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No cap on airfare from now, air ticket prices may go up during festive season

FEATHERS CLIPPED

The ministry had imposed lower and upper limits on airfares after the resumption of services in May 2020 following the initial two-month nationwide lockdown to contain the spread of Covid-19. Thereafter, the limits were relaxed in a phased manner according to the improvement in air traffic in the country.

The lower caps were meant as a relief for airlines struggling after the Covid-19 pandemic. At the same time, the upper caps on airfares were fixed to ensure that passengers do not have to pay a hefty amount for air travel.



the airfares. However, experts said that high competition among the airlines may lead to benefits for fliers and many airlines may offer discounts as per the demands.

Aviation expert Harshvardhan said: "The move will give flexibility to the airlines in deciding air fares and airlines can charge as per their policies. Airfare cap was more towards the higher side. New airline has come and there is competition in the sector. To attract travelers, some airlines are likely to come up with offers."

An industry source said that airlines will have freedom to decide on air ticket prices, according to the prevailing market situations. They may raise prices during festive season as higher fares will add to the margins, he said.

Earlier, the Civil Aviation Ministry had said that after review of the current status of Scheduled Domestic Operations vis-a-vis passenger demand for air travel, it has been decided to remove the fare bands notified from time to time regarding the airfares with effect from August 31.

Earlier, discussions on removing the fare bands for domestic airfares were held among the stakeholders including the government authorities and airlines. Carriers were of the view

that removal of the pricing caps is required for the full-fledged recovery of domestic air traffic.

THAROOR SEEKS TO ENHANCE AIR CONNECTIVITY

Thiruvananthapuram: Shashi Tharoor, as the Lok Sabha member from Thiruvananthapuram, has taken the lead to meet with around 30 top officials from the airline industry to improve air connectivity here on Friday. Top officials of 30 plus airlines, including Air India, Indigo, SpiceJet, Vistara, Jet Airways, Air India Express, Emirates, Lufthansa, Air Arabia, Flydubai, Air Asia, Qatar Airways, SriLankan Airways, Maldivian Airlines, Scoot and Akasa Air, will attend the 'Trivandrum Connectivity Summit', organised by leading commercial organisations from various sectors.

Tharoor, who will chair the Summit, said that this is one which is primarily aimed at evolving a comprehensive strategy to enhance air connectivity to and from the State Capital Region (SCR).

Mikhail Gorbachev, last big leader of the Soviet Union, dies at 91

FORMER SOVIET UNION LEADER MIKHAIL GORBACHEV, THE LAST OF THE TITANS IN RUSSIA WHO SOUGHT ECONOMIC REFORMS THROUGH HIS FAMOUS 'GLASNOST' (OPENNESS) AND 'PERESTROIKA' (RECONSTRUCTION), DIED IN A HOSPITAL IN MOSCOW. HE WAS 91.



Ashe O | Moscow

Gorbachev, an unquestioned titan who embarked on a path of radical reform that brought about the end of the Cold War, reversed the direction of the nuclear arms race and relaxed Communist Party controls in hopes of rescuing the faltering Soviet state but instead propelled it toward collapse, has died in Moscow.

He was awarded the Nobel Prize for peace in

1990 which he shared with the US President then. His death on Tuesday was announced by Russian news agencies, citing the government hospital where he was being treated, but no further details were immediately available. The Washington Post reported this evening.

For the sheer improbability of his actions and their impact on the late 20th century, Gorbachev ranks as a towering figure. In 1985, he was chosen to lead a country mired in socialism and stultifying ideology. In six years of cajoling, improvised tactics and increasingly bold risks, Gorbachev unleashed immense changes that eventually demolished the pillars of the state. The Soviet Union's collapse was not Gorbachev's goal, but it may be his greatest legacy.

India's GDP records double digit growth of 13.5% in Q1 2022-23

Team Absolute | New Delhi

India's economic growth rose to 13.5 per cent in the first quarter of the current fiscal (2022-23), a huge jump from 4.1 per cent growth recorded in the final quarter of 2021-22.

This is the first double digit growth in GDP figures in a year, as the last double digit growth was 20.1 per cent recorded in first quarter of 2021-22.

"Real GDP or Gross Domestic Product (GDP) at Constant (2011-12) Prices in Q1 2022-23 is estimated to attain a level of Rs 36.85 lakh crore, as against Rs 32.46 lakh crore in Q1 2021-22, showing a growth of 13.5 percent as compared to 20.1 percent in Q1 2021-22," a statement issued by National Statistical



Office (NSO) said. The 13.5 per cent growth in the first quarter of the current fiscal is below Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) forecast of 16.2 per cent.

Rating agency ICRA had projected a growth of 13 per cent in the first quarter of the current fiscal. After recording a 20.1 per cent growth in the

first quarter of 2021-22, GDP growth had consistently fell during the entire quarter. In the second quarter of 2021-22, it slid to 8.4 per cent, in the third quarter, it further fell to 5.4 per cent while in the fourth quarter of the previous fiscal, it came down to 4.1 per cent.

The RBI has projected the economy's growth at 7.2 per cent for the current financial year.

"India's GDP has crossed pre-pandemic levels. India is on course to achieve 7 per cent growth in the current fiscal."

TV Sornathan, Finance Secretary

TAJ MAHAL'S NAME CHANGE GAME FALLS FLAT IN CORPORATION SESSION

Agra: Another attempt to force change the name of the Taj Mahal to "Tejo Mahal" fell flat, after noisy scenes and frayed tempers in a special session of the Agra Municipal Corporation on Wednesday.

A corporator had moved a resolution demanding the name change, on the basis of claimed "historical evidence" that the Taj Mahal was originally a Hindu temple. But due to the din, and groups of corporators shouting slogans, the matter could not be taken up.

Mayor Navin Jain adjourned the house indefinitely, after failing to bring the session to order. While the Hindutva group was adamant to move the resolution, the BSP and Congress corporators opposed the initiative, claiming that the High Court and the Supreme Court, had already dismissed the plea. Outside the house, various Hindutva groups continued to shout slogans, as corporator officials tried hard to pacify the agitated members of the house.

30 women shifted to hospitals after botched-up FP surgery kills 4 in Telangana

Hyderabad | Agencies

After the death of four women after undergoing Double Puncture Laparoscopy (DPL) at a family planning surgery camp at Telangana's Ranga Reddy district, authorities have shifted remaining 30 women to hospitals for treatment.

Health authorities said the condition of women was stable.

Thirteen women were admitted to Apollo Hospitals and remaining 17 to government-run Nizam's Institute of Medical Sciences (NIMS) in Hyderabad.

Two women were



undergoing treatment at the Intensive Care Unit (ICU) at NIMS. Doctors said they were physically weak and hence were under treatment at the ICU.

Doctors said there was no need for any concern and all women were likely to be discharged in a couple of days.

Health minister T. Harish Rao on Wednesday visited NIMS Hospital and called on the women. He told reporters that all women

were safe and would be discharged in two-day three days.

The minister said the government was providing the best treatment to the women. Every patient is being monitored by one doctor.

Four women have died due to complications after undergoing DPL at the female sterilisation camp conducted on August 25 at a Civil Hospital in Ibrahimpatnam in Ranga Reddy district.

They complained of acute gastroenteritis and died while undergoing treatment. Two deaths were each reported on Monday and Tuesday.

MORE J&K CONGRESS LEADERS RESIGN TO JOIN AZAD



Srinagar: Over a dozen senior Congress leaders and party workers in Jammu and Kashmir resigned on Wednesday to support Ghulam Nabi Azad.

Leading the group, former J&K Congress president and minister, Peerzada Sayeed said that he was feeling sad to leave the party with which he was associated for more than 35 years.

"The party has shrunk due to the wrong policies of the Congress high command. We have decided to join Azad sahib to strengthen democracy in J&K and to help the people who have suffered a lot," Sayeed said. Prominent among those who resigned are Muhammad Muzaffar Parry, a former legislative and Vice President of J&K Congress; and Haji Abdul Gani Khan, the Congress district president Srinagar.

Union Labour Ministry extends public utility service status for three industries

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Ministry of Labour and Employment has extended the public utility service status of three industries: industries engaged in the manufacture or production of mineral oil (crude oil), motor and aviation spirit, diesel oil, kerosene oil, fuel oil, diverse hydrocarbon oils and their blends including synthetic fuels, lubricating oils and the like, which is covered under items 26 of the First Schedule to the Industrial Disputes Act, 1947 (14 of 1947), to be public utility service for the purposes of the said Act," said a notification issued by the Ministry on Tuesday.

It said that the Central Government is of the opinion that public interest requires the extension of the public utility service status to the said industries

satisfied that public interest so requires that the services engaged in manufacture or production of mineral oil (crude oil), motor and aviation spirit, diesel oil, kerosene oil, fuel oil, diverse hydrocarbon oils and their blends including synthetic fuels, lubricating oils and the like, which is covered under items 26 of the First Schedule to the Industrial Disputes Act, 1947 (14 of 1947), to be public utility service for the purposes of the said Act," said a notification issued by the Ministry on Tuesday.

It said that the Central Government is of the opinion that public interest requires the extension of the public utility service status to the said industries

for a further period of six months.

"Now, therefore, in exercise of the powers conferred by the proviso to sub-clause (vi) of clause (n) of section 2 of the Industrial Disputes Act, 1947 (14 of 1947), the Central Government hereby declares the services of the industry engaged in the manufacture or production of mineral oil (crude oil), motor and aviation spirit, diesel oil, kerosene oil, fuel oil, diverse hydrocarbon oils and their blends including synthetic fuels, lubricating oils and the like to be a public utility service for the purposes of the said Act for a period of six months with effect from 28th August, 2022," it added.

Kejriwal launches country's 'first virtual school' in Delhi

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Wednesday launched 'country's first virtual school' in Delhi for students unable to take physical classes.

"We started Happiness Classes, Patriotic Curriculum and many special schools, along with we are building residential schools for children begging at traffic lights, Sports University, Skill University has been set up,

Army Preparatory School has been started. Today we are going to start the country's first virtual school," said Kejriwal while launching. He said that many parents do not want to send girls out, many children start working early, such children can study in this virtual school. "Children should come to school physically, but those who are unable to make this, this school will provide education," he said in a digital press briefing. "The admission to

the schooling platform will be open for students across India and they will also be prepared by experts for entrance exams like NEET, CUET and JEE along with skill-based training," he further said adding that its name will be Delhi Model Virtual School. Applications are being invited from Wednesday for Class 9 for 2022-23. This virtual platform has been created by Google and School Net India. This would be a revolutionary step, he said.

NCRB report: Kolkata safest city, but crimes against women alarming in West Bengal

Kolkata, which has been ranked as the safest city, the number of 'serious offences' increased to 1,080 in 2021, from 981 in 2020 and 961 in 2019.

In terms of kidnapping of women, West Bengal is in the third position with 7,403 cases after Uttar Pradesh and Maharashtra.

Kolkata | Agencies

The Trinamool Congress leadership in West Bengal might be boasting of Kolkata being rated as the safest city among all the metros in the country in the latest report of the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB), but opposition leaders and legal experts have pointed out that the same report also highlights alarming rate of crimes against women in entire West Bengal.

According to the NCRB report, the number of acid attacks against women



reported from across the country stood at 174 in 2021, with West Bengal topping the chart with 34 such cases. Senior counsel in the Calcutta High

Court, Kaushik Gupta, is of the opinion that considering the frequent reports of such attacks against women coming from different corners of the state, it seems the figures quoted in the NCRB report are much lower than the actual numbers. Meanwhile, state Minister for Women and Child Development, Sashi Panja, said that instead of making mud-slinging attempts against the West Bengal government, the BJP leaders should first speak about the crime rate in the states ruled by it, especially Uttar Pradesh.

SONIA GANDHI'S MOTHER PASSES AWAY IN ITALY

New Delhi: Congress interim president Sonia Gandhi's mother Paola Maino passed away at her home in Italy on Saturday and her funeral took place on Tuesday, party leaders said on Wednesday.

