

# absolute india

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**Electric vehicle sales set to jump 80% in 2021, says report at COP26**

## FOR THE GREEN PLANET

**Twenty four countries, six major vehicle manufacturers (GM, Ford, Mercedes, BYD, Volvo, JLR), 39 cities, states and regions, 28 fleets and 13 investors all jointly set out their determination for all new car and van sales to be zero emission by 2040 globally and 2035 in leading markets.**

▶ **THE GLOBAL SALES OF ZERO EMISSION VEHICLES (ZEVs) HAVE GROWN DRAMATICALLY SINCE 2019 FROM 2.1 MILLION TO 5.3 MILLION**

▶ **ZEVs ARE FORECAST TO BE 70 PER CENT OF ALL NEW CAR SALES IN 2040, WITH THIS PROJECTION HAVING DOUBLED IN THE LAST 5 YEARS.**



Vishal Gulati | Glasgow

Passenger electric vehicle sales are set to jump over 80 per cent in 2021 to 5.6 million units, off the back of unprecedented industry and government commitments around the world over the last two years, according to the Zero-Emission Vehicles Factbook, a special report published on Wednesday by BloombergNEF (BNEF), at the request of the UK COP26 Presidency and in partnership with Bloomberg Philanthropies.

The Factbook documents the progress that has been made towards global net-zero emissions in the road transport sector, and shows that the future is brighter than ever for zero-emission vehicles. In the first half of 2021, sales of passenger electric vehicles (including battery electric, plug-in hybrid and fuel cell vehicles) were 140 per cent higher than the same period in 2019, reaching seven per cent of global passenger vehicle sales. This compares with just 2.6 per cent in 2019, the year of the last UN Climate Change Conference.

The total global fleet of passenger electric and fuel cell vehicles now totals nearly 13 million, of which 8.5 million are true zero-emission vehicles (ZEVs), either battery electric or fuel cell (still, fuel cell vehicles

account for a fraction of that total). The latter figure is up from just 4.6 million at the time of COP25. At the same time, by 1H 2021, the global fleet of zero-emission buses has increased by 22 per cent since 2019, and the report expects 18 per cent of all municipal buses on the road to be zero-emission at the end of 2021.

**UK confirms pledge for zero emission of heavy vehicles by 2040**

Glasgow: All new heavy goods vehicles in the UK will be zero-emission by 2040, the UK government said on Wednesday. This, combined with the UK's 2030 phase out for petrol and diesel cars and vans, represents a world-leading pledge to end the sale of all polluting road vehicles within the next two decades. The UK will become the first country in the world to commit to phasing out new, non-zero emission heavy goods vehicles weighing 26 tonnes and under by 2035, with all new vehicles sold in the UK to be zero emission by 2040.

The International Energy Agency (IEA) has raised its 2030 battery electric vehicle fleet forecast by seven per cent since 2019, while the Organisation of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) has raised its 2040 estimate for the global electric and fuel cell vehicle fleet by 11 per cent.

**US join International Solar Alliance**

New Delhi: In what can be termed as a big boost to accelerate global adoption of solar energy, the US on Wednesday joined the International Solar Alliance (ISA) as the 101st member country, a development welcomed by India.

The launch of the International Solar Alliance (ISA) was announced by Prime Minister Modi and then French President Francois Hollande on November 30, 2015 at the 21st session of United Nations Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP21) in Paris.

## 5 UP cops suspended after man dies in police custody

KASGANJ | Agencies

Five policemen have been placed under suspension after a 22-year-old man allegedly killed himself at a police station on Tuesday night.

The man, Altaf, had been brought to the police station on Tuesday morning for questioning in a case filed last week in connection with the 'kidnapping of a woman and forced marriage'.

In a video statement released on Twitter on Wednesday, Kasganj Superintendent of Police Rohan Pramod Bothre claimed the man asked to use the toilet at the police station. When he did not return after a few minutes, the cops went inside the toilet. "He was wearing a black jacket and it appears he hooked the string, attached to the hood of the jacket, to a tap in the washroom and tried to strangle himself. He was brought out unconscious and taken to the hospital. He died within 5-10 minutes," Bothre said.

The five policemen suspended in the case have been accused of 'negligence', according to a statement. Meanwhile, Altaf's father Chand Miyan, said, "I handed over my son to the cops. But I feel that my son has



been killed." Another relative questioned how a person could hang himself from the water tap. "What is the height of the deceased and what is the height of the tap?" he asked. It may be recalled that in December last year, the Supreme Court had ordered that all police stations in the country and investigation agencies -- including the CBI, National Investigation Agency and Enforcement Directorate -- must install CCTV cameras with night vision and audio recording. The court said states have to install cameras with audio at all police stations.

## Twelve dead in bus-trolley collision in Rajasthan's Barmer

Jaipur: At least 12 persons were burnt to death and 40 others injured when a bus they were travelling in caught fire after colliding with a trolley at the Jodhpur National Highway in Rajasthan's Barmer district on Wednesday, police said. According to police, the injured were rushed to a government hospital, which referred 13 victims to Jodhpur hospital as their condition was critical. Fire brigades from Pachpadra, Balotra, and Barmer refinery were pressed into service to douse the flames. As per an eyewitness, the trolley was coming from the wrong side and rammed into the bus leading to the tragedy. The number of deaths are likely to go up as some of the victims are stated to be very critical, police said.



## Covid will kill another 1 lakh people, warns Germany's top virologist



Team Absolute | New Delhi

Christian Drosten, one of Germany's top virologists, has warned that a further 100,000 people will die from Covid-19 if nothing is done to halt an aggressive fourth wave, the BBC reported. Case numbers have soared as Germany on Wednesday registered its highest rate of infection since the pandemic began, with almost 40,000 cases in a day. "We have to act right now," said Drosten, who described

a real emergency situation, the report said.

Doctors in the intensive care Covid ward at Leipzig University Hospital have warned that this fourth wave could be the worst yet.

The state of Saxony has the highest seven-day infection rate in Germany at 459 cases per 100,000 people. The national rate is 232.

It also has the lowest take-up of vaccine: 57 per cent of the population here have been immunised, the report added.

## Elon Musk's net worth goes sub-\$300 billion

Nikhila Natarajan | New Delhi

Clearly, two of the costliest tweets in the history of Global Inc - and who else but Elon Musk, the world's richest man, to have bungled them in. "Much is made lately of unrealized gains being a means of tax avoidance, so I propose selling 10% of my Tesla stock," Musk asked by way of a "yes" or "no" poll on the microblogging platform over the weekend. Not satisfied with the poll, the maverick mega billionaire followed up six minutes later, stating, "I will abide by the results of this poll, whichever way it goes." The result out there in full public view was stark: 52:48 in favour of Musk selling 10 per cent! The bloodbath that followed sunk Tesla stock by \$200 billion (market capitalisation was \$1,211 bn on Friday end of day and \$1,023 bn on Tuesday 48 hours later). Musk's own net worth took a \$50 billion beating.



## Volatile situation on borders, forces must be ready: Rajnath

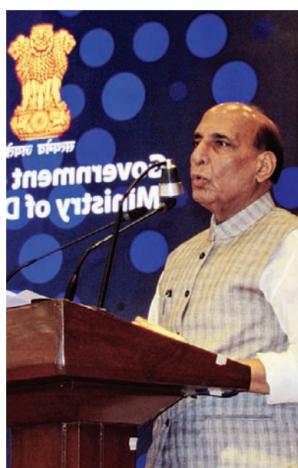
Team Absolute | New Delhi

Citing the volatile situation on the borders, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Wednesday said that the armed forces "need to be prepared to respond at a short notice for any contingency".

Addressing the second bi-annual Indian Air Force Commanders' Conference at the air headquarters, he stressed that the role of IAF in future conflicts is crucial and it needs to harness the capabilities and opportunities offered by Artificial Intelligence, Big Data Handling, and Machine Learning. Rajnath Singh also mentioned that the efforts in the field of indigenisation through 'Make in India' initiative of the government are showing results and the orders of LCA Mk 1A and C-295 will open new opportunities in the indigenous aerospace sector.

He exhorted the commanders to brainstorm to evolve viable solutions towards the conference theme of "Ensuring Certainty amidst Uncertainties".

The minister also appreciated the IAF for maintaining a high level of preparedness, ability to respond on a short



notice and displaying high standards of professionalism in carrying out operational and peace time tasks.

Indian Air Force chief Air Chief Marshal V.R. Chaudhari briefed him on the current status of the force.

## Rhea Chakraborty's bank accounts to be defreeze, gadgets returned

Team Absolute | Mumbai

After over 14 months, a Mumbai special court has ordered the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) to defreeze the bank accounts of Rhea Chakraborty and return her electronic gadgets, the lawyer of the Bollywood actress said here on Wednesday.

The gadgets were seized while the bank accounts were frozen by the NCB after her arrest last year in connection with the probe into the death of actor Sushant Singh Rajput. Special NDPS court judge D.B. Mane ordered the conditional release of the electronic gadgets on furnishing a bond of Rs 100,000, directing her not to sell or dispose of them till the case is pending and produce them whenever needed for investigation. The special judge noted



that since there was "no strong objection" from the NCB investigating officer, Chakraborty was entitled to defreezing these accounts, and passed a conditional order to this effect.

Chakraborty was arrested by the NCB on September 9 last year for allegedly procuring drugs for Rajput, who was found hanging at his Mumbai home on June 14, 2020.

## Hyderabad techie arrested for threats to Virushka's daughter

Mumbai: The Mumbai Cyber Police Station has arrested a 23-year-old techie from Hyderabad for giving rape threats to the 10-month-old infant daughter of Indian Cricket Captain Virat Kohli and Bollywood actress Anushka Sharma, an official said here on Wednesday.

Following a complaint by the cricketer's manager, the Mumbai Cyber Police got cracking on the case and with the help of tech-intel, they tracked the offensive caller -- identified as Akubathini Ramnagesh -- to Rangareddy in Hyderabad. They dispatched a police team to Hyderabad, caught Ramnagesh, a software engineer, and have brought him to Mumbai for further investigation.

He had issued online rape threats from his Twitter account, (@Criccrazygirl) to the infant daughter of the celeb-couple, soon after India lost the T-20 World Cup match to Pakistan on October 24.

## FB user data requests from Indian govt increased in 2021: Meta

▶ **FROM JANUARY-JUNE 2021, FACEBOOK RECEIVED A TOTAL OF 45,275 REQUESTS (LEGAL/EMERGENCY) FROM THE INDIAN GOVERNMENT. IN THE EARLIER JULY-DECEMBER 2020 PERIOD, THE TOTAL REQUESTS FROM THE INDIAN GOVERNMENT WERE 40,300.**

▶ **THE INDIAN GOVERNMENT ALSO REQUESTED FACEBOOK TO PROVIDE DATA OF 68,485 USERS, OF WHICH 51 PER CENT REQUESTS WERE MET WITH, INFORMED META. THE COMPANY, HOWEVER, DID NOT REVEAL THE NATURE OF THE REQUESTS FROM THE INDIAN GOVERNMENT.**

"We also restricted access to 22 items in response to reports received from the Elections Commission of India. Additionally, we restricted access to 65 items in response to other valid court orders and to six items in response to private reports of defamation."

Team Absolute | New Delhi

India with 45,275 requests was once again second to the US in terms of asking Meta (formerly Facebook) to provide user data in the first half of 2021, and social network restricted access in India to 442 items in response to directions from the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY).

The restricted access was due to violating Section 69A of the Information Technology Act, 2000, including content against security of the state and public order. In the July-December 2020 period, the social network had restricted access in India to 878 items in response to directions from MeitY.

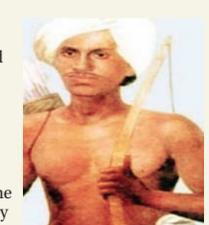


Meta announced earlier this month that the social network removed over 30 million pieces of content in September on Facebook and Instagram in India. The social network acted upon 26.9 million pieces of content across 10 policies for Facebook and over 3.2 million pieces of content across 9 policies for Instagram in compliance with the Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021, the company said in its monthly compliance report.

