

# absolute india

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PUBLISHED SIMULTANEOUSLY FROM MUMBAI, BHOPAL AND NEW DELHI

**NATION** > 02

India has become 5th largest economy globally: President ...



**HOLLYWOOD** > 06

Salma Hayek had the 'Magic Mike' strippers over to her home ...



**SPORTS** > 07

Women's T20 World Cup: India thrash Bangladesh by 52 runs...



## Centre relaxes Covid travel norms for passengers from China, other countries

New Delhi | Agencies

Amid declining Covid cases in the country, the Centre on Thursday relaxed the travel norms for passengers from China and other six countries. However, the random testing of 2 per cent travellers coming to India will continue.

Updating the 'Guidelines for International Arrivals', the Health Ministry has dropped the existing requirements of pre-departure Covid-19 testing and uploading of Self-Health Declaration for international travellers coming from/via China, Singapore, Hong Kong, South Korea, Thailand, and Japan.

In a letter to the Civil Aviation Ministry, the Health Ministry has said: "As has been witnessed in the last 4 weeks, these countries are witnessing a sustained and significant decline in trajectory of Covid-19



cases. Further, as per World Health Organisation's latest situational update on Covid-19, a decline of 89 per cent in the number of newly con-

firmed cases in the past 28 days has been noted globally as compared to 28 days prior to that." "Meanwhile, India has continued

to witness a declining trajectory, with less than 100 new cases/day are being reported. In view of the above, this Ministry is updating its 'Guidelines for International Arrivals', and dropping the existing requirements of pre-departure Covid-19 testing and uploading of Self-Health Declaration on Ministry of Civil Aviation's 'Air Suvidha' portal applicable for international travellers coming from/via China, Singapore, Hong Kong, Republic of Korea, Thailand and Japan," it said in the letter.

Health Secretary Rajesh Bhushan has said in the letter, "In order to monitor infections due to mutated variants of SARS-CoV-2 among international travellers to India, the present exercise of random testing of 2 per cent travellers to India (irrespective of country of origin) upon arrival India shall continue." The new arrangement will come into practice from 11 a.m. on February 13.

### HALF-EATEN BODY OF MISSING WOMAN FOUND AT CORBETT TIGER RESERVE



Rishikesh: Police on Thursday found a half-eaten body of a missing woman from the buffer zone of Corbett Tiger Reserve.

Body of 38-year-old Kamala Devi was found near Badanghar canal by forest guards, Chief Conservator of Forest, Kumaon Prasanna Kumar Patra said. Kamala Devi was missing since Wednesday evening from a village in Salt area of Almora district, he said. It is not clear whether she was killed by a tiger or leopard, Patra said.

### Joshimath crisis: Locals fearful as new cracks develop in houses

Joshimath | Agencies

Residents of Uttarakhand's Joshimath are living in a state of fear as five more houses have developed minor cracks along with the widening and increasing number of cracks in residential buildings already affected with land subsidence in the city. Chamoli District Magistrate Himanshu Khurana reached the area and inspected the houses on Wednesday. Khurana, on Thursday said that the size of the old cracks had increased in the houses where crackmeters were installed.

Cracks had also developed in the fields in Manohar Bagh ward in January. Suraj Kaparwan, owner of one of the affected fields, said that the administration had filled



the cracks with soil and plastic.

The development of new cracks in the holy city had stopped after January 20, but has started again, adding to the worries of the locals and the administration. Along with this, cracks in the houses of Manohar Bagh and Singhdhar ward have widened.

Locals have also been worried about the sudden drying up of a natural stream that had been flowing since the past several years in Joshimath's Singhdhar ward.

## Pregnant woman, in critical condition, airlifted from Jammu & Kashmir

Jammu | Agencies

Braving heavy snowfall, the Army and the Indian Air Force on Thursday airlifted a pregnant woman in critical condition from a hamlet in Jammu and Kashmir's Kishtwar.

Responding to a distress call, Army troops rushed to the village in the remote Nawapanchi area and carried the woman on a stretcher through snowfields, officials said.

The IAF flew a MI chopper to Nawapanchi and airlifted the woman, who was transported to the district hospital in Kishtwar for specialised treatment, they said.

"Indian Army in close coordination with the Indian Air Force evacuated a pregnant lady in critical condition from a remote winter isolated Nawapanchi area of Kishtwar district to Kishtwar town where the lady is being treated at district hospital," Defence



Spokesperson Lt Col Devender Anand said.

The people of Nawapanchi expressed gratitude towards the Army and the IAF and some of them also raised slogans praising the two forces.

Lt Col Anand said the Army has been making efforts to reduce the hardships faced by people in the area that has

harsh weather and extremely difficult living conditions especially during winters when it gets cut off from the rest of the district due to closure of roads.

"Indian Army has always been rendering life-saving humanitarian assistance to people apart from conducting counter-terrorist operations in the region," he said.

## Delhi boy, 9, named in "world's brightest" list, received grand honors

New Delhi | Agencies

Nine-year-old boy from New Delhi has been named in "world's brightest" students list released by the US-based Johns Hopkins Center For Talented Youth (CTY) based on above grade level testing of over 15,300 gifted students over 76 countries. Aaryaveer Kochhar, who also claims to hold the record for the youngest author in the world, scored in the 99th percentile in Math, which places him at the top one per cent of advanced children all over the world.

