rejection slip is being introduced for the first time under the new format.

There will be confidentiality of information like Vehicle owner's mobile number, name and address, engine number and chassis number (only the last four digits to be visible, the other digits shall be masked). The owner's mobile number has been made mandatory, on which an SMS alert will be sent for validation and fee. If the enforcement officer has reason to believe that a motor vehicle is not complying with provisions of emission standards, he may communicate in writing or through electronic mode to direct the driver or any person in-charge of the vehicle to submit it for conducting the test in any one of the authorized PUC testing stations.



## J&K POLICE CONSTABLE SHOT DEAD BY TERRORISTS

Srinagar: Suspected terrorists shot dead a J&K Police constable near his residence in Srinagar on Thursday night, sources said. Sources said the incident happened at Saidpora in the city. According to sources, the constable, identified as Javed Ahmed, was critically injured after terrorists fired at him indiscriminately. He was taken to the hospital where he was declared dead. Additional police forces have reached the spot and a search operation has been started to nab the attackers.

## HEROIN WORTH RS 7CR SEIZED IN ASSAM, 2 HELD

Guwahati: Assam police on Thursday seized heroin valued at Rs 7 crore and arrested two persons, including a woman drug peddler, in the state's Karbi Anglong district, officials said. Acting on a tip off, police personnel posing as clients have arrested one of the most wanted drug peddlers -- a Dimapur-based woman who has been running a drug racket, and subsequently apprehend another person. Police said that 164 packets containing high-quality heroin weighing 2.12 kg were recovered from the detainees at Janak Pukhuri in Khatkhati police station area in Karbi Anglong district bordering Nagaland. The woman has been reportedly supplying drugs to different places of Assam including Nagaon, Morigaon and Guwahati.

## TENSION AT TIKRI BORDER AFTER MAN BURNT TO DEATH

Bahadurgarh (Haryana): Tension is brewing on the Tikri border with report coming in of a death due to torching after the agitating farmers allegedly set a person from Bahadurgarh on fire. The police are not taking chances with the inflammatory situation and sufficient force has been deployed to prevent a possible breakdown of law and order. As per the details emerging from the incident, one Madan Lal gave a statement to the police that his brother, Mukesh, had gone to meet the agitating farmers sitting in protest against the three Central farm laws on Tikri border on NH9 on at 5 pm on Wednesday. Mukesh was admitted to General Hospital, Bahadurgarh, for treatment where he scummed.

## This AI tech can hear Covid in a cough

Australian computer scientists have developed a novel Artificial Intelligence-based model that can hear the effects of Covid-19 in the sound of a forced cough, even when people are asymptomatic, an advance that can pave the way for detecting the infectious disease via diagnostic mobile phone apps.

Sydney | Agencies

During the pandemic, many crowd sourcing platforms have been designed to gather respiratory sound audios from both healthy and Covid-19 positive groups for research purposes. A team of researchers from RMIT University accessed datasets from two of these platforms -- Covid-19 Sounds App and COSWARA -- to train the algorithm using contrastive self-supervised learning, a method by



which a system works independently to encode what makes two things similar or different. With further development, their algorithm could power a diagnostic mobile phone app, said lead author Hao Xue, Research Fellow in RMIT's School of

Computing Technologies. Xue said the method they developed could also be extended for other respiratory diseases like tuberculosis. While this is not the first Covid cough classification algorithm to be developed, the RMIT model outperforms existing approaches.

According to co-author Professor Flora Salim, previous attempts to develop this type of technology, like those at MIT and Cambridge, relied on huge amounts of meticulously-labeled data to train the AI system.

"We've overcome a major hurdle in the development of a reliable, easily-accessible and contactless preliminary diagnosis tool for Covid-19. This could have significant benefit in slowing the spread of the virus by those who have no obvious symptoms. A mobile app that can give you peace of mind during community outbreaks or prompt you to seek a Covid test -- that's the kind of innovative tool we need to better manage this pandemic."

Hao Xue, Research Fellow in RMIT's School of Computing Technologies



# BENGAL GOVERNOR MEETS SHAH, PRESIDENT KOVIND

Kolkata | Agencies

West Bengal Governor Jagdeep Dhankhar, who is on a two-day visit to Delhi, met Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Thursday evening and is expected to have briefed him about the 'deteriorating law-and-order situation in the state. Dhankhar also met President Ram Nath Kovind on Thursday morning, but none of them said what was discussed during the meeting. Dhankhar, however, maintained that his visit to the President was a courtesy call. This was the first meeting between Dhankhar and Shah after Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee retained power in West Bengal following the Trinamool Congress' landslide victory in the



Assembly polls. Dhankhar's meetings with the President and Shah assume significance because it was expected that the West Bengal Governor, who has been vocal on the 'deteriorating' law-and-order situation in the state, would brief them about the state government's 'silence' on the

issue. Dhankhar had visited several parts of the violence hit state after the announcement of election results on May 2 and had spoken to the people. "The entire details of his experience in the violence affected state have been given in a report," a source close to the Governor said, adding that Dhankhar is

likely to submit the report in Delhi. It is also likely that Dhankhar in his report has indicated that in the last four cabinet meetings after Banerjee came to power for the third time, no mention has been made about the 'violence' and 'deteriorating' law and order situation in Bengal.

## MAMATA TAKES DIG AT DHANKHAR

Kolkata: In a veiled reference to West Bengal Governor Jagdeep Dhankhar's visit to the national capital during which he met Union ministers, Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee said on Thursday that "a child can also be snubbed and made quiet". Though Banerjee didn't make any direct comment on the issue, she hinted that the state government always wanted a replacement for the present Bengal Governor, with whom the ruling Trinamool Congress has been at loggerheads for some time now. When asked for her comment on the Governor's meeting with the Central ministers, Banerjee said, "You can see everything. I shall not make a comment on this. Words are silver, but silence is gold," adding that "a child can also be snubbed and made quiet".



## Govt amends Cable Television Network Rules to address citizens' grievances

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Union Ministry of Information & Broadcasting said in a statement on Thursday that the government has amended the Cable Television Network Rules, 1994, adding a statutory mechanism to redress citizens' grievances/complaints. The rules have been amended in accordance with the provisions of the Cable Television Network Act, 1995, the ministry said. It also said that the notification is significant as it paves the way for a strong institutional system for redressing grievances while placing accountability and responsibility on the broadcasters and their self-regulating bodies. "The Cable Television Network Rules have been amended to provide for a statutory mechanism, which would be transparent and benefit the citizens. At the same time, self-regulating bodies of broadcasters would be registered with the Central government," the statement said. At present, there is an institutional mechanism in



the form of an inter-ministerial committee to address the grievances of citizens relating to violation of the Programme/Advertising Codes under the Rules. Similarly, various broadcasters have also developed their internal self-regulatory mechanism for addressing grievances. Some broadcasters had also requested for giving legal recognition to their associations/bodies. While expressing satisfaction over the existing mechanism of grievance redressal set up by the Central govern-

ment, the Supreme Court in its order in the matter of 'Common Cause Vs Union of India & Others' in 2000 had advised to frame appropriate rules to formalise the complaint redressal mechanism. At present, there are over 900 television channels which have been granted permission by the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, and all of them are required to comply with the Programme and Advertising Code laid down under the Cable Television Network Rules.

## Pashupati Kumar Paras elected LJP president



Patna | Agencies

Amid the ongoing tussle between Chirag Paswan and his uncle Pashupati Kumar Paras, the latter

has been elected as national president of the Lok Janshakti Party (LJP). "I had filed the nomination for the post of president and I have been elected unanimously. There was no other candidate who filed the nomination for the post," Paras said here. The executive committee of the LJP has 76 members and the majority of them are with Paras, electing him as the president of the LJP. The election was held at the official residence of strongman leader Suraj Bhan Singh in Patna. Singh holds the post of executive president of the party. On Wednesday, Chirag Paswan claimed that the election for the post of party president can be held only in two eventualities. First -- if the president dies, and second, if he resigns from the post. "I am alive and I have not resigned from the post of president. In this case, the election for the post of president is unconstitutional," Chirag said.

Reacting to this, Paras said: "There is no such provision in the democratic system of the party. As per the party constitution, the election can be held every 2 to 3 years. Moreover, the majority is with me and not with Chirag. Hence, I am the president of the party."

## Fugitive international gangster arrested by Bihar Police

Patna | Agencies

An international criminal wanted in over a dozen cases of heinous crimes including murder, kidnapping, extortion, and bomb blasts was arrested by the Bihar Police on Thursday. The accused, identified as Raj Kumar Yadav alias R.K. alias Nepali alias 'Maowadi' (Maoist), is a native of Nepal's Virpur district. Several cases have been registered against him in Nepal, as well as in Bihar's Madhubani and Supaul districts. The accused was hiding in Gurugram and leads about his locations and crime records were being shared by Interpol. Supaul's Superintendent of Police Manoj Kumar said that the accused is a fugitive gangster of Nepal and was sentenced life imprisonment in the neighbouring country. "On April 9 this year, Raj Kumar, along with 4 of his associates, had kidnapped a person named Somnath Yadav and kept



him in Nirmali in Supaul district. The Virpur police registered an FIR under relevant sections of kidnapping-cum-extortion. A dedicated team was also formed by Virpur police and its officers asked help from us to raid a particular place in Nirmali. "A joint team of Virpur and Supaul police raided a house belonging to Satish Kumar Yadav, native of Phukahi village under Phulparas police station in Madhubani district. He revealed that the victim was kept in a house in Nirmali and Raj Kumar Yadav killed him. He further said that the dead body was thrown into the Kosi river," the SP said.

## Sonia and Priyanka have taken Covid vax: Congress



Team Absolute | New Delhi

Amid questions being raised by the Congress leaders including the Gandhis, the Congress on Thursday said that both Sonia Gandhi and Priyanka Gandhi have taken the vaccine jab. While Sonia Gandhi has taken both the doses, Priyanka Gandhi has taken her first dose and Rahul Gandhi will take it as per the advice of doctors as he has just recovered from Covid. Randeep Surjewala, General Secretary of the

party, said that the Bharatiya Janata Party should focus on vaccinating the citizens of the country rather than questioning the opposition. He said Rahul Gandhi was scheduled to take the vaccination on April 16 but could not take it. Rahul Gandhi has been critical of the vaccination policy and had demanded that every citizen of the country visiting the vaccination centre should get inoculated. Also, those who do not have access to the internet have the right to life.

## MHA withdraws 'Y+' category security of TMC leader Mukul Roy



Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Central government has withdrawn the 'Y+' category security of Trinamool Congress leader Mukul Roy, sources said on Thursday. The development comes after Roy recently rejoined the Trinamool Congress from Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). Roy's son Subhrangshu's Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) protection was also withdrawn last week. The security withdrawal is reportedly initiated after Roy's written request to the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA). The TMC leader made the request to the Central government to withdraw his security soon after he rejoined TMC. Two Personal Security Officers (PSOs) and five armed guards have been providing round the clock securi-

ty to Roy since he was given 'Y+' category security based on threat assessment. The MHA issued the order to withdraw Roy's security on Wednesday. However, Roy told media in Kolkata earlier that he has already "relieved the CRPF personnel from his security." But CRPF Headquarters said the personnel continue to be on duty. The Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) which is providing 'Y+' category security to the TMC leader is waiting state police to take over his security before the force withdraws its officer from the duty to avoid any unprecedented situation. "Central government has issued orders therefore it is in process. Once handed over to state police then CRPF will be withdrawn," a CRPF official, privy to the development, told reporter.

