

absolute india

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No cheer on petrol and diesel front; Swiggy, Zomato-like services to come under GST

The GST Council on Friday decided to extend exemption various covid-19 related drugs till December end. Other non-covid life saving drugs have also received exemption. GST Council discussed petrol and diesel but the same will not be brought under GST.



September, 2021
Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh

The GST Council has taken steps to correct the inverted duty scheme on footwear and textiles.

Earlier tax was paid by restaurants but now aggregators such as Zomato and Swiggy will pay the tax, the GST Council decided. This move would help protect revenue. The place where the food is delivered will be the point where tax is collected by the Swiggy and Zomato like services, the finance minister said.

"Two GoMs formed today. One will look at rate rationalisation related issues and will submit a report in two months time. The second GoM will look into related issues of E-way bills, Fastags, Technology, compliance, and compensation schemes. This GoM will also submit report

in two months," the Finance Minister said.

"GST Council discussed bringing petrol and diesel under GST regime as asked by Kerala High court," Finance Minister said. The GST Council has decided against putting petrol and diesel under GST.

States which charge a national permit fee to grant a permit to goods carriers to operate throughout India is exempted from GST.

The council had earlier exempted immunosuppressant Tocilizumab and mucormycosis (black fungus) drug Amphotericin B from GST.

Cancer-related drugs to be brought down from 12% GST rate to 5%, finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman announced.

Team Absolute | Lucknow

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Friday chaired the 45th meeting of the Goods and Service Tax Council (GST) Council in Lucknow where it was decided against bringing petrol and diesel under the ambit of GST. In the first in-person meeting of the GST Council, it was decided to extend GST exemption for various life saving covid-19 drugs. Further, the GST Council decided to exempt various other non-covid life-saving drugs from GST. The Finance Minister said that

Unethical to give Covid-19 booster doses now : Adar Poonawalla

Team Absolute | Bengaluru

Serum Institute of India CEO Adar Poonawalla on Friday said that it was unethical to start giving the third booster dose of Covid vaccine to someone when others in certain countries and populations have not even got two doses for full vaccination.

"For example, only 2 to 3 per cent of developing world countries have received vaccines, while it has gone up to 40 to 50 per cent in the developed world.

"The third dose of vaccine is not right, at least till significant part of the other countries get 2 doses and then, of course, we look into third dose or an annual booster shot or something like that," he said at a media interaction along with Biocin chief Kiran Majumdar Shaw after announcing the strategic partnership forged between the Biocin Biologics Ltd (BBL) and the Serum Institute Life Sciences (SILS).

Poonawalla said that the "jury is still out there on the third dose".

"Maybe some very vulnerable sections,



immuno-compromised people could do with some booster shots. There is no evidence to show Covishield requires a third dose. Some people may have taken it... we have not recommended it yet," he said.

The government and drug controller's office will have to take a decision on the third booster dose based on data and cases as times goes on and including how effective the vaccine is on the Delta virus variant, he added.

"I know some vaccines in the West recommending the third dose because the antibody response has dropped a little, but we will wait and see, the goal is to give two doses to everyone and then look at three doses as a booster," he said.

"We are fortunate in India being in the developing world, having many Indian manufacturers... they have been able to give the population vaccines. But, if we didn't have them in India, we would be in the same position as African countries who have not been able to get vaccines," Poonawalla added.

OVER 2 CRORE VACCINE DOSES ADMINISTERED:

RECORD-BREAKING PACE OF VACCINATION ON PM NARENDRA MODI'S BIRTHDAY

Team Absolute | New Delhi

India on Friday set a new record by administering over two crore Covid-19 vaccine doses in a day. This came as a major push to the inoculation drive on the occasion of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's birthday.

As per the data on the Co-WIN portal, the cumulative doses administered in the country reached 2,00,41,136 at 5.10 pm. The total number of doses administered in the country has crossed 78.68 crore.

The daily vaccinations crossed the one-crore mark for the fourth time in less than a month. Health minister Mansukh Mandaviya said this is the fastest pace at which one crore doses have been administered.

The daily Covid-19 vaccination in the country was over 1 crore on September 6, August 31 and August 27. Mandaviya on Thursday had called for a major push to the Covid-19 vaccination drive during Prime



Minister Modi's birthday on Friday, saying it would be the perfect gift for him.

The BJP has asked its units across the country to help get a large number of people vaccinated on the occasion. India took 85 days to touch the

10-crore vaccination mark, 45 more days to cross the 20-crore mark and 29 more days to reach the 30-crore mark, according to the ministry.

The country took 24 days to reach 40 crore from 30 crore doses and then 20 more days to cross the 50-

crore vaccination mark on August 6, it said.

It took 19 more days to go past the 60-crore mark and took only 13 days to reach 70 crore from 60 crore on September 7, the ministry said.

The total number of doses administered crossed the 75-crore mark on September 13.

The countrywide vaccination drive was rolled out on January 16 with healthcare workers (HCWs) getting inoculated in the first phase. The vaccination of frontline workers (FLWs) started from February 2.

The next phase of Covid-19 vaccination commenced from March 1 for people over 60 years of age and those aged 45 and above with specified comorbid conditions.

The country launched vaccination for all people aged more than 45 years from April 1. The government then decided to expand its vaccination drive by allowing everyone above 18 to be vaccinated from May 1.

Radicalisation, trust deficit biggest challenges to peace: Modi



Team Absolute | New Delhi

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday called for a shared template to fight against radicalisation and extremism while virtually addressing the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) summit.

Addressing the plenary session of the 21st SCO meeting underway in Dushanbe, Tajikistan, he said radicalisation and trust deficit were the biggest challenges to peace in Central Asia and the recent developments in Afghanistan had made this challenge more clear.

In his six-minute virtual address, Modi said: "If we look back in the history, we will find that the Central Asia has been the hub of moderate, progressive cultures and values. Cultures like Sufi-wad born here and spread to whole world. It can even now be seen in its cultural legacy." The SCO should work to

develop strong network among the moderate, tolerant and inclusive institutions and traditions associated with Islam which have already been prevailing in India and member countries, he added.

The Prime Minister also asked the Central Asian countries to connect with India's huge markets and gain benefits. "India is committed to enhance its connectivity with these countries and we believe that landlocked Central Asian countries can benefit immensely by connecting with India's vast market."

In a veiled reference to China on connectivity issues, he said that any connectivity initiative cannot be a one-way street initiative.

"It must be ensured, consultative, transparent and participatory. There should be respect for territorial integrity of all countries," Modi said and also batted for Chabahar and North South International Corridor.

Welcoming the new additions to the bloc, he said with Iran being included as the SCO member while Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Qatar as dialogue partners, their participation would further strengthened the bloc.

"We must encourage our talented youngsters towards science and rational thinking. We can bring our start-ups and entrepreneurs together to create the innovative spirit towards making India a stakeholder in emerging technology," Modi concluded.

UDDHAV THACKERAY'S 'FUTURE FRIEND' REMARK FOR BJP LEADER REIGNITES BUZZ

At a programme in Aurangabad, Uddhav Thackeray referred to Union Minister and senior BJP leader Raosaheb Danve as "my former friend - and if we come together again, then future friend."

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray's comment at an event got him laughs but also set speculation on fire, with many state politicians wondering if he was dropping a big hint.

As he began his speech at a programme in Aurangabad, Uddhav Thackeray referred to Union Minister and senior BJP leader Raosaheb Danve as "my former friend - and if we come together again, then future friend."

The Chief Minister, who is also the Shiv Sena chief, clarified later in his speech that he was only joking as he had met his old friend Raosaheb Danve after a long time.

Thackeray went on to make more loaded remarks. "I like the railways for one reason. You cannot leave the tracks and change direction. Yes, but if there is a diversion you can come to our station. But the engine does not leave the tracks," he said.

Raosaheb Danve is the Minister of State for Railways and comes from the Marathwada region of Maharashtra.

The BJP, which apparently initiated efforts to patch up with its former



ally after their bitter break-up in 2019 over power sharing in Maharashtra, read more into the statement than the Shiv Sena may have wanted. In June, the Chief Minister's one-on-one meeting with

Prime Minister Narendra Modi had ignited talk of a realignment in Maharashtra.

Former Chief Minister and Leader of Opposition Devendra Fadnis did nothing to silence the reunion buzz. "In politics, anything can happen any time. Uddhavji has spoken our 'Mann Ki Baat'. It feels good to hear this," the BJP leader said, borrowing the title of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's monthly radio show.

Congress leader Nana Patole chose to downplay his ally's comments. "The Chief Minister sometimes likes to crack a joke and that is exactly what he did. This government will run its full five year term. There is no problem with the government in Maharashtra," said Patole, whose recent comments about the Congress fighting elections on its own had caused some friction in Maharashtra's Sena-NCP-Congress alliance.

Woman sentenced to 20 years in jail for sexually abusing boy

Hyderabad: A special court here on Thursday sentenced a woman caretaker of a school to 20 years rigorous imprisonment for sexually abusing a minor boy four years ago. The special court for POCSO Act cases also imposed a Rs 10,000 fine on the 27-year-old woman who had also caused burn injuries to the boy with a lit cigarette while molesting him in the school washroom. The incident had occurred in November 2017 at a school in Chandrayangutta in the old city of Hyderabad. K Jyothi alias Manjula had sexually abused the nine-year-old boy when he went to relieve himself. She also used a lit cigarette to cause burn injuries on the victim's hand while molesting him. She had also threatened him not to reveal this to anyone. The boy had later revealed what happened to his parents. They lodged a complaint with police against the school caretaker. The police had filed a case against her under Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act and arrested her.

SC collegium recommends 8 Chief Justices for various HCs

Team Absolute | New Delhi

In a major decision, the Supreme Court collegium has recommended elevation of eight judges as Chief Justices of various high courts and recommended over two dozen names of high court judges for transfer.

The new eight Chief Justices are: Justice Rajesh Bindal for the Allahabad High Court, Prakash Srivastava for the Calcutta High Court, Prashant Kumar Mishra for the Andhra Pradesh High Court, Ritu Raj Awasthi for the Karnataka High Court, Satish Chandra Sharma for the Telangana High Court, Ranjit V More for the Meghalaya High Court, Aravind Kumar for the Gujarat High Court, and RV Malimath for the Madhya Pradesh High Court. Justice Bindal was appointed as the acting Chief Justice



of Calcutta High Court on April 29, as the polling got over in West Bengal. He was caught in the standoff between the Trinamool Congress and the Centre after elections in West Bengal. According to a source, five Chief Justices and over two dozen judges were recommended to be transferred. Justice Akl Qureshi, who is currently Chief Justice of the Tripura High Court, is recommended to head the

Rajasthan High Court, while Rajasthan High Court Chief Justice Indrajit Mahanty will go to Tripura High Court in his place. Other Chief Justices to be transferred are Arup Kumar Goswami from Andhra Pradesh to the Chhattisgarh High Court, Mohd Rafiq from Madhya Pradesh to the Himachal Pradesh High Court, and Biswanath Somadder from Meghalaya to the Sikkim High Court.

According to the source, the

decisions were taken by the Supreme Court collegium Thursday evening. However, the collegium headed by Chief Justice NV Ramana and comprising Justices UU Lalit and AM Khanwilkar has not formally notified these decisions. According to the source, more names of high court judges are expected to come out later.

The collegium, on September 3, had made 68 recommendations, including 10 women judges, for appointment to high courts. However, the Centre has not acted on these names so far.

Breaking a nearly two-year deadlock, on August 18, the top court had published on its website names of nine persons recommended for appointment as judges to the top court. All nine names were cleared by the Centre within two weeks.

7 GUJ MINISTERS FACE CRIMINAL CASES; 19 ARE CROREPATIS

Team Absolute | Gandhinagar

The Gujarat Election Watch and the Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR) on Friday published a report on the members of the newly-formed Gujarat Cabinet.

The report came a day after newly-appointed Gujarat Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel allocated portfolios to 24 newly-inducted ministers.

As per the report, seven ministers (28 per cent) face criminal cases, of which three have serious criminal charges levelled against them.

