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THIRD WAVE STARTED?

In an interview to a news outlet, Dr Samiran Panda, Head of Epidemiology and Communicable Diseases at the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), stated that rising infections in some states are indicative of a third wave.

Rachel V. Thomas | New Delhi

While there is no direct indication of a third wave in the country, state-specific waves are seen, say health experts.

The emergence of new strains is complicating matters in Kerala, Merlin Moni, Associate Clinical Professor, Division of Infectious Disease - Department of Internal Medicine, Amrita School of Medicine, Amrita Hospitals, Kochi, told correspondent.

"The concept of herd immunity can be attained if the threshold reaches by around 60 to 70 per cent but it's now being complicated by the emergence of new strains. This has pushed the target immune population for achieving herd immunity beyond 80 to 90 per cent.

"Currently, in Kerala 70 per cent of the population above 18 years have received at least one dose of vaccine, however the incidence of vaccine escape mutants renders further predictions imperfect. However, the increased incidence of vaccine escape mutants could



herald a third wave," Moni told correspondent.

On the other hand, Dr Jayalaxmi T.K., Consultant, Pulmonologist at Apollo Hospitals, Navi Mumbai, contended that "there is no direct indication of the third wave as such".

Jayalaxmi noted a steady fall in OPD numbers. Over the last month in Navi Mumbai and Mumbai, the number of patients has reduced to one out of five among symptomatics who test positive as compared to 20-40 per cent of the OPD positive patients during the peak.

However, there has been a slight increase in cases in Mumbai in the last one to two weeks which could be due to the opening of the local trains, opening of shops and restaur-

NO CASES OF NEW COVID VARIANT C.1.2 DETECTED IN INDIA

New Delhi: Amid the threat of new Covid variant C.1.2, which has been detected in South Africa and many other countries globally, the Union health ministry on Wednesday clarified that no case of this variant has been detected in India so far. A new study has revealed that the new Covid-19 variant C.1.2 could be more transmissible and evade protection provided by vaccines. The government has clarified that 'no case of new Covid variant C.1.2 has been detected in India so far'. The Institute of Genomics and Integrative Biology has been put on alert in this regard for detection.

"There are some ongoing conversations around the much-anticipated third wave of the Covid-19 pandemic, but I think as India is a large country, we can talk of state-specific waves. Delhi had seen a second surge in cases in October-November 2020, when the first wave was already about to end in the country and the second wave did not begin. It's happening the same for Kerala now."

Dr Vikas Maurya, Director and HOD, Pulmonology, Fortis Hospital

India on Wednesday witnessed a surge in new Covid cases with 41,965 fresh coronavirus infections reported in the last 24 hours, taking the total tally to 3,28,10,845, according to the Union Health Ministry's data.

Kerala reported the most (63 per cent) new cases at 19,622 in the last 24 hours, followed by Maharashtra (3,741), Tamil Nadu (1,523), Mizoram (1,157), and Karnataka (973). These five states account for 87 per cent of all the new cases reported in India.

Kerala also reported 132 new deaths, the most, as per the August 31 update, followed by Odisha (67), Maharashtra (52), Tamil Nadu (21), Assam (15), and Karnataka (15). These six states account for 86 per cent of all deaths reported in the country.

Non-subsidised LPG cylinder gets costlier by Rs 25

Team Absolute | Mumbai

In another hit to the wallet of the common man, oil marketing companies have raised the prices of non-subsidised LPG cylinders by Rs 25.

In Delhi, the 14.2-kilogram non-subsidised cylinder will now cost Rs 884.50. Price in Kolkata is the highest among the four metro cities at Rs 911 per cylinder, while that in Chennai and Mumbai stood at Rs 900.5 and Rs 884.50 per cylinder. In Bhopal it will cost Rs 890.50.

This is the second hike in 15 days. The previous hike was of Rs 25 on August 18.

Further, the price of a 19 kg commercial cylinder has also been increased by Rs 75, taking the price in Delhi to Rs 1,693 per cylinder. The incessant rise in cooking gas prices has drawn criticism for the government from several quarters.

After the previous hike in LPG prices, the Congress slammed the government saying since November last year it has hiked the price of the cooking gas by Rs 265 per cylinder and it has not given any subsidy on the cooking gas since May 2020.



ECONOMIC POLICIES HAVE FAILED: RAHUL GANDHI

New Delhi: Congress leader Rahul Gandhi attacked the Centre earlier today over the hike in petrol prices, citing data for petrol, diesel, and cooking gas. Over the past seven years, the government has earned more than ₹ 23 lakh crore because of the rise of diesel, petrol, and cooking gas, he said, claiming that the funds from all this and the goods and services tax, were "benefiting a handful of crony capitalists". "When the UPA left office, the price of LPG was ₹ 410 a cylinder. Today it is ₹ 885, a 116 per cent rise, Gandhi said. The price of petrol has increased by 42 per cent and that of diesel has increased by over 55 per cent since 2014," Gandhi said.



"Roll Back LPG Price Hike": JDU



New Delhi: The BJP's NDA ally Janata Dal-United (JDU) demanded that the Centre roll back the hike announced today in LPG cylinder prices by petroleum companies. The party, which leads the coalition in Bihar, cited the financial pressure on households amid the Covid pandemic and said political rivals could use the issue to cause damage to the alliance's prospects in the many polls scheduled over the next few months. "There has been an unprecedented increase in prices (of petroleum products). See where the petrol and diesel prices are today...The kitchen budget has been hit badly. This is very worrying. As a friendly party, we want to suggest to the government that recent increase in prices should be rolled back...because there are assembly elections scheduled in many states in the coming months. Our political opponents can use this as a weapon against us in these elections," JDU Chief General Secretary KC Tyagi told a news channel.

'Liberate Kashmir from enemies of Islam': Al Qaeda to Taliban

KABUL | Agencies

Soon after the Taliban's victory in Afghanistan, terror group Al Qaeda has congratulated the former and has even talked of Kashmir liberation. This came soon after the withdrawal of US troops from the war-ravaged Afghanistan late on Monday. The letter by Al Qaeda was shared on Twitter by a journalist. "Allah! Liberate the Levant, Somalia, Yemen, Kashmir and the rest of the Islamic lands from the clutches of the enemies of Islam," read a statement in the letter addressed to Taliban.

In the letter, Al Qaeda also spoke of the withdrawal of US troops in Afghanistan and said, "We praise the

Almighty, who humiliated and defeated America, the head of disbelief. We praise Him for breaking America's back, tarnishing its global reputation and expelling it."

Taliban fighters watched the last US planes disappear

Hibatullah Akhundzada to be supreme leader of Af

Kabul: The Taliban have said that Mullah Hibatullah Akhundzada will be the leader under whom a prime minister or president will run the country, as per a report by Tolo News. Anamullah Samangani, a member of the Taliban's cultural commission, said that Akhundzada will also be the leader of the new government, Tolo News reported. Meanwhile, unconfirmed reports indicated that there will also be a prime minister's post in the next government, the report said.



into the sky over Afghanistan around midnight Monday and then fired their guns into the air, celebrating victory after a 20-year insurgency that drove the world's most powerful military out of one of the poorest countries.

'Caged Parrot': WB moves SC against HC

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The West Bengal government has moved the Supreme Court against the Calcutta High Court into cases of murder and crimes against women, which allegedly took place following the Assembly elections, contending that the central agency has been rightly described as a "caged parrot" and cannot function independently.

In a 774-page plea, the state government contended that the committee, appointed by the NHRC Chairperson to examine cases of alleged human rights violations, consisted of members who are either members of the Bharatiya Janta Party, or known to be closely associated with the party. The plea added that the



committee report was prepared in great haste, "with a pre-conceived and motivated objective and most crucially, in utter disregard of the principles of natural justice, the established principles of criminal jurisprudence. An honest and impartial investigation cannot be expected from the CBI, especially in the context of the state of West Bengal. It is not out of place to mention that CBI has been chastised by different High Courts across states for its evident lack of independence and has been rightly described as a caged parrot."

EVMS, VVPATs stuck, need them for upcoming polls, EC tells SC

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Election Commission on Wednesday urged the Supreme Court to grant urgent hearing on its plea alleging EVMS and VVPAT machines used in polls of six states are currently stuck and cannot be used for future elections.

Senior advocate Vikas Singh, representing the poll panel, submitted a large number of EVMS and VVPAT machines are still being preserved and need to be released.

"We have to maintain these EVMS and VVPAT machines and hearing is necessary as elections in states like Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, and Punjab



are coming up," Singh said.

At this, a bench headed by Chief Justice N.V. Ramana and comprising Justices Surya Kant and A.S. Bopanna, said: "Alright, we will fix it next week." The top court on

April 27, taking into account the onset of second Covid wave, had relaxed the statutory period for filing petitions, including the election petitions, under the Representation of the People Act, 1951.

AIIMS staff to go on indefinite strike from Oct 25

New Delhi: All the three recognised unions of the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), Delhi, on Wednesday announced that they will go on an indefinite strike from October 25. Earlier, last month with their demands of cadre review and others, saying the cadre review has not been done 1992, and the Union Health Ministry and AIIMS administration should seriously consider the matter. The association's other demands include the review of the AIIMS's contribution in national pension scheme, with the union leader claiming that other government offices contribute 14 per cent in the NPS, but AIIMS offers only 10 per cent in the scheme for employees.

North Indians face most extreme air pollution in the world

In 2019, India's average particulate matter concentration was 70.3 g/m3 - the highest in the world.

- Indian cities routinely dominate global pollution rankings and bad air kills more than a million people every year, the BBC reported.
- The report by EPIC said that north India breathes "pollution levels that are 10 times worse than those found anywhere else in the world".
- Air pollution can reduce the life expectancy of Indians by nine years, said a report by a US research group.
- The report said that Bangladesh, India, Nepal and Pakistan, which together account for nearly a quarter of the global population, consistently figure in the list of top five most polluted countries on earth.

Team Absolute | New Delhi

A study by the Energy Policy Institute at the University of Chicago (EPIC) has found that 480 million people in northern India face the "most extreme levels of air pollution in the world."

This air pollution has spread over decades beyond the region to western and central Indian states such as Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh, where the average person is now losing between two-and-a-half to three years of life expectancy as compared to early 2000, the study said. The EPIC study said that 480 million people in northern India face the "most extreme levels of air pollution in the



world", and, over time, these high levels have expanded to cover other parts too. Strong clean air policies can add up to five years to people's lives, it added. New data from the Air Quality Life Index report by EPIC said that residents in Delhi could see up to 10 years added to their lives if air pollution is reduced to meet the World Health Organization (WHO) guideline of 10g/m3, the BBC reported.

CAR FOUND FLOATING OFF POPULAR GOA BEACH, DRIVER BOOKED



PANAJI | Agencies

Hours after a video of a car floating in the waters off Goa's popular Morjim beach went viral, police on Wednesday arrested its driver for rash and negligent driving. The Hyundai i20 had been hired from a local rent-a-car agency by Gourav Bishwad, 25, who was last seen driving the vehicle illegally on the beach, police said. "Information was received that one tourist has been driving his rented car on Morjim beach, thereby posing risk to the general public moving on the beach. Accordingly police identified the tourist culprit who was intentionally driving the said rent-a-car and registered an offence under Sections 279 (rash driving), and 336 (endangering life) of the IPC," police inspector in-charge of the Pernem police station Jyba Dalvi said.



HEAVY RAINS TURN DELHI'S ROADS, MARKETS INTO FLOOD ZONES

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The plush diplomatic enclave of Chanakyapuri, financial hub Connaught Place market and several small lanes in the heart of Old Delhi, Chandni Chowk area were inundated due to heavy rains since Wednesday morning causing trouble to traders and commuters leading to heavy traffic jams across the national capital.

