

absolute india

VOL. 6, ISSUE 285, BHOPAL | FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 3, 2021 | ₹5 | PAGE 08

PUBLISHED SIMULTANEOUSLY FROM BHOPAL, MUMBAI AND NEW DELHI

NATION > 02

Digvijaya to head committee on agitations, Priyanka made...



HOLLYWOOD > 06

Britney Spears cleared of misdemeanour charge...



SPORTS > 07

Fourth Test: India strike back after being dismissed for 191...



Supreme Court concerned over fake & communal news

IT'S BAD FOR COUNTRY

The Supreme Court on Thursday expressed deep concern over web portals, and YouTube channels publishing fake news, slandering reputations in the absence of a regulatory mechanism, and also broadcast of communal news by a section of media. The top court emphasized if this were to continue unchecked then it may get a bad name for the country.

THE TOP COURT MADE THESE SHARP OBSERVATIONS DURING THE HEARING OF JAMIAT ULAMA-I-HIND PETITION SEEKING ACTION AGAINST MEDIA REPORTS ACCUSED OF "COMMUNAL BRANDING OF COVID" LINKED TO THE TABLIGHI JAMAAT GATHERING AT MARKAZ NIZAMUDDIN IN THE NATIONAL CAPITAL.



Team Absolute | New Delhi

A bench headed by Chief Justice N.V. Ramana also comprising Justices Surya Kant and A.S. Bopanna observed that the content shown in a section of private media bears a communal tone. Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, submitted before the bench that Centre has come out with new Information and Technology rules, which address concerns flagged by the top court. He added that many petitions have been filed challenging the new rules in various high courts.

Mehta contended that the Centre has filed a plea to transfer all these petitions to the Supreme Court. Mehta added: "Not only communal but also planted stories. These portals can even put fake news".

The Chief Justice added that the social media platforms do not

respond if an issue is raised in connection with the content.

"I have not come across any public channel, Twitter, Facebook or

YouTube ... they never respond to us and there is no accountability, about the institutions they have written badly about, and they don't respond and say this is their right," said the Chief Justice. He further added this is the condition of institutions and forget the individuals. Mehta replied, "This is what is taken care of under the IT rules".

Chief justice added, "Do not know who to approach...they are only concerned with the people who are powerful... judges, common man, they are not bothered." He added, "This is what we have seen".

Mehta submitted before the bench requesting it to transfer the plea before it which deals with the IT rules. "Your lordship can have a holistic picture as it is an all-India issue", he added.

"On web portals, there is no control of anybody, they can publish anything...if you go to YouTube, you will find how fake news is freely circulated and anyone can start a channel on YouTube. The problem is that everything in this country is shown with a communal angle by a section of the media. Ultimately, this country is going to get a bad name. Have you made an attempt for a self-regulatory mechanism (for these private channels)?"

Pregnant women must take both doses of vaccine: govt



Team Absolute | New Delhi

Pregnant women should take the both doses of the Covid vaccine, NITI Aayog's Member, Health, Dr V.K. Paul said on Thursday.

Pregnant women should come forward for vaccination otherwise they would have complications if they catch infection during that period, he said at a Health Ministry press briefing on the current Covid situation.

Noting that the festive season is approaching, he said that Covid appropriate behaviour is must for all as second wave is not over yet. "Celebrate festivals at home and avoid going outside. Mask is going for all even after both doses," he stressed. According to officials, 16 per cent of the total adult population of the country has been fully vaccinated, while 54 per cent of them have received at least one shot.

India's fresh Covid cases near 50K, biggest surge in a month

New Delhi: India reported 47,029 new coronavirus cases and 509 deaths in the last 24 hours. With this the country's overall caseload rose to 3.28 crore (3,28,57,937) and the death toll increased to 4.39 lakh (4,39,529). The total number of active cases presently stands at 3.89 lakh (3,89,583). Kerala contributed 32,803 cases or nearly 70 per cent of new cases and a third of deaths. Meanwhile, India's cumulative Covid-19 vaccination coverage has crossed 66 crore mark. Over 81 lakh doses of vaccines were administered in the last 24 hours. India's recovery rate currently stands at 97.48 per cent. The total active case accounts for 1.19 per cent of the total caseload.

Biological E gets DCGI nod to conduct phase 2/3 trials on children

New Delhi: The Drug Controller General of India (DCGI) has granted permission to Hyderabad-based Biological E Limited to conduct Phase 2 and 3 clinical trials for its anti-Covid shots called Corbevax on children. The trial will be on children between 5 and 18 years of age with certain conditions. The permission was given on Wednesday after the recommendation from the Subject Expert Committee. The trial will be conducted in ten locations across the country. The government has made an advance payment of Rs 1,500 crore to Biological E for the 30 crore vaccines.

High alert as mystery boat hits rocks off Palghar coast

Palghar (Maharashtra): Police and coastal security were on alert after an unidentified mini-barge hit the rocks off the coast near Bhuigaon village in Maharashtra's Palghar district, officials said on Thursday.

The boat is stranded on a rocky stretch around 4 kms off the coast and no identification name or flag is visible, sparking suspicions among the Palghar police and the Indian Coast Guard. Deputy Commissioner of Police, Mira Bhayander-Vasai Virar, Sanjeev Kumar Patil said: "We are keeping a close watch on the vessel and investigating further, though it's practically impossible to approach it." The police conducted a drone survey and alerted the Coast Guard which is understood to have carried out an aerial survey, but could not identify the vessel. Now, the Maharashtra Maritime Board (MMB) has been approached to help out in ascertaining the vessel's antecedents.

From a distance through binoculars, two persons are seen on the mini-barge, but police declined to confirm their presence or whether they are engaged in any suspicious activity. Some local fisherfolk first noticed the vessel late this morning and informed the local police as it was drifting without any visible crew on board, and now further operations will be taken up on Friday morning.

Al-Qaeda joins Taliban in attack on Panjshir valley

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Al-Qaeda has joined the Taliban in the group's offensive in the Panjshir valley, Ahmad Massoud's forces say, Al Arabiya reported.

Earlier reports on Wednesday had said that fighting is ongoing between Taliban fighters and the forces of a resistance front led by Ahmad Massoud in Panjshir province.

The Taliban confirmed that the fighting has been ongoing for two days and both sides have suffered casualties, Tolo News reported.



Residents at the front lines in the Nasaji-Gulbahar area, which is just outside of Panjshir valley, said on Wednesday that the fighting

resumed on Tuesday night and is still ongoing. According to locals, most of the people have fled the area, the report said.

Saudi Crown Prince had role in Kabul airport attack!

New Delhi: A Saudi opponent has spoken of the alleged role of Crown Prince Mohammad Bin Salman in supporting the ISIL elements during the August 26 Kabul airport attack, Iran's Mehr News reported. According to the opponent, sources close to the Saudi government in Bin Salman's offices and ministries have confirmed the Saudi Crown Prince's support for the ISIL terrorist group in the Kabul airport bombing, the report said.

As he described, Bin Salman sought to show that the Taliban are incapable of ensuring Afghan people's security and prove that under the Taliban, Afghanistan will be a hub of terrorism, the report said.

'BIG BOSS 13' WINNER SIDHARTH SHUKLA DIES AT 40

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Big Boss 13' winner Sidharth Shukla, best known for his role in the long-running TV serial 'Balika Vadhu', died here after a massive heart attack on Thursday. The 40-year-old actor was found unconscious by his mother on Thursday and was rushed to Cooper Hospital and declared dead on arrival. A Cooper Hospital spokesperson said here that the actor was "brought dead" in the morning.



Shukla was known for being fit and had even won the reality show, 'Fear Factor: Khatron Ke Khiladi 7'. He also hosted 'Savdhaan India' and 'India's Got Talent'.

The actor's body was examined externally in the casualty ward with no injury no foul play has been suspected in the death of the actor. The post-mortem was conducted on the actor but the preliminary report and his mortal remains will be handed over to the family only on Friday morning.

The entire procedure was video graphed and a team of five doctors and police officials were present during the post-mortem. A source said, "it is a sensitive case and the Sushant Singh Rajput case the doctors and police are double-checking everything and have also not spoken to the media on the case."

Although the family has ruled out foul play, the police and the doctors examining the actor's case said, "will only comment after the post mortem report is out."

Positive response: India on meeting with Taliban

Team Absolute | New Delhi

India on Thursday said its immediate focus relating to Afghanistan is to ensure that Afghan soil is not used for terrorist activities against it, two days after the Indian envoy to Qatar held talks with a top Taliban leader in Doha and conveyed similar concerns. To a volley of questions at a media briefing on whether India was ready to recognise a Taliban regime in the backdrop of the Doha meeting, spokesperson in the ministry of external affairs Arindam Bagchi said it is too early to talk about it. "Let's treat the Doha meeting for what it is. It was just a meeting. I think these are very early days," he said. "We used the opportunity to convey our concerns whether it is in getting people out (from Afghanistan) or on the issue of terrorism. We received a positive response," he said. Asked about India's engage-



ment with the Taliban and whether it is not a terrorist organisation, Bagchi said: "That's not our focus. Our focus is that Afghan soil should not be used for terrorist activities of any kind." On Tuesday, the MEA said Indian envoy to Qatar Deepak Mittal met Sher Mohammad Abbas Stanekzai, the head of the Taliban's Political Office in Doha, at the request of the group. In the meeting, Mittal conveyed to Stanekzai that Afghanistan's soil should not be used for anti-Indian activities and terrorism. It was the first publicly acknowledged formal diplomatic engagement that came two weeks after the Taliban seized control of Afghanistan.

UK announces \$1.2 billion for green projects in India

Team Absolute | New Delhi

A \$1.2 billion package of public and private investment in green projects and renewable energy are among the new steps to tackle climate change and boost investment announced by UK Chancellor of Exchequer Rishi Sunak and Indian Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Thursday.

Apart from the package, Sunak and Sitharaman announced the joint launch of the Climate Finance Leadership Initiative (CFLI) India partnership to mobilise private capital into sustainable infrastructure in India. The announcements were made at the 11th Economic and Financial Dialogue (EFD) between the UK and India, a release from the British High Commission said. These investments will support India's target of 450GW renewable energy by 2030. Sunak and Sitharaman also agreed to be ambi-



tious when considering services in the upcoming UK-India trade negotiations, which could open up new opportunities for UK financial firms and help more Indian companies to



access finance in the city of London. Services account for 71 per cent of the UK's GDP, and 54 per cent of India's GDP, the release said. The UK also welcomed India's

recent decision to lift the Foreign Direct Investment cap in the insurance sector from 49 per cent to 74 per cent, which will help British firms to take greater ownership of their operations in India, the release added.

"The UK-India economic relationship is already strong with bilateral trade of over 18 bn pounds in 2020, supporting nearly half-a-million jobs in each other's economies. Earlier this year, the UK and Indian Prime Ministers launched the 'UK-India 2030 Roadmap', to bring the economies and people closer together over the next decade and boost cooperation in areas that matter to both countries. The countries have also set out an ambitious goal to double the trade by 2030, including through negotiating a Free Trade Agreement," the release said.

Heavy rains lead to traffic snarls in several parts of Delhi

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Heavy rains continued to lash several parts of the capital city and adjoining areas for the second day in a row on Thursday.

The heavy rainfall led to waterlogging on several roads, including Pragati Maidan area, Minto Road, the roads near the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) and ITO. The rainfall led to heavy traffic jam on Vikas Marg to ITO and further to India Gate and Dhaula Kuan.

