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Class XII CBSE, ISCE board exams cancelled for this year

COVID EFFECT

The Prime Minister stressed that the health and safety of the students are of utmost importance and there would be no compromise on this aspect. He said that in today's time, such exams cannot be the reason to put the youth of the country at risk.

- The Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) will take steps to compile the results of Class XII students as per a well-defined objective criteria in a time-bound manner.
- After the government's decision to cancel CBSE board exams, the Indian School Certificate Examinations (ISCE) also cancelled its Class XII board exams for this year, saying that a scheme for evaluating the students will be announced soon.
- Like last year, in case some students desire to take the exams, such an option would be provided to them by CBSE, as and when the situation becomes conducive.
- The Prime Minister said that all the stakeholders need to show sensitivity for the students, as he directed the officials to ensure that the results are prepared in accordance with well-defined criteria, in a fair and time-bound manner.



The CBSE Class XII board exams for 2021 were cancelled on Tuesday.

The decision was taken after a key meeting chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Cabinet ministers and the concerned officials.

During Tuesday's meeting, the officials submitted a detailed presentation for the Prime Minister on the wide and extensive consultations held so far on the matter and the views received from all the stakeholders, including the state governments. Modi said that the decision on Class XII CBSE exams has been taken in the interest of the students, adding that Covid-19 has affected the academic calendar and the issue of board exams was causing immense anxiety among the students, parents and teachers, which had to come to an end. The Prime Minister said that the Covid situation is a dynamic situation across the coun-

try. While the numbers are coming down and some states are managing the situation through effective micro-containment measures, some states have opted for lockdowns.

The students, parents and teachers are naturally worried about the health of the students in such a stressful situation. Referring to the wide consultative process, Modi expressed appreciation that a student-friendly decision has been reached after consulting all the stakeholders from across the length and breadth of the country. He also thanked the states for providing valuable feedback on this issue. The Prime Minister had earlier held a high-level meeting on the matter on May 21, which was attended by the ministers and concerned officials.

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In view of the uncertain conditions brought about by the Covid-19 pandemic and the feedback obtained from the various stakeholders,

SC seeks details of PM Cares Fund scheme to help kids orphaned by Covid-19

According to the scheme, all children who lost both parents or a surviving parent, legal guardian or adoptive parents due to Covid-19 disease will be supported by a corpus of Rs 10 lakh from the PM Cares Fund. This corpus will be used for providing a monthly stipend for five years when the children are 18 years of age.

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The Supreme Court on Tuesday asked the Centre to provide details of the scheme recently announced under PM Cares Fund to help children who were orphaned due to Covid and how the scheme will be implemented.

Amicus curiae, advocate Gaurav Agrawal submitted before the top court that the government announced a scheme on May 29 to benefit children orphaned due to the pandemic. He added that they don't know yet how many children are beneficiaries of this scheme, though it said children who have lost parents, adoptive parent, etc would be its beneficiaries. A bench comprising Justices L. Nageswara Rao and



Aniruddha Bose asked the Centre's counsel to file an affidavit regarding the announcement of package made under PM Cares Fund. Additional Solicitor General Aishwarya Bhati submitted that the details of the scheme, includ-

ing identification of beneficiaries would be filed before the court. The top court was hearing an application filed in a suo motu matter on prevention of Covid-19 in child care institutions across the country.

SC STAYS HC ORDER ON IGST ON O2 CONCENTRATORS

New Delhi: The Supreme Court on Tuesday stayed the operation of Delhi High Court order, which held that imposition of Integrated Goods and Services Tax (IGST) on the import of oxygen concentrators as gift for personal use is unconstitutional. A bench comprising Justices D.Y. Chandrachud and M.R. Shah said: "We issue notice and till next date of hearing there shall be stay on operation of the May 21 order of the Delhi High Court." Attorney General K.K. Venugopal, representing the Ministry of Finance, argued that several hundreds of such equipment will be imported using the High Court order. The AG submitted that the GST council is holding a meeting on June 8 and this matter will be taken up. After a brief hearing in the matter, the top court issued notice on the plea filed by Ministry of Finance challenging the High Court order and stayed the High Court judgment till the next date of listing.

'Covid may increase in children as virus changing behaviour'

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Taking cognisance of Covid-19 disease dynamics, NITI Aayog's Member, Health, V.K. Paul on Tuesday warned that the pandemic may increase in children as there is a possibility of virus changing its behaviour. The announcement raised a serious alarm as the paediatric population had no Covid-19 infections four-five months before.

"The virus may change its behaviour in the paediatric population. The impact of Covid-19 may increase in children. The data has shown that a low number of children are being admitted to hospitals. We're pushing preparedness. No undue burden has been placed on paediatric care infrastructure so far. However, it is possible that 2 per cent to 3 per cent of children who get infected may need hospitalisation," he said.

Paul said that Covid-19 in children may take two forms. In one form,



symptoms like infection, cough, fever and pneumonia may occur, followed in some cases by hospitalisation.

In the second case, he said, after 2-6 weeks of getting Covid, which may mostly be asymptomatic, a small proportion of children may show symptoms like fever, body rash, and inflammation of eyes or conjunctivitis, breathing troubles, diarrhoea, vomiting and so on.

HOPE TO VACCINATE WHOLE COUNTRY BY DECEMBER 2021: ICMR CHIEF

New Delhi: Noting that Covid-19 vaccination drive is ramping up, Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) Director General Balram Bhargava on Tuesday said they hope to vaccinate the "whole country" by end of this year.

Addressing a press conference here, Bhargava also announced that enough doses to vaccinate 1 crore people per day will be possible by mid-July or August this year. "Our vaccination drive is being ramped up and by December 2021, we hope to have the whole country vaccinated. India is one of the five countries which is producing vaccines. There is no shortage of vaccine in the country. By mid-July or August, we will have enough doses to vaccinate 1 crore people per day. We are confident of vaccinating the whole population by December," he said.



Nestle document says 60% of its food portfolio is unhealthy

The world's largest food company, Nestle, has acknowledged that more than 60 per cent of its mainstream food and drinks products do not meet a "recognised definition of health" and that "some of our categories and products will never be 'healthy no matter how much we renovate'", the Financial Times reported.

- As per the report, Nestle, the maker of KitKat, Maggi and Nescafe, describes the 3.5 star threshold as a "recognised definition of health".
- The report said within its overall food and drink portfolio, about 70 per cent of Nestle's food products failed to meet that threshold, the presentation said, along with 96 per cent of beverages - excluding pure coffee - and 99 per cent of Nestle's confectionery and ice cream portfolio.
- Water and dairy products scored better, with 82 per cent of water and 60 per cent of dairy products meeting the threshold.

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A presentation circulated among the top executives this year, seen by the Financial Times, said only 37 per cent of Nestle's food and beverages by revenues, excluding products such as pet food and specialised medical nutrition, achieve a rating above 3.5 under Australia's health star rating system.

This system scores food out of five stars and is used in research by international groups such as the Access to Nutrition Foundation. The data excludes baby formula, pet food, coffee and the health science division, which makes foods for people with specific medical conditions. This means the data accounts for about half of Nestle's Swiss Francs 92.6 billion (72.7 billion pound) total annual revenues. The report said the findings



come as foodmakers contend with a global push to combat obesity and promote healthier eating. Executives at Nestle are considering what new commitments to make on nutrition and are aiming to unveil plans this year.

"We have made significant improvements to our products? . . . [but] our portfolio still underperforms against external definitions of health in a landscape where regulatory pressure and consumer demands are skyrocketing," the presentation said.



SEASONAL RAINFALL OVER COUNTRY TO BE NORMAL, WELL DISTRIBUTED: IMD

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Southwest monsoon's seasonal rainfall from June to September this year over the country, as a whole, is most likely to be normal and well-distributed spatially, according to the India Meteorological Department (IMD). However, the IMD's National Weather Forecasting Centre said, quantitatively, the monsoon seasonal rainfall during these four months over the country as a whole is likely to be 101 per cent of the LPA with a model error of four per cent up or down.

The LPA of the season rainfall over the country as a whole for the period 1961-2010 is 88 cm.

"Monsoon seasonal rainfall is likely to be well distributed spatially and most parts of the country is expected to receive normal to above normal rainfall during the season," said the IMD.

The latest global model forecasts indicate the prevailing neutral ENSO

The rainfall during these four months is expected to be 96 to 104 per cent of the Long Period Average (LPA)).



(El Nino Southern Oscillation) conditions are likely to continue over the equatorial Pacific Ocean and possibility of development of negative IOD conditions over the Indian Ocean during the monsoon season, it said. ENSO is an irregular periodic variation in winds and sea surface temperatures over the tropical east-

ern Pacific Ocean, affecting the climate of much of the tropics and subtropics. The weather office further said the southwest monsoon seasonal (June to September) rainfall over the four homogeneous rainfall areas is most likely to be normal over northwest India from 92-108 per cent and south peninsula from

93-107 percent. It is most likely to be below normal over northeast India (106 per cent). "The southwest monsoon seasonal (June to September) rainfall over the monsoon core zone, which consists of most of the rainfed agriculture regions in the country is most likely to be above normal (over 106 per cent of LPA), it said.

2020-21 darkest year of economy in four decades: Chidambaram

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Former Finance Minister and senior Congress leader P. Chidambaram on Tuesday said that 2020-21 has been the darkest year of the economy in four decades and that the government should print more money if necessary as suggested by several economists, including Nobel Laureate Abhijit Banerjee.

"We may note that Banerjee has called for printing more money and increasing the spending, though Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman in her recent interviews to various newspapers defended the government's misguided and disastrous policies."

Earlier addressing a press conference, Chidambaram virtually attacked the government over the GDP numbers.

He said, "As expected, the GDP at constant prices recorded a negative growth of (-) 7.3 per cent, the first time India has recorded negative annual growth since 1979-80."

"2020-21 has been the darkest year of the economy in four decades. The performance in the four quarters of 2020-21 tells the story. The first two quarters witnessed a recession (-24.4 and -7.4 per cent). The performance



in the third and fourth quarters did not herald a recovery.

The estimated rates of 0.5 per cent and 1.6 per cent were due to a very low base of 3.3 and 3.0 per cent in the corresponding quarters of the previous year. Besides, these rates come with a number of caveats," the senior Congress leader added.

Chidambaram alleged that when the first wave of the Covid pandemic appeared to subside last year, the Finance Minister and her Chief Economic Adviser began to sell the story of a recovery.

Sidhu meets Cong panel, says 'people's power' should return to people



Team Absolute | New Delhi

Disgruntled Congress leader Navtej Singh Sidhu, who has targeted Punjab Chief Minister Amarinder Singh on various issues including the 2015 Guru Granth Sahib sacrilege case, on Tuesday met the Congress panel for Punjab and presented his version.

Interacting with reporters after the meeting, he said: "I came here on the call of the party high command and I have presented people's voices from grass root level to the part.... my stand on democratic power remains the same that the 'power of the people' must return to the people."

"Every Punjabi must be made a share-

holder in Punjab's progress ... Jittega Punjab, Jittegi Punjabiyat, Jittega har Punjabji."

On Monday, Congress state chief Sunil Jakhar met the committee constituted by party president Sonia Gandhi and comprising of Mallikarjun Kharge, J.P. Aggarwal and General Secretary in charge of the state Harish Rawat. Apart from Jakhar, state ministers Sunder Sham Arora, Charanjit Channi, Aruna Chowdhry, Brahm Mohindra, O.P. Soni, Manpreet Badal, Tript Bajwa, Rana Sodhi and Sukhjinder Randhawa also met the committee. The committee will continue its consultations on Wednesday.

Meanwhile, sources indicated that there is no talk of replacing the Chief Minister, but only rehabilitation of important leaders. The Congress high command will not take the risk of replacing the Chief Minister as there is nobody of his stature to face the Akali Dal, specially the Badal family. The Congress will have to devise a middle path as 20 MLAs are reported to be unhappy with Amarinder Singh's style of functioning.