The roads outside the US Embassy in Chanakyapuri, Inner circle of Connaught Place, the road below the Minto Bridge and several other areas across Delhi were flooded resulting in obstruction to vehicular movement.

As safety measures, traffic police had closed both carriageways of the road below Minto Bridge for few hours and diverted traffic movement from Connaught Place towards Barakhamba Road and traffic coming from Kamla Market side was diverted towards Deen Dayal



Upaddhay Road.

Similarly, the commuters moving from Dhaula Kuan towards 11 Murti were stuck on road due to heavy water-logging. "Traffic movement is obstructed in the carriageway from Naraina towards Dhaula Kuan due

to heavy water-logging," said a Delhi traffic police.

"The main road of the Chandni Chowk market, where redevelopment work was carried out recently, was not affected as much as the small lanes and alleys inside the

market here. All the drains were choked in those areas leading to water-logging," said president of Chandni Chowk Sarva Vyapar Mandal, Sanjay Bhargava.

Lodhi Road observatory had recorded 120.2 mm rainfall while Safdarjung recorded 112.1 mm in the last 24 hours ending at 8.30 a.m. on Wednesday while for next three hours, Safdarjung recorded 75.6 mm and Lodi Road recorded 75.4 mm rainfall, as per India Meteorological Department (IMD) data.

The other key areas where heavy water-logging was reported were Lajpat Nagar Metro Station, Lala Lajpat Rai Marg, Mool Chand bus stand, Aurbindo Marg near AIIMS flyover, areas near Jungpura metro station, Ring Road from AIIMS to Mool Chand along with several areas in south Delhi, including Saket, Press Enclave, Malviya Nagar.

Traffic police had also closed the carriageway from Dwarka to Rajapuri.

War of words erupts between Mamata Banerjee and Jagdeep Dhankhar

Team Absolute | Kolkata

A war of words erupted on Wednesday between West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee and Governor Jagdeep Dhankhar on 'Police Day over the role of the force in the society.

The debate on social media took place after Dhankhar took to Twitter and said that 'politicised police pose threat to democracy'.

"On Police Day, I expect all in this uniform @WBPolice @KolkataPolice to uphold rule of law and act as 'Human Rights Warriors'. A politicised police force poses threat to democracy & leads to a 'police state'. Non-partisan stance is fundamental for rule of law and blossoming of democracy," Dhankhar tweeted.



Reacting to the Governor's tweet, Banerjee, without taking Dhankhar's name, said that such posts malign the entire police force.

"Hope they will change themselves. While doing several good works, some stray incidents can happen but that doesn't lead to demoralising the police," said Mamata.

Notably, the BJP has time

and again accused the state police pf being Trinamool cadres, alleging that they don't help the saffron party workers and leaders and always act at the behest of Trinamool.

In recent past, the BJP had also alleged that despite pleas, the police didn't register complaints of post-poll violence and also didn't take necessary action to curb the same.

Fake vaccine case: ED raids 10 locations in Kolkata

Team Absolute | Kolkata

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Wednesday conducted raids at 10 locations across Kolkata in connection with the fake vaccine case.

Though the ED officials didn't divulge the details of the raids, they were conducted following the arrest of Debanjan Deb, who impersonated as an IAS officer and conducted fake vaccination camps. According to sources in the ED office, the officials raided the houses of Deb and some of his aides, who have also been arrested by the Kolkata Police in connection with the fake vaccination racket. According to official sources, the objective



of the raids was to understand the nature of the transactions carried out while conducting the fake vaccination camps. The case has also taken into account the money laundering angle, which is being investigated. On June 23, Deb was arrested by the city police for allegedly posing as an IAS officer and organised a

COVID-19 vaccination camp. The fraud came to light after actor and Trinamool Congress MP Mimi Chakraborty went to receive vaccine jab at a camp organised by Deb and felt that something was fishy about the functioning of the system. She took action after she did not receive any message post her vaccination.

CBI team picks up Anil Deshmukh's son-in-law, lawyer

Team Absolute | Mumbai

In a surprise development, a Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) team picked up the son-in-law and lawyer of former Maharashtra Home Minister Anil Deshmukh late on Wednesday evening. Nationalist Congress Party national spokesperson and Minorities Minister Nawab Malik said that Deshmukh's daughter, son-in-law, and daughter-in-law, were, along with their lawyer, going out this evening from their Worli residence. "Suddenly, they were intercepted by around a dozen persons said to be from the CBI who asked them to step out of their car. They took away Deshmukh's son-in-law and lawyer into their vehicle, without any explanation," Malik said in a statement. State Congress spokesperson Sachin Sawant slammed the move terming it as "extremely serious." "They were taken away without serving any notice. The laws are being trampled and the country is run by 'Modi-shahi' - 'Whatever we say is the law', the Modi government should officially

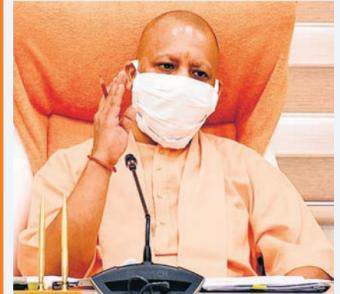


declare," he alleged. Malik said that they were taken away "illegally, without any prior intimation or notice", raising questions if there is rule of the law in the country or the law of the rulers.

"The CBI must clarify under what laws and norms the action was taken without following the due process of law," he demanded. The development happened even as a delegation of Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray, Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar, and Revenue Minister Balasaheb Thorat called on Governor Bhagat Singh Koshiyari to discuss various issues.

It comes barely four days after a purported CBI 'clean chit' given to Deshmukh ostensibly 'leaked' out in the media, which was later vehemently refuted by the central agency.

YOGI REMOVES FIROZABAD CMO AFTER CHILDREN DEATHS



Team Absolute | Lucknow

UP Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has removed Chief Medical Officer (CMO) of Firozabad, Nita Kulshreshtha, for her apparent failure to check spread of viral fever in the district, following the death of at least 32 children and seven adults.

Dinesh Kumar Premi has been appointed the new CMO. The Chief Minister, who is monitoring the situation himself, has ordered the Health Department to keep a round-the-clock watch on the situation and increase beds in the medical facilities.

He has also ordered a surveillance and awareness programme in the state from September 7 to 16, in which health workers would go door-to-door and identify those with fever and Covid symptoms.

The Chief Minister has also given instructions to urban and rural bodies to clean the area. A team of 11 specialist doctors has been sent to Firozabad along with medicines and other necessities. The team of health experts is camping in the district, and doctors/paramedical staff have been pressed into action.

The ICMR's 11-member team has also reached Firozabad and examined the samples. The children who are admitted to the medical college are getting free medical treatment, as per the orders of the Chief Minister.

Rajbhar promises 5 CMs and 20 deputy CMs in UP



Team Absolute | Jhansi

In a seemingly bizarre statement, Om Prakash Rajbhar, former Uttar Pradesh minister and president of Suheldev Bhartiya Samaj Party (SBSP) has said that if an alliance government is formed by the Bhagidari Sankalp Morcha in the state after the 2022 Assembly elections, then there will be five chief ministers and 20 deputy chief

ministers, representing all marginalised castes. Addressing a programme in Jhansi organised by 'Khangar' community on Tuesday, he said, "There will be one chief minister for each year in the five years of the government's term. All these chief ministers will belong to marginalised communities. Similarly, we will have 20 deputy chief ministers representing various weaker sections of the society." Explaining his statement further, Rajbhar said, "When there can be two deputy chief ministers in the state in a complete majority government in UP, five in Andhra Pradesh and two in Bihar, why not represent all the marginalised castes that have been looked down so far?" He said, "We have made alliances with all the parties that represent small and marginalised people, whose interests have been suppressed so far. Hence, it is now their turn to form the government." Rajbhar said that the common

agenda of the alliance include free electricity for domestic consumption for the entire five years. In addition, there will be free and common education for all along with free medical treatment.

"Also, we will ensure a caste-based census in the state and give 33 per cent representation to women," he said.

Referring to the BJP, he said that "it is a sinking ship which had earlier won just because of me and Anupriya Patel".

"BJP is a lying machine which only lies and does nothing. It is a washing machine in which a criminal is put in and he comes out with a clean image. That is why they are inducting so many leaders with a tainted image and trying to give them a clean image," he added.

The Bhagidari Sankalp Morcha is a political alliance formed by Rajbhar for the 2022 Uttar Pradesh Assembly elections and includes the AIMIM. The coalition is led by the SBSP.

SC Mishra's wife takes plunge in UP's 'Brahmin' politics

Team Absolute | Lucknow

In its campaign to woo Brahmins, the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) has now decided to turn its focus on women belonging to the Brahmin community. This campaign is being spearheaded by Kalpana Mishra, wife of BSP MP Satish Chandra Mishra. Kalpana Mishra, for all practical purposes, has taken a plunge into politics. She is now addressing 'Prabuddha Varg Sammelans' of women independently. She addressed one such meeting at her residence on Tuesday and party sources said that she will gradually move to other districts and address similar conferences.

Speaking at the conclave at her residence, she said that during the Mayawati regime, 'our daughters and sisters could move out of their



houses even late at night'.

Kalpana Mishra said that there is an atmosphere of anarchy all around in Uttar Pradesh today. She alleged that people belonging to the Brahmin community were being killed in police encounters.

The Bahujan Samaj Party, till now, had never promoted and encouraged women leaders to address party meetings. Sources said that the party could now set up a women's wing-Bahujan Mahila Morcha-and Kalpana Mishra could be asked to lead the same.

AAP to contest all 403 seats in UP, no alliances

Team Absolute | Lucknow

The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), has set to rest all speculations about alliances for the upcoming UP Assembly elections. The party has announced that it will field candidates for all 403 seats in the in the 2022 state election.

Sanjay Singh, AAP's Uttar Pradesh in-charge, has asked party workers to get involved in the preparations for the elections at the booth level in order to fight the imminent polls with full force.

Singh said that AAP's Tiranga Sankalp Yatra will be taken out in all 403 constituencies of the state in the coming days.

"Through this, we want to tell the people what real nationalism is. Our nationalism is that every poor child should have access to a better school to study. As in Delhi, the dream for better schools should be achieved in Uttar Pradesh too. Like mohalla clinics in Delhi, every village should have better hospitals or clinics. There



should be electricity in the homes of the poor - 300 units should be available free of cost." Sanjay Singh said. He said that the nationalism of AAP is that they will provide good health and education to the people of Uttar Pradesh.

"We do not have a cremation-making ideology. The BJP made

crematoriums in every village during the Covid-19 pandemic. In 2017, they had said that they would do so," he said.

Rajya Sabha MP Sanjay Singh slammed the ruling government in Uttar Pradesh. He alleged that many incidents that hurt the pride of the tricolour had taken place in

Uttar Pradesh under the BJP government.

"Everyday incidents of rape here against daughters take place. Instead of providing justice, the government forcibly burns the victim's body in the dark of night," he alleged.

He also slammed the BJP for allowing scams to take place in the state.

"Whether it is the purchase of medical equipment like oximeter, oxygen cylinders and thermometer or purchase of land for Ram temple or the scam in the Jal Jeevan Mission, the state government has no answer to our questions," he said.

AAP leader Sanjay Singh also mentioned the party's recently concluded membership drive in Uttar Pradesh during the meeting on Tuesday. He claimed that around one crore new members from Uttar Pradesh had joined the party in one month's time.