Globally, during the first six months of 2021, government requests for user data increased 10.5 per cent from 1,91,013 to 2,11,055.

## Gol declared Nov 15 as Janjatiya Gaurav Diwas

New Delhi: The Union Cabinet, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday approved the declaration of November 15, the birth anniversary of Birs Munda, as Janjatiya Gaurav Diwas.



Briefing the media after the meeting, Information and Broadcasting Minister Anurag Singh Thakur said November 15 as Janjatiya Gaurav Divas will be dedicated to the memory of brave tribal freedom fighters so that coming generations could know about their sacrifices for the country.

The government has planned week-long celebrations from November 15 to 22 to commemorate 75 years of the history of the tribal people, their culture and achievements. Several activities have been planned jointly with the state governments and the theme behind each activity is to showcase the unique tribal cultural heritage, their contributions to the freedom struggle, practices, rights, traditions, cuisines, health, education and livelihood.



# AFGHAN TERRITORY MUST NOT BE USED FOR TERROR ACTIVITIES, DELHI DIALOGUE ADOPTS DECLARATION

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Afghan territory must not be used for terror activities, the eight nations participating in the third Regional Security Dialogue on Afghanistan in New Delhi asserted in a joint declaration adopted on Wednesday.

"Afghanistan's territory should not be used for sheltering, training, planning or financing any terrorist acts," the joint declaration stated after the crucial meeting.

The five Central Asian countries - Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan - along with Russia, Iran and India participated in the meeting, while China and Pakistan did not join the dialogue.

At the meeting chaired by India's National Security Advisor Ajit Doval, all the participants discussed the evolving situation in Afghanistan, especially the security situation and its regional and global ramifications. They also paid special attention to the current political situation in Afghanistan and the threats arising from terrorism, radicalisation and drug trafficking as



well as the need for humanitarian assistance.

Without naming Pakistan, all the participating nations reiterated strong support for a peaceful, secure and stable Afghanistan while emphasising on respect for sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity and non-interference in its internal affairs. Expressing deep concern over the sufferings of people in Afghanistan arising out of the security situation in the war-torn country, the member countries condemned in the strongest possible terms all the terrorist activities and reaffirmed their firm commitment

to combat terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, including its financing, the dismantling of terrorist infrastructure and countering radicalisation, to ensure that Afghanistan would never become a safe haven for global terrorism.

The joint declaration also called for collective cooperation against the menace of radicalisation, extremism, separatism and drug trafficking in the region. Underscoring the need to form an open and truly inclusive government that represents the will of all the people of Afghanistan, which has representation from all sections

of society in the administrative and political structure, the Delhi summit advocated for the successful national reconciliation process in the country. Emphasising the importance of ensuring the fundamental rights of women, children and minority communities, it further said that the deteriorating socio-economic and humanitarian situation in Afghanistan is a matter of concern and also underlined the need to provide urgent humanitarian assistance to the people of Afghanistan directly, which must be distributed within the country in a non-discriminatory manner across all sections of the Afghan society.

The declaration further reiterated the importance of the dialogue and agreed to remain engaged with each other in the future, besides deciding to hold the next round in 2022.

Soon after the meeting ended, the seven foreign nations' security representatives met Prime Minister Narendra Modi and appreciated India's initiative in organising the dialogue and conveyed the perspectives of their respective nations on the Afghanistan situation.

# Depression in Bay of Bengal off TN coast brings profuse rainfall

Team Absolute | New Delhi

A depression lay centred over southwest Bay of Bengal, about 430 kms east-southeast of Chennai, resulting in moderate to heavy to extremely heavy rainfall along the Tamil Nadu coast on Wednesday, the IMD said.

"The well-marked low pressure area over central parts of south Bay of Bengal moved west-northwestwards and concentrated into a depression and lay centred at 5.30 p.m. over southwest Bay of Bengal about 430 km east-southeast of Chennai and 420 km east-southeast of Puducherry," the India Meteorological Department (IMD) said. This depression is very likely to move west-northwestwards and reach near the north Tamil Nadu coast by the early morning on Thursday and thereafter, likely to continue to move west-northwestwards and cross north Tamil Nadu and adjoining south Andhra Pradesh coasts between Karaikal and Sriharikota close to the north of Puducherry by Thursday evening, it said. Light



to moderate rainfall has been predicted at most places with heavy to very heavy rainfall at a few places and extremely heavy falls at isolated places very likely over north coastal Tamil Nadu, Puducherry, north interior Tamil Nadu, south coastal Andhra Pradesh and Rayalaseema and heavy rainfall at isolated places over south interior Karnataka.

Tamil Nadu and southern Andhra Pradesh have already been battered by rains for at least three days with several places in the former state witnessing massive flooding. National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) teams have been deployed at multiple places to deal with any exigencies.

There would be squally winds with speed reaching 45-55 kmph gusting to 65 kmph over southwest and adjoining west-central Bay of Bengal and along and off Tamil Nadu, Puducherry and south Andhra Pradesh coasts on Thursday, the IMD said. Sea condition will be rough to very rough over southwest and adjoining west-central Bay of Bengal and along and off Tamil Nadu, Puducherry and south Andhra Pradesh coasts during on Thursday and hence, fishermen have been advised not to venture into southwest and adjoining west-central Bay of Bengal and along and off Tamil Nadu, Puducherry and south Andhra Pradesh coasts.

# Consumer courts vacancies: SC warns states of imposing costs on officers concerned

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Supreme Court on Wednesday expressed its discontent over some state governments failing to furnish information in connection with vacancies and infrastructure for consumer courts in their territories.

A bench, headed by Justice Sanjay Kishan Kaul, said the court is not inclined to waste judicial time over parties defaulting in the matter and warned the state governments that it would impose a cost of Rs one to two lakh for recovery from the officers concerned.

Senior advocate Gopal Sankaranarayanan, amicus curiae in the matter, contended before the bench that a number of state govern-



ments -- Goa, Delhi, Rajasthan, Kerala and Punjab have not submitted information for staff and Bihar has submitted a status report for infrastructure.

The top court said: "This results in a considerable time period of courts being spent. We will impose exemplary costs on defaulting states for wastage of judicial time for recovery against officers."

It told the state govern-

ments that filling up vacancies and providing adequate infrastructure was their job. The top court emphasised that posts should be manned in order to address grievances of the people.

The bench posted the matter for further hearing on December 1. The top court was hearing a suo motu matter related to vacancies and infrastructure in consumer courts across the country.

# BENGAL TO LAUNCH HOUSE-TO-HOUSE CAMPAIGN FOR VACCINATION

Kolkata: In an effort to make vaccination a social event and reach out to the remotest part of the state, the West Bengal Health Department has decided to launch a house-to-house campaign to identify the beneficiaries who are yet to be administered the first dose of the vaccine.

A notification issued by the Health Department to all the chief medical officers of the districts said, "The state of West Bengal has been successfully implementing the Covid vaccination programme since its inception on January 16, 2021, and till date it has administered 7.4 crore doses cumulatively (including 1st and 2nd doses)."

"Now, to ramp up the vaccination programme further, a house-to-house campaign may be undertaken to identify the beneficiaries who have not yet taken the first dose. This can be done by forming a team with the frontline workers who can reach all the families, register all such beneficiaries, create awareness and encourage people to get their dose. This strategy can also be used for mobilising the due beneficiaries of the second dose," the notification said. "The team of frontline workers conducting the house-to-house campaign may also prepare the line list of all such vulnerable and bedridden unvaccinated persons for vaccinating them early," it added.

# Security beefed up in 9 UP districts after bomb threat

MEERUT (UP) | Agencies

Security has been beefed up at railway stations and temples in nine Uttar Pradesh districts after the Superintendent of Meerut city railway station received a letter threatening bomb blasts at these districts, including Meerut.

Railway Police DSP Sudesh Kumar Gupta said the letter was received on Tuesday and a case was registered against unidentified persons under relevant sections at the GRP police station.

Gupta said prima facie, it seems to be a hoax. A similar letter had been received by the Hapur railway station Superintendent's office on October 30, following which a thorough checking was conducted



in the station premises. Station Superintendent R.P. Singh said the letter threatened bomb blasts at many temples and railway stations in nine districts, including Meerut, Ghaziabad, Hapur,

Muzaffarnagar, Aligarh, Khurja (Bulandshahr), Kanpur, Lucknow, and Shahjahanpur. The police administration has increased vigil, Superintendent of Police, City, Vineet Bhatnagar said.

# 68 MLAs served notice for filing wrong info during 2020 Bihar

PATNA | Agencies

The Income Tax department has served notice to 68 MLAs who submitted wrong information during the 2020 Assembly polls.

An official of the department said that many of the MLAs have given wrong affidavits about their movable and immovable assets at the time of filing the nomination to the Election Commission.

Besides, some of them have mentioned the source of earning in income tax returns but not mentioned in the affidavit. Some of the legislators have not mentioned PAN cards and bank details in the affidavits.

"We have served notices to 68 legislators of Bihar who were elected after the 2020 assembly election. They had hidden their properties or source of earning or mismatch was found in income tax returns and affidavits. We have asked them to reply by November 30," the official added.



"Following the replies of legislators, we will investigate further and submit reports to the Election Commission. After the recommendation of the poll body, we will take further action against them," he said.

# Pilots seek settlement of outstanding dues pre-handover of Air India

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Indian Pilots Guild (IPG) has written to the Chairman and Managing Director of Air India for settling all outstanding dues with employees pre hand-over.

The IPG said this is a reminder of the company's obligation to justly settle the already promised dues. At this critical juncture where the international skies have opened up and the domestic demand is steadily rising due to the festive season, the pilots are once again being stretched beyond capacity to cover additional flights.

"We trust that you will ensure that the process of settling arrears is righteously carried out so as to not leave the employees feeling cheated. We are truly optimistic about making a fresh start with our new owners. We urge you not to exploit us



employees whilst settling our arrears as that would probably lead to mass protest and industrial unrest just as the company changes hands," the IPG said.

The 2006 Wage Agreement allocated a monthly Layover Subsistence Allowance (LSA) for Captains and Co-Pilots. Over the years, 25 per cent of these amounts were held back and are still due. By definition, LSA was an allowance provided to sustain one's self on international layovers where the cost of living is exponentially higher. Pilots would spend from their own pockets on international layovers because these sums of money were not rightfully paid on time. The reimbursement of these foreign currency expenses that have been incurred for so many years is long overdue, IPG said in the letter.

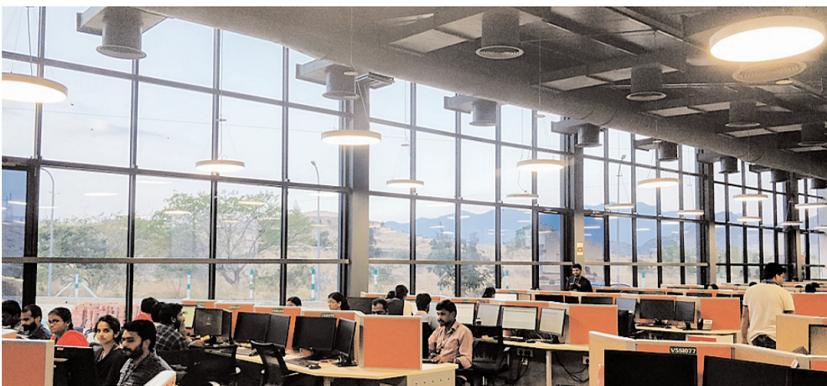
# India IT services market grows by 7.3% in first half of 2021

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Indian IT services market grew by 7.3 per cent in the first half of 2021, compared to the 5.7 per cent growth in the same period last year, as enterprises continued to invest in digital transformation initiatives, a new report showed on Wednesday.

Overall, the Indian IT and business services market was valued at \$6.96 billion and recorded a 6.4 per cent year-over-year (YoY) growth in the January-June period, compared to 5.1 per cent in the first half of 2020, according to the International Data Corporation's (IDC) worldwide semi-annual services tracker.