## 89 nations ahead of India in vaccination: Kapil Sibal

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Congress leader Kapil Sibal has accused the BJP of doing politics on the issue of vaccination after the ruling party MP opposed discussion in the PAC (Public Accounts Committee) on this issue. Kapil Sibal in a tweet on Thursday said, "Politics is Everything". "Population fully vaccinated: May 24 : 75 nations ahead of India June 1 : 81 ahead June 17 : 89 ahead," he said "Only 3.5 per cent fully vaccinated. In PAC, BJP oppose discussion on vaccination policy!" he further added.



The government on Wednesday informed that the cumulative number of COVID-19 vaccine doses administered in the country has reached more than 26.53 crore (26,53,17,472). A total of 20,67,085 vaccine doses were administered as first dose and 67,447 vaccine doses given as second dose in the age group 18-44 years on Wednesday. Cumulatively, 4,72,06,953 persons across 37 States/UTs have received their first dose and total 9,68,098 have received their second dose since the start of Phase-3 of the vaccination drive.

## 29 ARRESTED AFTER RAIDS ON ILLEGAL HOOKAH BARS

New Delhi: Delhi Police on Thursday said that it has apprehended 29 people, including four cafe owners in its crackdown against illegal hookah bar. R.P. Meena, Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP) south east Delhi, said that the staff of Kalkaji police station apprehended twenty five customers and four owners from cafe and bars. Meena said, four hookahs have also been seized from their possession. The DCP said that on June 12 during area patrolling, a police team reached near Govindpurj extension. The team noticed that one Cafe -- Sound & Fog was running and several customers were enjoying hookah inside the bar. He said the team raided at Sound & Fog cafe and apprehended the owners, Monu and Rohit, along with five customers. The DCP said that a case was registered under several sections of the IPC, Epidemic Diseases Act, Disaster Management Act and COTPA Act. He said that one flavoured hookah was recovered from their possession.

## FOUR HELD IN GURUGRAM ON MURDER CHARGES

Gurugram: Four persons have been arrested for allegedly killing a 4-year-old child Bhavya and injuring his father Praveen by opening fire in Pataudi village in Gurugram. The arrested individuals have been identified as Navin alias Kanchi, Harish alias Bhaman, Paramjeet alias Susu and Yaman alias Baiya. They are residents of Khodi village in Rewari district. The accused were arrested by a team of the crime branch unit Farrukhnagar of the Gurugram police from a Rewari village on Thursday after a tip-off. "The culprits disclosed before the police that the victim Praveen had a quarrel with Harish after having liquor a few days ago. To take revenge for the incident from Praveen they had committed the crime and fled the spot," Subhash Boken, spokesperson of the Gurugram police, told reporter. The culprits will be taken on police remand to recover the motorcycle and arms used in the crime, he said. The incident took place on Wednesday. Soon after the incident, the family members of the victims immediately took the injured father-son duo to a trauma centre in Rewari where Bhavya succumbed to his injuries while Praveen is still undergoing treatment.



## Over 5,000 children test Covid positive in Meghalaya, 17 die

Shillong: | Agencies

Over 5,000 children under the age of 14 in Meghalaya have tested Covid-19 positive and 17 of them died, health officials said on Thursday. Health officials said that since the beginning of the pandemic last year, 5,101 children up to the age of 14 tested positive but 4,344 of them have recovered and 17 succumbed. The remaining are under treatment in various hospitals. Majority of the children were infected during the past one month. "As many as 2,950 children have tested positive for Covid-19 since May 15, out of whom 2,821 have recovered, while 13 children died during the same period," an official said. The latest child death was reported in East Garo Hills district



where a four-year-old girl succumbed to the dreaded disease earlier this month. Briefing the media, Health and

Family Welfare Minister Alexander Lalo Hek said that not a single newborn baby was affected by infectious disease so far in the state.

He said that considering the rising infection of Covid-19 among the children, the government has decided to set up paediatric hospitals at Ganesh Das hospital in Shillong, Tura in West Garo Hills, and Jowai in West Jaintia Hills. Claiming that the state government has sufficient numbers of Covid vaccines to continue the drive for another week, he said that the Centre has assured that it would supply more vaccines to the state after June 21. The mountainous state so far registered 43,253 Covid positive cases and 38,032 have recovered and 758 have died. As on Thursday, the active cases stood at 4,464. Meghalaya's fatality ratio is 1.75 per cent against the national average of 1.29 per cent.



# 'DELTA PLUS' VARIANT MAY SPARK 3RD WAVE: HEALTH DEPARTMENT

Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray directed senior doctors and officers to ensure medicines and health equipment were available across urban and rural areas.

Team Absolute | Mumbai

With a state-appointed task force Wednesday expressing apprehension that a third wave of the pandemic could hit Maharashtra in a month or two if Covid-appropriate behaviour was not followed, Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray directed senior doctors and officers to ensure medicines and health equipment were available across urban and rural areas. At a meeting to review the preparations for the possible third wave of the pandemic, the CM was informed that a highly virulent "Delta plus" variant of the coronavirus could stoke a third wave in Maharashtra. The state health department officers also said while the number of patients during the second wave was much higher than the first due to the 'Delta variant' of the virus, the third wave may even see a higher volume of patients. The state recorded around 19 lakh patients in the first wave of the pandemic and nearly 40 lakh in



avirous could stoke a third wave in Maharashtra. The state health department officers also said while the number of patients during the second wave was much higher than the first due to the 'Delta variant' of the virus, the third wave may even see a higher volume of patients. The state recorded around 19 lakh patients in the first wave of the pandemic and nearly 40 lakh in

the second. Health officials said the third wave could even see eight lakh active patients, of whom 10 per cent could be children. The meeting was held here to take stock of preparations to tackle a possible third wave of COVID-19 even as Maharashtra, the state worst-hit by the pandemic, emerges out of a devastating second wave of the infection.

The presentation made by the health department at the meet portrayed possible scenarios in case a fresh wave of the infection hits Maharashtra.

Dr Rahul Pandit, a member of the task force said, "How to keep wave 3 limited is in our hands. We must avoid crowded places and ensure double masking. If we give away basic cognizance, the third wave will be bigger." Thackeray stressed the need for increasing vaccination coverage. Thackeray said the state had no basic amenities when the first wave of the pandemic hit Maharashtra, but had steadily increased it subsequently. Pointing out that the country will get 42 crore doses of the Covid-19 vaccine by August-September, he said the state would also benefit from it. Though vaccination plays an important role in this battle against Covid-19, one must also not forget that social-distancing norms need to be maintained, Thackeray said. RT-PCR tests have to be increased and PPE kits and other material has to be procured too, he added.

With a dip in cases, the Maharashtra government had allowed five-level graded relaxations in the state from June 7, which are revised based on weekly case positivity rate and occupancy of oxygenated beds.

## Ex-cop Pradeep Sharma arrested in SUV case, sent to NIA custody



Team Absolute | Mumbai

In a major development, the National Investigation Agency (NIA) on Thursday raided and arrested former Maharashtra Police 'encounter specialist' Pradeep Sharma, in connection with the ongoing probe into the cases of planting of explosive-laden SUV at Antilia and businessman Mansukh Hiran murder. He was produced before a Special NIA court which remanded him to the agency's custody till June 28. Early this morning, an NIA team along with the Mumbai Police, swooped at his Andheri home, carried out searches, and took away files, laptops, and other material. Meanwhile, Sharma was picked up from the Lonavala hillstation in Pune district and detained for questioning after which he was placed under arrest this afternoon. The NIA action - the fifth involving a former policeman and the 8th so far - came in the sensational case of the SUV with 20 gelatin sticks and a threat note abandoned near Antilia, home of industrialist Mukesh Ambani, on February 25.

Soon after that, the police recovered the body of SUV owner Hiran from the Thane Creek marshes on March 5, as both the cases triggered a massive political row. Sharma, a controversial former Senior Police Inspector and later a Shiv Sena activist, had been earlier interrogated by the NIA a couple of times in April in the same cases. Last week, the NIA had arrested two other persons -- Santosh Atmaram Shelar and

Anand Pandurang Jadhav -- from a slum pocket in Kurar village of Malad east for their roles in the twin cases. Police sources said that after their custodial interrogation, more details of Sharma's involvement emerged and culminated in Thursday's action.

Earlier, the NIA had arrested five other persons including former cops like Sachin Vaze, Riyazuddin Kazi, Sunil Mane, convicted ex-cop Vinayak Shinde and cricket bookie Naresh Gor. Sharma is reported to be close to Vaze, who is named as one of the prime accused in the SUV-Hiran cases, and the duo had allegedly met in early-March when the plot to eliminate Hiran was hatched, while Sharma had gone to the Mumbai Police Commissionerate to meet some other persons. A former college professor-turned-policeman of the 1983 batch state cadre, he built up a formidable reputation for wiping out the Mumbai mafia through the so-called 'encounter killings'.

However, Sharma was dismissed from the police force in 2008 for alleged links with the underworld, but was reinstated around 10 years later when the charges against him failed. He started his second innings with a bang by arresting Iqbal Ibrahim Kaskar - the younger sibling of absconding mafia don Dawood Ibrahim Kaskar - in September 2017, on extortion charges. In 2019, he quit the police force to join the Shiv Sena and contested the Assembly elections unsuccessfully from Nalaspotra constituency in Palghar.

## Don't deny admission to students for lack of TC or leaving certificates: Gaikwad

Due to the pandemic situation and financial losses in terms of job or business loss, many parents have not been able to pay school fees in part or full.

Team Absolute | Pune

After repeated complaints to the state School Education department about schools suspending students or throwing them out because of their inability to pay fees or other reasons, and not issuing them transfer certificates until full fees are paid, state School Education Minister Varsha Gaikwad has found a way out of the situation. Close to midnight on Thursday, the minister took to Twitter, stating, "Every child has a right to education and at the school of their choice. It has come to our notice, in the current extraordinary situation, more students are transferring out of schools due to financial reasons and some are

being denied transfer/leaving certificates. Students whose TC/LC is delayed or are unable to produce it may be given admission on a provisional basis by the new school. While schooling till Class 8 already provides for this under the RTE, this rule will also apply to Class 9 and 10." A government resolution to this effect has been issued by the School Education department. "Not giving admission in a new school due to lack of TC/LC would be a miscarriage of justice. It is also a violation of the Right To Education Act. Principals/administrators should ensure admission is not denied for want of TC/LC. Strict action will be taken against such schools for denying admission. For academic continuity, the

birth/age proof of such a student has to be deemed sufficient to give admission to a class appropriate to his or her age," said Gaikwad. Due to the pandemic situation and financial losses in terms of job or business loss, many parents have not been able to pay school fees in part or full.

Over the last couple of months, there have been several complaints from parents about schools discontinuing studies for the child and forcibly issuing LCs to them due to the non-payment of fees. In many cases, parents want to shift children to other institutions with lower fees but schools have been holding back leaving/transfer certificates which are a must at the time of school transfer, making it impossible to shift schools as well.

## Former Maha MLA Paril held in Rs 500 cr money laundering case

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Wednesday said that it has arrested former Maharashtra MLA Vivekanand Shankar Patil in connection with an over Rs 500 crore money laundering probe, officials said. He was sent to the agency's custody till June 25 by a special PMLA court here. An ED official related to the probe said that the agency arrested Patil on Tuesday night from his residence in connection with fraud at the Karnala Nagari Sahakari Bank.