A student of Raghuraj Singh Junior Modern School, Aaryaveer received 'Grand

Honours' and was congratulated by CTY Executive Director, Dr Amy Shelton for his exceptional academic abilities and achievement.

At the age of nine, Aaryaveer has committed himself to being a change maker in the world. He is the youngest member of the Inclusive United Nations and recently claims to have presented recommendations to The Chair of the Committee on the Rights of the Child, the highest global authority on child rights.

US-based Johns Hopkins Center For Talented Youth decides the list based on the results of above-grade-level tests of over 15,000 students across 76 countries. Less than

27 per cent of those participants qualified for the CTY ceremony, receiving either high or grand honours based on their test scores.

In her second attempt at the test, Indian-American prodigy Natasha Perianayagam, 13, topped the "world's brightest" students list. She was among the 15,300 students from 76 countries who joined CTY in the 2021-22 Talent Search year. "This is not just recognition of our students' success on one test, but a salute to their love of discovery and learning, and all the knowledge they have accumulated in their young lives so far," said CTY's executive director Dr. Amy Shelton had said

## Lithium, gold deposits found in J&K

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The government has found lithium and gold deposits in Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) for the first time. The Mines Ministry has found lithium reserves of around 5.9 million tonnes in Salal-Haimana area of Reasi district.

This report, along with 15 other resource bearing geological reports and 35 geological memorandums, were handed over to respective state governments during the 62nd Central Geological Programming Board (CGPB) meeting, held on Thursday.

Out of these 51 mineral blocks, five blocks pertain to



gold and other blocks pertain to commodities like potash, molybdenum, base metals etc. spread across 11 states of J&K, Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Madhya

Apart from these, 17 reports of coal and lignite with a total resource of 7,897 million tonnes were also handed over to the Coal Ministry. Seven publications on different themes and intervention areas in which the GSI operates, were also released during the meeting.

The proposed annual programme for ensuing field season 2023-24 was also presented and discussed during the meeting. During 2023-24, the GSI plans to take up 966 programmes comprising 318 mineral exploration projects including 12 marine mineral investigation projects. A major thrust has been given on the exploration of strate-

gic - critical and fertiliser minerals.

The CGPB is an important platform of the GSI, wherein the annual field season programme (FSP) of GSI is placed for discussion for synergy and to avoid duplication of work. The members of the CGPB and other stakeholders like state governments, central and state government mineral exploration agencies, place their requests for collaborative work with the GSI.

Based on the priorities set by the Centre and the importance and urgency of proposals presented by the members and stakeholders, the annual programme of GSI is given a final shape.

## In 'Operation Dolphin', DRI recovers over 17 kg gold thrown into sea by smugglers

Team Absolute | New Delhi/ Chennai

The Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) has arrested three persons, who were trying to smuggle 17.74 kg gold worth Rs 10.1 crore on a fishing boat, and threw it overboard when intercepted, an official said on Thursday. The entire gold was later recovered by the DRI with the help of divers. "We developed intelligence that a gang based in Mandapam, Ramanathapuram, Tamil Nadu were planning to smuggle huge quantities of gold from Sri Lanka by engaging a fish-



ing boat. We learnt that three persons in the fishing boat would collect the gold in the high seas and landing in the coast of Mandapam," the DRI official said. The official said that accordingly, a joint operation along with

the Indian Coast Guard was planned to nab them. A team of Indian Coast Guard and DRI mounted surveillance and the fishing boat was identified on the early hours of February 8.

"On spotting the fishing boat, rigid inflatable boats from the Coast Guard ship were deployed and the said fishing boat was intercepted after a chase in the sea near the Mandapam coast. During the course of interception, the persons in the fishing boat threw the contraband parcel into the sea. The parcel containing the contraband was retrieved from the seabed with the help of Coast Guard Divers,"

the official said.

The DRI said that the parcel contained 14 packages of foreign origin gold in various forms - bars, chains, etc and totally weighing 17.74 kg - were tied in a towel and thrown into sea.

The said foreign origin gold have been seized under the provisions of the Customs Act, and the three arrested persons are being interrogated.

With this seizure, the DRI's Chennai Zonal Unit has so far seized 209 kg of foreign origin gold in financial year 2022-23. The all India gold seizure by the DRI is 950 kg in this financial year.

## Youth on way to 'commit crime' arrested in Dwarka

Team Absolute | New Delhi

A 19-year-old teenager who was on his way to allegedly 'commit a crime' in the national capital's Dwarka area has been arrested along with four country-made pistols, the police said on Thursday.

The arrested individual has been identified as Sunny -- a resident of Sampla near Rohtak in Haryana. "During questioning, he said that after watching some videos of gangsters on social media, he made a plan to rob cash and vehicles with his school friend," the police said.

Deputy Commissioner of Police (Dwarka), M. Harsha Vardhan, said: "A police team



was tasked to regularly conduct surveillance over the members (out on bail) of different gangs active in district and adjoining states. "On February 6, specific inputs were received by the team

regarding the movement of Sunny. The police were informed that he would come to Jharoda Kalan village to commit crime," the DCP said.

"A trap was laid at Bahadurgarh-Najafgarh Road, and Sunny was apprehended," Harsha Vardhan said, adding four country-made pistols and four live cartridges were recovered from his possession.