In a tweet, Congress General Secretary Jairam Ramesh said: "Smt. Sonia Gandhi's mother, Mrs. Paola Maino passed away at her home in Italy on Saturday the 27th August, 2022. The funeral took place yesterday". Sonia Gandhi is abroad for her medical check up, and is accompanied by both Rahul Gandhi and Priyanka Gandhi. She was also supposed to visit her ailing mother. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has conveyed his condolences to Congress interim president Sonia Gandhi on the passing away of her mother Paola Maino.



STATEWIDE PROTEST CALL OVER POLICE INACTION AGAINST RAPE ACCUSED K'TAKA SEER

Bengaluru | Agencies

Dalit and student organizations and others have given a statewide protest call against the ruling BJP and the Karnataka police on September 2, condemning the inaction against rape accused Lingayat seer Murugha Shivamurthy Sharanaru of Murugha mutt in Chitradurga of Karnataka.

Posters have been released by various groups on social media calling for the immediate arrest of Murugha who is facing a sexual assault case by minor girls. The protesters will gather near the Freedom Park in Bengaluru at 10.30 a.m.

The posters announced that the protest will be backed by women's organizations, labour unions, farmer and daily wage workers' unions, minority institutions, NGOs, advocates associations and sexual minority groups.

The rape accused seer is holding a meeting with close aides including 4th accused Paramashivaiah at the mutt on Wednesday. The District and Sessions court is taking up the bail



petition of the accused seer on Thursday. Sources in the mutt said

that the meeting will decide on the future course of action in case the

court rejects the bail plea of the accused seer.

The officials of the Child Welfare Committee have shifted most of the girl students from the Murugha mutt hostel following the development.

Former Chief Minister H D Kumaraswamy stated on Wednesday that it is wrong to accuse politicians of being silent on the POC SO case against the seer. "There is no chance that we chose to ignore the incident. The concerned authorities should be deciding on this and initiating action. Politics should not be mixed with this incident and care should be taken not to hurt religious feelings at the same time," he added.

Posts slamming the political parties and prominent leaders over the issue have also gone viral. "Do not sympathize with rape accused seer. Siddaramaiah who claims himself as a socialist and progressive should have raised his voice for poor victim girls who are minors belonging to oppressed classes."

The posts also chided former CM B S Yediyurappa, saying that morals should prevail over caste.

KCR visits Patna, meets Nitish, Lalu Prasad

Patna | Agencies

In a bid to bring opposition leaders on one platform, Telangana Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao on Wednesday visited Patna and met his Bihar counterpart Nitish Kumar.

Nitish Kumar, Deputy CM Tejashwi Yadav and ministers warmly welcomed KCR, as the leader is popularly known, at the airport.

An event to pay compensation to kin of martyrs of the Galwan Valley incident was held in Chief Minister's Secretariat where both the Chief Ministers, along with several other leaders of the ruling parties, participated.

KCR handed over cheques of Rs 10 lakh each for the Galwan Valley martyrs and Rs 5 lakh each to the 12 labourers who died recently in a fire tragedy in Hyderabad.

"It was a big burden in my heart... to go to Patna, a land of martyrs and give respect to them for their supreme sacrifice. It is a great honour for me that I have come to Patna," he said. During the event, Nitish Kumar, in particular, was aggressive against the BJP and Narendra Modi government. "The Centre is not doing any work. It is only doing advertisements. Those who believe in work do not need to advertise," he said.



"Centre has reduced the funds that belong to states. We have demanded for the special status of Bihar which the Centre did not give so far... Media organisations have also been captured by a group of selected people who are targeting opposition parties and appreciating just one. I want to ask journalists that are you not the common people. Reporting should take place as it was done in the past," he added. Tejashwi Yadav said: "We have to stay united and work for the people of the country. If we manage peace, prosperity and development will come automatically. Nowadays, the spread of poison in society is a biggest challenge for us. We have to work on it to wipe out poison from society."

Rao also met RJD chief Lalu Prasad Yadav before returning to Hyderabad in the evening.

J&K HC orders reopening of 2003 Nadimarg Kashmiri Pandit massacre case

Srinagar | Agencies

Following an application filed by the UT government, the Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh High Court has ordered reopening of the Nadimarg massacre case in which 24 Kashmiri Pandits were killed by LeT terrorists in Pulwama district on March 23, 2003.

The application filed by the UT government through prosecution had sought recall of an earlier order that dismissed a criminal revision petition a decade ago and effectively closed the case.

The high court has now ordered that the trial will reopen on September 15.

Masked LeT terrorists in army uniform had raided the Nadimarg village on the night of March 23, 2003, where around 52 Kashmiri Pandits lived despite the migration of the majority of their commu-



nity from the Valley in early 1990s. The terrorists had lined up 11 men, 11 women and two babies who were killed with a volley of automatic gunfire. Many of the terrorists involved in the massacre were either killed or captured in subsequent years. Seven suspects were indicted after investigation and the case was transferred to the Shopian sessions court, which rejected a revision petition seeking examination of material and wit-

nesses during the pendency of the trial.

The prosecution had said at that time in its application that witnesses had migrated out of the Valley and were reluctant to depose in the court out of fear.

The lower court had said that allowing a review was beyond its jurisdiction. Thereafter, the high court dismissed the revision petition on December 21, 2011.

After this, a new application was filed in 2014.

TENSION IN PUNJAB VILLAGE OVER CHURCH VANDALISM

Chandigarh | Agencies

Tension erupted in a village in Punjab's Tarn Taran district located close to the India-Pakistan border on Wednesday after a group of miscreants vandalised a three-story church and broke the statues of Mother Mary and Jesus Christ.

Condemning the incident, Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann ordered a probe into the desecration and fire incident. "This is a highly condemnable incident, and severest of severe action must be taken against the perpetrators of this heinous crime," said the Chief Minister in a statement.

He said he has directed the Director General of Police (DGP) to minutely probe into this unpardonable incident. He said this incident is a handiwork of the forces inimical to the peace, prosperity and progress of the state.

After keeping the security guard captive at gunpoint, the miscreants also set on fire the pastor's car. Visuals of the car engulfing in flames and vandalism of the statues were caught on CCTVs.

A person was caught on the camera repeatedly hitting the idol with a hammer.

A large number of people belonging to the community staged a sit-in protest at Thakarapura village, the crime spot, demanding the arrest of the accused and security for the minority community.

The incident comes a day after the Akal Takht



Jathedar, head of the highest temporal seat of the Sikhs, issued a statement against "forced conversions" by Christian missionaries.

"So-called Christian missionaries have been forcibly converting Sikhs through fraudulent practices. Sikhs and Hindus of Punjab are being misled and converted. This is happening right under the government's nose. Though there are provisions in

the law to book for superstitious practices in the name of religion, no government is ready to act against them (missionaries) due to vote bank politics," Giani Harpreet Singh had said.

Two days earlier, a group of nihangs and their supporters disrupted an event organised by Christian missionaries at Daduana village in Amritsar.

PROBE ORDERED AFTER 70-YR-OLD IS ACCUSED OF GANG-RAPE IN UP

Pratapgarh | Agencies

Inspector General of Police (Prayagraj range), Rakesh Singh, has ordered a probe into a case in which a 70-year-old man has been booked for gang-rape along with four others.

The IG has asked SP (Pratapgarh) to conduct a detailed probe into the incident.

The police claimed that the father of the victim had lodged an FIR with Kunda police against five persons, including the 70-year-old man, under the relevant sections of IPC and POC SO Act, accusing them of keeping his minor daughter captive for around 15 days and raping her repeatedly at different locations.

The father told the police that a



youth from Kunda, who studied with his daughter at a local coaching centre, had taken her out on July 11 and

offered her tea laced with sedatives. The father further alleged that when his daughter became uncon-

scious, she was gang-raped.

He also claimed that not only the youth, but his brother and three others, including the elderly man, had raped his daughter repeatedly at separate locations and then freed her on July 26.

The victim's father alleged that the accused had threatened him of dire consequences if he dared to report the matter to the police.

He also accused local police of registering a fake case of goat theft against him at the behest of the accused.

IG Rakesh Singh said: "SP (Pratapgarh) has been directed to conduct a detailed probe into the incident." He added that senior police personnel would probe the charges and take action accordingly.

Two persons robbed of jewellery worth Rs 2 crore by four robbers in Delhi

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Two persons were robbed of jewellery worth Rs 2 crore and other valuables by four persons who threw chilli powder into their eyes in Central Delhi's Paharganj on Wednesday morning. One of the robbers wore a police uniform and they intercepted the victims on the pretext of checking.

Initially the police got a call around 4.49 a.m. that two persons threw chilli powder into the eyes of a man and damped with his valuables. The police reached the spot and found that two persons were robbed by four robbers.

"On enquiry it was found that two persons were having two bags and a box containing

jewellery which was to be transported to Chandigarh and Ludhiana. They were intercepted by four persons and robbed. One of the accused was in police uniform. They intercepted them on the pretext of checking. Two came from behind and threw chilli powder in their eyes and snatched the bags and the box," said the police official.

The official said that the estimated value of the jewellery was about Rs 2 crore and the rest of the items' value was being verified as the consignment was received from different places like Mumbai, Ahmedabad, Surat.

A case under sections 392, 394, 34, 506 IPC has been registered.

"We have got strong clues and hopefully it will be worked out very soon," the police said.

ARMY PREVENTS BRIDGE COLLAPSE IN HIMACHAL

Shimla: Valiant effort of the Indian Army prevented a bridge collapse on the Chakki river over the Pathankot-Jogindernagar rail route in Himachal Pradesh, the armed forces said on Wednesday. After flash floods and torrential rains washed away a rail bridge on the Chakki river in Kangra district, the Army was called in by the civil administration to prevent the at-risk road traffic bridge adjacent to the washed away rail bridge.

Significant sections of the railway bridge on the Chakki river collapsed after repeated flash floods on August 20. The gushing waters caused severe erosion of piers at the Chakki bridge leading to its collapse. As the rail bridge was washed away, the fury of the water accelerated soil erosion towards the piers of the adjacent 500m roadway bridge. The only way to protect the road bridge, the major link road to Dharamsala from Pathankot, was to divert the forceful waters, the Army said.

Madrasa in Assam demolished over suspected terror links



Guwahati | Agencies

The Assam government on Wednesday demolished a private-run Madrasa in its bid to foil the alleged terror activities being run from the Madrasas in the state. This morning, the Bongaigaon

district administration demolished Markazul Ma'arif-u-Kariyana Madrasa at Kabaitari in the Jogighopa area of the district.

Eight bulldozers carried out the demolition drive in the presence of a huge number of police personnel there.

SP Bongaigaon, Swapnaneel Deka informed that a notice regarding the demolition was issued to the Madrasa authority on Tuesday. Of the nearly 200 students, most of them were sent back home, while a few others who stayed on the Madrasa premises shifted to nearby

institutions before carrying out the demolition.

Hafizur Rahman, a teacher of this madrasa, was arrested on August 26 based on information provided by two imams earlier nabbed by the place from the Goalpara district.

Police claimed that Rahman and two imams have strong links with the terror outfits Al-Qaeda in Indian Subcontinent (AQIS) and Ansarullah Bangla Team (ABT).

"We have found some incriminating documents while searching the madrasa," Deka said.

Asked about the reason behind the demolition, the police officer said that the madrasa was constructed violating the government norms and necessary permissions for the building were also not sought.

"So, it was demolished under provisions of the Disaster Management Act", he added.

In the last five months, Assam police have arrested around 40 people for their alleged links to Al-Qaeda in Indian Subcontinent (AQIS) and Ansarullah Bangla Team (ABT).