Most of these MLAs complained about arbitrary actions by the CM but the key concern was the government's inability to bring to book the culprits in the desecration of Guru Granth Sahib and police firing during peaceful protests in 2015, when the Akali Dal-BJP government was in power, as promised in the party's election manifesto.

TWO KILLED, 7 INJURED IN BUILDING COLLAPSE IN VARANASI



Varanasi: Two people were killed and seven injured when a dilapidated building collapsed in the Kashi Vishwanath complex early morning on Tuesday.

The building was in the vicinity of the Kashi Vishwanath Dham and was occupied by migrant labourers from Malda district of West Bengal.

The injured have been admitted to the hospital and senior officials reached the site of the incident to supervise rescue operations. Further details are awaited.

Providence to sell 30 mn doses of PTX-Covid19-B to Biological E

Canada's Providence Therapeutics Holdings Inc and Biological E Ltd on Tuesday announced the execution of a term sheet for sale of up to 30 million doses of the former's proprietary messenger RNA vaccine, PTX-Covid19-B, to Biological E and other end-buyers.



Hyderabad | Agencies

The term sheet sets forth the material terms for a definitive licensing and collaboration agreement and also outlines the terms for sale. This sale represents the sale of all the remaining 2021 Providence production, plus a portion of the early 2022 Providence pro-

duction, after accounting for the first sale of Providence vaccines to Canada's Manitoba Province. The financial terms of the transaction have not been disclosed.

Providence will provide the necessary technology transfer for Biological E to manufacture mRNA vaccines in India, with a minimum production capacity of 600 million doses in 2022 and a target capacity of

1 billion doses. Biological E will be responsible for all clinical development and regulatory activities for the mRNA vaccine in India and other jurisdictions licensed by Biological E. The Hyderabad-based firm will run pivotal trials in India and seek emergency use authorisation.

"This initiative is an important commitment by a Canada-based company to help India and other nations vaccinate their citizens against Covid-19. Providence was founded to serve patients, and this commitment by Biological E allows us to achieve that essential goal," Providence CEO Brad Sorenson said. "The mRNA platform has emerged as the front runner in delivering the first vaccines for emergency use to combat the Covid-19 pandemic.

Biological E is very pleased to be able to work with Providence on its promising mRNA vaccine candidate. We hope to provide India and other countries yet another option to ramp up their efforts towards achieving herd immunity against Covid-19," Biological E Managing Director Mahima Datla said.

VILLAGERS IN BIHAR'S GOPALGANJ LEAVING HOUSES ON FLOOD FEARS

Patna: Villagers of Gopalganj district in north Bihar are leaving their villages after increasing water level of the Gandak river has kindled fears of floods. Most of the affected villages fall under Gopalganj's Sadar block. The villagers claim that water from the Gandak river enters into the villages falling in low-lying areas in Diyara region. Villages such as Jagri Tola, and Maqsdapur, etc are situated on the bank of Gandak river.

"The water level is rising in Gandak river due to continuous rain taking place in the region due to the effects of super cyclones Yaas and Tauktae. Generally, we used to leave the village during the monsoon session. However, due to the super cyclones,

moderate to severe rain is continuously taking place in the region leading to rising water level in the river," said Radhe Shyam Mahto of Jagri Tola. "The water is expected to enter our houses at any time. Hence, we have decided to leave to go to our relatives and will return in February or March next year. We used to live in our native villages for only 6 months in a year," he added.

As many as 21 districts of north Bihar are affected with flood every year during Monsoon session due to rain water coming from Nepal and eastern Uttar Pradesh and accumulating in Gandak, Burhi Gandak, Kosi Bagmati, Kamla Balan rivers, which cross the low-lying districts of north Bihar.

Yogi, Ramdev now in varsity curriculum

Meerut | Agencies

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath and yoga guru Ramdev will now be part of the Chaudhary Charan Singh University curriculum. University officials said that this is part of their effort to teach students about their "ancient cultural heritage" and the architects of this heritage. Yogi Adityanath's 'Hathyoga Ka Swaroop va Sadhna' and Ramdev's 'Yog Sadhna va Yog Chikitsa Rahasya' will be part of the first year, second semester undergraduate philosophy curriculum. It can also be taken as an elective subject by students, along with other courses.

Prof Y. Vimla, pro vice chancellor of the university, said, "The Board of Studies on philosophy has decided that the works of Yogi Adityanath and Ramdev would be included in the syllabus. The two books have been recommended by the state government and endorsed by the Board of Studies of the uni-



versity." The recommendation from the state government was made to the University Grants Commission (UGC).

"Study and practice of this course will provide a stressless and effortless life, expansion of consciousness, regulation of the nervous system, etc," said the syllabus structure for the philosophy course recommended by the state government to the university. Under the New Education Policy, the UGC has come up with a new curriculum which allows universities to decide what makes up 30 per cent of the syllabus for each course. This 30 per cent is designed to keep regional relevance in mind.

Kerala to vaccinate bed-ridden people at their homes

Thiruvananthapuram | Agencies

In a move which will bring relief, Kerala on Tuesday announced all bed-ridden people above 45 will be administered the Covid vaccine at their homes. The state, meanwhile, saw its Covid test positivity rate at 15.13 per cent. Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan had, the other day, mentioned that one of the indicators to lift the lockdown norms would be the TPR staying below 15 per cent for three days.

At present, the lockdown is there till June 9, and given the TPR, it seems that the lockdown could be lifted next Wednesday.

A statement issued by Vijayan said that the day saw 19,760 people turn Covid positive after 1,30,594 samples were sent for testing in the past 24 hours, taking the total active cases to 2,02,426. There were 24,117 recoveries, taking the total cured to 23,34,502 in the state. Despite all the favourable indicators, the number of deaths in the state on account of Covid continue to remain high as 194 fatalities were reported, taking the death toll to 9,009.



Another favourable indicator was the total number of people under observation at various places also has come down to 7,64,008, including 37,493 people at hospitals.

State Health Minister Veena George said that the her department is getting ready a detailed protocol in the way how those bed-ridden people in the above age 45 category would be given vaccine jabs at their residence. The first step would be to prepare a list and once done, the process would begin and all those who arrive to give the vaccine would be wearing PPE kits and will wait for 30 minutes after the jab is given to see if everything is ok with the person who was inoculated.

Why only formalities and not treatment of black fungus: Rahul

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Amid rising cases of black fungus, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Monday attacked the government for not providing proper treatment to patients suffering from the disease.

Union Minister for Chemicals and Fertilisers D.V. Sadananda Gowda on Monday had announced that an additional 30,100 vials of Amphotericin B have been allocated to all the States/UTs and Central Institutions.

The injection is used for treatment of Mucormycosis, a serious but rare fungal infection caused by a group of molds called mucormycetes that has been developing in Covid-19 patients.

The fungal disease is commonly being observed in patients who were given steroids for a long time; those who have been hospitalised for a long



time, were on oxygen support or ventilator, faced poor hospital hygiene or those who have been taking medication for other illnesses such as diabetes. If not treated on time, the infection can turn fatal.

Rahul Gandhi on Tuesday in a tweet said, "Government should clarify about the situation of black fungus epidemic, what is being done for the shortage of Amphotericin B, and what is the procedure of giving medicine to patients. why is the government not giving proper treatment but indulging in formalities."

Leaders welcome decision to cancel Class XII board exams

Team Absolute | New Delhi

In view of the uncertain conditions brought about by the Covid-19 pandemic and the feedback obtained from the various stakeholders, the Centre on Tuesday decided to cancel the CBSE Class XII board exams for 2021.

The decision to cancel the Class XII board exams was taken in a review meeting on Tuesday that was chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

"Tweeting the government decision, Modi said, "Government of India has decided to cancel the Class XII CBSE Board Exams. After extensive consultations, we have taken a decision that is student-friendly, one that safeguards the health as well as future of our youth."

Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi

Union ministers and leaders cutting across party lines on Tuesday welcomed the Centres decision to cancel the CBSE Class XII board exams this year.

Vadra congratulated the students for making their voice heard.

"Congratulations students of Class 12 for making your voices heard. After all the uncertainty and stress, you deserve to relax and celebrate today! All the best for a happy, healthy and bright future ahead," Priyanka Gandhi tweeted.

In a series of tweets, Union Education Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal 'Nishank' said, "To ensure safety and security of students, teachers and parents and to put an end to the anxiety in the minds of Class XII students, in a

meeting chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi Ji, it was decided to issue CBSE results based on well-defined criteria."

In another tweet, Pokhriyal said, "I wish all the students the very best in their careers. I would like to reiterate that safety and career of students are of paramount importance for Modi ji's government."

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal tweeted, "I am glad 12th exams have been cancelled. All of us were very worried about the health of our children. A big relief."



'MAKE PEOPLE AWARE AND ALSO TAKE STRICT ACTION FOR CORONA COMPLIANT BEHAVIOR'

Do more and more tests and do contact tracing, pay special attention to the treatment of black fungus, Chief Minister Chouhan reviews the situation and arrangements of Corona

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has said that unlock has started in the state. Now is the real test. We also have to run the daily routine also end the rest of the infection. For this, make people aware of Covid-compliant behavior and also take strict action.

Chouhan said that corona infection should not increase under any circumstances. More and more tests should be done and contact tracing of every positive patient should be done. Kill Corona campaign should be run effectively. Chief Minister said that special attention should be paid to the treatment of black fungus in the state and to ensure timely delivery of amphotericin B and other medicines to every hospital that is treating it.

Chouhan was reviewing the situation and arrangements of Corona in the state through video conferencing from his residence. All concerned were present in the V.C.

1078 new cases

There are 1078 new cases of Corona in the state. The number of active cases is 20 thousand 203. On Tuesday 4120 patients have become healthy. The 7-day average positivity of the state is 2.2% and today's positivity is 1.5%. The recovery rate is 96.4%.

More than 5% positivity in Indore

Now Indore district has more than 5% positivity rate. The remaining 51 districts



have less than 5% weekly positivity rate. The weekly positivity rate of Indore is 6% and that of Bhopal is 4.7. The weekly positivity rate of 22 districts of the state is less than 1% and the positivity rate of 29 districts is up to 5%. There is no new case in Alirajpur. 01-01 new cases have come in Katni, Khandwa and Mandla districts.

More than 10 new cases in 16 districts

Now more than 10 cases have come in 16 districts of the state. 362 in Indore, 221 in Bhopal, 98 in Jabalpur, 41 in Gwalior, 24 in Ratlam, 21 in Sehore, 17 in Betul, 15 in Sagar, 14 in Dhar, 14 in Neemuch, 14 in Rewa, 13 in Raisen, Anuppur 12, 12 new cases have come in Ashoknagar, 12 in Kargone and 12 in Morena.

12,906 patients at home Isolation

Out of 20 thousand 303 active patients of Corona in the state, 12 thousand 906 patients are in home isolation. The remaining patients are admitted in hospitals. Out of the patients admitted in the hospitals, 2327 patients are in ICU, 2629 patients are on oxygen beds and 2441 patients are on normal beds.

1.1 in rural areas and 2.62% in urban areas

Kill Corona Campaign-4 is being run in rural and urban areas in the state, under which free medical kits are being provided to the patients of cold, cold, fever etc. The survey has positivity of 1.1% in rural areas and 2.62% in urban areas.

987 active cases of Black Fungus

There are 987 active cases of black fungus in the state. There are cases of 417 fungi in Indore, 223 in Bhopal, 120 in Jabalpur, 82 in Ujjain, 56 in Gwalior, 36 in Rewa, 36 in Sagar, 15 in Dewas and 1-1 in Burhanpur and Ratlam.

11,341 treated in Covid treatment plan

So far, 11 thousand 341 Covid patients have been treated free of cost in Covid treatment scheme in the state. Presently 3184 patients are being treated free of cost in government hospitals, 914 patients in contract hospitals and 5029 patients in affiliated hospitals.

'Don't play games with Supreme Court'

Top court bench tells BSP MLA Rambai's husband accused in murder case



New Delhi / Bhopal:

Bhopal

The Supreme Court on Tuesday warned the husband of a Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) MLA from Madhya Pradesh, who was arrested in

connection with the murder of Congress leader Devendra Chourasia, saying "don't play games with the Supreme Court".