"Verticals like government and manufacturing, which delayed IT investments in 2020, hiked up their IT spend in H1 2021, and enterprises in the country continued to increasingly depend on IT service providers for solutions in areas like cloud, security, artificial intelligence, analytics, etc.," said Harish Krishnakumar, senior market analyst, IT Services, IDC.



India. The IT and business services market is projected to reach \$19.93 billion by the end of 2025, growing at a CAGR of 8.2 per cent between 2020-2025, the report said.

"H1 2021 turned out to be the year that showcased enterprise resiliency strengthen at a remarkable pace.

Most enterprises witnessed a bounce back with business reaching the pre-pandemic situation," said Shweta Baidya, senior research manager, enterprise software and ICT services, IDC India.

While large enterprises continued to take long strides towards transfor-

mation initiatives, the mid-market segment adopted a cautious approach towards technology investments, with a focus on investments that provided quick returns in the form of customer acquisition, talent retention or financial returns, she added.

# With 16 new Zika virus cases, Kanpur crosses 100-mark

KANPUR | Agencies

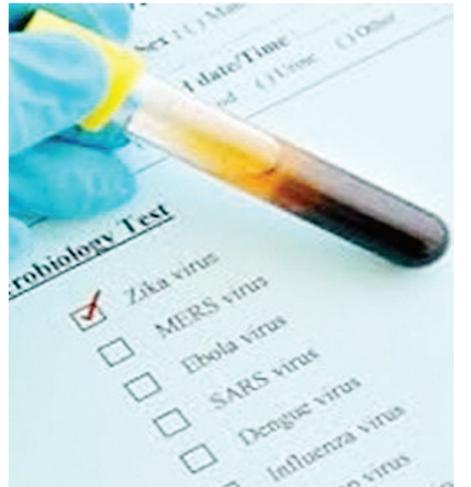
With 16 more cases of Zika virus being reported, Kanpur has crossed the 100-mark.

The fresh tally of 106 cases includes nine men and seven women, including two in an advanced stage of pregnancy from the Zika epicentre of Chakeri area and one patient who tested positive on Saturday from the neighbouring Kannauj district.

Chief medical officer (CMO) Dr Nepal Singh said that the 16 new patients are residents of Harjinder Nagar, Pokharpur, Tiwaripur Bagiya and Qazi Khera localities in the Chakeri area.

The pregnant women who contracted the virus underwent an ultrasound test and doctors confirmed their foetuses were healthy.

"In the report received from KGMU Lucknow on Tuesday, seven women of whom two are pregnant, and nine men have been confirmed to be infected with Zika virus. The infected per-



sions have no severe symptoms. All have been kept in home isolation. About 100 teams have been deployed in the city for source reduction and 15 teams for home sampling and sampling. Also, an additional 15 rapid response

teams (RRT) have been engaged to check the spread of Zika virus," the CMO stated.

A massive sampling campaign is underway in the affected areas, said a senior health official.



Chouhan reviewed revenue receipts for the year 2021-22

IT IS NECESSARY TO DEVELOP THE TENDENCY OF TAKING BILLS IN THE GENERAL PUBLIC: CM

- ALL AUCTIONS OF FOREST DEPARTMENT WILL BE ONLINE FROM DECEMBER ONE
IMPORTANT CONTRIBUTION OF THE DEPARTMENTS ENGAGED IN REVENUE COLLECTION IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE STATE
INSTRUCTIONS TO PRESENT THE NEW EXCISE POLICY AND HERITAGE WINE POLICY SOON



Secretary Iqbal Singh Bains, Principal Secretary Finance Manoj Govil were present in the meeting. Other departmental officers virtually participated in the meeting.

ambit of tax to more people, we can increase revenue collection. Chouhan said that it is necessary to develop the tendency of taking bills for the purchased items among the people.

ments of the Government of India. The GST collection should also be improved in the state using digital technology and data analytics.

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan said that the works of development and public welfare in the state are possible only through collection of revenue.

Bhopal BJP MP Objects to Azan: Congress MLA says Voice of one religion never hurts another

Bhopal MP Pragya Thakur has objected early morning azan saying it affects sadhana and puja of seers, patients and others while Congress MLA from Bhopal Madhya Arif Masood urged Pragma Thakur to keep in mind her 'dignity as an MP.'

Team Absolute | Bhopal
Bharatiya Janata Party's Member of Parliament from Bhopal Pragya Thakur has objected early morning azan saying it affects sadhana and puja of seers, patients and others.



"Starting from 4 am onwards, loud voices are heard and this keeps continuing making people lose sleep, patients suffering and sadhu-sant also mostly start their dhyana and sadhna from 4 am in Brahma muhurt," Thakur said at a function on Tuesday evening.

remarks that he represents 130 crore Indians. He pointed out that the voice of one religion never hurts another.

problems from anyone," added Masood. "How come small things bother her during her sadhana, we never allow such things to hamper ours," added the MLA urging Thakur to refrain from such talks.

Amanpreet Singh Monga is Aakash Institute student

Bhopal Student Secures impressive AIR 247 NEET UG 2021

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Amanpreet Singh Monga, a student of Aakash Institute in Bhopal has made the institute proud by securing an impressive AIR 247 in the result of the prestigious National Entrance Examination (NEET) UG 2021.



world's toughest entrance exam. He attributed his entry into the elite list of top percentiles in NEET to their efforts in understanding the concepts, and their strict adherence to their learning schedule.

Aakash Institute has helped me with both. But for the content and coaching from the institute, I would not have grasped many concepts in different subjects in a short period of time," he said.

Team Absolute | Bhopal

As the death toll in Bhopal's Kamla Nehru hospital fire reached five on Wednesday, questions are being raised about the preparedness of the administration to tackle such a situation.

The Kamla Nehru hospital is a separate unit for children in the campus of Madhya Pradesh's largest medical institute -- Hamidia Medical College Campus.

A couple of months ago, the Union Health Ministry had advised all states to strengthen their medical infrastructure, especially for children in view of a possible third wave of the Covid pandemic, which could affect

the children more.

Along with the medical infrastructures, such as beds and medicines, strengthening of the fire fighting system in hospitals was also to be a part of the preparation.

Subsequently, a notice of the Bhopal Municipal Corporation (BMC) citing a letter of the Union Health and Family Welfare department, had issued a notice to the Kamla Nehru hospital on April 12, this year.

The notice by BMC commissioner KVS. Choudhary had asked the Kamla Nehru hospital administration to set up fire fighting systems within one week.

"As per the required standard procedure, installation of fire fighting systems are mandatory in your hospital to avail for NOC from the fire

department of the BMC. If fire fighting systems are already installed, submit a detailed report to the BMC within the period of 7 days," said the notice available with IANS.

What is more surprising is that the then Bhopal Commissioner Kavindra Kivayat was the administrator of BMC in the absence of an elected Mayor.

The tenure of the BMC Mayor expired almost one year ago and the fresh elections for the municipal corporations in Madhya Pradesh are pending due to the Covid pandemic.

A nurse, who was on duty when the fire broke out in Kamla Nehru hospital, said that she was in the same ICU ward where children were admitted. "Around 8 p.m. on Monday,

a child was brought to the ICU department, who needed ventilator support immediately. In the meantime, a ward boy carried in the ventilator and as he switched on the button, the ventilator caught fire. Immediately, I picked up the child and ran to another ward."

In view of the Covid pandemic, senior administrative officials were made in-charge of particular hospitals and they were supposed to review the preparation while inspecting them.

CM CONGRATULATES CM HELPLINE OFFICERS

Bhopal: Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has congratulated the officers who have provided excellent services under CM Helpline 181. Chouhan said that the role of officers who achieve around cent percent achievement in resolving problems helps in redressing the problems of the common man.

CM plants saplings in Smart Garden

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan planted Neem and Saptaparni saplings in Smart Garden on Wednesday. Sarvshree Ram Shankar, Aziz Mohammad Khan and Azim Khan of Samrat Colony Samiti of Ashoka Garden, Bhopal also participated in the plantation.

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Five thousand saplings have been planted by them in the entire Bhopal including Ashoka Garden. Tree plantation has been done by them specially in parks and hospital campuses.

Chouhan welcomed and greeted the members of Samrat Colony Samiti at the plantation site. Committee members apprised Chief Minister Chouhan about the works being done in the fields of environment, cleanliness and education of children.



ing saplings in various colonies, parks and hospital premises with the message of "Plantation work is great - trees are like children."

Chouhan is continuously encouraging community participation in the plantation campaign. Chief Minister Chouhan appreciated the

activities of the committee.

It is noteworthy that Chief Minister does tree plantation every day as part of his resolve. Neem and Saptaparni planted today are important trees from environmental and Ayurveda point of view.

CM PAYS TRIBUTE TO DATTOPANT JI THENGADI



Bhopal: Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan paid homage to Dattopant Thengadi on his birth anniversary. Chouhan paid floral tributes by garlanding his picture in the auditorium at his residence.

Eye on 2023 MP Polls: BJP to Hold Mega Tribal Outreach Event in Bhopal on Nov 15

PM Narendra Modi to address BJP tribal outreach event

The event, organised to mark the birth anniversary of tribal hero Birsa Munda, will also include union minister Arjun Munda and 13 other tribal leaders.

Team Absolute | Bhopal

In the run-up to the 2023 assembly polls, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in Madhya Pradesh has its eyes set on tribal voters. The ethnic groups comprise around 21% of the state population and 47 reserved seats are in their domain.

In continuation with the efforts to woo the tribal communities, the saffron party is holding a mega event, expecting the participation of more than two lakh indigenous people from across the state, and Prime Minister Narendra Modi will address the gathering at Jamburi Maidan in Bhopal on November 15.

The event on November 15, organised to mark the birth anniversary of tribal hero Birsa Munda, will also include union minister Arjun Munda and 13 other tribal leaders such as union minister Faggan Singh Kulaste, minister Bisahul Singh, Vijay Shah and Meena Singh.

The Prime Minister is expected to announce the Sickle Cell

Eradication Mission for the tribal population and chief minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan is likely to communicate the decision to hand over the rights of community forests to the Gram Sabhas. A money lending Act for the tribal regions could also be initiated on the occasion.

Of the more than two lakh tribal people expected to attend the event, around 30,000 will be staying in close to 150 schools and hostels of the state capital. The rest will be accommodated in nearby districts until November 14. The chief minister had made a slew of announcements for tribal groups in the run-up to recent by-polls and the ruling BJP, amid infighting in the Congress, registered an impressive win in Jobat, a Congress citadel, influenced by former union minister Kantilal Bhuria.



party," added Rao. In 2003, when a resurgent BJP had unseated the Congress from power with a landslide win, the saffron party had won a total of 67 seats reserved for the SC, ST as against 15 won by the Congress. However, a spirited Congress edged out the BJP in the 2018 polls, ousting it from power after 15 years. The BJP in 2018 had won only 18 SC seats and 16 ST seats as against 31 ST seats and 28 SC seats won in the 2013 assembly polls.

The immediate cause behind the SC-ST disenchantment in 2018 seemed to be a Supreme Court order diluting the provi-

sions of the SC/ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act and the Shivraj Chouhan government failing to bring in an overriding legal remedy, a political analyst from Madhya Pradesh said.

The BJP November 15 event is being seen as a response to the Congress's Adivasi Adhikar Yatra. Earlier, in September the BJP government of the state hosted home minister Amit Shah to mark the martyrdom day of tribal king Shankar Shah and his son, Raghunath Shah, in Jabalpur as part of the Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav an initiative of the Centre to celebrate and commemorate 75 years of India's independence. Held in the Mahakaushal region, one of the tribal heartlands in MP, the event was seen as part of the BJP's outreach towards the ethnic population. The November 15 event comes close on the heels of a three-day tribal dance festival held in Raipur, in which artists of 27 states and six union territories had taken part, besides those from other countries. Among others, Jharkhand chief minister Hemant Soren had attended the event. However, State Congress chief Kamal Nath slammed the BJP for focusing on certain communities. SAPAKS, an amalgamation of general and backward categories, had also galvanised voters against Shivraj who had publicly announced that no one can touch the reservation quota in his state.



