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Three flights with Indian nationals land at IGI Airport

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Three private flights -- Air India, Vistara and IndiGo carrying Indian nationals from Kabul landed at the Indra Gandhi International (IGI) Airport Terminal 3 on Sunday Morning. Over two hundred Indian nationals arrived home safely. Sukhwinder Singh who works in the US embassy in Kabul says chaos like situation prevails in Kabul's streets and all are in a hurry to leave Afghanistan.

He said he was evacuated on the night of August 14 with the intervention of an Indian Embassy official when the situation started worsening. He said he had been living in Doha since then. "Most of the people trapped there were evacuated," he added. He said he himself was in the helicopter whose video went viral in which people can be seen cheering as they are being evacuated to return home.

Sukhwinder Singh, who hails from Punjab, told IANS that after the Taliban captured power in Kabul, Afghanistan took a dangerous turn. "Several times it looked that I would not be able to return home. There was no hope left," he said.



On being asked if he would return to Kabul again for work, he said it will depend on how Afghanistan's relations with the Indian government remain.

Praveen Singh who works in the UAE embassy in Kabul said that he would never think of going back as the painful and life threatening experience he underwent there is horrifying. Kamal Chakravarti who worked in a private company in Kabul and returned home on Sunday, said, "I am happy that I have returned home safely but whenever I think of situation there I just shudder at the very thought of it". He said Indians are very helpful to Indians in Kabul. This is the time Indian government should also do something for them.

Talks between protesting farmers, Punjab govt remain inconclusive

Team Absolute | Chandigarh

The talks between the government and the protesting farmers in Punjab on Sunday remained inconclusive as the former didn't arrive to the demand of hiking the state assured price (SAP) of sugarcane to a minimum of Rs 400 per quintal. For the past two days, farmers have been blocking the Delhi-Amritsar national highway near Jalandhar, along with the rail tracks. They threatened to block all highways from Tuesday, if their demands were not accepted.

However, service roads were opened for Raksha Bandhan, while the dharna at Jalandhar continued as usual. At the meeting led by Cooperative Minister Sukhjinder Randhawa here, it was decided to clear the outstanding dues of Rs 45 crore of the sugarcane growers by first week of September.

Another meeting with an expert committee will also be held on Monday. The government last week hiked the assured price by Rs 15, making it Rs 350 a quintal. Official sources told IANS that a



meeting with Chief Minister Amarinder Singh may be held on Tuesday. Expressing solidarity with the protesting sugarcane farmers, Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) President Sukhbir Singh Badal on Saturday demanded that the Congress government should increase the state assured price (SAP) of sugarcane to a minimum of Rs 380 per quintal, besides calling for the immediate release of all pending payments due to the sugarcane growers.

He also announced that in case the state government did not do justice to the sugarcane growers, the next SAD-BSP alliance government would raise the SAP to a minimum of Rs 380 per quintal. "We will include this commitment in our election manifesto as well," he added.

In a statement issued here, the SAD President said that it is "shocking" that after refusing to increase the SAP for sugarcane for four years, the Punjab government has affected a

"measly" Rs 15 per quintal increase towards the fag end of its tenure. "This amounts to betraying both the sugarcane growers as well as the cause of diversification. The government has sprinkled salt on the wounds of the cane growers through this callous and insensitive act," he said. Had the government hiked the sugarcane price by a minimum of Rs 20 per year, the SAP this year would have been at least Rs 380, which is a fair per quintal price for sugarcane, he said. "Not doing so has caused a loss of Rs 1,000 crore to the Punjab farmers," Sukhbir Badal said, adding that the Haryana government is giving a SAP of Rs 358 per quintal, which is Rs 30 to Rs 40 more per quintal.

He also said that the loss is much more if the interest quotient on the late payments as well as high state VAT on diesel is taken into account. The SAD chief also demanded that the state government should ensure immediate release of the backlog of payments due to sugarcane growers from cooperative sugar mills. "The private mills have sold sugar in the market, but have not paid the farmers," he said.

IAF plane with 168 onboard lands at Hindan air base from Kabul

Team Absolute | New Delhi

An Indian Air Force (IAF) transport aircraft arrived at Hindan air base here with 168 passengers including some eminent Afghan leaders from Hindu and Sikh communities, on Sunday morning, the officials said.

The officials also confirmed that 107 Indians have been brought back through this evacuation. Apprehending that the Taliban militia may prevent the Afghan public representatives from taking the IAF flight, the entire plan was kept secret till the flight took off from Afghanistan, sources said.

The IAF aircraft was waiting for the clearance at the Kabul airport due to the huge rush as many countries have sent their military planes to evacuate their citizens. "The US authorities have taken full control of the airport and they are managing the air operation from the war torn country. In this huge rush, charting out a slot for an aircraft and also a safe air route for the evacuation flight, have become major challenges for US authority," an official explained who was privy to these developments.

This was the second evacuation made



by the Indian authorities to bring back the stranded Indian and Afghan nationals who wanted to come to India after the Taliban took control of Afghanistan on August 15, 2021. The first air rescue operation was made on August 17, when an IAF C-17 aircraft brought back 120 Indians, including Indian Ambassador Rudrendra Tandon, the last batch of the Indian embassy staff, ITBP personnel from the Kabul airport amidst the critical situation in Afghanistan.

However, the Government has been making all efforts to bring back Indians and leaders of the Afghan Sikh and Hindu communities who have feared Taliban's prosecution. The Kabul airport was closed on August 16 evening for commercial operation but it was reopened for military aircraft deployed for evacuation operations on Tuesday by the American agencies.

'All roads deserted in Kabul except one leading to airport'

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Amid the ongoing unrest, chaos and tension in Afghanistan, three planes, and an Indian Air Force (IAF) transport aircraft, carrying Indian nationals arrived at Delhi's IGI Airport and Hindon Air Base in Ghaziabad, respectively, on Sunday.

Zaffer Sherif, who was working at the NATO base in Kabul airport, said all roads in Kabul looked deserted except the one leading to the airport which was choked with heavy traffic as people were in a hurry to leave the country. "We got the information about Taliban that had captured Jalalabad city (around 40 km from Kabul) on August 16 morning. After some hours, again we were informed that Taliban had entered into the city and local Talibanis began coming inside the airport."

"Around thousands of



Talibanis sat on the runway to disrupt the flight operation and started cover-shot. Later, we were evacuated to Doha from where we have reached India," he said.

India on Sunday evacuated 168 passengers including 107 Indian nationals through Indian Air Force's C-17 aircraft that landed at IAF's Hindon Air Base.

An Air India flight carrying 87 Indians also landed at Delhi's IGI Airport on Sunday, along with two other

private airlines, from different locations.

One more flight carrying Indian nationals is expected to land, said an official.

Another returnee Jagadeesha, who also was working at NATO base in Kabul, said: "We felt safer inside the base. The embassy helped us in getting airlifted to Doha from where with Indian embassy's help we have reached here."

Even as the flights carrying Indian nationals landed in early morning at the IGI airport, the check-out was delayed by many hours due to the Covid-related formalities. All the evacuees had to undergo RT-PCR tests.

Health Minister Mansukh Mandaviya tweeted on Sunday morning, sharing a photo of the ongoing vaccination of the evacuees at the Delhi airport.

He tweeted: "We have decided to vaccinate Afghanistan returnees with free Polio Vaccine - OPV & fIPV, as a preventive measure against Wild Polio Virus. Congratulations to the Health Team for their efforts to ensure public health. Take a look at the vaccine drive at Delhi International Airport."

Polio has not yet been eradicated in Afghanistan and Pakistan. Meanwhile, the Ministry of External Affairs has said the government is committed to the safe return of all Indian nationals from Afghanistan

FinMin summons Infosys CEO over glitches in IT e-filing portal



Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Ministry of Finance has summoned Infosys MD and CEO, Salil Parekh on Monday over continuing glitches in the new income tax e-filing portal.

In a tweet, the Income Tax Department also said that the portal is not available since Saturday, August 21. Parekh has been summoned to explain to the Finance Minister the reason for the persistent glitches in the portal.

"Ministry of Finance has summoned Sh Salil Parekh, MD & CEO @Infosys on 23/08/2021 to explain to hon'ble FM as to why even after 2.5 months since launch of new e-filing portal, glitches in the portal have not been resolved. In fact, since 21/08/2021 the portal itself is not available," the department said. The new income tax e-filing portal developed by Infosys was launched on June 7 in a bid to ease

the tax filing process and expedite the refund issue. However, taxpayers have been facing several problems in using the portal since its inception.

In July, the Union Finance Ministry asked the Institute of Chartered Accountants of India (ICAI) to constitute a seven-member task force to look into the technical issues facing the new Income Tax e-filing portal developed by Infosys. In line with the directive, the ICAI constituted a team to analyse the issues. During the recent Monsoon Session of Parliament, Minister of State for Finance Pankaj Chaudhary said in a written reply to the Lok Sabha that Infosys has been paid a total of Rs 164.5 crore under the project.

He had said the government launched the new income tax e-filing portal as part of the Integrated E-filing and Centralised Processing Centre 2.0 Project.

Now, TN association seeks reservation for in-service doctors

Team Absolute | Chennai

After the Tamil Nadu state government announced 50 per cent reservation for MDS admissions to in-service doctors, the Tamil Nadu Medical Officers Association has demanded that this be extended for super-specialty medical courses like DM and Mch.

Dr. Akilan, state president of Tamil Nadu Medical Officers association welcomed the decision of the state government for providing the reservation for BDS doctors in the government service and said that the same be extended for MD/MS and DM/Mch courses. Dr. Swaminathan, President of the Service Doctors and Postgraduates Association also thanked the state government for providing the 50 per cent quota for in-service doctors. He said, "This has been a long-standing demand of government doctors and we expect the government to implement the same quota for admissions to MD/MS courses as well as super-specialty streams like DM/Mch." The association had in a petition in 2020 to the government complained that in the absence of an in-house service quota, service candidates getting into MDS in the government dental colleges were zero in 2019 and three in 2020.

The Directorate of Medical Education (DME) which has commenced the admission procedure for MDS courses in government and self-



financing colleges for the 2021-22 academic year has stated in the prospectus the provision of 50 per cent quota for in-service doctors. According to the prospectus of the DME, of the total seats sanctioned for MDS courses in government dental colleges, 50 per cent were allotted to the All India Quota for allotment by the Director-General of Health Services. The balance of 50 per cent of the seats would be allocated under the state quota under the first phase of counselling and of the 50 per cent of seats in the state government quota, 50 per cent will be exclusively allocated to the in-service candidates working in state government hospitals and other institutions. The balance 50 per cent will be in the open category and both service candidates

Sri Lankan Navy pelted stones at Indian fishing boats: TN officials



Team Absolute | Chennai

Around 60 Indian fishing boats that were engaged in fishing off the Rameshwaram coast in Tamil Nadu were subjected to stone-pelting by the Sri Lankan Navy, according to state fishing department officials. The incident was reported on Saturday night. The officials said that around 25 boats along with the fishing nets and other equipment were damaged in the heavy stone-pelting by the Sri Lankan Navy. The boats, according to the fisheries department, were engaged in fishing at Katchatheevu when the incident occurred. According to fishermen, the Sri Lankan naval officials came in five vessels and conducted heavy stone-pelting on the Indian vessels thus damaging 25 including their fishing nets. However, fishermen said that none of them were injured. Fishermen association leaders said that a strong word be sent to the Sri Lankan Navy from the Government of India that no boat from the Tamil Nadu coast be attacked by them. Sesuraja, a leader of the fishermen association, told IANS, "This is creating a very wrong precedent and the Sri Lankan Navy has no business throwing stones at us. If our people had crossed the boundary, the duty of the Sri Lankan Navy was to appraise our team on this and not to hurl stones and damage our vessels and fishing equipment. I urge both the Central and state government to take stringent action against those involved in attacking our fishermen."



UPLOAD WOMEN'S DIGNITY, ENSURE SAFE ENVIRONMENT: VICE PREZ

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Vice President M Venkaiah Naidu on Sunday urged everyone on the occasion of Rakshabandhan to uphold the dignity of women and ensure a safe environment for them.

Naidu, who is in Bengaluru on an official tour, celebrated Rakshabandhan at Raj Bhavan with school children from various local schools.

Greeting the people on the occasion, Naidu said Rakshabandhan is a celebration of the special and deep-rooted bond of love and respect between brothers and sisters. Urging the people to treat everyone like their brothers and sisters, Naidu said



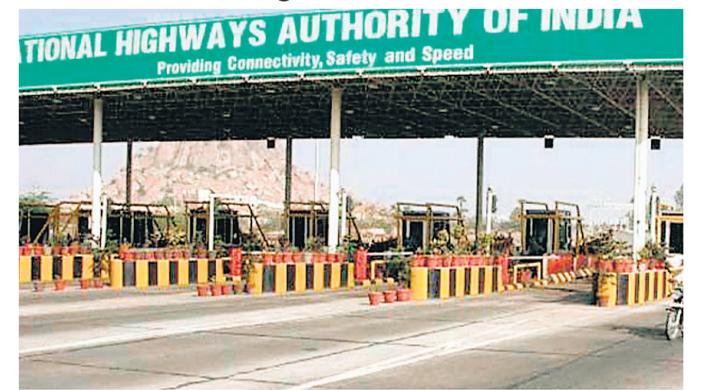
this would promote brotherhood and harmony among the citizens and "make our nation strong".