The MLA's husband had moved the top court seeking bail.

Declining to entertain the bail plea of BSP MLA Rambai Singh's husband Govind Singh, a bench comprising Justices D.Y. Chandrachud and M.R. Shah said the court will not grant him bail and the petitioner can seek remedy before the appropriate forum. Singh's counsel sought liberty of the court that his client be allowed to persuade the trial court for bail. To which the bench replied: "We are not saying anything in the order. Don't play games with the Supreme Court."



The bench pointed out to Singh's counsel that his client has been booked for murder and many cases are pending against him.

The bench pointed out that the petitioner was given police security because he is the husband of an MLA, and instead of arresting him, the police were protecting him. The bench added that there was also a lookout notice for Singh after he tried to abscond. The bench said: "Only after the orders of this court that you were arrested. We are not inclined to give you bail."

After a brief hearing in the matter, the top court allowed Singh to withdraw the bail plea.

Singh was arrested by the police on May 28 after the top court had given a deadline to Madhya Pradesh DGP on April 5. The top court had on March 26 observed that an effort was being made to shield the accused after the DGP had said that despite court order, the police were not able to arrest him. The top court was then hearing pleas by Somesh, the son of Chaurasia, and the state government seeking cancellation of the bail granted to Singh. The petitioner had claimed that Singh was involved in several heinous cases while on bail. The top court had on March 12 noted the MP police's failure to arrest Singh and the alleged harassment of a judge by the Damoh superintendent of Police. The top court had asked the DGP to examine the allegations levelled by the judicial officer. In its February 8 order, the judge had noted that he was "pressured" by the Damoh SP and his subordinates.



Selfie campaign in Bhopal to raise awareness about vaccination

Team Absolute | Bhopal

To spread the awareness about the importance of vaccination, those families in Bhopal who have got vaccinated, have decided to launch a selfie campaign on the social media on the lines of 'Mera Parivar Corona Mukti' campaign of the Madhya Pradesh government.

District Panchayat Chief Executive Officer, Vikas Mishra, in a meeting with various departments said, the process of unlocking the state has begun from Tuesday. At present, there has been a decline in cases of Covid-19 infections. In order to further reduce Covid cases, it is necessary to follow Covid-19 appropriate behaviour such as consistent and proper wearing of face masks, maintaining social distancing and



strictly following hygiene norms. Vaccine is currently the easiest way to protect an individual against Covid-19. People who have been vaccinated should serve as role models and motivate others to get vaccinated. Therefore, families who have got vaccinated on a war footing basis. ASHA and Anganwadi workers along with self-help groups in Bhopal district have been working continuously in this direction and efforts are on to seek the help of those working in non-governmental organisations to raise awareness through selfies.

Inter-state bus service from MP will remain suspended till June 7

Team Absolute | Bhopal

The postponed transport service from Madhya Pradesh to four border states has been extended till June 7 due to Corona infection. State Transport and Revenue Minister Govind Singh Rajput said that despite the relief in Corona curfew from June 1, the inter-state bus service will remain suspended till June 7. In view of the decreasing positivity rate of infection and increasing recovery rate in the state, the process of unlocking has been started in the state in a systematic manner from June



1. Transport Minister Rajput said that in view of the corona virus infection in the state, we cannot be careless about the spread of corona infection through passengers coming from outside the

state. To prevent the spread of this infection, the previously restricted inter-state bus service has been extended to June 7.

Transport Minister Rajput said that these services will be restricted to Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and Chhattisgarh as before. Neither Madhya Pradesh buses will go to these states nor will buses come from these states to Madhya Pradesh. These services will be restricted till June 7. After this, in view of the situation, further decision will be taken regarding the restoration of services.

THE PICTURES AND VIDEOS OF PEOPLE ROAMING UN-NECESSARILY WILL GO VIRAL ON SOCIAL MEDIA

Barwani: To prevent corona infection in Madhya Pradesh, preparations are being made to crack down on those who roam unnecessarily on the roads. In Barwani district, the administration has decided that the pictures and videos of those who violate the provisions of unlock by roaming unnecessarily will be released on social media WhatsApp. Shivraj Singh Verma, Collector of Barwani, has said that during unlock from June 1, the arrangements have to be implemented at all times. For this, field staff of teachers, patwaris and other departments should be deployed in the area of their charge. They will make a video of the people violating the provision of unlock and it will be sent to their WhatsApp. Based on this, action should be taken against the guilty shopkeeper.

During the video conferencing, the collector told all the revenue officers that the rule of opening 50 percent shops in the cities and big towns of their charge should be compulsorily followed. For this, information about the opening of shops should be made available to shopkeepers by various means on the basis of even-odd numbers. So that they do not inadvertently violate this rule.

Farmers will be able to deposit crop loan amount till June 30: Patel

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Farmer's Welfare and Agriculture Development Minister Kamal Patel informed that in view of corona infection, Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has given instructions to extend the crop loan recovery till June 30. He said that earlier also the date of recovery of crop loan has been extended.

Patel said that the government of the state is the government of farmers. The government is with them in every sorrow and pain of the farmers, they

will not be allowed to face any kind of trouble. With this sensitivity, Chief Minister has decided to extend the date of deposit of crop loan amount for the third time.

It is noteworthy that earlier the date of depositing the loan amount was 31 March, which has been extended to 30 April, then 31 May and now 30 June.

Patel said that this decision will give relief to the farmers of the state. He has expressed gratitude to Chief Minister on behalf of the farmers of the state.

TOURIST MOVEMENT STARTED IN TIGER RESERVE AREAS

Bhopal: All tiger reserves of the state have been opened for tourists from June 1. On the first day, 124 tourists enjoyed tourism in the Tala, Magadhi and Shitoulri regions of the Badhavgarh Tiger Reserve. Area Director Vincent Rahim said that 73 tourists entered 15 tourist vehicles and 51 tourists entered 12 tourist vehicles in the morning and afternoon. Hand washing and thermal screening were done with soap while entering the National Park, which started a month and a half later. For this, arrangement of sanitizer is being made by the park management at the booking counter, all the gate interpretation center, Sovereign Shop, Center Point etc.

Use modern technology to make education useful for students: Governor

Online education is the system of the future, Fourth foundation day of Pt S.N. Shukla University Shahdol celebrations conclude

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Governor Anandiben Patel has said that today we are faced with countless challenges due to Covid-19 pandemic, but it has opportunities also. The need is to provide quality education to students by facing challenges with self-evaluation, clear action plans and determination. She said that online learning is the system of the future. It should be used to make education useful for the student. This work can be done by providing additional learning material to students according to their interests, specialties and weaknesses instead of treating all of them as equal. Patel was addressing an online seminar on 'University Management: Challenges



and Possibilities in the Context of Pandemic' from Lucknow Raj Bhavan on the occasion of the fourth foundation day celebration of Pandit SN Shukla University, Shahdol. Make an action plan for the upcoming academic session The Governor said that the

pandemic has globally impacted economic and social life. The challenge before universities today is to reduce the negative impact on education as much as possible. In view of the upcoming academic session 2021-22, universities should prepare a detailed action plan to meet the possible challenges. Student-teacher relationship and mutual interaction is a very important factor in the success of students. Therefore, options for teaching through mixed education method will have to be considered in the coming academic session. For this, all universities should continuously update the online learning technology. She said that some students may be facing family problems or financial crisis due to this pandemic, universities should be more sensitive and prepare an action plan for such students. Efforts should be made that no student should be deprived of education due to financial crisis.

Liquor party in Health Minister's car, video went viral

Team Absolute | Bhopal

A video of a purported vehicle of a Madhya Pradesh minister is going viral on social media, in which three youths are allegedly drinking alcohol, there was a dispute with the people of the village, Congress has alleged by tweeting this video that this car belongs to the health minister Dr. Prabhuram Choudhary. Narendra Saluja, media coordinator of Congress state president Kamal Nath, shared the video with the tweet. He wrote, "The vehicle in which alcoholism is being done is being told by the state health minister and the person driving it is being told as a private driver? This is a video near the school in the Satlapur police station area. Sayin Bhai Kotwal to dar kahe ka (Beloved is Boss, why afraid?) Anyway, there still a liquor-loving government in the state" It is seen in this video that three youths are sitting



in a car, whose number is of government vehicles, the number of government vehicles in the state starts with MP 02. A young man sitting in the car is drinking something. After that the people of the village surround the car, there is a dispute, the vil-

lagers also try to get the key of the car. Even then, the driver quickly runs away. Health Minister Dr. Choudhary said in statement that he will take strict action if the allegations are found true. The probe has been ordered.



LOWEST COVID CASES IN 50 DAYS AS DEATHS DIP BELOW 3K

Team Absolute | New Delhi

India reported 1,27,510 new infections in 24 hours -- its lowest in 50 days, as 2,795 more succumbed to the pandemic, the Union Health and Family Welfare Ministry said on Tuesday.

This is the least number of fresh infection reported after April 8, when India recorded 1,31,968 cases while on April 7, India witnessed 1,26,789 fresh cases.

Fatalities also dropped below the 3,000-mark for the first time since April 26, when the country witnessed 2,771 deaths.

Most Metro cities are still fighting huge waves, though Mumbai and Delhi have arrested the surge.

For the first time in 47 days Delhi on Saturday reported less than 100 cases. Andhra Pradesh on Sunday breached the 15-lakh mark in recoveries.

India's overall tally of Covid-19 cases now stands at 2,81,75,044 with 18,95,520 active cases and 3,31,895



deaths so far.

According to the Health Ministry, a total of 2,55,287 people have been discharged in the last 24 hours, taking the total discharge to 2,59,47,629 in

Covid cases till date.

The Health Ministry said that a total of 21,60,46,638 people have been vaccinated so far in the country, including 27,80,058 who were admin-

istered vaccines in the last 24 hours.

According to the Indian Council of Medical Research, 34,67,92,257 samples have been tested up to May 31 for Covid-19. Of these 19,25,374 samples were tested on Monday.

In the last three weeks, India has recorded over 75,000 deaths. On May 24, India crossed a grim milestone of three-lakh deaths due to the coronavirus infections, thus becoming world's third country after the US and Brazil to cross three-lakh deaths.

India registered record fatalities due to Covid on May 21 with 4,529 deaths -- the highest from Covid infection in any country in a day since the coronavirus outbreak was reported in China's Wuhan in December 2019.

It surpassed 4,468 deaths in the US on January 12, and earlier 4,211 in Brazil on April 6. After battling a brutal second wave for weeks, fresh Covid cases came down below the three lakh-mark for the first time on May 17 after touching record high of 4,14,188 on May 7.

Delhi Police suspends arms license of Sushil Kumar

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Nine days after two time olympic medallist Sushil Kumar was arrested on May 24 in connection with the murder of wrestler Sagar Dhankar, Delhi Police has suspended his arms license.

According to informed sources in Delhi Police related to his case, Delhi Police has sent notice to Kumar to cancel his arms license that was issued to him in 2012.

The source said that as of now the arms license of Kumar has been suspended and in the notice Police has asked why his arms license should not be cancelled.

The notice from Police has been sent to his home directly. He has been given 10 days time to respond to the notice. Dhankar was killed on the night of May 4 during a brawl at Chhatrasal Stadium.

Kumar was arrested by Delhi Police Special Cell

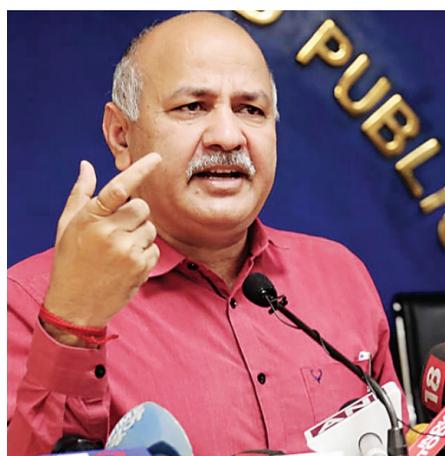


sleuths from Delhi on May 24 along with his aide Ajay after staying on the run for 18 days. On Sunday, Crime Branch sleuths took Sushil Kumar to Uttarakhand's Haridwar to probe where he took shelter during his run. The police team also tried to find Kumar's clothes and mobile phone in Haridwar.