After the swearing-in ceremony of the new Gujarat Cabinet on Thursday, the Gujarat Election Watch and the ADR analysed the affidavits of all the 25 ministers, including the CM, and published the report, which showed that 19 of the new ministers are crorepaties (millionaires). According to the report, the average assets of the 25 ministers are estimated to be Rs 3.95 crore.

The minister with the highest declared assets is Hrishikesh Ganeshbhai Patel from the Visnagar constituency with assets worth Rs 14.95 crore. He is followed by Jagdish Panchal Nikol from the Ahmedabad constituency

with Rs 14.75 crore assets, while Kuber Dindor from the Santrampur constituency has assets worth Rs 10.94 crore. Unlike the first two who studied till Class 12, Dindor has a doctorate degree. The minister with the lowest declared assets is Chauhan Arjunsinh Udesinh from the Mehmedabad constituency with assets worth Rs 12.57 lakh. On the education front, there is a mixed bag of ministers in the new Cabinet. A total of 13 (52 per cent) ministers have declared their educational qualification to be between Class 8 and Class 12, while 11 (44 per cent) are graduates or have higher degrees. One minister has declared his education qualification as 'just' literate.

The BJP top brass has expressed faith in the junior MLAs led by Bhupendra Patel, with more than half under 51 years of age. A total of 13 (52 per cent) ministers have declared their age to be between 31 and 50 years, while the remaining 12 (48 per cent) have declared their age to be between 51 and 70 years. As many as 18 ministers in the Cabinet have declared liabilities out of which the minister with the highest liabilities is Jagdish Panchal at Rs 3.13 crore.



INDIA, NEPAL TO CARRY OUT JOINT ARMY TRAINING EXERCISE IN U'KHAND

India and Nepal will carry out joint military training exercise 'Surya Kiran' at Uttarakhand's Pithoragarh from September 20, the Indian Army announced on Friday.

Team Absolute | New Delhi

During this exercise, an infantry battalion from the Indian Army and a formation of equivalent strength from Nepali Army would be sharing their experiences gained during the conduct of various counter-insurgency operations over a prolonged period in their respective countries.

As part of the exercise, both the armies would familiarise themselves with each other's weapons, equipment, tactics, techniques, and procedures of operating in a counter-insurgency environment in mountainous terrain. Also, there would be a series of expert academic discussions on various subjects such as humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HADR), high-altitude warfare, jungle warfare etc.



The joint military training would culminate with a gruelling 48 hours exercise to validate the performance of both the armies in counter-insurgency in mountainous terrain.

The last edition of Exercise Surya Kiran was conducted in Nepal in 2019.

Last year, Indian Army chief, Gen M.M. Naravane visited Nepal to enhance the bilateral relationship. He met then Prime Minister K.P. Sharma Oli, as well as his counterpart, Gen Purna Chandra Thapa. The ties between the two countries came under strain last year after China increased its influence in Nepal.

"The exercise is part of an initiative to develop inter-operability and sharing expertise between the two nations," the Indian Army said. His joint military training will go a long way in improving bilateral relations and also will be a major step towards further strengthening the traditional friendship between the two nations, it added.

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Fire breaks out in basement of CBI building, doused

Team Absolute | New Delhi

A fire broke out in the basement of the CBI building located at the CGO complex in the Lodhi road area of the national capital on Friday afternoon.

A fire official told IANS that the department received a call about a blaze in the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) building at around 1:40 p.m.

"A total of 8 fire tenders were immediately rushed to the spot," he said.

As per latest reports, the firemen doused the fire at 2.30 p.m. The official said that the fire had mainly caught the electrical board and the false ceiling due to which white smoke could be seen billowing out from the basement area.

All the staff present in the building were quickly evacuated.



"The exact cause of the fire is being ascertained," the official added.

Meanwhile, panic gripped the people in and around the CBI building as the eight fire tenders blaring loud sirens rush in to douse the flames.

The incident occurred just a day after a fire broke out in a godown of a factory in west Delhi's Mayapuri. The blaze was brought under control and no casualties were reported.

Grant of Rs 2,427 cr released to states for urban local bodies

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Finance Ministry on Friday released an amount of Rs 2,427 crore to 11 states for the urban local bodies.

The amount released is the 1st instalment of tied grants for the year 2021-22. These grants have been provided for the Non-Million Plus cities (NMPs) including Cantonment Boards.

The 15th Finance Commission, in its report for the period from 2021-22 to 2025-26, has divided urban local bodies into two categories: Million-Plus urban agglomerations/cities (excluding Delhi and Srinagar), and all other cities and towns with less than one million population (Non-Million Plus cities) and has recommended separate grants for them.

Out of the total grants recommended by it for Non-Million Plus cities, 40 per cent is basic (untied) grant and the remaining 60 per cent is tied grant. Basic grants (untied) can be utilised for location specific felt needs, except for payment of salary and incurring other establishment expenditure.

On the other hand, tied grants for the Non-Million Plus cities are released for supporting and strengthening the delivery of basic services out of which 50 per cent is earmarked for



'Sanitation Solid Waste Management and attainment of star ratings as developed by the Housing and Urban Affairs Ministry and the remaining 50 per cent is tied to 'Drinking water, rainwater harvesting and water recycling. The tied grants are meant to ensure availability of additional funds to urban local bodies over and above the funds allocated by the Centre and the state governments for sanitation and drinking water under various centrally-sponsored schemes and provide quality services to citizens. The states are required to transfer the grants to the ULBs within 10 working days of receipt, and any delay beyond 10 working days requires them to release the grants with interest.

'Punjipati Pujan Diwas', Congress takes jibe at PM's birthday

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Indian Youth Congress (IYC) observed 'unemployment day' across the country on Friday to mark Prime Minister Narendra Modi's 71st birthday.

Addressing a press conference here, Congress spokesperson Supriya Shrinete said that in the last seven years since coming to power, the Prime Minister has committed seven 'blunders' for which the country is suffering.

She also said that the Prime Minister's birthday should be observed as 'Poonjipati Pujan Diwas' (Capitalist Worship Day), as the government has put the country on sale besides benefiting only the rich.

The day should also be marked as 'anti-farmer day', 'unemployment day', 'inflation day', 'economic slow-down day', 'Corona mismanagement day' and 'raid day', Shrinete added.



The Youth Congress observed the Prime Minister's birthday as 'national unemployment day', saying that due to the wrong policies of the government, people are facing the double burden of inflation and unemployment, with the latter breaking all the records of the previous 50 years.

Youth Congress President Srinivas BV said that while the birthday of Jawaharlal Nehru is celebrated as Children's Day, the birthday of PM Modi, who made India unemployed, is being celebrated as national unemployment day.

The Congress also said that Modi must understand that employment is not provided by rhetoric, one has to work to provide jobs for which policies have to be implemented.

The mark the occasion, the youth wing of the Congress took out a 200 feet long flag march in the national capital.

Sukhbir Badal, Harsimrat Kaur detained briefly over farm law protests in Delhi

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) chief Sukhbir Singh Badal and Lok Sabha MP Harsimrat Kaur Badal were among several Akali leaders detained by the Delhi Police amid their protests against the three farm laws here. The leaders, however, were later set free.

SAD held demonstrations near Parliament to mark their protest against the completion of a year of the enactment of the farm laws.

Since Friday morning, hundreds of protesters, including Akali Dal leaders, marched on Delhi's Rakabganj Road.

The leaders also addressed the workers and termed the protest as the 'Black Friday Protest'.

The detainees were brought to the Parliament Street police station. Although all the leaders were released after some time, SAD chief Sukhbir Badal told IANS:



"We were arrested by the Delhi Police, after sometime the Magistrate released us. We have

given our memorandum so that our message reaches the government."

Another Delhi Akali Dal leader told IANS: "For the first time in history, thousands of people were protesting outside Parliament. We held a peaceful protest and respect everyone's sentiments."

"The only demand from the government is to withdraw these laws because the farmer is not happy. Had he been happy, he would not have been sitting on the borders of Delhi for a year." Harsimrat Kaur thanked all the workers and also targeted the government.

"This fight of farmers will continue till three agricultural laws are not withdrawn. The government used to say 'Sabka Saath Sabka Vishwas'. They have not supported the farmers, but have betrayed the farmers."

In view of the protests, the Delhi Police had closed the roads by putting barricades at various places. In addition, a large number of police personnel were also deployed.

SC allows Kerala govt to conduct offline exams for Class 11

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Supreme Court on Friday expressed satisfaction over the steps being taken by the Kerala government to ensure that no untoward situation is faced by students and approved its decision to conduct offline exam for Class 11.

A bench headed by Justice A.M. Khanwilkar said: "We are convinced by the explanation offered by the state and trust authorities will take all precautions and necessary steps so that no untoward situation is faced by students who are of tender age and appearing for the proposed examination."

The bench observed that the third wave is not in the offing immediately, and it had earlier intervened, as there was a possibility of a third wave of corona by September.

In an affidavit, the state government had contended that online examinations would prejudice students belonging to backward classes, who have no access to either computer and mobile phone. The bench, also comprising Justice C.T. Ravikumar, said the Kerala government has given convincing explanations, and noted that holistic approach has to be taken in the matter and the authorities concerned are conscious of their duties.

The top court modified its order of stay passed on September 3 on a petition by Rasoolshan A, represented by advocate Prashant Padmanabhan, challenging the Kerala High Court order declining to interfere with the state government decision to conduct offline exams. The top court dismissed the petition. The state government

said the Class 11 marks are added to Class 12 scores for the purposes of higher education, making it imperative to hold offline exams. The top court observed that the affidavit filed by the state states it is taking all measures related to the coronavirus protocol.

On September 3, the Supreme Court had stayed the Kerala government decision to conduct offline exam for Class 11 from September 6, citing the alarming situation in the state, which accounts for nearly 70 per cent of Covid cases in the country.

The bench had orally observed: "There is an alarming situation in Kerala. It accounts for nearly 70 per cent cases of the country, with around 30,000 daily cases. Children of tender age can't be exposed to risk."

AFTER HC RAP, FRESH SIT TO PROBE MAINPURI TEEN'S DEATH IN SCHOOL

Lucknow: Following a rap by the Allahabad High Court, Uttar Pradesh DGP Mukul Goel has set up a new special investigation team (SIT) to probe the mysterious death of a 16-year-old Mainpuri girl student, who was found hanging in her school in suspicious circumstances in 2019.

The court has asked the police authorities to update the court after a month with the progress in the investigation into the matter. The family members of the deceased girl had alleged that she was sexually assaulted and killed.

The court also issued a directive on Thursday that the state government must issue an order directing its officers to complete the investigation of rape cases within two months or within the time limit as per amended provisions of the Criminal Procedure Code (CrPC).

The court further directed the police authorities to ensure that family members of the girl concerned are not pressurized during investigation and to ensure their safety.

A division bench comprising, Acting Chief Justice Munishwar Nath Bhandari and Justice Anil Kumar Ojha was hearing a public interest litigation filed by one Mahendra Pratap Singh. In the PIL, the petitioner had alleged that the police were not fairly investigating the said incident and have been protecting the actual accused.

During the course of hearing, additional advocate general Manish Goyal, representing the state government, informed the court that the concerned investigation officers, ASP and DSP, who were initially investigating the case, have been suspended by the state government.

Further, a new SIT has been formed to investigate the case afresh. The mother of the deceased girl had stated in the FIR that her daughter used to complain that she knew some secrets of the school and that is why the principal was torturing her.

One year of farm laws: Punjab CM asks Centre to scrap them

Team Absolute | Chandigarh:

As the contentious farm laws passed by the Centre completed a year, Punjab Chief Minister Amarinder Singh on Friday demanded immediate scrapping of the legislations by the union government, calling for detailed discussions to find a way forward with the farmers, who have been on a mass protest since November 26 last year.

Pointing out that many farmers had died in these protests, the Chief Minister said it was high time the Central government realised its blunder and withdrew the legislations in the interest of the farmers and the nation.

The Chief Minister, wearing a #nofarmers_nofood bade, was inaugurating the third state-level virtual Kisan Mela organised by Punjab Agricultural University, Ludhiana.

The two-day mela is centered on the theme on eliminating stubble burning.

"Till date, the Indian constitution has been amended as many as 127 times, so why can it not be amended once again to scrap the farm laws and resolve the imbroglio resulting from them," asked the Chief Minister.