Praising the age-old Indian family system, the Vice President said it teaches us to respect the elderly and inculcates the spirit of sharing and caring among the youngsters.

Stating sisters bring happiness in the house, Naidu said that there are many Indian festivals that celebrate family relations and strengthen the bond of togetherness.

Earlier on Sunday, Naidu tweeted Rakshabandhan greetings in 13 languages including Kannada, Hindi, Telugu, Malayalam, Tamil, Marathi, Konkani, Odia, Bengali, Assamese, Gujarati, Punjabi.

PMK seeks white paper from NHAI, threatens stir against toll fee hike in TN



Team Absolute | Chennai

Pattali Makkal Katchi (PMK), a constituent of the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) in Tamil Nadu has sought a white paper from the NHAI and is mulling protests against the proposed hike in fee at toll plazas in the state. The PMK founder leader Dr. S. Ramadoss in a statement on Saturday has called upon the NHAI to present a white paper on the cost incurred to set up toll plazas in Tamil Nadu as well as the fee collected from users.

Ramadoss said that the NHAI is planning to increase the toll fee by 8 per cent of the existing fee in 23 toll plazas of Tamil Nadu and called upon the NHAI authorities to first present a white paper on the expenses and profit and then only think about hiking the price. The senior PMK leader said that the proposed hike is huge and that this would lead to a higher fee in transportation of goods and added that the result would be a higher price for essential commodities in the state. Sources in the PMK told IANS that the party is planning to conduct a series of

protest marches at the toll plazas in the state if a white paper is not presented as demanded by the party. The PMK is a strong political party in Northern Tamil Nadu and is the prominent political outfit of the Vanniyar community. The statement of the PMK senior leader and the subsequent plans for protest marches has made the BJP leadership of Tamil Nadu to take note of the situation. The Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M.K. Stalin had recently issued the Government Order for the 10.5 per cent reservation for the Vanniyar community within the Most Backward Caste (MBC) reservation in the state for educational institutions and jobs. While the previous AIADMK had passed the bill for 10.5 per cent reservation to the community, Stalin followed suit with the Government Order on the same.

This was seen by political observers as a move to provide a long rope to the PMK and the recent statements from the PMK leaders seems to be an indicator that they are not that hostile to the DMK as it was earlier.

INFORM PEOPLE ABOUT GOVT WORKS, NADDA TELLS U'KHAND PARTY WORKERS



Team Absolute | New Delhi

Ahead of next year's Assembly polls, BJP chief J.P. Nadda has asked the party leadership in Uttarakhand to connect with people and spread awareness about the policies of the Union and state governments, party leaders said. Nadda was on a two-day visit to Uttarakhand from Friday to take stock of party's poll preparedness.

A senior party functionary said that Nadda has given three basic formulas - strengthening organisation at booth level, 'ratri pravas' (night stay), and dialogue with the people for winning the polls. It is learnt that the disconnect of elected representatives with the workers and people came to Nadda's notice while collecting feedback from different sets of workers.

"Naddaji said that everyone from the Chief Minister,

ministers, party organisation and MLAs have to work together. During his two days pravas, he advised everyone to establish connections with people and also collect their opinion about the state government and MLAs," a party leader said. The leader said that Nadda pointed out that despite repeated instructions, there is no continuity in the ministers, MLAs and state office bearers's outreach. "He (Nadda) has asked the state unit to prepare a compliance report of all the three programmes," the leader said. Another party leader said that while interacting with elected representatives, Nadda asked them to visit and stay with people in their respective constituencies. "Naddaji emphasised that leaders must spend time with people in their constituency and understand the situation on the ground. He also advised the leaders to spend the night with the people for better understanding of people's sentiment. "He asked the elected representatives to spread information about government welfare schemes and work done by the young Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami under the guidance of Prime Minister Narendra Modi," he said.

Bank heist foiled in Assam, three dacoits gunned down

Guwahati | Agencies

Three suspected dacoits were shot dead as they tried to rob a bank in Assam's Kokrajhar district, police said on Sunday. Director General of Police Bhaskar Jyoti Mahanta said that the dacoits were targeting the bank at Chengmari and when intercepted, opened fire on police. Police retaliated and three dacoits from South Salmarua and Goalpara districts were injured and subsequently succumbed to their wounds, he said. "Vehicles, tools, gas cutters, two pistols along with Oxygen Cylinders were recovered from the area. Operation was on till late night to flush out the rest of the dacoits," the DGP said on Twitter. Another police official said that acting on intelligence inputs that a gang of robbers would try to attempt to rob an Allahabad Bank branch at Bhotgaon near Kokrajhar town, police had laid an ambush before the gun fight occurred late on Saturday night. Dacoits had also tried to rob the same bank branch three months back but police foiled their attempts. Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, who also holds the Home Department, appreciated the efforts of the police in prevent-

ing the bank robbery. Amidst controversy among various political parties, rights groups and civil society over the purported "police encounters" in Assam, with the latest incident, the number of deaths has increased to 21, while 33 persons were injured since Sarma become Chief Minister on May 10. Police, however, say that the accused attempted to escape from custody or attacked them, leading to them opening fire. The Chief Minister has continued to maintain that the state police has the "full authority" to deal with criminals and unlawful elements in the ambit of the law.

KERALITES AMONG EVACUEES FROM AFGHANISTAN, BREATHE SIGH OF RELIEF



Thiruvananthapuram | Agencies

Around 45 Keralites were among latest batch of Indians airlifted from Afghanistan and reaching New Delhi on Sunday and shared tales of the ordeals they had gone through. A person from north Kerala who was in Afghanistan for the past few years told IANS, on the condition of anonymity, that: "It has been a nightmare and I don't know how to express it. There are several check-posts erected by Taliban and getting up to the airport was a herculean task and I thank the Government of India and the

Government of Kerala for having helped all of us back to India. All the Keralites are back to the country."

Minister of State for External Affairs, V. Muraleedharan, told media persons that the government has brought in a group of Indians in which Keralites are also there. "According to our information, around 500 Indians are still stranded in various areas of Afghanistan and we will be airlifting them as well," he said. Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan thanked the Centre and Prime Minister Narendra Modi for bringing the Keralites back to the country from Afghanistan.

Vijayan, in a tweet, called upon anyone who is still stranded back in Afghanistan to contact the NORKA Roots website or the helpline of the External Affairs Ministry which is working 24x7. Former Indian diplomat Venu Rajamony told media that there is however no exact data on the number of Indians and Keralites working in Afghanistan as several people who reach that country from the UAE and other countries does not register with the embassy. However, he said that the Indian embassy has operational contacts with the Taliban as was evident by the evacuation.

Punjab CM warns Sidhu's advisors on assertions on Pak, Kashmir

Chandigarh | Agencies

Taking strong exception to recent statements of two of Navjot Sidhu's advisors on issues like Kashmir and Pakistan, Punjab Chief Minister Amarinder Singh on Sunday warned against such "atrocious and ill-conceived comments that were potentially dangerous to the peace and stability of the state and the country". He urged Sidhu to rein in his advisors "before they end up doing more damage to India's interests" and asked the advisors "not speak on matters of which they clearly had little or no knowledge, and had no understanding of the implications of their comments".

Reacting to reported remarks of Sidhu's advisors Pyare Lal Garg questioning Amarinder Singh's criticism of Pakistan, as well as the earlier controversial statement of Malvinder Singh Mali on Kashmir, he expressed shock at their "extraordinary statements", which he said, were "totally misplaced and



antagonistic" to the stated position of India and the Congress on Pakistan and Kashmir.

"Kashmir was and is an inalienable part of India," asserted the Chief Minister, adding that with his proclamation to the contrary, Mali had effectively and inexplicably toed Islamabad's line.

"This is totally anti-national," he said, also slamming Mali for failing to withdraw his statement despite the widespread condemnation it had

evoked not only from other parties but also from within the Congress. Ridiculing Garg's statement that his criticism of Pakistan was not in the interest of Punjab, the Chief Minister said Sidhu's advisor was clearly disconnected from the ground reality.

"The fact, which every Punjabi and in fact every Indian knows, is that Pakistan's threat to us is real. Every day they are pushing weapons and drugs into Punjab via drones in a brazen attempt to destabilise our state, and our nation. Punjabi soldiers are dying at the borders at the hands of Pak-backed forces," pointed out the Chief Minister, dubbing Garg's remarks as "irrational and unjustified".

"Garg may have forgotten the thousands of Punjabi lives lost in the fire of Pak-backed terrorism of the 1980s and 1990s, but I have not. Nor have the people of Punjab. And we will continue to do everything in our power to fight off Pakistan's dangerous games," asserted Amarinder Singh, urging Garg not to undermine the sacrifices of Punjabis.

Self-styled godman arrested in fraud case worth Rs 3cr

Bhubaneswar | Agencies

A self-proclaimed 'Baba' and a techie have been arrested for their involvement in a fraud case worth Rs 3 crore, the Odisha Police said on Sunday.

The Economic Offences Wing (EOW) of Odisha crime branch has arrested Chandan Akash Mohanty, a B.Tech degree holder, and Bijayananda Choudhury (also known as Swami Bijayanandaji Maharaj), a self-proclaimed Baba, for committing the fraud, the police said. The accused have been arrested as per EOW PS Case No 10 of 2021 on the basis of a written complaint filed by Odisha Tourism Development Corporation (OTDC) official, said EOW SP, Gagarin Mohanty.

Mohanty, who was earlier working on contractual basis as assistant engineer in OTDC, in criminal conspiracy with others had cheated a special class contractor by issuing fake work orders purportedly issued

by OTDC, Bhubaneswar and collected huge amount from him in his personal account towards purported/ projected EMD against the work orders, he said. In the course of their interactions, both Baba and Mohanty promised to provide work orders to the contractor in respect of works from OTDC Ltd. and instructed him to deposit various amounts towards EMD in the personal account of Chandan.

The accused has handed over 23 numbers of work orders for repair and renovation of Pantha Nivas at Barkul and Rambha, purportedly issued under the seal and signature of OTDC executive engineer and managed to get Rs 3 crore approximately from the contractor, the SP said.

During investigation, Mohanty said, all those work orders were found fake and manufactured by using forged signatures and seals and not issued from OTDC Ltd. They are being forwarded to the court of SDJM, Bhubaneswar, he added.

SENSE OF FEAR PREVAILS ACROSS KABUL, SAYS RETURNEE FROM KABUL

New Delhi:

A contingent of over 150 Indians from Kabul returned safely at the Indira Gandhi International Airport in Delhi on Sunday Morning. Amid the ongoing tension and unrest in Afghanistan, the passengers were in happy state of mind after they safely came home. A passenger coming from Kabul, Hari Thapa said that the sense of fear looms across Afghanistan after the Taliban toppled the government there. "However, we didn't face much trouble as I was staying in a hotel in Kabul and somehow managed to reach the Kabul airport," he said. "The Taliban allowed us to go easily. We were staying in a hotel for a week to return to India safely," said Thapa. Being asked about the Indian embassy's role in their safe return, he said that he did not get any help from the embassy. "We managed ourselves to reach the Kabul airport somehow. There was a chaos at the roads in Afghanistan capital city," he said. About kidnapping of Indian nationals in Kabul, he said he is not aware of such thing in Kabul. Recounting his horrific experience in Kabul, Hari continued saying that there is a chaos like situation prevailing at the airport. "Everyone is in a hurry to leave Afghanistan in any way possible." However, he added that he did not receive any direct threat from the Taliban in Kabul.



Delhi gears up for 3rd wave, makeshift hospitals to remain in standby mode

Team Absolute | New Delhi

When Covid-19 turned into a global pandemic, many nations across the world came up with a strategy to set up makeshift hospitals to cater the needs of growing infected patients as the virus challenged the healthcare facilities even of all the developed nations.

Apart from the medical oxygen-crisis, limited healthcare facilities during the second Covid wave was also one of the most apparent reasons for the devastating pandemic in India. As the virus continued to pose challenges to the healthcare facilities across the nation, many makeshift hospitals were constructed on an urgent basis to accommodate the patients suffering from the infection. The Indian Railways stopped all trains and converted many coaches into isolation centres for the patients.