IT raid on two Kolkata biz groups finds unaccounted income of Rs 250 cr



Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Income Tax Department on Wednesday said they recently carried out a search and seizure operation on two prominent real estate groups of Kolkata, and have detected a total unaccounted income of more than Rs 250 crore. The official said that during the course of the search operation on August 18, a large number of incriminating evidence, including documents and digital data, were seized. "There are evidences of out of books cash transactions and on-money receipts. Several documents and elec-

tronic data indicate routing of unaccounted money through shell companies. Further, some of the evidences found during the search operation indicate use of unaccounted funds in land acquisition," said the official.

The official said that the key persons admitted use of shell companies for infusion of unaccounted funds in the form of share capital, share premium and unsecured loans through sale of bogus investments.

During the course of search proceedings, 16 bank lockers have been found which have been placed under restraint.



MAN CARRIES PREGNANT WIFE TO HOSPITAL ON PUSHING CART

In the absence of an ambulance, a man was forced to rush his pregnant woman to a health centre in Damoh district only to find the staff absent.



Team Absolute | Bhopal

In the absence of an ambulance, a man was forced to rush his pregnant woman to a health centre on a pushing cart in Damoh district only to find the staff absent.

After the video of the incident went viral on social media, the district administration started an inquiry into the matter.

The woman's husband, who was identified as Kailash Ahirwar, a resident of Raneh village located around 60 km from district headquarters Damoh, alleged that after his wife went into labour on Tuesday, he called

the 108 government ambulance service but no ambulance came for two hours.

Left with no choice, he then put his wife on a pushcart and rushed her to the local Arogya Kendra where no nurse or doctor was available, Kailash claimed.

Later, she was shifted to Hatta by a government ambulance.

However, after the video surfaced on social media, the district administration swung into action and the woman was shifted to district hospital, as per an official.

Meanwhile, a senior medical official posted in Damoh district health centre said

that an inquiry into the matter has been ordered.

"Notices have been issued to the concerned employees as to why an ambulance was not provided to ferry the pregnant woman to hospital and action would be taken after the inquiry is done," the official said, requesting anonymity.

Notably, last week, a similar incident was reported in Bhind district where family members had carried a senior citizen on a pushing cart to a hospital. The district administration had then lodged an FIR against three journalists for reporting the matter.

AS BJP HAS ALREADY STARTED PREPARATIONS FOR THE FORTHCOMING ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS TO BE HELD IN MADHYA PRADESH IN 2023, CHIEF MINISTER SHIVRAJ SINGH CHOUHAN MET BJP NATIONAL PRESIDENT J.P. NADDA TO DISCUSS THE POLITICAL SITUATION IN THE STATE AND REVAMP THE STATE CABINET.

Team Absolute | New Delhi

As BJP has already started preparations for the forthcoming Assembly elections to be held in Madhya Pradesh in 2023, Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan met BJP National President JP Nadda to discuss the political situation in the state and revamp the state Cabinet.

Notably, this was Chouhan's first meeting with the BJP president after



he was dropped from the party's parliamentary board.

Before the 2023 Assembly elections to be held in Madhya Pradesh, the BJP now wants to complete the process of making all political appointments as soon as possible. Along with this, the exercise of filling the vacant ministerial posts in the state Cabinet has also started.

Amid the recent talks of cabinet expansion in the state, Chouhan met

Nadda on Tuesday which has further intensified the news speculated across political circles.

According to top party sources, during his meeting with Nadda, the CM Chouhan informed him about the political situation in the state and conveyed the wishes of all top leaders and discussed the core issues concerning the party organization and his government.

Sharing the photos of meeting

Nadda, Chouhan tweeted, "Today, in New Delhi made a courtesy call on BJP National President JP Nadda ji and on this occasion informed him about various works and efforts for the development and public welfare in the state."

Shivraj further said, "I sincerely thank Nadda ji for his continuous cooperation, support and guidance."

The Chief Minister wants to get all the regional and caste equations right before the 2023 Assembly elections by expanding the state Cabinet this time. Union Home Minister Amit Shah, who recently visited Madhya Pradesh, had discussed the election preparations in the state while reviewing the work of the party organization and state government.

On Tuesday, Chouhan also met President Droupadi Murmu and invited her to come to Madhya Pradesh while congratulating her formally on winning the recent presidential election. Earlier in the day, CM Chouhan met Union Power Minister RK Singh and discussed various issues related to the state. The chief minister met Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman later in the evening.

CM takes stock of the damage in the flood affected Hinotia and Gujarkheda villages

- ▶ WILL BRING MY PEOPLE OUT OF THIS CRISIS : CM
- ▶ STATE GOVERNMENT WILL FULLY COMPENSATE FOR THE LOSS
- ▶ FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE WILL BE GIVEN FOR NEW HOUSING

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has said that after Ganesh Sthapna, I have come among my people. After Ganesh ji, the public is my god, I am worshipping the people by coming to villages Hinotia and Gujarkheda. CM Chouhan was interacting with the villagers in the flood affected villages of Hinotia and Gujarkheda in Vidisha



district on Wednesday after understanding about their plight.

Chouhan said that if my rural brothers are troubled, then how can I sit in peace. Not only Hinotia and Gujarkheda, 27 thousand 639 houses in 1336 villages of Vidisha district have been damaged. I will take my people out of this crisis. Chouhan said that he has seen houses that have been

reduced to piles of mud, households have also drowned and crops apart from cattle have been ruined. Chouhan said that people whose houses have been damaged due to floods, they will be provided houses like Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana after construction. He said that along with the assistance in RBC 6-4, the amount of Prime Minister fasal bima yojna

would also be given to compensate for the damage caused to the crops. Along with this, compensation will also be given for cattle like cow, buffalo, goat etc. The CM said that those who do not have a home to live in, they will be kept in temporary shelters till the house is built, so that they can take care of their children. He directed the District Collector to make arrangements immediately. Chouhan said that after the challenge of saving lives from floods, all possible help would be given to all the families of the victims. The CM said that if life comes back on track, then the works of roads, bridges and culverts will also be done. Chouhan said that whatever areas of the state have been affected by the floods, they will be brought out of this crisis and trouble. He said that on the basis of the assessment of the damage caused by the floods in Vidisha district so far, Rs 11 crore 3 lakh 15 thousand have been immediately transferred to the accounts of the affected.

Over Two Lakh Students Enrol In CM Rise Schools

A total of 2,40,818 students have so far enrolled in the 274 newly set up CM Rise Schools in Madhya Pradesh, an official said on Tuesday.

Team Absolute | Bhopal

A total of 2,40,818 students have so far enrolled in the 274 newly set up CM Rise Schools in Madhya Pradesh, an official said on Tuesday. The official quoting Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan said this is a major achievement of the state government. The CM Rise Schools have been started from the academic ses-

sion 2022-23 to provide quality education to children in the state. They have facilities at par with private institutions.

Chief Minister reviewed the state school education department's performance on Monday and expressed satisfaction over the response garnered by the CM Rise Schools. "Providing quality education, overall development and making students ready for the future is a big challenge. The state government, teachers and parents will take up this challenge with a team spirit," the Chief Minister said on the occasion.

Chouhan said he will himself write letters to teachers and parents of the students of CM Rise Schools to motivate them.

During the meeting, officials informed that digital classrooms, well equipped libraries, laboratories and high standard facilities have been provided in the CM Rise Schools. For the operation of these schools, effective training has been imparted to selected teachers, school leaders, principals and vice principals.

Play-theme based paintings and boards informing about value-based education have been put up in these schools. MP School Education Minister (Independent Charge) Inder Singh Parmar, Chief Secretary Iqbal Singh Bains, department's principal secretary Rashmi Arun Shami and other senior officials attended the meeting.

Miscreants Open Fire At BJP Leader; Incident Caught On Cam

In a shocking incident, a Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leader was attacked in Morena on Tuesday, August 30 after returning from Gwalior.

Team Absolute | Bhopal

In a shocking incident, a Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leader was attacked in Madhya Pradesh's Morena on Tuesday, August 30. As per BJP leader Monu Mavai, three unknown miscreants fired at him when he was travelling to Morena from

Gwalior. Notably, the incident occurred around 7:30 PM on Tuesday near Chhauda toll plaza of Civil Line police state area in Morena when BJP leader Monu Mavai was returning from Gwalior and three miscreants fired at him. The entire incident was captured by the CCTV camera at the toll plaza.

According to the preliminary information, BJP leader Monu Mavai, a resident of the Khaneta village was returning from Gwalior to Morena in a car on Tuesday. As per the visuals from the CCTV footage, when the car carrying Mavai reached the Chhauda toll plaza, unidentified

miscreants who were travelling in a white car, came out and opened fire at the BJP leader's car. The miscreants then escaped from the spot after comfortably driving away in their car. Notably, the car in which Monu Mavai was travelling sustained damages due to the firing.

Following the firing incident in Morena, the BJP leader whose life was narrowly saved has made serious allegations against the police and administration stating that if a Bharatiya Janata Party leader is not safe in the district then how will the police provide security to the general public.

CM PLANTED SAPLINGS

Bhopal: Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan planted Banyan, Neem and Saptaparni saplings along with the founder of Super Thirty, Arun Kumar in the Smart City Park located in Shyamala Hills. Chouhan's wife Smt. Sadhana Singh and son Kunal Singh participated in the plantation on Ganesh Chaturthi. Senior social worker Raghavendra Sharma, former UPSC chairman Prof. DP Agrawal, Prayas Youth Welfare Society President Atul Ghenghat besides Ipiyush Jain, Chaitanya Shrivani, Rohit Sharma and Shubham Maina also took part in the tree plantation programme. It is worth mentioning that Anand Kumar had started the Super Thirty Education Programme to prepare students living in poor and difficult conditions for IIT Joint Entrance Examination.



Man slits throat of woman

Team Absolute | Bhopal

A man slit the throat of a woman at Bangarda village in Khandwa district, said police. The girl was turned down her marriage proposal, said police. The girl was operated upon but her condition is still critical, said Vivek Singh, SP Civil Lines, Khandwa. Later, the man, Bablu, accused of slitting the throat of the woman in Bangarda village in Khandwa district, was found dead in a backwater, said the Purnasa sub-divisional magistrate. Officials said that the girl and boy both belong to the same community. In a separate incident, earlier, a girl in Jharkhand's Dumka district was allegedly set on fire by a person after she did not reciprocate his

proposal. The accused Shahrukh poured petrol on her and set her ablaze on August 23. The police have already arrested the accused.

The accused, Babloo, stabbed the 20-year-old girl multiple times at her home on Monday after she refused to marry him, they added.

The girl was then taken to the hospital where she died on Sunday," said Vivek Singh, Superintendent of Police.

Police said Babloo was found dead near Indira Sagar dam in Khadwa this morning. "It appears to be a suicide, investigation is underway," an official said.

He worked as a watchman in a neighbouring village. The survivor's sister said

Babloo was forcing the girl to marry him and he attacked her after she turned down his proposal. "Both me and my younger sister were alone at the house as our parents had gone to aunt's village. We were filling water in buckets. Just when I went inside the room, the watchman Babloo came to our house and attacked my sister," she said. The incident comes a week after a school girl was set on fire by her alleged stalker for turning down his proposal in Jharkhand's Dumka.

On August 23, the accused, identified as Shahrukh, allegedly poured petrol on the 16-year-old girl from outside the window of her room when she was sleeping and set her on fire, the police said.

CM INSTALLS GANESH IDOL AT THE RESIDENCE

- ▶ CM REACHED MATA MANDIR WITH FAMILY TO COLLECT GANESH IDOL
- ▶ CM GREETES AND EXTENDS GOOD WISHES TO THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE ON GANESH CHATURTHI

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan installed a Ganesh idol at the CM's residence on Ganesh Chaturthi on Wednesday. Earlier, CM Chouhan, along with wife Sadhana Singh, sons Kartikeya Singh and Kunal Singh reached Mata Mandir Chakki Chauraha area to collect Ganesh idol. Chouhan called upon Ganesh ji to come to the residence at the pandal of Ram Naresh Art Shiv Kala Kendra of Dinesh



Prajapati. Chouhan left for the CM's residence along with the family amidst the showering of flowers, beating of drums and blowing of trumpets in an open decorated vehicle with Ganesh idol. From there the CM reached the residence via New Market, Banganga, Polytechnic intersection. He greeted the people on the way on Ganesh Chaturthi and accepted their greetings.