"What is the problem in doing it a 128th time," he demanded to know from the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)-led government at the Centre, which was out to ruin the farmers. What was happening with the farmers today was extremely sad, given the immense



contribution made by them to India's development and progress, said Amarinder Singh, calling for immediate revocation of the laws, which he said were detrimental to the interest not just of the agricultural community but the entire country.

Recalling that he had been asked by the Centre to stop Punjab's farmers from going to Delhi last November, the Chief Minister said he had refused point blank to do so, as protest is the democratic right of farmers.

"Why should they not protest? How can I stop them," he asked, making it clear that he

continues to stand with the farmers in their fight against the 'draconian' legislations, with his government continuing to give compensation and jobs to the families of the deceased farmers. Noting the contribution of Punjab and its farmers to the country's growth, the Chief Minister said the state, with only 1.53 per cent of total geographical area of India, produces about 18 per cent of the country's wheat, 11 per cent paddy, 4.4 per cent cotton and 10 per cent milk.

For the past many decades, Punjab has been contributing about 35-40 per cent of wheat and 25-30 per cent of rice to the central pool, he said, expressing pride in the achievements of the state's farmers.

The Chief Minister pointed out that the state had attained a record wheat productivity (5,188 kg per hectare) and production (182.6 lakh tons) during 2018-19. It also achieved a record rice productivity (4,366 kg per hectare) and production (133.8 lakh tons) during 2017-18.

Record cotton productivity (827 kg lint per hectare) was also achieved during 2019-20, he added, giving full credit for these achievements to the hardworking farmers of Punjab and the improved agricultural technologies developed by PAU.

The Chief Minister, who recalled that he had been attending Kisan Melas since 1970, stressed on the importance of agriculture as

the lifeline of Punjab, and urged farmers to take full advantage of PAU's advancements in technologies, seeds, etc.

He underlined the importance of continued research to keep pace with the developments in agriculture the world over. Citing Israel's success in use of drip irrigation for judicious use of the fast-depleting water table, the Chief Minister said Punjab's groundwater level had been continuously going down. The state's diversification programme was linked to ensure minimal use of water, he added.

CHANGE OF NAME

I Shyam Pada Bera residing at Vill Chakdha Po Hansuri PS-Usthi Distt-24 Parganas South Pin -743609 inform that my wife date of birth in my service record book has been incorrectly marked 02.05.1986 so my wife correct date of birth should recorded in my service record book 02.05.1983 so in future she should be known by this correct Dob by 02.05.1983



AFTER ED, CBI, NOW IT 'SEARCHES' ANIL DESHMUKH'S NAGPUR PROPERTIES

The IT action covers educational institutions run or managed by the ex-minister or his family members or their close associates, certain offices, and residential premises.

Team Absolute | Nagpur

After the Enforcement Directorate and the Central Bureau of Investigation, the Income Tax Department on Friday was "searching" premises linked with former Maharashtra Home Minister Anil Deshmukh in Nagpur and other places for alleged tax irregularities.

The developments came in the wake of the ED filing a charge sheet in the Deshmukh case which claims that the senior Nationalist Congress Party leader and an associate had allegedly received amounts of Rs 20 crore each.

The IT action covers educational institutions run or managed by the ex-minister or his family members or their close associates, certain offices, and



residential premises. The ED charge sheet came in the alleged corruption case against Deshmukh in which now dismissed cop Sachin Vaze had claimed that he was given a target to collect Rs 100 crore per month from Mumbai restaurateurs in his statement to the ED.

Vaze also alleged that Deshmukh and another minister had received kickbacks of Rs 40 crore from some police officers for reversing their transfers ordered by the then city police chief Param Bir Singh.

On Thursday, the state government suspended Deshmukh's ex-personal secretary Sanjiv Palande - an officer of additional collector rank - after his arrest by the ED on June 26 in the same case.

All shops in Pune to stay shut on Sunday for Ganesh Visarjan: Pawar

Maharashtra deputy chief minister Ajit Pawar further said essential services will remain exempted. Also, restaurants and hotels will remain open.

Team Absolute | Pune

Maharashtra deputy chief minister Ajit Pawar said on Friday all shops in Pune would remain closed on September 19 on the occasion of Ganesh Visarjan. However, essential services will remain exempted, Pawar said.

The senior Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) leader also said that restaurants and hotels will remain open. The shutdown will be effective across Pune city, Pune cantonment and rural areas.

The 10-day Ganesh Chaturthi festival, which usually sees millions crowding the city streets, is being celebrated across Maharashtra in a low-key manner with several curbs in place amid the unrelenting Covid-19 pandemic. In the wake of a ban on physical visits of devotees to community pandals (marquees), a lot of mandals in the state have arranged online 'darshan' or telecast of their idols through their official websites.

The government has been urging for a muted celebration of the key festival as fears of an imminent third wave of the virus writ



larger. Earlier, chief minister Uddhav Thackeray had said people's health was more important than any festival and appealed to citizens to launch a strong movement against coronavirus. He said he prayed to Lord Ganesh to destroy all "evil and negativity". In Mumbai, police have imposed orders under CrPC section 144 prohibiting assembly of five or more persons between September 10 and 19. No procession of any kind would be allowed in the city during this period and devotees would not be allowed to visit Ganesh pandals either. While the home department has issued a circular banning visits to pandals, the height of Lord Ganesh idols to be installed has been restricted as well.

Mumbai Police book actor, others for driving ex-Mr India to suicide

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The Mumbai Police have booked Bollywood actor Sahil Khan and four others for allegedly instigating prominent physique-builder and former "Mr India" Manoj Patil to commit suicide, officials said here on Friday.

Patil, who survived the suicide attempt early on Thursday morning, is currently undergoing treatment at the BMC-run RN Cooper Hospital, Vile Parle.

"An athlete and body-builder, Patil had bagged the prestigious title of 'Mr India - Men's Physique Overall Championships-2016', conducted by the government-recognised Indian Body

Builders Federation," IBBF General Secretary Hiral Sheth told IANS. According to police, Patil allegedly tried to end his life by swallowing some pills at his home in Saileela Apartment in Oshiwara, but was rushed to hospital by his family and survived.

Patil, 29, who also dabbles in modelling, had recently submitted a complaint letter to the Oshiwara police in which, among other things, he accused Khan and others for allegedly creating issues in his professional career and defaming him via the social media, and demanding action against them.

The police, who have lodged a FIR based on Patil's letter, will record his state-

ment after he fully recovers before taking the investigations further though no arrests have been made so far in the case.

Incidentally, on Thursday, Khan rubbished all the allegations levelled against him and informed the media that the entire matter was between Patil and another person named Raj Faujdar of New Delhi who had come in his (Khan's) contact on some social networking site.

The police have booked Khan and others under Indian Penal Code sections pertaining to abetment of suicide, attempt to commit offences, defamation, criminal intimidation, and common intent.

26 OF 28 DAMS IN RAIGAD DISTRICT FILLED TO CAPACITY



Raigad: The storage level of 26 out of 28 dams in Raigad district in Maharashtra is full this monsoon, with water being discharged from 20 of them, an Irrigation official said on Friday. He said Karle Dam in Shrivardhan and Khaire Dam in Mahad were 98 per cent full, adding that monsoon rains were over in many parts of the district.

Arrested Cop's Rs 40 Crore Bribe Charge On Maharashtra Ex-Home Minister

This statement is part of charge sheet filed recently by the ED against Deshmukh's former personal secretary Sanjeev Palande and personal assistant Kundan Shinde in connection with a money laundering case.

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Maharashtra Transport Minister Anil Parab and his then cabinet colleague Anil Deshmukh allegedly received Rs 40 crore from 10 DCs in Mumbai to reverse the order of their transfer issued by the then city police commissioner Param Bir Singh, dismissed police officer Sachin Waze has claimed in his statement to the Enforcement Directorate (ED).

This statement is part of charge sheet

filed recently by the ED against Deshmukh's former personal secretary Sanjeev Palande and personal assistant Kundan Shinde in connection with a money laundering case.

In July 2020, Param Bir Singh had issued an order of transfer of 10 DCs in Mumbai.

Waze, in his statement claimed that Mr Deshmukh, who was then the home minister, and Anil Parab were not happy with the transfer order issued by Param Bir Singh. "Later I came to know that a sum of Rs 40 crore was collected from the police officers listed in the transfer order. Out of that Rs 20 crore each were given to Anil Deshmukh and Anil Parab," Waze claimed. Besides the arrested duo - Palande and Shinde - the charge-sheet filed in the money laundering case also names Waze as an accused. However, neither Deshmukh, an NCP leader, nor his family members

were named as accused in the charge sheet.

Palande and Shinde are currently in judicial custody in the case.

Waze, an assistant police inspector in Mumbai, was arrested in March this year in connection with the explosives-SUV found parked near industrialist Mukesh Ambani's south Mumbai residence and the murder of Thane businessman Mansukh Hiran. The charge-sheet says that Palande and Shinde had played a key role in the money laundering case. The central agency said its probe has revealed that Deshmukh used to call Waze about handing over money collected from bars and restaurants. For instance, between January and February 2021, Waze handed over 16 bags containing Rs 4.6 crore to Shinde, while Palande was instrumental in passing on the instructions of the NCP leader to Waze.

Top cosmologist T Padmanabhan passes away

Team Absolute | Pune

Cosmologist Prof. T Padmanabhan, a globally renowned theoretical physicist and Dean of the Academic Department of Inter-University Centre for Astronomy & Astrophysics, passed away following a massive heart attack, a top official said here on Friday.

He was 64 and is survived by his wife Vasanthi and daughter Hamsa.

Padmanabhan, who hailed from Thiruvananthapuram and was conferred with the Padma Shri in 2007, breathed his last at his home here, stunning the scientific community.

"This is one of the saddest days in the history of the IUCAA and the Indian scientific community today. Prof Thanu Padmanabhan passed away this morning as a result of a cardiac arrest," IUCAA Director Somak Raychaudhury said in a message. Principal Scientific Adviser to the Government, K VijayRaghavan, condoled his death.

"Shocked to hear of the passing of Prof Thanu Padmanabhan. His research linking general relativity and thermodynamics in new ways, and in other areas, has been widely recognised. Scholar, communicator, extraordinary scientist, friend to many. He will be much missed," he said.

Maharashtra govt appoints three state information commissioners



Team Absolute | Mumbai

The Maharashtra government on Friday announced the appointment of three state information commissioners (SIC).

Retired bureaucrats Suresh Chandra Gairola, Samir Sahay and Rahul Bhalchandra Pandey were appointed to the post.

Activists said that it took nearly two

years for the state government to fill these posts and in the meantime, the post of Amravati SIC also fell vacant. "There are over 60,000 second appeals pending for hearing. The Act continues to remain on paper with vacant posts not being filled promptly," said Right to Information (RTI) activist Anil Galgali.

According to the government, chief minister Uddhav Thackeray approved the names a few days ago, post which the Governor approved the names too and an order was issued yesterday.

While hearing a PIL filed by former chief information commissioner Shailesh Gandhi and some RTI activists, the Bombay high court in August had directed the state government to provide a roadmap for filling up vacancies for the posts of information commissioners of the State Information Commission (SIC) along with other top posts within a month.

In September 2020, the court had asked the state to fill up the three vacant posts for information commissioners at Pune, Nagpur and Nashik at the earliest.

PORTION OF UNDER-CONSTRUCTION FLYOVER CRASHES IN MUMBAI, 14 INJURED

Mumbai: At least 14 persons were injured when a portion of an under-construction flyover at Bandra Kurla Complex here crashed early on Friday, the BMC Disaster Control said. The incident occurred around 4.40 a.m. when a girder of the SELR flyover being built by the MMRDA in Bandra East came crashing down in the early hours. All the 14 injured men were rushed to the BMC's V.N. Desai Hospital for treatment and their condition is now stable. They are identified as: Anil Singh, 28; Arvind Singh, 29; Azhar Ali, 26; Mustafa Ali, 28; Riyazuddin Ali, 23; Motallab Ali, 28; Riyaz Ali, 21; Atish Ali, 22; Akbar Ali, 25; Shrawan, 49; Rais Ali, 22; Aziz-Ul-Huq, 29; Parvez, 22 and Shrimand, 25.