## EDITOR'S SPECS

## Jolt in Bengal BJP

The internal tiff between two BJP leaders in West Bengal reached a flash-point when the party's All-India National vice President Dilip Ghosh asked party veteran and former Governor of Tripura Tathagata Roy 'to leave if he was not happy with the leadership'. Ghosh's outburst came after Roy made a series of attacks on the BJP leadership particularly against Ghosh, party's central observer-in-charge of Bengal Kailash Vijayvargiya, and central leader Shiv Prakash and central co-observer Arvind Menon. Roy has targeted the four since the defeat of the party in the recent Assembly polls holding them responsible for the debacle. Reacting to Roy's scathing attacks on different social platforms for the last six months. The state leadership has also sent all the controversial tweets and Facebook posts to the central leadership. Undeterred, Roy, however, said, "Dilip Ghosh will not understand if I say something. This is the problem with uneducated people. I shall not say anything because it will be of no use. So, I prefer to keep my mouth shut. There is no point answering a person who will understand the meaning of what I say". The state leadership, however, decided to maintain an equal distance from both the leaders in this controversy. Political observers, however, are of the opinion that Ghosh might have got some kind of assurance from the higher-ups and so he has made a statement like this. Interestingly enough there has been no statement from the central leadership as of now. Meanwhile, BJP leader and actor turned politician Joy Banerjee has decided to leave the party. In a letter to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Banerjee alleged that he had been removed from the BJP's national working committee and his central security had also been lifted.

## Pak calls on India to reopen Kartarpur Corridor for pilgrims

## Hamza Ameer

The Pakistan government has called on India to reopen the Kartarpur Corridor and allow pilgrims to cross over into Pakistan on the occasion of Guru Nanak Dev's birth anniversary celebrations from November 17 to 26.

Marking the second anniversary of the opening of the Kartarpur Corridor, Pakistan has expressed hope that India would allow pilgrims to travel through the corridor in the spirit of cooperation.

"In the upcoming Guru Nanak's birth anniversary celebrations from November 17-26, we look forward to hosting devotees from India and around the world," read a statement issued by the Pakistan Foreign Office.

"In the last two years, the corridor has not only fulfilled the earnest desire of the Sikh community around the world for easy access to the revered site, but is also reflective of the primacy that Pakistan accords to all religious minorities in the country. The corridor has



opened new vistas for the promotion of inter-faith harmony," the statement added.

It also reminded that the Kartarpur Corridor was described by UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres as the "Corridor of Hope" during his visit to Kartarpur Sahib in February 2020.

Pakistan has also criticised India for refraining from opening the corridor despite reopening and resumption of international travels all over the world and opening of all religious places in the country.

"The Kartarpur Corridor was reopened on June 29, 2020 under the Covid related proto-

cols after its temporary closure due to the pandemic on March 16, 2020. India, despite resumption of international travel all over the world, and opening of all religious places in that country and repeated calls by the Sikh community, is yet to open the corridor from its side and allow pilgrims to visit Kartarpur Sahib," the statement read.

Pakistan has also highlighted that "the magnificent newly-built Gurdwara Darbar Sahib Kartarpur complex is a gift by the people of Pakistan and their leadership to the Sikh community in India and worldwide.

"Two years ago on this day, the Kartarpur Corridor was inaugurated by Prime Minister Imran Khan on the event of the 550th birth anniversary of Baba Guru Nanak," read the statement. As per details, Pakistan is willing to allow at least 3,000 devotees from across the world to participate in the upcoming birth anniversary celebrations of Guru Nanak and it is looking forward to India to reciprocate its offer with the same cooperation.

## Modi shows will, way to tackle climate change: Commonwealth Secretary General

## VISHAL GULATI

The whole Commonwealth will work together, harder and smarter to achieve the targets of the Paris Agreement, an international treaty on the climate crisis aiming to radically reduce carbon emissions.

And India is an intrinsic partner in this challenge. It is the largest member of the Commonwealth and Prime Minister Narendra Modi has shown that there is a will and there is a way. "We will work together," Commonwealth Secretary General, Patricia Scotland, whose birthplace Caribbean island suffered tremendously when it was struck by a hurricane in 2017, told IANS in an exclusive interview.

She is in this Scottish city to convince world leaders gather for COP26 -- the 2021 edition of the UN Annual Climate Change Conference -- to renew and strengthen commitments to the 2015 Paris Agreement goal of keeping warming to 1.5 degree Celsius within reach. On mobilising finance for Commonwealth nations to cope with the impacts of climate change by building long-lasting resilience and livelihood adaptation, she told IANS the climate finance is one of the most critical elements leaders are discussing at this climate summit COP26 in Glasgow.

"Many countries have enormous ambitions to tackle the climate crisis, through plans to phase out fossil fuels and transition to clean energy, develop climate-resilient infrastructure and transform key sectors such as agriculture to be more sustainable. "But financing is required to deliver any of these strategies successfully," the Secretary General was clear in saying.

"More than 10 years ago at COP15, it was agreed that developed countries should provide US\$100 billion each year to help developing countries adapt to climate change and cut their own emissions. "However, according to the latest figures from the OECD just under \$80 billion of this has been raised in 2019, so we are clearly off-target and it is frankly not enough for the climate



action needed to keep global temperature rise to 1.5 degrees." She candidly said the developed nations must deliver on their promises, not only to achieve results on the ground, but as a matter of trust. The reality is the current processes to access some of these international climate funds are quite difficult and arduous for capacity-constrained small states. This is why the Commonwealth Climate Finance Access Hub was created in 2015 -- it places highly skilled advisers in government departments to build capacity and support them in developing robust, successful funding proposals. To date, the hub has helped countries secure about \$44 million in climate finance for six countries, with projects worth US\$750 million in the pipeline, she said. Do you think vulnerability should be the core basis for allocation of climate finance, the Secretary General replied: "Vulnerability should certainly be taken into account when deploying finance to developing nations. Some nations are more vulnerable than others to the impacts of climate change, due to structural aspects beyond their control such as geography or location. In fact, this is the lived reality of many small island nations. "My own birthplace, Dominica, suffered tremendously when it was struck by Hurricane Maria in 2017, which destroyed the equivalent of 226 per cent of its annual GDP overnight." Recognising the devastation, the Commonwealth Secretariat is developing a Universal

Vulnerability Index (UVI) that assesses how vulnerable or resilient developing countries are to economic, socio-political and environmental shocks, such as climate change, which could influence how much international finance they can access.

According to the Secretary General, the climate change is the defining global challenge of "our times, now exacerbated by the Covid-19 pandemic". It is both an existential threat and a threat multiplier, amplifying existing social, political and economic inequalities. No nation is left untouched by this phenomenon and all levels and sectors of society are affected, though some are more vulnerable. The solution, she believes, is only by working together across nations and sectors to align actions, join forces, share ideas, pool resources and learn from each other, will be able to stop the crisis. "It is the smallest and most vulnerable that will suffer the most from the consequences of inaction, even if they contributed the least to the problem," she said. An optimistic Patricia Scotland believes key outcomes will emerge from the Glasgow summit that is primarily focused on climate finance for action by developing nations to build resilience to climate change and to reduce emissions to keep 1.5 degrees Celsius future alive and abandoning fossil fuels. She says the young people are the key to changing mindsets and building the momentum for change. "I certainly hope so. I expect that the use of fossil fuels will eventually become outdated, as human civilisation advances to more efficient, economically viable, and less damaging ways of producing energy and power. "As the cost of renewable energy technologies continues to fall, renewables are now the cheapest form of energy, rather than fossil fuels. "The Commonwealth is certainly making it a priority to support member states through the Commonwealth Sustainable Energy Transition Agenda and the partnership with the International Solar Alliance."

## international

## Imran summoned by SC on Army Public School attack case, briefs it on progress

Islamabad | Agencies

Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan, who was summoned by the Supreme Court, on Wednesday briefed it on the progress made in the 2014 Army Public School (APS) attack case, which still haunts the victims' families, loved ones and people at large.

A three-judge bench, headed by Chief Justice Gulzar Ahmed and comprising Justices Qazi Mohammad Amin Ahmed and Justice Ijazul Ahsan, had summoned the Pakistan Premier at around 10 a.m. He arrived at the court roughly two hours later, just before noon. The court was hearing the APS attack case, in which terrorists of the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) had stormed the Army Public School located on Warsak Road in Peshawar on December 16, 2014, brutally killing a total of 147 people, including 132 young children.

The hearing began with the Prime Minister present in courtroom No 1 along with a number of lawyers, security personnel, families of APS attack victims and PTI ministers, including Interior Minister Sheikh Rashid Ahmed and Information Minister I Fawad Chaudhry.

Imran Khan was questioned about the progress his government made in the case, with the bench raising serious reservations on the recent ceasefire agreement between the government and the TTP, which had claimed responsibility of the attack at the school. The court criticised the Prime Minister for not taking enough steps to satisfy the families of the killed children and others in the attack, but instead talking with the TTP,



as it termed the ceasefire agreement as "compromised agreement" with the killers of the country's children. "The satisfaction of the parents who lost their children in the APS attack is necessary," said Justice Ahsan told him.

Imran Khan was also reminded that it was his responsibility to ensure that the culprits are brought to justice and the families of the loved ones are assured of complete support, as the court directed the government to submit a progress report within four weeks.

The Supreme Court bench, during the last hearing, had assured the families of the victims of all out assistance and

support by the court in fulfilment of their demands.

"The AG (Attorney General) has been put on notice on the complaints and asked to take action, as required by the law, and if those who have been named are found guilty of negligence in the performance of their duties, necessary measures should be taken," its order issued then read.

In Wednesday's hearing, the court grilled the AG when he said that the order of the last hearing was not sent to the Premier. "Is this the level of seriousness? Call the Prime Minister; we will talk to him ourselves. This cannot go on," the Chief Justice said. The family members of the victims had demanded registration of an FIR against those civilian and military officials who, they believe, were responsible for security measures at the school.

The Supreme Court had also raised serious questions over the capabilities of the country's intelligence agencies, questioning their "disappearance" when it comes to the protection of their own citizens.

"Where do the intelligence agencies disappear when it comes to the protection of their own citizens? Was a case registered against the then army chief and other responsible?" the CJP asked. "There is such a huge intelligence system in the country. Billion of rupees are spent on it. There is also a claim that we are the best intelligence agency in the world. So much is being spent on intelligence but the results are zero," he said.

"The institutions should have known there would be a reaction to the operations in the tribal areas. The easiest and most sensitive target were children," Justice Ahsan said.

## S Korea, Indonesia to enter last-stage talks on overdue payments for fighter project

Jakarta/Seoul | Agencies

South Korea and Indonesia were set to hold what could be the final round of talks on Wednesday to address the latter's overdue payments for a joint fighter development project, sources said.

Kang Eun-ho, head of the Defense Acquisition Program Administration (DAPA), and other Korean negotiators arrived in Jakarta on Tuesday, as Seoul seeks to squelch lingering doubts over Indonesia's commitment to the 8.8 trillion won (\$7.4 billion) project, called KF-X.

Indonesia first agreed to shoulder 20 percent of the new fighter's development cost in 2010. But it stopped making payments in 2017, with the amount of overdue payments currently standing at 800 billion won, Yonhap news agency reported.

"We will do our utmost during the negotiations

based on mutual trust between South Korea and Indonesia, and their will for cooperation," Kang told Yonhap News Agency.

Indonesia's failure to make the payments raised worries it could pull out of the project. Such concerns rose further when it brought its technicians in Korea back to their home country in March last year, citing the spread of the Covid-19 pandemic. In a positive sign, however, Indonesian Defense Minister Prabowo Subianto agreed to resume talks with Seoul officials over the overdue payments during a visit here in April, which coincided with an event unveiling a prototype of the country's first home-grown fighter jet, named the KF-21 Boramae.

In August, a group of Indonesian technicians returned to Korea, raising expectations the joint fighter development program will gain renewed momentum.

## UK CONFIRMS PLEDGE FOR ZERO EMISSION OF HEAVY VEHICLES BY 2040

Glasgow | Agencies

All new heavy goods vehicles in the UK will be zero-emission by 2040, the UK government said on Wednesday.