According to the ED officials, Patil is of the Peasants and Workers Party of India and a former chairman of the Panvel-based bank. The ED official alleged that Patil created fictitious accounts and siphoned off about Rs 500 crore. The ED case of money laundering is based on the FIR lodged by the Economic Offences Wing of Navi Mumbai last year against 76 persons after the Reserve Bank of India detected the fraud following an audit. The official said that the audit revealed that Patil was siphoning off funds

since 2008 from the bank through 63 fictitious loan accounts to the loan accounts of Karnala Charitable Trust and Karnala Sports Academy, which were founded by him. "It was found that the management of the bank was under control of Patil. In order to siphon the funds, Patil used some old accounts of bank and get them renewed and large amounts were transferred from these accounts to the said trust accounts," he said.

The official further said that no collateral securities were taken against such loans and no correspondence was made with revenue authorities regarding payment of stamp duty for the purpose of purchasing immovable properties for which loans were obtained, thereby making the loans unsafe/unsecured. He said that further, all the above loan accounts from where funds have been transferred to the said trust, were found to be NPAs. He also said that it was observed that the said loans were sanctioned and disbursed at the instruction and for gains by Patil, without following KYC norms and other RBI guidelines.

## Maha to roll out mobile units to detect early hearing loss

Team Absolute | Mumbai

In a unique initiative, the Maharashtra Health Department will use mobile units to check the hearing abilities of newborns in the state to diagnose and start their treatment early, Health Minister Rajesh Tope said on Thursday. To be launched as a pilot project in Gadchiroli, Jalna and Pune, the project was conceived by Nationalist Congress Party MP Supriya Sule and will be taken forward by Abhijit Raut of the Disability Rights Development Forum of the Yashwantrao Chavan Pratishthan. As per the Census 2011, there were a total of 55,569 hearing impaired children in the age group of 0-10, which is now estimated to be around 92,000, with 51 percent scattered in rural areas and 49 percent in urban centres. At a detailed presenta-

tion, officials said that the National Deafness Prevention Programme is being implemented in 16 places in the state and now its scope would be further expanded to cover entire Maharashtra. Tope also stressed on the implementation of OtoAcoustics Emission (OAE) tests among newborns and infants to detect and diagnose hearing disability and then initiate treatment, which is necessary for the overall development of children. "Deafness can be prevented if this OAE test is done at an early stage. Therefore, this programme should be planned for early diagnosis and treatment," he said. The mobile units would travel to various primary health centres to check the hearing abilities of newborns, while hearing tests could also be carried out during a child's immunisation sessions, he said.

## Mumbai vaccination scam MAHA GOVT ASKS BMC TO PROBE MATTER AND FILE REPORT WITHIN 15 DAYS

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Days after the residents of a housing society in Mumbai's Kandivali claimed to be cheated in an alleged vaccination scam, the Maharashtra government has asked the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) to investigate the matter and file a report within 15 days. On Wednesday, Mumbai Police sources had informed that though the matter is still under investigation, what they found is that beneficiaries have received their certificates but with different dates and locations of vaccination. Responding to the alleged Hiranandani Estate Society vaccination scam, Maharashtra Cabinet Minister Aslam Shaikh said: "We have asked Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) to investigate the matter and file a report within 15 days." In a complaint submitted to the police, the Hiranandani

Heritage Residents Welfare Association (HHRWA) had said that a vaccination camp was arranged by the residential complex on May 30. Later, it was found that the Co-WIN portal did not have any record of the people who participated and they received certificates in the name of different hospitals. "If the vaccine is found to be spurious, the people who got vaccinated will have a medical emergency to deal with. Therefore, there is an urgent need to investigate the whole episode so that such fraudulent activities are not repeated at other places," the complaint said. The society members began doubting the exercise after their certificates showed different hospital names and the hospitals denied holding any such drive. Not even a single member showed usual side effects like fever or body ache. Meanwhile, the trio who had come for vaccination camp in the society remains incommunicado.

## Coast Guard saves 16 crew of sinking ship off Raigad

Team Absolute | Mumbai

In a daredevil operation, the Indian Coast Guard on Thursday rescued 16 crew members of a sinking cargo ship near the Revdanda jetty off Maharashtra's Raigad district, an ICG spokesperson said here. The incident happened in the early hours when Indian-flagged M.V. Mangalam's second officer intimated that the ship, with 16 on board, had partially sunk around 3 kms off the Revdanda jetty in the stormy Arabian Sea. In view of the distress and with water ingress panicking the crew, the ship captain was even planning to abandon the vessel, the ICG was told. Gauging the seriousness of the situation, the ICG's



MRCC team calmed down the alarmed captain and crew and asked them to remain on board as help was being deployed. ICG Subhadra Kumari Chauhan immediately set sail from Dighi Port towards the sinking vessel, while two ICG helicopters took from Daman for the evacuation operation. The ship reached

the vicinity of M.V. Mangalam by 10.15 a.m. as challenging weather conditions prevailed, but it sent rescue boats to pick up the crew. Around that time, the two helicopters also arrived and started winching up the crew of vessel, saving all 16, and flew them to Revdanda for medical aid, said the ICG spokesperson.

## Heavy rainfall likely in Mumbai, other districts over next 48 hours

An offshore trough runs from south Karnataka to north Kerala coast. Under its influence, widespread rainfall with isolated heavy to very heavy falls likely over Konkan, Goa, and Madhya Maharashtra during next 2-3 days. Isolated extremely heavy rainfall also very likely over Maharashtra and Goa during the next 24 hours.

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) on Thursday said that four districts of Maharashtra--Mumbai, Thane, Palghar and Raigad would witness heavy rainfall on June 18 and 19. The IMD has predicted light to moderate rain or thundershowers in the city and the suburban areas with the possibility of heavy rainfall at isolated places. "An offshore trough runs from south Karnataka to north Kerala coast. Under its influence, widespread rainfall with iso-



lated heavy to very heavy falls likely over Konkan, Goa, and Madhya Maharashtra during next 2-3 days. Isolated extremely heavy rainfall also very likely over Maharashtra and Goa during the next 24 hours," the IMD said in a

statement. Yesterday, the rain started lashing Mumbai city and its suburbs after a gap of three days. Continuous rain causes waterlogging in Mumbai's Parel area on Wednesday and also led to traffic snarls

at different parts of the city. Last week also heavy rain had lashed Mumbai and its suburbs as the monsoon set in over the city, inundating several low-lying areas and disrupting train and bus services. However, no significant rainfall was recorded since Sunday, barring some light rain at isolated places. Apart from Maharashtra, the weather department has projected heavy rainfall in Delhi, Punjab, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Goa, Karnataka, Kerala Bihar, and Jharkhand during the next two days.

## Dairy farmers dump milk on road in protest against low prices

The protest, organised by the All India Kisan Sabha the farmer's outfit of the Communist party saw farmers emptying their milk cartoons on the road at various places in Aurangabad and Ahmednagar.

Team Absolute | Pune

Dairy farmers in Maharashtra started protesting over the low prices of milk on Thursday morning. The protest, organised by the All India Kisan Sabha -- the farmer's outfit of the Communist party -- saw farmers emptying their milk cartoons on the road at various places in Aurangabad and Ahmednagar. Since the start of the lockdown in Maharashtra, milk procurement prices have collapsed at the farm gate levels. Farmer who were paid a



comfortable Rs 30-31/liter for their milk with 3.5 per cent fat and 8.5 per cent SNF (Solid-Not-Fat) since then are receiving around Rs 17-20/liter. Dairies on their part have blamed the demand destruction for them having

to slash procurement prices. In their letter to the chief minister and the minister for dairy development, the Kisan Sabha has pointed out how the milk pouch prices have not corrected for the consumer despite a dip in procurement price. The Sabha has asked for a complete audit of the milk unions to find out if their claim of

demand destruction is true during the lockdown. They have also asked for strict legislation against such drastic price dips. The farmers have demanded a revenue sharing formula between the farmers and the dairies which shall safeguard them from price shocks. Also, they have asked for single milk marking brand in Maharashtra on the lines of the Gujarat Cooperative Milk Marketing Federation or Amul. Asking for a stop on the sales of toned milk, they have asked for strict implementation of laws against milk adulteration.



## BHOPAL REPORTS FIRST COVID-19 CASE OF DELTA PLUS VARIANT, LOCAL AUTHORITIES ON ALERT

Delta Plus is a mutated form of the 'Delta' variant that is largely being held responsible for fueling the second wave of coronavirus infections in India. In Madhya Pradesh, the National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) reported the presence of a new variant in a positive case in Bhopal, as per Medical Education Minister Vishwas Sarang.



Team Absolute | Bhopal

A new variant of coronavirus has been detected in a sample tested in Madhya Pradesh. The National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) in its report alerted the presence of the new variant in a positive case in Bhopal, Medical Education Minister Vishwas Sarang said on Thursday.

"We are investigating and conducting contact tracing to minimise the infection spread," the minister said. The Delta Plus variant has been

detected in a woman in Bhopal. She and her family members have presently tested negative for the viral infection. The local authorities in Bhopal are on alert following the detection of the virus. According to reports, only six cases of Delta plus variant were detected in the country so far. Delta Plus is a mutated form of the 'Delta' variant that is largely being held responsible for fueling the second wave of coronavirus infections in India. On the other new 'Delta Plus' variant, NITI Aayog Member (Health) VK Paul said it is not yet classified as a

variant of concern. In the context of public discourse regarding detection of new variants, NITI Aayog Member (Health) V.K. Paul has reminded that the newly detected 'Delta Plus' variant is not yet classified as a Variant of Concern (VOC). The variant was observed in Europe in March and has been notified and brought into public domain on June 13 this month. As 'Delta Plus' is not yet classified as a VOC, Paul said, the way forward is to watch the potential presence of 'Delta Plus' in the country and take

the appropriate public health response. "The present status is that yes, a new variant has been found. This is as of now a Variant of Interest (VoI), not as yet classified a VoC," Paul clarified it in a COVID-19 media briefing.

The VOC is one in which we have understood that there are adverse consequences to humanity, which could be due to increased transmissibility or virulence, said Paul, adding "We do not know at this moment about the Delta Plus variant."

Paul stressed on the need to watch the effect the variant in a scientific manner as it has been found outside our country. He said that this variant is a reminder to us about the importance of infection control and containment measures and behaviour.

It should be noted that the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has already reclassified the Delta strain of coronavirus, first found in India and mostly responsible for the deadly second wave, as a variant of concern, based on evidence that it is more transmissible.

Meanwhile, the World Health Organization (WHO) said Wednesday that yet another variant of COVID-19, named Lambda, has been identified in 29 countries and notably in Peru where it was first identified. The Lambda lineage was classified as a global Variant of Interest on Monday due to an "elevated prevalence" in South America.

## Chief Minister reviews Corona situation and arrangements



Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan said that now the state is being unlocked and economic activities have started, therefore it is mandatory for every person to cent percent follow Covid appropriate behaviour and Corona guidelines.

► MP RANKED 28TH IN THE COUNTRY IN CORONA INFECTION

► 145 NEW CASES REPORTED, POSITIVITY RATE 0.2%, RECOVERY RATE 98.5%

economic activities have started, therefore it is mandatory for every person to cent percent follow Covid appropriate behaviour and Corona guidelines. Even the slightest carelessness can cost a lot. Everyone must wear masks, maintain distance from each other and avoid forming crowd anywhere. Everyone must make sure to get vaccinated for protection from Covid.

Chouhan was reviewing the situation and arrangements of Corona in Mantralaya on Thursday.

The number of active cases of Corona in the state has come down to 2984. In the last 24 hours, 404 patients have recovered. The weekly positivity rate of the state has come down to 0.3 percent. The weekly positivity rate has come down to less than one percent in 51 districts of the state. Only Bhopal district has a weekly positivity rate of 1.1 percent.