AIMIM workers protest against Thackeray

Team Absolute | Aurangabad

The All India Majlis-E-Ittehadul Muslimeen (AIMIM) on Friday, September 17, 2021, held an agitation here against Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray before his arrival for an event, wherein the protesters sarcastically 'thanked' him for resolving various problems faced by the city and the Marathwada region of the State.

This unique protest was held near Baba Petrol Pump in the city.

Thackeray arrived in Aurangabad for a flag-hoisting ceremony on the occasion of the Marathwada Mukti Sangram Din (Marathwada Liberation Day) at a memorial located in Siddharth Garden.

The AIMIM workers stood at the square carrying plac-



ards in hands, which read. "Thank you chief minister for resolving the drought-related woes, clearing the irrigation backlog and for resolving other issues." Former AIMIM corporator Naser Siddiqui said, "Aurangabad is now known as the city of potholes. Shiv Sena says that the party has given 14 mayors to the city. But the chief minister should assess what work they have done for the city." "So we are standing here to thank the chief minister," he said.

Maharashtra government says no action against Narayan Rane in Nashik FIR till September 30

Rane was arrested on August 24 and later granted bail by the Mahad magistrate court. He had stoked a controversy after his statement in Raigad that he would have slapped the Maharashtra CM for "not knowing how many years India has been independent."

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The Maharashtra government Friday extended its interim statement till September 30 that no coercive action will be taken against Union Minister and Rajya Sabha MP Narayan Rane, who challenged the FIR filed by the Nashik Cyber Police over his remark against Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray.

After Rane's counsel sought interim protection from court in the FIRs other than the one registered in Nashik, the HC suggested him to file separate petitions instead of one. The FIRs have been registered at Mahad,



Thane, Pune, Jalgaon, Ahmednagar and other places.

A division bench of Justices SS Shinde and NJ Jamadar was hearing Rane's plea seeking to quash the FIRs against him.

"The FIRs are from different police stations of different jurisdictions. Let the challenge to each of the FIR be in separate petitions. It will be more convenient for the prosecution in taking instructions from each police station," Justice Shinde said and added that the bench will tag all petitions together for hearing.

Rane's counsels agreed and said that they will file separate petitions and, in the meantime, Mundargi sought an interim protection in all FIRs registered against the union minister in connection with his August 23-remark.

He said that while the government had earlier stated that it would not take any coercive action against Rane in the FIR registered in Nashik, similar protection will be granted in other cases as well. However, the court said that it would first hear the pleas and then decide on the same.

Additional Public Prosecutor JP Yagnik said that the petitioner had assured that he would cooperate with the probe conducted by Nashik Police and has been asked to appear before it on September 25. Mundargi said that his client will cooperate and as the Nashik Police have sent him a notice under Section 41A of the Criminal Procedure Code (CrPC) asking him to appear, he will do so via videoconferencing on September 25.

Rane was arrested on August 24 and later granted bail by the Mahad magistrate court. He had stoked a controversy after his statement in Raigad that he would have slapped the Maharashtra CM for "not knowing how many years India has been independent."

Rane's plea in the HC stated that the Nashik Police Commissioner was working under pressure from the Shiv Sena, the ruling party in the state, and that multiple FIRs were lodged against him with the only intention to "harass him by launching a false prosecution." HC will hear Rane's pleas next on September 30.



EDITOR'S SPECS

This is not how Centre should be dealing with recession

Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, while announcing the National Monetisation Pipeline (NMP), said that asset monetisation is based on the philosophy of creation through monetisation and is aimed at "tapping private sector investment for new infrastructure creation." If one looks at the two volumes of details provided by the NITI Aayog and the economic policy of this government it will be clear that NMP has nothing to do with infrastructure development. It is, instead, a cover-up of the massive resource crunch the country is staring at.

The Centre is facing a serious financial crisis because of the exigencies created by the pandemic and its own policies that are tuned to help big corporations. The lakhs of crores of cess and surcharges it has collected haven't helped the government tide over the crisis. NMP will aggravate this crisis. Disinvestment of profitable Navratna companies will result in a loss of dividend, a major source of income for the Centre. Tax exemptions to the so-called investors will take away another major share of income. Central funds will be squeezed and this, in turn, will have a bearing on state finances. The Centre is now advising panchayats to find ways to monetise their properties. These policies reflect poorly on the government's economic management and speak of the lack of planning at a time when the economy is undergoing a depression. The huge tax exemptions to big corporate houses has aggravated the situation. States begging for resources does not augur well for cooperative federalism. Instead of helping states to face this economic depression, the Centre is busy cutting its resources. All the cesses and surcharges that are not shared with states come to about 20 per cent of the total revenues of the Centre. States have been demanding that this money should be shared with them, particularly while fighting a pandemic. Developing basic infrastructure and the production sector is the only way to face an economic crisis. The Centre has the responsibility to help states in this respect. That should not be done by selling or handing over public assets to private individuals and corporations.

'INDIAN HEALTHCARE MUST PLEDGE TO CHECK NEONATAL MORTALITY'

Indian healthcare too must take a pledge to overcome this burden and strive towards arresting the problems that cause neonatal mortality, say the healthcare professionals.

September 17 is commemorated as the World Patient Safety Day, and this year the World Health Organization has come forward with "Safe Maternal & Newborn Care" as the theme to promote better maternity and child-care across the world.

Indian healthcare too must take a pledge to overcome this burden and strive towards arresting the problems that cause neonatal mortality, say the healthcare professionals.

India contributes to one-fifth of global child births, and the country is also a large contributor to the neonatal deaths.

In 2020, infant mortality rate for India was 29.07 deaths per thousand live births, which is considered a quarter of total global fatalities. It is also the highest in absolute numbers for any country in the world, and this depicts a poor image for a nation that intends to emerge into a global superpower.

Dr. Satwinder Singh Sabharwal, COO, Aware Gleneagles Global Hospital, believes that availability of better-quality healthcare at affordable rates will ensure reduce neonatal mortality rate in India and around the World. "Proving easy access to best-in-class doctors and super-specialty healthcare is critical for financially backward and less privileged sections of the society will ensure more mothers do not have to face the heartburn of losing their newborn to ill-fate. Multi-specialty hospitals like ours, which offer best-in-class care at affordable rates are providing a possible solution to this problem," he said.

Dr. Pradeep Panigrahi, Medical Director, SLG Hospitals pointed out that super specialty or modern healthcare is not just expensive but is also physically located at a distance from the common people. "More multi-specialty healthcare facilities need to come up in non-prime, and semi-urban settings to ensure more and more economically backward sections take benefit of it. We are a hospital which is not located in the most prime localities, and we are easily accessible to those coming even from far-off locations like other districts and from locations with poor healthcare infrastructure. India needs



more hospitals like ours to ensure best-quality treatment is available to all at all times," he said. According to Gaurav Khurana, CEO, Gleneagles Global Hospitals the first 24 hours is the most critical phase for every child after birth. "Cutting of umbilical cord ends child's dependence on mother (placenta) for oxygen and nutrition; and from this stage to the child turning one year old is the most crucial phase. Ensuring right medical care at child's birth will play a big role in child's long life, and the medical fraternity in our country

must take a pledge to make sure neonatal mortality is arrested, thus ensuring more children live-on to make India great," he said.

The Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, Government of India has developed the India Newborn Action Plan (INAP) in response to the global Every Newborn Action Plan (ENAP) in 2014. INAP aims to significantly reduce preventable newborn deaths and still-births and to bring down the neonatal mortality rate and still born rate to 'single digits'

by 2030. Focus of INAP is on pre-conception and antenatal care; care during labor and childbirth; immediate newborn care; care of healthy newborn; care of small and sick newborn; and care beyond newborn survival. Indian healthcare fraternity hopes that their effort and the measures taken by the government together will help the country overcome this problem.

international

SPECIAL UN ENVOY MEETS TALIBAN OFFICIALS IN KABUL

Lyons met Mullah Abdul Haq Wasiq, the acting intelligence chief of the Taliban government, during which they also discussed about the safety of UN personnel and the threat posed by the Islamic State (IS) terror group

Kabul | Agencies

Special UN envoy Deborah Lyons met Taliban officials in Kabul to discuss the importance of humanitarian assistance for the people in the war-torn nation, the world body's mission in Afghanistan announced.

In a statement on Thursday, the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) said that Lyons met Mullah Abdul Haq Wasiq, the acting intelligence chief of the Taliban government, during which they also discussed about the safety of UN personnel and the threat posed by the Islamic State (IS) terror group, Xinhua news agency.

Lyons, who also heads the UNAMA, recently returned to Kabul after attending several meetings on Afghanistan aboard.



On Wednesday, Lyons held a meeting with Taliban's Interior Minister Mullah Sirajuddin Haqqani, stressing the necessity for all UN and humanitarian personnel in Afghanistan to be

able to work without intimidation or obstruction to help Afghan people, according to the UNAMA. "The meeting also addressed the requirement of mutual trust in collec-

tive efforts to improve the challenging situation in Afghanistan, not least in restarting the economy, ensuring civil servants and health workers are paid, as well as medicines and food reaching those most in need," the Mission confirmed.

Earlier this month, Undersecretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs Martin Griffiths visited Kabul and held talks with the Taliban leadership. Meanwhile on Monday at a meeting in Geneva, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said the possibility of a complete economic collapse in Afghanistan was "serious" and highlighted an urgent need for funding support. On Tuesday, the UN appealed to the countries pledging \$1.2 billion in relief for Afghanistan to take actions quickly.

Palestine condemns Israeli opposition to 2-state solution

Ramallah | Agencies

Palestine has condemned the current Israeli government's position of rejecting the two-state solution and its attempts to undermine any opportunity to establish a Palestinian state with East Jerusalem as its capital.

The Palestinian Foreign Ministry said in a statement that the position of Israeli Prime Minister Naftali Bennett and Finance Minister Avigdor Lieberman "is part of the unilateral Israeli measures that aim at liquidating the Palestinian cause." The statement added that the Israeli officials blame the Palestinian leadership under false pretexts "to hide their ambitions of expanding settlements on the lands of the state of Palestine."

Accusing Bennett of being "an enemy of peace", the statement said that "he (Bennett) represents the stances of the settlers, their councils, and their organisa-



tions, which lead to incitement campaigns against the Palestinian people."

Direct peace talks between Israel and the Palestinians, which were sponsored by the US and lasted for nine months, stopped in 2014 following deep disagreements on Israeli settlement and the recognition of establishing a Palestinian state on the 1967 border. Israel occupied the West Bank and East Jerusalem, which are claimed by the Palestinians, in the 1967 Middle East war and has controlled them ever since. The Jewish settlements are considered a violation of international law by most of the international community.

The Jewish settlements are considered a violation of international law by most of the international community.

EU announces new Indo-Pacific strategy

Brussels | Agencies

The European Union (EU) has unveiled a new strategy for enhancing its economic, political and defence existence in the Indo-Pacific region, vowing to cooperate with all members in the region without seeking confrontation.

According to the adopted Joint Communication on the EU Strategy for Cooperation in the Indo-Pacific, the Indo-Pacific region's growing economic, demographic, and political weight makes it a key player in shaping the international order and in addressing global challenges, Xinhua news agency reported. The EU intends to increase its engagement with the region to build partnerships that reinforce the rules-



based international order, address global challenges and lay the foundations for a rapid, just and sustainable economic recovery that creates long-term prosperity.

EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell told a press conference on Thursday that the bloc will seek no confrontation but cooperation with everybody, and the strategy is inclusive to all actors in the region.

Borrell said in a statement issued later that "the world's centre of gravity is moving towards the Indo Pacific, both in geo-economic and geo-political terms.

Biden's QUAD summit could yield up to \$100bn in military sales

Washington | Agencies

US President Joe Biden will be hosting the QUAD countries' heads of governments summit this coming week, in Washington DC, comprising of the US, Japan, Australia, and India. By end of the week, there could be announcements of military deals with Japan, Australia, and India, that may total up to \$100 billion in American defence exports.