Till date, Delhi Police has arrested nine people in connection with the case, including several members of Nwrraj Bawana and Kala Asauda gang.

Sushil Kumar had won a bronze medal in the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games and silver in the 2012 London Olympic Games.

Adopting new parenting approach is the need of the hour: Sisodia



Team Absolute | New Delhi

Delhi Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia on Tuesday said that adopting new par-

enting approach is the need of the hour for emotional well-being of our children, especially in times of the pandemic situation, when various social interactions for

the children has stopped.

Sisodia asserted that in times of the grave Covid crisis, parenting is the key to children who have been locked up at the home with their families.

"A new normal has emerged and our old ways of parenting will not work. Our children who used to have many social interactions are now at home, they are unable to go to school or meet their friends," the Deputy CM said at a webinar organised on the occasion of Global Parents Day.

Sisodia, who is also the Education Minister in the AAP-led Delhi government, said that in India, approaches to parenting are still very archaic.

"Our ways of parenting need to change, we need to adopt approaches that will deal with the challenges of our current times," he added.

NISHANK IN AIIMS FOR POST COVID COMPLICATION



New Delhi: Union Education Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal 'Nishank' was admitted to AIIMS on Tuesday for post Covid complications. His condition is stable, aides said.

The 61-year-old minister was rushed to the hospital following complains of low level of oxygen. Nishank had tested positive for the virus in April this year.

AIIMS sources said there was nothing serious and treatment has started. This development comes ahead of a scheduled meeting for CBSE Board exams for Class 12.

Vax by pvt hospitals in residential colonies meant for all: AAP MLA

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Aam Aadmi Party leader and Malviya Nagar MLA Somnath Bharti has stated that vaccination camps run in residential colonies by private hospitals is for all and not just those above 60 or physically challenged.

He said to dispel any misinterpretation or confusion he held detailed discussion on March 31 with senior officials in the Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, and was categorically told that that camps were to be availed by all. Bharti said the health ministry has clarified that such camps although should focus on elderly citizens and physically handicapped because they face logistical problems in going to hospital or crowded places. "But in no manner anyone who is below 60 years of age or not physically handicapped is prohibited in getting vaccinated at such vaccination centers," his statement said. This came after Bharti organised an immunisation drive for the locals at Greenfield



School in Safdarjung Enclave on Sunday. According to a statement from Bharti's office, the drive was held with the help of Delhi-based NGO - Bridging the Gap Foundation' and Fortis Escorts Hospital.

EX-COP HELD IN GURUGRAM FOR THRASHING 2 BROTHERS OVER CRICKET MATCH BRAWL

Gurugram: A retired policeman was arrested for mercilessly thrashing two siblings over a cricket match brawl here in Sector-39, police said on Tuesday. The incident took place on Monday evening and later went viral on social media, where the ex-cop Prem Babu Sharma and his family members could be seen tying up one of the two brothers to an electric pole and severely thrashing him.

According to the police, the matter escalated into a major brawl after Prem's son Naveen sustained eye injury during a cricket match.

The victims were identified as Suraj and Vishvajeet, residents of Jharsa village in Gurugram. The siblings alleged in their complaint that they were playing cricket in the Jharsa village on Monday evening when Naveen reached the spot and insisted on joining the match.

CBI books Ghosh Brothers Automobiles in bank fraud case

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) on Tuesday said that it has registered a case against Guwahati-based Ghosh Brothers Automobiles and its promoters and directors in a bank fraud case worth Rs 168 crore.

A CBI spokesperson here said that the agency has booked Pranab Kumar Ghosh, Pratul Kumar Ghosh, Gita Rani Ghosh and Prabir Kumar Ghosh, all promoters-Directors of Ghosh Brothers

Automobiles. Besides the promoters and directors, the CBI has also named Arunabha Chattopadhyay, Chartered Accountant and unknown bank officials and private persons.

The official said that the case has been registered on the basis of a complaint from IDBI Bank for causing a loss of Rs 168.62 crore. He said that in the complaint it was alleged that term loan and cash credit facility were sanctioned fraudulently to the private company based at Guwahati to the tune of Rs 64.67 crore from IDBI Bank,

Guwahati Branch for purchasing vehicles.

"It was further alleged that the accused availed loan by submission of false documents and also the accused indulged in diversion of money for the purpose other than for which the loan was sanctioned, and thereby caused loss of Rs 168.62 crore as on January 31, 2021 to the bank," he said.

He said that as on July 1, 2020, the outstanding balance was Rs 153.38 crore and the said account became NPA due to the non payment of dues to the Bank.

CENTRE EXEMPTS RENEWAL RC FEE FOR BATTERY OPERATED VEHICLES

New Delhi: The Centre has exempted Battery Operated Vehicles (BOV) from payment of fees for the purpose of issue or renewal of Registration Certificate (RC) and assignment of new registration mark.

The Ministry of Road Transport and Highways issued a draft notification in this regard on May 27 further to amend the Central Motor Vehicles Rules, 1989 proposing to exempt renewal of RC of BOV. As per the Ministry, the decision was taken to encourage e-mobility. "Comments from general public and all stakeholders have been sought within a period of thirty days from the date of issuance of this draft notification," said the Ministry.



Gurugram's education dept urges parents to get vaccinated

GURUGRAM | Agencies

Gurugram' education officer Indu Boken has appealed to the parents of the students of both government and private schools in the district to get themselves vaccinated at the earliest and wear protective gears while stepping out in public.

Boken said if the parents are safe then only their children will be safe while staying at home.

"Continuous efforts are being made both by the district administration and the state government to contain the Covid spread. To protect children from the deadly virus, advance summer vacation was declared by the government, which is an important decision by the education department in the interest of the children," she added. Boken said that due to the pandemic situation today, students are in their homes but their parents have to go out to earn their livelihood. "So, it is important



that parents get their vaccination done as soon as possible and do not be careless about it. If parents are safe in the home, then only other family members and children will be safe from the deadliest virus," she said. The education officer further said that according to the experts there is also a possibility of a third Covid wave which can be a big threat to the children. "The most important way to avoid this danger is vaccination, by which parents can protect themselves as well as other members of their household from infections," she added.

Strong winds likely in Delhi & adjoining areas

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Lightning accompanied by gusty winds is forecast on Tuesday over Delhi, East Rajasthan, Punjab, Haryana and Chandigarh.

While in these five places it will be at 40 to 50 kmph, speed with slightly lower intensity between 30 and 40 kmph is also expected at isolated places over Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Madhya Maharashtra, Marathwada, Coastal Andhra Pradesh and Yanam, North Interior Karnataka, Kerala and Mahe.

Jammu, Kashmir, Ladakh, Gilgit-Baltistan, Muzaffarabad, Himachal Pradesh, West Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, West Bengal, Sikkim, Odisha, Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram, Tripura, Konkan, Goa, Telangana, Rayalaseema, Coastal and South Interior Karnataka and Tamil Nadu, Puducherry and Karaikal will see lightning at isolated areas.

Delhi's minimum temperature settled at 17.6 degrees Celsius while maximum temperature hovered around 35 degrees Celsius. It was forecast light rain, thundershowers accompanied with gusty winds with speed of 30-40 kmph.

As per the Indian Meteorological Department's (IMD) latest forecast, thunderstorm with lightning, hail and gusty winds with speed reaching 40-50 kmph is also very likely at isolated places over Vidarbha in Maharashtra.

The IMD also indicated that the "southwesterly winds have strengthened, resulting in likely enhancement in rainfall activity over Kerala". "Hence the monsoon onset over Kerala is likely to take place around June 3, 2021."



"Due to strengthening of lower-level southwesterly winds, fairly widespread to widespread rainfall activity likely over Northeastern states during next five days. Isolated heavy to very rainfall very likely over Assam and Meghalaya during next two days and heavy rainfall over Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram and Tripura during next two days."

The Western Disturbance as a trough in mid and upper tropospheric westerlies with its axis at 5.8 km above mean sea level roughly along longitude 76 degree east to the north of latitude 28-degree north is also behind the changes, said the IMD. "Lower-level moisture incursion from north Arabian Sea to the plains of Northwest India taking place and is very likely to continue during next 2-3 days. Under its influence, no significant change in maximum temperatures very likely during next two days," the IMD said.

Also, the weather department said, isolated to scattered rainfall and thunderstorm activity likely over Western Himalayan Region and adjoining plains of Northwest India during next two days. There is also prediction about the cyclonic circulation over east central Arabian Sea off Karnataka coast between 3.1 and 4.5 km above mean sea level. "It is likely to meander over the region during next three days." The IMD further said that southwesterly winds are also likely to strengthen during next two-three days and under the influence of these and other favourable meteorological conditions, scattered to fairly widespread rainfall and thunderstorm likely over Karnataka, Kerala and Mahe.

"Isolated to scattered rainfall thunderstorm is also expected over remaining parts of south Peninsular India during next 4-5 days."



LOCKDOWN RELAXATION IN MUMBAI, PUNE, NAGPUR AND SOME MORE DISTRICTS

As per the census of 2011, the municipal corporations that are having a population of more than 10 lakh will be considered as the independent administrative unit for curbing the spread of COVID-19. Mumbai, Thane, Navi Mumbai, Kalyan-Dombivali, Vasai Virar, Pune, Pimpri Chinchwad, Nagpur, Aurangabad and Nashik corporations will be treated as the administrative units, the order had said.

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The Maharashtra government has announced various exemptions from Covid-based restrictions depending on positivity rates and oxygen bed availability in various districts. According to the latest guidelines issued under the Uddhav Thackeray-led MVA government's 'Break the Chain' initiative, establishments or shops involved in providing essential commodities should remain open from 7 a.m. to 2 p.m. in municipal corporations or states with a COVID-19 positivity rate of less than 10% and less than 40% oxygen beds occupied. Border points will be closed in districts where the COVID-19 positive rate is over 20% and more than 75% of oxygen beds are occupied, and no one will be able to enter or exit. Only death in the family, medical reasons, and emergency services or services related to such events shall be exempt from this rule. Restaurants will continue to offer food delivery services.



MUMBAI

Lockdown limitations will be in place from 7 a.m. on June 1 to 7 a.m. on June 15, with some exceptions based on the COVID-19 situation. Before 3 p.m., both essential and non-essential e-commerce deliveries will be permitted. After 3 p.m., only critical services such as medical, other emergency, and food delivery will be permitted. Except for individuals working in COVID-related projects, all other government offices will function at a 25% capacity. Agricultural stores will be allowed to remain open until 2 p.m.

NAGPUR

All essential as well as non-essential or standalone shops, including some exceptions, will now be allowed to remain open in Nagpur between 7 am and 2 pm from Monday to Friday. All non-essential shops (stand-alone shops not located inside shopping centres/malls) shall be allowed to operate between 7 am and 2 pm from Monday to Friday. The movement of people will remain restricted till 3 pm every day except for medical and other emergencies or for home deliveries allowed under the order dated May 13, it said. All government offices, except those involved directly in the pandemic work, can function with 25 per cent attendance in the Nagpur city limits. The agriculture-related shops shall remain open till 2 pm throughout the week, as per the order.

PUNE

On weekdays, stand-alone shops selling non-essential items and liquor stores are permitted to remain open from 7 a.m. to 2 p.m. Shops selling essential items are permitted to remain open from 7 a.m. to 2 p.m. every day. Except for medical reasons, Pune residents would not be able to leave after 3 p.m. Mall shops would not be allowed to open, but e-commerce firms will be able to transport both vital and non-essential items.