Delhi on Wednesday recorded 112.1 mm rainfall in a span of 24 hours, the highest single-day precipitation in September in 19 years, that inundated several areas, including the Chanakyaपुरi



diplomatic enclave, ITO, and Cannaught Place area that disrupted the road traffic. The traffic movement has been closed at Azad market underpass (both carriageways) due to waterlogging, said Delhi Traffic Police in its

advisory. Delhi Police warned traffic was affected from Jahangirpuri metro station to Mukarba Chowk (both carriageways) and from Nangloi to Mundka due to waterlogging.



NGT can't exercise suo moto power, Centre tells SC

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Centre on Thursday submitted before the Supreme Court that National Green Tribunal (NGT) does not have the power to take cognisance of a matter on its own.

Additional Solicitor General Aishwarya Bhati, appearing for the Environment, Forest and Climate Change Minister, submitted before a bench headed by Justice A.M. Khanwilkar and comprising Justices Hrishikesh Roy and C.T. Ravikumar that: "It is our respectful submission that the suo motu power is not there.."

She added it is not there in the statute. The top court is examining the issue whether the NGT has the power to take suo motu cognisance of



a matter. Bhati contended that tribunal's powers cannot be bound by procedural constraints. "This is a peculiar tribunal dealing with environmental matters. Often, environment ends up being nobody's baby."

As the bench queried her that if tribunal were to receive an information in connection with environment, will it not be duty bound to initiate process, the ASG contended that once a letter or communication is

received by the tribunal, it is within its power to take cognisance of that. She said the ministry has filed a one-page affidavit, citing that suo motu power is not there in the statute, and can't be exercised by the tribunal. The arguments in the matter will continue on September 7.

On Wednesday, the top court had observed that violation of environmental and forest laws are not disputes between two parties only as it affects the common public.

Row as historic K'taka temple bans vehicle parking for non-Hindus

The management of historical 12th-century Mahalingeshwara temple in Puttur taluk of Karnataka's communally-sensitive Dakshina Kannada district has banned vehicle parking by non-Hindus, stirring up a controversy.

Team Absolute | Dakshina Kannada

Those not belonging to the Hindu religion are not allowed to park their vehicles in the Devamaru Gadde area which lies in front of the temple, as per a signboard set up by the management. It warns that legal action will be taken against those who violate the guidelines. Mahalingeshwara temple comes under the state Hindu



Religious and Charitable Endowments Department. As the step by the temple authorities was termed a sign of intolerance, temple management President Maliya Keshava Prasad sought to clarify that if people from other religions parked their vehicles in the land belonging to the temple, "it caused trouble for Hindu devotees



who visited the temple". "Many devotees have complained about it. The signboard has been installed for the convenience of Hindu devotees. It is also a precautionary measure to avoid untoward incidents. The Bajarang Dal, and Hindu Jagaran Vedike activists have filed complaints. We have also received individual complaints," he

said. "They (non-Hindus) used to over-speed in the Chariot lane near the temple. People used to sit in the parked cars causing inconvenience to Hindu devotees. We are planning to erect a wall around the temple to avoid the problem," he claimed.

Dakshina Kannada's Superintendent of Police, Sonawane Rishikesh, said that the temple comes under the Religious and Charitable Endowments Department and they will initiate action according to procedure.

The police is not aware of the development and has not initiated any action, he said.

"So far, the Police Department has received no complaint in this regard. We will definitely look into it and inquire if it is required," he added.

Meanwhile, sources said that the district administration has issued a notice to the temple management in this regard and is inquiring into the matter.

PAKISTANI INTRUDER ARRESTED IN PUNJAB, 2 KG HEROIN SEIZED

Chandigarh:

The Border Security Force (BSF) on Thursday foiled an infiltration bid by narcotic smugglers, and apprehended a Pakistani intruder, injured in its warning shots.



The other two, however, managed to flee in the bid along the border in Punjab's Ferozepur district. The BSF jawans belonging to 136 Battalion posted near the Satpal border post observed three Pakistanis trying to sneak into the Indian territory at around 2.30 am.

They first challenged the intruders and later fired at them, resulting one of the intruders getting injured. His two accomplices managed to escape.

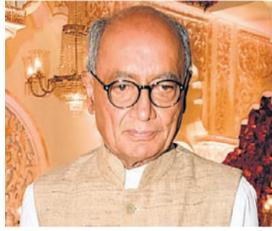
Later, both returned to search for their companion. Seeing them coming, the BSF again fired at them, forcing them to flee.

Digvijaya to head committee on agitations, Priyanka made member

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Congress on Thursday constituted a committee to raise national issues and former Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh Digvijaya Singh has been made chairman with Priyanka Gandhi Vadra as one of its members.

A statement from the Congress said, "the committee has been formed to plan sustained agitations on national issues." The other members of the committee are Uttam Kumar Reddy, BK Hariprasad, Manish Chathrath, Ripun Bora, Udit Raj, Ragini Nayak and Zubair Khan. Digvijaya Singh, who has made a comeback has been leading an agitation in his home state and was last seen in Delhi during the protest march led by Rahul Gandhi where he was detained by the police. Many people have commented that Congress needs leaders like him. Singh, who was a powerful General Secretary and has



been in charge of the party in UP, Assam, Andhra Pradesh and many other states, was out of the All India Congress Committee for long.

The Congress has been protesting against the government on various issues. On Thursday also it held a protest in Delhi against the fuel price hike but it has not been able to sustain a nationwide campaign against the Union government in the past seven years, said a party leader.

The party's frontal organizations --

youth and women wings -- on Thursday held protests against the government over inflation and fuel price rise in New Delhi. Mahila Congress workers protested near the Prime Minister's residence at 7, Lok Kalyan Marg. The Youth Congress held a protest outside the Ministry of Petroleum against the rise in the prices of fuel and LPG cylinders.

The Mahila Congress protestors were detained by the police. Amrita Dhawan, president of Delhi Mahila Congress before being detained said, "the home budget has collapsed, the price of every item is skyrocketing and things are going beyond the reach of common man."

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Wednesday had attacked the government on the issue and had said that the only GDP which is growing in the country are the prices of Gas, Diesel, Petrol (GDP) which has hit the common man the hardest.

Andhra HC sentences five IAS officers to imprisonment

Team Absolute | Amaravati

The Andhra Pradesh High Court on Thursday sentenced five IAS officials, including four serving, to imprisonment, ranging from two weeks to one month, and a fine of Rs 1,000 each for not implementing court orders in a land acquisition case.

The court, however, allowed the officials to challenge the order and suspended the same for one month.

The high court took a serious note of the IAS officials disobeying the court order to pay compensation to a woman, whose land in Nellore district was acquired by the government. It directed the compensation amount be deducted from the salaries of the officials concerned.

Retired IAS officer Manmohan Singh and S. S. Rawat were sentenced to imprisonment for one month each. Then Nellore district Collector



Seshagiri Babu, Mutyala Raju, and M. Imtiyaz were sentenced for two weeks each. In June, the court had sentenced two IAS officials to one month imprisonment and a fine of Rs 1,000 each for not implementing court orders on the filling of certain vacancies in the Horticulture Department. The court sentenced Panchayat Raj Commissioner Girija Shankar and Horticulture Commissioner Chiranjeevi Chowdary. The judge, however, withdrew his order after government special counsel gave a commitment to the court that its orders would be implemented in the next two weeks.

Bengal deploys 10 IPS officers to assist SIT probing post-poll violence

Team Absolute | Kolkata

A day after the Calcutta High Court observed that the three-member Special Investigation Team (SIT) formed by the court to investigate lesser crimes that happened after the elections is not functioning according to the instructions, the state government deployed 10 IPS officers to assist the SIT in the probe. The CBI that has formed four teams is already looking into the serious crimes like rape and murder.

The 10 officers include ADG South Bengal Siddh Nath Gupta, ADG Western Range Sanjoy Singh, IGP Bardhaman Range B L Meena, IGP North Bengal D P Singh, DIG, Railways Soma Das Mitra, DIG Malda Range Praveen Kumar



Tripathy, DIG Barasat Range Prasun Bandopadhyay and DC Reserve Force Subhankar Bhattacharya.

Two officers of Kolkata police --

Bahttacharya and Joint CP Nilanjan Biswas -- have been entrusted with the responsibility of looking into the incidents under the jurisdiction of Kolkata police.

The five-judge bench of the High Court on August 19 ordered the constitution of the SIT comprising IPS officers Soumen Mitra, Suman Bala Sahoo and Ranbir Kumar to look into the allegations other than murder and sexual assault. The High Court had said the working of the SIT shall be "overseen by a retired Hon'ble Judge of Hon'ble Supreme Court, for which separate order shall be passed after taking his/her consent".

The Court observed that it was aware that the SIT was not functioning and added that if required steps would be taken. In the order, the Court had directed both the CBI and the SIT to file a status report before it within six weeks.

Man held for killing wife, kids and faking his own death

Team Absolute | Kasganj (UP)

In a bizarre case, the Kasganj police claim to have uncovered a sensational case in which a man, believed to be dead, has been arrested for murdering his wife and children in 2018.

The alleged accused buried their corpses at his home and then faked his own death to get away with the gruesome crime.

According to the police, 34-year-old Rakesh, who worked as a pathologist in 2018 with a private laboratory in Greater Noida, carried out the murders over an affair with a woman who is also part of UP Police.

The accused, three of his family members and the woman have been arrested.

The police said that the accused's family helped him in several stages of the crime.

His father is a retired policeman.

Rohan Pramod Botre, Kasganj police chief, said, "Rakesh's two children were aged 18 months and three years. He killed them and his wife in February 2018 and then buried the bodies in the house, covering the pit with cement. After the murder, he even filed a missing person's report, claiming his wife had taken his kids and left the house without any information."

Botre said a few months after the disappearance of his family, Rakesh's father-in-law went to court and got a police case filed in Noida alleging kidnapping and dowry harassment.

The Noida police were investigating both, the missing person's case and the case filed by the father-in-law, but could not find any major clues in either case.

MADRAS HC ORDERS ONLY NATIVE BREED BULLS TO PARTICIPATE IN JALLIKATTU



Chennai | Agencies

The Madras High Court on Thursday ordered the Tamil Nadu government to ensure that bulls of native breed are allowed to participate in the Jallikattu events and not foreign or hybrid bulls. Hearing a petition for an order to allow only native breed bulls to participate in Jallikattu -- bull taming sport played during Pongal festival -- the court ordered the state government to ensure only bulls of native breed participate in the event.

The court also warned veterinarians of severe action like contempt of court and departmental action if they issue false certificates. Welcoming the court order P. Rajasekhar, President of the Jallikattu Pathukaapu Peravai told IANS: "Nearly 99 per cent of the bulls that participate in Jallikattu are of native breed. There may be one or two foreign or mixed breeds. Such bulls will not be caught by the players and allowed to run away."

Nishad Party wants 70 seats from BJP in UP

Lucknow | Agencies

Nishad Party president Dr Sanjay Nishad wants 70 seats from the BJP in the upcoming Uttar Pradesh Assembly elections.

"The Nishad Party has influence on 160 Assembly seats. I have spoken to the BJP leaders and told them that we would like to contest on 70 seats. In the 2022 elections, the government will be formed by that party which agrees to the demands of the Nishad party," he said.

Nishad further said, "We want coaching centres for children of all castes and religions. There are coaching centres for the Scheduled Castes, but a particular caste has hijacked them."

His other demands include reservation for Nishad community as scheduled castes, the inclusion of Ram-Kevat episode in school books, withdrawal of all cases against members of the Nishad community and land holdings along river banks to



the Nishads.

He also demanded installation of a statue of Nishad Raj in the fort at Shringverpur. It was at this place that Lord Ram crossed the Ganga River on his way to exile along with Sita and Lakshman. Shringverpur is an excursion destination, located about 40 kilometres from Prayagraj.