However, the daily Covid case trajectory has shown the declining trend now, all makeshift hospitals in the national capital Delhi are operational and will remain in a standby mode to face the severity of a possi-



ble third Covid wave. The health scientists are continuously warning about the possible third wave in India anytime. Recently, the Delhi government announced building seven makeshift hospitals with 7,000 ICU beds in the next six months to prepare for a potential third covid wave. These seven makeshift hospitals will be constructed by the public works department (PWD) in Sarita Vihar, Shalimar Bagh, Sultanpuri, Kirari, Raghbir Nagar, GTB hospital, and

Chacha Nehru Bal Chikitsalaya.

The makeshift Covid-19 facility attached to the Lok Nayak Jai Prakash Narayan Hospital at Ramleela Maidan started operations with 250 ICU beds during the second wave. Dr Ritu Saxena, Media Cell Chief, says that the makeshift Covid-19 facility at Ram Leela ground is fully operational and "we are planning the extension of the facility there as per the direction from the government to prepare in advance for possible third wave."

She said, "Till we get any direction from the government, the facility will remain operational." Though, she accepts that only a few Covid patients are visiting the facility now. Dr Purvi Verma, Clinical Doctor at the CWG Covid care center, said, "We are ready to face the challenges of the third wave with two oxygen plants ready and a total of 450 beds attached with the oxygen supply."

She said we have two halls here where 450 beds are available along with 50 beds with ICU facilities. "We have received directions for 460 beds to be in complete operation". A Medical Mobile Unit (MMU) facility also runs from the CWG center that detects the

Covid patients and provides quality treatment. The facility is presently running in New Delhi district.

"SPCCC Radha Soami Satsang Beas in Chhatarpur will continue to function till further orders. We will continue to manage the centre till the time we are asked to do so", ITBP spokesperson Vivek Kumar Pandey said. He said, "However, we are receiving near to zero Covid patients and have reduced the staff for the facility. We will continue to be operational till we get any direction from the government."

Delhi Health Minister Satyendar Jain recently said that all necessary measures are being taken and health infrastructure is being ramped up to unprecedented levels with more than 37,000 Covid-19 dedicated beds being built for the fight against the likely third wave of Covid-19. He said that if third wave comes, it will be milder than the second wave in Delhi at least because the majority of the cases that emerged during April-May this year were caused by the Delta variant, implying the majority of the population may already have antibodies.



PROTECT YOURSELF FROM CORONA BY GETTING BOTH DOSES OF VACCINE: CM

Vaccination mega campaign in the state on 25 and 26 August, Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan gave a message to the people of the state on Rakshabandhan appealed to all to make the campaign a success



Team Absolute | Bhopal

In his message to the people of the state on the occasion of Raksha Bandhan, Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has said that they should protect themselves, family, state and country by getting both the doses of corona vaccine. This would be a true gift from brothers to sisters. Chouhan said that along with regular vaccination in the state, a vaccination mega campaign would be launched on August 25 and 26. Every eligible person above the age of 18 years must get both the doses. Chouhan said that in the vaccination mega campaign, the

first and second doses of corona vaccine would be administered on August 25 and the second dose on August 26 at the designated centres. Chouhan has appealed to the general public including all corona volunteers, public representatives, voluntary organisations, religious leaders, social workers, various organisations to extend their full cooperation in this vaccination mega campaign and make it a complete success.

Chouhan said that corona has been controlled in the state, but not completely eradicated. Cases of corona are still coming. No need to panic. Take utmost care and behave covid friendly.

Chouhan said that vaccine is a strong protection cycle against corona. Scientists have told that the vaccine gives 93 percent protection against corona. But for this it is necessary to have both the doses of corona within the prescribed time period. This vaccine will be fully effective only if both doses are taken. Chouhan said that 60 percent eligible persons have got the first dose of corona vaccine in the state, but only 12 percent have got the second dose. Those who have got Covishield vaccine should get the second dose after 84 days and those who have got Covaccine after 28 days without fail.

Districts' ministers in charges to monitor preparations of vaccination mega campaign

► RESPONSIBILITIES ASSIGNED TO MINISTERS BY POSTPONING THE MEETING OF THE CABINET

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has said that it is the top-most priority of the state government that by the month of September, all the eligible citizens of the state should get the first dose to protect them from Covid. This target has been fixed under a specific strategy. The purpose behind completing the second phase of the vaccination mega campaign in the month of August itself is to ensure the health security of the people of the state.

Chouhan said that by postponing the meeting of the Cabinet to be held on August 24, all the ministers have been asked to ensure preparations for the vaccination mega campaign on August 25 and 26 in the districts under



their charge. It is noteworthy that in the vaccination mega campaign in the state, on August 25, the first and second doses of corona vaccine and on August 26, the second dose will be administered at the designated centres. At present, Madhya Pradesh ranks second in the country in vaccination. So far, more than 4 crore people have got

the first and second doses of the vaccine administered in the state. The population eligible for vaccination in the state is 5 crore 48 lakh 90 thousand.

Chouhan has appealed to the social organisations, corona volunteers, public representatives and general public of all the districts to extend their full cooperation in the vaccination mega campaign. Political parties must also provide their constructive contribution in this campaign related to public interest. Chouhan has also requested government departments and heads of various sects and religions to motivate them to get the vaccine.

CAMPAIGN FOR SELECTION OF TALENTED PLAYERS

Bhopal: To provide a golden opportunity to the talented players of the state, the state government is starting a talent selection programme from August 24. In the Talent Search-2021 campaign, players of the state can register online till August 23. The registration process was started from August 9. Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has announced 'Talent Search 2021' campaign to hunt and polish future sports talents. This campaign will start from August 24 in the entire state. The campaign will be run in coordination with the Sports and Youth Welfare, School Education and Tribal Welfare Departments. In the campaign, about 2500 boys and girls will be selected and trained in various sports academies operating in the state equipped with state-of-the-art resources and under the supervision of national and international trainers. Talented Players of Athletics, Shooting, Water Sports (Kayaking, Canoeing, Rowing, Sailing, Slalom), Karate, Fencing, Boxing, Wrestling, Taekwondo, Judo, Horse Riding, Men's Hockey, Triathlon, Women's Hockey, Badminton, Archery, Men's Cricket, Yoga and Malakhamb will be able to join this campaign to make their future. The selection process is being done as per the prescribed criteria and following the guidelines related to Covid.

NGT forms committee to penalise encroachers of govt land in Bhopal

Team Absolute | Bhopal

The National Green Tribunal has formed a committee and directed it to take action against encroachment on government land and discharge of untreated sewage in a drain at a village in Bhopal. A bench headed by NGT Chairperson Justice Adarsh Kumar Goel constituted a committee of officials from the Central Pollution Control Board, Secretary, Urban Development, MP and Member Secretary, MP State PCB.

The green panel asked the committee to remedy the illegality by taking action against law violators by way of prosecution and recovery of compensation and restoring the flow of the drain, preventing discharge of sewage therein.

"Needless to say, in doing so, prescribed procedure be followed. At the same time, since two years have gone in the process, further action may be taken on day to day basis. "The CPCB and Member Secretary, State PCB will be the nodal agency for coordination and compliance. We expect the high-



er authorities of the State to take suitable action against the officers who have colluded in illegal arrangement and prevented enforcement of law. An action taken report may be filed before the next date by e-mail," the bench said. The tribunal was hearing a plea filed by Madhya Pradesh resident Hardesh Kirar alleging violation of environmental norms by M/s Raj Homes Colony by raising constructions on encroached government land, discharging untreated sewage at Kauluva village, Bhopal and diverting the course of the said drain. The NGT also took note of a report which referred to an

agreement between the applicant and M/s Raj Homes, Bhopal to the effect that the applicant would get some land as settlement to withdraw the complaint.

The tribunal also said it is a matter of surprise and regret that state authorities should be party to an illegal arrangement of environmental law not being enforced and the applicant being allowed some benefit for not pursuing this application. The green panel said such illegal arrangement to defeat law cannot be allowed. The State is bound by the doctrine of public trust to protect the drain against pollution as well as diversion, the NGT

said. "Not only authorities have failed to do their statutory duty under the Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1974, they have acted against law by encouraging an illegal agreement under which the Tribunal may not proceed with the matter further and the illegality may be condoned and perpetuated," the NGT said.

The tribunal was hearing a plea filed by Bhopal resident Hardesh Kirar alleging violation of environmental norms by Raj Homes Colony by raising constructions on encroached government land and discharging untreated sewage at Kauluva village in Bhopal.

The state pollution control board in its report had said that a public drain is passing from two sides of complainant's house which has no boundary wall.

"The complainant filled the nala (drain) stretch at back side of his house up to boundary wall of Raj Home Pvt. Ltd. Now complainant has encroached the land of old nala path by filling it intermittently and said that he is the occupier of this encroached nala land," the report had said.

BJP MLA gets a taste of unmotorable road

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Villagers in Chhatrapur district made their MLA come to terms with reality and showed them their plight, when they invited him to inaugurate a government school on Friday. BJP MLA Rajesh Kumar Prajapati had to walk through the mud and water-logged fields in the absence of a proper road. The Chandla MLA had attempted to reach the village with the help of his SUV and two tractors, but in vain. The four wheelers were stuck in mud, villagers said.



Prajapati had to abandon his SUV about a kilometre away from the venue and walk to the venue. He was invited by the villagers to inaugurate the primary school at Hirdepurwa village, about 100 kilometres away from the district headquarters. When the MLA reached the village outskirts and proceeded towards the school, his SUV got stuck in the mud and the villagers got tractors to navigate the muddy road. He boarded a tractor but its

wheels were also stuck in the mud. "We have been raising the issue of bad roads for the past 70 years. The nets only make assurances but roads are not constructed", said Mahesh Rajput, a villager. Two weeks ago, villagers had to carry an ailing person on a cot and were forced to tread the muddy pathways to reach the nearest hospital in Purwa village of Manuriya Panchayat under the same constituency. The MLA has promised construction of roads with the help of villagers after the monsoon.

"I fully understand the plight of the villagers. I will get the road constructed. The villagers in Hirdepurwa have also promised to give some land for the road construction," MLA Prajapati said.

CM PLANTS SAPLING WITH FAMILY



Bhopal: Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan planted a sapling in Smart City Park along with family on the occasion of Rakshabandhan. Chouhan, his wife Sadhna Singh and son Kunal Singh planted saplings of Karanj. Chief Minister Chouhan plants a sapling every day as part of his resolve to plant trees continuously for one year.

7 month-old child stolen from Chhattisgarh rescued in Umariya; three held

► AN OFFICER SAID THAT THE MAIN ACCUSED, RITA YADAV, HAD KIDNAPPED THE BABY BOY FROM THE CIMS AND WAS TRAVELLING TO DELHI TO MEET HER BOYFRIEND.

Team Absolute | Umariya

A seven-month-old boy allegedly stolen from the Chhattisgarh Institute of Medical Sciences (CIMS) in Bilaspur district was rescued from a train in Umariya district and three persons, including two women, were arrested, Chhattisgarh Police said on Sunday. An officer said that the main accused, Rita Yadav, had kidnapped the baby boy from the CIMS and was travelling to Delhi to meet her boyfriend. "Bilaspur Police safely rescued the child by arresting Rita Yadav, a resi-

dent of Bilaspur district, from the Umariya railway station in Madhya Pradesh with the help of the Railway Protection Force (RPF)," Adtl SP Nimesh Baraiya told reporters.

The two other arrested persons are identified as Yadav's boyfriend Pushpendra and one Hema Kaushik, he said. The rescued baby was handed over to his parents Ishak Be and Shafar Shah, he said.

Baraiya said that Yadav, already married, was in a relationship with Pushpendra and one Sahil, a resident of Mumbai. "She

had lied to Sahil that she was expecting a child from him, following which the latter asked her to come to Delhi. Yadav then started a search for a child (to convince Sahil) and met the victim couple. On the pretext of offering monetary help and arranging treatment facilities, Yadav with the help of Pushpendra took Ishak Be and her child to the CIMS and eventually escaped with the baby. In the wake of the incident, a complaint was lodged with the Bilaspur Police and a search was launched," Baraiya said.

He said Yadav left for Delhi on August 21 with the baby.

"Meanwhile, with the help of CCTV footage of CIMS and other evidence, police held Pushpendra and Hema. Based on the inputs given by the duo, a police team with the help of RPF arrested Yadav from a train in Madhya Pradesh's Umariya district and ensured safe rescue of the baby," the Adtl SP said. Further probe is underway, he added. A Madhya Pradesh police official had said when the Umariya RPF apprehended the woman (Yadav) and enquired, she could not give a satisfactory reply and was taken off the train along with the child.

EDUCATION IS ESSENTIAL FOR DEVELOPMENT: GOVERNOR

Bhopal: On the auspicious occasion of Rakshabandhan, the sisters tied the thread of Raksha Sutra to Governor Mangubhai Patel. Governor Patel blessed the sisters and wished them a bright future. He said that education is essential for development. Whatever work an educated person does is better. He asked the girls to study diligently, get good education and contribute to the development of the country and society. Prajapita Brahmakumari's sister BK Awadhesh, Balika Griha's Priyanka and Saloni Vishwakarma and the girls of SOS Balgram greeted the Governor on the occasion of Raksha Bandhan by tying Raksha Sutra.