In fact, the Australian submarine deal, signed on Thursday, itself is estimated at \$40 billion (and projected to reach \$90 billion in long-term). In the days ahead, before September 24, when the formal QUAD summit will be held, Japan could also well, and does need to, sign up for some \$20-30 billion package, and the same goes for India. India too has its multiple needs for hardware, needs to ramp up fast, and thus could finalise a mega-pur-



chase this week from the US, again in the \$20-30 billion range.

Today, as the 21st century grows beyond its teen years, the US faces unprecedented global and domestic challenges. Not in the least is to overcome the snafu situation that has resulted in Afghanistan. And to counter, to deny (deny, not delay) the rise of China as a world hegemon, Middle Kingdom power, between the Heavens and Planet Earth, in the 21st century.

The US is now leading the QUAD towards a loose but muscular military alliance to prevent the planetary dom-

inance plans of China. As part of the US plan, the Indo-Pacific nations of Japan, India, Australia will need to each boost up their defence and offence capabilities, for their own national, self-interest, with accompanying investments also made by the US in its own force projection in this theatre. Consequently, together the QUAD will become a formidable firewall to the expansionism and military adventurism of China. It makes eminent sense for Japan, Australia, and India to urgently shore up their military and defence abilities, including tools and abilities for offence to give China a bloodied nose if it interferes in their sovereign national interests. The obvious supplier of such military hardware and capabilities are the US defence companies. The obvious payor for such procurements are the governments of Japan, Australia, and India.

Global Covid-19 caseload tops 226.9 mn

Washington | Agencies

The global coronavirus caseload has topped 226.9 million, while the deaths have surged to more than 4.66 million and vaccinations soared to over 5.80 billion, according to the Johns Hopkins University.

In its latest update on Friday morning, the University's Center for Systems Science and Engineering (CSSE) revealed that the current global caseload, death toll and vaccination tally stood at 226,995,950, 4,669,300 and 5,807,211,499, respectively.

The US continues to be the worst-hit country with the world's highest number of cases and deaths at 41,782,046 and 669,987, respectively, according to the CSSE.

In terms of infections, India follows in the second place with 33,347,325 cases. The other worst countries with over 3 million cases are Brazil (21,069,017), the UK (7,373,388), Russia (7,110,656), France (7,021,091), Turkey (6,766,978), Iran (5,378,408), Argentina (5,234,851), Colombia (4,936,052), Spain (4,926,324), Italy (4,623,155), Indonesia (4,181,309), Germany (4,127,174) and Mexico (3,542,189), the CSSE figures showed.

Nations with a death toll of over 100,000 are Brazil (589,246), India (443,928), Mexico (269,913), Peru (198,860), Russia (192,340), Indonesia (139,919), the UK (135,134), Italy (130,167), Colombia (125,782), France (116,508), Iran (116,072) and Argentina (114,101).



DISABLED OR SENIOR CITIZENS WHO CANNOT COME TO THE CENTER, SHOULD BE VACCINATED AT HOME: CM

All eligible persons should get the vaccine by September 26: CM

- Don't put others' lives at risk by not getting vaccinated
- CM reached Sarojini Naidu School and motivated people for vaccination

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has said that due to compulsion for Corona vaccination, arrangements should be at home made by the district administration to vaccinate the differently-abled persons or elderly people who cannot come to the vaccination center. The crisis of the third wave of Corona is not over yet. Corona cases are coming up in many states, so there is a need for vigilance. It is necessary to wear mask and keep distance. All the scientists and doctors of the world are of the opinion that the best way to avoid the Corona epidemic is getting both doses of the vaccine. Free vaccine has been provided to all of us by Prime Minister Modi. All eligible persons must get both doses of the vaccine.

Chouhan said this while motivating the people present at the vaccination center set up at Sarojini Naidu Government Girls Higher Secondary School, Shivaji Nagar, Bhopal for vaccination. It may be noted that on September 17, the 71st birthday of PM Modi, Vaccination Mega Campaign-3 has been organized in the state. Chouhan said that the vaccine dose should be administered early. Seeing you, people should not



say, 'Badi der bhai Nandlala'. This is a dose for life. Chief Minister Chouhan said that if we don't get the vaccine, then we put the lives of others at risk. This vaccine is important for your safety as well as the safety of your family and acquaintances. Chouhan said that the first dose of vaccine is to be administered to 100 percent eligible population of the

state by September 26. To achieve this goal, cooperation of all the people of the state is necessary. Those who have not got vaccinated should get it done and those who have got it done and those who have already taken the first dose, they must also get the second dose done at a fixed time period. Chouhan spoke to Disabled Anil

Kumar and Arun Chaurasia, who came on wheelchairs to the vaccination center and took them personally to the vaccine booth. Chief Minister inspected the vaccination center and inquired about the progress of Vaccination Mega Campaign-3. Public Health and Family Welfare Minister Dr. Prabhuram Choudhary also addressed the gathering.



Vaccinate the remaining citizens by matching with the voter list, said chief minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has called upon the citizens to get both doses of the vaccine under any circumstance for complete protection and safety from Corona. Chouhan was addressing the citizens after observation of the vaccination center located in Maharana Pratap College campus in Vidisha district headquarters on Friday. Chief Minister's wife Sadhna Singh, MLA Basoda Leena Jain, District Panchayat President Toran Singh Dangri were also present. Chouhan said that Prime Minister Narendra

Modi has made free vaccines available by caring about the lives of every citizen of the country. He thanked the Prime Minister and wished him a happy birthday. The Chief Minister said that Corona is controlled now, but it is not eradicated. We all have to be careful about the third wave and stop it, he said. For this, get both doses of the vaccine, wear a mask and follow the guideline of Corona. Chouhan has directed the district administration and health staff to identify those who are not vaccinated by surveying from the voter list and get them vaccinated by September 26 at any cost. The

Chief Minister said that there will be no corona due to vaccination and even if it happens, there will be no danger to life. He also thanked voluntary organisations, public representatives and government employees who have become participants in the mega campaign of vaccine. Earlier, Chief Minister Chouhan discussed with the citizens who came to the vaccination centre to get the vaccine and appealed to them to get all the citizens of their street and locality vaccinated. He also presented certificates to the vaccinated citizens and citation of appreciation to the health employees.

Tractors powered by Green Energy will change the picture of development: Gadkari

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Union Minister for Road Transport and Highways, Nitin Gadkari has said that Indore has found a way to move towards a cleaner, better future by transforming its waste to wealth. He said that Indore has the potential that if it takes a pledge, it can set a new example in climate protection. Union Minister Shri Gadkari was addressing the dedication-foundation programme of road projects at the Brilliant Convention in Indore on Thursday. Chief

Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan presided over the programme. Gadkari said that the Malwa region is known for its farmers. If tractors start operating from CNG here, then not only the farmers will get financial relief but the pace of development of the state will also double. He told the Chief Minister Chouhan to arrange for CNG-run tractors. The central government will provide you the CNG pump. This will be a very good initiative in the field of climate protection in Madhya Pradesh.

Gadkari said that the way the transformation of Waste to Wealth is happening in Indore. In the same way, I would suggest to the Indore Municipal Corporation Commissioner that he should also work in the field of making green hydrogen from the dirty water of the toilet. In future, instead of petrol and diesel, vehicles will be able to run with green hydrogen. Today India is known for importing oil, if we work in this direction, we will be known for exporting green hydrogen in future.

Make disability a strength, not weakness: Governor

- There is no goal that the disabled cannot achieve
- Governor takes part in Disabled Aids Distribution Programme on PM's birthday

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Governor Mangubhai Patel has said that disability should be made your strength, not weakness. No physical weakness is ever greater than self-confidence. Referring to the achievements of the disabled of ancient and modern India, he said that the body of Ashtavakra, the author of Ashtavakra Gita, was crooked from 8 places. In the Tokyo Paralympic Games, the disabled have brought 19 medals for the country which proves that nothing can stop such spirits. He



called for the need to increase awareness and sensitivity towards disability in the society. Patel was addressing the Disabled Aids Distribution Programme organized in the Higher Secondary School for the Visually and Hearing Impaired, Shahjahanabad, located in Sparsh Complex, on the birth anniversary of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Patel said that the Disabled should

consider the equipments given to them only as means. Disabled should make their talent, courage and dedication achievable. There is no destination to which the handicapped cannot reach. There is no goal that a disabled person cannot achieve. What is needed is the special talent within them which has to be recognized, the hidden power must be awakened and brought

forth. The Governor has said that the society has to understand the problems of disabled and children. It is the responsibility of the family, society and all of us to recognize their talent and help them to grow. We must give new direction to their energy. Attractive cultural performances were given by the differently-abled students in the programme. Hearing impaired girl Khalima Ansari performed a solo dance on Vande Mataram. Visually impaired student Mahima Mali sang the song 'Ek Pyar Ka Naghma Hai' and student Aditya Bhairav performed 'Ganesh Vandana'. Mentally challenged students Jatni, Indresh, Tanu, Kumkum and Devraj presented a group dance on patriotic songs. Principal Secretary Social Justice and Disabled Welfare Prateek Hajela performed the vote of thanks.

16-year-old girl gang-rape, 3 booked

A case has been registered against three men for allegedly raping a 16-year-old girl in Gunga locality in Madhya Pradesh's Bhopal, police said.

Team Absolute | Bhopal

A 16-year-old girl was allegedly raped by three men who also filmed the incident on a mobile phone in Bhopal, police said.

The incident took place on September 12 in Bhopal's Gunga locality. The victim, a Class 10 student, is a resident of Sanchi area in Raisen district.

Police said a case of gang rape under the relevant sections of the

IPC and Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act was registered against the three accused at the 'Mahila police station' in Raisen district.

The three accused are yet to be arrested, police said.

The case diary related to the incident was sent to the Gunga police station in Bhopal where the incident took place, police said.

he victim, in her complaint, stated that the three accused came to collect some religious

donation while she was alone at her sister's home in the Gunga area on September 12, police said. She had gone to Gunga to take care of her ailing sister.

According to police, the victim claimed that she could identify one of the accused who lived in the area. She said while the two accused took turns to rape her, the third accused filmed the entire act.

The trio then threatened to release the video on social media

if the victim dared to file a complaint against them, police said.

The girl narrated her ordeal to her father after she went back home to Raisen. Her father then took her to the Sanchi police station from where she was referred to the 'Mahila police station' in Raisen where a case of gangrape was registered against the trio.

No arrests have been made so far in connection to the case and police are further probing the matter.

City students secured 99 per cent in JEE Main 2021 results

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Two students from Aakash Institute Bhopal secured an impressive 99 percentile and above in the consolidated result of the prestigious Joint Entrance Examination (JEE) Main 2021, much to the elation of their parents, and the entire staff of the institute. The students who scored 99 percentile and above are Varun Mishra (99.17 percentile) and Aditya Gupta (99.04 percentile).

The students joined Aakash Institute in a two-year classroom programme to crack IIT JEE, considered the world's toughest

entrance exam. They attributed their entry into the elite list of top percentiles in JEE to their efforts in understanding the concepts, and their strict adherence to their learning schedule. "We are grateful that Aakash Institute has helped us with both. But for the content and coaching from the institute, we would not have grasped many concepts in different subjects in a short period of time," they said. Congratulating the students, Aakash Chaudhry, Managing Director, Aakash Educational Services Limited (AESL), said, "We congratulate both the stu-

dents from Bhopal for their exemplary feat. Over 10 lakh students registered for the four sessions of JEE Main 2021 from across the country. Their achievement as top percentile scorer speaks volumes of their hard work and dedication as well as the support of their parents. We wish them all the best with their future endeavors."

A total of 10,48,012 students had applied for all four sessions of which 9,39,008 students had appeared for the exam. As many as 2,52,954 candidates appeared for all four sessions, as per the data provided by NTA.

State, which was once called Bimaru state, became an example of development under leadership of Chouhan: Gadkari

Team Absolute | Bhopal

The Union Minister for Road Transport and Highways, Nitin Gadkari said that once Madhya Pradesh was included among BIMARU states, but under the leadership of Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan, the development of Madhya Pradesh has got a new direction. Madhya Pradesh has achieved excellence in all fields including development of infrastructure, agriculture sector, science and technology. I believe that the overall development of any state is possible only when its infrastructure is strong. To give this strength to Madhya Pradesh, a total of 1356 km long 34 road projects at a cost of Rs 9 thousand 577 crore have been inaugurated and foundation stone has been laid today. Along with this, the Central Government will extend all possible cooperation to the State Government in making Madhya Pradesh the Logistic Capital of the country, it is my promise.