"In order to execute his plan, he arranged illegal arms to assert his dominance in the area or to commit any crime," the DCP said. "The source of firearms and ammunition has been identified and efforts are being made to nab the supplier(s)," the police officer added.







EDITOR'S SPECS

## India highest attacked country in Asia in 2022

India was the highest attacked country by hackers in Asia and the second-most attacked country globally (after the US) in 2022, a report showed. The number of cyber attacks on India increased by 24.3 per cent last year. Asia-Pacific remained the most targeted region globally, receiving 20.4 per cent of all attacks in 2021 and 24.1 per cent of all attacks in 2022. The number of attacks targeting the Asia-Pacific region increased by 26.4 per cent, according to data from cyber-security firm CloudSEK. North America, Asia-Pacific and Europe remained the most targeted regions in both the years 2021 and 2022. However, North America witnessed a decline in targeted attacks but remained the third most targeted region in 2022 (down from second in 2021), while Europe rose to the second position, possibly due to the Russia-Ukraine war. "2022 observed an increase in cybercrime with a surge in sophisticated and targeted cyber attacks. This can be attributed to an increase in underground activity leading to a rise in utility of malicious tools and malware," said a security researcher from CloudSEK TRIAD team. Emergence of numerous new ransomware groups and persistence of the old ones lead to an exponential increase in ransomware attacks. "Sectors like electric vehicles grabbed the attention of threat actors owing to the new technologies plagued with various vulnerabilities," said the researcher. Ransomware attacks increased drastically, going from the least common (0.3 per cent) in 2021 to the third most common (8 per cent) in 2022. Many new ransomware operators emerged in 2022, while some prominent ransomware groups launched their new versions (such as LockBIT 3.0). Attacks on the government sector globally accounted for 4.1 per cent in 2021, which increased to 12.1 per cent in 2022. IT and technology, e-commerce, and media, entertainment and marketing industries saw a decline in the number of attacks but remained in the top 10 industries targeted.

# WORLD PRODUCING RECORD AMOUNT OF SINGLE-USE PLASTIC WASTE THAN EVER: REPORT

## BRISBANE

The world is producing a record amount of single-use plastic waste, mostly made from polymers created from fossil fuels, despite global efforts to reduce plastic pollution and carbon emissions, according to a new report released. The second Plastic Waste Makers Index, compiled by the Western Australia-based philanthropic Minderoo Foundation, found the world generated 139 million metric tonnes of single-use plastic waste in 2021, which was 6 million metric tonnes more than in 2019, when the first index was released, CNN reported. The report found the additional plastic waste created in those two years equates to nearly one 1 kg more for every person on the planet



and was driven by demand for flexible packaging like films and sachets. In recent years, governments around the world have announced policies to reduce the volume of single-use plastic, banning products like single-use straws, disposable cutlery, food containers, cotton swabs, bags and balloons, CNN reported. In July, California became the first US state to announce its own targets, including a drop of 25 per cent in the sale of plastic packaging by 2032. In December, the UK extended its

list of banned items to include single-use trays, balloon sticks and some types of polystyrene cups and food containers. Bans are also in place in the European Union, Australia and India, among other places. But the report found that recycling isn't scaling up fast enough to deal with the amount of plastic being produced, meaning that used products are far more likely to be dumped in landfills, on beaches and in rivers and oceans than to make it into recycling plants, CNN reported. "It demonstrates beyond any doubt that the plastic pollution problem is getting much bigger and is being driven by the polymer producers, which are of course, driven by the oil and gas sector," said Andrew Forrest, Minderoo founder. He's proposing a "polymer pre-

mium" on every kilogram of plastic polymer made from fossil fuels to give people, companies and governments a financial incentive to recycle more. "In the advanced world, that polymer payment will lead to automatic mechanize collection. In the developing world, it'll lead to people who would not otherwise have any work, having work making sure there's no plastic waste going into the ocean, there's no plastic waste on streets, there's no plastic waste poisoning wildlife," he said. Last year, the UN Environment Assembly agreed to create the world's first-ever global plastic pollution treaty. An intergovernmental committee is working to a 2024 deadline to draft a legally binding agreement that would address the full lifecycle of plastic, from its production and design to its disposal.

# INDIA TO LEAD DEMAND FOR OIL TILL 2045, SAYS OPEC REPORT

## ANIMESH SINGH

After China driving the initial demand growth, it is going to be India which will take the leading role in crude requirement, along with other Asian and African countries, as per an OPEC report. According to the OPEC's "World Oil Outlook 2045" report, released during the ongoing India Energy Week here on Tuesday, besides India, fairly robust growth during this period is also projected for African and other Asian countries where economic progress, urbanisation, industrialisation, and vehicle fleet expansion will be fastest among all regions. This, the report said, "will result in respective demand increases of around 1.4 mb/d, 0.8 mb/d and 0.7 mb/d, for India, Africa and Other Asia respectively during the 2040-2045 period". Even by 2045, oil demand will still grow at a rate of more than 2 per cent per annum in India and Africa