This, combined with the UK's 2030 phase out for petrol and diesel cars and vans, represents a world-leading pledge to end the sale of all polluting road vehicles within the next two decades.

The UK will become the first country in the world to commit to phasing out new, non-zero emission heavy goods vehicles weighing 26 tonnes and under by 2035, with all new vehicles sold in the UK to be zero emission by 2040.

This comes as new research from Bloomberg New Energy Finance, commissioned by the UK COP Presidency and published on Wednesday, shows the progress made in the passenger vehicle market.

The research shows 31 per cent of the global passenger vehicle market is now covered by vehicle manufacturer commitments to end sales of fossil fuel-powered vehicles, up from a near zero share of the market at the start of 2021.

The global sales of zero emission vehicles (ZEVs) have grown dramatically since 2019 from 2.1 million to 5.3 million.

ZEVs are forecast to be 70 per cent of all new car sales in 2040, with this projection having doubled in the last 5 years.

A group of ministers and industry leaders committed to working towards 100 per cent zero emission new car and



van sales by 2040 or earlier at Transport Day at COP26.

Twenty four countries, six major vehicle manufacturers (GM, Ford, Mercedes, BYD, Volvo, JLR), 39 cities, states and regions, 28 fleets and 13 investors all jointly set out their

determination for all new car and van sales to be zero emission by 2040 globally and 2035 in leading markets.

In this group, companies like Sainsbury's and countries including El Salvador and New Zealand are making new

commitments to 100 per cent zero emission vehicles.

They follow proposals made by the EU, Chile, Canada and a number of US states this year to ensure all new cars are zero emission by 2035. Also announced on Wednesday a number of emerging markets and developing economies have committed to work to accelerate the adoption of zero-emission vehicles in their markets, including India, Ghana, Kenya, Paraguay, Rwanda, and Turkey. The UK government is also unveiling a new design for electric vehicle charge-points, which could become as iconic as the Great British post box, London bus or black cab. Showcased in the UK Pavilion at COP26 and designed together with the Royal College of Art and PA Consulting, the concept prioritises inclusivity and ease of use, designed with consumers, local government, accessibility groups and industry. The design concept will provide greater choice to industry and local government, as well as raise awareness and generate excitement around electric vehicles, as we build one of the most convenient, affordable and reliable charging networks in the world. This builds on the goal to make sure everyone benefits from the transition to zero emission transport. ZEVs are already cheaper to run in the UK than petrol or diesel cars and are expected to become cheaper to buy in the coming years. As one of the new Glasgow Breakthroughs launched by the Prime Minister at the World Leaders Summit, 30 countries have agreed to work together to make zero emission vehicles the new normal by making them accessible, affordable, and sustainable in all regions by 2030 or sooner.



PM SECURITY COMPROMISED, GOON JOINS VVIP EVENT COURTESY FADNAVIS: MALIK

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Making a shocking revelation, Nationalist Congress Party Minister Nawab Malik on Wednesday claimed that the Prime Minister's security may have been breached as a history-sheeter with mafia links managed access to a VVIP event with the help of BJP's Leader of Opposition Devendra Fadnavis.

Addressing the media, Malik said that a Mumbai builder from Versova, Riyaz Bhatti, 57, considered a henchman of absconder mafia don Dawood Ibrahim Kaskar, has always been seen in close proximity to Fadnavis, at BJP events, and even at his (Fadnavis') dinner table.

"This same Bhatti was arrested in a fake passport case (in 2015 and again in 2020), but he was permitted entry to the VIP enclosure in a function attended by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. How did such a man who is close to Dawood and other underworld people, gain access to the VIP event and even manage to get his photos clicked with the PM," Malik demanded.

Bhatti was nabbed on two occasions -- October 2015 and February 2020 -- in fake passport cases, his name cropped in land-grab cases with the help of Mafiosi Chhota Shakeel and has a Lookout Circular issued against him, but is currently absconding.

Elaborating on Fadnavis' alleged underworld connections, Malik accused the former CM of flouting the PM's objectives to rid the country of fake currency notes via demonetisation. "In Oct. 2017, a cache of fake notes



with a face value of Rs 14.65 crore was seized by Bandra Kurla Police, people were nabbed from Mumbai, Navi Mumbai and also others from Pune like Imran Alam Shaikh and Riyaz Sheikh," Malik said. Later, the DRI was probing the fake notes case, but suddenly it was hushed up by showing a face value of only Rs 8.80 lakh and at that time, the officer concerned was coincidentally Sameer Dawood Wankhede, claimed Malik. "A few months later, Fadnavis rewarded Haji Arafat Shaikh, the elder brother of one of the accused in the fake notes case Imran Alam Shaikh by making him the Chairman of Maharashtra State Minorities Commission," Malik pointed out, demanding the DRI revisit that currency seizure case to unravel the truth.

Hitting at the former CM, the NCP National Spokesperson said that Fadnavis reportedly put brakes on a probe involving a BJP leader named Hyder Azam who is allegedly involved in bringing Bangladeshis to Mumbai and whose second wife is from

Bangladesh.

"The Malad Police and later the West Bengal Police were probing the antecedents of his second wife, a Bangladeshi but everything was suppressed after a call from the CMO. Later, the same Hyder Azam was made Chairman of the Maulana Azad Minorities Financial Development Corporation Ltd.," Malik asserted.

In the same manner, a close aide of Fadnavis in Nagpur, one Munna Yadav who is a dreaded criminal engaged in terrorising people, was made Chairman of the state construction workers panel.

Dismissing Malik's contentions in Nagpur, Munna Yadav said his police record was clean barring some political cases and threatened to file a Re 1 defamation case against the NCP leader for making false allegations.

Malik asked Fadnavis to respond whether or not builders or landowners were forced to sell their lands and collect extortion money after they were threatened with calls from mafia abroad.

BJP rubbishes Malik's allegations, denies Fadnavis links with mafia

Hitting back, the Bharatiya Janata Party on Wednesday denied the allegations made by Nationalist Congress Party Minister Nawab Malik that Leader of Opposition Devendra Fadnavis had mafia links.

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Fadnavis tellingly hit out a tweet, quoting George Bernard Shaw: "I learned long ago, never to wrestle with a pig. You get dirty, and besides the pig likes it!"

Talking to media persons, BJP leader and former minister Ashish Shelar countered by displaying photos of the absconder goon Riyaz Bhatti with Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray, NCP President Sharad Pawar, Malik, Prithviraj Chavan, Aslam Shaikh and other top MVA leaders with a warning: "You show one, we will show you four pictures".

"Malik had promised a 'hydrogen bomb', but he failed... He's clearly frustrated and needs 'oxygen' now... Despite all his efforts, he could not defame or malign Fadnavis," claimed Shelar.

He demanded to know why the Maha Vikas Aghadi government has not taken any action on all the names Malik has revealed, and said all the allegations are false.

Earlier on Wednesday, Malik said that the Prime Minister's security may have been compromised after Bhatti managed to enter a VVIP event and even clicked photos with the PM, courtesy Fadnavis.

"There's no link between Fadnavis and Riyaz Bhatti... He went absconding under the MVA rule... Is the NCP giving him protection? Is Bhatti part of the Sachin Vaze extortion gang," Shelar asked. He accused Malik of shielding criminals, trying to deflect the attention of the minorities by dragging in Muslim names and defaming them, including Congress Minister Aslam Shaikh.

Malik had also charged Fadnavis with rewarding persons with shady credentials or involvement in questionable activ-



ities with plum government panel postings. Shelar said that these persons accused by Malik, like Munna Yadav, have only political cases, while others like Hyder Azam and Haji Arafat Shaikh would reply to the NCP leader's charges independently.

Endorsing Fadnavis' allegations of Tuesday, he questioned Malik's Kurla land deal with persons close to the mafia and demanded that Thackeray should lodge an FIR against the NCP minister for his business deals with such elements.

3rd non-bailable warrant against ex-Mumbai top cop Param Bir Singh

Team Absolute | Mumbai

A Mumbai court on Wednesday issued a non-bailable warrant against ex-city police chief Param Bir Singh in an extortion case lodged with the Marine Drive Police Station.

The NBW, issued by Additional Chief Metropolitan Magistrate R.M. Nerlikar, is the third against Singh, whose current whereabouts are not known since the past several months.

The Marine Drive Police had registered the extortion case against Singh and 7 others, including five police officials, on July 22 following a complaint by realtor Shyamunder Agrawal.

Among the accused, two police personnel - Asha



Chhota Shakeel. However, Agrawal claimed that based on this "false case", Singh and other police officials extorted money from him at the best of his former business associate Sanjay Punamia, a co-accused with the ex-city police chief, and currently out on bail. Besides this, Singh is facing two other NBWs issued in the past few weeks after extortion complaints were registered against him in Mumbai's Goregaon and adjoining Thane. Currently the Commandant-General of Home Guards, Singh has failed to honour summons for probe by various agencies, including a Maharashtra government-appointed panel, the retired Justice KU Chandiwai Commission.

According to the order, which came into effect from November 9, those who are not vaccinated will not be able to travel inter-state, inter-district by public or private vehicles.

Team Absolute | Aurangabad

To achieve 100% Covid vaccination target, the Aurangabad district administration in Maharashtra has adopted a strict policy where citizens who have not even received one dose of vaccine will not receive petrol, gas or ration. Moreover, they will also not have the access to tourist places in the district and their travel will be restricted within the state and district. Vaccination has been made compulsory for all workers at

Maharashtra Aims For 100% Vaccination by Nov 30 Aurangabad Orders No Petrol, Ration for Unvaccinated People

hotels, resorts and shops located in tourist places. The order came into effect in the district from November 9. Aurangabad district ranks no. 26 in the state in the number of preventive Covid vaccinations. Prime Minister Narendra Modi himself has instructed the district administration to take immediate action in this regard.



Expressing concerns over the slow pace of vaccination in Maharashtra, chief minister Uddhav Thackeray has also directed officials to achieve the target of 100% vaccination by November 30. While the average vaccination rate in the state being 74%, Aurangabad district has only 55% of its eligible population partially vaccinated,

ed, and 23% have been administered both the doses. The pace of vaccination has sped up in view of the possibility of the third wave amidst festive season. According to the order, people above 18 years of age who have not taken the first dose of vaccine or those who have not taken the second dose despite being eligible for the same, must not be allowed to enter private establishments such as tourist spots such as Bibi Ka Maqbara, Ajanta Caves, Daulatabad Fort and Ellora Caves. Those who have not taken any dose of vaccine will not be able to travel inter-state, inter-district by public or private vehicles. Employees and owners of all tourist hotels, resorts, shops must have at least one dose of vaccine. Full vaccination has been made mandatory for all government offices and tour organisers.

Political situation in Maharashtra terrible right now: Patole

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Reacting to the bitter war of words between Maharashtra minister and NCP leader Nawab Malik and leader of opposition in the assembly Devendra Fadnavis, state Congress chief Nana Patole said the political situation in Maharashtra is "terrible" right now.

"Leaders are making allegations at each other. It is bringing shame to the state. Allegations made by former chief minister Fadnavis and Maharashtra minister Nawab Malik against each other are serious," he said.

Malik had, in a press conference on Wednesday, accused Fadnavis of sweeping under the carpet a case of seizure of fake notes and appointing people with criminal back-



ground to government boards. "Fadnavis resorted to criminalisation of politics by appointing people with criminal background on government posts," he alleged.

Malik said on October 8, 2017, the Department of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) seized fake notes worth Rs 14.56 crore from the Bandra Kurla Complex (BKC) in Mumbai. "But Fadnavis helped sweep the case under

the carpet. The seized amount was later shown with a value of Rs 8.8 lakh."

After Malik's press conference, Fadnavis posted a cryptic tweet, quoting playwright George Bernard Shaw. "I learned long ago, never to wrestle with a pig. You get dirty, and besides, the pig likes it!" it read.