Nishad also hit out at the Opposition parties -- both the Samajwadi Party and Bahujan Samaj Party -- and accused them of "doing nothing for the Nishad community".

"Some leaders only change the colour of their 'kurta' in every election to get votes of a particular community but this will not happen now," he

said.

Nishad has had three meetings with the BJP leadership in Delhi and is hopeful of his demands being fulfilled.

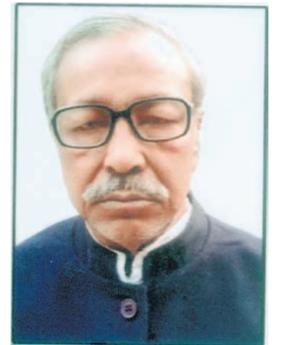
Meanwhile, a senior BJP functionary, when contacted, said that Sanjay Nishad's demand for 70 seats was 'irrational and unacceptable'.

Tripura Assembly Speaker resigns from post

Agartala | Agencies

In a sudden political development, Tripura Assembly Speaker Rebati Mohan Das on Thursday resigned from his post citing "personal reasons", a top official said.

Tripura assembly Secretary Bishnu Pada Karmakar, confirming the unexpected development, told reporter that Das submitted his resignation letter to Deputy Speaker Biswa Bandhu Sen. Das is a former CPI-M leader who joined the BJP in 2016 and was elected to the state assembly in the 2018 polls on a saffron party ticket from the western Tripura's Pratappgarh assembly segment. Bharatiya Janata Party leaders including state President Manik Saha and chief spokesman Subrata Chakraborty refused to comment on the sudden



political development. Amidst open resentment by a section of ruling BJP MLAs and leaders in Tripura, three new faces -- Ram Prasad Paul, Sushanta Chowdhury, Bhagaban Chandra Das -- were on Tuesday inducted into the Tripura cabinet in its first expansion after the BJP-IPFT alliance assumed office in March 2018 after defeating the Left parties in the assembly polls.



FOOD PROCESSING PARK WILL BE SET UP IN BUDHNI SOON - CM CHOUHAN

Units for wooden toys will be started by making clusters, CM dedicates/lays foundation of construction works worth Rs 98 crore, Budhni becomes 100 pc vaccinated development block,

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has said that soon a food processing industry will be set up at Budhni. Simultaneously, cluster based medium enterprises will be started to give recognition to Budhni's wooden toys at the national and international level. Chief Minister Chouhan was addressing the dedication and foundation stone programme organized for cent percent vaccination and various construction works worth more than Rs.98 crore on Thursday at Budhni development block of Sehore district. Congratulating all the citizens of Budhni block, Chief Minister appealed to get the second dose of the vaccine administered on time.

Chief Minister Chouhan said that he would make villages self-dependent by providing strong infrastructure to self-help groups and through cluster based units. Chouhan said that the state government's focus is on quality education, health and welfare of the poor as well as employment. He said that even the children of the village can get excellent education from CM Rise Schools.

Tap water supply in every house

Chief Minister Chouhan said that apart from improving health services and for the treatment of the poor, efforts are being made to provide benefits of schemes like Ayushman card to every needy person. Plan has been made to supply water through taps to every house, so that no Majra-Tola remains deprived. Chief Minister Chouhan said that efforts



are being made to ensure irrigation facility to be made available to 100 percent villages.

Budhni lauded for 100 pc vaccination

Chief Minister Chouhan appreciated the government staff including the citizens of Budhni for 100 percent vaccination. He made the citizens resolve that when their turn comes, they must get the second dose of the vaccine and help in stopping the possible third wave of Corona.

Chouhan honored the citizens and government employees who played an important role in the vaccination work by giving them citations. On the challenges of the first and second wave of Corona, Chief Minister said that everyone must wear masks and remain alert at all times.

Distribution of crop insurance amount of Rs 45 crores started

Chief Minister Chouhan said that funds have been sanc-

tioned for 41 thousand farmers who were deprived of the benefits of crop insurance scheme in the year 2019. The Chief Minister also started disbursement of Rs 45 crore received in the first installment. Chouhan said that our government is a government of farmers. Despite the low rate of moong, the government solved the problem by purchasing moong from the farmers.

Benefits of various schemes distributed to beneficiaries

Chief Minister handed over appointment letters to the dependents of 4 government servants including Shri Amit Yadav, Sushri Manju Chouhan, Shri Pradhan Sukhia and Sushri Manjuri Rai under the Chief Minister's Covid-19 Compassionate Appointment Scheme. Ex-gratia cheques were given to three children Pramila, Bharti and Ganesh under Chief Minister's Covid-19 Child Welfare Scheme. Benefits of Ladli Laxmi Yojana were also distributed to beneficiary girls.

Budhni Hospital will now have 50 beds

District in-charge and Public Health and Family Welfare Minister Dr. Prabhuram Chaudhary said that so far 4 crore 69 lakh persons have been given the first dose of vaccine in the state. On the call of Chief Minister Chouhan, work is on in full swing for the second dose of the vaccine. The Health Minister thanked the Chief Minister for sanctioning an amount of about Rs 15 crores to upgrade the 15 bedded hospital in Budhni to 50 beds.

CHIEF MINISTER CHOUHAN PLANTS KARANJ SAPLING IN SMART GARDEN



Bhopal : Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan along with Jaura MLA Subedar Singh Rajodha and Sarangpur MLA Shri Kunwar Singh Kothar planted a sapling of Karanj in Smart City Garden today. Chief Minister Chouhan plants saplings every day as per his resolve. Karanj plant is considered important in Ayurvedic medicine. Karanj plant is also used for religious purposes.

Tree plantation is necessary for all round development of a person-Prakash Chand

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Life Insurance Corporation of India completed 65 years of its establishment on September 1, 2021, with the help of Indira Gandhi Rashtriya Manav Sangrahalaya, tree plantation was done in the museum premises. On this occasion 75 saplings of Karanj, Sapatparni, Teak, Paras Peepal, Kadam and Neem were planted. All the officers/employees of Life Insurance Corporation of India and Museum enthusiastically participated in this plantation program.

On this occasion Prakash Chand, Regional Manager (Central Zone) said that trees and plants are really essential for the all round development of an



individual. A place where there are no trees, naturally appears sad, whereas a place surrounded by a good number of

trees automatically becomes alive and livable. Trees not only keep us physically healthy but also help in the develop-

ment of our mind.

Director, Dr. Praveen Kumar Mishra told that trees have the power to rejuvenate immediately. Spending time under the tree on the green grass can reduce your stress to a great extent. The sound of birds chirping on tree branches, the rustle of leaves when the wind passes by, and the smell of leaves and flowers on trees - all have a calming effect on our senses and stress. People who live closer to trees and nature are less prone to diseases. On this occasion, SN Satpathy, Regional Manager (Estate and Office Services), Gulshan Kumar Kalra, Chief Engineer (Central Zone), Sumit Kumar Dasgupta, Regional Manager (Corporate Communication) also planted saplings.

CHIEF MINISTER CHOUHAN CONDOLES DEATH OF CHANDAN MITRA

Bhopal : Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has expressed grief over the demise of former Rajya Sabha member and senior journalist Chandan Mitra. Chief Minister Chouhan said that on the basis of his intellectual and in-depth analysis, Mitra created his distinct identity in politics as well as in the media. Chief Minister Chouhan has condoled the death of Mitra. Chief Minister Chouhan has prayed to God to give peace to his soul and give strength to his family members and acquaintances to bear this loss.

Kamal Nath questions to Shivraj government on power cut

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Former Chief Minister and Congress State President Kamal Nath has asked many questions along with accusing the Shivraj government of serving lies regarding the unannounced power cuts in Madhya Pradesh for the past few years. Former Chief Minister Kamal Nath has alleged that the Shivraj government of the state is continuously serving lies about the power crisis in the state, every responsible person is lying by giving different reasons, no one is telling the truth about power crisis and power cut in the state. Nobody is ready to accept.

Former Chief Minister Kamal Nath has asked the

state government about the situation that Shivraj government should tell the total demand of electricity in Madhya Pradesh in today's situation and how much is being supplied and from where. The government should inform that in which area of the state, how many hours are being cut unannounced.

Kamal Nath has asked that the government should tell how much electricity is currently being generated in the thermal power stations of the state and what is their actual generation capacity, what is the reason behind the low generation and what alternative arrangements have been made by the government so far.

Management committees will be formed in 90 thousand schools

School management committees will be formed in all government and grant aided primary, secondary and joint secondary schools of Madhya Pradesh, so that the management of schools can be improved and steps can be taken towards multi-faceted development of children.

Team Absolute | Bhopal

The process of its formation will be completed by September 9. Director of State Education Center Dhanraju S. Reported that under the Right to Education Act, school management committees are constituted for better management of schools and implementation of educational activities. These committees play an important role in the multifaceted development of children with enrollment, regular attendance, quality edu-



cation and infrastructural functions in children's schools. In this regard, instructions have been issued to the collectors of all the

districts for formation of School Management Committee (SMC). The tenure of the committees to be formed

in about 90 thousand primary, secondary and joint secondary schools in the state is fixed for the next two academic sessions. The 18 members of the school management committees are the guardians of the children studying in the school, the head teacher of the school, the senior female teacher and the Punch-councilor of the local ward and a female Punch-councilor of the other ward nominated by the Sarpanch-Chairman-Mayor of the local body. Elected people's representatives are also involved. The chairman and vice-chairman of these committees are selected from among the parents of the students. While the head teacher of the school is the member secretary of the committee. The powers of local management of the school have also been delegated to these committees by the government.

Dhanraju has appealed to the parents of the students studying in government and grant aided schools by the school education department to reach the school on September 9, join the school management committee and participate in the development works of the schools.

Chief Minister Shri Chouhan listens to everyone with compassion

Chief Minister interacts with citizens and organisations in Budhni



Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan talked frankly with the general public and representatives of various organisations who came to meet him during his stay in Budhni on Thursday. During the hours, the Chief Minister did not disappoint anyone.

The Chief Minister first interacted with the artisans making wooden toys. After listening carefully to the concerns of all the artisans, he also resolved them. The Chief Minister directed the Collector to abolish the fees charged by the Forest Department on wood, form a committee of artisans, give training to the youths and solve the problems related to electricity bills. After talking to the organisation of small vendors, he instructed the collector to open the Bhopal-Nagpur road so that they can do business as before. Apart from bar association, Budhni Vyapari Sangh, Nagar Parishad Sangh etc., heads of many societies from different villages met the Chief Minister and apprised him of their demands. Sisters of many women self-help groups also met Chief Minister Chouhan. The women also presented the products made by the group to the Chief Minister. The Chief Minister said that all 800 self-help groups of Budhni would be provided funds for their work. Later the Chief Minister also went among the public and he himself took their applications.

4 persons including child died in road accident



Team Absolute | Mandla

A big news has come from Mandla in Madhya Pradesh recently. In fact, there was a tragic accident on the National Highway last Wednesday night. Four persons including 8-year-olds and 3 women were reportedly died in the accident. According to reports, all the people were riding in the auto but suddenly a trolley hit them from behind. Six persons were injured in the collision. Out of the 6 injured, 4 are said to be in critical condition. According to reports, all the auto riders were returning from a nearby vil-

lage after joining the grief of someone's death.

Nine women and one child from Semarkhapa village had gone to Anjanhapa village concerning grief. Everyone was returning in the evening. On the same National Highway, the auto driver started taking off the auto stop ride near Binaka intersection on the bypass. Meanwhile, suddenly a trolley coming from behind hit the auto hard. 8-year-old Naitik Patel, 55-year-old Shaikumari, 70-year-old Vinita Patel, and 50-year-old Sunita Patel were reportedly died in the accident. Apart from all this, 6 people have been injured. Out of these, 4 are in critical condition.