and 1 per cent per annum in Other Asia region, the report, which charts a roadmap for oil sector from 2022 till 2045, said. In another significant observation, the OPEC report said that it would be a global challenge to meet oil-related investment requirements of \$12.1 trillion by 2045. "Cumulative oil-related investment requirements are projected at \$12.1 trillion over the entire 2022-2045 period (in 2022 US dollars). This is slightly higher than assessed in the World Oil Outlook (WOO) 2021, as upward-revised demand projections and assumed cost inflation in the short- and medium-term more than offset the forecast period being one year shorter," it said. Upstream needs make up \$9.5 trillion, while downstream and mid-stream requirements are \$1.6 and \$1 trillion, respectively, it noted. The report further pointed out that "risks to the economic outlook, high inflation, energy policy goals confronted with energy security

challenges, and questions regarding a perceived shortfall in upstream investment, coupled with persisting and new geopolitical uncertainties, means that significant risks regarding the longer-term liquids supply outlook remain". Detailing a roadmap for the future, the report said that "in the current geopolitical context, besides a pressing need to increase climate ambitions, countries are increasingly focused on energy security issues. There is now more attention on an energy sustainability trilemma, related to affordability, energy security and reducing emissions, evidenced in many countries



publicly recognising the need for inclusive and resilient approaches, through more invest-

ments in oil and gas projects going forward".

## international

# THOUSANDS WITHOUT FOOD, WATER IN TURKEY & SYRIA AS QUAKE TOLL TOPS 16,000

## Ankara/Damascus | Agencies

Amid freezing temperatures, thousands are without food, water and shelter in Turkey and Syria as the death toll in the devastating 7.8-magnitude quake increased to 16,035 on Thursday, authorities said. In its latest update on Thursday, Turkey's Disaster and Emergency Management Agency (AFAD) said the death toll currently stood at 12,873, while the number of injured persons shot up to 62,937, reports Anadolu News Agency. The victims and the widespread damages have been reported from the 10 regions of Adana, Adiyaman, Diyarbakir, Gaziantep, Hatay, Kahramanmaraş, Kilis, Malatya, Osmaniye, and Sanliurfa. More than 113,200 search and rescue personnel are currently working in the field, AFAD said in its update, adding that a total of 28,044 people have been evacuated from quake-hit regions so far -- 4,607 by road and railway and 23,437 by air. "As a result of negotiations with the Turkish Foreign Ministry, 5,709 personnel coming from other countries to give help were dispatched to the disaster area," it added. Besides rescue teams, blankets,



tents, food, and psychological support teams were also sent to affected areas. A total of 92,738 family tents were set up to shelter survivors, AFAD also said. It added that 5,557 vehicles, including excavators, tractors and dozers, were sent to the disaster area. In Syria, the total number of fatalities stood at 3,162, CNN reported. Of the overall deaths, 1,900 were reported in rebel-held areas in the country's northwest, while 1,262 fatalities were registered in government-controlled parts of the war-torn

nation, according to Syrian state media and other officials. Meanwhile, over 5,000 people were reported injured and the toll is likely to increase as search operations continue. Syria's White Helmets, a civil defence group in Syria, have said that "time is running out", with "hundreds of families" still stuck under the rubble of collapsed buildings, the BBC reported. The group said their teams continue to search for survivors "amid great difficulties" and with a need for heavy machinery to remove

rubble. "Every second means saving a life," they added. Addressing the media earlier in the day in Geneva, Robert Holden, the World Health Organization's (WHO) incident response manager, said there were thousands of people now surviving "out in the open, in worsening and horrific conditions", with disrupted access to water, fuel, electricity and communications. "We are in real danger of seeing a secondary disaster which may cause harm to more people than the initial disaster if we don't move with the same pace and intensity as we are doing on the search and rescue. This is no easy task... The scale of the operation is massive," the BBC quoted the WHO official as saying. The devastating 7.8 tremor struck Turkey's southern province of Kahramanmaraş at 4.17 a.m. on Monday morning, which was followed by a 6.4-magnitude tremor a few minutes later in Gaziantep province. The epicentre of the 7.8-magnitude quake was 23 km east of Nurdagi in Gaziantep, at a depth of 24.1 km. At around 1.30 p.m., a third 7.5-magnitude tremor hit Kahramanmaraş, which officials said was "not an aftershock".

# Pakistan Army not available for poll duties

## Islamabad | Agencies

The Pakistan Interior Ministry has informed the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) that the armed forces would not be able to perform security duties during the provincial assembly elections in Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) as well as by-elections on 64 National Assembly seats as it was busy conducting census and counter-terror operations, media reported. Earlier this week, the electoral body had written to the federal government, seeking the deployment of troops of civil armed forces for the conduct of general and by-elections in various constituencies of the national and provincial assemblies. The Interior Ministry said that Pakistan was going through a difficult security situation as evidenced by a recent spike in incidents of terrorism across the country. It mentioned the multi-dimensional security concerns which include border security, internal security duties, maintenance of law and order and deployment at forward posts to counter the increased terrorist activities by miscreants and anti-state elements, Dawn reported. The ministry noted that intelligence agencies and the National Counter Terrorism Authority (NACTA) have been issuing threat alerts regarding the security situation prevailing in the country, which have also been shared with the provincial governments. It regretted that a number of terror incidents took place in the last month leading to the loss of precious lives. One of these was the suicide bombing at a mosque in the Peshawar



Police Lines that killed more than 80 people, mostly policemen. In this context, it is to be noted that security forces are fully engaged in combatting the threats posed by terrorists to the peace and stability of the country and the life and property of the people, the letter said, Dawn reported. It said the onslaught of terrorist activities tested the capacity of the law enforcement agencies to the maximum extent leaving little room to spare for other activities. It further highlighted that a terrorist organisation had openly threatened politicians and there was apprehension that the political leadership could be potential targets during the election campaign. The Interior Ministry said that the ECP's request was also taken up with the Military Operations Directorate at the General Headquarters (GHQ) as it was a key stakeholder, Dawn reported.