Maha Covid deaths remain high, cases drop, toll crosses 96K mark



Team Absolute | Mumbai

A day after dropping below the 200 level, Maharashtra's Covid-19 daily deaths rebounded to high on Tuesday with the toll crossing the 96,000 mark though new infections continued to slide, health officials said on Tuesday. Compared to 500 deaths on Monday, the state reported 854 fatalities (477 fresh, and 377 previous deaths), taking its toll to 96,198. The number of fresh cases fell from 15,077 on Monday to 14,123, taking the tally to 57,61,015 now.

In Mumbai, after two days, the new infections remained below the 1,000 level, but rose from 666 on Monday to 830, and the city tally climbed to 706,118. Deaths went down from 29 on Monday to 23, while total fatalities in the country's commercial capital went up to 14,849. The number of active cases dropped sharply from 253,367 to 230,681 now. Meanwhile, another 35,949 fully cured patients returned home, taking the total to 54,31,319 while the recovery rate further improved from 93.88 per cent to 94.28 per cent. The Mumbai Circle - comprising Mumbai, Thane, Palghar, and Raigad districts - recorded a further hike in new cases, from 1,952 to 2,374 now, while the case load rose to 15,34,781 and with 102 more deaths, the toll reached 27,906, in view of the reconciliation of fatalities. Meanwhile, the number of people sent to home isolation stood at 17,68,119 now, while those shunted to institutional quarantine went below the 10,000 mark after nearly two months, to 9,315.

Mumbai woman dies while grappling mobile thief

Team Absolute | Mumbai

In a shocking incident, a young woman and mother of three daughters, fell off a running train and was killed while grappling with a mobile thief, officials said here on Tuesday. The incident happened on Saturday evening around 7.45 pm near the Kalwa suburban stations on the Central Railway when the deceased, Vidya D. Patil 35, was returning home from her office in Andheri. According to her brother-in-law Kamalakar Patil, it was her fourth day at work after she was on maternity leave for six months and delivered a baby girl. According to Thane Government Railway Police (GRP) officials, Patil had boarded the train from Kurla for Dombivali where she lived in Ganesh Ghat, Kumbharkhanpada locality. Just as the train started leaving Kalwa station, a robber jumped inside the ladies' compartment, grabbed her mobile phone and rushed to the door to jump out on the platform. Not willing to give up, she lunged after him and caught him, but he pushed her, and she fell in the gap between the train and the platform and was run over. The entire incident lasted barely 10 seconds, giving no time to two other stunned women commuters inside the compartment to react or help her.



Patil is survived by her husband Dnyaneshwar, three daughters Purva, 9, Megha, 6 and Pari who is only 6 months old, besides an aged mother-in-law Indubai Patil, a grieving Kamalakar Patil told reporter. Moving swiftly, the GRP scanned CCTV footage and managed to nab the thief, identified as a history-sheeter Faisal Jameel Sheikh, 31, from his hideout in the nearby Mumbai town. Having several past cases of thefts or robbery against him, Sheikh was produced before a court which has been remanded to police custody till June 4.

Nine bidders shortlisted for CSMT building redevelopment

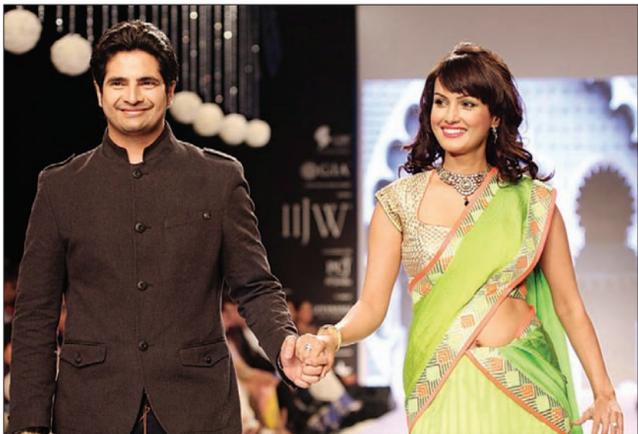
Team Absolute | Mumbai

The Indian Railway Stations Development Corporation (IRSDC) has shortlisted 9 bidders for the proposed redevelopment of the 133-year old Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Terminus (CSMT), a UNESCO World Heritage site, an official said on Tuesday. The development comes after the IRSDC invited Requests for Qualification (RFQ) in August 2020, to transform the CSMT building and railway station into an iconic city centre of Mumbai, IRSDC Managing Director and CEO S.K. Lohia said. Of the 10 applications received, the IRSDC evaluated and has shortlisted 9 for the next stage in accordance with their financial capacity, for the project estimated to cost Rs 1,642 crore on DBFOT basis. They include: Godrej Properties Ltd, Anchorage Infrastructure Investments Holdings Ltd, Oberoi Realty Ltd, ISQ Asia Infrastructure Investments Pvt Ltd, Adani Railways Transport Ltd, Kalpataru Power Transmission Ltd, GMR Enterprises Pvt Ltd., Moribus Holdings Pvt Ltd, BIF IV Infrastructure Holding DIFC Pvt Ltd. Keystone Realtors Pvt Ltd was out of reckon-



ing. The financial conditions included minimum net worth of Rs 821 crore at the close of the previous fiscal or minimum ACI of Rs 821 crore at the close of the preceding financial year for AIF or Foreign Investment Fund. After the two-stage bidding process consisting of RFQ and the soon to be called Request for Proposal (RFP) for the shortlisted bidders is completed, the selected bidder would be awarded the CSMT redevelopment project.

Karan Mehra gets bail after arrest over fight with wife Nisha Rawal



Team Absolute | Mumbai

Television actor Karan Mehra was granted bail on Tuesday morning after his arrest the night before, following a complaint by his wife, actress Nisha Rawal, over a domestic fight. Opening up on the incident, Karan's friend and colleague, actor Rohan Mehra, says he never realised there was a problem between the couple. "He was head over heels in love with his wife. They both are very close to me. We have travelled together, too. That was

long back. We have spoken on Instagram. I never thought that there is a problem. But no one can say if there is a problem between husband and wife," he told reporter. Rohan says Karan was not a violent person. "He was not like this. On Bigg Boss, too, he never raised his voice. He never hurt anyone. It's very strange. One can't say what is going on in someone's personal life. But he has never done anything like this. Otherwise he is a gem of a person," says Rohan. The two have worked together in "Yeh Rishta Kya Kehlata Hai".

RIL-BP INITIATIVE TO GIVE FREE FUEL TO COVID EMERGENCY VEHICLES

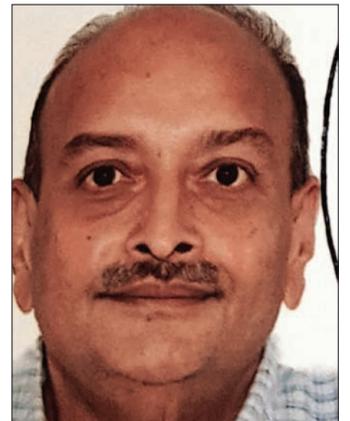


Mumbai: The Reliance BP Mobility Limited, an Indian fuels and mobility joint venture branded as 'Ji-bp' has joined hands with the Reliance Foundation to provide fuel free of charge to all Covid emergency services vehicles across India, an official said here on Tuesday. Under the initiative, in May 2021, around 21,080 emergency vehicles have been given free fuel of 811.07 KL worth Rs 7.30 crores, and the initiative will be continued till June 30 with 50-60 KL free fuel daily. Since the company's fuel stations are outside the Mumbai city limits, the company today flagged off a Mobile Fuel Bowser which will be stationed at the BrihanMumbai Municipal Corporation's Worli Transport Garage. Elsewhere, the facility is available at the company's 1,421 retail fuel outlets nationwide for all vehicles of the government and hospitals including private, ambulances, vehicles supplying medical oxygen, vehicles on emergency duty authorized by the CMO. Vehicles wanting to avail the no-charge fuel would need to submit an authorisation letter from the concerned district administration, health or police and for the Mobile Fuel Bowser, the company had implemented all necessary safety measures as per statutory guidelines. The 'Ji-bp' is available in 21 states and plans to expand the network upto 5,500 in next five years besides increasing its presence to 45 airports in the future, said the official.

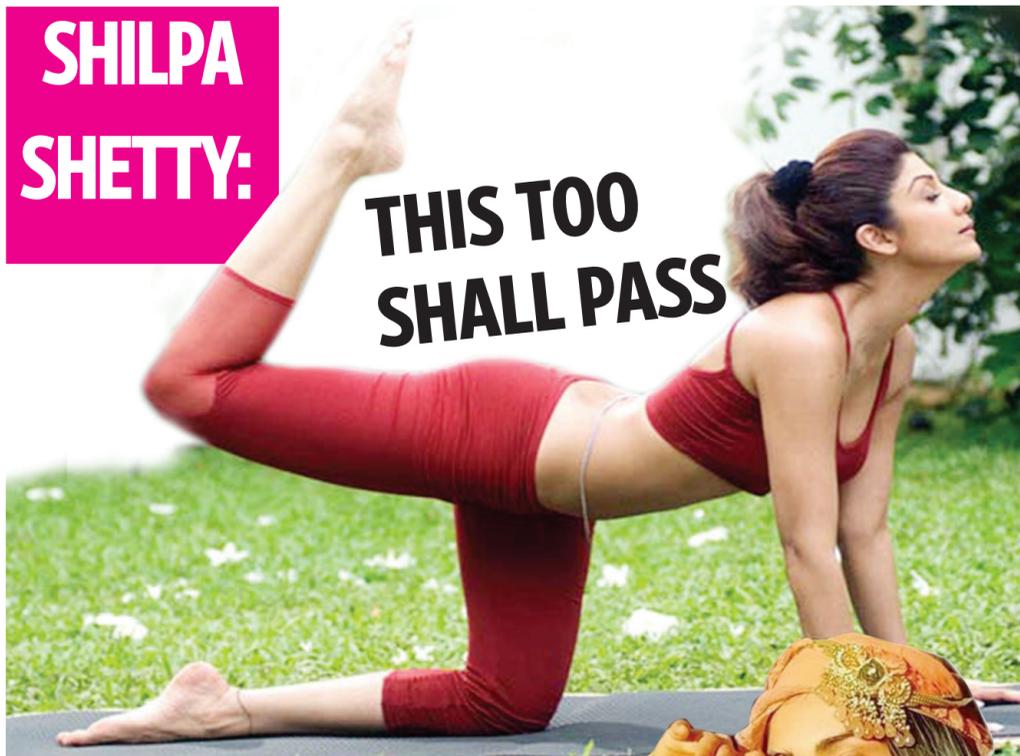
Mehul Choksi case: 8-member India team in Dominica

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Even as a private jet from Qatar landed in Dominica with documents related to fugitive businessman Mehul Choksi, wanted in the PNB loan fraud case, sources on Tuesday said members of the Central Bureau of Investigation, Enforcement Directorate and Ministry of External Affairs are camping in the island nation. According to informed sources, an eight member team from India reached Dominica on Saturday afternoon in a private jet that left from New Delhi on Friday evening. The sources said that two members each from MEA, CBI and ED along with two CRPF commandos were in Dominica for the hearing in the Choksi extradition matter scheduled on June 2. The source said that the officials of the CBI and ED from Mumbai zone were called on Friday to the national capital, who then boarded the private jet for Dominica. However, senior officials of the CBI and ED remained tight-lipped on the number of officials sent to Dominica for Choksi case hearing. On Saturday, Antigua and Barbuda Prime Minister Gaston Browne also confirmed that a private jet has landed in Dominica with certain documents related to Choksi who was involved in a multi-million dollar bank scam in India. Browne was responding to a question during his radio programme on a question about a private jet arriving in Dominica from Qatar and said, "Yes I can confirm that a jet is there. My understanding is that the Indian government has sent some documentation from the courts to confirm that Choksi is a fugitive. "My understanding is that it is for the court hearing scheduled on Wednesday (June 2) as the Dominica court has put a stay on his deportation. So the Indian government seems



to be going all out to ensure that he is repatriated to India and face charges there." Choksi, who is wanted in India by the CBI and the ED in Rs 13,500 crore Punjab National Bank (PNB) fraud case had gone missing from the island nation on May 23, sparking a massive manhunt. He was captured in Dominica on May 26. A Dominican court has restrained his deportation till June 2 as it hears a habeas corpus filed by Choksi's lawyers. On Saturday, several pictures of Choksi emerged online showing several bruise marks on his arms and swollen eyes. Choksi has been residing in Antigua and Barbuda since January 4, 2018, days before the CBI registered a case of bank fraud against him and his nephew, Nirav Modi, among several others. The CBI and ED, which have filed separate charge sheets in the case, are trying for his extradition.