The Uttar Pradesh election is scheduled to be held early next year.

CASE REGISTERED AGAINST MAN FOR RAISING PRO-PAK SLOGANS

Team Absolute | Gurugram

The Gurugram police registered a case against a man for allegedly raising pro-Pakistan slogans from his upscale apartment's balcony in Gurugram, the police said.

An FIR was filed against one Anwar Syed Faizullah Hashmi on the complaint of his neighbours.

On Saturday, a video went viral on social media of a residential society of Gurugram, in which the man was asking a child to raise pro-Pakistan slogans.

A police officer privy with the matter told reporter that police received the complaint from the residents of "Imperial Gardens Society" in Gurugram on Sunday, with a video clipping of the man raising "Pakistan Zindabad" slogans on the balcony of his house.

"Case for raising 'Pakistan Zindabad' slogan in the society has been registered under relevant sections of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) at Rajendra Park police station against the accused. The accused is absconding



and searches are on to nab him," the officer said. Meanwhile, the man's wife, in a complaint against the neighbours, has told the police that her husband is undergoing treatment for depression.

"Wife of the man has also filed a complaint of harassment against the residents of the society, in which she has alleged that the residents of the society came to her house and threatened her without any reason," the police said.

"The matter is under investigation, whether Anwar is a victim of depression or not will be found out. His wife has also filed one more complaint against few other people," a senior police officer said requesting anonymity.



CM AND MNS CHIEF SPAR ON FESTIVAL BAN

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray has said his government is not against any festival and the Opposition is playing politics over Covid-19 restrictions. His estranged cousin Raj Thackeray accused the government of enforcing curbs to create a situation beneficial to the ruling parties and raised questions over works worth thousands of crores that were approved under the "garb" of the pandemic.

Inaugurating an oxygen plant in Thane, Uddhav took potshots at the Opposition, after the BJP and MNS insisted on celebrating the Dahi Handi festival on the city's streets on Tuesday. BJP had organised a state-wide protest on Monday demanding the reopening of religious places and given Govindas a call to celebrate their favourite 'human pyramid' sport on the occasion of Krishna Janmashtami. In many places, the leaders and workers were detained by police on



Monday and Tuesday.

The CM's explanation came in response to the BJP and MNS's charge that the Thackeray government was anti-Hindu. After Shiv Sena's alignment with secular Congress and NCP, the BJP and MNS have been trying to form a new Hindutva axis in Maharashtra. CM Thackeray said the Coronavirus wasn't a government programme, but a strict protocol is needed to bring it under control and yet parties conducted aashirvad yatras and violated Dahi Handi ban despite concerns over a third wave. "They

put the people's lives in danger in the name of seeking blessings," he added. He reminded the protesters of missives from the Centre which specifically cautioned against crowding during the festivals like Dahi Handi.

Raj's MNS defied the ban on Dahi Handi in Mumbai and Thane. The leader said he had directed party workers to go ahead with celebrations. Former MNS legislator Bala Nandgaonkar and workers were detained at Kalachowki for violating the ban. Raj slammed the government for being selective when every

other thing was full on. "Morchas are not allowed, protests are not allowed and temples are shut. Tell me where we don't have crowds? Rallies are on. The yatras are held. Street fights between political workers are on. We have seen it over Narayan Rane's yatra. Sena legislator Bhaskar Jadhav's son visits a temple, but others are not allowed. Why?" the MNS chief asked.

In a comment that may cause Sena heartburn, he added, "The number of cars that bring in the developers to the old Mayor's bungalow hasn't reduced. The number of vehicles that bring in people for government work hasn't reduced either. When nothing is restricted, how come only the festivals are curbed?" He said the Centre advisory the CM mentioned wasn't only for Maharashtra. "It is okay if Jan Ashirvad Yatra is conducted, but festivals are restricted. It seems only festivals spread diseases, not political yatras and party conventions. They open what is beneficial to them and shut other things."

Maha to set up science city named after Rajiv Gandhi in Pune

In a significant decision, the Maharashtra government has decided to set up a world-class science city near Pune, under a Central scheme to inculcate the scientific spirit among students and prepare future scientists, officials said on Wednesday.

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The proposed complex will be named "Bharat Ratna Rajiv Gandhi Science Innovation City" and shall be developed on an 8-acre complex in the Pimpri-Chinchwad Municipal Corporation jurisdiction.

The decision was taken at a cabinet meeting presided over by Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray and an initial outlay of Rs 191 crore has been sanctioned for it under a Central government initiative.

"It will be ready within the next five years. It is intended to create a scientific outlook among the students and to prepare future scientists," said Thackeray. He said that recognizing the need to strengthen science and technology to shape India into the 21st century, the city will help adopt a scientific approach to change, boost the scientific temperament among the people and students, use tech for social development, experiential learning approach, creating



curiosity for science among the younger generations and teaching science in an easy to grasp, fun manner.

The proposed 'Bharat Ratna Rajiv Gandhi Science Innovation City' is expected to come up in the precincts of the famed Pimpri-Chinchwad Science Park which became operational in 2013 and has been a huge

crowd puller, said the PCPS Education Officer Sunil Pote. "We have been informed that the upcoming science innovation centre will be designed on the lines of similar high-class scientific zones in China, Singapore and other countries. This will be a good contribution to popularise science among the young minds," Pote said.

Saira Banu's heart condition stable, may be discharged soon

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Veteran Bollywood actress of yesteryears, Saira Banu who suffered from a heart problem called ischemia, has been admitted to Hinduja Hospital to treatment but is said to be stable now, her doctor said on Wednesday.

Saira Banu, 77, - the widow of legendary actor, the late Yusuf Khan alias Dilip Kumar - was rushed to the ICU of the hospital in Khar, three days ago. According to eminent cardiologist Dr Nitin S. Gokhale who is attending on her, the left ventricle in her heart had stopped functioning and led to ingress of water in her heart and lungs. "The problem has been



controlled for now and she is medically much better now. We shall shift her out of the ICU tomorrow (Thursday) and then decide further measures," Gokhale told reporter. Saira Banu's health sparked concerns on social media with many praying and wishing for her speedy recovery and early discharge from the hospital.

FISHERMAN NETS GHOL FISH AND EARNS RS 1.33 CRORE IN AUCTION

Mumbai: They have every reason to celebrate. And the smile on their faces comes courtesy this prized catch from the high seas. In their very first outing after fishing resumed after the month-long fishing ban, they have netted 157 Ghol fish. It's also made fisherman Chandrakant Tare a crorepati. This video of the catch went viral even before his trawler returned to the shores. And within hours of them returning to Murbhe, traders had lined up for the auction. On an average, Tare managed to sell each ghol fish for Rs 85000. Ghol fish fetches a good price also because of the commercial value it carries.

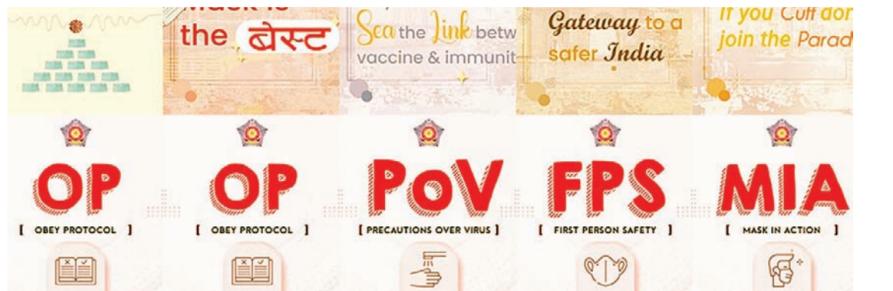
COME SEP, MUMBAI POLICE'S CREATIVE JUICES OVERFLOW

Quaid Najmi | Mumbai

Having earned laurels in past for its occasional dashes of humour, oft pithy, during the Covid pandemic, the Mumbai Police is at it again -- this time with a special 'lingo' for the Mumbaikars, here on Wednesday.

And Bingo! The brand new lingo of @MumbaiPolice & @CPMumbaiPolice seems to have hit a raging bulls-eye this time, too. Come September 1, Mumbai Police Commissioner Hemant Nagrale and his team have coined a fresh 'lingo' for Mumbai-'nagariya' - given the changed circumstances and life-styles in the post-Covid pandemic world.

The gobbledygook platter on offer comprises: OP - 'Obey Protocol', POV - 'Precaution Over Virus', MIA - 'Mask In Action' and FPS - 'First Person Safety'. To drive home the point, the police have toyed with iconic city monuments in the 'lingo-



play', like: 'Vaccine GATEWAY to a safer INDIA', 'Do you SEA the LINK between vaccine and safety', 'If you CUFF don't join the PARADE' or 'Mask is the BEST' -- the final being a tribute to the city's bus service which serve their best even in the worst of times. And there are some local or suburban appeals: Mumbai please take KHAR (suburb), Always CUR-REY mask while on ROAD (station)' and 'Lets keep safety ANTOP of our

priority list (Antop Hill locality). It all started a couple of days ago with a stern warning on the Mumbai Police social media handle pointing out "how Mumbai is in Danger" because of the growing numbers of irresponsible citizens, who saunter around without care for others.

For better effect, the Mumbai Police displayed the figures of the reckless people caught without face masks - August 23 (481), August 26,

(498) which shot up to nearly double, 920 on August 29 -- as a potential 'third wave' is menacingly hovering at the doorstep. "Risks high, precautions low! Get serious Mumbai! THE THREAT IS REAL. Look at the rising number of people caught roaming without masks last week and this might just be the tip of the iceberg. How we wish the fines you pay could keep Corona at bay. Alas!" rued the city's saviour fathers.

MLC Nomination Talks Likely In Uddhav Thackeray-Governor Meet

Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray (Shiv Sena), Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar (NCP) and Revenue Minister Balasaheb Thorat (Congress) is likely to meet Maharashtra Governor Bhagat Singh Koshyari this evening at 7 PM. According to sources, the nomination of twelve members to the state legislative council is likely to be discussed in the meeting.



and kept it pending.

The matter had reached the Bombay High Court too and the court had observed that the seats in the legislative council "cannot be kept vacant indefinitely", nudging the Maharashtra Governor and the Chief Minister to discuss the issue of nomi-

inating members to the council - underlining that a delay of eight months in deciding the issue is beyond reasonable time.

The Maharashtra government had moved court over the Governor delaying the issue of nominating twelve members to the legislative

council."This court cannot issue orders to the Governor, but it hopes that the Governor will decide on the matter soon," said the Bombay High Court. "If there is an issue with any of the names, then the Governor and Chief Minister must discuss the issue," the court added.

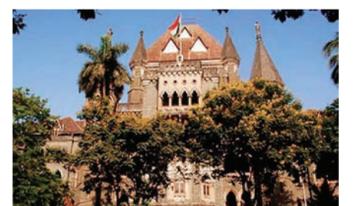
ELGAR PARISHAD CASE: GOVT, NIA OPPOSE BAIL PLEAS OF ACCUSED

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The Maharashtra government as well as the National Investigation Agency on Wednesday opposed applications for 'default' bail filed by some of the accused in the Elgar Parishad-Maoists links case before the Bombay high court. After both sides concluded arguments, the court reserved its order.

Sudhir Dhawale, Rona Wilson, Surendra Gadling, Shoma Sen, Mahesh Raut, Vernon Gonsalves and Arun Ferreira have challenged the power of the Pune sessions court which took cognizance of the charge sheet in 2019, and sought bail on this technical ground or 'by default'.