Now more than 5 new

cases of Corona have come in only 6 districts of the state. There have been 42 new cases of Corona in Bhopal, 34 in Indore, 9 in Jabalpur, 6 in Vidisha, 5 in Rajgarh and 5 in Ujjain.

No new cases of Corona have been reported in 22 districts of the state which includes Agar-Malwa, Alirajpur, Anuppur, Bhand, Burhanpur, Chhatrapur, Dewas, Dindori, Guna, Hoshangabad, Khandwa, Mandla, Narsinghpur, Panna, Sagar, Satna, Shajapur, Sheopur, Sidhi, Singrauli, Tikamgarh and Umaria.

Bhand and Burhanpur districts of the state have become totally Corona free. There is neither any new case of Corona nor any active case here. At present 1412 Corona patients are being treated in various hospitals of the state. Of these, 660 are in ICUs, 560 are on oxygen beds and 192 on normal beds. There are 1572 patients in home isolation.

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has said that Madhya Pradesh has come down in terms of Corona infection among 28 states in the country. As many as 145 new cases of Corona have been reported in the state and positivity rate has come down to 0.2%. At the same time, the recovery rate has increased to 98.5%.

Chouhan said that now the state is being unlocked and

## "MAW-BU-KHAR: SACRED GROVES OF MEGHALAYA"

Maw-Bu-Khar is the sacred grove of the Khasis of Maw Phlang area, and the sacred stone pillars represent Khasi Gods. Sacred groves have been a part of the life and culture of the people of Meghalaya. Many sacred groves are still well protected, in spite of rapid decline in the traditional value system.

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Indira Gandhi Rashtriya Manav Sangrahalaya (IGRMS) under the fifty three series of its online exhibition on Thursday presented the Maw-Bu-Khar, Sacred groves of Meghalaya situated in the Sacred Groves open air exhibition of Manav Sangrahalaya has been presented online with its basic information and photographs and videos.

About this exhibition, Praveen Kumar Mishra, Director, IGRMS said that the Maw-Bu-Khar is the sacred grove of the Khasis of Maw Phlang area, and the sacred stone pillars represent Khasi Gods. Sacred groves have been a part of the life and culture of the people of Meghalaya. Many sacred



groves are still well protected, in spite of rapid decline in the traditional value system. The traditional religious belief is that the Gods and spirits of ancestors live in these groves.

About the Maw-Bu-Khar Shri Dheer Singh, Assistant Horticulture Officer told that a large number of groves are located in the Cherrapunji

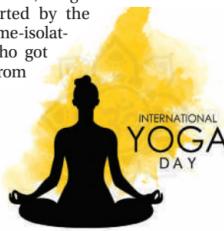
region of the East Khasi Hill District. The Mawphlang grove, close to Shillong town, and the Mawmai grove in Cherrapunji are some of the famous groves in the Northeast India. Traditionally, people around these groves believe that removal of plants or plant parts would offend the ruling deity, leading to local calamities.

## INTERNATIONAL YOGA DAY WILL BE CELEBRATED WITH THE THEME BE WITH YOGA - BE AT HOME

Team Absolute | Bhopal

The 7th International Yoga Day will be organised on June 21 with the theme 'Be with Yoga - Be at Home'. At present, during the Covid-19 transition, yoga will be practised on World Yoga Day by staying at home like last year. In order to increase the immunity through yoga and to include yoga in the daily routine of the general public, mass yoga practice will be done by people from their homes on World Yoga Day.

Yoga has a special role in protecting against infection of Covid-19 and other diseases and in increasing immunity. Due to the lockdown, everyone was confined in the homes and physical activity decreased, which had an adverse effect on the physical and mental level. Also, 'Yoga se Nirog' programme was started by the Department of AYUSH for home-isolated patients to cure those who got infected and to protect them from other adverse effects after infection, which has yielded fruitful results. In this sequence, the programme is being implemented continuously to connect post covid and other patients with 'Yoga Se Nirog' programme. On Monday June 21, as per the protocol laid down by Morarji Desai National Institute of Yoga, New Delhi, group yoga will be practised by people in their respective homes on World Yoga Day. According to the Yoga Protocol issued by the Department of AYUSH, Government of India, officers and employees of all departments, members of Indian Yoga Association, Patanjali Yogpeeth and Art of Living will practise yoga from their homes. It will be broadcast through Webex app, YouTube, Twitter. An appeal has been made to make World Yoga Day a success by doing proper postures and pranayama from 7 am to 7.45 am on the day of World Yoga Day.



Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has said that Madhya Pradesh has come down in terms of Corona infection among 28 states in the country. As many as 145 new cases of Corona have been reported in the state and positivity rate has come down to 0.2%. At the same time, the recovery rate has increased to 98.5%.

Chouhan said that now the state is being unlocked and

## Ensure strict punishment for those who commit crimes against women and children: CM

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has said that those who commit crimes against women and children in the state should get strict punishment, for this, the government's side should be kept firmly in the courts in such cases.

Chouhan said that 5205 girls who were abducted in the state in the last 6 months have been brought back to their homes, which is 60.8% of the total 8,566 kidnapped girls. He instructed that every girl child should be found and brought to her house safely.

Chief Minister was reviewing the action taken in cases of crime and domestic violence against women and children in the state on Thursday at Mantralaya.

It was informed that in 18 cases of crimes against women in the state, the death sentence given by the court has been kept unchanged by the High Court. Now the matter is in the Supreme Court. Chouhan directed that the government's side should be kept firmly in the cases in the Supreme Court.

Two districts of the state, Morena and Vidisha, have been selected by the Central Government for the operation of Women Police Volunteer Scheme. Under the scheme, a woman police volunteer will be formed in every village, ward, who will help in action against crime against women. He will be given an honorarium of one thousand rupees per month.

The decision to change the name of the Women's Crime Branch of Police to Women's Security Wing was taken in the meeting. Urja Mahila Help Desk is being operated in 700 police stations of the state to help women. Through these, relief and assistance is being provided to women in cases of crimes against women. Necessary counseling is also being done in cases of domestic abuse.

Chouhan said that unemployment is also one of the reasons for crimes. Every month employment campaign should be conducted in every district in the state, through which maximum number of youth should be provided employment.

Chouhan directed that the vacant posts in the police department should be filled soon. Director General of Police, Mr. Johri informed that 18 thousand posts of police personnel are vacant in the state, whose recruitment process will be started soon.



## Imposter Asks Money via FB Account of BJP Leader

BJP General Secretary Suhas Bhagat got to know about the fake account from the state vice-president of BJP's youth wing Vinay Jain.

Team Absolute | Bhopal

While the Madhya Pradesh police are trying to tighten the noose against the cybercriminals in the state, their efforts are constantly being challenged by miscreants. Frauds with fake Facebook profiles are on the rise. People make fake Facebook IDs of public figures and by posting messages for emergency help they ask people in the friend list to transfer money into their account.

One such case has come to light from Gwalior where a fake Facebook ID has been created in the name of BJP leader Suhas Bhagat, who is the organising general secretary of Madhya Pradesh.

Bhagat got to know about the fake account from the state vice-president of BJP's youth wing, Vinay Jain. Vinay was informed about the same from his friend Amit Jain who is a director of a college. Amit told him that he received a request from another ID with Bhagat's name. Though he had doubts, he accepted the request. Soon after, the fraudster started chatting with Jain and meanwhile, asked Rs 18,000 from him, showing an emergency. The fraudster told him to transfer the amount on Paytm as he did not have a Google Pay account.

The college director immediately understood that someone else was demanding money using Bhagat's name. However, in order to gather proof,

he transferred Rs 100 on the mobile number given by the person.

After transferring the amount, Amit told Vinay about the incident and asked him to inform all the office bearers so that they do not fall prey to the fraudster. Later, Amit filed a complaint in this regard in the cyber cell. Based on the complaint, the Superintendent of Police (SP) Sudhir Agarwal registered an FIR and a team has been formed to nab the fraudster. Reacting to the case, Agarwal informed that Facebook frauds are on a rise. It's advised not to accept friend requests from unknown people and in case someone's friend asks for money, it is better to confirm the demand by calling the person.

## Army Of Guards, Dogs Hired To Protect 7 Miyazaki Mangoes

Rani and Sankalp Parihar discovered a proverbial gold mine after they found out that the mango sapling that they had planted unknowingly in their orchard belonged to Japan's Miyazaki mangoes. Known to be among the most expensive mangoes, Japan's Miyazaki mangoes which are visibly red in colour are sold at exorbitant prices abroad

Team Absolute | Jabalpur:

A couple from Madhya Pradesh has hired a force of 4 security guards and 6 dogs to protect 7 mangoes that have grown in their tiny orchard in Jabalpur. While you may find the incident bizarre, you might change your mind once you get to know the price of the rare mangoes that the couple has in its possession. Rani and Sankalp Parihar discovered a proverbial gold mine after they found out that the mango sapling that they had planted unknowingly in their orchard belonged to Japan's Miyazaki mangoes. Known as one of the world's most expensive mangoes, Japan's Miyazaki mangoes which are visibly red in colour are sold at exorbitant prices fetching higher rates than even gold and silver jewellery.

What followed their discovery changed the couple's lives. To save their 7 mangoes from thieves the Madhya Pradesh couple has deployed 4 security guards and 6 fierce dogs to parade around their orchard 24x7 to protect the two trees that are laden with expensive



fruit. Not only is the Miyazaki mango rare in India, but they fetch extravagant prices across the world.

Japan's Miyazaki Mangoes are known for their special appear-

ance. Glistening red like rubies, they are among the most expensive in the world and sold at Rs 2.70 lakh per kilogram in the international market, according to Japanese media reports. Known as the 'egg of the sun' for its ruby red colour, each mango can be sold as high as Rs 21,000 apiece.

The story of the Madhya Pradesh couple landing the mango sapling is every bit the real-life version of the fairytale 'Jack and the Beanstalk'. The couple says that they once met a man on a train to Chennai who offered them the rare Japanese mango saplings. Initially, the couple was unaware of the variety of the mangoes and enjoyed it as it was, naming them fondly after the man's late mother - Damini, however, when they realized the truth, they had to quite literally get their guards up.

Last year, thieves stole their produce after realizing the truth behind the rub red mangoes. This year, the couple hopes to safeguard their fruit with the help of their security and guard dogs. The duo has no plans of selling their produce. They have stated that they will use the seeds to grow more plants.



EDITOR'S SPECS

# Side effects of coronavirus

**A**mong all patients infected with the coronavirus disease, more than 23 per cent continued to suffer from one or more health issues even a month after being diagnosed with Covid-19, according to a large study. Many patients recover from Covid-19 within a few weeks, but some exhibit persistent or new symptoms more than four weeks after first being diagnosed. Patients with such post-Covid conditions are variously referred to as having long-haul Covid, long Covid or post-acute sequelae of Covid-19 (PASC). The study by health care nonprofit FAIR Health analysed private health care claim records for nearly 2 million people diagnosed with Covid in 2020. The people in the study ranged in age from babies to the elderly; some 53 per cent were female and 47 per cent were male. The study has not been published in a peer-reviewed journal. The five most common post-Covid conditions across all ages were pain, breathing difficulties, hyperlipidemia, malaise and fatigue, and hypertension. Pain, breathing difficulties and intestinal issues were the top conditions among the paediatric population (0-18). More than 25 per cent young individuals aged between 19 and 29 showed cardiac inflammation post Covid. Fifty per cent patients hospitalised with Covid-19 developed a post-Covid condition, while among the symptomatic patients not hospitalised, 27.5 per cent developed long Covid. However, post-Covid symptoms were also present among 19 per cent patients who remained asymptomatic. Most of the post-Covid conditions that were evaluated were associated more with females than males. Further, anxiety was associated with the highest percentage of patients after Covid-19 in all age groups. It was followed by depression, adjustment and tic disorders. The odds of death 30 days or more after initial diagnosis with Covid-19 were 46 times higher for patients who were hospitalised with Covid-19 and discharged than patients who had not been hospitalised. Among Covid-19 patients with preexisting conditions, intellectual disabilities were associated with the highest odds of death 30 days or more after initial Covid-19 diagnosis, the study showed.