SHILPA
SHETTY:THIS TOO
SHALL PASS

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actress Shilpa Shetty Kundra took to Instagram on Tuesday to share a motivational post for fans, urging them not to lose hope amidst the tough times of pandemic. The actress posted a picture of herself doing a yoga asana, which said: "What you think, you become. What you feel, you attract. What you imagine, you create -- Buddha"

"We have a lot of unsettling things happening all around us. All of these can have a very adverse effect on our thought process. That's when it's most important to keep a check on your thoughts and emotions. You can manifest a world of change and positivity simply through your thoughts. So, no matter how testing the situation may be, always remember... this too shall pass. Keep your spirits high, chin up, breathe deeply, and stay mentally & emotionally positive!" she added.

The actress has been doing her bit in keeping her fans motivated and healthy through her posts on Instagram. She often posts pictures of yoga asanas too, explaining their significance.

Meanwhile, the actress' family recovered from Covid 19 recently and she resumed her position as a judge on the reality show "Super Dancer: Chapter 4". She is also set to return to the big screen for the first time in 17 years with the films "Nikamma" and "Hungama 2".

ADAH SHARMA:
PICKED UP THE FLUTE A
FEW MONTHS BACK

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actress Adah Sharma says she is learning to play the flute. "I picked up the flute a few months back when lockdown was relaxed and shooting started again. I love playing the piano but the flute I can carry in my bag, (and play) in the van between shoots," she said.

Adah had mentioned about her interest in the flute last year, too. In an Instagram video she posted in October 2020, Adah had captured a tune played by a flute player. She was trying to use her social media presence to help the musician who was struggling to make a living on empty streets during lockdown, she had said back then, and she encouraged her followers to contact people like him, purchase flutes from him and learn the art from "Basuriwaalebhैया".

She had also said in her post back then that her fans would be "inflicted with me playing the flute in videos soon".

It seems now that Adah is finally honing her skills as a flautist.

Dia Mirza feels helicopter
tourism in Kaziranga
will disrupt peace

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Bollywood actress Dia Mirza feels starting helicopter tourism in Kaziranga National Park, Assam, will disrupt peace in the place. Dia reacted to a news piece on Twitter on Monday that states Assam Government plans to promote helicopter tourism to Kaziranga National Park and Tiger Reserve.

Dia's tweet came after a Twitter user shared the news piece and wrote: "Helicopter tourism in #Kaziranga isn't a good idea at all." The actress replied: "Couldn't agree more. Why would one even come up with a plan like this?"

How is disrupting the peace of a place with a noisy helicopter an 'attraction' for tourists? Leave our forests alone please. #Kaziranga."

Commenting on the actress' tweet, netizens shared their opinion on the topic. "The use of helicopters to attract tourists is contrary to the basic principles of tourism and ecotourism. Thank you for your kind heart Mrs. Dia Mirza," commented a user.

"All stakeholders.. plz say NO to it! It will adversely affect biotic potential and reproductive strategies n health of dwelling beasts n animals!" suggested another user. "Probably they are inspired by #JurassicPark," wrote another user.

PEANUT BUTTER
WITHOUT WORRYING
ABOUT THE CALORIES?

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Peanut Butter is a thick spread made from grounded peanuts which are blended into a fine paste to get a smooth texture. It is the powerhouse of nutrients.

Talking of the health benefits, Chetan Kanani, Co-Founder of Alpino Health Foods, help us understand as to why peanut butter has unfailingly been the choice of all Indians for so many years now and break some existing prejudices.

"Peanut butter is an excellent source of protein and therefore, is ideal for a person aiming to gain mass and muscle but only a small

aggregate of people know that it also helps in losing weight. The fact that it contains trace amounts of calories per



serving when backed up by the fact that peanut butter makes you feel satiated for a longer period makes one lose weight.

"Another prejudice that is heard quite often is that the fats in peanut butter will make you fat. But in fact, the fats in the peanut butter are mono-unsaturated fats that help in weight loss and shoot down the risk of obesity, thereby preventing heart diseases.

"Another prejudice that peanut butter contains a lot of sugar and oil, therefore, it has a lot of calories. There are peanut butter available in the market like Alpino Natural Peanut Butter that is free from any additional sugar, salt or hydrogenated oils. Without worrying about the calories, you can enjoy the taste of peanut butter every day.

Alpino peanut butter comes in 5 variants namely-- Natural peanut butter, Chocolate peanut butter, Classic peanut butter, Coconut peanut butter, and Organic peanut butter. Texture variation of smooth or crunchy is also available. All of these are all-natural, with no added sugar, salt or hydrogenated oils.

Tara Sutaria's throwback Tuesday
is about sleepy mornings in Goa

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actress Tara Sutaria treated her fans with a sun-kissed throwback picture on Tuesday. In the Instagram image, she is seen flaunting a golden dewy glow as the sunrays fall on her face, accentuating her flawless skin. "Throwback to sleepy mornings in Goa," she captioned the post.

Tara has three films coming up -- "Tadap", "Ek Villain 2" and "Heropanti 2". "Tadap" is Milan Luthria's remake of the Telugu hit "RX 100". The film marks the Bollywood debut of Suniel Shetty's son Ahan. In Mohit Suri's "Ek Villain 2", she co-stars with John Abraham, Disha Patani and Aditya Roy Kapoor. She has also been roped in for the second instalment of "Heropanti". The film stars Tiger Shroff and is directed by Ahmed Khan. The actress, who is reportedly dating actor Aadar Jain, made her Bollywood debut with "Student Of The Year 2", co-starring Tiger Shroff and Ananya Panday. She was also seen in the action film "Marjaavaan".

Pooja Hegde distributes a
month's rations for 100 families

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Pooja Hegde is helping the ones in need during this difficult times in her own way. The actress was spotted organising a whole month's rations for about a 100 families. A leading photographer shared her image where Pooja can be seen sitting amidst packets of food. The caption explained, "@hegdepooja was seen organising a month's rations distributed to 100 families with a sweet message of 'keeping hopes up during this difficult time as a new morning is not far' #IndiaFightsCorona"

Pooja had previously tested positive for Covid last month, when she arranged a live session with a yoga coach on breathing exercises to help build lung capacity urging everyone to practice it during this time. Pooja has also been keeping up with yoga as part of her post Covid care.

On the work front, the Indian actress has films panning across India from Rohit Shetty's Cirkus with Ranveer Singh, Kabhi Eid Kabhi Diwali with Salman Khan, Pan-India release, RadheShyam opposite Prabhas, Acharya with Chiranjeevi and Ram Charan, Most Eligible Bachelor as well as Thalpathy 65 opposite Thalpathy Vijay.



"THOR: LOVE AND THUNDER' ROLE PUZZLES SAM NEIL

Los Angeles | Agencies

Actor Sam Neill says he is puzzled by his role of an Asgardian actor in "Thor: Love And Thunder", admitting that he doesn't understand the "Thor" Marvel films. In the new "Thor" film, Neill plays an Asgardian performer playing Thor's father Odin. "I've never understood any of the 'Thor' films, in fact the whole Marvel universe is a complete mystery to me. I mean I was standing beside Jenny Morris (on the set of 'Thor: Ragnarok') and I said, 'Do you know what planet we're on?' To be honest, I was completely baffled. I came back and I was baffled again, I did my bit, I don't know who is playing who exactly because they are sort of swapping roles," said Neill in an interview with Australian radio station Nova, according to contactmusic.com. Matt Damon, Luke Hemsworth and Melissa McCarthy will play Asgardian versions of Loki, Thor and Hela in the film.



Natalia Dyer:

Religion is beautiful, but important to take a step back from it at times

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actress Natalia Dyer, who is currently seen in the film "Yes, God, Yes", feels religion is a beautiful thing but it is also important to take a step back from it at times. "While I believe religion is beautiful, I think it's also important to sometimes take a step back from it to ponder and question what you've learnt and what you think you know. Because without keeping that curiosity and the questioning alive, you invariably kind of lose yourself -- who you really are." "So I think it's just about keeping an open mind and letting people make mistakes and giving people the space to explore and to learn from mistakes and to have conversations," she added. "Yes, God, Yes" is about around a teenager's journey through learning the Catholic views on premarital sex and sexual curiosities, heightened by pop culture influences.



KATE WINSLET DIDN'T WANT 'BULGY BIT' OF HER BELLY EDITED OUT OF INTIMATE SCENE IN NEW SERIES

Los Angeles | Agencies

Oscar-winning actress Kate Winslet has shared that she fought to retain an intimate scene in the limited series "Mare Of Easttown" that shows "a bulgy bit of belly", because she wanted a realistic portrayal of a middle-aged lady having sex. The actress said her role is "a fully functioning, flawed woman with a body and a face that moves in a way that is synonymous with her age," reports dailymail.co.uk. "I think we're starved of that a bit," she said of the scarcity of realistic female bodies on film and television during an interview with the New York

Times. Acknowledging her "unglamorous" appearance in the show, she said she turned down director Craig Zobel's offer to cut out "a bulgy bit of belly" from the scene for which she filmed the scene with Guy Pearce. "Don't you dare," she recalled telling him after he assured her the angle wouldn't air.

She said that she raised eyebrows for sending back the promo poster twice "because it was too retouched" and she knows how "many lines" she really has by the sides of her eyes. The 46-year-old actress also shared that her "days are getting a little bit numbered of doing nudity". "I'm just not that comfortable doing it anymore."

It's not even really an age thing, actually. There comes a point where people are going to go, 'Oh, here she goes again,' she said.

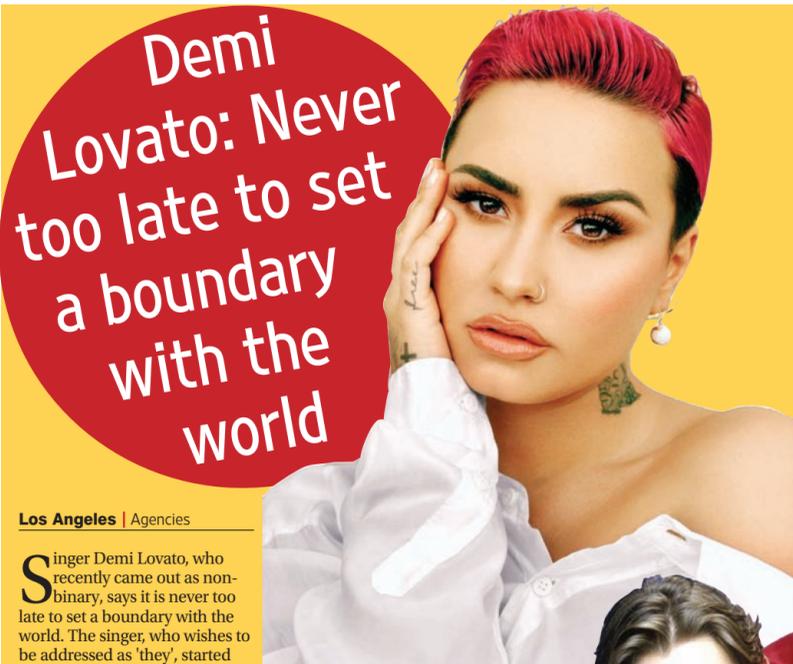
John Barrowman breaks his silence after being axed from Dancing on Ice

Los Angeles | Agencies

John Barrowman has broken his silence after being axed from Dancing on Ice following claims of inappropriate behaviour. The Sun revealed the 54-year-old will not be invited back to the ice panel of the ITV skating show after he faced allegations this month that he repeatedly exposed himself on the sets of BBC's Doctor Who and spin-off Torchwood.