In the midst of showering of flowers and chants of "Ganpati Bappa Moria, Ghar-ghar Pooja Ho Riya" and "Ek-Do-Teen-Char-Ganpati Ji Ki Jai-Jai Kar", Smt. Sadhana Singh entered the idol in the residence while performing worship and rituals. Chouhan, through media representatives, extended warm greetings and best wishes to the people of the state on the auspicious occasion of Ganesh

Chaturthi. CM said that for the last two years, during the Corona period, worship and festival of Lord Ganesh had to be celebrated while following the protocol of Covid. Now Corona is over, Ganpati ji is coming. Today we have come to take Ganesh ji along with the family like every year. Chief Minister said that Ganesh is Siddhivinayak (bestower of success), destroyer of troubles and provider of good intellect. Lord Ganesh is the one who makes us tread on the right path and brings welfare to all. May Lord Ganesh remove all obstacles, bless everyone, may there be joy, enthusiasm and happiness in everyone's life. With his blessings and grace, all the obstacles in the progress of the country and the state should be removed, this is the prayer at his feet. Chouhan has appealed to the people of the state to worship Ganpati ji with rituals and with full enthusiasm, celebrate Ganesh Utsav and pray for everyone to be happy, healthy, well-being to all.

IGRMS gives farewell to Assistant Curator and Security Gourd

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Indira Gandhi Rashtriya Manav Sangrahalaya (IGRMS) Bhopal organized the retirement farewell ceremony of Assistant Curator Rakesh Mohan Nayal and Security Gourd Devi Ram Sharma in the Rock Art Auditorium of the museum. On this occasion the chief guest of the program Praveen Kumar Mishra, Director of the museum said that retirement is an occasion where the work or contribution of the person retiring is recognized. I pray to God that you keep on the path of continuous progress in life, follow the path of your duty and honesty and make your dreams come true.

All the staff of the museum about the invaluable moments spent with Nayal and Sharma said that Nayal started his service in the



museum on 07.03.1988. Compilation of housing types and samples collected from Himachal, Uttarakhand and North-Eastern states during field work by them is an incomparable task. Nayal used to solve problems easily with his hard work and dedication, experience and intelligence. In the museum we all see your smiling face, working together and solving every problem together, all these memories will keep us feeling your presence. Devi Ram Sharma started his service in the museum on 19.10.1987, the work done

during his service is his identity. He has done excellent work in his tenure, in future he will be associated with the museum by becoming a better citizen. Nayal while addressing everyone said that I am very honoured to hear such great words for me from you guys. Provided me the best working conditions and environment to perform my duties and responsibilities in this museum during my stint at this museum, I had the opportunity to learn many things that have helped me both in my professional and personal life.



EDITOR'S SPECS

PT. NEHRU TO MODI, UNDER ONE ROOF

The Pradhan Mantri Sangrahalaya (Prime Ministers' Museum) is a tribute to every Prime Minister of the country since Independence in 1947 and a record of how each one of them has contributed to the development of the country in the last 75 years. This museum, at the Teen Murti Bhavan, is a history of collective effort and a powerful testimony to the success of India's democracy. Each of the Prime Ministers left a significant footprint in the country's journey to development, social harmony and economic empowerment, which has enabled India to realise the true meaning of freedom. The country was rebuilt after gaining independence from British colonialism and all the Prime Ministers together have contributed towards turning the dreams and inspiration into reality. The museum was started from the renovated Nehru Museum building in which the things related to the life and contribution of Nehru have been showcased among the people in a technically, more simple way and a new section has been started in it. In the Prime Ministers' Museum, a large number of rare gifts received by each Prime Minister from across the country are on display. Earlier, these were not displayed. The foundation for the expanded museum was laid in 2016. The idea of design of the Prime Ministers' Museum came out of the idea of a new emerging India. The construction of the museum was started in October 2018 while taking special care of the environment. The total area across which the Prime Ministers' Museum stands is 15,619 square metre, of which the area which the Nehru Memorial Museum occupies is 5,128 metres. Special care has been taken to protect the environment and the logo of the museum 'Dharma Chakra' has been designed which is a symbol of our democracy.

AN IMPORTANT COVID FALLOUT: COMMUNICATION SKILLS PUT TO TEST

D.C. Pathak

Work from home, zoom meetings and a drastic cut down on physical interactions across the table have compelled business organisations to search for a 'hybrid model' of running the enterprise, resetting the paradigms for performance evaluation and maintaining the efficacy of human resource development.

Both in India as also in the developed West, organisations are said to be facing a situation where the employees have got used to not going to place of work so much so that they often allow their personal convenience to prevail over the requirements of their organisations.

Employees could even choose to ignore the call from above for a physical or virtual meeting. Evolution of the 'new normal' for organisational functioning is work in progress, but many testing points for leadership are already cropping up, demanding a revised strategy for business management and productivity enhancement - in the scene left behind by the Covid onslaught.

Flexible working hours, participative supervision by leaders at various levels, who earlier just gave orders and looked for compliance reports, and a changed framework of boss-subordinate relationship in which the senior would now be required to have some idea of the challenges an employee could be facing on family front, are some major reforms that the organisations have been made to adopt for their own good.

The HRD people in any organisation have found their tasks multiplying and becoming onerous on account of the new-found importance of upskilling and re-skilling, revision of methodology for performance evaluation and the need for working out ways and means of preserving confidentiality of information exchanged by employees on line.

A very crucial test of leadership in a situation of dispersed and distant location of the work force is the effectiveness of communication sent top down on digital media. The days of lengthy letters and notifications despatched in hard copies are over and online communications are the norm now, but this is precisely the reason why a senior today is going to be judged for his or her ability to choose the right words and expressions in organisational communications.



It is important that the messages are concise, to the point and clear in their intent. It is said that if you can speak on a subject - as in a conference across the table - you are a master of its content and that if you can write about it, you are the close second best.

Online communications are, therefore, an indicator of a certain perfection of knowledge and the ability of the sender to impart that knowledge to the person at the other end.

Apart from communications primarily meant for exchanging data, anything that a leader conveys must be meaningful, must have connectivity with the larger objectives of the organisation and must evoke interest of the reader. The communication should be drafted so as to show that it has a purpose. Limitation of space in a tweet or a short WhatsApp message cannot be the excuse for arid, arrogant or incomplete communications. A paragraph can be condensed into a line by a competent communicator. Poor communication skills devalue leadership, while good messaging enhances the image and respectability of the leader. Covid is a reminder to all organisations that flawless communications are a must for keeping up productivity.

Importance of communication also comes out in the formulation of an organisation's mission, drafting of the ethical framework and defining of the parameters for performance evaluation. These functions all connect with the leadership and logically make the quality of communications a hallmark of the latter.

It is not adequately realised that communication is a product of the individual's education and innate wisdom and also a measure of

the leader's 'emotional quotient' - considering that all business is 'human activity'. Therefore, it becomes the prime mover of the organisation's success. One of the earliest business advertisements - 'Lipton's means good tea' - remains the benchmark of brief, intelligible and complete messaging.

Three principles of good communication which will be always relevant are - 'brevity should not be at the cost of clarity', 'it should not lend itself to more than one interpretation' and 'the communication should not hurt human sensitivity'. Success of a senior today depends a great deal on participative supervision, which basically allows a free two-way communication with the juniors, discourages buck passing and establishes an internal transparency that keep the working environment free of favouritism. Hierarchy-driven organisations often bred the malady of seniors avoiding the responsibility of taking a decision and pushing the 'files' up to their superiors - Covid intervention has on the other hand further strengthened the progressive trend of successful organisations becoming 'flat' in the sense of delegating the power of decision-making.

A welcome upshot of the Covid era is the greater hands-on involvement of seniors in work as team leaders and a greater recognition of merit of the individual as the centre of all productivity. This is going to stay as a learning from the past. At the base of all these reforms is the skill of all round communication. As already mentioned, it is the HRD leaders who face the challenge of reframing the strategy of recruitment, continuing with

in-house training in the new environment and changing deployment of the personnel in keeping with the demands of Covid contingency. Remote handling called for new protocols, new modes of communication and special measures to prevent security breach in a situation of wider online sharing of information. Programmes of re-skilling for multi-tasking, enhancing organisational loyalty and strengthening quality controls have to be reframed as Covid proved to be a great 'equaliser' for business organisations on one hand and putting the focus on competition built around 'quality' of product and service on the other.

Communication skills again are central to Social Media Marketing (SMM), which uses the digital outreach to intelligently use personal data to cater to the choices of customers. Preserving the confidentiality of proprietary information of the organisation requires security orientation programmes for the employees working from remote locations, framing of instructions that were easily understood and a new methodology for conducting the security audit. HRD-related communications will test the leadership in a more demanding way but once the organisation gets them right, it would also stand to gain substantially.

Information is the anchor of communication. In an environment of declining physical interactions within the organisation, difficulty about creating a common information grid for employees dispersed in remote locations and the paucity of reliable information itself because of the rise of the phenomenon of fake news on social media, importance of business intelligence has increased manifold and the function of analysis has also gained momentum. Broadly speaking, Covid restrictiveness has put a premium on communication and since good communications are a product of intelligent minds, it has ultimately brought overriding importance to the intellectual qualities of farsightedness, total devotion to the mission at hand and - what is equally crucial - compassion, in the leadership guiding the enterprise. It has proved once again that a good leader is a good communicator too.

(The writer is a former Director of Intelligence Bureau. The views expressed are personal)

international

WORLD LEADERS PAY RICH TRIBUTES TO GORBACHEV

Moscow | Agencies

World leaders were quick to pay rich tributes to the late Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev as the man who ended the Cold War and the arms race, as a statesman who stood at the pivotal turning point in world history.

He died on Tuesday due to a long illness at a hospital on Moscow Russian President Vladimir Putin expressed his "deep sympathies" over Gorbachev's death, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told news agencies.

Peskov said Putin, a former KGB agent who had an ambiguous relationship with Gorbachev, will send a telegram of condolences to the late leader's family and friends on Wednesday morning. UN chief Antonio Guterres praised Gorbachev as "a one-of-a-kind statesman who changed the course of history" and "did more than any other individual to bring about the



peaceful end of the Cold War". EU chief Ursula von der Leyen hailed Gorbachev as a "trusted and respected leader" who "opened the way for a free Europe".

His "crucial role" in bringing down the Iron Curtain, which symbolised the division of the world into communist and capitalist blocs, and ending the Cold War left a legacy "we will not forget", she wrote on Twitter. French President Emmanuel Macron described Gorbachev as a "man of peace" on Twitter early Wednesday, saying he

"opened a path of liberty for Russians. His commitment to peace in Europe changed our shared history".

UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson said he "always admired the courage and integrity" Gorbachev showed to bring the Cold War to a peaceful conclusion. "In a time of Putin's aggression in Ukraine, his tireless commitment to opening up Soviet society remains an example to us all," he said in a Twitter post, referring to Moscow's ongoing offensive in its former Soviet neighbour.

US President Joe Biden praised the former Soviet leader as a "man of remarkable vision." Gorbachev had worked to bring about democratic reforms in the Soviet Union after decades of brutal political repression, Biden said in a White House statement issued late on Tuesday. "These were the acts of a rare leader, one with the imagination to see that a different future was possible and the courage to risk his entire career to achieve it.

NEPAL ANNOUNCES VISIT OF INDIAN ARMY CHIEF

Kathmandu: India's Chief of Army Staff (COAS), General Manoj Pande will arrive in Kathmandu on September 4 on a four-day visit to the Himalayan nation, the Nepali Army said in a statement on Wednesday.