According to reports, the injured have been admitted to the district hospital. As soon as the incident took place, the people around them got very agitated. Angry people thronged the bypass. After some time, the police explained to the villagers and calmed the entire matter down.

OLYMPIAN VIVEK SAGAR APPOINTED AS THE SPORTS PROMOTION BRAND AMBASSADOR OF CRISP



Bhopal : Are we aware of our natural innate talents, abilities and strengths? Are we aware of our talents? One such software has been developed by the Centre for Research and Industrial Staff Performance (Crisp), with the help of which personality analysis can be done through fingerprints. On Thursday, State's Olympic hockey player Vivek Sagar launched Dermatoglyphics Multiple Intelligence Test (DMIT) software at Crisp Institute located in Shyamala Hills. On this occasion, brain mapping of Vivek Sagar was also done through fingerprint. In a programme organised in honour of Olympian Vivek Sagar on Thursday, Crisp institute announced him as Sports Promotion Brand Ambassador.



EDITOR'S SPECS

Motto of BJP's 'Jan Ashirwad Yatra'

With eye on state polls, the BJP is taking feedback on public response to the 'Jan Ashirwad Yatra' taken out by the newly inducted union ministers in their respective states. It is learnt that the party's central leadership is collecting feedback on several parameters, which include public and workers' participation during the yatra. "Party is collecting feedback on different parameters like people and workers participation, public opinion about government and party, awareness and reach of union and state government's schemes and others," a party insider said. Sources said that along with reports from ministers about their yatra, party leadership is also collecting feedback from the state and the district units. A BJP functionary pointed out that feedback collected from poll bound states will help the party draw its strategy accordingly. Assembly polls in Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Punjab, Manipur and Goa will be held early next year. The BJP is in power in four states -- Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Goa and Manipur, while the Congress is ruling in Punjab. The yatra has also set the party's preparations in motion in the poll bound states, especially in Uttar Pradesh that has got maximum new ministers. All the 39 newly inducted ministers in the union council had taken out 'Jan Ashirwad Yatra' in their respective states. Together all 39 ministers had covered 19,567 kms, 212 Lok Sabha constituencies and 265 districts across 19 states. The ministers had travelled three Lok Sabha and four districts of their home state before reaching their own constituency. During the Yatra over 1,600 programmes were held which included visits to places of religious importance, addressing the public, overseeing the implementation of Centrally sponsored programmes and vaccination centres. Sources said that during these programs, ministers had direct public interactions and the response collected from the people were submitted to central leadership.

CHINA INFLUENCING WORLD USING ARMY OF FAKE SOCIAL MEDIA ACCOUNTS, BUT WHY?

R.R.M. Lilani

The Chinese Ambassador to Sri Lanka, Qi Zhenhong, at a recent meeting with Health Minister Pavithra Wanniarachchi (now appointed as the Minister of Transport), said Covid-19 is a matter of science and not to politicise it, despite the fact that evidence proves beyond all doubt that the ruling Chinese Communist Party (CCP) has engaged in world politics using fake accounts and dismissing everything related to coronavirus as 'not their baby'. China has introduced an army of fake personnel on social media accounts and every news that emerges as pro-China news can be misleading and dreadful, these days.

Some of their fake news has turned out to be authentic as several of the official Chinese embassies around the world kept tweeting them that finally 'becomes' true. These news items are picked up by China's state newspaper and TV channels as well. The Chinese Envoy in Sri Lanka told the Minister not to politicise Covid-19 and also urged the Sri Lankan government not to engage in trying to trace the origin of the virus. He said it would not solve the questions, but it would hinder progress in fighting the pandemic around the world.

Making such an awkward statement to the countries with whom they are dealing with and urging them not to worry about the origin of the virus is worrisome and suggests how irresponsible China has become towards mankind.

Any disease needs proper analysis to find the origin of the disease, mainly for treatment and prevention. The Covid-19 that has destroyed over four million lives cannot be dismissed by such words by China, which calls itself a guardian angel to third world countries that depend on the Chinese Yuan. On August 13, it came to light

that the Chinese researchers did not want the lab-leak theory to be included in the World Health Organization's (WHO) findings on the origins of Covid-19 and influenced the presentation of the report. This was told by a WHO expert on a Danish TV documentary. A WHO team member in the investigation of the virus's origin, Peter Ben Embarek, told Danish channel TV2, that the Chinese counterparts were reluctant to link the origins of Covid to a laboratory in Wuhan or for the theory to be included in a report, and the team had eventually agreed 'on the condition that they didn't recommend any specific studies to further that hypothesis'. The tug-of-war of 'yes' and 'no' between China and the WHO experts on the probe into the virus is continuing while the world is seeking an answer.

For the second time, China rejected the WHO's proposal for a renewed probe into the origin of the global pandemic, citing it as a political tracing and nothing else.

Why is China reluctant to let world health experts probe? It is questionable and intriguing, but the reason is now exposed. They are guilty! By the end of March 2020, more than 80,000 Chinese had been infected by the virus from the time it first emerged in Wuhan. In Wuhan alone, there were 50,000 cases reported and, starting from August 2021, 4,512 new Covid-19 deaths have been reported. That is self-explanatory.

A well-developed country like China, that does not want to find a remedy for the wound that has caused a magnitude of deaths, should be held accountable, no matter what. If China cannot care for its people by telling the truth, it has breached the law of the land.

Due to its closed-door diplomacy, several top scientists from mainland China have gone against the CCP. Even ordinary people fear the CCP rule. It is a synthetic virus created for bio-war and was leaked by the Chinese.

By throwing incentives and freebies at its friendly countries, China today managed to create a relationship that is tight-gripped.

Moreover, China has been using several media outlets to carry their propaganda globally and has not spared even a tiny country like Sri Lanka. Chinese President Xi Jinping and his troops have used all the propaganda to project China as the protagonist on seeing the mammoth of accusations they are facing.

Recently, a Swiss-based professor who wrote a pro-China article that went viral in China was in fact a fake identity and the Swiss government said a person with that name does not exist in Switzerland.

Chinese state media quoted a Swiss biologist by the name of Wilson Edwards to accuse the US of politicising Covid-19 origins.

On July 24, on Facebook, this so called Wilson Edwards claimed to have witnessed or learned of US efforts to politicise the WHO Covid-19 investigations from within.

The fake 'Edwards' cited unnamed WHO sources and 'fellow researchers' complaining of having endured "enormous pressure and even intimidation from the US side as well as certain media outlets".

'Edwards' further said, the WHO sources told him the US is so obsessed with attacking China on the origin-tracing issue that it is reluctant to open its eyes to the data and findings.

The Facebook post was picked up widely by Chinese state media, including the Global Times, the People's Daily - which headlined its story as "US attempts to overturn report, leveraging WHO into political tool" - China Daily, and CGTN in multiple languages.

This 'Edwards' mounting fame, caught the eye of the Swiss Embassy and they searched citizen records and academic publications for any mention of him. Finally, the Swiss government's official twitter tweeted: "Looking for Wilson Edwards, alleged (Swiss) biologist, cited in the press and social media



in China over the last several days. If you exist, we would like to meet you!" But it is more likely that this (sic) fake news, and we call on the Chinese press and netizens to take down the posts. "An attached statement said the Chinese reports were false, and there was no registered Swiss citizen named Wilson Edwards, or any academic articles in the biology field under his name.

Following this humiliation, Chinese state media articles that had the name Edwards began disappearing from the internet, including from the Global Times and CGTN. The Wilson Edwards Facebook account, which was created on the same day it published its only post, with a profile photo of a library at Oxford University, and had just three friends, also appeared to have been deleted. Also, after a seven-month grilling by the Associated Press (AP), the Oxford Internet Institute, a department at Oxford University, found that China's rise on Twitter has been powered by an army of fake accounts that have retweeted Chinese diplomats and state media tens of thousands of times, covertly amplifying propaganda that can reach hundreds of millions of people - often without disclosing the fact that the content is government-sponsored.

The AP also noted that China's ambassador to the UK, Liu Xiaoming, who stepped down from his post, took to the US's Twitter and Facebook, which are

banned in China. Liu has 119,000 followers and transformed himself into the 'wolf warrior' of diplomacy. But later, it was detected that Liu's followers who claimed to be colleagues were, in fact, manufactured people. Also, Jacob Wallis, Senior Analyst at the Australian Strategic Policy Institute (ASPI), and Sanjana Hattotuwa, Special Advisor, ICT for Peace Foundation (ICT4Peace) and former Senior Researcher at the Centre for Policy Alternatives (CPA), Sri Lanka used the Twitter datasets to explain how China runs its information operations (both covert and overt). Wallis and his team analyzed 23,750 Twitter accounts and 348,608 tweets from January 2018 to April 2020, to be fake. Twitter deactivated those accounts for promoting misinformation and disinformation used for propaganda by diplomatic messaging through social media platforms. The 'hard work' by China to create fake accounts for pro-China propaganda is now known. They could have put that valuable time into giving firsthand information on the virus's origin, instead.

The masses have come to realize China is fighting a battle of their own, trying to prove a point using fake identities, which is irrelevant to the world. It's time China face reality and fight the real global causes, joining real friends and not faceless humans who will be deactivated.

(All views expressed are personal.)

international

US EXPLORING LAND ROUTES TO EVACUATE AFGHANS

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The US is exploring ways to evacuate American citizens and Afghan allies looking to leave the war-torn nation including via land routes, American officials said, reasserting a commitment to help eligible people who were not airlifted out.

US Under Secretary of State Victoria Nuland said President Joe Biden's administration is engaged in "ongoing intensive diplomatic work" to help American citizens and Afghan allies wishing to leave Afghanistan following the Taliban's takeover of the country, Al Jazeera reported.

"We are looking at all possible options including ½ air routes, land routes to continue to find ways for them to help evacuate and to support them in that," she said during a news briefing on Wednesday.

Nuland welcomed efforts by Qatar and Turkey to reopen the airport in Kabul in coordination with the Taliban.

"They have relatively optimistic projections about when that will happen, but we need to see it happen obviously,"



she told reporters, as per Al Jazeera.

She said the administration's "top priority" is to get the 100 to 200 remaining US citizens out of the country.

Nuland declined to share details about the possible land routes to minimise potential risks for people who may have to take them.

Also on Wednesday, State Department spokesperson Ned Price said Washington fully backs efforts to

5 PEOPLE SHOT DEAD IN DURBAN

Johannesburg | Agencies

At least five people were shot dead by unidentified gunmen in the South African city of Durban, a local government official said.

In a statement on Wednesday, member of the Executive Council for Transport, Community Safety and Liaison Peggy Nkonyeni said reports suggested that a group of people were in a house when three unknown gunmen, armed with 9 mm pistols attacked them, Xinhua news agency reported. Besides the five victims, three others were also injured in the incident. In a separate incident on Sunday, six people were shot and killed at U Section. "This week alone at least 11 people have been reportedly murdered at the township," said Nkonyeni. "I send my deepest condolences to the families of the deceased and assure the community that the police are looking into these sporadic crimes," she said.

Yemen's Houthis capture strategic sites near Marib city

Sanaa | Agencies

Yemen's Houthi rebels have seized control of two strategic sites close to Marib city, the government's last northern stronghold, a military source said.

"The rebels captured Malboda mountain in the northwestern district of Sirwah on Tuesday following a 48-hour fighting against the government troops, and advanced to Himat al-Dhiyab hill, about 15 km northwest of Marib city," the source told Xinhua news agency on Wednesday.

The rebel advance came despite airstrikes by the Saudi-led coalition backing the Yemeni government troops.