While John apologised and said it was "high-spirited behaviour and tomfoolery", he has now shared a video message with his fans on his Instagram. Speaking from his home in Palm Springs, USA, John said: "Hi everybody it's John here and I just want to say thank you very much to all of my fan family and everybody who has reached out with the countless messages of support over the last few weeks."

"It has meant such a great deal to me and has really touched me to know that people are supporting me and standing by me and sending their love and all their appreciation and kind words." John then went on to wish his UK fans a happy bank holiday weekend and his US fans a happy memorial day weekend. He added, "Hopefully we will all be back together soon and I look forward to it. Much love and thank you." John's post comes after a source told The Sun Dancing on Ice bosses are determined to protect their family-friendly image. And they insisted John - who joined the show in 2020 - will not be invited back on to the panel. One source told us, "Ever since allegations against John came to light, discussions have been ongoing over his future on the panel of Dancing On Ice."



Demi Lovato: Never too late to set a boundary with the world

Los Angeles | Agencies

Singer Demi Lovato, who recently came out as non-binary, says it is never too late to set a boundary with the world. The singer, who wishes to be addressed as 'they', started out as a child actor on "Barney & Friends". In 2007, they got a part on a short Disney Channel show called "As The Bell Rings" and then landed the starring role of the film "Camp Rock".

Talking about having a celebrity childhood and setting boundaries, Lovato said: "It's never too late to set a boundary with the world and I have learnt that. I continue to set boundaries where I know I have talked a lot about my life but yet haven't talked about everything and that is where my boundary is."

"There are things I will never share with the world because no one could benefit from them," the singer added on "The Drew Barrymore Show". Show host Drew Barrymore asked the singer: "You grow up so fast and I have always rebelled against my parents when I was a kid. What was being a celebrity child, like for you?"

Lovato said: "My parents did the best they could."

"There's no manual on how to raise a child star and when the child retorts back saying things like "I pay the bills" after the parent says that "you're grounded" was challenging and was also really not the right thing to have done or said at that time which I realized much later," the singer said on the show, which airs on Zee Cafe in India.

'TAKE THAT' ARE 'DESPERATE' TO START TOURING

London | Agencies

The British pop group Take That want to start touring again and might even record a new album. "We're desperate to come back and do something as soon as big venues are up and running again. I don't know what it will be yet, whether it's a tour or album, or both even. But Take That are going nowhere," said the band's frontman Gary Barlow in an interview with The Sun newspaper's Bizarre column, according to contactmusic.com.

A special 40th anniversary show is also in the works. "I think we will, as long as we are all fit and healthy. I think we all love the experience of being on stage. We love being in Take That. That greatest hits album marked a moment for us, and we are happy for that moment to just hold there, but I don't think it will be long before we're back. The touring side is such a big part of it for us, so we'll wait until people are safely back and feeling confident," Barlow added.

The band's last studio album was "Wonderland" in 2017.



ABSOLUTE PIC OF THE DAY



Rose Huntington-Whiteley



EDITOR'S SPECS

Damage-control in UP

June began on a cloudy note in Uttar Pradesh, sans the usual heat. But the temperature at the BJP state headquarters here on Tuesday was far from mild. BJP's organisational secretary B.L. Santosh and Uttar Pradesh in-charge Radha Mohan Singh, who are here on a two-day visit to assess the party's concern over the growing resentment in party ranks with regard to the state government's handling of the Covid crisis, held a series of one-to-one meetings with Deputy Chief Ministers Keshav Maurya and Dinesh Sharma on Tuesday. All the ministers who met the two leaders from Delhi were evasive about the topic of discussion and said that the party leadership held talks over the preparations for the Assembly elections due next year, and also took stock of the party cadres working to help the poor during the pandemic. Maurya, however, made a statement that allowed one to read between the lines. "Pradesh adhyaksh ke netritva mein hum phir jitenge (we will win again under the leadership of the state president)," he said. Santosh and Radha Mohan Singh had on Monday held meetings with some ministers, including Brijesh Pathak, Jai Pratap Singh, who is the Health Minister, and Swami Prasad Maurya. This was followed by with a late-night meeting of senior leaders at Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath's residence. A BJP press release said the leaders reviewed the works done by the party for Covid relief across the state in the last few months and earlier. Sources, meanwhile, said that the two leaders were concerned about the image of the state government being dented with its handling of the Covid crisis, including oxygen shortage and floating dead bodies. Moreover, an increasing number of BJP legislators have been openly airing their grievances about the functioning of the government. The Yogi Adityanath-led government's handling of the Covid surge in recent weeks has drawn sharp criticism on social media, while the opposition parties are sparing no opportunity to highlight the mishandling of the situation. The party is now concerned about the state of affairs in Uttar Pradesh, while the party's defeat in the recent panchayat elections is another major cause for concern. The BJP lost the panchayat elections in Ayodhya, Kashi and Mathura, which are known to be its strongholds. A senior party functionary, meanwhile, admitted that the two Central leaders were here to assess the extent of damage and discuss the steps to redeem the situation.

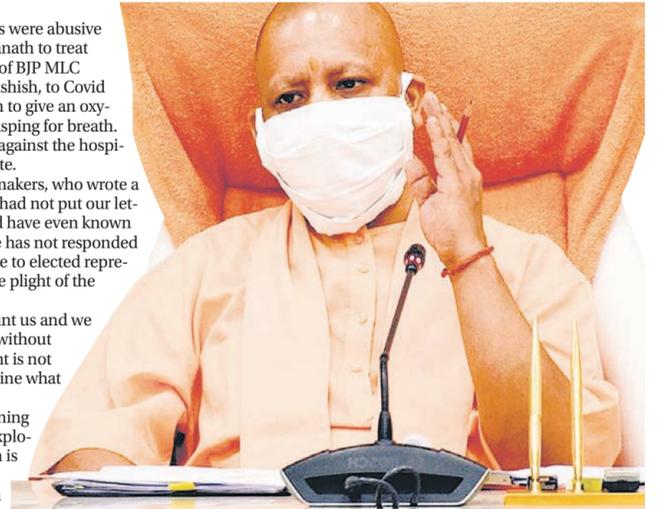
UP BJP LEADERS GETTING RESTIVE OVER YOGI'S COVID MANAGEMENT

Amita Verma

Union minister Santosh Gangwar, MP Satyadev Pachauri, UP minister Brijesh Pathak, BJP MPs Kaushal Kishore and Rajendra Agarwal, MLAs Dinanath Bhaskar, Dalveer Singh, Lokendra Pratap Singh and Sanjay Pratap Jaiswal, MLC Rajkumar Agarwal... the list goes on. More and more BJP leaders are airing their resentment against the Yogi Adityanath government over its Covid management, rather mismanagement. UP law minister Brijesh Pathak was the first to blow the lid off the state of affairs in the state when he wrote a letter to senior health officials, expressing his anguish on the stressed-out health facilities amid Covid surge last month. In the one-page letter, Pathak, an MLA from Lucknow, lamented that he had received a frantic call from the residence of Yogesh Praveen, informing him that his condition was critical and needed an ambulance. However, the ambulance did not reach him and the historian died. BJP MP Kaushal Kishore, who lost his elder brother to Covid, wrote to chief minister Yogi Adityanath, demanding action against Balarampur hospital and King George's Medical University doctors who have been 'ignoring' patients. He claimed in his letter that ventilators were not in working condition in these hospitals. In another instance, BJP MP from Meerut, Rajendra Agarwal wrote to Yogi Adityanath, complaining about inadequate arrangements, especially lack of medical oxygen in the city. Rajendra Agarwal stated in his letter that both government and private hospitals in Meerut are starting at an acute shortage of medical oxygen. Chairman of the Uttar Pradesh Labour Welfare Council, state minister Sunil Bharala, on the other hand, protested about the lack of beds, oxygen, and life-saving drugs in Meerut and asked chief minister Yogi Adityanath to directly intervene on behalf of Covid-19 patients. BJP MLA from Badaun, Dharmendra Shukla, levelled serious allegations against the Badaun Medical College and sought a probe into the matter. Another BJP MLA, Dinanath Bhaskar from Bhadohi, sent a letter to the chief minister seeking an inquiry into the circumstances that led to the death of a local BJP leader Lal Bahadur

Maurya.

Bhaskar further said that the doctors were abusive and told the patient to get "Yogi Adityanath to treat you." The most disturbing case is that of BJP MLC Rajkumar Agarwal, who lost his son, Ashish, to Covid because the hospital did not allow him to give an oxygen cylinder to the patient who was gasping for breath. Agarwal wrote letters, complaining against the hospital but no action has been taken till date. Talking to IANS, one of the BJP lawmakers, who wrote a letter to the chief minister, said, "If we had not put our letters on the social media, no one would have even known about them. The chief minister's office has not responded to even one letter. If this is the response to elected representatives, then we can understand the plight of the common man." He said further, "Our voters now taunt us and we are helpless. If our own kin have died without proper treatment - and the government is not even apologetic about it - you can imagine what happens to the people." A BJP legislator from a district adjoining Lucknow, said, "The situation is still explosive in the rural areas and the problem is that the chief minister depends on feedback from his Team 9. I have been seeking an appointment but have not got one yet. More people in my constituency are dying due to lack of treatment than of Covid. Even the death rate among non-Covid patients is escalating because all facilities for them have been shut out. Doctors are now demanding a negative Covid report before even treating fractures." A two-term BJP MP, meanwhile, said that elected representatives were facing massive public anger in their respective constituencies. "The problem is that we are helpless because the bureaucracy does not listen to us. We have informed our leaders about the situation but no one is doing anything. We have to face public anger and I do not know how this will reflect in the upcoming assembly elections," he said. He added that the panchayat elections and the BJP's poor performance in it were an indication of the things to come.



The deep disquiet in the BJP has now spread to its mentor organization, the Rashtriya Swayamsewak Sangh (RSS). A RSS functionary, admitted that this was the first time in seven years that Prime Minister Narendra Modi's image had been dented due to pandemic mismanagement. "The middle class are the worst-hit - and now the virus is spreading to the villages. The pandemic could have an adverse impact on the poll outcome," he confessed. BJP spokesman Ashok Pandey, however, downplayed the situation. "I admit that things were bad but now the chief minister is hitting the ground and setting things right. We have managed to control the situation and Covid is ebbing too," he said. A MLA, on the other hand, said, "The damage is irreparable. Those who have lost their family members to mismanagement, will not forget things in a hurry."