Accompanied by a five-member delegation, General Pande's visit comes on an invitation by his Nepal counterpart General Parbhu Ram Sharma. The main events in the Indian Army chief's itinerary include paying homage at the martyr's memorial in the Army Pavilion, receive a guard of honor at the Army Headquarters, hold a meeting with General Sharma, hand over various non-lethal military items to the Nepali Army, interaction with student officers at Army Command and Staff College, Shivapuri, and a visit to the Mid-Command Headquarters in Pokhara, the statement said. As Nepal and India are celebrating the establishment of 75th years of diplomatic ties, General Pande will announce a huge military assistance to Kathmandu, sources said. The main highlight of the visit will be the conferment of the rank of an Honorary General of the Nepali Army to General Pande by President Bidhya Devi Bhandari on September 5. Nepal and India have a long standing tradition of conferment of the rank of the honorary title to both armies since 1950. General Pande is also scheduled to meet Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba, who also holds the defence portfolio.

5 mn feared sick in Pak's flooded areas due to disease outbreak

Islamabad | Agencies

Health experts in Pakistan have sounded the alarm regarding the outbreak of disease in flood-affected areas, estimating around five million people to fall sick in the next four to 12 weeks.

People in the flooded areas of Sindh, Balochistan, Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa are likely to get diarrhoea, cholera, gastroenteritis, typhoid and vector-borne diseases like dengue and malaria, The News quoted the experts as saying.

It is estimated that a disease outbreak would initially require medicines and medical supplies worth 1 billion PKR, they said, and urged donors, philanthropists and common people to donate these after consulting health experts and officials of rescue and welfare organisations.

Of the 33 million people affected due to monsoon rains and floods across Pakistan, it is estimated that around five million people, including children, would get sick due to



outbreak of water-borne and vector-borne diseases in the next four to 12 weeks, The News reported.

On the other hand, officials of the welfare organisations working in the flood-hit areas said a large number of people, including women and children, had already started suffering from water-borne infections, including diarrhoea, gastroenteritis, cholera, fever, flu, allergy, scabies and other fungal skin ailments.

14 Afghan refugees killed by Turkish & Iranian authorities

Kabul | Agencies

The Amnesty International has accused Turkish and Iranian border authorities of killing at least 14 Afghan refugees in the last year.

The UK-based NGO said it had documented the "unlawful killing" of 11 Afghans by Iranian security forces and of three by Turkish security forces, in a report entitled "They Don't Treat us Like Humans" released on Wednesday. The rights group also said Iranian and Turkish security forces had repeatedly pushed back Afghans attempting to cross into those countries to reach safety, news agency reported.

Iranian security forces had repeatedly shot at crowded cars, while Turkish border guards had unlawfully used live ammunition, the report said. The figures relate to the period since the Taliban returned to power in Afghanistan in August 2021. The humanitarian situation



in the country has since deteriorated significantly. Amnesty interviewed 74 Afghan citizens and five government officials, lawyers and other experts between November 2021 and May 2022 for the report. The organisation also identified a total of 255 cases of illegal deportation between March 2021 and May 2022. The Geneva Convention on Refugees obliges host countries not to repatriate refugees to a country where they face persecution.

Turkey grants refugee status to citizens of European countries under the convention, while offering only a temporary protection status to Syrian refugees. Numerous reports from other NGOs suggest that refugee status is also denied to Afghans in Turkey for the most part. According to the Turkish Ministry of the Interior, around 43,000 Afghans have already been deported to Afghanistan so far this year.

Iraq's al-Sadr calls on supporters to end protests within hour

Baghdad | Agencies

Iraqi prominent Shia cleric Moqtada al-Sadr has urged his followers to end their protests and withdraw from the Green Zone in Baghdad, after clashes killed 22 people and wounded more than 200 others.

At a televised press conference on Tuesday in the Shia holy city of Najaf, south of the capital of Baghdad, al-Sadr apologized to the Iraqi people affected by the violence, stressing that he was hoping for peaceful protests, "no bullets and bombs". He called on his followers to "withdraw in 60 minutes," including from the sit-in in front of the parliament, or he "will not recognize them".

Immediately after his speech, the Iraqi Joint Operations Command said in a statement that



"it was decided to lift the curfew in Baghdad and the provinces," as quoted by Xinhua news agency

report. A security source from the Interior Ministry told Xinhua that following his speech, Sadr's sup-

porters began withdrawal from the Green Zone, which houses main government offices and some foreign embassies, while armed militiamen began to gradually disappear from the capital's streets.

BOX... Iraq PM threatens to quit if political conflict continues. Iraqi Prime Minister Mustafa al-Kadhimi expressed regret that the political conflict had reached the level of the use of weapons among Iraqi factions, warning that he would declare his post vacant if the dispute continued. In a televised speech late Tuesday, al-Kadhimi said that he was overwhelmed with pain by the political conflict, "the Iraqi blood that was shed yesterday sends a warning to every Iraqi that today we must put weapons under the authority of the state", reports news agency.



Maharashtra Ganeshotsav bonanza

HOMES FOR COPS IN JUST RS 15 LAKH IN BDD SCHEME

Team Absolute | Mumbai

In a Ganeshotsav windfall, the Maharashtra government has decided to give ownership of houses to police personnel for just Rs 15 lakh under the BDD Chawl redevelopment scheme, officials said here on Wednesday.

Chief Minister Eknath Shinde had made the announcement in the legislature last week and the Housing Department issued the detailed orders to the effect here on Tuesday, said the officials. All the police personnel, working or retired, or the families and legal heirs of the deceased, residing in the BDD Chawls till January 1, 2011, shall be eligible to get 500 square feet houses on ownership basis, on the construction cost of Rs 15 lakh.

The police personnel are living in the century old British Development Department Chawls complexes in Worli, Naigaon, and N.M. Joshi Marg.

The Maharashtra Housing & Area Development Authority (MHADA) would incur losses since the homes would be given on permanent ownership basis to the police personnel.

The state government will foot 70 per cent of the losses and the MHADA would bear the remainder for the



scheme, described as a welfare measure and to ease the problems of housing for police personnel.

In August 2021, the then Maha Vikas Aghadi government of Shiv Sena-Nationalist Congress Party-Congress led by Uddhav Thackeray had launched the much-delayed BDD Chawls redevelopment project.

Labelled as the biggest cluster development project of its kind in Asia, it is estimated to cost around Rs 20,000 crore. The MVA had taken up razing the

207 century-old buildings where 32 swank towers with all modern facilities would come up to shift and house the 17,000-odd families living in the BDD Chawls.

The redevelopment project is being executed by Tatas, L&T and Shapoorji Pallonji groups with buildings rising to 40-storeys and 22-storeys, parking, at least 4 schools, gardens, playgrounds, mini-hospitals, welfare centres, shopping plazas, etc, to be ready in the next 3 to 8 years.

MUMBAI'S LALBAUGCHA RAJA OFFERS ONLINE PRASAD SERVICE

Mumbai: People can order prasad online on Ganesh Chaturthi from Lalbaugcha Raja in Mumbai. In collaboration with Jio Mart and Paytm, they will try to deliver prasad to the doorsteps of devotees via online orders.

The prasad on JioMart is in the form of two laddus, and will only take orders from Mumbai, Navi Mumbai and Thane.

Through Paytm, the prasad will be available in the form of 250-gram dry fruit to devotees across India and abroad too, according to information on the official website of Lalbaugcha Raja Sarvajani Ganeshotsav Mandal.

Lalbaugcha Raja is a famous Ganesh idol of Lalbaugcha Raja Sarvajani Ganeshotsav Mandal, located at Putlabai Chawl, a place of worship founded in 1934.

YOUNGEST US SENATOR JON OSSOFF MEETS STUDENTS, BIZ LEADERS IN MUMBAI



Team Absolute | Mumbai

Visiting US Senator Jon Ossoff met students, business leaders and others as part of his ongoing eight-day trip to India to enhance Washington-New Delhi relations at different levels, officials said here on Wednesday.

Senator Ossoff, a former journalist and documentary film producer elected from the state of Georgia, held a lively discussion with students of Jai Hind College in an attempt to hear from the

young people of India on the challenges confronting their generation.

He also met the EXIM Bank Managing Director Harsha Bangari and other top officials to discuss the prospects of FDI opportunities in the US and trade relations between India and the state of Georgia.

Ossoff, 35, the youngest current sitting Senator, called on senior executives of the Mumbai-based Aditya Birla Group (ABG) to discuss its investments in Georgia and how to further strengthen

the relations between his home-state and India.

The ABG is the parent company of the Georgia-headquartered Novelis and BirlaCarbon and he met Santrupt Misra, Satish Pai, Ila Patnaik and others.

He also confabulated on US-India trade, economic and security priorities with American diplomats in India, including Consul-General in Mumbai Mike Hankey and US Acting Deputy Chief of Mission in New Delhi Brian Heath.

Ramdev declares Eknath Shinde as 'heir' to Balasaheb Thackeray's legacy

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Yoga Guru Ramdev called on Maharashtra Chief Minister Eknath Shinde and solemnly touched his feet, even as the Shiv Sena questioned the latter's credentials.

The duo also held discussions during what was described as a 'courtesy visit' by officials. Earlier he also met the Bharatiya Janata Party's Deputy CM Devendra Fadnavis.

Briefly interacting with mediapersons later, Ramdev said that CM Shinde is a beacon of 'Sanatan Hindutva' who has been following the ideals of the Shiv Sena founder, the late Balasaheb



Thackeray, with whom he enjoyed cordial relations.

"Now, Eknath Shinde is the true heir to Balasaheb Thackeray's legacy of Hindutva," declared Ramdev, whose nephew Ravi Rana is an independent MLA from Amravati. Rana's wife Navneet Kaur-Rana is

an independent MP from the same district.

Ramdev's comments raised eyebrows in Sena circles with spokesperson Kishore Tiwari wondering what "is the locus standi" of Ramdev to comment on Balasaheb Thackeray's legacy.

Court summons Jacqueline Fernandez on Sept 26 in extortion case

Bollywood actor Jacqueline Fernandez was aware of conman Sukesh Chandrashekhar's criminal history and "cooked up a false story" to wriggle out of investigations in a multi-crore money laundering case, the Enforcement Directorate has said in its chargesheet.

Team Absolute | New Delhi/Mumbai

Delhi Court on Wednesday issued summons to actress Jacqueline Fernandez to appear before it on September 26 in an alleged extortion case involving conman Sukesh Chandrashekhar.

The development came after the Enforcement Directorate (ED) named her in a Rs 200 crore money laundering case.

Taking note of the second supplementary chargesheet filed by the ED, special judge Parveen Singh of the Patiala House Court summoned the actress to appear before the court on September 26.

Recently, the ED had attached a number of Jacqueline's fixed deposits claiming that they had tainted money. The agency filed the second supplementary chargesheet on August 17 in the matter against the actress.

The probe agency had attached Jacqueline's FDs worth Rs 7.2 crore, terming them as proceeds of crime.

Jacqueline Fernandez's claim that she never knew of Sukesh Chandrashekhar's cases is false, the



Enforcement Directorate says in the chargesheet. "Jacqueline Fernandez was well aware about the criminal antecedents of Sukesh Chandrashekhar and also the fact that Leena Maria Paul is his wife in February 2021. She consciously chose to overlook his criminal past and continued to indulge in financial transactions with him," the chargesheet says.

It was her hair stylist Shaan who informed her about the identity and criminal history of Sukesh Chandrashekhar in February 2021.

"Despite this, Jacqueline Fernandez ignored this fact and continued the relationship with Sukesh and also received, used and enjoyed the financial benefits from Sukesh, which are nothing but proceeds of crime," the agency says.

The Enforcement Directorate, which is investigating the money trail in a ? 200 crore extortion case against the conman, named Jacqueline Fernandez as an accused earlier this month. Jacqueline Fernandez admitted to receiving five watches, 20 pieces of jewellery, 65 pairs of shoes, 47 dresses, 32 bags, 4 Hermes bags, nine paintings and one Versace crockery set as gifts from the conman, according to the chargesheet.