Heavy fighting also took place in other western districts of Marib province, where the troops have repelled rebel attacks in the Bakhah



area in the south of Jabal Murad district and al-Mushaireef area to the south of Rahabah district, leaving dozens of combatants on both sides dead, the same source added.

Meanwhile, Houthi-run al-Masirah TV reported 50 coalition airstrikes in the past 48 hours that targeted Houthi reinforcements and positions in Marib, noting that its forces have made important progress in Sirwah. The Houthis began in February a major offensive on Marib in an attempt to seize control of the oil-rich province.

Taliban accuse US of intentionally destroying equipment at airport

Kabul | Agencies

The Taliban has accused the US of intentionally damaging equipment at Kabul's Hamid Karzai International Airport during their withdrawal from Afghanistan.

Anas Haqqani, a key Taliban member, visited the Kabul airport a day after the last American soldier left Afghanistan, and said the US had deliberately destroyed military equipment including helicopters, military vehicles, and facilities, Ariana News reported.

"For years they called us destroyers. But now you are



witnessing those who are destroyers. They have destroyed our national assets," Haqqani said.

The last flight carrying American forces left Kabul in the early hours of Tuesday morning ½ ending 20 years of military presence in the

Global Covid-19 case load tops 218.3 mn

Washington | Agencies

The global coronavirus case-load has topped 218.3 million, while the deaths have surged to more than 4.54 million and vaccinations soared to over 5.32 billion, according to the Johns Hopkins University. In its latest update on Thursday morning, the University's Center for Systems Science and Engineering (CSSE) revealed that the current global caseload, death toll and vaccination tally stood at 218,327,987, 4,541,140 and 5,326,650,944, respectively. The US continues to be the worst-hit country with the world's highest number of cases and deaths at 39,388,909 and 642,004, respectively, according to the CSSE. In terms of infections, India follows in the second place with 32,810,845 cases. The other worst countries with over 3 million cases are Brazil (20,804,215), France (6,868,059), the UK (6,856,932), Russia (6,838,652), Turkey (6,412,247), Argentina (5,190,948), Iran



(5,025,233), Colombia (4,911,082), Spain (4,861,883), Italy (4,546,487), Indonesia (4,100,138), Germany (3,970,086) and Mexico (3,352,410), the CSSE figures showed.

In terms of deaths, Brazil comes second with 581,150 fatalities. Nations with a death toll of over 100,000 are India (439,020), Mexico (259,326), Peru (198,295), Russia (180,781), Indonesia (133,676), the UK (133,066), Italy (129,290), France (126,335), Colombia (125,016), Argentina (111,607) and Iran (108,393).

US, UKRAINE SIGN KEY DEFENCE, SECURITY DEAL

Washington | Agencies

The US and Ukraine have signed a Strategic Defence Framework agreement, which is set to define a new stage of bilateral cooperation in the field of defence and security. The deal inked on Wednesday during the visit of Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky to Washington creates conditions for a significant strengthening of bilateral cooperation in defense and provides international legal support from the US for the sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence of Ukraine, Xinhua news agency reported. The agreement also helps accelerate Ukraine's entry into the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

During Zelensky's visit, Kiev and Washington also signed a series of agreements on scientific and technical cooperation, space flight security, information protection and border security. At the beginning of their meeting on Wednesday in the Oval Office, Biden said "the US remains firmly committed to Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity in the face of Russian aggression and our support for Ukraine's Euro-Atlantic aspirations".

He announced an additional \$60 million in security assistance to Ukraine, and the creation of a new strategic defence framework as well as an energy and climate dialogue. Zelensky said in his remarks that he expected to discuss the security situation in Crimea and Donbas region in eastern Ukraine and the Nord Stream 2 gas pipeline project. The meeting between the two leaders was initially scheduled on Monday but was delayed as the Biden administration was focused on the withdrawal from Afghanistan.



CBI NABS 'INSIDER' FOR FAKE 'CLEAN-CHIT' TO ANIL DESHMUKH

In a massive embarrassment, the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) said that it has raided and arrested its own sleuth for allegedly conniving to prepare a 'purported' clean-chit to former Maharashtra Home Minister Anil Deshmukh, here on Thursday.

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The raids took place in New Delhi and Allahabad while the arrest took place early Thursday, hours after the CBI had swooped on Deshmukh's son-in-law Gaurav Chaturvedi and his Nagpur-based lawyer Anand Daga late on Wednesday evening, from Worli in Mumbai.



The Chaturvedi-Daga duo was detained and their statements recorded till the wee hours when the complicity of an inside hand, the CBI's own official -- a Sub-Inspector Abhishek Tripathi -- was also confirmed.

The CBI said in a terse statement this morning that it has registered a case against its own SI, the Nagpur-based lawyer (Daga) and other unknown persons for certain allegations, including corruption. "During the investigations of the said case, CBI has today arrested the SI (Tripathi), while the lawyer (Daga) is being questioned," the agency said, even as raids were carried out in New Delhi and Allahabad and his personal lockers in the CBI offices here. It may be recalled that last weekend,

media and political circles were rocked by a report purportedly giving a 'clean-chit' given to Deshmukh in the Bombay High Court-ordered preliminary enquiry (PE). Rattled by the alleged leak, the CBI had issued two strong rebuttals on the issue, and quietly launched a probe into the matter which culminated in the nabbing of an 'inside hand' in the sordid episode. The unsigned-undated-unattributed alleged PE report triggered a fresh political row with the Nationalist Congress Party and Congress demanding that the CBI should com-

ment on the authenticity or otherwise of the report. As a fallout of the incident, the CBI picked up Chaturvedi and Daga on Wednesday and early Thursday, nabbed its own (CBI) sleuth for allegedly conniving with them to prepare the fake PE report. Slamming the move, State Congress Spokesperson Sachin Sawant said it was extremely "extremely serious" as they were taken away without serving any notice. "The laws are being trampled and the country is run by 'Modi-Shah'... 'Whatever we say is the law', the Modi government should officially declare," said Sawant.

NCP National Spokesperson and Minister Nawab Malik said that they were taken away "illegally, without any prior intimation or notice", raising questions if there is rule of the law in the country or the law of the rulers. "The CBI must clarify under what laws and norms the action was taken without following the due process of law," Malik said sharply. There has been speculation in some circles that Deshmukh, who's on the radar of the ED and CBI but has yet to respond to their multiple summons, may be in contact with his family members.

States' fiscal balances stay weaker than pre-Covid levels in Q1 FY2022

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The pandemic continues to affect state finances with first quarter revenue and expenditure numbers pointing out that a full economic recovery is still a long road ahead.

According to the fiscal data reported by the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) for 19 state governments for Q1 FY22, the states' combined revenue receipts in that quarter were only 2 per cent higher than the pre-Covid level of Rs 4.3 lakh crore.

Simultaneously, the revenue spending of the 19 state governments increased by 14 per cent to Rs 4.9 lakh crore in Q1 FY22 from the pre-Covid level of Rs 4.3 lakh crore, possibly reflecting higher social sector spending amid the second wave of Covid-19.

The 19 states' combined revenue balance has, thus, slipped into a deficit of Rs

50,000 crore in Q1 FY22, in contrast to the small surplus of Rs 10,000 crore in pre-Covid Q1 of FY20. Moreover, their fiscal deficit has nearly doubled to Rs 1.1 lakh crore in Q1 FY22 from the pre-Covid level of Rs 60,000 crore in Q1 FY20.

According to an analysis by ICRA, varied recovery in the revenues and expenditures of 19 state governments in the April-June quarter has resulted in states' combined fiscal balances reporting a deterioration, relative to the pre-Covid level.

ICRA Chief Economist Aditi Nayar said that though the recovery in revenue receipts of states was led by non-tax revenues, their own taxes and Central tax devolution trailed the level witnessed in Q1 FY20. Moreover, the revenue spending of the 19 state governments increased by a sharper 14 per cent in Q1.

"Accordingly, the 19

states' combined revenue balance has slipped into a deficit of Rs 0.5 trillion in Q1 FY2022, in contrast to the small surplus of Rs. 0.1 trillion in Q1 FY2020," Nayar said.

The positive developments on the fiscal front for the states has come from an increase in capital expenditure.

Given the permission to continue construction activities with some restrictions, the capital spending by the 19 state governments recovered to Rs 60,000 crore in Q1 FY22, exceeding the pre-pandemic level of Q1 FY20 by a heartening, albeit mild, 2.6 per cent.

ICRA noted that the state's own tax revenues (SOTR) in Q1 FY2022 trailed the pre-Covid levels by 3 per cent, on account of stamps and registrations (S&R), and excise duty collections, even as sales tax and state goods and services tax (SGST) exceeded their pre-Covid levels.

Now, Mumbai registers spike in Dengue

Team Absolute | Mumbai

It's a double whammy for Mumbai as the city, reeling under the Covid wave, has seen a jump in August in hospitalisations due to dengue compared to the previous month. According to the BMC, more than 132 people required hospitalisation after testing positive for dengue, compared to a mere 28 last month, with authorities expecting the number to be higher as not all private admissions are notified.

The BMC said most cases were found in F south (Parel, Sewri, Naigaum), B (Dongri,

Umakhadi) and H west (Bandra, Khar and Santacruz) though there were no deaths so far due to the vector-borne disease.

The insecticide department said 13,15,373 houses were inspected, and 11,492 dengue breeding spots were destroyed. BMC's executive health officer Dr Mangala Gomare said the spike was usual during the months of August and September and one must see a doctor if symptoms such as fever, headache, rashes, muscle pain and joint pain are observed.

While a series of combat

measures have been initiated in Mumbai metropolitan region (MMR) and Pune metropolitan region (PMR), the Public Health

Department is also focussing on Western Maharashtra districts of Kolhapur, Sangli and Satara and Konkan districts of Raigad and Ratnagiri that were affected by massive floods. The number of Monsoon-related ailments has surged this year owing to the relaxations in lockdown-related restrictions, which has resulted in the free movement of people after the flattening of the Covid-19 curve during the second wave.

Jindal Global Law School achieves record placements with 48 offers in leading law firms

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Despite the turbulence of the global pandemic, this year's tally of 48 surged well past last year's record of 36 accepted offers. This includes 6 pre-placement offers (PPOs) and 7 Day-One offers.

The largest recruiter across the board was Cyril Amarchand Mangaldas with 15 accepted offers including 1 PPO, followed by AZB & Partners (Mumbai) and Trilegal with 7 accepted offers each. Indus Law extended 4 offers, while AZB & Partners (Delhi) and Shardul Amarchand Mangaldas & Co hired 2 students each. Argus Partners recruited 1 student. HCL, one of India's most prestigious IT services and consulting organizations, recruited 5 stu-

As many young graduating law students across the nation still face high levels of uncertainty in the midst of the ongoing pandemic, the graduating students of the batch of 2022 of Jindal Global Law School (JGLS), India's leading law school, have already secured a record 48 accepted offers from some of India's most prestigious law firms on Day Zero and Day One of the placement process.



dents for its general counsel practice.

Also, while Veritas Legal extended 2 pre-placement offers, Khaitan & Co, J. Sagar Associates and Sarvada Legal

also extended pre-placement offers to 1 student each. The Zero Day Placement for the Graduating Batch of 2022 was

Over 300 people getting vaccinated per minute in Mumbai: Govt

Team Absolute | Mumbai

A total of 97 lakh vaccine doses have been administered at civic-run vaccination centres and private hospitals in the city to date, according to the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC).

A total of 97 lakh vaccine doses have been administered at civic-run vaccination centres and private hospitals in the city to date, according to the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC).

As many as 336 people are getting vaccinated against coronavirus in Mumbai every minute considering the number of doses administered in the last few days, the Maharashtra government claimed on Wednesday.