# 4 DEAD IN 5.4-MAGNITUDE INDONESIA QUAKE

Jakarta: At least four people were dead and several houses and buildings destroyed after a 5.4-magnitude earthquake jolted Indonesia's Papua province on Thursday, a disaster agency official said. "The quake damaged houses, a restaurant and buildings. Four people were killed during the earthquake. Now we are carrying out risk assessments of the quake," the official told Xinhua news agency. According to country's meteorology, climatology and geophysics agency, the earthquake occurred at 1.28 p.m. with its epicentre located 1 km southwest of the provincial capital of Jayapura and a depth of 10 km. The earthquake did not have the potential to trigger a tsunami, it said. Several aftershocks occurred after the main tremor, according to the agency.

# Thousands of retirees protest in Wuhan against cuts in medical benefits

## New Delhi | Agencies

Thousands of people turned out in protest outside municipal government offices in the central Chinese city of Wuhan over major cuts to their medical benefits, according to local residents and video footage posted on social media, media reports said. Video clips uploaded to social media showed a large crowd of older people in raincoats and holding umbrellas gathered in rainy weather in a public space outside the gates of the city government compound, with police in high-visibility jackets linking arms to prevent them from approaching the gates, RFA reported. A resident of Wuhan, the epicentre of the Covid-19 pandemic, surnamed Zhang said both uniformed and plainclothes police were out in large numbers at the



protest, with several official buses parked at the scene, RFA reported. "There were a lot of police officers there protecting [the municipal government], but this is a matter of public feeling," he said. The protest came after warnings from the central government in Beijing that it won't be bailing out cash-strapped local

governments, whose coffers have been drained by three years of President Xi Jinping's zero-Covid policy, which ended in December last year, RFA reported. "This country is in trouble, and they haven't raised medical payments -- how can they reduce them? How are people supposed to manage," Zhang asked. He said the authorities had known the protest was coming and had held a "stability maintenance" meeting at city hall to deal with the issue. "Retirees are demanding an explanation from the government as to why their medical benefits have been cut from 260 yuan (\$38) a month to less than 100 yuan (\$15)," a subtitle on one of the videos said, RFA reported. "If they don't get an answer from the government, they will hold an even bigger rally," the text said.

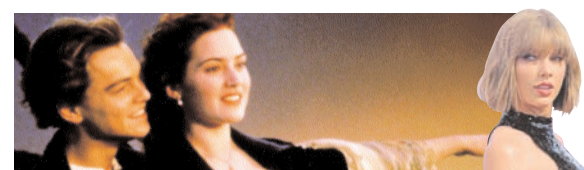
# Singapore to lift remaining Covid measures

## Singapore | Agencies

Singapore will lift few of its remaining Covid-19 measures from February 13 as the country's pandemic situation has remained stable in recent months, the Ministry of Health (MOH) announced on Thursday. The Ministry said that Singapore will adjust the current Disease Outbreak Response System Condition (DORSCON) level from the second lowest level Yellow to the lowest level Green, reports Xinhua news agency. The country will also lift a group of community measures related to mask-wearing, health advisory, and public health measures for migrant workers living in dormitories. One of the adjustments is that

mask-wearing on public transport and indoor healthcare and residential care settings will no longer be required under the temporary Covid-19 regulations. Meanwhile, Singapore will lift the remaining Covid-19 border measures, in view of the stable and improving global pandemic situation, and the low impact of imported cases on Singapore's healthcare capacity. Besides, as Covid-19 is being treated as an endemic disease, the city-state will further scale back pandemic subsidies and re-align the provision of financing support for testing and treatment to that of other acute illnesses from April 1. "MOH will continue to keep a close watch on the evolving Covid-19 situation and our healthcare capacity," the Ministry added.





**SALMA HAYEK HAD THE 'MAGIC MIKE' STRIPPERS OVER TO HER HOME**

Los Angeles | Agencies

Actress Salma Hayek Pinault, who stars as Maxandra Mendoza in 'Magic Mike's Last Dance', says her co-stars were "such great guys" who "were all hanging out with me" while filming. The actress told 'People' she became good friends with her castmates who play the various strippers and, eventually, so did her husband French businessman Francois-Henri Pinault. "My husband is not a jealous man," she says. "I used to call him all the time (from set) and say, 'Oh my God, I feel so bad,' because I had this predisposition about how the guys, the strippers were going to be. But they're not. They're lovely. They're such great guys. And (my husband) goes, 'Oh God, you're becoming best friends with the strippers, aren't you?' And I said, 'Yes!'" "And then he came a couple of times to the set. There was especially one who would come and ask him advice for business. He spoke French and he knew everything about Francois. He says, 'I'm a big fan.' He reacted more to Francois than to me!"