Gadkari was addressing the inauguration and foundation stone laying ceremony organised at Brilliant Convention Centre in Indore on Thursday. Chief Minister Chouhan presided over the programme.

Gadkari said that he has started projects worth one and half lakh crore rupees in Madhya Pradesh during his tenure and promised that he will visit Madhya Pradesh again next month and give gift of new projects worth one lakh crore. Giving informa-



tion about the Delhi-Mumbai Expressway, he said that the expressway of 1350 km length would be constructed by January 2023. Madhya Pradesh is also a part of this expressway. Under the expressway, 245 km 8 lane road is being built in the state at a cost of about 11 thousand crores. The distance from Delhi to Mumbai has been reduced from 24 hours to 12 hours through this expressway. He said that many such national highways are being built across the country which have reduced the distance between the states and cities by half. Union Minister Shri Gadkari said that I thank Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan for the new name given by him to Chambal Expressway as Atal Pragati Path. He told that Atal Pragati Path will meet Delhi-Mumbai Expressway. This will prove to be very useful from the point of view of development of the state. Chouhan

said that on the eve of the birthday of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Madhya Pradesh is getting huge gifts of development and this impossible task has been made possible by Gadkari. He said that the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana, which will change the direction and condition of the country, was envisaged by Gadkari along with the former Prime Minister Late Atal Bihari Vajpayee. Chouhan said that a proposal for a new Narmada Expressway of about 1000 km from Amarkantak to Alirajpur has been prepared by the state government. The State Government is soon going to send a proposal to the Government of India to approve this project as Integrated Express-way. He said that this express-way should be named as Narmada Pragati Path and the state government would develop industrial clusters around it, which would also create new employment opportunities. He said that the Bharatmala project of the Government of India plans to develop 35 multi-modal logistics parks across India. Indore and Bhopal have been selected in this. In Ratlam also 1000 acres of land is being provided by the state government, a logistic park should also be developed there. He said that with the cooperation of the central government, we will make the state the logistics capital of the country. Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan said that Buddhi assembly constituency is between three national highways.

Youths should draw inspiration from the personality of PM Modi: Governor

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Governor Mangubhai Patel told the youths to take inspiration from the personality of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Learn from his strong will power, high human sensibilities and devotion to duty and implement them in life. Shri Patel inspired the youth by referring to the personality and methodology of Shri Modi as the Chief Minister of Gujarat. He said that smart and strong methodology is the guarantee of success. Make such a goal which is to be pursued. To achieve the final goal, one should move forward by achieving small goals.

Patel was addressing the programme on the occasion of birth day of PM Modi at Rajiv Gandhi Technological University, Bhopal today. He started the blood donation camp in the university and planted Rudraksh sapling.

Referring to the incident of floods in Surat, Gujarat, Governor Patel said that once there was a severe flood in Surat city. The low-lying localities of the area were flooded up to 14 feet. As soon as the information was received in the



night, he reached the site as in-charge minister. The then Chief Minister Modi was informed about the flood. Modi told that he would reach Surat in the morning itself. Patel told that after coming to Surat, Shri Modi, sitting in a small boat, went door-to-door in the flood-affected area and spoke directly to the people. The flood affected families were overjoyed to find the Chief Minister among them, saying that you have come, now there is no problem. Modi discussed with them with cordiality and inquired about even their small needs. Most of the families said that they could not drink tea for the last two days due to non-availability of tea items. On returning from the tour, Chief Minister Modi directed all the collectors of the districts on the banks of the river late in the night to make small

boats available in Surat before 7 am. In this way, 100 boats were collected and all the materials needed for tea were delivered to every flood affected house between 7 am and 10 am. Patel said that having self-satisfaction is the biggest happiness in life. So it is not appropriate to run after anyone for money, power and prestige in life. He said that there is a favourable environment for start-ups in the country. There is immense potential for growth in the food and agriculture sector. The central government has also created a one lakh crore agri-infra-fund for basic facilities related to agriculture. A seed fund of one thousand crore rupees has been started to provide initial capital. He said that a big market has also been provided to the start-ups. In government tenders, start-ups are also getting the same opportunity as any big company. So far, about 8 thousand startups are registered on the GeM portal, which have also done business of about Rs 2,300 crore. An MoU was also signed between the Rajiv Gandhi Technological University and the National Cadet Corps in the presence of the Governor.

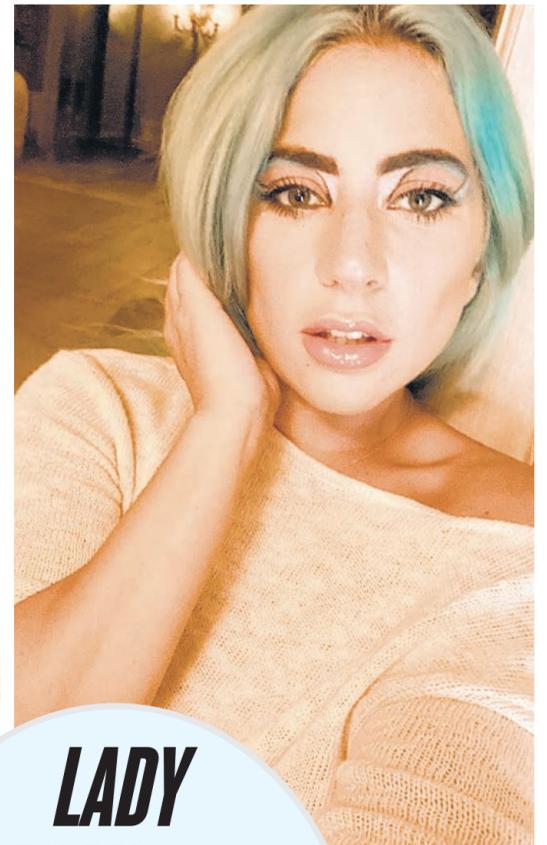


Jaime King, Antonio Banderas to star in 'Banshee'



Los Angeles | Agencies

Hollywood stars Jaime King, Antonio Banderas and Tommy Flanagan have joined the cast of upcoming action-thriller 'Banshee' directed by Jon Keeyes. "Banshee" is a complex story of revenge and family, and having this incredibly talented cast to bring these characters to life is a dream," Keeyes said. The film follows a freelance assassin, codenamed Banshee, who is ambushed by Anthony Greene, a powerful mercenary who killed her father, and who is now seeking to collect a bounty on Caleb, her former black ops mentor. "Banshee" is produced by Jordan Yale Levine and Jordan Beckerman of Yale Productions, alongside Keeyes of Highland Myst, from a script by Matthew Rogers, who wrote the trio's previous movie, 'The Survivalist', reports variety.com. Shaun Sanghani also serves as a producer on the film. "We're excited to have such an amazing cast for this wall-to-wall action movie," said Yale Levine and Beckerman. They added: "Antonio Banderas is a legend and having him alongside Jaime King and Tommy Flanagan in such a high-energy film is going to keep audiences on the edge of their seats." King is the star of Netflix's 'Black Summer' and has appeared in 'Pearl Harbor', 'White Chicks', 'Sin City' and 'Sin City: A Dame to Kill For'. Banderas recently earned an Oscar nomination for his work in Pedro Almodovar's 'Pain and Glory' and also recently starred in 'The Hitman's Wife's Bodyguard'.



LADY GAGA'S 'BORN THIS WAY' RETURNS TO BILLBOARD TOP 10 ALBUM

Los Angeles | Agencies

Lady Gaga's 'Born This Way' album, released in 2011, returns to the top 10 of Billboard's Top Album Sales chart for the first time in over a decade. The set re-enters the list at No. 10 thanks to the September 3 release of the CD and cassette editions of the album's special 10th-anniversary reissue. In the week ending September 9, 'Born This Way' sold 5,000 copies in the U.S. (up 5,251 per cent), according to MRC Data. It sold about 100 copies in the week previous as reported in Billboard.com.

'Born This Way' was originally released on May 23, 2011, and debuted at No. 1 on the June 18, 2011 dated chart. It was last in the top 10 on the July 23, 2011 list. The album was reissued on June 26, 2021, via digital retailers and streaming services with six additional tracks by other artists covering the album's songs. The CD and cassette editions of the reissue followed on September 3, while a vinyl LP release is expected on December 10. At No. 1 on Top Album Sales, veteran hard rock band Iron Maiden claims its first leader, as the act's latest studio effort 'Senjutsu' starts with a little over 61,000 copies sold across CD, vinyl LP, and digital downloads. Drake's 'Certified Lover Boy' begins at No. 2 on Top Album Sales with 46,000 copies sold, solely from digital downloads. It's Drake's 12th top 10 on the tally. Olivia Rodrigo's former No. 1 'Sour' is a non-mover at No. 3 with 20,000. 'Born This Way' was Lady Gaga's second full-length album that explored electronic rock and techno-pop and sold more than one million copies in its first week.

R. Kelly's Breaks Silence: I 'Never' Saw Anything With 'Underage Girls'

Los Angeles | Agencies

Kelly's high-profile sex trafficking trial took a turn this week when his longtime assistant took the stand. R. Kelly is officially on trial for racketeering and sex trafficking charges that could land him in prison for several decades. Since the middle of August, the R&B singer's reported inappropriate relationships with women, specifically underage women, have been explored and argued in criminal trial. On Monday, R. Kelly's longtime executive assistant Diana Copeland, testified against Kelly, while dropping some bombshells of her own. On Friday, September 17, she revealed more in her first public interview... Never witnessed something under... around underage women," Copeland told Michael Strahan in an exclusive interview. Her statement echoes what she said in court earlier in the week, insisting she never any of the alleged abuse, including kidnapping and sexual assault, that other witnesses have described, accord-

ing to the New York Times. Still, she admits there could be a good reason for that. "Now, I did come and go, so I mean, I want to make sure that I am clear that my experience does not negate anybody else's experience." Copeland, who worked for Kelly on and off for 16 years, said that working with him was 'incredible' at the start of his career, she admitted things did become strange, especially when he started living with multiple girlfriends. While she insists that all the women in the house were over 18, she admitted that Kelly kept restrictive rules for his girlfriends, like keeping them away from other men. "They asked me during the trial, 'Did you notice their reaction with males?' And I did," Copeland said. "They didn't want to speak to the males. In fact, sometimes they would ask me to interact with the males."

The singer appeared in a Brooklyn courthouse on Wednesday, August 18 for the start of the high-profile trial, which is likely to last between six and eight weeks, according to CNN. R. Kelly, real name Robert Sylvester Kelly, is facing multiple allegations of sexually abusing several women and underage girls and boys over the last decades, but he has denied any wrongdoing and has pled not guilty to the charges of racketeering, bribery, coercion, enticement and sex trafficking. He's been in federal custody since his arrest in July 2019.