A total of 97 lakh vaccine doses



have been administered at civic-run vaccination centres and private hospitals in the city to date, according to the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC). At least 71 lakh people have got a first dose, while 26 lakh people are now fully vaccinated, the data revealed. Over 1.6 lakh people were vaccinated in Mumbai on August 21, 27 and August 29, while 1.39 lakh got the jab on Wednesday, the state government said. "Higher vaccination coverage of people in Mumbai will ensure greater protection and strengthen our preparation for the predicted third wave," state minister Aadiya Thackeray said in the statement. Additional Municipal Commissioner Suresh Kakani said the civic body had adequate number of doses in stock as of Tuesday.

RELIANCE RETAIL ACQUIRES SOLE CONTROL OF JUST DIAL

Reliance Retail Ventures Ltd (RRVL) has now now taken sole control of Just Dial Ltd.

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The Reliance Industries' subsidiary now holds 40.98 per cent of the company as of September 1.

On July 20, the RRVL acquired 1.31 crore equity shares of Rs 10 each of Just Dial at a price of Rs 1,020 per equity share from V.S.S. Mani on the floor of the stock exchange through the block window facility.

The acquisition represents 15.63 per cent of the post-preferential issue paid-up equity share capital of Just Dial. On September 1, 2021,

Just Dial, pursuant to the preferential issue, allotted 2.12 crore equity shares of Rs 10 each at a price of Rs 1,022.25 per equity share (including a premium of Rs 1,012.25 per equity share representing 25.35 per cent of the post-preferential issue paid-up share capital of Just Dial to the RRVL.

Just Dial is a leading local search engine platform which provides search related services to users across India through multiple platforms such as website, apps, over the telephone and text. Just Dial had 30.4 million listings and 129.1 million quar-

terly unique users across web, mobile, App and voice platforms as of March 31, 2021.

The company has recently launched its B2B marketplace platform, JD Mart which is aimed at enabling millions of India's manufacturers, distributors, wholesalers, retailers to become internet ready in post-Covid era, get new customers, and sell their products online.

The platform offers digital product catalogues to businesses and aims at digitalising India's businesses, especially MSMEs, across categories.

Rare Atlantic walrus tusk seized in Maha's Ratnagiri, probe launched

Quaid Najmi | Ratnagiri

For the first time in India, the tusk of a rare Atlantic walrus was seized, from a coastal village in Maharashtra's Ratnagiri district, officials said on Thursday.

Following a confidential tip-off on August 31, Forest Department teams from Ratnagiri and Satara, along with the CIJ laid a trap and nabbed three accused red-handed with the booty from Hatkhamba village.

"The three arrested are from Goa and Maharashtra. We have recovered the tusk, approximately 15-16 inches long, of an Atlantic walrus (Odobenus rosmarus)," Honorary Wildlife Warden Rohan Bhatte, who is also Member of the Wildlife Crime Control Bureau (WCCB), told correspondent.

Teams of wildlife sleuths have been formed to conduct a nationwide operation to track the gang behind the Atlantic walrus ivory tusk smuggling, their associates, the buyers, etc. Ratnagiri Range Forest Officer Priyanka



Lagad said that this is the first-ever such seizure of a walrus tusk since these marine animals are found only in the icy shores of northern hemisphere, around 10,000 kms from here.

"The challenge before the investigations is to

find how the tusk has reached Maharashtra, who are the other players, how big is the racket and what are its larger ramifications," she said.

However, Lagad declined to reveal the exact quantity/weight of the large tusk, its market

value and other details owing to operational reasons and to avoid alerting the others who could be involved in the crime.

Bhatte said that following the interrogation of the accused trio, the teams will go to other Indian states and are likely to effect more seizures of wild creatures or their valuable organs. As far as the Atlantic walrus tusk's valuation, most experts and wildlifers term it as "invaluable" and beyond comparison with the elephant tusks that are the favourite of ivory smugglers globally. The team has also seized a car in which the tusk was being transported to an unknown location for a sale, and all the accused have been charged under the Section 49(c), of the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972 and CITES. Walrus is a huge flippered, deep-diving marine mammal, weighing over two tonnes, with the tusk measuring upto one metre long, and is found only in the Arctic Ocean, the Pacific and Atlantic oceans, around the North Pole, and the sub-Arctic seas in the Northern Hemisphere.

GOA ANNOUNCES 2 VACCINATION HOLIDAYS DURING GANESH CHATURTHI

Panaji: Ganesh Chaturthi, Goa's most popular Hindu festival, will spell relief to the thousands of Covid warriors engaged in the expansive inoculation drive, with the state government deciding to announce "vaccination holidays" on September 10 and 11.

Speaking to reporters on Thursday, Goa's nodal officer for the vaccination exercise Anup Netrawalkar said the two vaccination holidays have been announced after 228-days of non-stop statewide vaccination efforts at all government centres.

"We are announcing a vaccine holiday on September 10 and 11. There will be no vaccination in government centres on these two days. Vaccination will resume on September 12," Netrawalkar said. "This will provide a much needed break for our healthcare professionals. They have been working for 228 days without a single break. We are also doing this because during Ganesh Chaturthi, there may not be a big rush." After taking these factors into consideration, the Goa government has decided that it will be a vaccine holiday on September 10 and 11," he added.

The festivities of Ganesh Chaturthi are scheduled to begin on September 10 this year.



Britney Spears cleared of misdemeanour charge

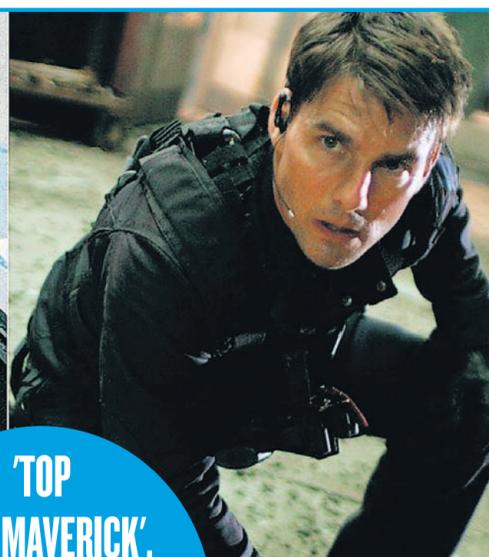
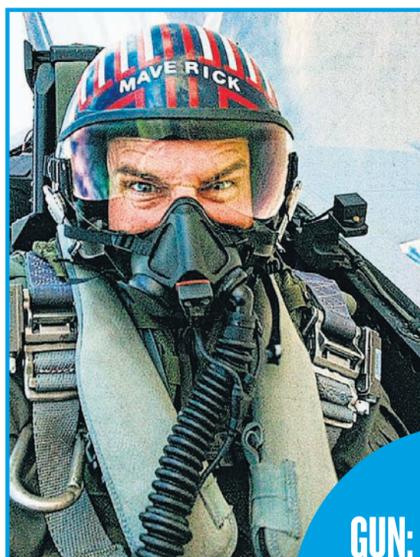
New York | Agencies

Britney Spears will not be charged with any crimes related to an incident that occurred at her residence involving her housekeeper, the Ventura County District Attorney said. The singer had been named a suspect in a battery investigation after allegedly striking a housekeeper during a dispute while in her home in Thousand Oaks on August 16.

During the argument, Spears was alleged to have slapped a phone out of the housekeeper's hand and the housekeeper indicated the screen protector to the phone was damaged. Spears' housekeeper later reported to authorities that she had an argument with the singer regarding the veterinary care of Spears' dog, according to The Hollywood Reporter.

Misdemeanour Unit Supervisor Blake Heller reviewed the case submitted by the Ventura County Sheriff's Office, and declined to file charges due to insufficient evidence that a crime had occurred.

Spears' lawyer Mathew Rosengart said in a statement provided to The Hollywood Reporter that "this was nothing more than sensationalised tabloid fodder, an overblown 'he said, she said' regarding a cell phone." Rosengart noted that the Sheriff's Department has acknowledged this was a "very minor" incident.



'TOP GUN: MAVERICK', 'MISSION: IMPOSSIBLE 7' RELEASE POSTPONED

New York | Agencies

Paramount has postponed the release dates of its upcoming movies, including Tom Cruise's 'Top Gun: Maverick' and 'Mission: Impossible 7', due to Covid concerns.

Cruise's 'Top Gun: Maverick' is departing its November 19 date and will now release on May 27, 2022. Whereas, his 'Mission: Impossible 7' set for May 27, 2022, also gets delayed and will now open September 30, 2022.

The studio has also pushed back 'Jackass Forever', which moves to February 4, 2022, from the earlier date of October 22, 2021. The moves come as concerns over the Delta variant continue to hamper theater attendance and make releasing tentpoles into a risky proposition for studios. Paramount, like other studios, regularly consults with epidemiologists on decisions such as this, and the studio is hopeful the box office will recover in 2022 when these films are now set to open, according to The Hollywood Reporter.

Shortly after Paramount announced 'Top Gun: Maverick' was exiting November 19, Sony pushed 'Ghostbusters: Afterlife' to that date, as it previously was set for November 11. 'Mission: Impossible - Fallout' filmmaker Christopher

McQuarrie returns to direct the seventh and eighth installments of the franchise. Joseph Kosinski helms 'Top Gun: Maverick', which last week unspooled off its first 13 minutes at CinemaCon, the convention for theater owners where speculation as to when the box office would return to pre-Covid levels was a hot topic.

While studios such as Warner Bros and Disney have experimented with putting tentpoles on streaming services and in theaters day-and-date, Paramount has kept many of its big titles, such as 'A Quiet Place II', for theatrical release only. It did sell off 'The Tomorrow War' to Amazon and put Mark Wahlberg's 'Infinite' on Paramount+ exclusively, but it has been expected that 'Top Gun: Maverick' and 'Mission: Impossible 7' remain theatrical only, as Cruise is a strong proponent of the theatrical experience and because of the hefty budgets of these movies.

"That doesn't mean that decision is the right decision for every film," said Paramount distribution exec Chris Aronson at CinemaCon of its 'A Quiet Place II' gamble, but "the underlying principle couldn't be more clear: The theatrical experience is irreplaceable," according to The Hollywood Reporter.

Justin Bieber to perform at MTV VMAs after 6 years



New York | Agencies

Justin Bieber is set to take the stage for a performance at the 2021 MTV Video Music Awards airing live on Sunday, September 12, MTV announced. The announcement on MTV's Instagram page stated, "Ready for my bby to return home to the VMA's stage after six years. You simply can't miss Justin Bieber at the 2021 at Video Music Awards, quickly approaching on Sunday, September 12 at 8 pm on MTV!"

The 'Peaches' singer will be performing at the VMAs for the first time since 2015. Bieber's the newest addition to a growing line-up of big acts, which includes Olivia Rodrigo, Lorde, Shawn Mendes, Kacey Musgraves, Machine Gun Kelly, Chlöe, Twenty One Pilots, Lil Nas X, Camila Cabello, Foo Fighters, and Doja Cat, who is also doubling as host for the awards show. Bieber's last performance at the VMAs was six years ago, when he sang a rendition of his 2015 hit 'What Do You Mean?' This year, the pop star is anticipating a big comeback on stage while also leading the way with seven nominations, including the artiste of the year, best pop, collaboration of the year for 'Peaches' featuring Giveon and Daniel Caesar, and video of the year for his collab with DJ Khaled and Drake on 'Popstar'.

The awards show will be broadcast live at 8 p.m. ET/5 p.m. PT on Sunday, September 12, from The Barclays Center in Brooklyn. The event will be executive produced by Bruce Gilmer and Jesse Ignjatovic, co-founder of Den of Thieves, according to Billboard.com.