# GIRLS IN RAJ FIGHT FOR EDUCATION

Madhav Sharma

**T**he pandemic has directly affected millions of lives in the country and the lockdown has cost many their livelihoods. For Priyanka Bairwa, a 19-year-old girl who lives in Sapotra town in the Karauli district of Rajasthan, the lockdown not only took away her family's source of income but also her dreams of pursuing higher education. But soon, she realised she wasn't the only girl whose dreams were getting shattered. She met many like her, who were unable to continue their education and were now being forced into marriage. Priyanka, and a few others, started a campaign to raise awareness about these issues and put pressure on their elders to help ensure all girls have the right to education. Over 1,500 girls from Karauli in rural Rajasthan are now part of the campaign urging the state government to help them go back to school. The campaign, which started in October 2020 with 10 girls in one district is today, a state-wide campaign involving six districts and over 1,500 girls. Their demands for scholarships and support for higher education have also been sent to the government of Rajasthan and the girls hope for a change in the right direction.

### Priyanka's story

Since Priyanka's father, Madanlal, was suffering from tuberculosis, the responsibility of providing for the family rested primarily on her mother, Urmila and the older kids. Urmila worked as domestic help and Priyanka would often help her mother with the chores in different homes; that is until the first lockdown was announced, more than a year ago. The lockdown meant that Urmila and Priyanka could no longer work in other homes and they soon lost their livelihood. Much to her disappointment, Priyanka, who was pursuing her Bachelor of Arts degree, was also unable to continue her studies, due to limited means. Being the oldest girl in the house, soon there were talks of arranging her marriage. But Priyanka vehemently opposed the idea. Early marriage or

child marriage is very common in the rural regions of Rajasthan. According to AMIED (Alwar Mewar Institute of Education and Development), a non-profit organization working in the rural areas of Rajasthan, every second girl in Karauli district is married off before she reaches the age of 18. And the situation only got worse in the pandemic, as the education of girls came to a halt and girls began to be viewed as a burden on families. Priyanka soon realised that many young girls were being married off without their con-

sent and the girls continued their campaign. Vinita Meena, a resident of Gokulpur village in Sapotra tehsil, is today one of the leaders campaigning for the cause. During the lockdown, Vinita's housemates were considering marrying her off. But Vinita opposed the marriage and soon joined Priyanka in the campaign. "The girls we talked to had two things in common. First, the pressure to get married and second, the fear of dropping out of school. Poverty, negligible participation in online classes, lack of



sent. With 10 girls, Priyanka felt she could now work to ensure girls from her area got a chance to study and avoid marriage.

### The beginning of a movement

Priyanka's mother was engaged in cleaning work at the AMIED office in Sapotra. "I knew that AMIED works for education and girl's education was one of their primary objectives. I, hence, approached them and they agreed to help us," states Priyanka. The organisation soon imparted training on health and education to the ten girls.

But Priyanka's parents were afraid. Initially, they stopped her from venturing out too much as they believed the current society is not safe for girls to travel alone. Many parents had similar fears and in addition, most of the villagers felt that no one would pay heed to the demands of a few young girls. But thankfully, AMIED stepped in and convinced many parents to allow their daughters to participate in the campaign. They said, if it succeeds, then girls' education could be free in the future. After much convincing, some parents, including Priyanka's, gave

awareness and lack of schools that provide education after standard 8 are the main reasons for dropping out of school," says Vinita.

### Gaining traction

In collaboration with AMIED, the girls now held regular meetings in the villages with other girls and their families. They made a list of demands which included timely scholarship for studies and free education up to class 12. Along with this, a demand was made to give a one-time scholarship of Rs 5,000 to those entering college, which should be paid all at once, so as to meet the requirements of buying books and other course material. This would ensure that girls not only have the opportunities to study up till class 12 but also pursue higher education, while also reducing the financial burden on their families. Currently, the scholarships offered by the government are paid in instalments and are not sufficient to cover all expenses.

(The author is a Jaipur-based freelance journalist and a member of 101Reporters.com, a pan-India network of grassroots reporters.)

# Psychologists urge parents to engage kids to prevent anxiety, depression

**C**hild psychologists are of the opinion that children under 13 years of age are in the grip of anxiety following the extended closure of schools and in the absence of any meeting or interaction with classmates and friends amid the Covid-19 pandemic. Vidya Ramaswamy, a child psychologist at a private hospital in Chennai told IANS: "Children are the most vulnerable as far as mental health is concerned. This are their growing years -- both mentally and physically and one complements the other. "While online classes are taking place, children are missing the humantouch factor, their group games and group meetings and hence most of the children are experiencing enhanced anxiety levels." While the first wave of the pandemic did not affect children much, during the second wave children in sizeable numbers were affected by the disease. Moreover, children are also worried whether their parents would contract the disease and whether they will lose them to the pandemic. This has increased the anxiety levels of children, the psychologists said. A Class 7 student of a prestigious school in Madurai, told IANS: "It's been ages since I've seen my classmates or participated in a touch and go game. No family get-togethers, no outdoor games, no movies, no eateries, and no vacation. "It's shutdown and I am anxious on whether my mother and father will catch the disease and what I will do. I am

getting more and more secluded and wants to have the normal life which we used to back." Rajith Das, a practicing child clinical psychologist in Chennai said that what was told by the student in Madurai, is typical of children in that age group. Das said, "What she said is true for a vast majority of children, they are missing their growing up years and this is having an impact on their social behavior. "Children will turn more and more irritable and more and more anxiety pangs will grip them." Psychologists unanimously believe that parents must be more communicable to the children and a time table should be set up so that they are involved in activities, both curricular and extra curricular. The psychologists also said that the children must not be provided with tabs and mobile phones for long duration instead they should be asked to draw pictures, play game of chess, write poetry, read good books and engage themselves in other activities. Muthulakshmy, a pediatric psychologist in Chennai told reporter: "If you engage children through the day most of the issues are gone. They need total parental support and then they need engagement. "If they are engaged properly, they will become happier and they should be given tasks which they could meet up within a day -- this is another way of engaging the children. "Mild exercises for at least 15 minutes is a must for the all-round development of a child."

# international

# 'EU-RUSSIA TIES AT LOWEST POSSIBLE LEVEL'



Brussels | Agencies

global actor, the "deliberate policy choices and aggressive actions of the Russian government over the last years have created a negative spiral" in relations, Xinhua news agency. A further downturn of the relations, which are already "at the lowest level," is "the most likely outlook for the time being", he added. "Our ambition should be to explore paths that could help change the current dynamics gradually into a more predictable and stable relationship. "The EU will simultaneously push back, constrain and engage with Russia, based on a strong common understanding of Russia's aims and an approach of principled pragmatism," he told the news conference as he launched the bloc's plan of action in this regard. To further its own interests, the bloc should engage Russia on several key challenges and the Covid-19 pandemic has shown the common interest for constructive engagement in public health, the EU said in a joint communication

endorsed on Wednesday. "This is a framework of action. It depends on the political will to implement it but it would be very good if we could have the unanimous support of the EU council, the European institutions and the member states," Borrell added. EU-Russia relations have reached a new low level after the 27-state bloc sanctioned Moscow over the arrest of Alexei Navalny, the jailed Kremlin critic. Moscow hit back, saying the case with Navalny is a purely domestic affair and foreign intervention is not allowed. "We will not leave unfriendly moves, including attempts to talk from a position of strength and interference in internal affairs, without a response," Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said at the opening of a conference on Russian-EU relations in Moscow in May. At that conference, Lavrov criticised the EU for preferring "ungrounded accusations" to "fact-based dialogue". Nevertheless, he noted that Russia is interested in conversations with the EU. "We have repeatedly said that we are open for constructive cooperation with the EU that would be based on the principles of equality and mutual respect," Lavrov said.

# China launches 1st crewed mission for space station construction

Beijing | Agencies



54, who was part of the Shenzhou-7 mission; and Tang Hongbo, 45, who is in his first space mission. The three astronauts are expected to set a new record for China's manned space mission duration, exceeding the 33 days kept by the Shenzhou-11 crew in 2016. The Shenzhou-12 spaceship will conduct a fast autonomous rendezvous and docking with the in-orbit space station core module Tianhe, forming a complex with Tianhe and the cargo craft Tianzhou-2. The astronauts will be stationed in the core module. Their work will be more complicated and challenging than previous crewed missions, according to CMSA director Hao Chun. China launched its space station core module Tianhe on April 29 and cargo craft Tianzhou-2 on May 29. The two completed a computer-orchestrated rendezvous and docking on May 30, waiting for the first crewed mission to unpack the cargo. According to the China Academy of Space Technology (CAST), more than 160 large and small packages, including supplies for astronauts and space-science equipment, were delivered by Tianzhou-2 in late May. The Tianzhou-3 cargo craft and the Shenzhou-13 manned spaceship will also be launched later this year to dock with Tianhe, and another three astronauts will then begin their six-month stay in orbit, according to the CMSA.

# S KOREAN NUKE ENVOY TO MEET US, JAPANESE COUNTERPARTS

**Seoul:** South Korea's top nuclear envoy will hold talks in Seoul next week with US and Japanese counterparts over the Korean Peninsula issues, the Foreign Ministry here said on Thursday. Noh Kyu-duk, South Korea's special representative for Korean Peninsula peace and security affairs, will talk bilaterally on June 21 with Sung Kim, the newly appointed US special representative for North Korean policy, reports Xinhua news agency. The US envoy will embark on a five-day trip to Seoul which will last until June 23 for the first since he took office on May 21. Noh will hold bilateral talks in Seoul with Takehiro Funakoshi, the director-general for Asian and Oceanian affairs of the Japanese Foreign Ministry, as well as the trilateral talks with the US and Japanese diplomats on June 21. It would come after the US administration recently completed the review of its policy towards North Korea. After the first in-person summit with South Korean President Moon Jae-in in Washington on May 21, US President Joe Biden stressed the willingness to engage diplomatically with Pyongyang to take pragmatic steps toward denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula.

# Guterres calls for full respect of Israel-Hamas ceasefire

United Nations | Agencies

**U**nited Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres has called for the full respect of the ceasefire agreed between Israel and the Islamic Hamas movement which brought an end to the 11-day bloodshed in Gaza Strip late last month. Responding to a question about the Secretary-General's reaction to Tuesday's escalating violence, Farhan Haq, deputy spokesman for Guterres, said at a regular press briefing on Wednesday that the UN chief "expresses concern over the most recent round of violence", reports Xinhua news agency. Haq added that Guterres "would like to see the cessation of hostilities be maintained and solidified in order to give space for the relevant parties to work out arrangements to stabilize the situation". The Israeli army said on Wednesday that it had carried out

the first airstrike in the Gaza Strip since the ceasefire which came into effect on May 21. In the overnight attack, Israeli war jets struck military compounds belonging to Hamas in the city of Khan Yunis in the southern Gaza Strip, the military said in a statement. The statement accused Hamas of being responsible "for all events transpiring in the Gaza Strip" and warned that the group "will bear the consequences for its actions". "The IDF (Israel Defense Forces) is prepared for any scenario, including a resumption of hostilities, in the face of continuing terror activities from the Gaza Strip," the statement read. Hundreds of Israeli ultra-nationalists marched on Tuesday in East Jerusalem, waving Israeli flags. Some of them chanted "Death to Arabs" and other anti-Arab slurs. Militants in Gaza responded to the march by launching "arson balloons" that caused at least 13 fires in southern Israel.