Empowerment of sisters is necessary for the empowerment of country: CM

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has said that the empowerment of the country is not possible without the empowerment of sisters. After becoming the Chief Minister, it has been my constant endeavour that how I bring happiness in the lives of mothers, sisters and daughters. The state government is working continuously for their safety, honour and welfare. Educational, economic, political and social empowerment of sisters is being done in the state.

Chouhan said that Atma-nirbhar Madhya Pradesh cannot be formed without self-reliant sisters. Various schemes are being run in the state to make the sisters self-reliant. Soon Mahila Panchayat will be convened, in which other schemes like Ladli Laxmi will also be made after discussion with the sisters.

Chouhan appealed to all the people of the state to take a pledge to protect the rights of mothers-sisters-daughters, their respect, their welfare and their empowerment on the auspicious occasion of Raksha Bandhan. Let us take pledge that all opportunities will be given to them to realise their dreams.

Chouhan told all the sisters of the state that when they tie rakhi to their brother on Rakshabandhan, ask them whether they got corona vaccine or not. On the occasion of Rakshabandhan, get vaccinated from Corona as a bond of protection. Sisters should not forget to get themselves vaccinated. Vaccination campaign will be run in the state on 25th and 26th August, in which first and second dose will be administered on 25th and second dose on 26th.

Chouhan today gave a message to the sisters of the state on the auspicious occasion of Rakshabandhan. He prayed to God for the happy, healthy and prosperous life of all the mothers, sisters



and daughters.

Chouhan started his day by tying rakhi to sisters Ku. Kanak Kushwaha and Shaili Tiwari, who came to the

Chief Minister's residence to tie rakhi. He offered sweets to the sisters with his hand and gave good wishes. Chouhan said that since time imme-

morial, there is respect for mothers-sisters-daughters in India and they are honourable for us. In Indian tradition it is said that where women are worshipped, God resides there.

Chouhan said that sisters are the carriers of our culture, values of life, fasting, celebrations, Teej-festivals etc. India's family system is a matter of wonder for the whole world and its axis are women. Government work starts with the worship of daughters in the state. Respect and safety of daughters is of paramount importance to us.

Chouhan said that by the year 2024, not only in urban but also in rural areas, drinking water would be provided to every household in the state from tap. For this the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has started the Jal Jeevan Mission.

Chouhan said that one percent registration fee is charged from women in the state for getting their land, house etc. registered. Due to this, 10 percent

more registries of properties in the name of sisters have been done this year as compared to last year. Loans are being made available to women self-help groups at low interest to make women financially empowered.

Chouhan said that 50 percent reservation has been given in local body elections for the political empowerment of women. In government jobs, 30 percent reservation has been made for women in police recruitment and 50 percent reservation for teachers.

Chouhan said that women police stations have been set up in every district for the protection of daughters. Madhya Pradesh is the first state where provision of capital punishment has been made for those who rape women. The Freedom of Religion Act has been enacted to take strict action against those who marry daughters by intimidation or fraud. Muskaan campaign is being run to bring the missing daughters back home.



NCP DRIVE TO COUNTER 'JAN ASHIRWAD YATRA'

In the first phases, the press conferences will be held at Vasai, Aurangabad, Alibaug, Ratnagiri and Sindhurg

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Sharad Pawar-led Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) has announced a drive to counter the ongoing 'Jan Ashirwad Yatra' started by four newly inducted Union ministers from the Central government in Maharashtra. The party has decided to hold press conferences in various districts to "point out" how the Narendra Modi-led government allegedly failed in dealing with critical issues such as inflation, unemployment, rising fuel prices, Covid mitigation, vaccination drive among others.

"We have decided to expose the failure of the Central government by creating awareness. For this, we have decided to hold media interactions in different areas in the coming days. In the first leg, five press conferences will be held in the next four days starting Saturday. In the next phase, another region will be selected and similarly, all the regions of the



state will be covered one by one," said Mahesh Tapase, state spokesperson, NCP.

"We will prove this by comparing the performances of UPA-1 and UPA-2 with the first and second term of the Modi-led government. See the rising inflation, rise in fuel prices, unemployment, Covid management, vaccination drive etc. There is not a single area where this government has performed better," he added.

In the first phases, the press conferences will be held at Vasai, Aurangabad, Alibaug, Ratnagiri and Sindhurg.

Sanjay Tatkare, another spokesperson of the party said the locations have been selected from where 'Jan Ashirwad Yatra' was held. "We want to put our side of the story before the people. We will also show the people how BJP is misleading them by putting facts and figures. This is the reason

the party has selected the same locations where 'Jan Ashirwad Yatra' was held," Tatkare said. Ahead of the forthcoming local body elections, the state BJP unit is looking at an opportunity to take the Central schemes to the people and also expose the alleged failure of the Maharashtra Vikas Aghadi (MVA) government being run by Shiv Sena, NCP and Congress.

Four new ministers, Rajya Sabha MPs Narayan Rane and Bhagwat Karad, and MPs Kapil Patil and Bharti Pawar who were inducted into the Modi government as part of the cabinet reshuffle on July 7 were asked to hold 'Jan Ashirwad Yatra'. It started on August 16, while Rane started the yatra on August 19.

More than 15 municipal corporations (including Mumbai, Navi Mumbai and Thane), 29 of 36 district councils and over 90 municipal councils will go for polls over the next 18 months. The election bandwagon to these local bodies in such a huge number is considered as the mini-Assembly polls.

Mumbai-Delhi travel time to reduce by 3 hours

Rajdhani Express, which is the fastest train on the Mumbai-Delhi route, currently takes 15 hours to reach from Mumbai to Delhi. The railway authority aims to cut this to 12 hours



Team Absolute | Mumbai

The Western Railway has put the Mumbai-Delhi route on fast-track with an aim to reduce the travel time by at least three hours.

Rajdhani Express, which is the fastest train on the Mumbai-Delhi route, currently takes 15 hours to reach from Mumbai to Delhi. The railway authority aims to cut this to 12 hours.

The train's speed is projected to be increased to 160 kilometres per hour (kmph) from the current range of 110-130 kmph. As per the officials, WR will speed up the train between Mumbai Central and Nagda in Madhya Pradesh (693km),

Vadodara and Ahmedabad (95km), Nagda and Mathura (545km). The North Central Railway will work to accelerate speed between Mathura and Palwal, Haryana (82km), while the Northern Railway will work on increasing the speed between Palwal and New Delhi (57km).

The project will be completed by March 2024, at the cost of Rs 11,188 crore. The infrastructural changes for it include strengthening of railway tracks, laying of geogrids and geotextiles on the route, construction of compound walls along the tracks at several places to prevent trespassing and fitting the train with an anti-collision system to avoid

accidents. According to sources, work on anti-collision system on railway sections between Virar-Vadodara, Vadodara-Ratlam and up to Nagda stations on the Mumbai-New Delhi route has already started.

The WR will also construct boundary walls alongside the tracks wherein the speed of the outstation trains will be increased. "It is the vision of railways to increase the speed of trains on the Mumbai and New Delhi route. We have started work on the project in full swing. Tendering processes for different works to increase the speed is ongoing." Sumit Thakur, chief public relations officer of WR, said.

COLLEGE STUDENT ARRESTED FOR SODOMISING 9-YEAR-OLD BOY

Mumbai: Police have arrested a 19-year-old college student for allegedly sodomising a minor boy residing in his neighbourhood in suburban Goregaon, an official said on Sunday. The incident took place on Friday afternoon when the nine-year-old boy was playing outside his house, he said. The accused, who knew the boy, asked him to come inside his shanty where he allegedly sodomised the minor, the official said. The victim later informed about the incident to his mother who took him to a nearby hospital and then complained at Bangur Nagar police station. The police arrested the accused within two hours and booked him under relevant Indian Penal Code (IPC) sections, including 377 (unnatural offences), and provisions of the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, the official added.

Mayor ties rakhi to Covid-19 warriors

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Mumbai mayor Kishori Pednekar on Sunday tied rakhi to COVID-19 front-line workers and thanked them for their selfless work done during the Covid-19 pandemic. She visited Kasturba Hospital and celebrated Raksha Bandhan by tying the sacred thread to doctor, nurse, and other health care workers. "There is a need to be cautious to avoid a third wave of the pandemic," she said while speaking to reporters. Pednekar also urged people not to flock while celebrating the festival and follow Covid-19 protocols. "The outbreak has significantly reduced but not ended. Black fungus and Delta plus variants have emerged now. The third wave can infect children as well. We need to be cautious," she said. Pednekar further said that the burden of the third wave will fall on children. Meanwhile, the mayor



also condemned the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) for holding nation-wide Jan Ashirwad Yatra amid the outbreak.

"BJP's Jan Ashirwad Yatra is nothing but a yatra of deceit. People are witnessing what they're doing. They will give their 'aashirwad' in due time. If they really want to work, then they should provide COVID vaccines for people," she said.

As per the official health bulletin issued on Saturday, Mumbai reported 259 new COVID-19 cases and 5 deaths over 24 hours. There are 2825 active cases in the city.

As Second Wave Ebbs, 6 Maharashtra Districts Have Active Cases in Single Digits, 5 Report 37,000 Cases

Team Absolute | Mumbai

As the Covid-19 second wave ebbs, 15 districts across Maharashtra have fewer than 100 active cases. Six of these 15 districts have active cases that are in single digits, while the tribal-dominated Nandurbar district has absolutely no active case at all.

Out of over 55,000 active cases in Maharashtra, over 37,000 are concentrated in the five districts - Pune, Thane, Satara, Ahmednagar and Sangli, The Times of India reported. A state official told TOI that these 15 districts are smaller, with sparse population density and limited movement and the current challenge is to keep the daily detection numbers and active cases low in these parts.

Dr Subhash Salunke, technical advisor to the state government said that the Delta variant was still active in the state and new cases were being seen among people who were not previously exposed to it. Of the 36 districts in the state, only seven districts were reporting

These 15 districts are smaller, with sparse population density and limited movement and the current challenge is to keep the daily detection numbers and active cases low in these parts.

an infection rate that was higher than the average infection rate for the state, said Health minister Rajesh Tope. The numbers are still being driven by these districts and the government is focusing on these districts to ensure that the containment norms are implemented properly, Tope added. The minister warned the states reporting cases in single digits should not let their guard down.

"Our second wave was caused by the Delta variant and the variant seems stable at the moment. We need to use this time to vaccinate as many people as possible if we want to prevent a huge third wave," Dr Salunke said.

Recent sero-surveys in the state and Kerala had shown that antibody levels among people were dropping and the

weather conditions in the next few months will see fluctuating temperatures that are conducive for viral growth, he added.

Maharashtra reported 4,575 new coronavirus cases and 145 deaths on Saturday while 5,914 patients recovered from the infection. The state's Covid-19 caseload thus rose to 64,20,510, while the death toll increased to 1,35,817, an official said.

Nandurbar district in north Maharashtra did not record a single active Covid-19 case for the sixth day in a row. As many as 5,914 patients were discharged from hospitals during the day, taking the recovery count to 62,27,219. There are 53,967 active cases in the state at present.

Court acquits Bhiwandi woman of flesh trade charge

Team Absolute | Thane

The district court here in Maharashtra has acquitted a 30-year-old woman, a resident of Bhiwandi, of trafficking and pushing women into prostitution charges for want of sufficient evidence.

Special judge (Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act) and additional sessions judge Kavita Shirbhate said in her order that the prosecution has "miserably failed" to prove all the charges against the woman, who hails from West Bengal.

The copy of the order passed on August 13 was made available on

Saturday.

Special Public Prosecutor Sanjay More told the court that police had registered an FIR against the woman under various sections of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) and the Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act in July 2014 on a complaint that she was trafficking women and young girls from West Bengal and pushing them into flesh trade in Bhiwandi in the Thane district. "If the evidence of prosecution witness is considered, witnesses have stated that the present accused had pressured the victim for the purpose of prostitution and was taking money. However, the prosecution has not

examined both the victim girls to corroborate the evidence of witnesses. Therefore, I held that the evidence of witnesses is not helpful to prove the ingredients of sections 3, 4 and 6 of the PITA Act," the judge noted.

"The prosecution also failed to prove that the accused had abetted to the use of minor victim girl as a prostitute by committing sexual harassment against her and forcing the victim for illicit sexual relations with unknown customers. I held that the prosecution has miserably failed to prove the charges levelled against the accused beyond all reasonable doubts," the order said.

ROAD ACCIDENT VICTIM DIES DURING TREATMENT

Nagpur: A 45-year-old man, injured after his two-wheeler was hit by a vehicle in Butibori area here in Maharashtra, died during treatment on Saturday, police said. The accident occurred in Mohgaon village on Friday afternoon, leaving Chandramani Madavi (45) seriously injured, an official said. Madavi succumbed to his injuries during treatment at a hospital, he said. A case was registered by the police and search is on for the driver of the vehicle, which is yet to be identified.