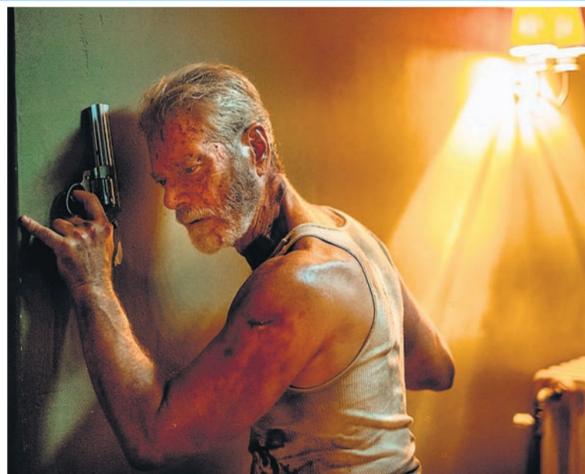
Demi Lovato & G-Eazy Open Up About Painful Past Problems

Los Angeles | Agencies

Demi Lovato, 29, and G-Eazy, 32, opened up about their controversies in a powerful new music video. The A-listers teamed up for their latest song, "Breakdown" which dropped on September 17, and saw the pair get candid about their struggles in the spotlight. The clip began with some real-life headlines flashing on the screen, relating to Demi's drug overdose and G-Eazy's legal troubles. The lyrics then dive into the painful challenges both singers have faced, "Been fighting my demons, but they ain't fighting fair/ But I keep saying 'Everything's alright, I swear/ All alone in a dark space, ain't no light in there/ What's f**ked up is I might actually like it there," G-Eazy raps. The track comes just one week before G-Eazy is set to release his fourth studio album, 'These Things Happen Too', on Sept. 24. As fans would know, he was also arrested and charged with assault on September 13, following a nightclub brawl that left one person needing head stitches. "He was arrested on September 13th inside of 233 West 10 Street (Standard Hotel) for punching a 32 year old male and a 29 year old male,

'Don't Breathe 2': Unlike the first edition, it fails to deliver an immersive experience

FILM REVIEW
BY TROY RIBEIRO
Don't Breathe 2 (Showing in Theatres)
Direction: Rodo Sayagues
Cast: Stephen Lang, Brendan Sexton III, Madelyn Grace, Adam Young, Bobby Schiffield, Rocci Williams and Stephanie Arcila.
Duration: 100 minutes
Ratings: * * * (three stars)



Despite being a skilfully crafted horror-thriller with nail-biting suspense and gore, 'Don't Breathe 2' fails to deliver the immersive experience of its first edition, which was released in 2016. The first edition was a simple story of a burglary gone awry, but this one is a bit more complex. Taking place about eight years after the last film, the plot is not about just some intruders in the same terrifying house of a blind man, who is now living with Phoenix (Madelyn Grace), a girl in her early teens. Norman Nordstrom (Stephen Lang), the blind Navy Seal veteran is fiercely overprotective of Phoenix who we are made to believe is his daughter. She is lonely and rebellious. When Nordstrom is talked into letting the girl go into town, she is noticed by a strange man who sets a chain of events into motion and the motive of these intruders is much more devious than mere burglary. Initially, with Nordstrom having to

save himself and Phoenix from the three intruders who are pure sociopaths, comes closest to echoing the first edition, which is fairly standard. The intruders appear bird-brained. During one of the face-offs, Jared (Bobby Schofield) winds up with his lips and nose sealed with some sort of glue. His dimwitted comrade Jim Bob (Adam Young) pierces a screwdriver through his cheeks so that Jared may breathe. The trio was sent to the Nordstrom house by Raylan (Brendan Sexton III) who had an agenda of his own. Deaths and gore are just a natural progression to the plot. While the actors are all-natural and sincere in their performances, which make the film look real, it is their cardboard-thin characters that allow the suspension of disbelief. The novelty

factor is no more in Stephen Lang's Norman Nordstrom. He is still intimidating but appears tired and jaded. Madelyn Grace as Phoenix is cute and lovable. Stephanie Arcila in a small role, as Hernandez the veteran army ranger and Norman's only connection with society, is poised and polished. The action sequences are intensely pulsating and gory in parts, and for most of the parts you can anticipate the result. The scene that stands out is when Nordstrom acts dead lying in the shallow pool of water, and he responds to the ripples created. Cinematographer Pedro Luque's camera work is certainly worth mentioning. Each frame in the film, with its atmospheric lighting, is picture perfect and visually stimulating but the pulse is missing due to the convolutedly woven drama.

ABSOLUTE PIC OF THE DAY

Halsey





NEW ZEALAND CALL OFF WHITE-BALL TOUR OF PAKISTAN BECAUSE OF SECURITY CONCERNS

Rawalpindi: | Agencies

New Zealand have called off their white-ball tour of Pakistan because of security concerns ahead of the first of three ODIs at Pindi Cricket Ground in Rawalpindi on Friday. New Zealand were visiting Pakistan for the first time after 18 years for a white-ball tour featuring three ODIs which were to be followed by five T20Is in Lahore.

Players and support staff members from both sides did not come out of the hotel and were asked to stay in their rooms. Spectators were not allowed to enter the stadium. After a period of uncertainty and chaos caused by the delay apart from rumours of COVID-19 outbreak in either camp, a statement from New Zealand Cricket (NZC) was issued.

"However, following an escalation in the New Zealand Government threat levels for Pakistan, and advice from NZC security advisors on the ground, it has been decided the BLACKCAPS will not continue with the tour. Arrangements are now being made for the team's departure," read the NZC statement.

The chief executive of NZC David White said it was simply not possible to continue with the tour given the advice he was receiving. "I understand this will be a blow for the PCB (Pakistan Cricket Board), who have been wonderful hosts, but



player safety is paramount and we believe this is the only responsible option."

New Zealand Cricket Players Association chief executive Heath Mills echoed White's sentiments. "We've been across this process throughout and are fully supportive of the decision. The players are in good hands; they're safe -- and everyone's acting in their best interests." NZC also said it will not comment on the details of the security threat nor the updated arrangements for the departing squad.

New Zealand, led by Tom Latham, had arrived in Islamabad on September 11 after losing a five-match T20I series to Bangladesh 3-2. Since the start of this century, New Zealand first came to Pakistan in 2002 under Stephen Fleming. They had to abandon the tour on the morning of the second Test in Karachi after a bomb exploded outside their team hotel. The last time New Zealand toured Pakistan was in 2003 for a five-match ODI series, which they lost 5-0. The PCB issued a statement

shortly after NZC released one, saying that no security threat of any kind existed for the visitors. "Earlier today, New Zealand Cricket informed us they had been alerted to some security alert and have unilaterally decided to postpone the series.

"Pakistan Cricket Board and Pakistan Government made fool-proof security arrangements for all visiting teams. We have assured the New Zealand Cricket of the same. The Pakistan Prime Minister (Imran Khan) spoke personally to the Prime Minister of New Zealand (Jacinda Ardern) and informed her that we have one of the best intelligence systems in the world and that no security threat of any kind exists for the visiting team." "The security officials with the New Zealand team have been satisfied with security arrangements made by the Pakistan Government throughout their stay here. PCB is willing to continue the scheduled matches. However, cricket lovers in Pakistan and around the world will be disappointed by this last minute withdrawal."

The tour had been given a green signal a fortnight ago after the assessment of security measures by independent security consultant Reg Dickason, who had come on the 2002 and 2003 tours as well. New Zealand had trained in Rawalpindi and were set to play the first ODI on Friday before calling off the tour.

Parul wins steeplechase with personal best in National Open athletics

Warangal: | Agencies

Parul Chaudhary of Railways overcame a tough challenge from Maharashtra's Komal Chandrakant Jagdale to win the women's 3000m Steeplechase in the 60th National Open Athletics Championships at the Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium in Hanamkonda here on Thursday.

Though Ram Baboo (Uttar Pradesh) was the only one to come up with a National Record-breaking performance when he won the Men's 35km Race Walk in 2 hours 46 minutes and 31 seconds, it was the women's 3000m Steeplechase that held attention. Both Parul Chaudhary and Komal Jagdale ended up with personal best times.

To be sure, the Tamil Nadu Mixed 4x400m Relay squad came up with a new meet record in an enthralling final which saw fancied the Railways being disqualified after Kiran Pahal, running the third leg, stepped inside the kerb when jostling for space on the inside with Delhi's Pooja. The credit for Tamil Nadu's victory should go to R Vithya Ramaraj's spectacular third leg when she lifted her team



from fifth place to second for P Abhimanyu to come up with a memorable anchor leg that saw him overhaul a 5m lead held by All India Police at the start of the final leg. Aware that she had to outrun the established steeplechaser, Komal Jagdale sought to open up a big lead in the early part of the race. Parul made the most of that pace to script her best time in the event, lowering her personal best by a whopping 10 seconds. It was the first time she dipped home inside 10 minutes. While Parul relied on her better finishing skills to slip past Komal on the final lap after tailing her through the race,

the Maharashtra runner made a last-gasp attempt to surprise her rival on the home stretch but the Railways' ace sensed it and lunged in the nick of time to win by two-hundredths of a second.

Railways' B Aishwarya 'claim' the Women's Long Jump crown with an opening leap of 6.52m that propelled her among the top jumpers in the country. For someone whose previous best effort was over 6.25m on January 3, 2020, and the best this season was 6.16m in the Railways trials, the 24-year old had everyone pleasantly surprised.

England's tour of Pakistan next month in doubt now: reports

Team Absolute | New Delhi

England's tour of Pakistan next month was thrown into doubt on Friday after New Zealand abandoned their international series there on security grounds.

According to a Daily Mail report, the Black Caps did not leave their hotel for the first one-day international and no spectators were admitted to the stadium in Rawalpindi after the country's cricket board received security advice. Before the scheduled time of the toss for the day-nighter, confirmation came that the tourists would be returning home before a ball had been bowled. The England and Wales Cricket



Board (ECB) then said that they will decide on whether next month's tour of Pakistan can go ahead in the next 48 hours. "We're aware of New Zealand's decision to pull out of the Pakistan tour due to a security alert," a spokesperson was quoted as saying by standard.co.uk. "We are liaising with our security team who are on the ground in Pakistan to fully understand

the situation. The ECB Board will then decide in the next 24-48 hours whether our planned tour should proceed. "England men and women are due in Rawalpindi for T20 double-headers on October 13 and 14. It will be the men's first visit to the country since 2005, and the women's first-ever visit. But the tour is in doubt now.

Kolkata | Agencies

Former champions Army Green beat I-league side Sudeva Delhi FC 1-0 to enter the quarter-finals of the 130th Durand Cup here on Friday. Deepak Singh, their two-goal hero from their 3-1 win against Jamshedpur FC (JFC) earlier in the tournament, was on target again to see the Greens through.

The two sides clashed at the Mohun Bagan ground in the final game of Group B, with both of them as well as JFC, also playing their final game simultaneously against FC Goa at the Vivekananda Yuba Bharati Krirangan (VYBK), having a shot at the knockout stages.

JFC, however, went down 0-5 in that game, allowing Army Green to go through along with group toppers FC Goa, who had three wins out of three.



In the initial quarter of the first half, both Army Green and Sudeva created opportunities but it was all Greens after that. In the 9th minute, the Greens had their first major scoring opportunity when Lallawmkima took a brilliant header, but could not go

past Sudeva keeper Sachin Jha. Shubham Rana took another shot at goal on the rebound, but Sachin came up with another brilliant save.

The ball hovered around the Sudeva goal for most of the first half. Thirty minutes into the game, two

back-to-back corners almost got the Greens on the board, but Sachin made sure it was goalless at halftime.

Sudeva looked all charged up in the second half, however. In the 46th minute, William Pauliankhum had the ball just a few yards away from the goal but failed to score.

Army Green came back strong and in the 51st minute courtesy of a nice setup and a wonderful assist by Dip Mazumdar, Deepak tapped the ball into the net.

The Delhi side did have a few chances to equalize but they could not go past Army Green's defense to end the campaign with three losses.

In the day's second game, FC Goa authored a dominating performance to blitz JFC 5-0 to finish on top with nine points and push their ISL rivals out of the 130th Durand Cup.

On 'KBC13', Neeraj Chopra opens up about his choice as javelin thrower

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Olympic gold medalist Neeraj Chopra, who will be on the hot seat in 'Kaun Banega Crorepati 13' for the 'Shaandaar Shukravaar' episode on Friday, will be seen sharing his story as to why and how he took up javelin throw as a sport.

He says: "Honestly, I was overweight when I was 13-14 years old. My chachaji (paternal uncle) insisted that I take up sports. He even asked me to choose between sports and studies, and thinking he will be proud of me I told him my choice -- studies.

"To which he said he knows how much I study and asked me to take up sports. So, when he sent me to a stadium, I wasn't even sure I would take up any sport."

"I simply went there to lose weight.



The stadium was 15-16 kilometre away from my village and I used to travel by bus. This bus used to stop 2km ahead of the stadium and I had to walk the rest of the way. After a

month or two, my fitness improved.