On Wednesday, senior advocate Sudeep Pasbala, Dhawale's lawyer, told a bench of Justices S S Shinde and N J Jamadar that the accused were booked for 'scheduled offences' under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, and hence only a special court for UAPA cases could have handled the case and not an ordinary sessions court. On the other hand, Advocate General Ashutosh Kumbhakoni, the state government's lawyer, argued that in



September 2018 the Pune court had granted extension of 90 days to the Pune Police (who probed the case initially) to file a chargesheet.

As the chargesheet was filed within that period, the accused were not entitled to default bail, he said. Additional Solicitor General Anil Singh, who appeared for the NIA, made the same argument. A court taking cognizance of chargesheet has no relevance for default bail application, he added.

Advocate Pasbala said the NIA's argument was that the case should have gone before a special court only after the central agency took it over in January 2020, but that was not what the law mandated. The bench then reserved the matter for order.

Despite being fully vaccinated, Farah Khan tests Covid positive

Mumbai: Filmmaker Farah Khan Kunder has tested Covid positive once again, despite being fully vaccinated. She took to her Instagram stories on Wednesday to confirm the news. The filmmaker, who is seen as a judge in TV reality show 'Super Dancer Chapter 4' says that she has informed people around her to get tested. The filmmaker was shooting with co-judge Shilpa Shetty on Monday. She has also shot for a special episode of 'Kaun Banega Crorepati 13' with Amitabh Bachchan recently. Farah wrote a light-hearted message on her Instagram stories which read: "I wonder if this happened because I didn't put my 'kaala teeka'. Despite being double vaccinated and working with mostly double vaxxed people, I have still managed to test positive for Covid. I've already informed everyone I came in contact with, to get tested. However, if I have forgotten someone (because of old age N fading memory) Please test Yourself. Hoping to recover soon."

Economic recovery to drive road traffic up 12-14% this fiscal

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Road traffic volume will grow 12-14 per cent in the current fiscal, driven by economic recovery, continued industrial production, and increased preference for personal mobility fuelled by the pandemic, after declining 4-5 per cent in the last one year.

Resilient performance of the sector through the pandemic and adequate liquidity maintained by players would continue to support their credit profiles, a CRISIL Ratings study of 25 toll road assets across 11 states indicates.

Says Anuj Sethi, Senior Director, CRISIL Ratings, "Road traffic grew 57 per cent on-year in the first quarter this fiscal, albeit on a significantly contracted base of last fiscal, which saw more stringent restrictions. The bounce-back has been faster compared with the first wave, with normalcy returning in July as against September last fiscal. Consequently, traffic growth is likely to be



healthy at 12-14 on-year." Commercial traffic, which is closely linked to

the macroeconomic environment, is expected to log healthy growth this fiscal. Personal mobility,

on the other hand, is likely to gain preference over public transport or shared mobility due to pandemic-related concerns, thereby driving passenger traffic.

With both these growth engines expected to fire, the sector's growth prospects look brighter. CRISIL's base-case estimate, though, factors a modest impact of a possible third wave, and could see a downside of 200 basis points (bps) if it is more severe than anticipated.

The sector faced multiple headwinds over the last 2-3 fiscals, with revision in axle-load norms of commercial vehicles, economic slowdown and the pandemic affecting traffic.

However, once restrictions eased, there was a healthy bounce-back, limiting the decline in traffic to a better-than-expected 4-5 per cent last fiscal. This fiscal has seen a much stronger bounce-back after the second wave-induced restrictions in the first quarter.



EDITOR'S SPECS

Every life need clean air

The same clean air policies that can reduce fossil fuel emissions and help reign in climate change can also add up to five years onto people's lives in the most polluted regions while globally adding more than two years onto lives on average. The conflicting events offer two visions of the future. The difference between those futures lies in policies to reduce fossil fuels. New data from the Air Quality Life Index (AQLI) on Wednesday underscored the health threat of a world without policy action. Unless global particulate air pollution is reduced to meet the World Health Organisation's (WHO) guideline, the average person is set to lose 2.2 years off their lives. Residents of the most polluted areas of the world could see their lives cut short by five years or more. According to AQLI's new report, South Asia is home to the most polluted countries on the earth, with Bangladesh, India, Nepal, and Pakistan accounting for nearly a quarter of the global population and consistently ranking among the top five most polluted countries in the world. Alarming, India's high levels of air pollution have expanded geographically over time. Compared to a couple of decades ago, particulate pollution is no longer a feature of the Indo-Gangetic plains alone. Pollution has increased so much in Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh. For example, the average person in those states is now losing an additional 2.5 to 2.9 years of life expectancy, relative to early 2000. China is an important model showing that policy can produce sharp reductions in pollution in short order. The benefits of clean air policies are even greater in the region's pollution hotspots, like northern India, where 480 million people breathe pollution levels that are 10 times worse than those found anywhere else in the world.

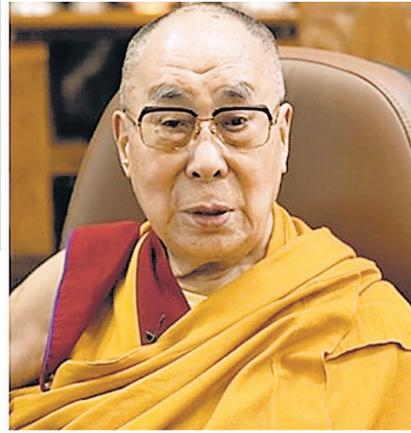
China's Panchen Lama Ignored by Tibetans

Recently, China-appointed 11th Panchen Lama, Gyaltzen Norbu (GN) who acts only as a mouth-piece of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), was sent by China to attend a religious conference in Sichuan in July, was ignored by ordinary Tibetans who had been told by authorities to turn out to greet him. The only people who came to see him were those whose attendance had been specifically arranged by the Chinese authorities.

Dawa Tsering

Abbots and Monks in monasteries in the region had been coerced into receiving and greeting the GN, and were ordered to pose for pictures with him. Chinese authorities threatened the local Tibetans to grant traditional religious reception to GN in their localities failing which their name would be struck off from the government schemes including subsidised rations, etc. The Chinese government often uses Tibetan religious figures for political propaganda and publicity purposes to show to the world that there is freedom of religion in Tibet. However, in reality these visits are choreographed under the direct supervision of the Chinese authorities. GN was named as 11th Panchen Lama by China in May 1995 to replace Gedhun Choekyi Nyima (GCN) who was selected by the Dalai Lama as 11th Panchen Lama, and who vanished into Chinese custody together with his family and has not been heard from since. But in May 2020, China had said that he was a college graduate with a job, and that neither he nor his family wished to be disturbed in their "current normal lives". However, Chinese authorities have had difficulty persuading Tibetans to accept GN as the official face of Tibetan Buddhism in China, as ordinary Tibetans and monks are traditionally loyal to the Dalai Lama and have been reluctant to acknowledge or receive GN. Gyaltzen Norbu has been called a

'stooge of the atheist CCP government' by Tibetans. Ever since, GN has been paraded annually in Tibet, accompanied by police, Chinese officials and a massive publicity operation involving hundreds of coerced worshippers. In between these visits, he has effectively been held under house arrest in Beijing and never been allowed to travel freely or to speak openly with foreigners. GN's lack of freedom appears never to have been questioned by the Chinese authorities, apparently because they imagine effective incarceration in Beijing to be appropriate. Also GN is often not called by CCP leaders to attend the important functions and anniversaries of China as well as Tibet. During the visit of Xi Jinping to Tibet, GN was not invited to Tibet, though he was just a few miles away in Sichuan Province. During the recent visit of Wang Yang to Tibet, GN was also not invited. Being a Tibetan, GN is not given importance by the CCP leaders. For CCP leaders he is a puppet to be used to exhibit to the world that China supports religion and secondly to control the reincarnation of the Dalai Lama. In reality, GN is nothing more than a prisoner in China. He is under house arrest in Beijing and he cannot visit the places of his own choice. He is directed by the CCP leaders about which place to visit and is told what he has to speak. Sometimes Tibetans inside Tibet and in Diaspora pity on him though they have no reverence for him. Visits of GN to Tibet and areas



inhabited by Tibetans are crucial for China as these visits are being used for transmitting China's religious policies, warning Tibetans to be wary of superstitious beliefs and asking Tibetans to be more hard-working. It is a clear indication to Tibetans that religious beliefs and practice will be dwindled in coming days. GN's visits are an attempt to boost his image and also promote Xi Jinping's vision on Tibet. During his visit, GN always propagate sinicization of Tibetan Buddhism and claim that it is necessary to be absorbed into Chinese culture and adapted to communist society. Instead of giving teachings as a religious figure, GN always talks politics. He always says that he would work hard to maintain the country's and ethnic unity. He will "resolutely endorse comrade Xi Jinping as the core of the Communist Party, endorse socialism with Chinese characteristics and continue the glorious tradition of Panchen Lama's in history of loving the country and loving religion". He will not fail to live up to the expectations of the CCP and contribute to promoting Tibetan Buddhism and socialism. During his current visit to Tibet, GN presided over the meeting of the 11th council of the Tibet branch of the Chinese Buddhist

Association in Lhasa on August 4 and 5, which was also attended by members of United Front Works Department (UFWD). In his keynote address GN said that it is necessary to be grateful to the leadership of CCP, especially Xi Jinping, for his remarkable work in Tibet. He also urged the Tibetans to resolutely continue fighting against the 14th Dalai Lama and the Dalai's faction. He also encouraged Tibetans to deeply understand the spirit of the instructions of Xi Jinping and expressed hope for adaptation of Tibetan Buddhism to a socialist society in order to ensure that Tibetan Buddhism always advances in the direction of Sinicization. GN expressed happiness on the development taking place in different areas under the aegis of Xi Jinping and stated that all should be grateful to the CCP for the development achieved and should follow the party. He stated that Tibetan Buddhism must also be combined with national interests in order to have good development prospects. Norbu's current tour commenced from his visit to the Tibetan inhabited areas of Sichuan and Gansu province from July 9-22 and July 23-29 respectively.

Local Tibetans ignored the visit of Norbu even though they were categorically instructed by authorities to turn out to greet him. However, abbots and monks were forced to greet him. In the Tibetan tradition, genuine reincarnate lamas are expected to travel widely, study in a range of institutions, and meet with a broad range of lamas to obtain the teachings and transmissions that are central to their claims to knowledge and religious authenticity. Once they reach adulthood, they are also free to walk away from their religious commitments, as happens relatively frequently outside Tibet. The underlying issues behind this travesty of human rights violations are, of course, political. Chinese authorities want absolute control of the selection of the next Dalai Lama, since the current 14th of that lineage is the unquestioned leader of the Tibetan people. Due to bad Chinese strategies, GN has neither been able to become a potential leader nor is he revered as a religious leader. He has been reduced to being a puppet of Chinese authorities, who is a prisoner in Beijing most of the time.

international



New Delta variant mutation confirmed in Japan

Tokyo | Agencies

A group of Japanese researchers said a new mutation of the Covid-19 Delta variant had been discovered for the first time in the country, local media reported on Tuesday. The research team, led by Associate Professor Hiroaki Takeuchi at Tokyo Medical and Dental University Hospital, said that the mutation was found when a patient infected with the Delta variant visited the institute earlier this month, reports Xinhua news agency. Genetic analysis revealed the N501S mutation, the team said, adding that only eight cases of the mutation have been reported outside Japan. The N501S mutation is similar to the N501Y variation of the Alpha variant, which was first detected in the UK.