71-year-old among two arrested for extorting money from businessman

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Mumbai police have arrested two persons, including a 71-year-old man, for allegedly extorting money from a real estate businessman, an official said on Sunday.

One of the accused, Anant Shetty (49), was nabbed from Karnataka on Thursday, while the other person, Hemant Bankar (71), was arrested from his residence in Worli area of Mumbai on Saturday, he said.

During the probe into the case, the police found that Shetty and the prime accused, who is still absconding, had allegedly duped the businessman of a certain sum from his Dubai-based bank account after submitting fake documents, the official said, without divulging details of the amount and the main accused. After the incident, whenever the businessman asked them to repay the

amount, they would make excuses. Besides, gangster Vijay Shetty used to allegedly call the businessman on behalf of the accused, asking him to give them more time to repay the amount or else threatened to kill him.

The businessman, who was facing such threatening calls since July 2019, lodged a complaint with the Mumbai crime branch's anti-extortion cell (AEC) recently.

Based on the complaint, the AEC traced Anant Shetty to Chamarajanagar in Karnataka and nabbed him.

The police also found that Bankar, who is the parent of the prime accused in the case, was in touch with Anant Shetty, hence the former was also arrested from his home here in Worli, the official said.

The accused were booked under Sections 387 (extortion) and 120-B (conspiracy) of the Indian Penal Code and other relevant provisions, he added.

JEWELRY SHOP OWNER STABBED TO DEATH

Palghar: Two unidentified persons murdered a 48-year-old jewelry shop owner in the Palghar district of Maharashtra's Nallasopara area on Saturday. According to the police, Kishore Jain's hands and legs were tied by the miscreants and he was brutally stabbed about 12 times in the face and head with a sharp weapon on Saturday. The accused persons were trying to rob the man. The incident occurred at 11 am, when the two persons walked into Sakshi Jewellers posing as customers, soon after Jain had opened the store. The police said that the accused were in the store for about 20 minutes. "After the attack, they tried to open the locker but failed and left. A shopkeeper from the vicinity came to see the deceased after an hour from the time of the incident and found him covered in blood. Jain was then taken to the nearest hospital, where he was declared brought dead," Nallasopara police official said. A case has been registered under sections 302, 392, 397, and 34 of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) and further investigation by a special team of 10 personnel is underway.

AFTER 355 YEARS, A SALUTE TO SHIVAJI'S 'GREAT SLIP' FROM MUGHAL GRIP

Team Absolute | Pune

As the country marks the 355th anniversary of the revered Maratha warrior king Shivaji's daredevil bolt from the clutches of the Mughals, a band of youth from Maharashtra are enacting that adventurous journey from Agra Fort in Uttar Pradesh to the Rajgad Fort in Pune. On August 17, a 30-member group left the Agra Fort on the same presumed route taken by Shivaji, then 36, and his minor son Prince Sambhaji, 9, to break free from the 99-day long grasp of Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb and sneaked from there to reach the Rajgad Fort after a gruelling three-week long journey. According to the coordinator of the first of its kind commemorative trip, Omkar Shinde, the exact 'escape' strategy or the supposed 'route' taken by Shivaji was so confidential that barely sketchy details are available even today.

Named 'GarudZep Mohim', symbolising the 'flight (zep)' by the mythical bird 'Garud', they will reach from Agra to Pune - a distance of 1,253 km to be covered in 13 days - on August 29, he said. Shivaji's sojourn then went down in history



as one of the most sensational escapes in the world that left the Mughals flabbergasted and fuming. "We rely on the basic historical evidences and tales of that era for this trail, passing several cities and towns in UP, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh till Maharashtra. We are travelling in a truck, seven cars, three motorcycles, and one ambulance with a medical team. The participants take turns running stretches with the 'torch' (mashaal)," team leader Maruti Aaba Gole told IANS from Madhya Pradesh. A far cry from

the situation back in 1666 when there were no roads, no reliable maps or proper routes, or no arrangements for food or water, as Shivaji and his men lurked mostly through enemy territories in multiple disguises. They had to go through dense forests infested with deadly wild animals, a hostile and difficult terrain, climbing mountains, or crossing valleys with flooded rivers as it was the height of monsoons, said Gole, 35, the 14th descendant of the head of Shivaji's Infantry, Sarnobat Narveer Tilajirao Gole. He said the Maratha king was first lured to Agra, publicly slighted in emperor Aurangzeb's court and then whisked into captivity, where he meticulously planned his escape, ostensibly in baskets laden with sweets. "All along, Shivaji had made arrangements to swap horses every couple of hundred kms, kept changing his disguises to avoid detection by the Mughal forces or spies as he mostly raced through enemy kingdoms with a handful of confidential aides. They completed the treacherous journey in around three weeks," said Shinde. However, to evade suspicion, Shivaji had left Prince Sambhaji under the care of an aide's relative in Mathura, and arranged to bring him to

the Rajgad Fort a few months later after the dust settled. After a series of other historical exploits and multiple wars and skirmishes for the next eight years, he was coronated at his new capital, the Raigad Fort, to become Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj on June 6, 1674. Another participant, Digvijay Jedhe, said the group is getting a rousing reception all along as it passes Sevla Ghat (UP), Dhaultpur (Rajasthan), Gwalior, Mohama, Guna, Devas, Indore, Junwani, Sendhwa (MP), Shirpur, Dhule, Malegaon, Nashik, Sinnar, Sangamner, Pune and finally to the Rajgad Fort, the first capital of the Maratha Empire.

On the final 20 km stretch of the 13-day long remembrance trail, 355 youth will run with 'fiery torches' to the Rajgad Fort next Sunday, culminating in a public reception to be graced by leading personalities, Shinde informed.

The unique event is organised by Sarnobat Tilajirao Gole Pratishthan, Vadgaon Maval Durg Sanvardhan, Shiv Bhumi Bhramanti (Kondhve Dhavade), Narveer Tanaji Malusare Pratishthan, Western Ghats Running Foundation, Shambhuraje Mardani Khel (Kolhapur) and the Deshbhakt Keshavrao Jedhe Foundation.



EDITOR'S SPECS

Reduce Heat, Prevent Deaths

Immediate and urgent globally coordinated efforts to mitigate climate change and increase resilience to extreme heat to limit additional warming can help save lives, say researchers. Extreme heat is an increasingly common occurrence worldwide, with heat-related deaths and illnesses also expected to rise. Reducing the health impacts of extreme heat is an urgent priority and should include immediate changes to infrastructure, urban environment, and individual behaviour to prevent heat-related deaths, said researchers in a new two-paper Series on Heat and Health, published in The Lancet. Two strategic approaches are needed to combat extreme heat. One is climate change mitigation to reduce carbon emissions and alter the further warming of the planet. The other is identifying timely and effective prevention and response measures, particularly for low-resource settings. Failure to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and to develop and deploy evidence-based heat action plans will mean a very different future awaits many people and communities around the world. According to a new Global Burden of Disease modelling study, also published in The Lancet, more than 356,000 deaths in 2019 were related to heat and that number is expected to grow as temperatures rise worldwide. However, many heat-related deaths are preventable by mitigating climate change and reducing exposure to extreme heat, the researchers said. When exposed to extreme heat stress, the body's ability to regulate its internal temperature can be overwhelmed, leading to heat stroke. In addition, physiological thermoregulatory responses that are engaged to protect body temperature induce other types of physiological strain and can lead to cardiorespiratory events. To counter these health effects, the researchers highlighted accessible and effective cooling strategies at the individual, building, and urban and landscape level.

BREAKING DOWN BARRIERS TO PUBLICATION AND SCREENWRITING

N. Lothungbeni Humtsoe

Bangalore headquartered Script a Hit, is a platform that helps people with ideas, but not the proficiencies, time or resources to turn their thoughts into a novel, to get published or create scripts for audio-visual content production. The idea is to break down the barriers to publication and screenwriting. The platform is the brain-child of Jaishankar Krishnamurthy, who had aspired to write a novel for over four decades, but due to the lack of time and skills, but it materialised into books. He realised that there must be millions of people in India who may have great ideas but don't have the necessary means to turn their notions into novels. To help such people fulfil their dreams of being a published author, Krishnamurthy along with his wife Krishna Udayasankar, Co-Founder of the company, along with a few friends began 'Script A Hit', a website where anyone's dreams of becoming a published author can come true. Q: How is 'Script a Hit' different from a publishing company? A: 'Script a Hit' does not aim to publish manuscripts, rather our aim is to help people transform their ideas into manuscripts that can then be submitted to leading publishers, to be published as books. As a result, what we look for in terms of submissions is not the entire manuscript, but a concept note -- the seed of what can be a spectacular novel. Many people may have amazing ideas but do not have the skills, time or resources to turn that idea into a complete novel. We cater to these individuals by helping bridge the process between idea and manuscript. As a result, once we accept the submitted idea, we employ professional writers to convert the idea into a novel. We then will approach reputed publishing companies to publish the novel. In short, we see ourselves as adding value by serving as a bridge between the ideator and publishing houses, thereby serving both their needs. Q: How did the idea of 'Script a Hit' come to your mind? Who is it meant for? A: The idea came from me, as I had been aspiring to write a novel for four decades but somehow could never complete a single book. Being married to a successful writer, Krishna Udayasankar, who has published many bestsellers, I pitched her a plot, which she then worked on using her exceptional skills. Now, my first book, 'Farside', co-authored with Krishna is forthcoming from Penguin Random House in October 2021. I have also completed my second novel in collaboration with another writer. The book, 'Mind Games' is currently being pitched to various publishers by the reputed Redink Literary Agency. For my third book, I engaged a writer to bring an intriguing financial thriller to life. I now have three complete manuscripts, with a fourth in the works, in a span of fewer



than two years. As a result of these experiences, I realised that there are several individuals like me who may not have the time or skills to write, or the resources to convert their unique ideas into novels. 'Script A Hit' is a unique platform for such individuals to realise their dreams of becoming an author or the creative mind behind an audio-visual production -- be it a movie or an OTT series.

Q: How does the idea work?

A: Any person who has an idea can submit a detailed synopsis of their idea by registering at the website. If the idea is selected by the 'Script A Hit' team, we enter into a legal contract with the submitter acquiring the idea with an initial payment of Rs 10,000. We then employ professional writers, chosen with care to fit the particular genre and proceed to write out the entire manuscript. We will then pitch the manuscript to reputed publishers. Depending upon the idea, we will also simultaneously present a detailed pitch to (audio-visual) content producers. Our aim is to get to the market a great idea in the form of a novel and/or as audio-visual content.

A portion of the proceeds from the royalty from the Publisher and amounts received from content producers will be going to the person who submitted the initial idea, and always, they will get creative credits for the final product.

Q: How many entries have you received till now?

A: We have received around 100 submissions and they are from across India. Right now we are accepting submissions in English, Hindi and Tamil. Except for one submission in Hindi, the rest have been in English. The genre of stories ranges from romance, science fiction and fantasy to crime and thrillers.

Q: In this era of OTT platforms, do you think your platform enables people to sell their ideas to these platforms. Also, how is it benefitting your brand?

A: There has been a behavioural change in viewership of late, highlighted all the more due to Covid. Many people, who previously watched only broadcast TV content are now consuming content on OTT platforms faster than such content can be produced. The same goes for a readership of books.

We aim to meet the steep increase in demand for new stories across various kinds of media by translating the best of ideas into the most captivating content.

We have the unique advantage of having onboard an accomplished writer, Krishna Udayasankar, who has optioned all of her novels to date to content producers, including the likes of Disney Hotstar and Phantom Films. She has also been engaged to write screenplays for web series, which are currently being pitched to leading OTT Platforms.

Also on board is Neha Lamba Grover, formerly of Star TV and now working with HCL Technologies in their Media Telecom sector in the US, dealing with a broad content-production client base. She brings both her contacts and considerable expertise in audio-visual content production to the table. These, combined with our unique vision, make us a game-changer brand in the world of literary and audio-visual entertainment.

LIFE BEGINS AT 60; NO WORK, ONLY LEISURE, THESE ARE THE BEST YEARS, AFTER ALL!



With a strong focus on ageing positively, senior citizens want to explore new career avenues, pursue their passions, and at the same time engage in social good more actively. Contrary to widespread belief, today's senior citizens are far from retirement.