He adds: "By the end of the movie, they all came to the house. They were all hanging out with me. Then Francois was saying, 'You're right, they're adorable, they're lovely.'" She also says that working with costar Tatum was a delight: She "found him to be a real gentleman." "He's like a Southern gentleman and he cares about that. Because he's so cool, goofy and funny. He can be that. Or he can also be very smart and intense and focused." "He's always kind. ... And I told him, I said, 'Your mom taught you well.' I think that normally comes, most of the times, from the mother. I think that is true." She adds, "He's very respectful and he's very thoughtful."

**DiCaprio attacked by a radio host after it was rumored he is dating teenage model**

Los Angeles | Agencies

Hollywood star Leonardo DiCaprio has been attacked by a radio host named Megyn Kelly after it was rumored he is dating teenage model Eden Polani, with the Kelly ranting he will never be happy if he continues going to with younger women.

The 'Titanic' actor is renowned for his habit of dating women no older than 25 and has been most recently linked to 19-year-old model Eden Polani after he split from his long-term girlfriend Camila Morrone last August a few months after she turned 25.

Radio host Kelly slammed his taste for younger woman and claimed he will never find someone "who he can fall in deep love with".

She said on her SiriusXM show about his rumored relationship with Eden: "He is now dating a teenager, literally a teenager."

He's in the news every week for how he won't date anybody past age 25. If he does, it makes news.

"And now he's actually gone down to a teenager. She could literally be his daughter. I feel like this guy from the rate of things is never going to know the joy of meeting somebody who he can fall in deep love with and build a family with."

"He's just going to keep banging teenagers for the rest of his life. It doesn't strike me as something to emulate."

Eden deleted her Instagram account following reports she and Leonardo are an item - and after he apparently denied they are in a relationship.

The pair was photographed sitting next to each other at Ebony Riley's EP release party over the weekend, but Page Six said a source close to the actor had insisted they are not an item.

They said: "There is zero truth to this. He was seated next to (Eden) at a music party, along with many other people."

"It's just silly. Leo clearly can't be dating every single person that (he's) in a room with."

Leonardo has also recently been linked to model Victoria Lamas, and sparked talk he was dating model Gigi Hadid shortly after breaking up with Camila.

**'Everything I saw publicly was wrong'**

Steven Soderbergh debunks rumour Thandiwe Newton got fired from 'Magic Mike 3'

Los Angeles | Agencies

'Magic Mike's Last Dance' director Steven Soderbergh is gearing up for its theatrical release with Salma Hayek playing the female lead opposite Channing Tatum, but that wasn't how the film originally went into production. The movie started filming with Thandiwe Newton, but she exited the project after only 11 days and was replaced with Hayek, reports 'Variety'.

A studio spokesperson told Variety at the time that Newton exited the film "to deal with family matters," but outlets like Page Six ran with headlines that claimed it was an on-set fight between Tatum and Newton that got her fired from the movie. Rumours circulated the two actors had an explosive fight over Will Smith slapping Chris Rock at the Oscars. Soderbergh now told Rolling Stone that none of the headlines he saw about Newton's exit were factual, reports 'Variety'. "Nothing I ever saw was accurate, and there's really no upside for anybody involved in litigating this or excavating it, because I consider it private," Soderbergh said. "Everything I saw publicly was wrong. It was just...I don't think anybody sees any benefit in running through this publicly. It becomes something you can't control. Right now, to keep it private means all of us can control it, and I think that's where it should sit for the time being." "The film is showing up at a good time because it's such a joyful movie," Soderbergh recently told Variety. "I'm also curious if there is a space still for mid-range movie budget aimed at adults - one that's not by standard definition a fantasy spectacle."



**'THERE WERE AWFUL WORDS'**

Lily Collins recalls being slut-shamed by toxic ex-boyfriend

Los Angeles | Agencies

Actress Lily Collins is plunged into anxiety by memories of an abusive ex who branded her a "w\*\*\*e." The 'Emily in Paris' actress, who is now in a healthy relationship with husband Charlie McDowell, revealed that she still gets "triggered" about her previous toxic romance. During her appearance on the February 8 episode of the 'We Can Do Hard Things' podcast, Lily talked about her ex. "He would call me 'Little Lily'... and he'd use awful words about me in terms of what I was wearing and would call me a w\*\*\*e and all these things," she recalled. Adding about how his behaviour sparked feelings of "panic" and "anxiety," Lily said, "There were awful words and then there were belittling words. I became quite silent and comfortable in silence and feeling like I had to make myself small to feel super safe. The situations are completely different 10 years ago to now. That panic is what I can still get triggered by."

She added, "Even if I'm in the healthiest relationship, there can be a moment that happens throughout the day where history comes back like that. It's like a millisecond, or shorter than a millisecond, and your gut reacts, your heart starts beating, and all of a sudden you're taken back to that moment where they said that thing to you 10 years ago, but you're not in that situation now and that's the trigger and it's f\*\*\*king hard. It's awful."

Lily, who did not share the identity of her toxic ex, has previously been romantically linked to famous faces including Taylor Lautner, Zac Efron, Chris Evans and Nick Jonas, but there is no suggestion she was talking about any of them.