POLICE BUSTED PHONE & VIDEO SEX CALL CENTRE, ONE HELD

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Mumbai Crime Branch has reportedly busted phone and video sex call centre. The owner of the call centre was arrested and 17 girls were rescued, that included students as well. The police informed that the call centre charged the victims from Rs 270 to Rs 10,000.

The police arrested Brijesh Sharma from Dahisar, who was operating the call centre, which offered sex chat services. The accused has been booked under Indian Penal Code (IPC) section 294 (punishment for obscene acts or words in public).

DCP Sangram Nishandar



informed that, "We raided the call centre of Sea Link Media and Entertainment in Kaanchpada locality on a tip. As soon as the victims from across the country and abroad, registered themselves on the online application called 'Chamet', they would come in contact with women who would have sex chats and video calls with them and then take money via digital payments. The police seized 19 mobile phones, 1 laptop and other materials from the spot. The police are investigating the number of people who registered themselves for these services and others involved in the crime. The police also said that they are also investigating if there are any sextortion links.

Medical student committed suicide in Latur

Latur | Agencies

A third year MBBS student of a private college has allegedly died by suicide in Maharashtra's Latur city, police said on Wednesday.

The dead student was identified by the police as Bhagwat Sunil Bade (21), a resident of Devdahiphal village in adjoining Beed district, but the reason for his extreme step was not yet known.

According to the police, Bhagwat Sunil Bade was a very bright student in his

school days and had got admission in the MBBS (Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery) course at the MIT Medical College in Latur on his merit.

The 21-year-old student had secured good marks in the first two years and was in the third year of MBBS, they said. He was staying in a boys hostel located outside the college campus on Ambajogai Road, the police said. A police team visited the hostel and conducted a 'panchnama' (spot inspection), and the student's body

was handed over to his family members on Wednesday morning after a postmortem.

According to his friends, Bhagwat Sunil Bade had not been regularly attending classes and had come back to the college after a three-day visit to his village last week.

A case of accidental death has been registered at the Vivekananda Chowk police station, the police said.

An investigation was underway to find out the reason for the suicide, said Police Inspector Sudhakar Bawkar.

KAMAL R KHAN TAKEN TO HOSPITAL AFTER COMPLAINTS OF CHEST PAIN HOURS AFTER ARREST

Mumbai: Kamaal R Khan, also known as KRK, has been sent to a 14-day judicial custody by Borivali court, following his arrest over derogatory tweets on late actors Rishi Kapoor and Irrfan Khan back in 2020.

And now, if reports are to be believed, the self-proclaimed critic has been rushed to a hospital in Kandivali area on Tuesday evening after he complained of having chest pain.

KRK was nabbed from Mumbai airport on Tuesday morning. An FIR was registered against Khan in 2020 at Malad Police Station by Yuva Sena member Rahul Kanal. Thereafter, a lookout notice was issued against him. Following which, he was arrested under Sections 153A, 294, 500, 501, 505, 67, and 98 of the IPC.

For those who are unaware, Kamaal R. Khan often gets into trouble as a result of his insulting tweets and rants against Bollywood movies and stars. To seek attention, KRK often engages in passing comments over actresses that are in bad taste.

Prayers on lips, devotion in hearts, Maha soaks in Ganeshotsav spirit

A FESTIVE ATMOSPHERE PREVAILED AT THE 8 TOP GANPATI TEMPLES - ASHTAVINAYAK - ALL 'SWAYAMBHU' (SELF-MANIFESTED) IN RAIGAD, PUNE AND AHMEDNAGAR DISTRICTS, WITH THOUSANDS THRONING FOR 'DARSHAN' AND 'PUJAS' SINCE EARLY MORNING.

AFTER TWO YEARS, IDOLS OF 2-FEET (HOUSEHOLD) AND 4-FEET (PUBLIC MARQUEES), THE FAMILIAR LARGE AND GIGANTIC IDOLS OF LORD GANESHA RETURNED TO THE CELEBRATIONS, AWING THE MASSES.

THE STATE'S TALLEST - 38-FEET LORD GANESHA - IN A PARASHURAM 'AVATAR' IS INSTALLED AT IITH KHETWADI LANE IN SOUTH MUMBAI, WHILE THE ALL-TIME FAVOURITE, LALBAUGCHA RAJA IN LAULBAUG HAS MESMERISING FORM OF OVER 18 FEET ENTHRALLING DEVOTEES WHO THRONG HERE 24 HOURS DAILY FOR 'DARSHAN', AND THE RICHEST, GSB MANDAL MATUNGA'S LORD GANESH IDOL OF GOLD, SILVER AND PRECIOUS STONES, WITH AN INSURANCE COVER OF A STAGGERING RS 316.50 CRORE THIS YEAR.

Quaid Najmi | Mumbai

After two years of the Coronavirus pandemic restrictions, Ganeshotsav 2022 started with a big bang, gigantic idols, lavish colourful thematic decorations and piety all over Maharashtra, with celebs, corporates and commoners immersing in the spirit of the 10-day festival, here on Wednesday.

Maharashtra Governor Bhagat Singh Koshiyari, Chief Minister Eknath Shinde, Deputy CM Devendra Fadnavis, various state and central cabinet ministers and many more are celebrating Ganeshotsav with idols at their homes.

An estimated around 300 large or gigantic idols adorn the city landscape this year, besides other medium or small idols in mandals and households, companies, factories, or certain railway stations, all over, with official estimates of nearly a million idols to be worshipped this year in Maharashtra. Several big and small Ganeshotsav organisers admit that



with the massive inflation this year, all budgets have gone haywire with prices of all stuff for decoration, the costs of erecting the big and small pandals, security, prasad and other eatables shooting up between 25-40 per cent.

Elsewhere, Pune is also witnessing pompous celebrations, while the traditional celebrations are seen in the coastal Konkan belt where thousands of villages and homes have

come alive in the Ganeshotsav fest, twinkling fairy lights beckoning the visitors from afar in the remote hilly or coastal or tribal villages.

Lakhs of people from Konkan, living or working in Mumbai, Thane, Pune and other major cities have gone to their native villages for full-fledged Ganeshotsav celebrations, braving delays, massive traffic snarls, bad roads, the sudden downpour, high ticket rates, etc.



Ewan McGregor almost rejected 'Star Wars' role

Los Angeles | Agencies

Actor Ewan McGregor thought he was too "urban grunge" to star in 'Star Wars'.

Playing Obi-Wan Kenobi in the prequel trilogy of the sci-fi franchise, the 51-year-old star revealed that he nearly turned down the part as he wanted more indie roles following his success in 'Trainspotting'.

"I was like, 'I am Danny Boyle's actor,'" the actor quipped. "I am f***** urban grunge. I am the Oasis of the British movie industry, and then when 'Star Wars' came around, I felt, 'I don't know if I want to do this. This isn't me.'"

"I was so into being this sort of antihero. I felt like an indie British actor. I felt like that defined me."

McGregor said that it was a childhood love of the franchise that ultimately persuaded him to take the part.

The 'Moulin Rouge' star recalled: "In the end, it just got closer and closer. By that time, I was just so attached to the idea of it from where I was a kid. To get a chance to be that character and play the younger Alec Guinness was pretty awesome."

"I was almost grateful to be involved in something that big and to be part of the legend of it, because I loved it. When I was a kid, I loved those films. I was six or seven when the first one came out. It's in me somehow."

Ewan, who reprised his role as the Jedi for the 'Obi-Wan Kenobi', says that making the sci-fi films was hugely different from featuring in indie projects.

"It's a different process. Those prequels, it was very much the challenge of trying to be believable in front of a blue curtain for four months."

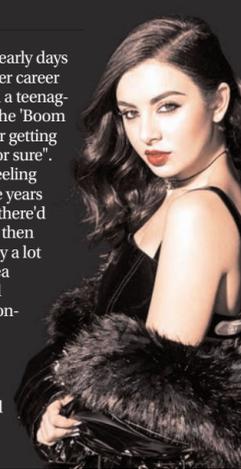
I was keen to get 'down and dirty': Charli XCX



Los Angeles | Agencies

Pop star Charli XCX misses "the ease and the fun" of her early days in the music business. The 30-year-old pop star began her career at warehouse parties and small clubs when she was still a teenager, and has confessed to missing the chaos of the early days. The 'Boom Clap' hitmaker said: "When I was younger, I was always up for getting down and dirty. I miss the ease and the fun of those shows, for sure".

Charli has even made a concerted effort to recapture the feeling she had during her teens. She told a local newspaper: "Five years ago, I used to request that my dressing room be trashed, like there'd just been a party in there. It was fun for about two weeks and then we were kind of just sitting in a literal mess." Now it's definitely a lot more health-orientated backstage - Kombucha and echinacea tablets. Real rock star stuff." Charli's stage shows have evolved markedly over the years. And she's now feeling much more confident about her dance moves. The chart-topping star shared: "Now I'm 30, I realised I'd never learned a new skill and mastered it from the ground up." So, whilst dancing isn't exactly a giant leap away from music, I really was not a good dancer at all, so I spent months and months learning and training." And I'm just really proud of myself for being able to start from nothing and end up with something that's really cool."



Camila Morrone split with Leonardo DiCaprio,

Los Angeles | Agencies

Hollywood star Leonardo DiCaprio and Camila Morrone have gone their separate ways. According to reports, the actor and his girlfriend have called it quits after dating for more than four years.

The 'Once Upon a Time in Hollywood' star and the model have been dating since 2017. While they were notoriously private about their romance, the catwalk beauty opened up about dating a Hollywood A-lister when sitting down with a magazine for her Young Hollywood Portfolio feature. "More exposure leads to more judgment and negativity," she confided to the magazine in January 2020. "It's a little bit of a bummer because you're really trying to do good work and be nice and be a good person, and in the meantime people wish negative things upon you." Despite the backlash she received for her large age-gap romance with the 47-year-old actor, the 'Mickey and the Bear' actress tried to not let the negativity wear her down. "It would never take away the joy of the craft that I get to do," the 25-year-old explained at the time. Camila herself often responded to criticism on social media. After reading mean comments seemingly comparing her and Leonardo's relationship to that of Lauren Bacall and Humphrey Bogart, she argued, "my God, people are so mean and full of anger with people that they know nothing about".

"I guess I just hope on this Friday that people learn to live with a little less hatred and place their time and interests elsewhere," the step-daughter of veteran actor Al Pacino further stated. "Because living without hatred feels pretty good."



Since '80s, Madonna first woman to earn on Billboard chart in every decade

Los Angeles | Agencies

Singer Madonna has hit a record-breaking milestone after scooping a top 10 album every decade since the release of her self-titled debut release in 1983.

The 64-year-old has become the first female to land an album in the Billboard 200 top 10 every decade since the early 1980s.

Since her self-titled debut in 1983, the Queen of Pop has sat in the top 10 in the 80s, 90s, 200s, 10s and now, officially, in the 20s.

Her new remix compilation, 'Finally Enough Love', debuts at No. 8 on the September 3-dated chart.

According to Billboard, Madonna is the 10th act to have achieved this distinction and the other nine are all solo male artists or groups comprising men.

She logged a total of five top 10s on the Billboard 200 in the 1980s ('Madonna', 'Like a Virgin', 'True Blue', 'The Who's That Girl'

soundtrack and 'Like a Prayer').

Seven in the a90s ('I'm Breathless: Music From and Inspired by the Film Dick Tracy', 'The Immaculate Collection', 'Erotica', 'Bedtime Stories', 'Something to Remember', 'The Evita' soundtrack and 'Ray of Light').

Six in the 2000s ('Music', 'GHV2: Greatest Hits Volume 2', 'American Life', 'Confessions on a Dance Floor', 'Hard Candy' and 'Celebration').

In the '10s she had four ('Sticky & Sweet Tour', 'MDNA', 'Rebel Heart' and 'Madame X'). Of those 23 top 10s, nine reached No. 1: 'Like a Virgin', 'True Blue', 'Like a Prayer', 'Music', 'American Life', 'Confessions on a Dance Floor', 'Hard Candy', 'MDNA' and 'Madame X'.