# Aus state likely to remain in dark for weeks after severe storms

Canberra | Agencies

**T**housands of residents in the Australian state of Victoria, battered by devastating storms last week, are expected to remain without power for up to three weeks. The electricity company AusNet said on Thursday that flooding and wild winds on June 9 and 10 had brought down trees and power lines, causing major damage to its network, resulting in a blackout for about 3,000 residents in the Dandenong Ranges, about 35 km east of the capital city, Melbourne, reports Xinhua news agency. "Our field crews are working as safely and as quickly as possible in challenging conditions," AusNet stated on its website.



"We have back up from interstate crews to help us with the rebuilding efforts and we are providing back-up generation where we can."

The company noted this was the "worst damage to its network in a single incident in memory and there remained a lot of work to be done". Responding to the crisis on Thursday, Victoria's acting Premier James Merlino

announced that households without power were now entitled to a compensatory payment of A\$1,680 (\$1,282) per week. "The depth of winter and weeks without power, this is an unprecedented emergency," he said. Meanwhile, travel restrictions placed on Melbourne residents due to a Covid-19 lockdown were lifted, but the state's emergency services

warned people against visiting the Dandenong, as many roads remain closed due to storm debris and many damaged trees still needed to be removed. There have also been reports of a sinkhole and collapsed roads in the area and there are concerns that the saturated soil could lead to even more trees coming down. Merlino told reporters that the government would consider laying power cables underground to avoid such future storm damage but conceded there were no immediate "big infrastructure responses". "The assessment of the damage is taking place right now, so it's a bit early at this stage to talk about the extent of the damage and what will be done in response," he said.

# WILDFIRE IN US STATE FORCES EVACUATION OF HUNDREDS

**Washington:** A wildfire, dubbed Robertson Draw Fire, is raging near Red Lodge, a small town in the US state of Montana with over 2,000 residents, forcing 450 of them to be evacuated. Billy Chapman, fire information officer from Custer Gallatin National Forest, was quoted by the Montana Public Radio (MTPR) as saying on Wednesday that he could not confirm any losses or damage, reports Xinhua news agency. The blaze, ignited on Sunday, exploded Tuesday, due to very dry, windy and changing conditions. It was estimated at 2,000 acres Tuesday, and by 6 a.m. Wednesday, it grew to 21,000 acres. Photos posted online showed the fire burning actively eclipsed a mountain ridge, making the flames visible from Red Lodge at midnight. "It was pretty scary. Mt. Maurice is very visible from downtown. I'm sure a lot of people have seen the pictures but it was a really intense fire, really high flames, absolutely torching the trees. It was intense for a few minutes," Chapman said.



## EWAN MCGREGOR TO PLAY GEORGE MALLORY IN 'EVEREST'

Los Angeles | Agencies

Hollywood star Ewan McGregor is all set to play the late British mountaineering legend George Mallory in the upcoming adventure drama "Everest". The film is directed by "The Bourne Identity" helmer Doug Liman and written for the screen by "Up In The Air" writer Sheldon Turner, reports hollywoodreporter.com.

Mark Strong and Sam Heughan will essay important roles in the film, while cinematographer Martin Ruhe, Oscar-winning composer T. Bone Burnett and production designer Oliver Scholl are also associated with the project.

"Everest" will be introduced to buyers at the Cannes Virtual Market during the prestigious Cannes film festival, being held this year from July 6 to 17. Shooting for the film begins in January next year, in the UK and Italy, according to Hollywood Reporter.



## Cardi B opens up on her role in 'Fast & Furious 9'

Los Angeles | Agencies

American rapper Cardi B is officially joining the "Fast & Furious" franchise in the upcoming ninth film of the series. The

rapper



opened up about her character Leysa and how she came to be involved with "Fast & Furious 9".

She said the franchise hero Vin Diesel was instrumental in roping her in. "Vin Diesel reached out, and he was talking about a role. I'm like, 'It's freakin' Fast & Furious'. Get me there, put me on a plane! I like the fact that I'm representing such a powerful, strong woman,"

Cardi B said, opening up on her role in a behind-the-scenes video of the film. She spoke about working with Vin Diesel in the franchise, too.

"Being around Vin, he's just so nice, so dope. He makes you feel so comfortable. I'm just so excited," she said.

## SCARLETT JOHANSSON: BLACK WIDOW HAS MOVED AWAY FROM HYPER-SEXUALISATION

Los Angeles | Agencies

Hollywood superstar Scarlett Johansson says she is happy that her Marvel Cinematic Universe avatar Natasha Romanoff, as well as her superhero alter ego Black Widow, has moved away from the "hyper-sexualisation" which defined it when she first essayed the role in the 2010 blockbuster "Iron Man 2".

"Obviously, 10 years have passed and things have happened and I have a much different, more evolved understanding of myself. As a woman, I'm in a different place in my life, you know? And I felt more forgiving of myself, as a woman, and not -- sometimes probably not enough. I'm more accepting of myself, I think," Johansson told collider.com, according to a report in femalefirst.co.uk.

"All of that is related to that move away from the kind of hyper-sexualisation of this character and, I mean, you look back at 'Iron Man 2' and while it was really fun and had a lot of great moments in it, the character is so sexualised, you know? Really talked about like she's a piece of something, like a possession or a thing or whatever - like a piece of a\*\*, really. And (Robert Downey Jr.'s character) Tony (Stark) even refers to her as something like that at one point... (he says) 'I want some'. Yeah, and at one point calls her a piece of meat and maybe at that time that actually felt like a compliment," she recalls while speaking to Collider. The 36-year-old actress gets her first solo superhero film this year, with "Black Widow" scheduled to release in theatres on July 9. The film was originally slated for release last year, but had to be postponed owing to the pandemic.

## Maya Rudolph unfolds her role in 'Luca'

Team Absolute | Mumbai



Actress Maya Rudolph, who features in the voice cast of the upcoming animated film "Luca", says an experience from motherhood in real life helped her bring alive her role.

Rudolph voices Daniela, mother of the titular Luca in the film. She says she used a maxim she follows with her own children to understand and bring alive the nuances of her role.

"I've definitely seen my mama bear come out when necessary with my children, so that was a pretty easy element of Daniela to relate to. When your children are pushing boundaries, you want to show them that you love them but you're serious. That can be an incredibly difficult balance, but one that every parent understands. Daniela has a very sweet, recurring mantra with Luca, saying, 'You know I love you, right?' I think that's really important for her character because she is not embarrassed to show how strong she is, and she's not embarrassed to show how much she loves her son," says Rudolph.

Directed by Enrico Casarosa the film features the voices of Jacob Tremblay, Jack Dylan Grazer, and Jim Gaffigan amongst others.

"Luca" releases on Disney+ Hotstar Premium on Friday



## Diana Ross' first album in 15 years set for Sept release

Los Angeles | Agencies

Diana Ross has shared details of her first album in 15 years, titled "Thank You". "Thank You" is the follow-up to Ross's 2006 album "I Love You", and was recorded entirely in her home studio during the pandemic, reports bbc.com. Due for release in September, this will be Ross's 25th solo studio album and 43rd overall.

"This collection of songs is my gift to you with appreciation and love," the 77-year-old veteran singer said in a statement.

"I am eternally grateful that I had the opportunity to record this glorious music at this time," she added.

The title track, released on Thursday midnight, is a gospel-pop number that recalls the star's Motown years.

A press release said the album "offers a powerful, inclusive musical message of love and togetherness" and that "with its songs of happiness, appreciation, and joy, it wholeheartedly acknowledges that we are in this all together".

Ross has co-written all 13 tracks, working with a variety of contemporary names including Jack Antonoff, who has emerged as a key collaborator for female artists like Taylor Swift, Lana Del Rey, St Vincent and Lorde.

The soul singer started her career at Motown in the 1960s, achieving stardom with The Supremes, on chart-busters such as "Baby Love", "Stop! In The Name Of Love" and "You Keep Me Hanging On".



## DWAYNE JOHNSON REACTS TO 46 PER CENT RESPONDENTS ROOTING FOR HIM TO BE US PRESIDENT

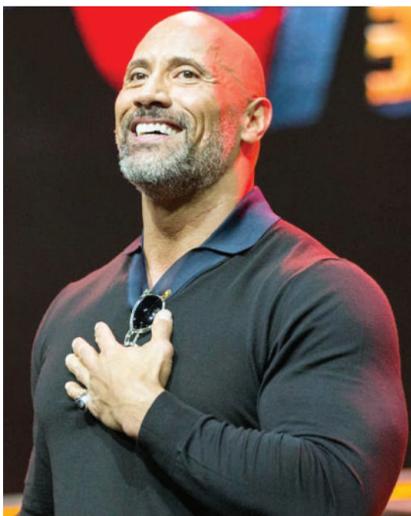
Los Angeles | Agencies

WWE champion-turned-Hollywood superstar Dwayne Johnson says it is time for him to "humbly and respectfully stand up, listen and learn" when 46 per cent Americans favour the idea of having him as President of the United States.

A recent poll reveals 46 per cent of those who were asked the question, said they would support the 49-year-old macho action star's bid for US presidency.

"I love our country to my core and I'm endlessly grateful for the opportunities I've had here, as a half-Black, half-Samoan kid being able to work my a\*\* off knowing tenacity opens doors," Johnson tells People magazine in an exclusive interview.

Noting that he is "not a politician nor did I ever have political passions", Johnson, however, told People: "But when 46 per cent of Americans say they're in favour of me becoming president, that forces me to humbly and respectfully stand up, listen and learn."



ABSOLUTE PIC OF THE DAY

Kristin Cavallari



## SHAFALI VERMA, SMRITI MANDHANA HELP INDIA POST 187/5 AT STUMPS

### WOMEN'S TEST: DAY 2

Bristol | Agencies

India were 187 for five in reply to England's first-innings' 396 for nine wickets declared, on the second day of the one-off Test here on Thursday. Shefali Verma and Smriti Mandhana shared a solid 167 runs off 48.5 overs for the opening stand before both departed in quick time as the collapse started for India. Verma hit a brilliant 96 on debut, while Mandhana made 78 before five quick wickets derailed India Women. Shikha Pandey, skipper Mithali Raj and Punam Raut too got out in quick succession as India lost five wickets in a span of just 16 runs to hand England the upper hand. At the close of play,

Harmanpreet Kaur was batting on 4 in the company of Deepti Sharma with India still trailing England by 209 runs. Earlier resuming at the overnight score of 269 for six, England lost Katherine Brunt (8) and Sophie Ecclestone (17) in the morning session but Sophia Dunkley continued to frustrate the visitors, remaining unbeaten on 74. England added 127 runs to their overnight score. Dunkley and Anya Shrubsole (47) shared valuable 70 runs for the ninth wicket. Debutant off-spinner Sneha Rana was the pick of the bowlers for India with figures of 4/131, while Deepti Sharma (3/65) too impressed with the ball. India are playing their first Test in nearly seven years.