**ABSOLUTE PIC OF THE**



Charli XCX

**Dwayne Johnson went to "great lengths" to surprise Adele at Grammys**

Los Angeles | Agencies

Hollywood star Dwayne Johnson went to "great lengths" to make sure Adele was "authentically surprised" at the Grammy Awards. The actor stunned the singer, who has expressed multiple times how much of a fan she is of the former wrestler, during host Trevor Noah's opening monologue at Sunday's, February 5, when he appeared from behind her to give her a hug, and he insisted the singer's shock was genuine. He told Variety, "We wanted to do something special for Adele. I know that she is a very big fan of mine and has made that clear publicly many times."

But I've got to tell you, I am a huge fan of hers, as well - her music, her journey, her openness and directness in how she speaks." "I've always admired that about her. We were trying to figure out something to do that was going to be fun and surprise her, and we had kicked around ideas all week. The key to a surprise like that is to actually keep it a surprise." He added: "I and the Grammys went to great lengths to make sure that Adele was authentically surprised in the moment, and she was. It was just a great surprise and I was able to chat with her a little bit and her boyfriend, Rich Paul."







# SRK'S 'PATHAAN' IS THE FIRST FILM EVER TO SHUT DOWN BURJ KHALIFA BOULEVARD

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The brutal battle that superstar Shah Rukh Khan's character Pathaan has with John Abraham's, the anti-hero Jim in Dubai was possible because the entire Burj Khalifa Boulevard was shut down for the first time ever for any film in the world. Director Siddharth Anand reveals, "The toughest action to execute in Pathaan - one is on top of a moving train, one is mid-air with planes, one is in Dubai which takes place in the boulevard around the Burj Khalifa which no Hollywood film has been able to do this."

"To shoot this sequence in Dubai, it just looked impossible. But the Dubai police and the authorities made it happen for us." He adds, "My friends, who live at the Boulevard, came and told me that they got circulars saying on this day between these times, you will not be able to access the boulevard so please plan your days. And they were amazed that - oh my god... that's for my film!"

Siddharth further states, "I said I can't believe it and this wouldn't have been possible if they had not agreed to our vision and supported us wholeheartedly. So I want to thank the Dubai police and the authorities in Dubai."



## UORFI DANCES IN A SAREE AHEAD OF SHOW'S FINALE

Team Absolute | Mumbai

As the curtains are all set to drop for 'MTV Splitsvilla 14' on Friday, social media sensation Uorfi Javed, who was a part of the youth-based reality show as a mischief maker, has shared a music video dancing on the song 'Villa Wala Pyaar' with the other contestants.

Uorfi took to Instagram on Thursday, where she shared a music video. She captioned it: "Bas ho gaya ab bohot intezaar. Uorfi aa gayi hai lekar Villa Wala Pyaar. Ab hoga entertainment non stop mere yaar! Isko sunte sunte ho jao iss season ke grand finale ke liye bhi taiyyar. Fully Faltoo laya hai yeh drama aapke liye from samunder paar."

In the clip, Uorfi is dancing alongside Justin D'Cruz, Sakshi Shrivastava, Soundous, Joshua Chhabbra, Tara Prasad, Akashlina Chandra and Kashish Ratmani. Unlike her usual self, Uorfi, who is known for her bizarre fashion style, is seen wearing a peach floral saree.

The finale of 'MTV Splitsvilla 14' will take place on Friday.



## SID-KIARA RECEIVES A WARM WELCOME; SHAKE A LEG TO DHOL BEATS BEFORE ENTERING HOME

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Newly-weds Sidharth Malhotra and Kiara Advani received a warm welcome at his home in Defence Colony after returning from their wedding held in Jaisalmer. The couple was welcomed with high power dhol beats as they danced outside before making an entry into the brightly-lit house.

A video of Sidharth and Kiara dancing with their friends and family at the gate are doing the rounds on social media.

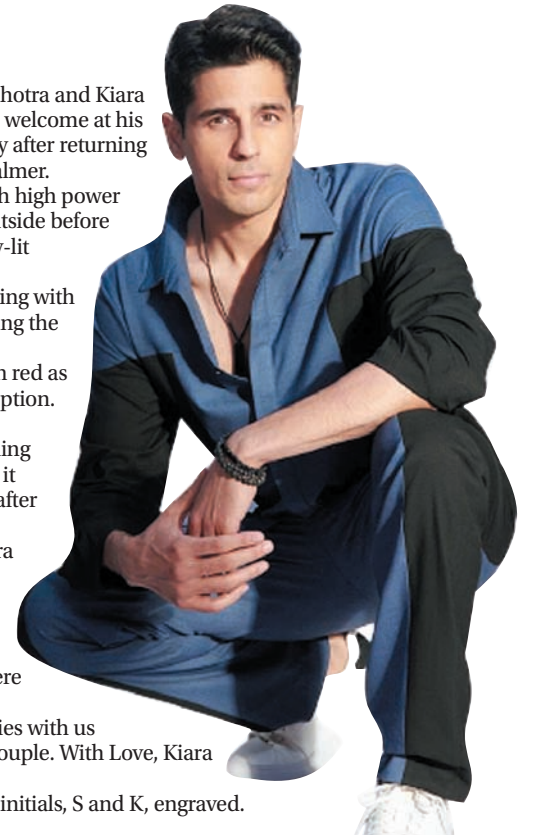
The 'Shershaah' actors were twinning in red as they arrived in Delhi for the wedding reception.

Also a note from newly-weds Sidharth Malhotra and Kiara Advani for their wedding guests has gone viral on social media and it talks about making memories with them after the party.