Malik had earlier sought to link the BJP with an alleged narcotics dealer by tweeting the latter's photograph with the former chief minister and his wife Amruta Fadnavis. Fadnavis had then said he will make revelations about Malik's "underworld links" after Diwali and also share the "documents and proofs" of the same with NCP president Sharad Pawar. Patole urged Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray to order a probe into the allegations made by both Malik and Fadnavis.

BJP urges CM to take action against Malik over land deals

Ashish Shelar requested the Chief Minister of Maharashtra to take cognisance of this issue and file an FIR to enquire all the proceedings.

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Mumbai: Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) MLA Ashish Shelar on Tuesday launched a blistering attack on Maharashtra Minister Nawab Malik over alleged land deals with 1993 serial blasts' convicts and urged Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray to take action against him.

During a press conference, Ashish Shelar said the rate of the property was supposedly Rs 2,000



sq ft but it was bought for only Rs 25 per sq ft. "The property deal was done in 2005 with one of the prime accused in 1993 Mumbai blasts case who was later convicted for the crime. It was a conspiracy to bury an underworld property and get it under their own name," he added. The BJP leader went on to say that no Mumbaier will accept such a fraudulent deal and if any tenant could purchase a property for only 25 per cent of its value then why isn't every tenant living in

Mumbai getting the same benefit. He then requested the Chief Minister of Maharashtra to take cognisance of this issue and file an FIR to enquire all the proceedings.

Shelar concluded the press conference saying, "This is just the beginning. We will uncover many such hidden truths in the upcoming days." Earlier in the day, Leader of Opposition and former Maharashtra CM Devendra Fadnavis alleged that a company of Nawab Malik and his family members had purchased land in suburban Kurla at a very cheap rate through fictitious documents from two convicts of the 1993 Mumbai serial blasts case. He also alleged that Malik and his family members had entered into land deals with people associated with the underworld.

Pooja Dadlani skips questioning SRK's manager will be summoned again: Mumbai Police

POOJA DADLANI HAS SKIPPED THE SUMMONS OF THE MUMBAI POLICE CITING HEALTH REASONS. MUMBAI POLICE SAID SHE WILL BE CALLED AGAIN.

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The Mumbai Police on Wednesday said it will again summon Shah Rukh Khan's manager Pooja Dadlani in connection with the drugs-on-cruise case as Pooja has skipped the interrogation citing health reasons. SRK's manager who was often spotted outside the Narcotics Control Bureau office when Aryan Khan was in jail is significant for the investigation. "Her

statement is important for SIT and in the time to come, we will summon her again for questioning," the Mumbai Police said. This is the special investigation team of the Mumbai Police conducting a parallel probe into the extortion allegations against the NCB team in the Aryan Khan case. The SIT has also sought the CCTV footage of NCB's South Mumbai offices, reports said.

According to various conflicting accounts given by Prabhakar Sail, Sam D'Souza, names which have surfaced in the past few days in connection with the Aryan Khan case, the extortion demand was made to SRK's manager Pooja Dadlani. Sam



D'Souza claimed Pooja Dadlani even paid ₹50 lakh to KP Gosavi as she was promised that Gosavi could ensure Aryan Khan's release from NCB detention, before he was arrested on October 3. D'Souza claimed he returned the money to Pooja Dadlani after Aryan was arrested. While the drugs case is now under an SIT of the NCB, the Mumbai Police are looking into the extortion angle raised by Prabhakar

Sail, a former aide of KP Gosavi. Sail claimed he overheard a conversation between Gosavi and D'Souza about a payoff of ₹18 crore from Shah Rukh Khan to secure Aryan Khan's release. Meanwhile, police claimed they have checked the CCTV footage of the Lower Parel area where Pooja Dadlani reportedly met Gosavi and D'Souza and found that Pooja's car was in that area. The Delhi team of the NCB is also looking into the pay-off allegation. On Monday, the team visited the spot outside the Indiana Hotel where Pooja apparently met Gosavi. The NCB special investigation team had summoned Aryan Khan, Arbaaz Merchant and Achit Kumar; all three were arrested in the case and are now out on bail. While Arbaaz and Achit have met the NCB SIT, Aryan Khan cited health reasons and has skipped the first summons.

Polls to 6 Legislative Council seats on December 10

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Days after the Congress victory in the Deglurbiloli assembly by election defeating BJP, the Maha Vikas Aghadi partners and BJP will be pitted against each other in the biennial polls to six of the total 8 seats of the Maharashtra Legislative Council from local authorities' constituencies slated for December 10. The term of office of the eight sitting members of the Maharashtra Legislative Council is going to expire on January 1 next year. The process of nomination will start from November 16.

The election is crucial for MVA to increase its strength as the Governor, despite cabinet's recommendations sent last year, has not yet cleared a file pertaining to the nomination of 12 persons from his quota in the state council.

As per the Election Commission of India release, elections will be held for two

seats in Mumbai, one each in Kolhapur, Dhulecum Nandurbar, Akola cum Buldhana cum Washim and Nagpur. The sitting members are Ramdas Kadam (Shiv Sena) and Bhai Jagtap (Congress) in Mumbai, Satej Patil (Congress) in Kolhapur, Amrishbbhai Patil (BJP) in Dhule cum Nandurbar, Gopikisan Bajoriya (Shiv Sena) in Akola cum Buldhana cum Washim and Girish Vyas (BJP) in Nagpur.

Shiv Sena is expected to drop Kadam, who is a former leader of the Opposition and the minister, as in a series of audio clips he purportedly had with one of his associates showed him expressing happiness over the action initiated by various authorities over the alleged illegal constructions of minister Anil Parab in Ratnagiri and Mumbai. Kadam is also purportedly heard speaking about how he was planning to meet BJP leaders including Pravin

Darekar and Kirit Somaiya, who have been relentlessly attacking the Sena. Kadam was not invited for the annual Dusserah rally. On the other hand, Congress is expected to renominate Jagtap, who heads the Mumbai city unit, while Satej Patil is the minister of state for home. BJP will renominate Amrishbbhai Patel but may bring in a new face replacing Vyas in Nagpur. Shiv Sena will take a decision on renominating Bajoriya or nominating a new leader.

With regard to local authorities' constituency election, the commission has laid down the guidelines that if at least 75 per cent of the local authorities in a local authorities' constituency are functioning, and in addition at least 75 per cent of the electors out of the total electorate of the constituency are available, then electorate is treated as available for electing representatives to the legislative council, it said.



# DWAYNE JOHNSON WON'T BE PLAYING SANTA IN 'RED ONE'



Hollywood star Dwayne Johnson will not be playing Santa in his festive film 'Red One', his Seven Bucks Productions colleague Hiram Garcia has revealed.

Los Angeles | Agencies

The Rock is starring in the Christmas film for Amazon Studios but his Seven Bucks Productions colleague Hiram Garcia has confirmed that the 'Jumanji' star will not be donning a red suit, reports femalefirst.co.uk.

Garcia told Slash Film: "It's funny, he's not playing Santa. For some reason, everyone thinks he's playing Santa, but he's playing something really awesome."

"We're really excited about it. It's the movie we're looking to film next year. We're thrilled to have Jake Kasdan to direct it, because he is such a master in that space and the tone we're wanting to do."

Garcia added that the new movie will turn the festive genre "on its head" and will be something completely different for viewers. He said: "It is very much 'Hobbs and

Shaw' meets 'Guardians of the Galaxy' meets 'Miracle on 34th Street'. It's going to take holiday mythology and turn it on its head. Really, it's hard to find another Christmas movie to even compare to it."

"I don't think there's ever been anything done like this in that space, which is always very appealing to us."

Garcia continued: "We're really excited about it, Amazon's been great with it, and we're in the process -- the script's about to be written, and we'll be shooting that next year. Our goal is, knock on wood, we're hoping to have that ready for December 2023."

In a statement when the film was announced, Johnson said: "Hold my Mana, because this is exciting. Our Seven Bucks is very bullish on our partnership with Amazon Studios; underpinned with some innovation, some pioneering and a lot of positive energy and passion."



ADELE REVEALS HEARTBREAK IN NEW SINGLE 'HOLD ON'

Los Angeles | Agencies

Grammy-winning singer Adele, who is set to release new album '30' on November 19, has opened up about her heartbreak and the end of her marriage on new song 'Hold On'.

Adele has unveiled her new single as the soundtrack to Amazon's new Christmas advert, and she bares her soul while singing about her split from ex Simon Konecki in the emotional lyrics, reports femalefirst.co.uk.

At one point, she sings: "I swear to God I'm such a mess, the harder I try I regress."

And in another line, she adds: "Every day feels like the road I'm on, might just open and swallow me whole."

She then croons: "Let

time be patient, let pain be gracious, just hold on. I will survive."

In the Amazon advert, a young woman is seen struggling during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Adele has already been honest about how she wrote about the breakdown of her marriage to Konecki and hopes it can help their son Angelo, nine.

She previously said: "I wanted to explain to him through this record, when he's in his 20s or 30s, who I am and why I voluntarily chose to dismantle his entire life in the pursuit of my own happiness."

"It made him really unhappy sometimes. And that's a real wound for me that I don't know if I'll ever be able to heal."

PAUL RUDD CROWNED 'SEXIEST MAN ALIVE 2021'



Los Angeles | Agencies

Hollywood star Paul Rudd has been crowned as 'Sexiest Man Alive 2021'.

TV personality Stephen Colbert revealed the 'Ant-Man and the Wasp' actor's new title on Tuesday night's episode of 'The Late Show

With Stephen Colbert', reports people.com. "Right now, there is one major question on absolutely everyone's minds: Who will be PEOPLE Magazine's Sexiest Man Alive for 2021? In these divided times, it's the last thing that all Americans care about," said Colbert, noting how this year's guesses ranged from Chris Evans to Dwayne Johnson.

"Well, all the speculation ends tonight, ladies and gentlemen, because it is my distinct honour to have been chosen by the good people at PEOPLE to be the official person to announce this year's Sexiest Man Alive," he added.

"And it is not a responsibility that I take lightly." Colbert then took Rudd through a series of tests and assessments to ensure that the actor was properly suited to take the coveted 'Sexiest Man Alive' title. On the show, Colbert cut to a previously recorded clip at the "LSSC Sexiness Research Institute," where Rudd enters for evaluation. "I think you have the wrong room," Colbert told Rudd, to which the actor replied: "That's what I'm here for." Before analysing Rudd's mental and physical 'sexiness', Colbert swore the star in. "I do solemnly swear to give the sexiest answers I can, to be a man and to stay alive," Rudd proclaimed.

"So help me McConaughey." After his intellectual assessment, Colbert did a physical exam on Rudd, even running his fingers through the actor's full head of hair, before testing how sexy he could be in a rigorous photograph shoot, during which Rudd posed as a construction worker and a monk before finally pouring a gallon of water on himself wearing only a white T-shirt and jeans.

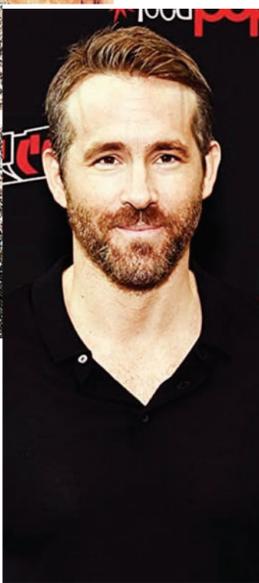


'I enjoyed it completely'

Gal Gadot says she feels 'whole' after welcoming third child months ago... but is unsure if she will have another baby

Los Angeles | Agencies

She welcomed her third child, a daughter named Daniella, in June. And Gal Gadot feels like her family is complete. The 36-year-old Israeli actress appeared on The Late Late Show With James Corden on Tuesday night as she was asked how it has been since her brood has expanded. Gal - who was on the show with English actor Henry Lloyd-Hughes - said: "On the one hand, it's overwhelming because you're being outnumbered and all of that, but, on the other hand, I feel like we -- now we're whole, we have been expecting her the whole time and now it feels so good because I feel like in the first one you worry about having your first child." The Wonder Woman actress has been married to businessman Yaron Varsano since 2008. The couple share three daughters, Alma, 10, Maya, four, and Daniella, four months. She continued: "I don't know how many of you here are parents. Look like we have some even grandparents here."