In celebration of World Senior Citizen's Day (August 21), Columbia Pacific Communities, India's largest senior living community operator, launched India's first ever report on the golden agers, The Positive Ageing Report. Supported by extensive desk research, the report, aims to examine traditional notions and understand evolving needs of seniors while giving key insights on the changing aspirations, needs of senior citizens and their view of ageing in the 21st century. People older than 60 years account for 8 per cent of the Indian population. However, by 2050, the number of elderly will almost double, with over 319 million people aged over 60. This necessitates reimagining of our existing infrastructure and services to support positive ageing and better senior care for the ageing population. In the given scenario, the findings of the Report will help enhance our understanding and drive conversations around what senior citizens feel about ageing and the kind of support they need from society. The Report is based on face-to-face and telephonic interviews conducted by Innovative Research Services (India) Pvt. Ltd.

- Some of the key findings from the report are as follows:
• For people over 60, men (31 per cent) identify themselves with their careers (compared to 19 per cent women), women (30 per cent) believe their identity comes from their passions and interests (compared to 23 per cent men).
• The proportion of women over 60 (36 per cent) who spend over four hours daily on social media is greater than millennial and Gen Z men (22 per cent) and more than double of millennial and Gen Z women (15 per cent).
• More than two out of five respondents over 60 (45 per cent) agree with the statement -- 'Life begins at 60; no work, only leisure, these are the best years, after all!'
• Nearly a third (31 per cent) of the respondents believe that it is only after 60 that they would have all the time and the wisdom to achieve their ambitions.

international

Israel launches airstrikes on Gaza following clashes

Tel Aviv | Agencies

Israeli fighter jets struck posts and facilities of the armed wing of the Islamic Hamas Movement in Gaza following clashes between Palestinian protesters and Israeli soldiers, security sources and witnesses said. The airstrikes late Saturday were launched in response to clashes earlier in the day between dozens of Palestinian demonstrators and Israeli soldiers on the borders between Israel and the besieged coastal enclave, in which an Israeli sniper was seriously wounded, reports Xinhua news agency. Several explosions were heard in central and western Gaza Strip, causing damage to Hamas' posts and facilities, while no casualties have been reported, according to the sources. The airstrikes also attacked weapons caches and other posts that produce weapons, said an Israeli army spokesman in a press statement. The spokesman held the Hamas movement, which rules and controls the Gaza Strip, fully responsible for the clashes on Israel and for exploiting civilians to get involved in attacks against Israel. Earlier on Saturday, 41 Palestinian demonstrators were



injured by Israeli soldiers' fire, including 22 children, with two of them in critical condition, according to Gaza hospital officials. On Friday, the Palestinian factions in the Gaza Strip, including Hamas, called on people to demonstrate near the border area with Israel to mark the 52nd anniversary for burning al-Aqsa Mosque in East Jerusalem. Khalil al-Hayyah, a senior Hamas leader in Gaza, told reporters that his movement will continue the efforts to defend al-Aqsa Mosque and the struggle to end the Israeli blockade that has been imposed on the Gaza Strip for 15 years.

UN mission welcomes Libyan army's release of detainees

Tripoli | Agencies

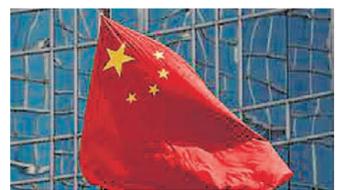
The UN Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) has welcomed the release of a group of detainees by the eastern-based army. UNSMIL welcomes the recent release of detainees as a result of the continued confidence-building efforts by the Joint Military Commission and its strong commitment to move forward with the full implementation of the ceasefire agreement, the Mission said in a statement on Saturday. The Mission called on all concerned national and international parties to ensure, respect and support the full implementation of the ceasefire agreement, in accordance with relevant UN Security Council resolutions, reports Xinhua news agency. A war erupted in April 2019 between the eastern-based army and the former UN-backed Government of National Accord in and around the capital Tripoli and lasted for more than a year, before the rivals signed the agreement. Also, the Mission welcomed the resumption of the water supply in Tripoli, after the main water supply system was shut down by an armed group a few days ago demanding the release of the former chief of intelligence.



New sanctions show US' unwillingness to mend ties: Russia

Moscow | Agencies

New US sanctions against Russia showed the Joe Biden administration's "lack of political will and unwillingness" to mend the Moscow-Washington relations on a partnership basis, the Russian Foreign Ministry said. Ministry's spokesperson Maria Zakharova made the comments on Saturday a day after the US announced new sanctions against Russian individuals and entities over the alleged poisoning of Kremlin critic Alexei Navalny and the Nord Stream 2 gas pipeline project, reports Xinhua news agency. Zakharova considered such "hostile actions" contrary to the spirit of the Geneva summit between Russian President Vladimir Putin and his US counterpart Biden in June. The new sanctions "under far-fetched pretexts" were announced against the backdrop of "the largest foreign policy failure for the US in Afghanistan", she noted. "It is useless to put pressure on Russia and our response, as always, will be tough and adequate," Zakharova added. On Friday, the Department of the Treasury announced that it designated



nine Russian individuals and two Russian entities "involved in Navalny's poisoning or Russia's chemical weapons program". Many designated are members of Russia's Federal Security Service. In addition, the Department of State designated two Russian Ministry of Defence scientific laboratories that have engaged in activities to develop Russia's chemical weapons capabilities. In a separate move, the Department of State said on Friday it had submitted a report to Congress pursuant to the Protecting Europe's Energy Security Act of 2019 (PEESA), as amended. The report lists one Russian vessel and two Russian persons involved in the 1,230-km Nord Stream 2 gas pipeline.

Saudi-led airstrikes killed Iranian military advisor: Yemen govt

Sanaa | Agencies



The Yemeni government announced that airstrikes launched by the Saudi Arabia-led coalition killed an Iranian military officer in the country's oil-rich province of Marib. Haidar Serjan, who worked as an advisor to the Houthis, was killed with nine others on Friday night following airstrikes launched by the coalition during the ongoing fighting in Marib's district of Serwah, Minister of Information Muammar Al-Eryani said in a statement on Saturday. The Minister urged the international community and the UN to "adopt a firm

stand against Iran's interference in the Yemeni affairs." The Houthis began in February a major offensive on Marib in an attempt to seize control of the oil-rich province, the government's last northern stronghold. Yemen's civil war flared up in late 2014 when the Houthi rebels seized control of much of the country's north and forced the internationally recognised government of President Abd-Rabbu Mansour Hadi out of the capital Sanaa. The Saudi-led coalition intervened in the Yemeni conflict in March 2015 to support Hadi's government.

China adopts new law to protect users' personal information

Beijing | Agencies

China's top legislature has voted to adopt a new law on personal information protection which will take effect on November 1, as Chinese tech firms have come under renewed scrutiny in the country. Lawmakers approved the law at the closing meeting of a regular legislative session of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress (NPC) last week. The development of big data brings convenience to life but also breeds chaos: some platforms over-collect personal information; some businesses install image acquisition equipment without authorisation and secretly record customers' faces and other biological characteristics. China has always attached great importance to personal information security. The law on personal information protection clarifies rules on the processing and cross-border provid-

ing of personal information, reports Xinhua news agency. "Currently, the whole society pays close attention to new technologies such as user profiling and recommendation algorithms, and problems including big data-enabled price discrimination have arisen," said Zang Tiwei, spokesperson for the Legislative Affairs Commission of the NPC Standing Committee. The law makes provisions prohibiting the excessive collection of personal information and big data-enabled price discrimination against existing customers. When pushing information and business marketing to individuals through automated decision-making, personal information processors should provide options that don't target personal characteristics at the same time, or offer ways of rejection, says the law. It asks internet giants, which possess the personal information of a large number of users, to set up an independent body mainly

composed of outsiders to supervise how the information is handled. These big internet platforms are also required to formulate their own rules on personal information protection following the principles of openness, fairness and justice, and publish social responsibility reports on personal information protection on a regular basis, according to the law. It also requires prominent signs to be set up at public places where image acquisition and personal identification equipment is installed, stipulating that the collected images and identification information can only be used for safeguarding public security. Strengthening protection for minors, the law deems personal information of minors under 14 as sensitive, asking personal information processors to formulate special processing protocols for the group. China had 989 million internet users by the end of 2020, of whom 183 million were minors.

Taliban meets Afghan political figures, assures security

Kabul | Agencies

The Taliban announced that its delegation met with political figures in the Afghan capital Kabul, assuring them of security and safety almost after a week of the country's takeover by the insurgent group. "A delegation from the Political Office of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan met with a number of political figures in Kabul today," Muhammad Naeem, a spokesman for the Political Office of the Taliban in Qatari capital Doha, said in a tweet on Saturday. According to the spokesman, the delegation told the attendees about the future of the "Islamic Emirate", the name of Afghanistan under Taliban rule, which wants a strong central government that respects the rule of law and gives every citizen the opportunity to serve his country, reports Xinhua news agency. The meeting came a day after former President Hamid Karzai and Abdullah Abdullah, the head of the

High Council of National Reconciliation met with political figures in Kabul in which they discussed the security of Kabul city and protection of people's lives and properties, reports TOLO News. There were reports that the Taliban's deputy leader Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar has arrived in Kabul. The Taliban entered Kabul on August 15 after taking control of most parts of Afghanistan, following the rapid withdrawal of the US and NATO forces from the country that began in May. Two days later, Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid said they intended to form an inclusive government and does not want to have any internal or external enemies.

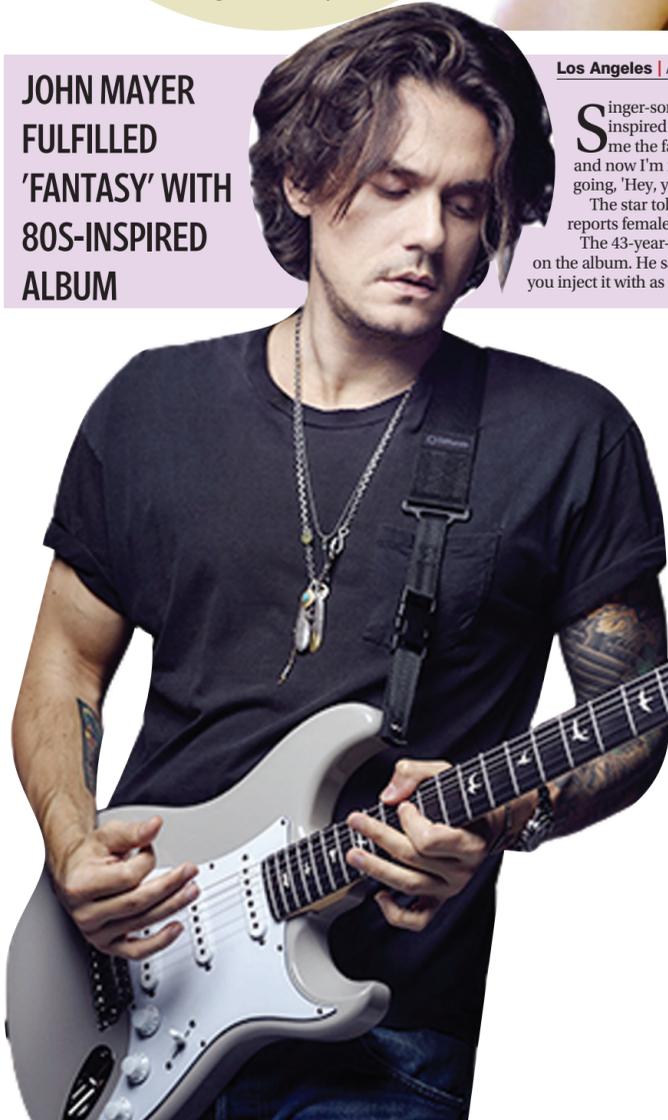




SELENA GOMEZ: DON'T THINK I'LL EVER QUIT MAKING MUSIC

Los Angeles | Agencies

Singer Selena Gomez says she has no plans to stop working on her own music. She had earlier shared that she might retire from music to focus her life more on her acting and producing work. She said, "I don't think I'll ever quit making music. I'm not saying I want a Grammy. I just feel like I'm doing the best I can, and it's all about me. Sometimes, that can really get to me." Gomez released her first Spanish language record earlier this year and she said that it was a "challenge", reports femalefirst.co.uk. "It was a challenge. I think speaking in Spanish is a lot easier than singing. I made sure that I didn't look like a fool. I focused so hard on making sure that the language I was speaking, and the way I was speaking it, was authentic," she told Elle magazine. Earlier this year, Gomez had said that she was considering retiring from music as she didn't feel like she was being taken seriously.



JOHN MAYER FULFILLED 'FANTASY' WITH 80S-INSPIRED ALBUM

Los Angeles | Agencies

Singer-songwriter John Mayer released his latest record and wanted to revisit his childhood by creating music inspired by 1980s sounds. Mayer said, "I think everyone who makes music comes at it from a fantasy, but for me the fantasy this time was, what if it's 1988 and I had had a band in the late sixties through the seventies, and now I'm my age in the eighties and people are handing me these things called chorus pedals, or people are going, 'Hey, you don't need a tube amp anymore.' And I go, 'You don't? Okay. This sounds great...'" The star told Guitar World magazine that he was putting "more and more and more" melody on each track, reports femalefirst.co.uk. The 43-year-old singer also said that every track was hard work as he tried to install as many "layers" as possible on the album. He said, "It took forever to work on these songs. It was like, here's the three-and-a-half minutes - how do you inject it with as many moments and layers as possible? How can you just keep jampacking it with payoffs?"