"There were a lot of sports at the stadium but I saw my seniors throwing javelin and I liked seeing it go very far and get stuck in the ground and I

felt like I wanted to do the same. I tried it and enjoyed it very much," adds Neeraj who holds the second spot on the World Athletics Ranking in 2021. He said: "My senior jai, he felt that my throw was good and he asked me to join him. And I don't know what happened or what I liked about it, but I felt this is a sport that I want to take up. "I never thought of representing India at the Olympics when I took up the sport. I just put in all my energy and hard work and I'm lucky that I got great support and guidance from my family and seniors and today, I've won Gold for my country." "Olympians PR Sreejesh and Neeraj Chopra will be special guests for the 'Shaandaar Shukravaar' episode of KBC 13' which will air on September 17 on Sony Entertainment Television.

Davis Cup: India down 0-1 as Gunneswaran loses opener against Finland

Espoo (Finland) | Agencies

India got off to a disappointing start in their Davis Cup World Group I First Round match against Finland with Prajnesh Gunneswaran losing in straight sets to Otto Virtanen, 3-6, 6-7(1) in the opening singles here on Friday.

Gunneswaran, who is coming back from a wrist injury and had undergone rehabilitation in his hometown Chennai, struggled for rhythm as his serve was broken in the sixth game. He did put up a better fight in the second set but Virtanen, at 419 ranked way down the list as compared to Gunneswaran, who is ranked 165, ramped up the

pressure in the tiebreak to win the best-of-three-sets match in straight sets.

Gunneswaran struggled with his first serve, managing to land only 58 percent as compared to 73 by his opponent. He had two break points but could not convert even one while Virtanen converted one of eight chances.

Though Gunneswaran refused to blame the injury for failing to play his game on Friday, he wished he had played more matches in the runup to this Davis Cup tie. "I have played better before but obviously didn't do what I needed to do today. I feel like I couldn't convert on some of the close situations,"

Gunneswaran said, admitting that he committed mistakes at crucial times while his opponent came up with a better response on some of the big points.

"It was a combination of him coming up with the goods on the big moments and me not doing enough," he said in the post-match interaction.

India's hopes now depend on Ramkumar Ramanathan, who will take on Finland's Emil Ruusuvaari in the second singles. Gunneswaran hoped that Ramkumar could get the better of Finland's top singles player and make it 1-1 on the first day of the two-day encounter.

Heather Knight shines as England Women win opening ODI vs New Zealand

Bristol | Agencies

Veteran England star and captain Heather Knight slammed a 107-ball 89 and Katherine Brunt scored a quick 43 as the hosts powered to a 30-run victory in the opening One-day International against New Zealand Women at the County Ground here.

Sent in to bat on Thursday evening, England were bowled out for 241 in the 50th over, with captain Knight (89) leading the way alongside Tammy Beaumont (44) and Brunt (43).

That proved 30 runs too many for New Zealand, as Brunt (1/22) and the England attack squeezed them out of the game, eventually bowling them out for 211 in the 47th over.

England were put in to bat first by New Zealand and got off to a good start. Openers Lauren Winfield-Hill and Beaumont capitalised on the bad balls and kept the scoreboard ticking. They were going strong at 44 in the ninth over when Hannah Rowe (1/47) struck, removing Winfield-Hill on 21 via a faint nick through to the keeper.

Her wicket did little to slow down the scoring as captain Knight joined Beaumont at the crease. The duo forged a strong partnership and soon took England past the 100-run mark in the 22nd over.

Just as it looked like England were going to reach top gear, Sophie Devine (2/57) provided New Zealand with the second



breakthrough, ending the half-century stand. Beaumont fell

just six runs short of a fifty, struck in front of the middle

Brief scores:

England Women 241 in 49.3 overs (T Beaumont 44, H Knight 89, K Brunt 43; J Kerr 3/42, S Devine 2/57) beat New Zealand Women 211 in 46.3 overs (A Satterthwaite 79 not out, S Devine 34; N Sciver 2/10, K Cross 2/37, S Ecclestone 2/39) by 30 runs.

stump. Two overs later, Natalie Sciver (2) fell to the returning Lea Tahuu (2/32). She also picked up the wicket of Amy Jones (2) in the 30th over and Jess Kerr (3/42) got Sophia Dunkley (5) in the 32nd over to reduce England to 140/5.

Despite the regular fall of wickets, Knight continued to take on the New Zealand bowlers. She paired with Brunt to push England past 220. The 88-run stand was broken by Leigh Kasperek (1/48) in the 47th over when she caught and bowled Knight for 89.

The remaining four England wickets fell for 13 runs as the hosts were bowled out for 241.

New Zealand were in trouble early in the chase as Sciver (2/10) accounted for Suzie Bates (1) and Lauren Down (5) inside the opening 10 overs.

The pressure continued to mount as Kate Cross (2/37) had Maddy Green (19) caught at slip in the 13th over to reduce New Zealand to 31/3. The duo of Amy Satterthwaite (79*) and captain Sophie Devine (34) rebuilt the innings in a 78-run stand but just as they were getting back into the game, Cross struck again, removing the Kiwi skipper for 34 in the 29th over.

Wickets fell at regular intervals from there as New Zealand slipped to 143/8, with Sophie Ecclestone (2/39) on a hat-trick at one point after removing Katy Martin (9) and Brooke Halliday (0).

Ajay Devgn to Anand Mahindra: It was great shooting the truck stunt



Team Absolute | Mumbai

Bollywood star Ajay Devgn, who recreated his iconic 'Phool Aur Kaante' split stunt for an ad using trucks, has thanked Mahindra Group Chairman Anand Mahindra and said that it was great shooting the commercial.

Anand Mahindra posted the ad cam-

paigned on his Twitter and wrote: "30 years ago, in his debut Bollywood film, Phool Aur Kaante, @ajaydevgn performed his original master act, the split. And now, he does it again, this time for Mahindra. Watch this space for more..."

To which, Ajay has replied: "Thanks Anand, My special feats will always be reserved for Mahindra. It was great shooting this commercial.@anandmahindra

@MahindraTruckBus."

Ajay recreated his iconic 'Phool Aur Kaante' split stunt for the ad using trucks instead of bikes, which he originally used in the 1991 film.

Ajay's entry in 'Phool Aur Kaante' became very popular where he appeared standing, balancing on two moving motorcycles. Similar stunts have been repeated in a number of films such as 'Son of Sardaar' and 'De De Pyaar De'.

SAIF REVEALS TO KAPIL SHARMA WHY HE CAN'T SING LULLABIES TO HIS KIDS

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Bollywood actors Saif Ali Khan, Yami Gautam and Jacqueline Fernandez will be the guests this Saturday on 'The Kapil Sharma Show'. The trio will be promoting their new film 'Bhoot Police' in which Yami and Jacqueline play sisters plagued by an ancient ghost while Saif Ali Khan and Arjun Kapoor become their 'shamans' in shining armour.

During a candid question answer session, Archana Puran Singh asked new fathers Saif Ali Khan and host Kapil Sharma about their favourite lullaby that they sing to their children.

At first Saif said that all singing is done by Alexa and Kapil replied that he plays the catchy tune 'baby shark' for his daughter: "A small kid cannot understand words so they can listen to anything, it does not matter. My daughter is one and a half years old. For her I play 'baby shark do do do do do do'."

Talking about lullabies, Saif recalled an incident with his first born, daughter Sara Ali Khan when she was a baby: "I used to sing an English lullaby called Summertime when Sara was really young, and suddenly she opened her eyes and said, 'Abba please don't sing.' From then on, I can't sing. Even the baby said 'don't sing', which made the audience laugh heartily."



Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actress Rakul Preet Singh, whose look from the upcoming Ayushmann Khurrana-starrer 'Doctor G' was unveiled Friday, had to enroll for medical classes to get into the skin of her character in the film.

To essay Doctor Fatima, Rakul had to learn medical terminology and also nuances of some important surgical procedures for this family entertainer, directed by Anubhuti Kashyap.

In order to make everything related to the medical world appear authentic on screen, the makers had arranged for experts to conduct special sessions with the cast - Rakul,

Rakul Preet Singh enrolled for medical classes for 'Doctor G'



Ayushmann and actress Shefali Shah and train them as part of their characters' prep. Rakul said: "Shooting for 'Doctor G' has turned out to be an interesting experience. Since I play a doctor, the mannerisms and actions needed to be precise. It was mandatory to learn important things related to the medical world to make it look real on screen." "The journey of becoming Doctor Fatima was an amazing process which I will cherish forever."

Rakul said that she and the makers wanted her character to look authentic. "We did multiple look tests to get her look right. The idea was for her to look as close to real as possible and bring out the endearing quality of her character. By just wearing the doctor's coat, you suddenly get a sense of responsibility even though I was only playing a character," she said.

The actress added: "While treating patients for scenes, one truly understands how much responsibility doctors have on their shoulders and how difficult their life is."



Mika recalls pranks he played on elder bro Daler Mehndi

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Rapper Mika Singh, who is judging the 'Zee Comedy Show', shared an interesting anecdote about how his elder brother Daler Mehndi is so afraid of darkness that he always needs someone around him in the evening, even if it is to use the restroom.

Mika Singh revealed: "Not many people know about this, but Daler Paaji is very scared of darkness. In fact, when he uses the restroom, even during the day, he keeps the door open. During the evenings, whenever he would go to the washroom or any place which is not lit up, he expects us to sit outside, and he would continuously ask from inside if we're still waiting outside (laughs)."

The hilarious gossip act by Chitrashi Rawat (as Kareena Kapoor Khan), Sugandha Mishra Bhosle (as Aishwarya Rai Bachchan) and Sidharth Sagar (as Rakhi Sawant) left everyone in splits. In fact, the things that they gossiped about during the act not just made everyone laugh out loud but also reminded Mika Singh of some funny pranks that he used to play on his brother Daler Mehndi.

Mika Singh also opened up about why Daler Mehndi and he didn't pass out of school, while also revealing some more spicy anecdotes from their lives.

WHEN VARUN DHAWAN'S DIET LEFT BADSHAH SURPRISED

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Rapper Badshah has revealed about the day when he was surprised to see actor Varun Dhawan eating four butter 'naans' and a large portion of butter chicken! Badshah has spoken about the same on the sets of 'Zee Comedy Show' where he is set to appear as the special guest this weekend. During the shoot, Badshah shared a funny anecdote about an incident he recently witnessed when he was with Varun Dhawan. The singer mentioned how when he went to Varun's film set recently, he was astonished to see the actor eat a large portion of food within minutes! Talking about the same, Badshah said: "I had gone to meet him (Varun Dhawan) on the set of his film, and during that time, he had toned his body for that particular movie. He was looking ripped, and I wanted to know the secret

behind him looking so fit. I sat with him for 15 minutes during his break and within that period of time, he ate four butter naans and a large portion of butter chicken." "While speaking, he didn't even realise he had eaten so much, and when I told him that he had already eaten four big butter naans, he said 'Punjabi hoon na main, we don't count and eat'. I was actually going to ask him how he got into shape and what he eats to look so ripped, but after witnessing him eat such a large portion of food within minutes, I couldn't ask him anything," Badshah further said.



INSTAGRAM PIC OF THE DAY



Nora Fatehi

YO YO HONEY SINGH: SUCCESS FOR ME IS TAKING MY FANS TO THE ZONE OF THE SONG

Team Absolute | Mumbai

As the latest released song 'Kanta Laga' - which is a collaboration between Neha Kakkar, Tony Kakkar and Yo Yo Honey Singh - hits 63 million views within one week, Yo Yo expressed his gratitude towards his fans and says that the success of a song for him is to take his listeners to the zone of the song.

The song 'Kanta Laga' is produced by Desi Music Factory, composed and written by Tony Kakkar. The song is performed by Tony, Neha and Yo Yo.

The song was released on September 8. Talking about the overwhelming response of the song, Yo Yo said, "I'm grateful to have listeners who embraced me in this song. The

response to the song has been amazing and listeners have expressed an incredible amount of love in the comments' section. Success for me is offering listeners a song that transports them to the zone of the song. I think 'Kanta Laga' did just that."

Adding to that Neha said, "It makes me very happy to give people music they can enjoy. Working with Tony and Yo Yo Honey Singh was absolutely delightful and I'm glad that our jam resulted in 'Kanta Laga'."

Tony is also excited the way the song has been received well as a party dance number as he said, "I want to thank listeners for joining us in the party that we created with Kanta Laga. I wish our listeners make happy memories with this song."