Ryan Reynolds: Putting my phone down at night has changed my life

Los Angeles | Agencies

Actor Ryan Reynolds has found putting his phone down at night a "weirdly and unexpectedly restorative" practice.

The star, who is gearing up for the release of his next 'Red Notice' on Netflix, told US TV show 'Extra' about the things he's learned from the Covid-19 pandemic, which include his decision to try and switch off more in the evening, reports aceshowbiz.com.

"One thing I've learned to do is put the phone down at night," he

explained. "It is a discipline, it is hard in this day and age. We are all sort of addicted to our phones and social media... so putting that stuff down at night has changed my life. That has allowed me to be more present with my family and I have found that to be weirdly and unexpectedly restorative." Reynolds recently announced he's taking a planned sabbatical from Hollywood and further explained his reasons for the break during his interview with 'Extra'.

## Will Smith's 'King Richard' co-star floored by his generosity

Los Angeles | Agencies

Hollywood star Will Smith knows how to care for his co-stars. Being an A-lister, 'The Fresh Prince of Bel-Air' alum has been praised for his generosity after using his own money to give his 'King Richard' co-stars personal bonuses.

Smith, who was reportedly paid \$40 million for starring in the biopic, gave the cash bonuses to Saniya Sidney and Demi Singleton, who play tennis stars Venus Williams and Serena



Williams, and Tony Goldwyn, Jon Bernthal and Aunjanue Ellis among others, according to The Hollywood Reporter. A source described the payments as a nice bonus, given by the star on top of what they already received from the studio as compensation for the pivot to simultaneous HBO Max release strategy, reports aceshowbiz.com. Goldwyn, who portrays one of Venus' tennis coaches, Paul Cohen, in the film, has confirmed the story to Access Hollywood and he heaped praises on Smith.

ABSOLUTE PIC OF THE DAY



Larsa Pippen



### T20 WORLD CUP

# MITCHELL, NEESHAM POWER NEW ZEALAND INTO FINAL

Abu Dhabi | Agencies

An unbeaten half-century from Daryl Mitchell (72 not out off 47 balls), along with an explosive cameo from James Neesham (27 off 11 balls) helped New Zealand beat England by five wickets to storm into the final of the ICC Men's T20 World Cup at the Sheikh Zayed Cricket Stadium here on Wednesday. Chasing 167, New Zealand chased the total with an over to spare to win the first semi-final of the knockouts stage.

England had an early breakthrough on third ball of the innings as Martin Guptill went early for a flick, only for the leading edge to pop to mid-on off Chris Woakes. Woakes returned in his next over to take out Kane Williamson, who in an attempt to break free walked across to scoop, only for the top-edge to lob to short fine leg. Mitchell and Devon Conway struggled for timing but hit four boundaries between themselves to end the power-play at 36/2.

Post power-play, England contained the duo with raw pace of Mark Wood and leg-spin of Adil Rashid in tandem. Conway broke the shackles by advancing down the pitch for a



boundary in the tenth over. In the next over, Conway and Mitchell took a six and four respectively while taking 15 runs off Wood. The 82-run partnership for the third wicket was

broken by Liam Livingstone in the 14th over as Conway tried to chase a wide delivery but missed it and was easily stumped. Livingstone had another wicket in the 16th over as

Glenn Phillips holed out to long-off. Neesham thumped two sixes (including an attempted catch by Bairstow at long-on) and a four while taking 23 runs off Jordan in a match-changing 17th over. In the next over, Neesham slog-swept Rashid over deep mid-wicket followed by Mitchell reaching his half-century with a pulled six over long-on. But Rashid finished off with a wicket as Neesham sliced straight to extra cover.

With 20 runs needed off the last two overs, Mitchell slammed Woakes for back-to-back sixes over long-on and deep mid-wicket before finishing the chase in style with a boundary past backward square leg as England conceded 23, 14 and 20 in the last three overs of the chase.

#### Briefscores

England 166/4 in 20 overs (Moeen Ali 51 not out, Dawid Malan 41, Tim Southee 1/24, Adam Milne 1/31) lost to New Zealand 167/5 in 19 overs (Daryl Mitchell 72 not out, Devon Conway 46, Liam Livingstone 2/22, Chris Woakes 2/36) by five wickets

### ICC T20I RANKINGS

# Kohli drops to 8th spot, Rahul jumps to 5th in batting chart

Dubai | Agencies

India captain Virat Kohli dropped four places to eighth while his teammate KL Rahul jumped three slots to fifth in the latest ICC men's T20I Player Rankings for batters, released on Wednesday.

Apart from first two matches the T20 World Cup, Kohli didn't get too many opportunities to bat and it affected his T20I batting rankings. On the other hand, Rahul with his three fifties in India's last three matches, moved to No 5. After returning low scores against Pakistan and New Zealand, KL was brilliant against Afghanistan, Scotland and Namibia but the knocks came in too late for India as they exited the tournament in the Super 12 stage. Meanwhile, Aiden Markram has made significant gains in his T20I rankings on the back of the sensational performances for South Africa in the ongoing World Cup. Markram's unbeaten knock of 52 in just 25 balls in South Africa's victory over Group 1 table-toppers England sees him climb to the No 3 spot in the T20I rankings for batters. His heroics with the bat has



also helped him break into the top 10 all-rounders, rising seven places to No 7.

South African teammate Rassie van der Dussen too broke into the top 10 rankings for batters, climbing six spots to occupy the 10th spot in the latest update. Van der Dussen scored a Player of the Match-winning knock of 94\* against England, helping the Proteas post a daunting total of 189. Unfortunately for South Africa, their win against England was not enough as they crashed out of the Men's T20 World Cup on net run rate, despite winning four games out of five.

In the rankings for bowlers, the Australian duo of Adam Zampa and Josh Hazlewood climbed the charts. Both bowlers have been in great form of late and were instrumental in Australia qualifying

for the semi-finals of the World Cup. Zampa's five-for against Bangladesh takes him to the No.5 spot, while Hazlewood went up 11 places to No.8, thanks to his four-wicket haul against West Indies. The other major movement in the top 10 saw Tim Southee, who has picked up five wickets since the last update, move three places up to No 9 in the bowling rankings. The Australian domination in the latest update continued with Glenn Maxwell and Mitchell Marsh moving up in the all-rounders' rankings. Maxwell went up three places to become the new No 4 ranked all-rounder while Marsh ascended five spots to No 9. Sri Lankan sensation Wanindu Hasaranga achieved a career-high rating (173) for all-rounders, thus going up one spot to No 3.

# Domestic badminton season under new format from December

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Indian badminton players will get back to competitive action after a gap of nearly 20 months when the domestic season gets under way with back-to-back senior-ranking Level 3 tournaments next month.

The season will commence in Chennai with the first tournament from December 16 to 22, followed by another Level 3 tournament in Hyderabad from December 24-30.

Both events carry prize money of Rs 10 lakh each, and are part of the Badminton Association of



India's (BAI) new domestic format, which was approved in 2019 but due to the pandemic, was not introduced earlier. BAI secretary Ajay Singhania said that the

domestic season will begin with all Covid-related protocols in place, and it was mandatory for players to carry RTPCR negative reports.

# US Open champion Raducanu shocked by qualifier Xinyu in Linz

Linz (Austria) | Agencies

The latest tennis sensation and US Open champion from Great Britain, Emma Raducanu's string of poor performances continued with the 18-year-old losing to qualifier Wang Xinyu of China 6-1, 6-7(0), 7-5 in the second round of the Upper Austria Ladies Linz here.

Xinyu earned her first top-20 win, stunning the No.1 seed Raducanu in a late Tuesday evening game, while second seed Simona Halep of Romania reversed a recent loss to Aliaksandra Sasnovich of Belarus to reach the quarterfinals.

World No.106 Wang needed 2 hours and 36 minutes to knock off this year's most recent Grand Slam champion, and the 20-year-old from Shenzhen, China edged closer to potentially making her top-100 debut



on the WTA. "I really felt the passion here," Wang said after her triumph.

"It's also my first time here; I really enjoy playing this tournament," she told wtatennis.com.

Coming into Linz, Wang had played top-20 opposition for the first four times in her career this season, and she was unable to win a set in any of those clashes. But with Raducanu having just hit her new career-high ranking of world No.20 in this week's singles rankings, Wang was able to capture her first top-20 victory in Linz.

Last month, Raducanu was brought crashing down to earth in her first tournament since her US Open triumph, losing in straight sets to Aliaksandra Sasnovich in the second round of the BNP Paribas Open in Indian Wells. It had ended her 10-match winning streak that began in New York.

### World Cup Qualifiers

# Arsenal defender Gabriel earns first Brazil call-up

Rio de Janeiro | Agencies

Uncapped Arsenal defender Gabriel Magalhaes has been drafted into Brazil's squad for 2022 World Cup qualifiers against Colombia and Argentina, the Brazilian Football Confederation (CBF) has said. The 23-year-old replaces Benfica's Lucas Verissimo, who was ruled out of the matches because of a knee injury. "It's a dream come true," Gabriel said in an Instagram post on Monday. "Being called up to represent my country gives me great pride and satisfaction."

Gabriel, who joined Arsenal from Lille in



September 2020, has been in fine form this season as a regular starter in the heart of the Gunners' defense, reports Xinhua. Brazil meet Colombia in Sao Paulo on Thursday and Argentina in

San Juan five days later. Tite's men currently lead the 10-team South American zone qualifying standings with 31 points from 11 outings, six points clear of second-placed Argentina.

### KOHLI THANKS OUTGOING INDIA SUPPORT STAFF FOR THEIR CONTRIBUTION

New Delhi: India captain Virat Kohli on Wednesday expressed gratitude to the outgoing coaching staff -- Ravi Shastri, Bharat Arun and R Sridhar -- for their contributions in making the Indian team a strong outfit. The trio of head coach Shastri, bowling coach Bharat and fielding coach Sridhar finished their tenure on Monday, with India's last match of the T20 World Cup against Namibia.

While India failed to qualify for the semifinals of the ICC T20 World Cup in the UAE, the Shastri-Kohli duo along with Bharat and Sridhar made the team a formidable travelling outfit in the Test arena.

They were part of a set-up that won two Tests in Australia while the Indian side is leading 2-1 in the five Test series in England, which is set to be completed next year. India also won the T20I series in South Africa, New Zealand, England and Australia under their tenure. "Thank you for all the memories and the amazing journey we've had as a team with you all. Your contribution has been immense and will always be remembered in Indian cricket history," Kohli, who has given up T20 captaincy, wrote on twitter. "Wish you the best moving forward in life. Until next time," he added. Shastri has been replaced by former India captain Rahul Dravid as India head coach while Rohit Sharma is India's new T20 captain. It is also expected that Rohit will take over the ODI captaincy as well during India's next session.

# Sneha, Anika ready for big time competitions at Women's Amateur Asia-Pacific

Abu Dhabi | Agencies

Sneha Singh and Anika Varma -- two of India's most successful amateur stars -- are eager to prove their mettle as they represent the country at this week's Women's Amateur Asia-Pacific (WAAP).

The third edition of the premier regional tournament for amateurs, organised by the R&A and Asia Pacific Golf Confederation (APGC), starts at Abu Dhabi Golf Club from Wednesday, November 10. The champion golfer gets guaranteed entry in the AIG Women's Open and The Amundi Evian Championship (both majors), as well as an invitation to play in the Augusta National Women's Amateur.

The Hyderabad-based Sneha, and Anika, who



moved to Sacramento in the US for high school and golf, have chosen completely different routes to the championship. Sneha has become the leading Indian player at No.153 on WAGR by playing extensively in domestic ama-

teur tournaments and the occasional Hero Women's Golf Association of India Tour, in which she has won three titles playing against the professionals in the last three years. Anika, who burst onto the scene with a sensational fifth place finish in the 2019 Hero Women's Indian Open, is still in school and has committed to play for University of Oregon (a top-5 team in US collegiate system). With not many school events offering WAGR points in the US, her ranking has fallen to No.478, but it did not bother her much.