In the note, Sidharth Malhotra and Kiara Advani penned: "Thank you so much for sharing in the joy of our wedding day. We are so fortunate to have such wonderful family and friends in our lives that have travelled from near and far to celebrate here with us."

"Please drink, dance and make memories with us tonight as our first evening as a married couple. With Love, Kiara & Sid."

They also gave a coin with the couple's initials, S and K, engraved.



## VIJAY SETHUPATHI IS A PURE ARTIST: SHAHID KAPOOR

Shahid worked with Vijay and found him to be extremely innocent and a pure artist

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Bollywood actor Shahid Kapoor, who is gearing up for the release of his show 'Farzi', worked with south sensation Vijay Sethupathi for the first time and he shared that he found him to be extremely innocent. Talking about Vijay, Shahid said on IMDb Original 'Burning Questions': "He is very childlike and innocent in the way he comes across. There is a lot of integrity to him as an actor, and he is also unpredictable as an actor. He's a pure artist; you can just sense it when you work with him. That's the biggest compliment you can give anybody. It was a pleasure working with him."

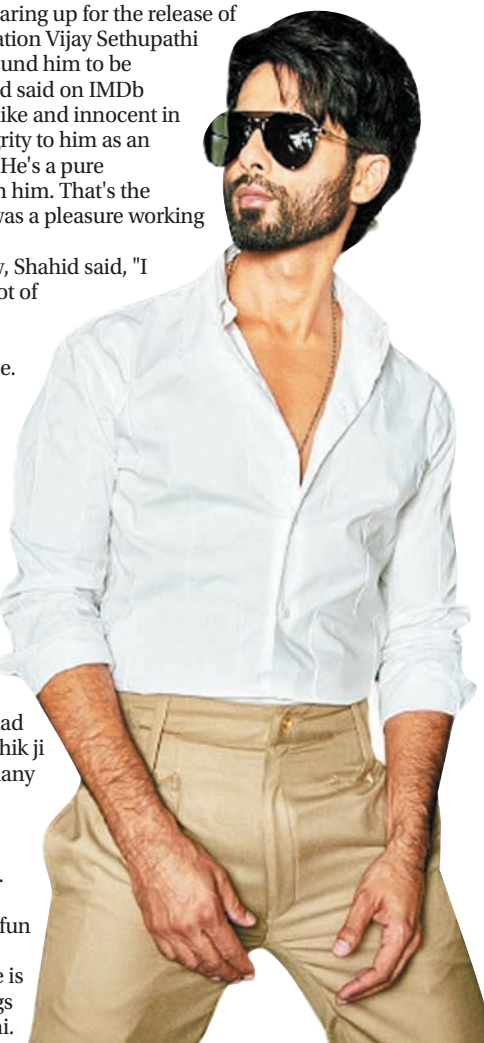
With Farzi streaming in a few days from now, Shahid said, "I am very happy with the show. It takes away a lot of nervousness when you feel satisfied with what you've done. I feel very happy with the way it's turned out and is excited to share it with people. It's my first time on a digital platform, and I'm excited to see how people respond to that."

Shahid made his debut in the Hindi film industry 20 years ago.

When asked how he deals with adversity, he shared some words of wisdom. "Adversity is challenging, but when you are challenged, you become a better version of yourself, so it's an opportunity." About his biggest challenge till date, he said, "People Management. I think it's more challenging than what I do." On the one film he wants everyone to see, Shahid spoke about a classic. "Jaane Bhi Do Yaaro is a film I'd want everyone to see. It had dad (Pankaj Kapur), Naseer uncle, Satish Kaushik ji and some fantastic actors. I don't know how many people have seen it. It even had Vidhu Vinod Chopra as an actor."

"They were all a bunch of friends who came together and made it. Kundan Shah directed it. It's one of the funniest films I have seen. It can make me laugh anytime. If you want to have a fun time, just watch it, it's great!"

He also revealed that 'Dunki' is the movie he is looking forward to watching in 2023, as it brings together Shah Rukh Khan and Rajkumar Hirani.



## Kapil suffers heartbreak as he features in Guru's latest track

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Comedian Kapil Sharma suffers heartbreak as he features in Guru Randhawa's latest track 'Alone' ft. Yogita Bihani. Talking about the song, Guru said: "I have known Kapil Paji for a while and was always a fan of his wonderful voice which makes me glad to be working with him on his debut single. I am so happy that when we suggested this song, he was immediately ready for it. I think the listeners will agree with me when I say that he has nailed this song with his voice."

'Alone' is an emotional heart-break song presented by T-Series, which shows the amazing chemistry between couples played by Kapil Sharma and Yogita Bihani, also features Guru Randhawa.

Kapil said, "I have been passionate about music for as long as I can remember. My long-term dream has finally been realised... all thanks to Bhushan Kumar sir and my dearest friend and brother Guru Paji." "I think the credit for this song goes to Guru as he has sung it, written its lyrics as well as composed this song. I had a blast working with both Yogita and Guru for my first music video, I honestly couldn't have asked for a better team for my debut."

Yogita Bihani, who features in the music video alongside Kapil Sharma and Guru Randhawa, said, "I was extremely ecstatic when I found out that I am going to be a part of this amazing song by Guru Randhawa and Kapil Sharma."



## INSTAGRAM PIC OF THE DAY



Anu Emmanuel