QATAR WARNS AGAINST ISOLATING TALIBAN

Doha | Agencies

Qatar's foreign minister has warned that isolating the Taliban could lead to further instability and urged countries to engage with the movement to address security and socioeconomic concerns in Afghanistan. "If we are starting to put conditions and stopping this engagement, we are going to leave a vacuum, and the question is, who is going to fill this vacuum?" Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani said in Doha on Tuesday, alongside his German counterpart, Heiko Maas, Al Jazeera reported. The US-allied Gulf Arab state has emerged as a key interlocutor to the Taliban, having hosted the group's political office since 2013. "We believe that without engagement we cannot reach ... real progress on the security front or on the socioeconomic front," Sheikh Mohammed said, adding that recognising the Taliban as the government was not a priority.



The Qatari foreign minister also warned against any rise of "terrorism" after the US withdrawal and called for an inclusive government, the report said.

"It is our role to always urge them (the Taliban) to have an expanded govern-

ment that includes all parties and not to exclude any party.

"During our talks with the Taliban, there was no positive or negative response," al-Thani said, referring to recent talks between Qatar and Afghanistan's new rulers.

UK IN TALKS WITH TALIBAN OVER FURTHER EVACUATIONS



London | Agencies

The UK is reportedly in talks with the Taliban over furthering the evacuation process and securing a safe passage out of Afghanistan for British nationals and Afghans who remain there. "The Prime Minister's special representative for Afghan transition, Simon Gass, has travelled to Doha and is meeting with senior Taliban representatives to underline the importance of safe passage out of Afghanistan for British nationals, and those Afghans who have worked with us over the past 20 years," the BBC

quoted a government spokesman as saying.

It comes after a Taliban pledge to allow further departures.

As per an official statement by the UK government, over 17,000 people had been evacuated by the UK from

Afghanistan so far, including over 5,000 UK nationals.

Meanwhile, on Tuesday, the Taliban deployed its special forces at the Kabul airport hours after the last batch of US troops left Afghanistan.

The final evacuation flight of the US was conducted in the last hours of Monday night, airlifting their military and non-military personnel back home, one day before the August 31 deadline.

The British troops had left the country over the weekend. The Taliban have promised those with authorisation will be allowed to leave the country.

Sri Lanka declares economic emergency as food items go out of reach

Colombo | Agencies

Sri Lanka has declared an economic emergency, after a steep fall in the value of the South Asian country's currency caused a spike in food prices. Authorities say they will take control of the supply of basic food items, including rice and sugar, and set prices in an attempt to control rising inflation, the BBC reported. The Sri Lankan rupee has fallen by 7.5 per cent against the US dollar this year. The wide-ranging emergency measures came into effect on Tuesday. A former army general has been appointed by the government as the commissioner of essential services, with the power to seize stocks held by traders and retailers. "The authorised officers will be able to take steps to provide essential food items at a concessionary rate to the public by purchasing stocks of essential food items," the president of the island



nation, Gotabaya Rajapaksa, said in a statement.

"These items will be provided at government guaranteed prices or based on the customs value on imported goods to prevent market irregularities," the statement added.

The announcement came after a surge in the cost of basic foodstuffs such as sugar, onions and potatoes, BBC reported.

There have also been long queues

outside shops due to shortages of other goods including milk powder, kerosene and cooking gas.

The Country's Department of Census and Statistics said the increase in the foreign exchange rate was one of the reasons behind rising prices of many essential items over the last year.

Month-on-month inflation rose to 6 per cent in August, mainly due to high food prices, the department said.

The country, which is a net importer of food and other commodities, is witnessing a surge in coronavirus cases and deaths which has hit tourism, one of the country's main foreign currency earners, the report said.

Partly as a result of the slump in tourist numbers, Sri Lanka's economy shrank by a record 3.6 per cent last year.

In March last year, the government imposed an import ban on vehicles and other items as it tried to stem the outflow of foreign currencies.

US NAVY HELICOPTER CRASHES OFF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA COAST

San Diego | Agencies

A US Navy helicopter crashed on Tuesday afternoon off the coast of San Diego, California, prompting search and rescue operations by sea and air, according to the US Pacific Fleet. "An MH-60S helicopter embarked aboard USS Abraham Lincoln (CVN 72) crashed into the sea while conducting routine flight operations approximately

60 nautical miles off the coast of San Diego at 4.30 p.m. PST, Aug. 31," the fleet's commander said in a statement. The statement did not reveal how many people were on board and whether there were any casualties, saying "more information will be posted as it becomes available."

However, citing a local news channel, Xinhua news agency reported that preliminary information indicates that one

person had been rescued and five people were still unaccounted for.

Reportedly the search and rescue operations continued into the night with US Coast Guard and Navy "air and surface assets." The Coast Guard put one of its helicopters in the air around 10 p.m. local time on Tuesday (0500 GMT on Wednesday), and said it would continue searching for about eight hours, the reporter said.



Nepal, India enter into fresh diplomatic row

Kathmandu: After the boundary row of last year, there was peace in bilateral ties between Nepal and India. There were high-level meetings and contacts between the two sides. But that seems to be fading away now. The presence of Indian SSB in a recent incident in which a Nepali national fell into Mahakali while crossing the river using a cable and went missing, is likely to invite another round of a diplomatic row between Kathmandu and New Delhi. Eyewitnesses and locals of Darchula district of Nepal said one Jay Singh Dhami of Darchula district fell into the Mahakali River in July end after the Indian SSB removed the cable. Then Nepal's Ministry of Home Affairs formed a five-member investigation team led by Joint Secretary Janardan Gautam on August 1 to probe the matter. The Gautam-led panel on Tuesday evening submitted its report to the Home Minister Bal Krishna Khad stating that "it appears the incident took place in the presence of Indian security personnel" and recommended that the government take diplomatic initiatives to bring the perpetrator(s) to book.



INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT MUST IN BHOPAL AND INDORE: CM CHOUHAN

Flight service from Indore to Dubai started, Air service started from Gwalior to Delhi and Indore also, Chief Minister Chouhan virtual launches air services



Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan said that Indore is the engine of growth for Madhya Pradesh. The state government will provide all possible support to make Indore an international airport. All possible support will be extended by the state government for the construction of new airport or expansion of airport. Chief Minister

Chouhan said that Bhopal is backward in terms of air connectivity. There is a need to increase air services here. Also, Singrauli is the power hub of the country. Hence, serious efforts are required to increase air connectivity in Rewa Satna area. Chouhan was virtually addressing the inauguration programme of airlines from Gwalior and Indore from his residence.

Air India starts flight from Dubai and Indigo from Gwalior

Chief Minister Chouhan virtually launched the international flight from Indore to Dubai and the airline services from Gwalior to Delhi and Indore from his residence. It may be noted that Air India will provide air services between Indore and Dubai once a week on Wednesdays. IndiGo flights will be available daily from Gwalior to Delhi and Indore.

Madhya Pradesh has received 58 airlines in 53 days

Union Civil Aviation Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia said that 58 airlines have been provided to Madhya Pradesh in the last 53 days. As a result, air craft movement in the state per week has increased from 424 to 738. Air services have been started for five new cities from Indore and four from Gwalior. A grand new airport will be established in Gwalior after Rajmata Vijayaraje Scindia at a cost of Rs 500 crore. The railway station of Gwalior will be given a facelift at a cost of Rs 250 crore. Union Minister Shri Scindia flagged off the new airlines from Delhi.

Daily flights will be available from Gwalior to Delhi and Indore

IndiGo flight will depart from Delhi at 7:10 am for Gwalior, which will reach Gwalior at 8:10 am. Daily flight from Gwalior to Delhi will be available at 12:20 pm, which will reach Delhi at 1:30 pm. Similarly, air service will be available from Gwalior to Indore at 8:30 am, which will reach Indore at 10 am. The airline from Indore to Gwalior will leave daily at 10:20 am and reach Gwalior at 12 noon.

Cold chain system must for agricultural products and medicines at Indore Airport

Union Minister for Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare, Narendra Singh Tomar congratulated the people of the state on getting the new gift of air service. Union Minister of State for Civil Aviation, VK Singh said that air connectivity is increasing continuously in Madhya Pradesh and will be further expanded in the coming days. Energy Minister Tomar said that the increase in air services from Gwalior will increase the possibilities of industrial development of the area. Water Resources Minister Tulsi Silavat said that the people of Indore have been facilitated from the air service started for Amritsar, Surat and Pune.

Indore creates history again, achieves 100% vaccination



Team Absolute | Indore

Indore has become the first million-plus population district in the country to achieve 100% first-dose Covid vaccination. Agar district, with 90% of its population vaccinated, is second in the state, followed by 88% in Bhopal.

"Indore ne chamatkar kar dikhaya," an elated chief minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan said. "All eligible residents of Indore have been given the first dose of Covid-19 vaccine. I congratulate all Indoreans for making this life-saving campaign a success," he said. With 8.24 lakh doses administered statewide on Tuesday, MP's vaccine count rose to 4.63 crore. Sources said that vaccination will now be carried out every day in the state.

By Tuesday evening, Indore had vaccinated 28,08,627 people aged above 18 years -- 650 more than its targeted population of 28,07,559.

Man kills wife for refusing to cook Chicken Political rift over power cut in MP

The unannounced power cuts in Madhya Pradesh for the past few days have turned into a political conflict. Congress is attacking on this issue, while there is a difference of opinion among the people of the government itself.

Team Absolute | Bhopal

A 40-year-old man allegedly killed his 32-year-old wife after she refused to cook chicken for him in Madhya Pradesh's Shahdol district, police said on Wednesday.

The incident occurred in Semariyatola village under the Papanudh police station area on the night of August 23, but involvement of the man in the killing of his wife came to light days later during investigation, they said.

Additional Superintendent of Police (ASP) Mukesh Vaishya said, "The accused, identified as Kamlesh Kol, had an argument with his wife Rambai Kol over cooking chicken for him on the night of August 23. The argument took an ugly turn and the accused, in a fit of rage, hit his wife with a stick."

He said the police were initially informed that the



woman died after being injured in an incident. But a post-mortem report and subsequent investigation revealed Kamlesh Kol's wife died after being on the head, Vaishya said. A case of murder was registered against the

accused and he was arrested on Sunday, he said. After interrogation, it was revealed that Kamlesh Kol told his wife to cook chicken for him, but when she refused, he got angry and fatally assaulted her, police officials said.

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Overall, the power cut has given the Congress an opportunity to launch an attack. Power cuts have been going on in the state for the past few years. This is the reason why only the MLAs of BJP raised this issue. Not only has one MLA written a letter to Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan, but another MLA has even threatened to launch an agitation. After this the Congress has adopted an aggressive stand.

Amidst the allegations of power cut, Energy Minister Pradyuman Singh Tomar has said that at present there is sufficient power generation in the state as compared to the demand of electricity. There is no power cut anywhere in the state due to lack of power availability.

Tomar has said that since the evening of 27th August, there was an unexpected increase in the demand of electricity and a situation of low generation for about three days. Therefore, there was a compulsion to do unannounced power cut, as a last option. The situation of shortfall in



power generation has been created due to countrywide coal crisis and less rainfall. On the other hand, due to scanty rainfall, there was an unexpected increase in the demand for electricity in the agriculture sector.

On the other hand, State Home Minister Dr. Narottam Mishra agrees to the power crisis. He says that the problem of electricity in the state is not permanent. Technical problems have arisen due to interruption of

coal supply to power plants and lack of rain. The government is trying to restore the smooth supply of electricity as before.