The tournament features six of the top-30 players in the world, with Korea's Youmin Hwang, No.4 on the World Amateur Golf Ranking (WAGR) and China's world No.7 Xiaowen Yin the top-ranked players.

### T20 World Cup

# Formidable Pakistan face determined Australia in second semis

Tokyo | Agencies

Unbeaten Pakistan, who are in search of their second title, will lock horns with a determined Australia in the second semi-final of the 2021 ICC Men's T20 World Cup at the Dubai International Cricket Stadium, here on Thursday.

The Babar Azam-led Pakistan are the only unbeaten side so far in the ongoing tournament, having won all five games. On the other hand, Australia, who are yet to win a title, have lost just one match in the mega event till now.

This will be Pakistan's fifth appearance in the T20 WC semi-finals. The 2009 champions have reached this stage in the first four editions (2007, 2009, 2010, and 2012). On the other hand, Australia will be playing their fourth semi-final of the T20 WC (2007, 2010, and 2012).

Pakistan have looked completely invincible and their batters are in brilliant form in this tournament. Openers Babar Azam and Mohammad Rizwan are giving them a terrific start, while middle-order batters like Mohammad Hafeez, Shoaib Malik, and Asif Ali are also among the runs.

However, Fakhar Zaman hasn't contributed much with the bat and his form can be a concern for Pakistan going into this clash.

Their bowling attack has also done well and kept things tight. Pacers Shaheen Shah Afridi and Haris Rauf have troubled batters and have picked up regular wickets but Hasan Ali has had an ordinary tournament. Spinners Imad Wasim,



Mohammad Hafeez and Shadab Khan have also supported pacers well. Meanwhile, David Warner's form is a welcome sign for 2010 runners-up Australia. The attacking opener was not in great touch ahead of the tournament but his two half-centuries gave Australia a lot of confidence. His opener partner and captain Finch can cause trouble for Pakistan bowlers.

Mitchell Marsh and Glenn Maxwell are the game-changers for Australia with both bat as well as the ball while Steve Smith gives them stability. Marcus Stoinis and Matthew Wade will finish the innings in the last five overs.

In the bowling department, pacers Josh Hazlewood, Mitchell Starc and Pat Cummins have picked wickets with the new ball while the likes of Adam Zampa, Glenn Maxwell and Mitchell Marsh have struck regularly in the middle overs.

#### Squads:

**Australia:** Aaron Finch (c), Ashton Agar, Pat Cummins, Josh Hazlewood, Josh Inglis, Mitchell Marsh, Glenn Maxwell, Kane Richardson, Steve Smith, Mitchell Starc, Marcus Stoinis, Mitchell Swepson, Matthew Wade, David Warner, Adam Zampa.

**Pakistan:** Babar Azam (c), Shadab Khan, Asif Ali, Fakhar Zaman, Haider Ali, Haris Rauf, Hasan Ali, Imad Wasim, Mohammad Hafeez, Mohammad Nawaz, Mohammad Rizwan (wk), Mohammad Wasim Jnr, Sarfaraz Ahmed, Shaheen Shah Afridi, Shoaib Malik.



## I NEVER WENT IN BECAUSE I HAD THIS DREAM TO BE INVITED INSIDE

Siddhant Chaturvedi opens up how *Bunty Aur Babli 2* fulfilled a long time dream

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actor Siddhant Chaturvedi who is best known for his ground-breaking performance as MC Sher in the film 'Gully Boy', is now rising to fame with a multi-film lineup which includes the flick, 'Bunty aur Babli 2'. Having raised major anticipation post the trailer with his many different avatars in his first commercial film alone, Siddhant has his fans all invested with this upcoming film.

Siddhant now reveals how his journey with YRF actually began way before Bunty Aur Babli 2 as he said, "I have a very long

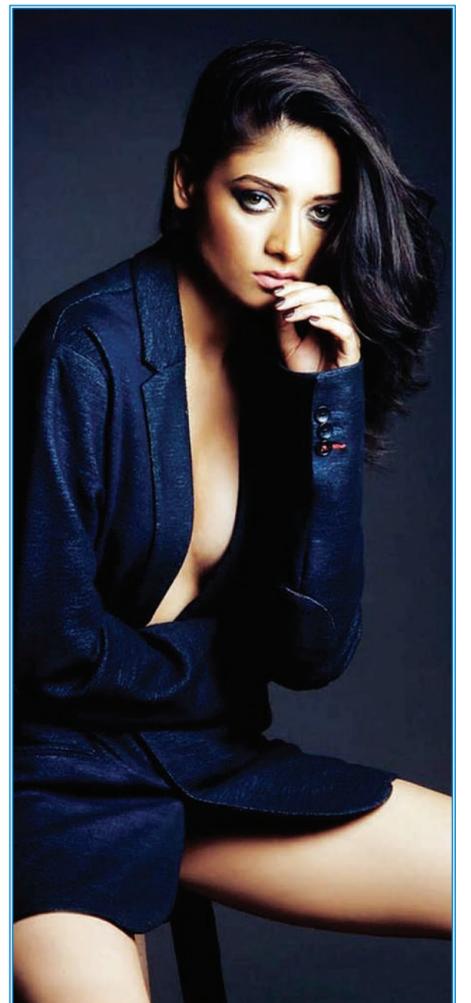
relation with YRF studios. During my college days, a lot of my friends used to come to the studio for auditions or internships so if I ever accompanied them, I always waited outside at a chai tapri and just had chai."

He adds, "No matter how much my friends asked me to come in, I never went in because I had this dream to be invited inside by Aditya Chopra sir and even though it seemed like a far-fetched dream that time, I had decided that it was the only way I was going to go in there if I ever did. And when Bunty Aur Babli 2 happened, it became one of the most special films for me because it made my dream come true."

Back in 2019, when he had started his journey for the film, Siddhant had shared a flashback picture where he can be seen having chai at a tapri outside the studios.

The multi-talented star has won a large fan base with a single performance and is now all set to treat them with a whole new avatar in this upcoming flick which also stars Saif Ali Khan and Rani Mukherjee.

Apart from Bunty Aur Babli 2, Siddhant has various big-ticket projects like Shakun Batra's untitled movie alongside Deepika Padukone and Ananya Panday, Phone Bhoor, featuring Katrina Kaif and Ishaan Khattar, Kho Gaye Hum Kahan as well as the action film,



## VERY HAPPY 'CHHORRI'

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Yameena Bharadwaj, who made a mark in the series 'Made In Heaven', will soon be seen in the horror film 'Chhorri'. The appreciation for the recently released teaser of the film has left the actress overwhelmed.

Talking about the response to the teaser, she says, "I am so glad to see the amount of love people have showered on the teaser of 'Chhorri', it feels great to see all your hard work being appreciated. I personally had a great time on the sets, working for an Abundantia film."

Commenting about her experience of shooting the film, the actress adds,

"During our shoot schedule of about 25 days in Bhopal, we had so much fun because the entire crew and team, from Vishal Furia sir to Mita ma'am, Nushratt and everyone was really sweet fun to be around. And the best part was the food, we all used to look forward to the food breaks between our shoots because the food on the sets was so yummy."

"I am really excited for everyone to watch the film and give it as much love as they have given to the teaser till now. I am very scared of horror films myself but I had an amazing time shooting for this one and I am sure the audience will enjoy watching it equally as much," she concludes.

## 'DILBAR' NORA TO RETURN AS 'DILRUBA'



Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actress Nora Fatehi, who is all set to feature in yet another another foot-tapping dance number in 'Satyamev Jayate 2' titled 'Kusu Kusu', says after the success of 'Dilbar in the first installment of the film', to be able to return as Dilruba for the track 'Kusu kusu' feels really great. Turning into the lucky charm for John Abraham, Nora collaborates with the actor yet again after 'Dilbar', 'O Saki Saki' and 'Rock Tha Party' while the actress marks her hat-trick with filmmaker Milap Zaveri post 'Dilbar' and 'Ek Toh Kam Zindagani'.

Talking about returning to the franchise, Nora Fatehi shares, "Satyamev Jayate' holds an extremely special place in my life and I am so glad to be a part of 'Satyamev Jayate 2' as well. After the success of Dilbar, to be able to return as Dilruba feels really great. She added: "I am thankful to Milap, Nikhil sir, and Bhushan sir for choosing me to be a part of this opportunity once again. And I am excited to present a Kusu Kusu' and really looking forward to the response from everyone." Director Milap Zaveri also expressed his excitement for Nora's return.

## Taapsee Pannu wraps up 'Shabaash Mithu' shoot



Team Absolute | Mumbai

Taapsee Pannu is basking in the success of 'Rashmi Rocket' and the actress has wrapped up another film titled 'Shabaash Mithu', a biopic based on Indian women's cricket captain Mithali Raj. Taapsee took to

her Instagram to share a few pictures from sets, she wrote, "8 ki thi jab kisi ne ek Sapna dikhaya tha, ki ek din ayega jab Cricket sirf gentleman's game nahi hoga. Humaari bhi ek team hogi, ek pehchaan hogi... 'Women In Blue' Aa rahe hai hum... Jald i.. #ShabaashMithu ITS A FILM WRAP! Get ready to cheer for the World Cup 2022!"

#WomenInBlue"

The actress can be seen donning the Indian cricket team's jersey as she has a moment of joy with her cast members. 'Shabaash Mithu' is directed by Srijit Mukherji with story penned by Priya Aven. In addition, Taapsee has an interesting slate of upcoming films like 'Dobaaraa', 'Mishan Impossible', 'Loop Lapeta' and her debut production 'Blurr'.

## Vicky Kaushal dives 'Into the Wild with Bear Grylls'



Team Absolute | Mumbai

After Bollywood actor Ajay Devgn, the upcoming episode of the second season of 'Into The Wild with Bear Grylls' will have Vicky Kaushal as the special guest.

The actor opens up about overcoming his deep-sea water phobia and going on expedition in the Indian Ocean with famed adventurer Bear Grylls.

He says: "It was a wonderful experience going on this survival expedition with the world-famous adventurer Bear Grylls. If it wasn't for him, I would have not been able to defeat my fear of swimming in this vast ocean. This journey also marks an incredibly significant chapter in my life as I was able to overcome and conquer one of my many fears."

He adds how Bear helped him to overcome his fear while facing number of challenges from crocodiles, sharks and snakes including the uncertain tides and weather.

"The thought of being in the middle of an ocean and not having a floor beneath you is not easy, but Bear's constant motivation and determination has helped me rise out of this triumphantly," shares Vicky Kaushal.

## Battle of Rezang La

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Dhakkad team gears up to make India's most ambitious war film on the Battle of Rezang La that changed the face of the Indo-China War of 1962; hunt for leading man currently underway.

In an otherwise lost war, the battle of Rezang La was the sole bright spot for India in the 1962 Indo-China war. The six soldiers who survived that battle have vividly pieced together the details of that icy November morning that saw 120 Indian soldiers resulting in the downfall of 1300 Chinese soldiers.

The heroism of the story was always meant for a big screen retelling and the fervour of the story itself was a cue for director Razeesh 'Razy' Ghai to make a film based on the historic battle. For the filmmaker it's a personal story to tell given his Army upbringing with both his father (retired) and brother in the force. Rendering a personal touch to the story is crucial to him.

Razy, who is currently working on the post production of Kangana Ranaut headlined Dhaakad, is starting the pre-production of this magnum opus early next year. The war film brings to life the story of an epic battle of 120 valiant men from India's 13 Kumaon battalion. They were successful in blocking the Chinese PLA troops from crossing the key ridge into the Chushul Valley. What makes the story more relevant



right now is that the success story of Rezang La was reflected during last year's China-India skirmishes. Military experts believe that India's strategic leverage compelled the Chinese forces to disengage.

With such a powerful story at hand, screenwriter Rajiv G Menon is looking to craft an authentic and engaging screenplay. Co-producing the film with Razy is Sohel Maklai, who are also the producers of Dhaakad. The team is already envisioning it as one of the most lavish war films to come out of India.

## INSTAGRAM PIC OF THE DAY



Sonal Chauhan