## Euro 2021 De Bruyne, Hazard leads Belgium 2-1 to win over Denmark

Copenhagen | Agencies

Kevin De Bruyne scored the winner as Belgium beat Denmark 2-1 on Thursday to reach the knockout stage of Euro 2021. Yussuf Poulsen gave the hosts a second-minute lead, but De Bruyne came off the bench at half-time to make his first appearance of the tournament after injury and teed up Thorgan Hazard to equalise before drilling in a fine strike. Almost two-dozen shots and only one goal are the stats that highlight where it went wrong for Denmark today, on a day that started with a superb opener and ends with the likelihood of a knockout stage finish slipping away. They can still get there of course; group stage ties are decided on head-to-head records and a win against Russia will give them the advantage there. If Finland fail to take a point off Belgium however, then it could all get a bit knotted. Still, Kasper Hjulmand's side can take scant solace that their journey isn't over yet - and that they may still fight for a last-16 spot next week. Earlier Ukraine defeated N.



Macedonia in Berlin to keep afloat in the Euro Cup. Andrey Yarmolenko and Roman Yaremchuk scored the goals as Ukraine beat major tournament debutants North Macedonia 2-1 and book their first win in Group C of the Euro 2020 at the Arena Nationala in Bucharest on Thursday. Both the West Ham United striker and the KAA Gent attacker scored their second tournament goals in a duel dominated by their colours in the first half before North Macedonia intensified their efforts, reports Xinhua. North Macedonia will face the Netherlands in their third next Monday while Ukraine will set a clash with Austria on that same day.

## WTC final: India include two spinners in the playing XI

Southampton | Agencies

India will play two spinners and three fast bowlers in the World Test Championship final against New Zealand that begins on Friday here at the Hampshire Bowl.

Both Ravindra Jadeja and R Ashwin have been included while Jasprit Bumrah, Mohammad Shami and Ishant Sharma will comprise the pace bowling attack. Wicketkeeper-batsman Rishabh Pant will bat at No. 6. Rohit Sharma and Shubman Gill will open.

India XI: Rohit Sharma, Shubman Gill, Cheteshwar Pujara, Virat Kohli (captain), Ajinkya Rahane (vice-captain), Rishabh Pant, Ravindra Jadeja, R



Ashwin, Jasprit Bumrah, Mohammad Shami and Ishant Sharma.

## Sneh marks Test debut in style, fulfills late father's dream

Bristol | Agencies

Debutant off-spinner Sneh Rana, whose three-wicket haul helped Indian women's team make a late comeback on the first day of the one-off Test against England, dedicated her performance to her father who died two months ago.

"I lost my father two months back. I lost him just before this team was announced. It was difficult, it was a bit emotional moment (when she stepped onto the field) because he wanted to see me play again for India. Unfortunately he can't. But it is fine, part of life," said Sneh who picked 3/77 in her first Test which was also her first international in



five years. England, who were 230/2 at

one stage, ended the day at 269/6. "I had suffered an injury due to which I was away from cricket for one year. But I have been playing domestic cricket and performing, thanks to which I am making a comeback," the 27-year-old told the media.

Sneh said she knew she would get to play in the XI before the match and was told by the team management in the team meeting about it.

"When we had our team meeting before the match, I got to know I will play. I was interacting with the coach and the captain and discussing strategies and plans on how to bowl, especially in Test matches. Test debut is different," she said.

## ITALY FIRST TO ENTER KNOCKOUTS IN EURO 2020

Rome | Agencies

Italy became the first side to enter knockout stages of Euro 2020 thanks to a 3-0 win over Switzerland here late on Wednesday. The result means they will now fight for the top spot in Group A in their final league game against Wales, who beat Turkey earlier in the day.



Manuel Locatelli was Italy's hero with two goals as Roberto Mancini's side displayed assured and attacking football, Xinhua reports.

In Group A's other match at the Olympic Stadium in Baku, Aaron Ramsey and Connor Roberts scored a goal each for Wales as they won 2-0 against Turkey. Both sides traded attacks in the first half, but Wales looked more dangerous in front of the goal and scored the opener in the 42nd minute when Ramsey chested down Gareth Bale's chip into the box before tapping the ball past Turkey goalkeeper Ugurcan Cakir. Turkey's Burak Yilmaz should have restored parity early in the second half, but the captain wasted a golden chance from close range following a corner. At the hour mark, Wales were awarded a penalty but Bale put the spot-kick over the bar. Bale had a hand in Wales's second goal though, as the striker danced through Turkey's penalty box before squaring to Connor Roberts, who sealed the deal in the dying seconds of injury time.

## India-New Zealand WTC final: The big match-ups



Southampton | Agencies

With less than a day to go for the World Test Championship final between India and New Zealand to begin here on Friday, IANS looks at some of the key match-ups:

### Rohit Sharma vs Trent Boult:

Sharma has played only one Test in England and experts say he has a weakness against the moving ball, especially one that comes in from a left-arm seamer. Former Pakistan pace bowler Mohammed Amir exploited it during the 2017 Champions Trophy final and even before too.

### Virat Kohli vs Kyle Jamieson:

The tall New Zealand pace bowler turned down his Royal Challengers Bangalore skipper Kohli's request of bowling to him at nets with a Dukes ball that he was carrying with him during the 2020 Indian Premier League (IPL). But Kohli would have faced him in the IPL nets with a white and got some idea. The steep bounce could be hot to handle.

### Ross Taylor vs R Ashwin/ R Jadeja:

Taylor, who average of 33.83 against India is almost 12 runs below his career average of 45.76, has been dismissed 54 times by a spinner out of 164 times. But his average of 44.55 against the slow bowlers is higher than his average of 33.28 against pace bowlers. Part of the reason is that on wickets outside India, the spinners don't get much purchase.

### Devon Conway vs Jasprit Bumrah:

New Zealand's South African import became only the sixth batsman to score a debut ton at Lord's and the first to score a double on Test debut at Lord's was the Man-of-the-Series in the recent two-Test series against England. He is known to play the ball late. But how he reads pace bowler Jasprit Bumrah's quick-arm action will be interesting. Bumrah's natural delivery goes away from him and he may have to be watchful.

### Kane Williamson vs Ishant Sharma/Mohammed Shami:

New Zealand captain Williamson has a poor record in England (an average of 26.1 as against a career average of 53.6) and Ishant Sharma, on his fourth tour of England and having experience of county cricket with Sussex which gave him his career a fresh lease, will be targeting his knee roll to get the leg-before wicket decision.

## NADAL PULLS OUT OF WIMBLEDON, OLYMPICS

London | Agencies

Rafael Nadal, winner of 20 Grand Slam titles, will skip this year's Wimbledon and will also not feature in the Tokyo Olympic Games as he wants to rest his body.

The Wimbledon runs from June 28 to July 11 while the Olympic Games begin on July 23.

"Hi all, I have decided not to participate at this year's Championships at Wimbledon and the Olympic Games in Tokyo. It's never an easy decision to take but after listening to my body and discuss it with my team I understand that it is the right decision," tweeted 35-year-old Nadal, who is the joint highest winner of Grand Slam titles along with Roger Federer at 20. Nadal lost to world No.1 Novak Djokovic in the French Open semi-finals recently. It was only his third defeat in 108 matches at the Roland Garros.

Nadal's pullout gives an opportunity to Federer to go clear on top with 21st Grand Slam titles at his favourite venue though the Swiss has been on the wane in recent times. Djokovic, a five-time winner at Wimbledon, seems a more serious contender at the SW 19 and will hope to get to 20 career Grand Slam titles and join Federer and Nadal.



## India announce women's hockey team for Olympics

Team Absolute | Bengaluru

The Hockey India (HI) announced a 16-member national women's hockey team, including experienced Rani Rampal, for the Tokyo Olympic Games.

The team is a blend of youth and experience. Eight seasoned players - are part of the 16-member strong squad. The team captain will be announced later, said HI.

The eight stalwarts are Rani, Savita, Deep Grace Ekka, Sushila Chanu Pukhrabam, Monika, Nikki Pradhan, Navjot Kaur, and Vandana Katariya, who have the experience of representing India at the 2016 Rio Olympic Games.

"This team has worked very hard over the last few years and has made progress consistently. There's a good mix of experienced players and new talent, which is excellent. We look forward to taking on the best in the world in Tokyo. This is a team with a lot of potential and

drive which we hope to channelise to our best performance yet," said chief coach Sjoerd Marijne.

This will be the women's third appearance at the Olympic Games. India competed in the 1980 Moscow Olympic Games and 2016 Rio Olympic Games. Since Rio 2016, the Indian team has won 2016 Asian Champions Trophy, 2017 Asia Cup and silver medal at the 2018 Asian Games.

Drag-flicker Gurjit Kaur, Udita, Nisha, Neha, Navneet Kaur, Sharmila Devi, Lalremsiami will make their Olympic debut in Japan.

Team: Savita (goalkeeper), Deep Grace Ekka, Nikki Pradhan, Gurjit Kaur, Udita (defenders), Nisha, Neha, Sushila Chanu Pukhrabam, Monika, Navjot Kaur, Salima Tete (midfielders), Rani Rampal, Navneet Kaur, Lalremsiami, Vandana Katariya and Sharmila Devi (forwards).



## Upstox becomes ICC's 'Official Partner'

Dubai | Agencies

The International Cricket Council (ICC) on Thursday announced Upstox, one of the largest online investment platforms in India, as its 'Official Partner' for all ICC events until the end of 2023.

"We are extremely pleased to welcome Upstox as an Official Partner of the ICC. As our marquee events around the world continue to attract a wide and passionate fan-base, this association provides Upstox with an unrivalled platform to educate and engage both existing and new customers," said Anurag Dahiya, ICC's Chief Commercial Officer.

"We look forward to supporting Upstox's next phase of growth throughout 2021-



23, a period in which the ICC will host no fewer than five senior-level World Cups across men's and women's cricket."

Besides the ICC World Test Championship final, starting on June 18, the events covered under the partnership are: men's T20 World Cup 2021, under-19 men's World Cup 2022, women's T20 World Cup 2022, men's T20 World Cup 2022, women's T20 World Cup 2023, the World Test Championship final 2023, men's World Cup qualifier 2023, and the men's World Cup 2023. "Upstox's collaboration with the ICC will play a significant role in spreading financial awareness and building an equity investment culture in India. We want to empower our customers by helping them maximize the potential of their investments with our tech-enabled and intuitive platform," said Ravi Kumar, co-founder and CEO, Upstox.

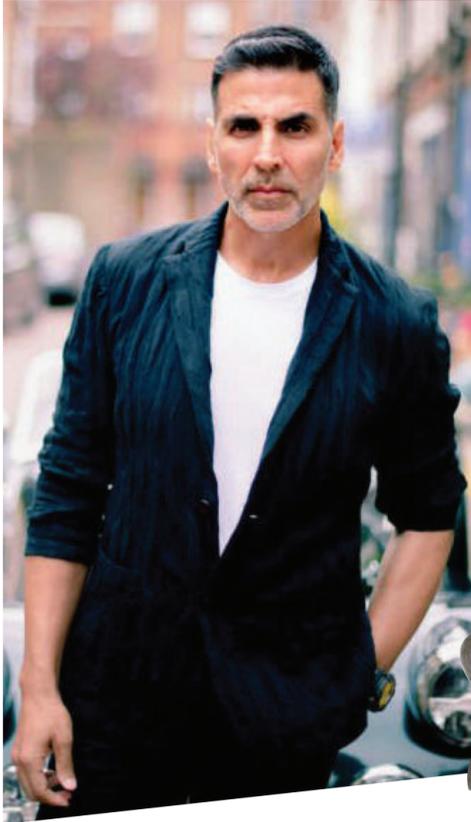


## AKSHAY KUMAR DONATES RS 1 CR FOR SCHOOL BUILDING IN J&K'S LOC VILLAGE

Team Absolute | Srinagar

Bollywood star Akshay Kumar on Thursday donated Rs 1 crore for a school building in remote Tulail village along the Line of Control (LoC) in Jammu and Kashmir's Bandipora district. The actor reached Neeru village by a helicopter around noon and thereafter started interaction with locals and the deployed security forces.