Speaking of her new album, Madonna said: "I named this record 'Finally Enough Love' because at the end of the day, love is what makes the world go round." She told a fashion magazine: "It also is representative of one of my biggest loves in life, which is dance."

Daniel Craig forgot 'Knives Out' accent



Los Angeles | Agencies

Hollywood star Daniel Craig failed to remember his 'Knives Out' accent.

Reprising his role as Detective Benoit Blanc in the sequel 'Glass Onion, A Knives Out Mystery', he revealed that he spent months working with a dialect coach perfecting the sleuth's Kentucky drawl once again.

"I went away to work with an accent coach for three or four months before we started shooting. I'd forgotten the accent, and I didn't want to do a pastiche. I wanted to make it as

grounded and as anchored in reality as possible," Craig told to a magazine.

The former James Bond actor continued: "How the f*** do we take something that caught people's imagination and made them talk about murder mysteries, and do it again without it becoming a pastiche of itself?"

The original 'Knives Out' film was a hit when it was released in 2019 and director Rian Johnson has suggested that he prefers Craig's character to have an element of mystery surrounding him.

He said of the new movie: "There's definitely more Blanc, but it's not very interesting to me, the notion of building out Benoit's life. Like with Poirot and Miss Marple, what's fun is how the elements of Benoit's character reveal themselves through his act of solving each one of these mysteries." Having starred as 007 in five films, Craig said that he has no fear about turning 'Knives Out' into a successful series of films. "I've spent the past 15 years of my life trying to do that in a franchise, so I'm not afraid of it. If you've got the right people in the room and the right talent, then you can do it."

"Rian's a genius writer and doesn't want to repeat (himself). Neither do we want to let people down, we want audiences to enjoy the world that we created in the first one and believe in this one," he added.

Ben Kingsley to role in 'Wonder Man' series

Los Angeles | Agencies



Hollywood star Ben Kingsley is poised to reprise the role of Trevor Slattery in the upcoming 'Wonder Man' series from Marvel Studios.

The show was first revealed to be in the works back in June. It will focus on the Marvel character Simon Williams, also known as Wonder Man.

In the comics, Williams is the son of a wealthy industrialist whose company falls on hard times due to competition from Tony Stark's Stark Industries. Williams then accepts an offer from villain Baron Zemo that gives him ionic superpowers including super strength and durability. After fighting the Avengers several times, Wonder Man ultimately joined their ranks.

Kingsley returning as Slattery has been established that Slattery is a failed actor and Wonder Man has been an actor and a stuntman in the comics.

Exactly how Kingsley would factor into the plot of the series and how many episodes he would appear in is being kept under wraps, but sources say that he will play a major role.

Kingsley first portrayed Slattery in 'Iron Man 3'. In that film, Slattery has been hired to portray a terrorist leader known as 'The Mandarin', but his true identity is revealed in the end and he is arrested. He then appeared in the short film 'All Hail the King', which shows Slattery in prison before he is broken out by someone working for the real Mandarin. Most recently, Kingsley played Slattery in 'Shang-Chi and the Legend of the Ten Rings'. He was taken prisoner by The Mandarin, Shang-Chi's father Xu Wenwu, who kept him alive as a sort of court jester. Shang-Chi and his friends eventually help him escape and he in turn helps them defeat Wenwu.

Kingsley is one of the most celebrated actors of modern times, known for roles in films like 'Gandhi', 'Sexy Beast', 'House of Sand and Fog', 'Bugsy' and 'Schindler's List'.

ABSOLUTE PIC OF THE DAY



Adriana Lima



Asia Cup 2022

INDIA ENTER SUPER FOUR STAGE WITH 40-RUN WIN OVER HONG KONG

Dubai | Agencies

Defending champions India became the first team from Group A to seal their Super Four spot in Asia Cup 2022 with a 40-run win over Hong Kong at the Dubai International Stadium on Wednesday.

Earlier, Suryakumar Yadav's fireworks in the last seven overs led him to be unconquered on 68 off just 26 balls and combined with Virat Kohli's 31st T20I fifty, 59 not out off 44 balls, propelled India to reaching a daunting 192/2.

In defence of 192, spinners Yuzvendra Chahal and Ravindra Jadeja conceded just 48 runs overall to make up for the 97 runs leaked collectively by young pacers Avesh Khan and Arshdeep Singh to reduce Hong Kong to 152/5 in their 20 overs.

For Hong Kong, bright spots in the bat were a 71-run stand between Babar Hayat (41) and Kinchit Shah (30) while hitting 33 runs in the last two overs. But they were not enough to outshine the efforts of Suryakumar and Kohli.

Yasim Murtaza hit Arshdeep for fours over backward point and mid-



on. But the left-arm pacer had the last laugh, bouncing out Murtaza and fine leg taking the catch on top-edge. Hayat set the tone for Hong Kong, slamming sixes down the ground off Avesh and Bhuvneshwar Kumar.

He then showed his leg-side play, slamming three fours in five balls off Avesh and Arshdeep. But India ended power-play on a high, as

Jadeja's razor-sharp direct hit from point caught Nizakat Khan just short of his crease. Post power-play, Jadeja and Chahal applied breaks on Hong Kong's scoring rate as just 14 runs came in next four overs. In a bid to break the shackles, Hayat tried to take on Jadeja but ended up slicing to point. Shah swept, went inside-out and

steered hard to pick boundaries off Chahal, Avesh and Arshdeep. But with the required run rate going upwards, Hong Kong were just unable to catch up with it. Avesh cleaned up Aizaz Khan with a slower delivery, which made things hard for Hong Kong. Shah, in a bid to go big, miscued to a juggling long-off off Bhuvneshwar.

Zeeshan Ali began 19th over by lofting inside-out over cover for six off Avesh. Scott McKechnie followed it up with upper cut, flick and neat steer to take a six and two fours in a 21-run over. Zeeshan then hit successive fours off Arshdeep in the final over, but by then India had all but sealed their second consecutive win in Asia Cup 2022 and a spot in Super four.

Brief scores

India 192/2 in 20 overs (Suryakumar Yadav 68 not out, Virat Kohli 59 not out; Mohammad Ghazanfar 1/19, Ayush Shukla 1/29) beat Hong Kong 152/5 in 20 overs (Babar Hayat 41, Kinchit Shah 30, Ravindra Jadeja 1/15, Bhuvneshwar Kumar 1/15) by 40 runs

US OPEN

Two-time winner Osaka exit US Open in first round

New York | Agencies

Defending US Open champion Emma Raducanu and two-time winner at Flushing Meadows Naomi Osaka were eliminated from the season-ending Grand slam, losing their respective first-round matches to Alize Cornet and Danielle Collins on Wednesday (IST). In her record-breaking 63rd consecutive major appearance, Alize Cornet of France hogged the limelight, ending Raducanu's title defence inside the Louis Armstrong Stadium 3-6, 3-6. Raducanu, who had soared into the top-10 of the WTA rankings in July, will soon drop to outside the top-75 following her first-round exit.

American 19th seed Danielle Collins, who had not played since July, was back to her best in her 7-6(5), 6-3 first-round win against two-time champion Osaka, displaying breath-taking baseline strokes. The Australian Open finalist, who earned her maiden win in four attempts against Osaka, will face Spain's Cristina Bucsa in the next round. Raducanu had



her serve broken three times in the first set, the last time due to a double fault. It was 3-1 in the second when Cornet hit a superb half-volley winner on the way to her sixth break of Raducanu's serve. A seventh break was just enough to get Cornet a spot in the second round. "My game at the net was pretty good," Cornet was quoted as saying by wtatennis.com. "I did a lot of variation -- I think that's what worked tonight."

The 32-year-old Cornet, ranked No.37, has five top-20 wins this season, including the upset of No.1 Iga Swiatek at Wimbledon and a win against Romania's Simona Halep in Melbourne. "I think

I'm handling my emotions better," Cornet said. "I guess I'm getting old -- more mature. It shows in my results. I'm 32 -- better late than never." Cornet is appearing in her 63rd consecutive Grand Slam main draw, the longest run in the Open Era. She will play Katerina Siniakova of the Czech Republic in the second round. "I saw that I've beaten a Grand Slam champion on every Slam this year," Cornet said. "I think it's crazy. It's kind of cool. These players that I'm admiring, that I have been following for a long time, knowing I'm part of this world, that I can beat them on a Slam, I don't know, I still feel like a kid sometimes."

Durand Cup:

KERALA BLASTERS QUALIFY FOR QUARTERFINALS

Guwahati | Agencies

Kerala Blasters (KBFC) have qualified for the quarterfinals of the 131st IndianOil Durand Cup after defeating the Army Green Football Team (AGFT) 2-0 in a Group D match at the Indira Gandhi Athletic Stadium here on Wednesday.

Muhammed Aimen and Aritra Das scored for the winners who were dominant throughout the game. The game had a great flow from the beginning from both sides. The teams played some attacking football in each other's box. KBFC started to control the midfield with Viben Mohanan and Muhammed Azhar, who have been consistently good in the tournament, calling the shots. They found the attacking foursome of Ajsal, Gaurav, Aimen and Roshan from time to time and were creating pressure on the Army defence. The first goal came from such a move involving Roshan, Ajsal and Aimen. Roshan carried the ball from the right and found Ajsal in the middle who found Aimen on the left wing. Muhammed Aimen unleashed an exquisite right footed curler into the top left corner to give the Blasters the lead.

The youngsters of KBFC have made a habit of scoring wonderful goals all throughout the tournament and the second goal was one such. In stoppage time, Aritra Das



carried the ball down the left wing, entered the box and struck a bullet of a shot into the top corner. Army keeper Rolua Puia was left stunned. Army Green was good in patches with PC Lallawmkima making some good runs inside the box. The best chance for them came from a counter attack which was wasted by Gautam Singh from a pass by Chabin Rabha. AGFT began the second half with more intent and pressed high with fresh legs having been introduced by gaffer Robichandra Singh. They dispossessed Blasters often but could not create any genuine goal scoring chances. The ones they did were either wasted or defended with

ease by the Blasters defence. Tejas Krishna and Marwan Hussain along with Goalkeeper Sachin Suresh ensured that the Army men were kept under control.

On the other end, Kerala was attacking with intent as well and creating opportunities. The attackers were combining well to create more pressure for the Army defence. Aimen had a chance to become the joint top scorer of the tournament but his header hit the post. The Blasters qualified for the knockouts with seven points while AGFT has one game remaining against table toppers Odisha FC, which will be played on September 4.

Japan Open 2022:

SRIKANTH ADVANCES TO PRE-QUARTERS

Osaka (Japan) | Agencies

Ace Indian shuttler Kidambi Srikanth advanced to the men's singles round of 16 but compatriots Lakshya Sen and Saina Nehwal crashed out in the opening round of the Japan Open 2022 badminton tournament, here on Wednesday. Former world No. 1 Srikanth outplayed Malaysia's Lee Zii Jia, an All England champion and fifth seed at the BWF Super 750 event, 22-20, 23-21 in a thrilling encounter. "It was a close match and could have gone either way but I am happy with the way I played. It's important to close out games at this high level because every match is going to be tough," Srikanth said after his victory. "I was leading 16-12 in the first game but found myself behind 20-18 after giving away too many points. I just told myself to be consistent and not give easy points. I am always happy to win and now I will go back and think about how to beat my next opponent," he added. The CWG 2022 bronze medalist will next face either Wang Tzu Wei or Kanta Tsuneyama in the next round. Meanwhile, Commonwealth Games champion Lakshya Sen bowed out of the Japan Open after losing to home favourite Kenta Nishimoto 21-18, 14-21, 13-21 in his first match despite winning the first game.