Not only this, the issue of power cut was also raised in the state cabinet meeting. According to sources, the ministers have even said that the common people want electricity, they do not tolerate the cut because electricity has become a habit all the time. The consumer may get expensive electricity, but he needs electricity. Congress is attacking on this power cut. Former Chief Minister and Congress State President Kamal Nath said on the power cut, that the unannounced power cut continues in the entire state. Electricity remains absent for hours in rural areas and agricultural areas. Many parts remain in darkness for hours, there is a huge crisis of coal in the state, production is getting affected, there is a huge gap between demand and supply, but instead of accepting the responsible truth, unaware of all these things, they are serving lies. They are saying that there is no power crisis in the state.

Female Sarpanch owns property of 17 crore, disclosed in Lokayukta raid

Team Absolute | Rewa

The raid of Lokayukta police in Rewa district of Madhya Pradesh has exposed a woman sarpanch as a millionaire. The raids are on, assets worth more than 17 crores have been unearthed so far. The husband of the female sarpanch does the contract. According to the information received, in respect of Sudha Jitendra Singh, Sarpanch of Bajinath Gram Panchayat, the Lokayukta police had received a complaint that he had assets disproportionate to his income. On confirmation of this, the team of Lokayukta raided his residence in Shradapuram Colony and Bajinath village, then shocking information came to the



fore. There is also a swimming pool in the luxurious house of Shradapuram. During the raids of the Lokayukta teams, two crusher machines, one mixer machine, one brick machine and 30 large vehicles in which chain mount, JCB, Hyva, loader, tractor, innova, scorpio, brick machine etc. were detected. Its value is estimated to be around seven

crores. Apart from this, gold and silver jewelry worth Rs 20 lakh, life insurance policy and deposit in bank account of Rs 12 lakh and documents of 36 plots have been found in the raid. Rewa Lokayukta Superintendent of Police Rajendra Verma told reporters that assets worth about Rs 17 crore have been unearthed so far. Further action is in progress.

Officials say that after the completion of the raid, details will be sought from the woman sarpanch as to how she acquired this property.

It has been told that the sarpanch's husband does contracting, while the female sarpanch gets a monthly honorarium of only three thousand rupees, and she has been in this post for six years.

CHIEF MINISTER PLANTED CASSIA SAPLING IN SMART UDYAN



Bhopal: Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan planted a sapling of Cassia in Smart Udyan. Chouhan plants saplings every day in fulfillment of his resolve. Cassia is also called wild cinnamon in India. The bark and leaves of Cassia are used in making Ayurvedic medicines.

Government hospitals to vaccinate seven days a week

Team Absolute | Bhopal

The battle is being fought against the Corona epidemic and vaccination has been considered as a big weapon to win this battle. This is the reason why vaccination is being given fast pace in Madhya Pradesh, now all the government hospitals of the state will get the vaccine seven days a week. The Health Department has decided that in all the Medical Colleges, District Hospitals, Civil Hospitals, Community Health Centers and Primary Health Centers in the state, the vaccination session of Corona will be organized seven days a week including Sundays.

Santosh Shukla, Director (Vaccination) of the National Health Mission has told that the Health Department has changed the instructions issued earlier regarding Covid-19 vaccination, according to the new instructions, now vaccination will be done for seven days. All the concerned officers have been instructed to make necessary arrangements in this regard.



It is to be known that according to the instructions issued earlier regarding corona vaccination, vaccination sessions were not conducted on Tuesdays, Fridays and Sundays. On Sundays, holidays, Tuesdays and Fridays, routine immunization sessions for mothers and children were conducted. The new instructions will also have regular immunization sessions on Tuesdays and Fridays and also conduct corona vaccination sessions.

Madhya Pradesh to be made textile hub

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has said that Madhya Pradesh has huge potential for investment in the textile sector. Work is being done to make the state a textile hub, which will provide employment opportunities to a large number of people.

The Chairman of Sagar Group, Sudhir Kumar Agrawal, met Chief Minister Chouhan at Mantralaya and discussed about investment in the state. Agrawal informed that in the field of textiles, an investment of Rs 1000 crore has been made by Sagar Group in the state, in which about 4000 people have got direct employment. Sagar Group is



also soon coming up with a Multi Specialty Hospital on Hoshangabad Road in Bhopal, which will provide employment to about 1000 people. The group is working in the textile sector, food processing sector, real estate and education sector in the state.

Chief Minister Chouhan assured that every necessary facility and cooperation would be provided by the government to the investors and industries.

CYBER POLICE ISSUES ADVISORY ON CYBERCRIMINALS

Bhopal: Additional Director General of Police, State Cyber, Yogesh Choudhary on Wednesday issued an advisory on cyber criminals targeting parents' money by taking advantage of children's addiction to mobile/online games. The advisory said that today many children insist on having their own mobile sets so that they can play online games or use parents' mobile. Choudhary has warned parents against handing over their mobile phones to their children except when they are required to attend online classes or, give them mobiles that do not contain SIM cards and allow them to use internet through Wi-Fi. In the advisory, Choudhary has asked the parents to be extra vigilant and keep a tab on the online activity of their children. He advised them to Enable Parental Control on Play Store etc., in mobile of all the family members and urged them from not giving out the banking credentials/passwords. He also warned against parents asking their children making online monetary transactions such as bills payments, recharging phones, or similar such payments. He said that in case the parents realize that money deducted from their accounts and they do not receive any message on their mobile, then they must first ask their children if they know anything about it and then lodge a complaint at the nearest police station.

Schools reopen in state, students feel elated

Team Absolute | Bhopal

With declining case trajectory in the city, schools in the state capital reopened with strict anti-Covid measures in place after months.

The government has allowed opening of schools with preventive Covid measures. The schools in the state will reopen for classes 6 to 12 in staggered manner. The new guidelines for schools include mandatory thermal screening, staggered lunch breaks, alternate seating arrangements, 50 per cent seating per classroom, and mandatory quarantine room for students in school premises.

Talking to reporter, an official said that all the teachers will be fully vaccinated soon and we have ensured complete safety for stu-



dents. He said that we have sanitized all classrooms and students will be allowed only after thermal screening. Rishika, a student from class 12, said, "We are excited to join schools again after several months. We are following full Covid appropriate behaviour and don't want to be confined again at home".

Khushi from the same class said that she has enjoyed coming out after long time, "We were so excited to join the school. With proper sanitization all safety norms are being followed in schools", said elated Khushi. Colleges and coaching institutes in the state have also been allowed to reopen from Thursday.

James Wan's 'Malignant' to release on Sep 10

Los Angeles | Agencies

The 'Conjuring' director James Wan's forthcoming horror movie 'Malignant' is set to release in India on September 10. The film will be released in English, Hindi, Tamil and Telugu. 'Malignant' is the latest creation from the 'Conjuring' universe. The film marks director Wan's return to his roots with this new original horror thriller. In the film, Madison is paralysed by shocking visions of grisly murders, and her torment worsens as she discovers that these waking dreams are in fact terrifying realities. 'Malignant' stars Annabelle Wallis, Maddie Hasson, George Young, Michole Briana White, Jacqueline McKenzie, Jake Abel and Ingrid Bisu. Wan directed from a screenplay by Akela Cooper, with story by Wan and Ingrid Bisu and Cooper. The film was produced by Wan and Michael Clear, with Eric McLeod, Judson Scott, Bisu, Peter Luo, Cheng Yang, Mandy Yu and Lei Han serving as executive producers. The music is by Joseph Bishara, who has composed the score for all seven films in 'The Conjuring' universe, among many others.



SHAWN MENDES TALKS IN HIS SLEEP: CAMILA CABELLO

Los Angeles | Agencies

Singer Camila Cabello has revealed that her singer beau Shawn Mendes has a habit of talking in his sleep and that would "scare" the 'Havana' hitmaker when they first began spending the night together. "He's always sleep-talked, but it happened a lot during the pandemic because we were going to sleep together every night. I stay up a little longer than he does; I'll be on my iPad or reading or whatever," Cabello said during an appearance on 'The Late Late Show with James Corden'. She added: "He's just like, one of those people who as soon as he gets into bed and five minutes later (he falls asleep). Like, mid-sentence he'll be like, And L..." The actress said it would sometimes scare her, reports femalefirst.co.uk. "I would be reading or something and he would just start sleep-talking and it would scare the s*** out of me because he'd just be like, 'Baby! That! Feels! So! Good!' and then he'd go back to sleep." She added: "That is the first thing he ever said when he slept-talked, by the way. I don't know. I was like, 'Thank you? I'm not really doing anything right now'." Cabello recently praised Mendes for being "so supportive".

Naomi Campbell gave up 'finding soulmate' for modelling career

Los Angeles | Agencies

Supermodel Naomi Campbell revealed that she had to "sacrifice" finding a "soulmate" for her career in modelling.

Campbell has never been married but was previously engaged to U2 bassist Adam Clayton and businessman Flavio Briatore, reports aceshowbiz.com.

She has also been linked with the likes of Leonardo DiCaprio, Usher, Robert De Niro, Skepta, and Liam Payne, but the supermodel says her personal life has suffered due to her work.

Asked what she's sacrificed, she told The Cut: "I'd say the sacrifice is really finding that soulmate who will understand you. It's really like you feel if they look at you as if you're strong... you know, I'm strong, but I'm also sensitive. I know that in relationships I have to compromise."

Campbell, who announced earlier this year in May that she had welcomed a baby girl via surrogate, said she isn't alone, as she has a great support system.

She said: "I'm not out here on my own. It's simple, and it's small. To be with your loved ones who just want to enjoy the quality time. I want my friends to flourish. You want to protect those you love."

She finds comfort being out in the world as she feels travelling has "saved" her.



'GIRL ON FIRE'

Los Angeles | Agencies

Singer Alicia Keys is all set to release a graphic novel titled 'Girl on Fire' in March next year, which will be based on her hit 2012 single of the same name.

Keys shared that the book will tell the story of a 14-year-old girl named Lolo Wright, who discovers she has "telekinetic powers she never knew she had while protecting her brother from a policeman who pulls a gun on him in a dangerous case of mistaken identities", reports femalefirst.co.uk.

In a statement, Keys said: "I wrote 'Girl On Fire', I knew I was writing it for that girl in the back row who needed someone to tell her there's nothing you can't do, that nothing is impossible." When Andrew and I came up with the idea of translating the song into a young adult graphic novel, I knew that I wanted it to be about a girl coming to realize the strength she's always had."

The 'My boo' hitmaker added: "There's a little Lolo in all of us, we all have the power inside to do what we never even thought we could and I'm so proud and crazy excited to be able to share her story with you. You're going to fall in love with Lolo." The book will be released alongside HarperCollins Publishers and co-author Andrew Weiner, and it is illustrated by Britney Williams. The upcoming release will be the second book by Keys, after she also released a memoir titled aMore Myself: A Journey' last year.

'F9: The Fast Saga': Action-packed and over-the-top



TROY RIBEIRO

Direction: Justin Lin
Cast: Vin Diesel, John Cena, Michelle Rodriguez, Tyrese Gibson, Chris 'Ludacris' Bridges, Charlize Theron, Nathalie Emmanuel, Jordana Brewster, Sung Kang, Helen Mirren and Kurt Russell.
Duration: 145 minutes (Releasing in theatres from Sept 3)
Ratings: **1/2

The fizz in the 'Fast & Furious' franchise seems to be flattening out progressively. The ninth edition of this over-the-top, frenetic-paced, action-packed franchise opens with a promise but ends on a ridiculously convoluted and low note.

The film is a bloated thriller with a weak and worn-out storyline that only die-hard 'Fast & Furious' fans would be able to follow. There is a semblance of a story only if you have the patience of sitting through loads of jaw-dropping, gravity- and logic-defying stunts, which include a satellite and space-ship sequence.