ELTON JOHN TEAMS UP WITH LIL NAS X, DUA LIPA FOR 'LOCKDOWN SESSIONS'

New York | Agencies

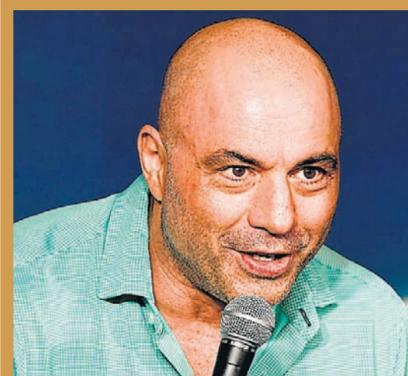
Elton John announced the release of his forthcoming new album 'The Lockdown Sessions' to be out on October 22. The new album is set to show off 16 tracks worth of collaborations with other artists that John has worked on since settling into quarantine in March 2020. After 18 months spent in lockdown, pop superstar Elton John is ready to show fans exactly what he's been up to.

The album will feature some songs that the world has already heard, including his duet with Rina Sawayama on 'Chosen Family', and his revamp of the Pet Shop Boys' 'It's a Sin' with 'Years & Years'.

The Lockdown Sessions will also feature 10 brand new songs, featuring stars such as Lil Nas X, Nicki Minaj, Charlie Puth, Stevie Nicks, Stevie Wonder, and many more according to Billboard.com. "The last thing I expected to do during lockdown was make an album. But, as the pandemic went on, one-off projects kept cropping up," John said of the new album in a statement.

Popular podcast host Joe Rogan tests Covid+

Popular podcast host Joe Rogan revealed that he has Covid-19.



New York | Agencies

The American comedian took to his Instagram and shared a video on his post. The comic and podcast host said he took Ivermectin, a dewormer meant for horses that the CDC says is "not authorised or approved by FDA for prevention or treatment of COVID-19." Ivermectin is approved to treat certain conditions in humans, but not Covid-19, which the FDA stressed on August 21 when the federal agency tweeted "You are not a horse. You are not a cow. Seriously, y'all. Stop it." The post included information on why the drug can be "dangerous and even lethal," according to The Hollywood Reporter.

VENICE FILM FESTIVAL

Roberto Benigni steals the show

Venice | Agencies

Life is Beautiful' actor Roberto Benigni received the lifetime achievement award at the 78th Venice International Film Festival. The legendary Italian comedian gave a mile-a-minute 'thank you' speech to cap an emotional start to the film festival. Bong Joon-ho was emotional and Jane Campion was touching but the evening belonged to actor-director Benigni.

The 78th Venice International Film Festival got off to an emotional start on Wednesday night with host and Italian actor Serena Rossi dedicating the opening night to Afghan mothers forced to be away from their children in an attempt to save them from the Taliban. "We want to say to them: you are not alone," said Rossi.

Initially, the scene at the Sala Grande, Venice's gala theater, seemed oddly sombre, a mood that wasn't

helped by images of a half-empty gallery - Covid-19 social distancing regulations meant the theatre had to operate at half capacity - and a sea of masked faces hiding the identities of the more famous members of the crowd, including Isabelle Huppert, Cynthia Erivo and Sarah Gadon.

With the face coverings, even the flamboyant Spanish director Pedro Almodovar and his muse Penelope Cruz - star of Almodovar's 'Parallel Mothers', Venice's opening night film - seemed more serious than sprightly, according to The Hollywood Reporter.

But it was clear everyone was very pleased to be back. Almodovar was here last year but few others were able to make the 2020 Venezia, which was held in-between coronavirus lockdowns in Italy. If the opening night crowd seemed quiet at first, it was likely because few really believed they were here in person at the Venice Film Festival.



ABSOLUTE PIC OF THE DAY



Pixie Lott



FOURTH TEST: INDIA STRIKE BACK AFTER BEING DISMISSED FOR 191

London | Agencies

India looked to suffer almost the same fate that they did on the first day of the third Test at Headingley, when they found themselves reduced to 127/7 on the opening day of the fourth Test on a batting-friendly Oval pitch on Thursday. The two new inclusions for this Test, Shardul Thakur and Umesh Yadav, however, kept them in the game. The former's half-century took India to 191 while the latter's dismissal of in-form Joe Root pegged England to 53/3 at the draw of stumps. The hosts still trail by 138 runs with seven wickets in

Kohli fastest to 23,000 runs in international cricket

London: India skipper Virat Kohli on Thursday became the fastest batsman to get to 23,000 runs in international cricket. Kohli, who was on 22,999 at the start of his innings on Thursday, cracked a four of James Anderson's bowling to go past 23,000 runs in international cricket in just his 490th innings. This is 32 innings less than what former India batsman Sachin Tendulkar got to the milestone. The Mumbai maestro took 522 innings to get to the mark. Former Australia batsman Ricky Ponting is third on the list, having taken 544 innings while ex-South Africa all-rounder took 551 innings.



hand. However, they have a major concern since Root, the batsman to score over 1/3rd of their runs in the present series, is already back in the hut. Much of the day, however, depicted a story of Indian team's fragile batting against moving deliveries. The openers Rohit Sharma (11) and K.L. Rahul (17) began well, adding 28, but they both fell on the same score as England tightened pressure bowling maiden after maiden. Cheteshwar Pujara (4) was the third wicket to fall -- for the 11th time to James Anderson -- with the score on 39 and when Ravindra Jadeja, promoted to No. 5, was dismissed with the score on 69, it all fell on the shoulders of skipper Virat Kohli, who looked the best of the Indian batsmen. Kohli's masterly 50 off 96 deliveries contained eight fours and while he and vice-captain Ajinkya Rahane, who came in at No. 6, batted, India still had hope. The total was still low by any standard on a batting-friendly pitch at The Oval.

Brief scores

Kolkata Knight Riders 187/6 in 20 overs (Nitish Rana 80, Rahul Tripathi 53; Rashid Khan 2/24) vs SunRisers Hyderabad 177/5 in 20 overs (Manish Pandey 61 not out, Jonny Bairstow 55; Prasidh Krishna 2/35)

Paralympics

Good day for India in para-badminton

Tokyo | Agencies

Pramod Bhagat defeated Ukraine's Oleksandr Chyrykov to storm into the semifinals of the men's singles SL3 category in the Tokyo Paralympic Games badminton competition here on Thursday.



Bhagat, the World No 1 in his category and the reigning world champion, beat the Ukrainian 21-12, 21-9 in 25 minutes. This was the second win for Bhagat in this three-player Group, jumping to a big lead in both games before sealing an impressive victory. Bhagat had beaten compatriot Manoj Sarkar in straight games in his opening match in Tokyo. The SL3 category has six players divided into two groups of three each and Bhagat topped his group by winning his two matches. Sarkar will meet the Ukrainian player, Oleksandr Chyrykov, and the winner will

qualify for the semifinals. Among the other Indians, Krishna Nagar started his campaign with a win in SH6 class and remained on course for reaching the semifinals. Nagar defeated Malaysia's Didin Tarehoh 22-20, 21-10 in the three-player group B in which Brazil's Goncalves Vitor Tavares is the third player in the group. The Brazilian has also won one match when the Malaysian opponent retired while training 13-18 in the second game after losing the first 21-13.

India leaves out R Ashwin once again

London | Agencies

India left out R Ashwin for the fourth consecutive Test match against England in the ongoing series. The ace off-spinner, who is only one of the three Indian spinners to have taken over 400 Test wickets, was seen warming at The Oval prior to the start of the Test but was kept out. What makes the decision surprising is that England have four left-handers in their line-up -- including three who are known for their batting. Ashwin has an impeccable record against left-handers. Out of the 413 Test wickets he has taken, 211 are left-handers. "They are not playing an extra batsman. They are playing five bowlers and still not playing R Ashwin. That is surprising," said former India pace bowler Ajit Agarkar on Thursday. The Oval pitch is generally more spin-friendly than any other in England. Indian bowling coach Bharat Arun had hinted on



Tuesday that the team might play both spinners only if the pitch aids spin bowlers. However, it seems that the tinge of green on the surface discouraged the team management from playing two spinners and field only one in Ravindra Jadeja.

US Open Tsitsipas advances with four-set victory

Tokyo | Agencies

Stefanos Tsitsipas needed five sets to beat former World No. 1 and 2012 champion Andy Murray in the first round at the US Open. On Thursday, it looked like Tsitsipas may have to take a similar arduous route into the third round when he lost a set to France's Adrian Mannarino but the Greek pulled up his socks and blanked the French player in the next two sets to reach the third round in New York. Tsitsipas eventually won the match 6-3, 6-4, 6-7(4), 6-0 to reach the third round at Flushing Meadows. No 2 seed Daniil Medvedev did not face much trouble in despatching Dominik Kepler of Germany 6-4, 6-1, 6-2 as the weather played spoilsport at the US Open, leading to suspension of matches on outside courts. Earlier, Andrey Rublev of Russia too lost a set against Pedro Martinez but came back strongly to advance in four sets. He was upset with himself after let-



ting slip the second set but came to defeat Martinez 7-6(2), 6-7(5), 6-1, 6-1 to reach the third round for the fourth time in five years. Rublev arrived in New York in great form after reaching his second ATP Masters 1000 final at the Western & Southern Open in Cincinnati. He has now won six of his past seven matches and will next play American youngster Frances Tiafoe, who beat Argentine lefty Guido Pella 6-1, 6-2, 7-5.

Stephens, Halep reach third round

New York: The 2017 champion Sloane Stephens advanced to the third round of the US Open in women's singles with a dominant 6-4, 6-2 win over No.21 seed Coco Gauff in 66 minutes. With the roof closed on Arthur Ashe Stadium due to rain, Stephens saved the sole break point against the 17-year-old American, moving her record in the second round of Slams to an impressive 24-3. This was the first career meeting between Stephens and Gauff. Now ranked No.66, Stephens' form had been trending up since the start of the clay season this spring. No.9 seed Garbine Muguruza of Spain turned around a very unfavourable head-to-head on Wednesday when she defeated Andrea Petkovic of Germany, 6-4, 6-2, to reach the third round. Two-time Grand Slam champion Muguruza had lost all three of her prior meetings with former World No.9 Petkovic, but their most recent clash came at Doha in 2016, over five years ago. No.3 seed and defending champion Naomi Osaka too moved into the third round after qualifier Olga Danilovic withdrew ahead of their second-round clash due to a medical reason. Danilovic posted on social media that she has been dealing with a viral illness this week. Halep's 6-3, 6-1 defeat of lucky loser Kristina Kucova in just 68 minutes moved the Romanian into the third round here for the first time since 2016.



Ronaldo slaps defender before taking penalty in FIFA WC qualifier match

Almancil (Portugal) | Agencies

Cristiano Ronaldo on Thursday became the all-time leading scorer in international men's football. The Portuguese superstar scored twice in the FIFA World Cup qualifiers group match against Ireland. Ronaldo scored twice in the final minutes of the match to set up a 2-1 win for Portugal, thus grabbing three points. It was Ronaldo's night to remember against Ireland. But there was an incident that led to him slapping Ireland's defender Dara O'Shea before taking the penalty kick. While Ronaldo, waiting at the penalty spot, was placing the ball, O'Shea kicked the ball away. The move led to Ronaldo bouncing back by slapping the defender right across his shoulder. O'Shea immediately fell to the ground holding his face but Ronaldo escaped any punishment as the referees did not catch the incident. Ronaldo's kick was saved by young goalkeeper Gavin Baznu.



Earlier this week, Ronaldo made the move from Juventus to Manchester United. CR7 has scored 118 goals in 292 games during his stay at Old Trafford between 2003 and 2009. He won three Premier League titles, the Champions League, the FA Cup, and two League Cups with United.