"Akshay Kumar has donated Rs 1 crore for the construction of the school building in Neeru village of Tulail. "He visited the area to boost the morale of the deployed army soldiers and the BSF troopers with whom he interacted for a long time. "He also danced with the locals in the village who turned out to see and meet the actor. The function was organised by BSF troopers posted on an LoC post in Neeru village. "He has appreciated the army, BSF and the locals for leading hardy lives in the area braving heavy snowfall and extreme inaccessibility", sources said.



## KRITI KHARBANDA SHARES GLIMPSE OF HER 'WORKOUT MORNINGS'



Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actress Kriti Kharbanda gives a glimpse of her workout mornings, in a new post she shared on Thursday.

Kriti posted a picture on Instagram showing her lying down casually, flashing a smile at the camera. She is dressed in a black sports bra paired with black lycra pants, and she flaunts a post workout glow.

"Workout mornings," she wrote as caption.

On June 12, Kriti clocked 12 years in acting. She stepped into the field of acting with the Telugu film "Boni". Her Bollywood debut happened in 2016, with "Raaz: Reboot". Kriti was last seen on screen in Bijoy Nambiar's "Taish". She will next be seen in "14 Phere", directed by Devanshu Singh. The film is a comedy and casts her opposite Vikrant Massey.

## Nushratt Bharuccha reacts on 'Saiyaanji' video crossing 400mn views

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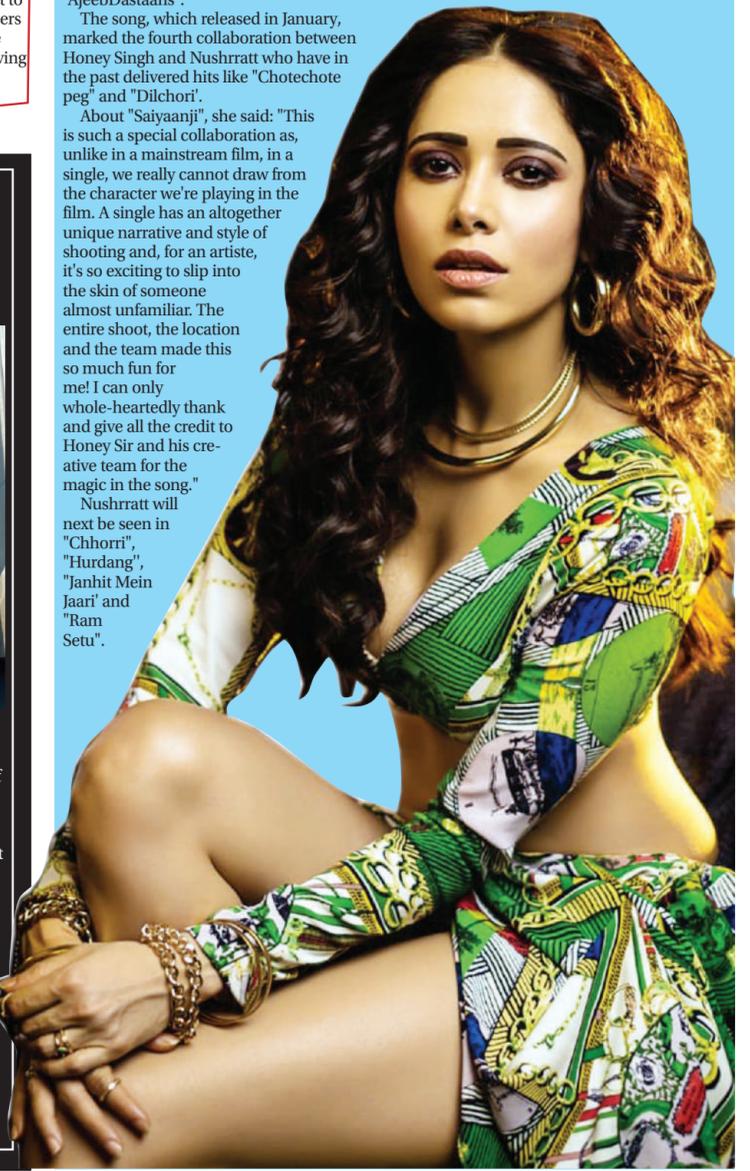
The music video of YoYo Honey Singh's new track "Saiyaanji" has crossed 400 million views on YouTube, and Nushratt Bharuccha, whose dance in the video became quite popular, says the success of the track means the world to her.

"Saiyaanji" crossing the 400 million views mark is a truly a special moment for me, and for many reasons. Honey Singh sir and I have had a great run with all the film songs we've collaborated on so far, but to cross this huge milestone with our very first single together means the world to me," says the actress, who was recently seen in the OTT release "Ajeeb Dastaans".

The song, which released in January, marked the fourth collaboration between Honey Singh and Nushratt who have in the past delivered hits like "Chotechote peg" and "Dilchori".

About "Saiyaanji", she said: "This is such a special collaboration as, unlike in a mainstream film, in a single, we really cannot draw from the character we're playing in the film. A single has an altogether unique narrative and style of shooting and, for an artiste, it's so exciting to slip into the skin of someone almost unfamiliar. The entire shoot, the location and the team made this so much fun for me! I can only whole-heartedly thank and give all the credit to Honey Sir and his creative team for the magic in the song."

Nushratt will next be seen in "Chhorri", "Hurdang", "Janhit Mein Jaari" and "Ram Setu".



## Vaani Kapoor: It's been a long wait to see my films get a release

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Vaani Kapoor has a dream line-up right now. After her last release, the blockbuster "War" in 2019, she was cruising along, looking at three mega releases in 2020. Then, pandemic struck.

It's delayed her date with the box office, of course, but "Bell Bottom" starring Akshay Kumar, "Chandigarh Kare Aashiqui" with Ayushmann Khurrana and "Shamshera" with Ranbir Kapoor are still mega attractions at the box office. It's been a long wait, but with "Bell Bottom" being formally announced for theatrical release on July 27, Vaani tells us it pays to be patient.

"It's a solid product and Akshay sir, like in every film of his, is simply outstanding. One has to see the film to understand what he has done. I'm grateful that I have a big film coming out now," says Vaani.

"It's been a long wait to see my films get a release due to the virus, but I'm being super hopeful now that the audience will be entertained by them," she adds.

Vaani feels restarting the film industry has become important because the onslaught of losses has been relentless over the past year. A glossy spy thriller as "Bell Bottom" could perhaps be the right film to kickstart things once again.

"I'm really excited about the prospect of our industry restarting because it has endured the relentless onslaught of the pandemic. 'Bell Bottom' is a big screen entertainer. Hopefully, the film will play a huge hand in bringing people back to the theatres," she says.

## HOPE PRODUCTIONS BRINGS ON BOARD PRANAB KAPADIA AS CO-PRODUCER

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Celebrated Bollywood film makers Gauri Shinde and R. Balki have partnered with media business veteran Pranab Kapadia as co-producer for the upcoming films to be made under their production company - Hope Productions.

Hope Productions was born of an idea to create and shape quality content, launch promising new talent and provide a platform for original storytelling, without any compromises. The first film under the Hope Productions banner was the superhit English Vinglish.

An experienced media professional, Pranab Kapadia boasts of a career spanning over 22 years in the industry. Commenting on the



association, Pranab Kapadia said, "I am honoured and delighted to collaborate with India's finest, most talented, creative powerhouse duo of Gauri Shinde & R. Balki."

"Their unique style of storytelling, creating entertaining content and commercial success out of

subjects that are considered taboo, is remarkable," he added.

A natural and symbiotic collaboration between Gauri Shinde and R. Balki with Pranab Kapadia is expected to bolster the visionary and ambitious endeavors of Hope Productions.

## Ayushmann Khurrana: My equity today is mainly due to my social entertainers

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Actor Ayushmann Khurrana's equity has been soaring over the past few years. He has delivered eight back-to-back hits in theatres and won a National Award at the same time, striking that balance despite constantly departing from what is traditionally expected from the Bollywood hero. Ayushmann credits his social entertainers for his success.

"Whatever my equity is today, is mainly due to the success of my social entertainers, which made me connect to the people of India. These films have told people who I am, how I think and what my intent is as an entertainer," he says.

Ayushmann says he has been fortunate to get the right films that have become hits. Success always translates to equity, he adds.

"I have always believed in letting my work do the talking. I have been fortunate enough to pick projects that have contributed to the new discourse of how cinema in India can be unique, clutter-breaking, conversation-starting entertainers that don't need to follow stereotyped norms of how stories have been told," he says.

The actor said that he would like to believe brands have noticed this and connected with the idea that he tries to tell real stories of real people. "I feel thrilled that I'm part of a brand's vision and journey to reach out to audiences with a narrative that resonates my journey in cinema. I'm grateful that my films have worked wonderfully," he says, in this context. Ayushmann currently has three films lined up. He will be seen in "Chandigarh Kare Aashiqui", "Anek" and "Doctor G".



## Shilpa Shetty says her husband can't sing

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Actress Shilpa Shetty Kundra made a candid confession on reality TV -- the fact that her husband can't sing. The subject came up on "Super Dancer: Chapter 4", a show that Shilpa judges. In an episode featuring singer Kumar Sanu, the actress will be seen opening up about her husband Raj Kundra.

In the episode, the contestants will dance to Sanu's hit songs from the nineties. The ace singer will also croon a few of his popular songs to add nostalgia.

Shilpa then requests Sanu to sing "Wohtohaiabela" from the film "Kabhihaankabhinna", saying it is one of



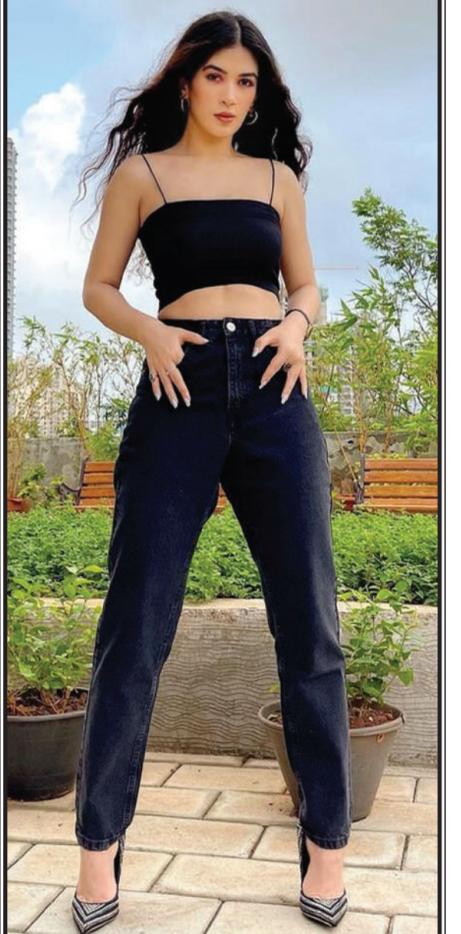
her husband's favourite tracks.

"Raj is perfect, but he can't sing. The moment my husband tried singing this song, I figured that singing is not and will never be his forte. So, now I hope he takes away the message of how he should actually sing," the actress said. Sanu shared that he is singing all these songs for the first time on a reality show.

After the song, he said: "I have never met Raj Kundra but I would like to tell him, no matter how good or bad a singer he is, I am always ready to help him out whenever he needs me to."

"Super Dancer: Chapter 4" airs on Sony Entertainment Television.

## INSTAGRAM PIC OF THE DAY



Bandgi Kalra