NYC HOMECOMING CONCERT CUT SHORT BY HURRICANE HENRI

Washington DC | Agencies

The NYC Homecoming concert had to be cut short due to Hurricane Henri on Saturday at the Great Lawn, Central Park in New York. The five-hour musical event with megastars was concluded within two-and-a-half hours due to lightning and thunderstorms. As Barry Manilow was performing 'Can't Smile Without You', lightning brought the concert to a halt. A severe thunderstorm brought on by Hurricane Henri was approaching, and everyone needed to seek shelter elsewhere. The concert's first performance was by New York Philharmonic followed by Philharmonic, Jennifer Hudson, Carlos Santana, LL Cool J, and Earth, Wind and Fire, among others. Many of the headliners, including Bruce Springsteen, Paul Simon, Patti Smith, Elvis Costello, and Maluma, had yet to perform when the concert was stopped halfway through. Thousands of attendees vacated Central Park after New York Mayor Bill de Blasio announced that the concert has been called off.

CHADWICK BOSEMAN HONoured BY WIFE WITH EMOTIONAL PERFORMANCE

Los Angeles | Agencies

Late actor Chadwick Boseman was honoured by his wife Simone Leeward and "Black-ish" actor Anthony Anderson during the Stand Up to Cancer fundraising telethon event. Intended to celebrate thirteen years of cancer research, the event, which

included performances and

was held on Saturday,

appearances from renowned names in Hollywood such as Chris Evans, Paul Rudd, Bradley Cooper, Cecily Strong, Jennifer Garner, Ed Helms and Tony Hale, reports hollywoodreporter.com.

"Many of us were devastated to learn of Chadwick Boseman's tragic passing after he privately grappled with cancer for several years," Anderson said during the show.

"The world lost an incredible artist and a true hero. But before he was a public figure, he was a person like you or me, a son, a brother, uncle, cousin, friend, colleague, husband. Many of us are all too familiar with the fracture a dearly loved one's passing leaves in the lives of those who love them."

He introduced Boseman's wife Simone, who performed "I'll Be Seeing You", a song about living with the reality of loss.

Boseman passed away last year in August due to colon cancer. He was 43.

CHRISTINA AGUILERA TO HEADLINE QUEER MUSIC FEST

New York | Agencies

Pop singer Christina Aguilera is all set to headline the queer music festival LadyLand. The festival will take place in New York at the Brooklyn Mirage and Kings Hall on September 11. The 'Genie in a Bottle' singer has been a consistent supporter of the LGBTQIA+ community. In 2019, she received the HRC Ally for Equality Award from the Human Rights Campaign for advancing the cause of LGBTQIA+ equality and honoured at the 2003 GLAAD Media Awards for her signature song 'Beautiful', which depicts a gay couple and transgender people.

LadyLand Festival was started in 2018 by Ladyfag, a New York City-based performer and events producer.

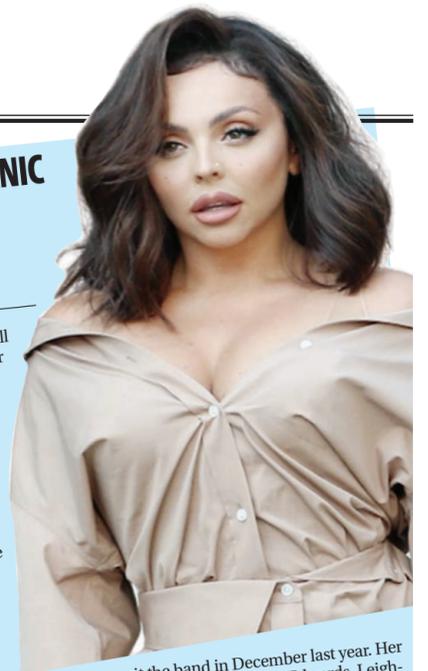
Chairlift co-founder and Grammy-nominated producer Caroline Polachek is also set to perform at the queer fest, along with 'Move Ya Body' singer Nina Sky, DJ Aquaria, La GoonaChonga, and many more.

JESY NELSON: HAD PANIC ATTACKS BEFORE QUITTING LITTLE MIX

London | Agencies

British singer Jesy Nelson, who is all set to start her solo singing career with the launch of her single 'Boyz', said on Saturday that she had multiple panic attacks which led to her decision to quit the girl band Little Mix. The band has just celebrated its tenth anniversary.

The singer said that she was in a happy place and eating whatever she wanted during the lockdown. Matters, however, took a turn for the worse when she got to know in October 2020 that she would have to shoot the music video of their track 'Sweet Melody' within two weeks. Jesy decided to



quit the band in December last year. Her fellow band members Perrie Edwards, Leigh-Anne Pinnoch and Jade Thirlwall supported her decision. "After the video I just got back in a really dark place and ended up back in hospital," she said. "That was when my mum said, 'No more'."



ABSOLUTE PIC OF THE DAY



Ariana Grande



WORLD ATHLETICS U20

SHAILI WINS SILVER IN LONG JUMP

Nairobi | Agencies

India's Shaili Singh improved on her personal best of 6.48 metres with a superb effort of 6.59 in the women's long jump final but lost out on the gold medal by an agonizing one centimetre on the final day of competitions at the World Athletics U20 Championships in Nairobi, Kenya, on Sunday.

The 17-year-old Shaili, coached by former jumper Bobby George and his wife Anju Bobby George, had to be satisfied with the silver medal despite a brilliant performance in Nairobi during which she



improved on her personal best twice, once to qualify for the final (6.48) and then in the final -- 6.59 metres.

Shaili had taken the lead with a leap of 6.59m on her third jump but Sweden's Maja Ask cleared 6.60 on her fourth jump and took the gold medal as Shaili fouled her next two attempts and could manage only 6.37 metres in the sixth and final jump. Maja had also won the women's triple jump gold earlier in the championships.

Shaili had started off with an identical 6.34 in her first two jumps but came up with the big leap in the next attempt to jump into the lead.

Saili's silver medal is the third medal for India in the World Athletics U20 Championships 2021 adding to the silver won by Amit Khatri and the bronze by the 4x400 Mixed Relay team.

Amit Khatri and the bronze by the 4x400 Mixed Relay team.



Highly-rated American amateur golfer Aman Gupta decides to play for India

Dubai: American Aman Gupta, one of the brightest talents in US collegiate golf system who is currently ranked 72nd in the World Amateur Golf Ranking (WAGR), has decided to pursue his career while playing under the Indian flag.

The 22-year-old Gupta is part of the first team at Oklahoma State University, one of the most successful teams in the history of US college golf and boasting of such alumni as Rickie Fowler, Victor Hovland, Matthew Wolff and Peter Uihlein.

Born in Easley in South Carolina, Gupta is an American, but also holds an Overseas Citizenship of India (OCI) card, which gave him an opportunity to play for India. His father, Kapil, hails from Amritsar and his mother Aradhana is from Mumbai.

A semi-finalist at the 2020 US Amateur Championship, Gupta is currently in the final year at OSU and plans to turn professional towards the middle of next year.

BHAVINA, SONALBEN AIMING FOR TT MEDALS AT TOKYO PARALYMPICS

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Bhavina Patel and Sonalben Patel, both from Gujarat, will be aiming to put their best foot forward when the Paralympic Games competitions begin in Tokyo on August 25. The duo is participating in the women's table tennis wheelchair Class 4 category and women's singles wheelchair Class 3 categories respectively. They will then pair for the women's doubles event. Bhavina and Sonalben start their qualification rounds in Tokyo on the opening day. The qualifying rounds are scheduled for August 25, 26 and 27, while the semifinal and the final are scheduled for August 28 and 29 respectively. The duo has been training under coach Lalan Doshi at the Blind People's Association in Ahmedabad. While Bhavina is ranked eighth in the world in her category, Sonalben is ranked 19th. Both have been recipients of the Sardar Patel Award and the Eklavya Awards and have been medalists at the Asian Games. They are a part of the Target Olympic Podium Scheme (TOPS) core group and have received key interventions from the government in terms of participation in international competitions.

Bhavina has also received financial assistance towards procuring TT tables, robot and TT wheelchair for personal training, assistance towards physiotherapy, psychologist and coaching fees to prepare for the Paralympic Games.



In para powerlifting, India is sending two of the best in Jai Deep and Sakina Khatun. While Sakina, born in West Bengal, has been training at the SAI National Centre of Excellence in Bangalore, Haryana-based Jai Deep has been training at the Rajiv Gandhi Stadium in Rohtak. Both are part of the TOPS core team. Sakina, who will participate in the women's up to 50kg category, is the only Indian woman paralympian to ever clinch a Commonwealth Games medal when she won in 2014 in Glasgow. She is also a Para Asian Games 2018 silver medalist. Sakina's impairment is a result of the effects of contracting polio as a baby. Post her matriculation, she started powerlifting training in 2010 and is coached by Farman Basha. Jai Deep, who is participating in the men's up to 65kg category, is an assistant coach in the Sports Authority of India. Both have received key government interventions in terms of participation in over three international competitions and participation in national coaching camps with sports science support along with sports kit.

T20 World Cup: Dinesh Karthik names India and West Indies as his finalists

Dubai | Agencies

Indian wicketkeeper-batsman Dinesh Karthik has named India and West Indies as his finalists for the men's T20 World Cup in UAE and Oman in October and November. He also said that after India, West Indies is his second favourite team for the exciting cricket they play.



"I'm not going to go all the way to who is going to win but I'll tell you this, I'd love to see an India vs West Indies Final. My second favourite team after India would definitely be West Indies, only for the flair of cricket that they play," said Karthik in an ICC Digital Show.

The 36-year-old Karthik, who was a member of India winning the inaugural T20 World Cup in 2007, said it will be a close call Rohit Sharma and David Warner for the top runner in the tournament.

When asked about the teams in Group 2 who can enter semi-finals apart from India, Karthik said, "It's going to be a close call for me between Pakistan or New Zealand. I would love to see Pakistan there but I do think New Zealand find ways to always punch above their weight. I think they're a pretty well-rounded team and they have a great leader in Kane Williamson. A lot of the time a leader makes a difference in a World Cup."

From Group B, Karthik identified Bangladesh to have the best chance apart from co-hosts Oman. "Bangladesh definitely has the best chance. They play spin well, they're a solid team. I'm pretty surprised they even have to play this to qualify -- that's how good they are. But if they have brought themselves here they've done something wrong over a period of time somewhere down the line. Bangladesh need to be very careful." Karthik concluded by saying that mystery spinner Varun Chakravarty could emerge to be the best bowler of the tournament. "My choice is a guy called Varun Chakravarty. I feel he's got something really special in him. If India goes all the way, I can promise you this boy that I'm speaking about will have played a major role in them moving forward in this tournament. Remember the name 'Varun Chakravarty'."

The men's T20 World Cup will start on October 17 and finish on November 14 in Oman and UAE. The Super 12 stage of the mega event commences from October 23.

Bishwamitra sails into semis at ASBC Asian Youth & Junior Boxing

Team Absolute | New Delhi

It was a cakewalk for Bishwamitra Chongtham (51kg) at the ASBC Youth & Junior Boxing Championships in Dubai as the 2021 World Youth Championships bronze medalist comfortably won his quarter-final bout and entered the semi-finals alongside three other Indians on the second day of the tournament.

According to the information received here, Bishwamitra, the diminutive boxer from Manipur, was too strong for Kenzhe Muratol of Kazakhstan. He showed swift movement and technical prowess throughout the bout before securing an easy 5-0 win and confirming himself at least a bronze with a place in the semis.



In the middleweight quarter-final, Deepak (75kg), up against Iraq's Dhurgham Karim, dominated the proceedings from the word go. He landed a flurry of punches on his opponent in the

third round and as a result, the referee had to stop the contest.

National champion Abhimanyu Loura (92kg) from Haryana also moved into the semi-finals after defeating

Kyrgyzstan's Tenibekov Sanjar in a one-sided affair.

In the women's section, Preeti (57kg) won her bout and advanced to the semi-finals. She beat Mongolia's Tugsjargal Nomin, claiming victory by RSC verdict in the second round of the match.

On the other hand, Aditya Janghu (86kg) was the lone Indian to suffer defeat on the second day as he lost to 'azakhstan's Temrlan Mukatayev in a quarter-final bout.

On the third day of the tournament, six Indian junior boxers will be seen in action. Krish Pal (46kg), Ashish (54kg), Anshul (57kg), Preet Malik (63kg), Bharat Joon (81+kg) will play their respective quarter-finals while Gaurav Saini (70kg) will fight in the semi-finals.