The narrative takes off from two years after the events of 'F8: Fate of the Furious'. Dominic Toretto (Vin Diesel) is now leading a retired life in the countryside, raising his son Brian with his wife Letty Ortiz (Michelle Rodriguez).

Their old associates, Roman Pearce (Tyrese Gibson), Tej Parker (Chris 'Ludacris' Bridges) and Ramsey (Nathalie Emmanuel), arrive with the news that the plane of Mr Nobody (Kurt Russell), an intelligence operative, has crashed in Montequinto, Central America, after being attacked by rogue agents when he was captur-



ing Cipher (Charlize Theron), a criminal mastermind.

Dominic, who is fondly called 'Dom', agrees to help them investigate who the rogue agent is after realising his brother Jakob (John Cena) is involved.

Like in its previous edition, there is a track of family drama in 'F9'. This time, it is the rivalry between the two Toretto brothers, Dom and Jakob. The plot, punctuated with emotional flash-backs of events in Dom and Jakob's lives, breaks the momentum of the

mayhem-laden sequences and thus crashes the viewing experience.

Vin Diesel and John Cena put up a balanced performance, neither outshining the other. The rest of the veteran star cast with their superb on-screen chemistry are clearly at home in there.

On the production front, the set pieces are big and outlandish. The action sequences, including the delightfully destructive car chase involving magnets et al, are perfunctory in design.

'NO TIME TO DIE' TO RELEASE ON SEP 30

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The latest James Bond film 'No Time To Die', starring Daniel Craig in his final role as 007, is all set to release in select cities across India on September 30.

The announcement was made by Universal Pictures on Wednesday and the confirmation added that it is all set to release across theatres in India, wherever they are open on September 30. 'No Time to Die' will be released in English, Hindi, Kannada, Tamil, Telugu, Malayalam, Punjabi, Gujarati, Bhojpur, Bengali. The official Twitter handle of the @007 Twitter account posted the final international trailer of the movie and announced the release date.

The 2 minute 24 second trailer was captioned: "The wait is over. The final international trailer for #NoTimeToDie. In cinemas from September 30." The release of the spy film, which is the 25th installment in the James Bond movie franchise, features Craig playing 007 for the fifth and supposedly final time.

Daniel Craig's last fling as Bond

'No Time To Die' is directed by Cary Joji Fukunaga. The film also features Rami Malek as the new Bond villain, Safin, and brings back Lea Seydoux as Dr Madeleine Swann, Ben Whishaw as Q, Ralph Fiennes as M, Naomie Harris as Moneypenny and Jeffrey Wright as CIA agent Felix Leiter.

ABSOLUTE PIC OF THE DAY



Becca Kufirin



ROOT REGAINS NO. 1 SPOT IN TEST RANKINGS; SHARMA OVERTAKES VIRAT KOHLI

Dubai | Agencies

Following some fine performances with the bat in England's ongoing Test series against India, skipper Joe Root on Wednesday regained the No. 1 spot in the ICC Men's Test player rankings for batting.

The England skipper has notched up centuries in all the three Test matches in Nottingham, Lord's, and Leeds, aggregating 507 runs at an average of 126.75. This golden run sees him overtake New Zealand captain Kane Williamson to return to the top of the charts after six years.

Root started the series ranked fifth in the charts, but his form has seen him take massive strides in his charge towards the top spot. Other gainers in the England batting department after their series-levelling victory in Leeds include Jonny Bairstow (five places up to 24th) and Dawid Malan (ranked 88th).

From India, Rohit Sharma has been the biggest gainer, overtaking captain Virat Kohli to gain one spot and jump into the top-five batsmen's rankings. Sharma scored 19 and 59 in the two innings of the Headingley Test match. Cheteshwar Pujara's batting 91 in the second innings has also



seen him progress three spots to jump up to the 15th spot in the rankings table. England's pacers made notable gains in the bowling rankings, after their performances in the third Test. The veteran James

Anderson has gained one spot to move into the top five, while Player of the Match Ollie Robinson, and Craig Overton have also risen up the table. Robinson advanced nine places to move up to No.36, while Overton has

re-entered the rankings at the 73rd spot. With the fourth Test at The Oval starting this week, there will be further opportunities for players from both sides to make significant gains in the ranking charts next week.

Fourth Test: India have history against them at batting-friendly Oval

London | Agencies

Barring the historic win in 1971 that also won them their first-ever series in England, India have not much hope to draw from their record at The Oval, where they play the fourth Test from Thursday.

India have played 13 Test matches and lost five of them. Seven have been drawn.

The Oval has one of the best batting pitches in the country and there could be some respite for the Indian batsmen who are struggling to find runs on this tour.

The Indian top three have managed to score runs in some innings or the other. However, the Nos. 4, 5 and 6 have been disappointing.

Skipper Virat Kohli, who bats at No. 4, is due for a big score and so is No. 5 Ajinkya Rahane and No. 6, the wicket-keeper-batsman Rishabh Pant. The Indian team management, which is insistent on playing five bowlers, may



bring in bowling all-rounder Shardul Thakur to strengthen the batting in place of Ishant Sharma. There are concerns over left-arm spinner Ravindra Jadeja's fitness. The team management may mull bringing in R Ashwin in his place as there are already calls for him to be reinstated in the playing XI.

England are bound to see changes as Jos Buttler is out, leaving the wicket-keeping duties to Jonny Bairstow. Moeen Ali has been named vice-captain. However, it will

be interesting to see if the home side rests one from James Anderson and Ollie Robinson. Both the new-ball bowlers have played the first three Tests and have bowled the maximum number of overs in the series so far.

England have Chris Woakes and Mark Wood back in the squad and that allows them to rest one of their new-ball bowlers. Both Woakes and Wood could also play as England may drop Sam Curran, who has been a bit off-colour with the ball.

NZ lose to B'desh after being dismissed for their joint-lowest score



Dhaka | Agencies

Bangladesh spinners made full use of the spin-friendly pitch and a depleted opposition batting line-up at the She-e Bangla National Stadium, Mirpur, to shoot out New Zealand for 60, their joint-lowest T20I total, and register their first-ever win over Kiwis in the

shortest format. The host won by seven wickets after the visitors equalled their lowest T20I score 60 against Sri Lanka in 2014. Spinners Mahedi

Hasan, Nasum Ahmed and Shakib Al Hasan, who comprised the first bowling lot that was pressed into attack, shared five wickets and conceded just 30 runs in 10 overs to lead the rout.

Left-arm pacer Mustafizur Rahman took 3/13 and right-arm pacer Mohammad Saifuddin took 2/7.

New Zealand, captained by Tom Latham, folded in 16.5 overs. Latham and Henry Nicholls (both 18) top-scored for the visitors.

Bangladesh survived early loss of two wickets and reached the target in 15 overs. Shakib top-scored with 25.

Brief scores

New Zealand 60 all out in 16.5 overs (M Rahman 3/13, N Ahmed 2/5, S Hasan 2/10, M Saifuddin 2/7, M Hasan 1/15) vs Bangladesh 62/3 in 15 overs (S Al Hasan 25). (Patna Pirates); RohitGuliaRs 83 lakh (Haryana Steelers).

US Open Djokovic overcomes Danish challenge to enter second round



New York | Agencies

Serbia's world No. 1 Novak Djokovic reached the second round of the US Open with a 6-1, 6-7(5), 6-2, 6-1 win over Holger Vitis Nodskov Rune in two hours and 15 minutes even as the Danish teen suffered from cramps in the final two sets at the Arthur Ashe Stadium.

Djokovic is now six match wins from becoming the first man since Rod Laver in 1969 to claim all four major titles in one season. The three-time US Open champion will next face Dutchman Tallon Griekspoor.

After match point the 20-time major winner, who can pass Roger Federer and Rafael Nadal for most Slam titles with a trophy at the end of this fortnight, had a lengthy exchange with Rune at the net to give him encouragement.

Djokovic's next opponent, Tallon Griekspoor of the Netherlands, battled past big-hitting German Jan-Lennard Struff 2-6, 7-6(3), 4-6, 6-4, 7-5 after three hours and 38 minutes.

Djokovic is now 16-0 in first-round matches at the US Open. The Serbian has not lost in the opening round at a major since the 2006 Australian Open.

Swiatek, Olympic champion Bencic breeze into second round

Iga Swiatek, the No.7 seed from Poland, got her US Open campaign off to a flying start with a 6-3, 6-4 win over American qualifier Jamie Loeb, in an hour and 14 minutes in a late Tuesday evening match on the Grandstand court. Swiatek, the 2020 French Open champion, has now reached the second round in New York for the third straight season, and she is 10-1 overall in first-round matches at Grand Slam events.



Bencic will next face Italy's Martina Trevisan, who notched a victory in the first US Open main-draw match of her career by ousting former US Open semifinalist CoCo Vandeweghe, 6-1, 7-5. No.10 seed Petra Kvitova of the Czech Republic also made short work of her first-round clash, dismissing Polona Hercog of Slovenia, 6-1, 6-2 in little over an hour.

Man United confirm Ronaldo signing a two-year contract

London | Agencies

Manchester United have confirmed that they have re-signed Cristiano Ronaldo, 12 years after he left the club to join Real Madrid in 2009.

The 36-year-old has signed a two-year contract with the option of that being extended for a further year, the Manchester United website said on Tuesday evening, four days after informing they had agreed a fee with Juventus to bring the striker back to the club where he scored 118 goals in 292 appearances between 2003 and 2009. "Manchester United is a club that has always had a special place in my heart, and I have been overwhelmed by all the messages I have received since the announcement on



Friday." "not wait to play at Old Trafford in front of a full stadium and see all the fans again. I'm looking forward to joining up with the team after the international games, and I hope we have a very successful season ahead," said Ronaldo on the Manchester United website. Meanwhile, Xinhua reported that coach Ole Gunnar Solskjaer was delighted at seeing Ronaldo return to Old Trafford.

Paralympics: Avani fails to qualify for Mixed Air Rifle Prone final

Tokyo | Agencies

Avani Lekhara's hopes of adding a second medal to the gold she won in the R2 Women's 10m Air Rifle SH1 did not materialise as the 19-year-old Indian shooter finished 27th in the R3 Mixed 10m Air Rifle Prone SH1 qualification.

Avani could manage only 629.7 in the qualifying round as South Korea's Park Jin-ho topped the round with a Paralympic Record score of 638.9. Germany's Natascha Hiltrop was second with a score of 635.4.

Avani, who had scores of 105.9, 105.0, 104.9, 105.3, 104.2, 104.4, was the best placed among the three Indians in the fray as Sidhartha Babu was 40th with a score of 625.5 and Deepak finished 43rd among 47 shooters with a score of 624.9.

The Mixed 10m Air Rifle Prone SH1 was not the strong event for Avani and that was evident as the Indian could not



keep pace with the top shooters. The top eight shooters in the qualifying round

made it to the final which will be held later in the day.

Prasidh Krishna added to Indian Test squad

London | Agencies

Fast bowler Prasidh Krishna has been added to India's Test squad ahead of the fourth Test at The Oval, said the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) on Wednesday.

The 25-year-old had been travelling with the Indian team from the start of the tour as a standby player.

"The All-India Senior Selection Committee - based on the request of the team management - has added fast bowler Prasidh Krishna to India's squad for the fourth Test," read the BCCI release.

A right-arm pace bowler, Krishna made his international debut in the ODI series against England in Pune in March. He played in all three



matches and picked up six wickets, including 4/54 on debut. In nine first-class appearances, Krishna has picked 34 wickets at an average of 20.26 and economy rate of 2.79.