Tammy Beaumont shines as England thrash New Zealand by 46 runs

Chelmsford | Agencies

England opener Tammy Beaumont shined with a scintillating knock of 97 from just 65 balls as England cruised to victory in the first T20I against New Zealand by 46 runs. The hosts now have a 1-0 lead in the three-match T20I series. Tammy struck 13 fours and a six in front of a huge Chelmsford crowd. She fell short of a second T20I century after being dismissed by Hayley Jensen on the second-last ball of the innings. But her 97 was good enough in helping England post 184/4 in 20 overs. Tammy was ably supported by Amy Jones (31 runs off 15 balls) and Sophia Dunkley (23 not out off 17 balls) in a batting line-up missing regular captain Heather Knight due to a hamstring injury. New Zealand, in their first international outing since April, crumbled under massive scoreboard pressure. Openers Suzie Bates and Sophie Devine



were dismissed in 2.2 overs. The three-wicket partnership of 48 runs between Amy Satterthwaite and Maddy Green promised a fightback. But left-arm spinner Sophie Ecclestone took out Green, starting a slide for New Zealand's batting. At one point, they were in danger of being bowled out for less than 100. The lower-order provided some resistance before being bowled out for 138 in 18.5 overs. The second T20I between the two teams will take place at Hove on Saturday.

INDIAN PLAYERS WEAR BLACK ARMBANDS IN PARANJAPÉ'S HONOUR

London: The Indian cricket team is sporting black armbands on the first day of the fourth Test against England at The Oval in honour of renowned cricket coach Vasudeo Paranjape, fondly known as Vasoo Paranjape. "The Indian Cricket Team is sporting black armbands today to honour the demise of Shri Vasudev Paranjape (sic). #TeamIndia," read the tweet from the BCCI with a picture of the Indian team wearing the black armbands while standing for the national anthem. The gesture was lauded by his son Jatinder Paranjape. "Paranjape family is very touched by this gesture [three prayer emojis]," read his tweet. Paranjape, whose son Jatinder played four ODIs for India and had served as national selector recently, was the captain of Dadar Union Cricket Club and had captained former Indian batting mainstays Sunil Gavaskar and Dilip Vengsarkar.

Want to show Kohli what it means for us to get him out: James Anderson

Team Absolute | New Delhi

England seamer James Anderson, who has dismissed Virat Kohli twice in the ongoing series, admitted that there was a lot of emotion involved in his celebrations when he claimed the Indian captain's wicket in the first innings of the third Test at Headingley. Kohli was one of three top-order Indian batsmen that England's highest wicket-taker in Tests, Anderson dismissed in a fiery spell in the third Test in which India were dismissed for just 78 runs in the first innings. The two probably don't share a good rapport as Kohli swore at Anderson during the second Test. During the same fixture, Jasprit Bumrah had tested Anderson's batting skills with a barrage of bouncers. In his column for The Telegraph, Anderson wrote, "When I got Kohli out in the first innings in Leeds there was a



lot of emotion. It was the same as at Trent Bridge. I guess there is that extra something with him because he is such a good player and their captain as well. You see how much it means to him when his team takes a wicket so I want to show him what it means to us to get him out."

India, Nepal playout 1-1 draw in friendly

Kathmandu | Agencies

India came back from a goal down to hold Nepal to a 1-1 draw in an International Friendly held at the Dasharath Stadium in Kathmandu on Thursday. Midfielder Anirudh Thapa scored for the Blue Tigers in the 60th minute to cancel out the lead Anjan Bista had given the home team in the 36th minute. The first half kicked off with India straight away on the front foot, earning a corner with their first attack. Brandon's delivery found Chinglensana Singh inside the box but he was denied a shooting chance with a last-ditch challenge. From the second corner, Chinglensana got

a chance again but his attempted shot went out for a goal kick. Liston Colaco was a constant source of threat for India down the left flank, troubling the Nepal defence with his pace and dribbling. In the eighth minute, he beat his marker and produced a dangerous cross that did not find an Indian touch in the penalty area. With one-fourth of the game completed, Indian skipper Sunil Chhetri won the ball high up the pitch and played it to Liston, who found Manvir Singh with a pass and he won a corner for the Blue Tigers. Brandon curled the ball into the box but he was denied a shooting chance with a last-ditch challenge. From the second corner, Chinglensana got

called into action on a few occasions, as he collected the long passes and crosses attempted by the Nepal wingers. Both sides battled it out for the opening goal and in the 36th minute, the hosts took the lead through Anjan Bista, who pounced on a loose pass in the Indian defence and put the ball in the back of the net. India went forward in search of the equalizer, with Liston charging down the left flank on several occasions and entering dangerous areas with the ball. The score at the break, however, remained 1-0 in favour of Nepal, with Gurpreet making a couple of clean saves towards the end from long-range efforts from the hosts.



'Gone too soon': Friends, colleagues express shock over Sidharth's death

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The Indian showbiz industry woke up to the shocking news of actor Sidharth Shukla's death on Thursday. Colleagues and friends expressed their grief on Twitter. Sidharth was 40. The actor passed away in Mumbai's Cooper Hospital after suffering a massive heart attack in the morning. Actor and comedian Sunil Grover tweeted: "Shocked and sad to know about Sidharth Shukla. Gone too soon. Prayers. Rest in peace." Actor R. Madhavan wrote: "Heartbreaking and tragic. Rest in

Peace brother. Just don't have words to express my anguish."

Actor Aftab Shivdasani tweeted: "Extremely sad and shocking news of the passing of #SidharthShukla, life is so so fragile. My deepest condolences to his family in this heart-breaking time. Prayers for his soul. Om Shanti."

Actor Kushal Tandon uploaded a picture with Sidharth and tweeted: "Sad, shocking, May God gives strength to his mother, sister and family, RIP brother fly away into different world peacefully Om Shanti."

Director Hansal Mehta, pointed out how young he was. He tweeted:

"No age to have a heart attack. No age to go. This is extremely sad and disturbing. Hope this time for sadness, reflection and mourning does not get converted into a Tamasha by some idiots."

Actress Koena Mitra said:

"Deeply saddened! @sidharth_shukla, We met for just 14 days, we fought a lot and parted ways. Never spoke again. Your sudden demise has taught me unconditional forgiveness! I forgive everyone & seek forgiveness from whoever I may have disappointed. RIP Sid. #SidharthShukla"

Sidharth is survived by his mother and two sisters.



PAPON'S MUSIC VIDEO 'SHIKWA' STARS MALVI MALHOTRA

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Singer Papon's upcoming music video 'Shikwa' stars Malvi Malhotra and Anuj Saini. The music video of the song has been shot in Manali. Talking about her experience of shooting in the mountains, Malvi said, "We shot it in Manali. It's a lovely place to be and to shoot. It's a beautiful sad song. People will relate to this song like never before. It has soothing music and lyrics. The video is heartwarming and I am very excited." The music video is directed by Raaj Aashoo and the lyrics are by Sayeed Qadri. "I hope this song can be the song of the year. It will make people nostalgic and they will think of that one love that we all have in life. I can't contain my excitement for this one. Love and light to all. Let's all get vaccinated and prepare against the pandemic," said Malvi. The actress is known for her roles in known for films like 'Hotel Milan' and 'Udaan'. The 'Shikwa' music video has been produced by Bullman Records and is likely to release on September 20.

Karan Johar: I believe an image has the power to move your soul

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Celebrated filmmaker Karan Johar shares how the wedding picture of his parents is one of his favourites and that an image holds the power to move someone's soul.

Asked to choose one of his favourite still photographs of all time and Karan said, "It's a photograph of my parents when they got married. It always moves me because I feel like they had a life ahead, a story ahead and a journey ahead which I know I have witnessed with my own eyes and that was the beginning of that journey. So that picture always moves me."

"As a filmmaker myself, I believe that an image has the power to move your soul and express so many emotions and that's why the premise of Your Lens is extremely excit-

ing as it gives an opportunity for everyone to showcase their creativity and get featured on a prolific platform like National Geographic."

Karan has come onboard for 'Your Lens', a platform as part of National Geographic, to encourage photographers and enthusiasts to share the most precious captures that have emotionally moved them and touched their hearts.

Talking about the campaign Karan also mentioned, "I urge all the photo aficionados to grab their cameras and seize this opportunity."



Nia all set to liven up equations in 'Bigg Boss OTT' house

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The three weeks in 'Bigg Boss OTT' house so far have been entertaining but with the entry of Nia Sharma in the house, the equations are going to change even more.

Even before entering the house, Nia Sharma had spoken about her favourite contestant being Pratik. She said: "I don't want to break Pratik Sehajpal and Neha Bhasin's connection because genuinely there is nothing to break. I find Pratik interesting, and I would want to make a separate connection with him. Pratik takes my heart away." Nia further expresses her views on Pratik's connection to Neha Bhasin, and says: "I don't know what Neha Bhasin is doing inside. She is treating everyone at her own convenience."

Now talking about the most mature and calm couple in the Bigg Boss OTT house, Raqesh Bapat and Shamita Shetty, Nia comments on their relationship and says: "I think Raqesh is in love with Shamita but I'm not sure if she there yet." Right in the middle of the game seems like Nia's entry is going to change a lot of equations in the house. Will her liking for Pratik put Neha and Pratik's connection in a spot? She certainly doesn't seem predictable, but you never know, because she has seen how the game has been so far, she surely has the upper hand in knowing who she can break easily and who is competition to her.

'Bigg Boss OTT' streams on Voot.



Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actress Charrul Malik who has turned towards acting after quitting journalism is enjoying working on 'Happu Ki Ultan Paltan' and 'Bhaji Ji Ghar Par Hai'. "It is sheer fun shooting for both the shows. My co-actors, colleagues, and teammates of both the shows are very fun-oriented. There's a stress-free environment there. We just laugh on and off camera. In corona times, whatever tension happens like lockdown, I feel it is the best place to relieve tension. In today's time, people do meditation. I feel that by doing these comedy shows, my soul feels happy," she said. Talking about her character 'Rusla' in 'Bhaji Ji Ghar Par Hai', she said: "Rusla" is Charrul and Charrul is 'Rusla'. I am not pretending to be someone else. I am not into any other character. I am acting myself. No retakes are taken of my shoot because I think they think that I am playing the character perfectly. I don't have to do anything additional. I am playing myself. So I think I am very natural."

COMEDY SHOW RELIEVES TENSION: CHARRUL MALIK

INSTAGRAM PIC OF THE DAY



Mallika Sherawat

HINDI VERSION OF 'HAATHI MERE SAATHI' TO BE AIRED ON DTH

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Rana Daggubati and Pulkit Samrat-starrer 'Haathi Mere Saathi' will have a direct-to-television release on Zee Cinema. The film traces the narrative of a man fighting for the rights of elephants and the ecosystem.

It was filmed in Tamil, Telugu and Hindi. While 'Kaadan' in Tamil and 'Aranya' in Telugu have already been released, the Hindi version was delayed due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Written and directed by Prabu Solomon, the movie features 'Baahubali' actor Rana Daggubati as the protector of the elephants and nature, along with Pulkit Samrat, Shriya Pilgaonkar, Zoya Hussain and Anant Mahadevan in pivotal roles.

Sharing his experience, Rana said:

"We have a great story to tell with 'Haathi Mere Saathi'. It is a wholesome journey of a man who is closely connected to nature, best friends with elephants and a faithful protector of their community. The film draws light on some serious issues faced by these communities and the thorough dedication to the cause."

Set in deep forests and right in the middle of royal elephants and their protector community, 'Haathi Mere Saathi' shows those emotions which connect humans and animals.

The movie is produced by Eros Motion Pictures and is scheduled to release directly on Zee Cinema followed by streaming on Eros Now on September 18.