The 21-year old Sen's game tapered off after the mid-game break in the second game as he often went wide with his returns. On the other hand, Olympic medalist Saina Nehwal was also knocked out after losing 9-21, 17-21 to Japan's Akane Yamaguchi, new world champion. The pair of MR Arjun and Dhruv Kapila, who



became the first Indian men's doubles pair to make the World Championship quarterfinals last week, were eliminated after a 21-19, 21-23, 15-21 loss to South Korea's Choi Soi Gyu and Kim Won Ho. CWG 2022 bronze medal winners Treasa Jolly and Gayatri Gopichand too lost 17-21, 18-21 to Thai seventh seeds Jongkolphan Kittharakul and Rawinda Prajongjai. The mixed doubles pair of Juhi Dewangan and Venkat Gaurav Prasad lost 11-21, 10-21 to Chinese top seed Zheng Si Wei and Huang Ya Qiong in 23 minutes.

Germany's Andrea Petkovic bids emotional farewell

New York | Agencies

Germany's Andrea Petkovic was overcome with emotion after her tennis career effectively ended on Tuesday in a 6-2, 4-6, 6-4 defeat against Swiss Olympic champion Belinda Bencic at the US Open. Former top 10 player and French Open semi-finalist Petkovic had announced last week that the New York grand slam would be her swansong, although she may appear once more at a smaller event in Europe to see friends and family a final chance to give her play.

"I was really devastated over the last five days," Petkovic said after the first-round defeat, admitting to "pure sadness." Petkovic said she initially wanted to announce her retirement a few weeks ago but that this plan



ended when American icon Serena Williams said in Vogue magazine that the US Open would be her finale. "I woke up the next morning, my mobile was flashing like crazy because the Serena piece in Vogue was published.

So I thought, OK, this won't interest anyone now," she said. Petkovic said she had huge respect for 23-time grand slam winner Williams who advanced into the second round on Monday amid a huge hype. "I asked myself how Serena did it. I have so much empathy and sympathy for her right now," the 34-year-old German said.

Petkovic said that she obviously did not give the sport "as much as Serena" but she was satisfied because "I feel I have brought everything to an end in my small world.

Rashid Khan rises to No. 2 in T20I bowling

Sharjah | Agencies

Afghanistan spinner Rashid Khan has risen to No.2 in the men's T20I bowling charts following his superb spell of 3/22 in the Asia Cup Group B match, which saw the side crush Bangladesh by seven wickets here on Tuesday night.

This was Afghanistan's second successive win in the tournament following their victory against Sri Lanka in the opening game. Rashid Khan also went past New Zealand pace bowler Tim Southee to become the second-highest wicket-taker in men's T20Is



during the win over Bangladesh. The leg-spinner, who had started the match with 112 scalps in the format, picked up the wickets of Mushfiqur Rahim, Afif Hossain and Mahmudullah, to go to 115 wickets, according to ICC. Southee was second in the wicket-takers' list with 114 wickets before the match. Bangladesh's Shakib Al Hasan holds on to his record with 122

wickets, the most by anyone in the men's game, and the second best in all T20Is, behind West Indies woman cricketer Anisa Mohammed. Rashid, 23, has had a remarkable T20I career so far, averaging 13.73 and clocking an economy rate of 6.16 after 68 matches in the format. He has six hauls of four or more wickets in T20Is, which is again the joint-most in the men's game. Rashid's spell, which followed an impressive three-wicket haul from Mujeeb ur Rahman, helped Afghanistan restrict Bangladesh to 127/7 in 20 overs.

ICC Women's T20 WC Qualifier to be held

Dubai | Agencies

The ICC Women's T20 World Cup Qualifier will be held at Zayed Cricket Stadium and Tolerance Oval in Abu Dhabi from September 18 to 25, the world cricket body announced on Wednesday. During the Qualifier, a total of eight teams will compete for the final two spots at next year's T20 World Cup in South Africa.

Hosts the United Arab Emirates (UAE) will play Thailand at the Zayed Cricket Stadium in Abu Dhabi on the opening day of the global qualifier. Zimbabwe will also be in action on day one as they take on Papua New Guinea at the adjacent Tolerance Oval. Bangladesh, Ireland,

Scotland and the USA complete the line up in the qualifier in the battle to join Australia, England, India, New Zealand, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, West Indies and hosts South Africa at the ICC Women's T20 World Cup next year.

"Hosted at Abu Dhabi Cricket & Sports Hub, the matches at the Tolerance Oval will be the first full internationals at the ground since it was given ICC accreditation, while the Zayed Cricket Stadium will be the venue for the final as well as both semi-finals," the ICC said in a release.

Bangladesh and Thailand, who played in the highly successful T20 World Cup in Australia in 2020 and qualified for this tournament on that basis, are the two leading teams in the Tyres ICC Women's T20I Team Rankings and are drawn in different groups.

Ireland, Scotland and the USA are pooled along with Bangladesh in Group A while Thailand are in Group B along with Zimbabwe, Papua New Guinea (PNG) and the UAE. The top two teams from each group will make the semi-finals and both finalists will book their places in the T20 World Cup. "This T20 World Cup Qualifier is going to be a fantastic event with eight closely matched teams competing for just two places at the ICC Women's T20 World Cup in South Africa next year. The level of competitiveness in the women's game has increased significantly over the last four years and with every ICC region represented in Abu Dhabi it will be a tough fought event," said Chris Tetley, ICC Head of Events.

"There is huge momentum around the women's game at the moment following the great success of the ICC Women's Cricket World Cup 2022 and the sport making its debut in the recent Commonwealth Games in Birmingham. The ICC Women's T20 World Cup in South Africa will enable us to build on that and in line with our global growth strategy take women's cricket to more fans than ever before," he added.

Emirates Cricket Development Manager Andrew Russell, said, "Women's cricket has never been in better shape both around the world and in the UAE, and it is essential to our Board that we carry forward this momentum. We aim to do just that through hosting this prestigious event, which we believe can be a vehicle that accelerates the



International Cricket Council



Sushmita Sen to be seen in 'power-packed' biopic

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Bollywood actress and former beauty queen Sushmita Sen has been roped in as the lead for this intense and power-packed script. The prep is on and set to go on floors by the end of this year. The biopic will see Sushmita in multiple shades, in a never seen before avatar. Sushmita will be fronting the biopic whose rights have been acquired by Mansi Bagla of Mini Films and ace photographer Subi Samuel's Bungalow No 84.

Mansi Bagla, Mini Films says: "I wanted to make a big announcement after Forensic and this timing is just perfect. This is my birthday gift to myself. Forensic is still making noise, loved by so many, and now I'm here to tell this thrilling story and who better than Sushmita Sen to play this role, more details on the biopic coming up soon."

"The day I met Sushmita, I was spellbound by her aura and I can say it now with all my heart, this film will be a superhit."

The casting and other aspects of the film is in pre-production stage and will go on floors by the end of this year.

Mini Film's Forensic has garnered high numbers on the OTT platform, Avitesh Shrivastava-starrer Adesh Shrivastava's biopic is near completion and Bagla has also bagged the rights of a Ruskin Bond story which was widely reported.

Subi Samuel, Bungalow No 84 shares: "I am excited to begin this new journey with two of the most powerful women I've met in the industry by far- Sushmita is a brilliant actress and is apt for the biopic and Mansi who's drive and passion towards filmmaking inspired me to explore it myself."



Vijay Varma: It is my work that speaks for me

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Vijay Varma has been in the Hindi film industry for a decade now and gained the spotlight with his performance in 'Chhitaagong', 'Pink', and his latest release 'Darlings'. The Bollywood actor says it is not easy to make a name in the industry and that he had to prove himself through his work.

Talking about facing hiccups in the industry, Vijay in conversation with a news portal, said: "Everything could be a hiccup but eventually you might figure out those hiccups were a part of your growing up and journey. Of course it is not easy. It is never easy to make a mark or to have a name in the industry and hats off to people who have been doing this for years actually because your one movie or one performance can completely change opinions about you. And also getting the raw opportunities is not easy for somebody like me who comes from a non-film background and is an outsider. I really had to prove through my work. I just hoped for opportunities and I grabbed them and I worked diligently on them."



Zakir Khan to embark tour for his comedy special



America and Canada tour that will see him touring in support of 'Tathastu'. Opening with a recap of behind-the-scenes moments from Khan's life, 'Tathastu' takes the audience on an unconventional outing that is bursting with personal chronicles covering Khan's growing up years, his family life and years of struggle.

Commenting on the same, Zakir Khan said in a statement: "'Tathastu' is something of great intrinsic value to me. It's one of my most nuanced projects thus far and a long-standing dream that has finally taken shape. I am glad live performances are back with a bang and I can hit the road and meet all my fans. I can't wait to see you all!"

'Tathastu' captures an honest, vulnerable and unedited version of Khan sharing significant life lessons whilst trying to make sense of his journey thus far.

The comedian will start his North America tour on September 3 in New Jersey, followed by Toronto, Vancouver, Seattle, and more.

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Comic artiste and writer Zakir Khan, following the success of streaming comedy specials 'Haq Se Single' and 'Kaksha Gyarvi', is hitting the road once again with his latest showcase 'Tathastu'.

Zakir will embark on a North



"ALL OF TOXIC ABUSE & THREATS AFFECTED ME MENTALLY": JASMIN BHASIN

Jasmin Bhasin, who has appeared on television shows, revealed in a recent interview with a news portal that she received death and rape threats after appearing on Bigg Boss.

Team Absolute | Mumbai

She stated to a news channel, "Leave alone trolling, people hurled such toxic abuses at me when I left the Bigg Boss house. I received death and rape threats. And for what? Just because I did a show and they didn't like me in it?" The actress needed medical attention, and it was her friends and family who helped her get through the difficult period. She continued, "What I faced was very serious.

All of that affected me mentally at some point. But I got over it with medical help and my friends and family who love me."

The actress concluded that she no longer allows trolls to bother her and instead focuses on the praise she receives for her work. Bigg Boss 12 was significant for Jasmin because it boosted not only her career but also her personal life. She realised her feelings for Aly Goni were much deeper than their friendship. Since then, the two have been in a committed relationship.

Kunal Kemmu set for directorial debut

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Bollywood actor Kunal Kemmu is someone whom the audience has seen growing up on celluloid. The actor, who started his career as a child artiste in films like, 'Hum Hain Rahi Pyar Ke', and headlined films like 'Kalyug', and several others as a grown up actor, is set to make his directorial debut with the film 'Madgaon Express'.

Kunal took to Twitter on the occasion of Ganesh Chaturthi and shared the news of his directorial debut with his fans as he put up the film's announcement poster. He wrote: "Ganpati Bappa moriya. As all good things begin with his name I can't think of a better day to share this with all of you." Piecing together the film's journey from a thought in his mind to becoming a feature, he further wrote: "It started with a thought in my head which grew into a dream which flowed out through my fingers into words on my laptop and now it is becoming a reality on its way to the silver screen." He also expressed his gratitude towards producers Ritesh Sidhwani and Farhan Akhtar of Excel Entertainment.

He mentioned: "A big thank you to Ritesh, Farhan and Rucha at excel entertainment for believing in my script and my vision and partnering with me on this exciting journey in the world of cinema. With joined hands and a bowed head I seek all of your blessings and the blessings of Ganpati Bappa."

The plot and release date details of the film are currently under the wraps. On the work front, he has an exciting slate of films ahead including 'Shehzada', 'Freddy', 'Captain India', 'Satyaprem Ki Katha' and Kabir Khan's untitled next.

Thank you Bappa for making this a life changing year: Kartik Aaryan

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With the Ganesh Mahotsav starting with full zest in Mumbai after a break of two years of the Covid pandemic, actor Kartik Aaryan went for his first ever darshan of Lalbaug Ka Raja, to take blessings.

Taking to his social media, he also shared images from his darshan of Bappa as he wrote: "Ganpati Bappa Moriya !!! A Blessed to get my first darshan of #LalBaugKaRaja. Thank you bappa for making this a Life changing year. Aur hope karta hu aap aagey bhi meri saari mannate aise hi poori karte rahe." Kartik had an exceptional year as his film 'Bhool Bhulaiyaa 2'



Blessed to get Darshan of Lal Baugcha Raja



Anushka Sen