Congratulations on a wonderful career Dale Steyn: Tendulkar

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Cricket legend Sachin Tendulkar has congratulated Dale Steyn on a "wonderful career" after the South African pacer announced his retirement from all forms of the game.

"Congratulations on a wonderful career @DaleSteyn62! It was always great playing against you. Hope you enjoy your 2nd innings as much as you enjoyed your 1st," Tendulkar wrote on Twitter.

The right-arm pace bowler, known as the greatest and best fast bowler in the past 20 years alongside James Anderson, played 93 Tests for the Proteas and picked up 439 wickets with 26 five-wicket hauls.



Steyn, who had skipped IPL 2021 to take some time off the game, also played 125

ODIs and 47 T20Is taking 196 and 64 wickets in the two formats respectively.

Will have to start thinking about 2024 Paris now: Goalkeeper Savita

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Indian women's hockey team player Savita, who stood rock-solid guarding the goal during the Tokyo Olympic Games, said on Wednesday that with the current Olympic cycle spanning just three years, the team's priority will be to regroup, analyse the Tokyo performance and "hit the ground running" immediately.

With the 2024 Paralympic three years away Savita said, "I actually can't wait to return to the camp in SAI (Sports Authority of India), Bengaluru. It has become a place of comfort for us. There has been lot of celebrations following the Olympics (India finished fourth) and now it's



time to get back to reality. Next year is crucial with the Asian Games and our priority will be to win gold so we automatically qualify for the Paris Olympics. We will resume training

with that target in mind," she said.

The team's resilience to bounce back from a series of losses in the league stage to beat Ireland (1-0) and South Africa (4-3) changed the

course of the Olympic Games for them. Making it to the quarterfinal was the team's first priority and getting past the mighty Australians 1-0 in the first knockout game ensured the entire nation rallied behind them ahead of the semifinal clash against Argentina women.

Looking back at the turn of events, Savita said, "Now that I have finally had some time to reflect on our performance, I do feel we achieved something outstanding, and the best part was the journey to get till here over the past five years. We have endured a lot as a team and as individuals faced tremendous odds to reach this level. I think we will always cherish this journey.



Nia Sharma: The new 'Boss Lady' of the 'Bigg Boss OTT' house

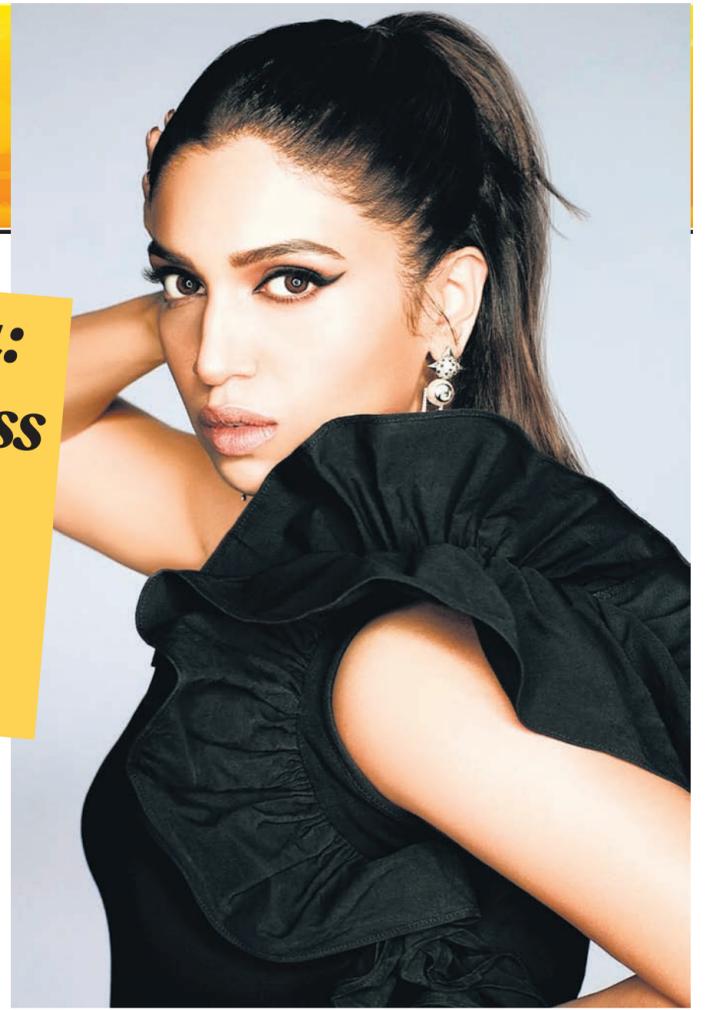
Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actress Nia Sharma is the new 'Boss Lady' as announced by Bigg Boss in the 'Bigg Boss OTT' house. In the recent episodes we have seen Nishant Bhat and Moose Jattana were announced as the first contenders for 'Boss Man' and 'Boss Lady' positions.

Earlier, Bigg Boss exhibited the power of 'Boss Man' and 'Boss Lady', as Pratik Sehajpal and Neha Bhasin got the power to save any one contestant from elimination. While Pratik rooted for Nishant Bhat, Neha wanted to save her bestie

Shamita Shetty, after a long discussion and convincing, Pratik decided to go ahead with Neha's decision and they both decided to save Shamita.

While this happened, Bigg Boss gave the audience a chance to save one more contestant and after the voting closed, it was revealed that the audience had saved Nishant. Contestants who are nominated for the weekend are Divya Agarwal, Millind Gaba and Akshara Singh. 'Bigg Boss OTT' streams on Voot.



I love makeup: Bhumi Pednekar

"I am a diehard believer, supporter and lover of makeup. I can't even remember how old I was when I delved into the world of beauty," she said.

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Bollywood actress and environmentalist Bhumi Pednekar has been named as India's first M.A.C global cosmetics brand ambassador due to her efforts towards climate conservation, sustainability and her body of work.

Bhumi has professed her love for makeup in a quick chat. The actress added that she has been around women who love the world of beauty as much as she did and "I guess it was their influence along with how positive, fun and creative makeup can be, that completely engulfed me and continues to do so till date. It actually is therapy for me."

Being the first Indian personality who has been appointed as the face of a brand like M.A.C makes the 32-year-old actress feel extremely "honoured and proud". "I've been a makeup lover since I was very young, so I feel extremely honoured and proud of myself. I was someone who would collect her pocket money to go buy her favourite M.A.C lipstick or foundation. And from that to actually becoming the face of the brand, it feels like an achievement and that life has come a full circle," she said. Speaking about her upcoming slate of work, Bhumi will be seen in 'Badhaai Do' with Rajkumar Rao, 'Raksha Bandhan' starring Akshay Kumar and 'Mr Lele' alongside Vicky Kaushal.

Indians warming up to the horror genre: Ananya Sengupta



Sukant Deepak | New Delhi

When actor Ananya Sengupta signed her first supernatural thriller, The Final Exit, her gut might have warned that it may not do well at the box-office, but she was proven wrong. "Over the past two decades, the audience has warmed up to horror movies. Filmmakers are now open to investing in a horror film with A-list cast and elaborate sets. However, horror as a genre is still evolving, and India has a long way to go to tap its full potential. I am confident it is just a matter of time before we get there," said Sengupta, who was also seen in the movie Ghost.

Intentionally choosing varied genres to prove her versatility, the actor, who has done multiple films down south too will now be seen in the web series Highdose. "The makers were keen to cast me for the lead role of Revati. The concept appealed to me and I was quite impressed with their commitment," said the actor who won the Best Actress' and Best Supporting Actress' for short films Engima' and Silver Gandhi' at Port Blair International Film Festival and Golden Sparrow International Film Festival respectively.

Sengupta, who will be seen in South-Indian filmmaker Srinivasa Raju's upcoming film, is optimistic that it would be a turning point in her career. All praise for the "professionalism" in the South Indian film industry, she asserts, "My shoots would start at 7 a.m., which meant I had to wake up at 5 a.m. everyday for 40 days. Shooting two films simultaneously was indeed a challenging task. I shed a few kilos rapidly. Nevertheless, it taught me discipline. The entire team, especially technicians, were really persevering."

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The upcoming sixth season of popular dance reality show 'Dance+' is set to premiere on Disney+ Hotstar on September 14. The show will release on the OTT platform ahead of television.

Director-choreographer Remo D'Souza will be the Super Judge while Raghav Juyal returns as a host once again. Talking about his return with 'Dance+ Season 6', Remo said: "I am glad to make a comeback as

the super judge on Dance+, the biggest dance reality show.

This opportunity gives me a scope to share my knowledge of dance, something I dearly love and have built my life on. I know this season will be packed with many mind-blowing performances because Shakti, Salman and Punit are fantastic dancers themselves. "While he keeps an eye on the fierce competition amongst contestants, Remo will once again be seen judging three of

Richa Chadha met female cops for 'Candy'

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actress Richa Chadha met female police officers for her upcoming series 'Candy' to understand the balancing act of being a homemaker and working in law enforcement.

"Portraying the role of a cop was not easy", said Richa. She added: "It demanded a very different mental make up. I was lucky enough to hang out with some female cops and understand the dual pressures of managing the needs of the family in the Indian social set up, and working as a law enforcer."

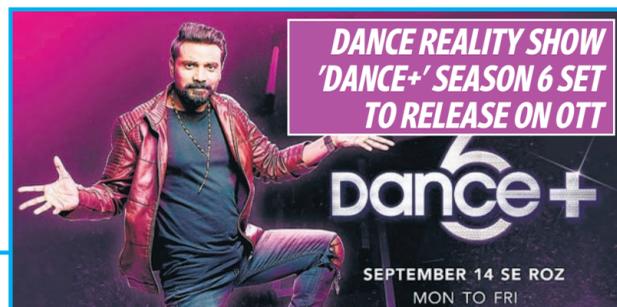
Richa will be seen next in Voot Select's original web series, where she will be donning the avatar of a cop for the first time. It also has actor Ronit Roy in a lead role. 'Candy' is helmed by Ashish R. Shukla. The series has a mix of suspense and mystery where Richa will be seen investigating sinister murders in a school in a small town.

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Punjabi singer Ekam Bawa, who is best known for his song 'Lalkare', is about to venture into Bollywood soon with his upcoming single.

In the past, Ekam has composed and sung Punjabi songs like 'Love You', 'Bugga Bugga', '4 Din', 'Ziddi Jatti', 'Pee Pee Ke', 'Reejh Dil Di', 'Sniper', 'Fake Bande', 'Love You Jatta', 'Sardarni', 'Reejh', 'Yaar Maar' and 'Munda Miss Karda'. The Punjabi singer shared the inspiration behind his music. "Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan Sahab has been my biggest motivation over the years. Whenever I sit for 'riyaz' before every 'riyaz' it is necessary for me to listen to Nusrat Khan Sahab. His voice gives me eternal peace and the way he sings can really blow your mind."

**PUNJABI
SINGER EKAM
BAWA INSPIRED
BY NUSRAT
FATEH ALI KHAN**



his dance protégés for their mentorship skills and captaincy. These include, Salman Y Khan, who is stepping into the role of a captain for the first time, Shakti Mohan - who returns this season and returning captain on the show, Punit J. Pathak.

The host for the sixth season of Dance+, Raghav Juyal said: "Returning to the Dance+ stage is

like a reunion of friends and family. I have known each of the captains, and Remo sir for years now and the beauty of being the host here is that it doesn't feel like a job. I will simply be myself and charm the judges, contestants and the viewers."

'Dance+' Season 6 will release on Disney+ Hotstar on September 14.

INSTAGRAM PIC OF THE DAY



Neha Malik