Thompson-Herah runs second fastest-ever women's 100m

Eugene (USA) | Agencies

Two-time Olympic 100m champion Elaine Thompson-Herah of Jamaica ran a stupendous 100m race, clocking 10.54 seconds at the Wanda Diamond League meeting in Eugene, Oregon. That was the second fastest time ever in the history of 100m racing -- just short of the 10.49 clocked by American Florence Griffith-Joyner in 1988.

Elaine, on Saturday night, defeated a field that included the two compatriots who joined her on the Tokyo podium.

Elaine, whose previous best was the 10.61 she set in retaining her 100m title in Tokyo, overhauled the fast-starting Olympic silver medalist Shelly-Ann Fraser-Pryce to bolster the position she already held as the second-fastest ever behind the 1988 10.49 world record belonging to the late Florence



Griffith-Joyner of the United States.

The 34-year-old Shelly-Ann, the Beijing 2008 and London 2012 gold medalist who has run 10.63 this season, was second in 10.73, with fellow Jamaican Shericka

Jackson completing the order of the Tokyo Olympic podium as she clocked 10.76, equalling her personal best.

They were followed by Teahna Daniels, Marie-Josée Ta Lou, Javianne Oliver, Mujinga Kambundji, Briana Williams and Sha'Carri Richardson, according to a report on World Athletics website.

Home sprinter Sha'Carri Richardson, who missed the Olympics after incurring a one-month ban following a positive test for cannabis during the US Trials, failed to make the impact she had hoped for in rejoining the company of the world's best, drifting back to ninth and last place in 11.14 on the Hayward Field track where she ran a wind-assisted 10.64 at the trials.

"To come back with a personal best after the Olympics, that is amazing," said Elaine, whose face had lit up when she saw her time.

Unseeded Teichmann sets up Cincinnati title clash with world No. 1 Barty

Cincinnati | Agencies

IlTeichmann of Switzerland booked a spot in the biggest WTA singles final of her career by dispatching No. 5 seed Karolina Pliskova of the Czech Republic, 6-2, 6-4, and setting up a title clash with world No.1 Ashleigh Barty of Australia at the Western & Southern Open.

A wildcard into the event ranked, world No.76, 24-year-old Teichmann took just an hour and 22 minutes to upset world No.4 Pliskova in hot and humid conditions on Saturday evening in Ohio.

Teichmann is now 4-0 against top-10 players this season. The victory over 2016 Cincinnati champion Pliskova was Teichmann's second top-5 win of the week, and her third win in a row over a Top 20 player.

World No.1 and reigning Wimbledon champion Ashleigh Barty defeated Germany's Angelique Kerber 6-2, 7-5 in one hour and 14



minutes to book her place in the final. Teichmann had stunned world No.2 Naomi Osaka in the round of 16 for her biggest career win by ranking. She then notched a quarterfinal victory over 12th-ranked Belinda Bencic,

her countrywoman and the reigning Olympic champion. "I think I served really good, as did she (Pliskova)," Teichmann told wtatennis.com, after her win. "Especially in the beginning, I was trying to return, some-

how get into the rally. I felt as well very good in the rally, and I think that's where I made the difference." The victory moves Barty into her 19th career final, ninth at WTA 1000 level or higher, and a Tour-leading sixth of 2021.

Zverev overcomes Tsitsipas to set up title clash with Rublev

Cincinnati | Agencies

Germany's Alexander Zverev produced a superb comeback against Stefanos Tsitsipas of Greece to extend his winning streak to 10 matches and charge into the final of the Western & Southern Open here on Sunday (IST).

Feeling unwell and down a double break at 1-4 in the third set, the German clawed back to claim a 6-4, 3-6, 7-6(4) win and set up a title clash with world No. 7, Russia's Andrey Rublev, who recorded his first victory over countryman Daniil Medvedev in his fifth attempt to reach his second ATP Masters 1000 final. Rublev won 2-6, 6-3, 6-3.

Zverev, the Tokyo Olympics champion played exceptional tennis in the first set, dropped his level significantly in the second set before finding his gritty final act. Having been deserted by his serve throughout the middle of the match, Zverev slammed three aces to take a 6-5 lead in the decider and then controlled the tie-break by going five for five on first serves, sealing the victory with a second mini-break.



"After the first break [to get to 2-4] I thought I had a chance and I felt he (Tsitsipas) wasn't serving bombs and that I was in the rallies," Zverev told atptour.com. "It was a little bit of the mentality that I had against Novak at the Olympics.

Tsitsipas, who also reached the semifinals last week in Toronto, now heads to the US Open with a Tour-leading 48 match wins on the season.

Russia's Andrey Rublev said after recording his first victory over countryman Daniil Medvedev in his fifth attempt that it had given him a lot of "confidence".

"It gives me more confidence that I can compete against him. There are still so many things to improve, but it's like you pass university and they give you a diploma," Rublev said of getting his first win against the world No.2.

The fourth seed, who fell to Medvedev at the Australian Open in February, had not defeated the 12-time tour-level titlist in their previous four encounters. However, Rublev rallied in Ohio hitting powerful forehands to defeat Medvedev in two hours and 22 minutes and improve to 1-4 in their ATP head-to-head.

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BIG B ON THE HOTSEAT IN 'KBC' SEASON 13 OPENER

2020 Olympics gold medal-winning javelin thrower, was only three.

The Big B will be seen sharing insights from his initial days with KBC. Basu, he says, surprised him by having the smallest details of the show on top of his mind. He'll also recall how the producers took him to the sets of 'Who Wants to be a Millionaire' so that he could see how the original show was executed and recorded.

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Amitabh Bachchan will be on the hotseat fielding questions from the producer of 'Kaun Banega Crorepati' (KBC) and erstwhile host of such popular shows as 'Quiz Time' and 'Mastermind India', Siddhartha Basu.

The former quizmaster will ask the Big B six questions about the show in the rapid-fire round, which will be aired during the KBC Season 13 opener on August 23. The Big B, we are told, will be seen responding to the questions with a lot of zest and enthusiasm. And of course, he will ace the round, and he does it with a lot of grace.

Bachchan, we are told, will share how the popular knowledge show has had a glorious journey over the past 21 years (it was first aired on STAR Plus in 2000). He'll share how 'KBC' started when the Indian cricket team's current skipper Virat Kohli was just 12 years old and Neeraj Chopra, the Tokyo

TAMANNAAH BHATIA: STARDOM NOT THE REASON TO PURSUE ACTING

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actress Tamannaah Bhatia started her career in acting at the tender age of 15. However, she says stardom was not the reason she got into the world of glitz and glamour.

As of today, the 31-year-old actress is one of the most prominent names down south as she has worked in blockbusters such as the 'Baahubali' franchise, 'Anbanavan Asaradhavan Adangadhavanace', 'K.G.F: Chapter 1' and 'SyeRaa Narasimha Reddy' among many others. Tamannaah in a chat said, "When I started working at 15, honestly stardom was really not the reason I got into movies. I just wanted to be in front of the camera and whatever would bring me that I would have chosen that path."

The actress has a whopping fan following of 14.3 million on Instagram and 5.1 million on Twitter.

She feels fortunate to see such a high courtesy her hard work.

DINO MOREA LIKENS 'THE EMPIRE' CHARACTER TO A BLACK PANTHER

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Dino Morea will be seen in a negative light for the first time in 'The Empire'. The actor, who referred to the black panther's mannerisms for his character Shaibani Khan, says playing an antagonist has no limitations and that he has the potential to be fantastic.

Talking about his character, Dino in an exclusive chat shared that since there was not much to refer for his character Shaibani Khan, he chose to watch videos of black panthers.

"I compared my character with a certain animal. We made Shaibani Khan like a black panther. Initially we thought he would be a lion but we settled with a black panther. So, prep was for watching a lot of videos about black panthers," Dino said.

He added, "The way it moves, agility, cunningness and I always had this in the back of my head that whenever he (Shaybani Khan) walked or spoke there was a certain growl and madness which I tried to keep as much as possible. I truly hope people love my efforts."

Directed by Mitakshara Kumar, the series is a fictional saga of a warrior-turned-king based on books by Alex Rutherford.

Salman Khan's 'Tiger 3' look leaked, goes viral

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Salman Khan is shooting in Russia for his upcoming film 'Tiger 3'. The superstar's look from the spy thriller has been leaked and has caused social media to go into a tizzy. A fanpage on Instagram which goes by the name 'salmanic_aryan' has shared a few stills from the film, featuring the 'Dabangg' star, who is unrecognisable in his get up. According to the fanpage, the pictures are from a car chase sequence that is being shot in the country.

The 55-year-old superstar is seen sporting long reddish brown hair and a beard. He is wearing a white T-shirt, jeans, a red jacket and a headband for the look.

Another set of pictures showed Salman posing with some fans. The third instalment, which is directed by Maneesh Sharma, also stars Katrina Kaif. 'Tiger 3' was put on hold due to the global outbreak of Covid-19. 'Tiger 3' is the third part of the spy thriller franchise. The first instalment 'Ek Tha Tiger' directed by Kabir Khan released in 2012. The second 'Tiger Zinda Hai' released in 2017 and was directed by Ali Abbas Zafar.



CAN'T FAKE LAUGHTER IF SOMETHING ISN'T FUNNY: FARAH KHAN

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Choreographer and filmmaker Farah Khan, who appears as the 'Laughing Buddha' on the television programme 'Zee Comedy Show', says it is not very easy to make her laugh.

"My sense of humour is slightly elevated, so rubbish does not make me laugh. Also, I don't like jokes. I like a little madness, playing a certain character and a little bit of physical humour. I enjoy all that. If something is not funny, I will not fake laugh," said Farah. Opening up on her role as the 'Laughing Buddha', Farah shared, "They've made me the judge, but I'm not really judging it. I'm just enjoying what they are doing. They win the competition depending on how many times a team makes me laugh." Farah has also been personally benefitted from her association with the show as it has taken away all her stress. She said, "People need to laugh. We all need to laugh. After sitting on that chair, I feel all my stress is gone. People need a good dose of laughter, especially after the second wave (of Covid-19), which was very depressing. Every day we were only getting bad news, be it from our neighbours, friends, relatives or someone in Bollywood."



Pankaj Tripathi hails Ladakh's first moving theatre

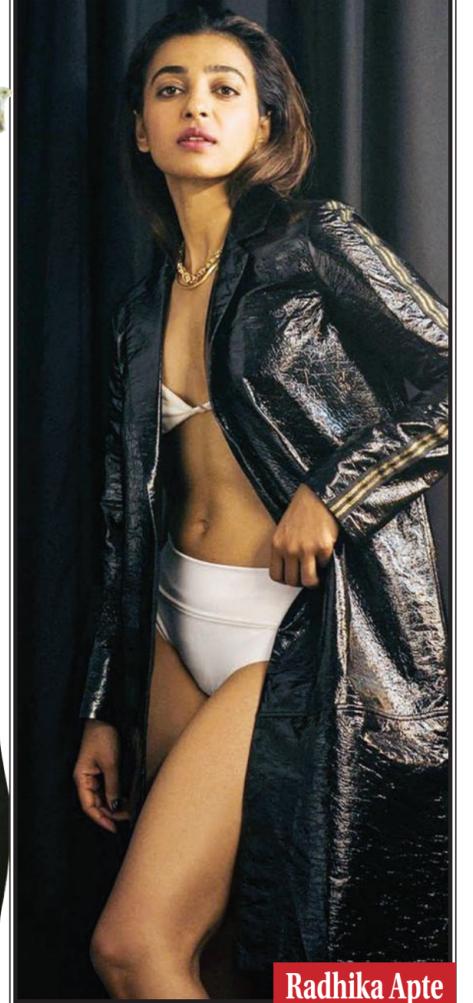
Team Absolute | Leh

Actor Pankaj Tripathi has shared his thoughts on installing an inflatable theatre in Leh (Ladakh) by PicturtimeDigiplay, a mobile digital movie theatre company. He says, "What a beautiful initiative. Cinema reaches people in the interiors of this country. For someone like me who belongs to the film world, this comes across as such a unique and different means of film exhibition - 'A Moving theatre'. Having a concept like this in a gorgeous location such as Leh, is absolutely incredible." Installed at a height of 11,562 feet, this theatre becomes the first ever moving cinema theatre in the Union Territory of Ladakh. On Sunday the inflatable theatre was installed at the

NSD Grounds at Leh. While The Chief Guest for the event was Thupstan Chewang, President, Ladakh Buddhist Association, actor Pankaj Tripathi was the Guest of Honour. A short film called 'Sekool' (a film about the Changpa Nomads of Ladakh) directed by Stenzin Tankong was screened at the launch of the theatre that received a roaring response. The director and cast of the film were present too. A special screening of the recently released film 'Bell Bottom' shall also be held later in the evening for the Army and CISF.



INSTAGRAM PIC OF THE DAY



Radhika Apte