Saibal Gupta

When senior leaders of the BJP claimed that it was the chief minister's ego that resisted her from staying away from the review meeting with Suwendu Adhikari, Trinamool Congress alleged that the meeting with the Prime Minister personally was pre-scheduled but she was not allowed time as promised by the PMO. The controversy started in the morning when an official from the PMO called Suwendu Adhikari and was asked to stay in the review meeting at Kalaikunda. Adhikari, who is also the Leader of the Opposition in the state legislative assembly, reached Kalaikunda at 1 p.m. much before the arrival of the Prime Minister. Interestingly Mamata Banerjee announced from her review meeting in Hingalganj that she won't be able to stay at the review meeting but she would hand over the estimate of the damage caused by the storm. According to highly placed sources in the state secretariat, chief minister's announcement comes after chief secretary Alapan Bandopadhyay confirmed that Prime

Minister has given her separate time but when she reached Kalaikunda she was made to sit in a separate room and was informed that as the review meeting has started already, she will have to wait. Sources close to the chief minister said that she insisted for one minute time but she was requested to wait. Mamata Banerjee then walked into the review meeting, handed over the paper and walked out. This one-minute incident was enough to attract strong political repercussions. Just after the meeting Governor Jagdeep Dhankhar who was also present wrote, "At the Review Meet by PM #CycloneYaas to assess damage caused. CM and officials @MamataOfficial did not participate. Such boycotts both in consonance with the constitution and federalism. Certainly, by such actions neither public interest nor interest of state has been served. Trinamool Congress MP Kalyan Banerjee was quick to respond. In his tweet, Banerjee wrote, "@jdhanakar1, can you tell us, under what provision Nandigram MLA can be present in the review meeting between the central government headed by @narendramodi

One minute Modi-Mamata meeting triggers huge controversy

It was a meeting that hardly lasted for a minute but the meeting between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee created a huge political controversy.

and state government headed by @MamataOfficial. Stop doing politics @jdhanakar1 in this situation". Suwendu Adhikari who was in the centre of the controversy wrote, "When Hon PM Shri @narendramodi stands strong with the citizens of West Bengal in wake of cyclone Yaas, Mamata ji should also set aside her ego for the welfare of people. Her absence from the PM's meeting is murder of constitutional ethos & the culture of cooperative federalism". "Today is a dark day in India's long-standing ethos of cooperative federalism, a principle held sacred by PM @narendramodi. If her track record is anything to go by, @MamataOfficial Didi's administration was unable to manage Amphan relief. Rampant loot plagued the relief works. Even now, West Bengal is suffering and the state government is in absent mode," he added. Union Home Minister on his Twitter handle wrote, "Mamata Didi's conduct today is an unfortunate low. Cyclone Yaas has affected several common citizens and the need of the hour is to assist those affected. Sadly,

Didi has put arrogance above public welfare and today's petty behaviour reflects that". Trinamool Congress refuted the allegation. The party's spokesperson, Kunal Ghosh said, "There is no place for any kind of controversy. It was a meeting between the Prime Minister and the Chief Minister. The chief minister met the Prime Minister and submitted to him the details of the damage caused by the storm. There the matter ends". State BJP President Dilip Ghosh said, "This cannot be a good example of cooperative federalism. She gave preference to her personal ego more than the pains of the people of the state. Suwendu Adhikari is the Leader of the Opposition and the Prime Minister has invited him to be present. Her absence in the meeting will send a very wrong signal". TMC General Secretary Partha Chatterjee said, "Those who are speaking of her insensitivity should know that she was in the state secretariat whole might to oversee the pains of the people. She is the one who is personally overseeing the relief operations in the state. I would like to ask where were those people during the storm?"

OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT, REPUTATION AND REMEDIAL ACTION

It is sexual harassment complaint season here shredding the reputation of organisations and individuals. Communication strategists and experts are of the view that one sexual harassment complaint is enough to bring down to dust an organisation/individual reputation built over decades. They also said it is the top management's task to fight the damage and then repair it.



Venkatachari Jagannathan

Messages on WhatsApp, Twitter, Facebook, email will be exchanged between thousands of people and read by lakhs thereby damaging an organisation/individual reputation. The cases currently in point are the reputation of city based famous institutions - Padma Seshadri Bala Bhavan (PSBB), Maharishi Vidya Mandir Matriculation Higher Secondary School, Loyola College - and also that of Tamil movie lyricist Vairamuthu.

On the corporate side, the most famous case was the Infosys sexual harassment episode that blew up in 2002. "Reputation is built brick by brick and can't be bought and built like a product brand, image and perception," Harish Bijoor, brand expert and founder of Harish Bijoor Consults Inc, told correspondent. "Reputation is actually an organisation's responsibility towards its stakeholders and it cannot be shaped by communication. A product is sold, a

brand is bought and shaped by communication differentiation. A brand's image and perception can be controlled," a communication strategist told correspondent preferring anonymity. Experts to whom correspondent spoke were unanimous on the do's and don'ts for organisations hit with sexual harassment complaint. "Own it up first and explain the steps taken on the complaint. Anything less than this will backfire," Sreeba Varghese, Creative Director, S Factor

based in Ernakulam in Kerala and into image management and others. A communication strategist said PSBB bungled in its communication strategy relating to the sexual harassment complaint by not admitting it initially. The issue recently blew up with social media posts by school students and alumni alleging a commerce teacher harassing students and inappropriate behaviour. The school management had said it is taking suo moto notice of the allegations and will take necessary steps to address the situation in a free, fair and transparent manner. Assuring the parents of its students, the school said it has zero tolerance towards any behaviour that adversely affects the physical, emotional and psychological well being of the students. The school management also said these allegations were not brought to its notice earlier. Two DMK party MPs - Dayanidhi Maran and Kanimozhi - had tweeted on the issue demanding a probe and making the school management accountable. Meanwhile the issue got a lot of traction in the social media and there were posts about the caste, religion of the school promoters. Reacting to such posts a Y.G. Madhuvanthi - daughter of actor Y.G. Mahendran a PSBB trustee - in a video said caste/religion colour is being given about the school which should not be

done. This in turn took the social media discussions on Aryan versus Dravidian and others. "As a member of the PSBB promoter family, Madhuvanthi who is also the state executive member of BJP shouldn't have got herself involved in the debate. Social media will discuss many things and she shouldn't have joined the issue. This added fuel to the fire," a communication strategist said. "The communication from the sexual harassment hit organisation should be focussed on the issue on hand and its resolution process," he added. According to him, the top head of the PSBB management should have come out with a statement on the action taken on the complaint which in the long run would save the institution. On the other hand, facing a similar situation, the Maharishi Vidya Mandir school issued a statement referring to the complaints against its commerce teacher and said he has been suspended and an inquiry has been instituted. Experts also said if the sexual harassment complaint against an organisation/individual is overlooked initially, it would bite at a crucial moment and cite lyricist Vairamuthu's example. Seventeen women had complained against Vairamuthu for sexual harassment in 2018 in the Me Too movement. But no action was taken against him then. But the issue bit him now. Vairamuthu on Saturday announced

his decision to decline the ONV Kurup literary award after learning that the ONV Cultural Academy would be taking a relook on the award to him in the wake of sexual harassment complaints against him. The announcement of award for Vairamuthu recently resulted in a controversy with many noted personalities opposing it citing that he is accused of sexual harassment. The other sexual harassment complaint against a famous educational institution was against the famous Loyola College. Last year The Tamil Nadu State Commission for Women ordered Chennai's Loyola College to pay Rs 64,30,000 to a former staffer towards damages for sexual harassment, mental agony and in back wages. The Loyola management declined to respond to the media citing the matter as subjudice. In 2002 faced with sexual harassment court case against its senior official Phaneesh Murthy, Infosys initially was not forthcoming. But later Infosys set the record straight by answering queries from an online business magazine www.domainb.com. Speaking on the condition of anonymity told correspondent: "After the sexual harassment complaint against then senior official Phaneesh Murthy, the company brought in the whistle blower policy."



brief

10 DEAD IN PAK RAIN-RELATED INCIDENTS



Islamabad: At least 10 people were killed and three others injured in different rain-related incidents in Pakistan's Punjab province, local media reported on Tuesday.

Local residents and rescue teams rushed to the site and shifted the bodies and the injured to a hospital. The victims comprised three women, four children and a man, while the identity of the injured is not known yet.

ISRAEL LIFTS ALMOST ALL COVID RESTRICTIONS



Tel Aviv: Following a sharp drop in new Covid-19 infections and severe illnesses, Israel is almost completely lifting government restrictions imposed to halt the spread of the virus, the Ministry of Health announced on Tuesday.

According to the announcement, regulations under the so-called Green Passport will expire the same day, which means that in future public institutions will be open to both vaccinated and unvaccinated people, reports dpa news agency.

In connection with this measure, all attendance and visitor limits for events, shops and restaurants, for example, will be abolished.

IRAN PRODUCED OVER 2.4KG OF HIGHLY ENRICHED URANIUM: IAEA



Tehran: Iran has produced more than 2.4 kg of nearly weapons grade uranium, according to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), putting it well outside the bounds of an international nuclear deal it is allegedly working to salvage.

495 ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS RESCUED OFF LIBYAN COAST LAST WEEK



Tripoli: At least 495 illegal immigrants were rescued off the Libyan coast last week, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) said.

JAPAN'S SEAFOOD PRODUCTION HITS RECORD LOW



Tokyo: Japan's seafood production has hit a record low for the second consecutive year, owing to falling demand amid the Covid-19 pandemic as well as changes in water conditions, the government said.

TIME HAS COME FOR GLOBAL PANDEMIC TREATY: WHO CHIEF

"A treaty would foster improved sharing, trust and accountability, and provide the solid foundation on which to build other mechanisms for global health security. Pandemics are a threat to all of us. So we must work together to build a healthier, safer, fairer future -- for all of us."



Geneva | Agencies

The Covid-19 pandemic has proved that the world needs a pandemic treaty to strengthen both the World Health Organization (WHO) and global

health security, WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said on Tuesday. "This is an idea whose time has come," said Ghebreyesus, in his closing remarks at the WHO's 74th World Health Assembly (WHA), which took place online from May 24 to Tuesday.

Global Covid-19 caseload tops 170.5mn



Washington | Agencies

The overall global Covid-19 caseload has topped 170.5 million, while the deaths have surged to more than 3.54 million, according to the Johns Hopkins University.

In its latest update on Tuesday morning, the University's Center for Systems Science and Engineering (CSSE) revealed that the current global caseload and death toll stood at 170,580,362 and 3,546,731, respectively.

The US continues to be the worst-hit country with the world's highest number of

cases and deaths at 33,264,380 and 594,568, respectively, according to the CSSE.

In terms of infections, India follows in the second place with 28,047,534 cases.

The other worst countries with over 3 million cases are Brazil (16,545,554), France (5,728,788), Turkey (5,249,404), Russia (5,013,512), the UK (4,503,224), Italy (4,217,821), Argentina (3,781,784), Germany (3,689,921), Spain (3,678,390) and Colombia (3,406,456), the CSSE figures showed.

B'desh's Covid vax registration to resume after Chinese doses arrive

Dhaka | Agencies

The Bangladesh government will resume registration for Covid-19 vaccination after more doses arrive in the country from China, Health Minister Zahid Maleque announced.

He made the announcement on Monday as the country is undergoing a shortage in vaccines. Due to the vaccine shortage in the country amid a delay in the arrival of shipments from India, Bangladesh suspended the registration for jabs in May, Xinhua news agency reported.

Bangladesh's drug regulator in April author-



ized the Sinopharm Covid-19 vaccine for emergency use. Bangladesh reported 1,710 new Covid-19 cases and 36 fatalities on Monday, increasing the overall infection tally and death toll to 800,540 and 12,619, the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS) said.

European nations urge explanation on alleged US spying

On Sunday, Denmark's national broadcaster DR News said in a report that Danish Defense Intelligence Service (FE) has given the US National Security Agency (NSA) open internet access to spy on senior politicians of European countries including Germany, Sweden, Norway, and France, Xinhua news agency reported.

Berlin | Agencies

European countries have demanded an explanation from the US and Denmark as soon as possible on reports that the American intelligence agency had used Danish infrastructure to spy on top politicians, including German Chancellor Angela Merkel.

In response to the report, Danish Minister of Defence Trine Bramsen had said that the government will not "enter into speculation about any intelligence matters from the press or others... Systematic wiretapping of close allies is unacceptable"

But French President Emmanuel Macron on Monday called for "clarity" and urged "complete transparency and resolution of the matter by our Danish and American partners".

Meanwhile, Merkel said she "could only agree" with Macron's comments, adding she was "reassured" by



Bramsen's condemnation of any such spying. Besides Merkel, German Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier and the candidate for chancellor Peer Steinbrueck were among those the NSA

had spied on, the DR News reports said. "It is grotesque that friendly intelligence services are indeed intercepting and spying on top representatives of other countries," Steinbrueck told German broadcaster ARD on Monday.

In Paris, French Minister for European Affairs Clement Beaune told France Info radio that the DR report needed to be checked and that, if confirmed, it would be a "serious" matter. "These potential facts, they are serious. They must be checked," he said, adding there could be "some diplomatic protests".

Jens Holm, a member of the Swedish Parliament, called on investigation into "who exactly was monitored, when and how". "This is extremely outrageous," Holms told local media, adding that the situation elicits memories of the Cold War. The governments of Norway and Sweden are pressing the Danish government and demanding immediate answers about the alleged NSA espionage through Danish cables.

Russian President's visit to Pakistan on the cards

Islamabad | Agencies

After Pakistan and Russia signed a fresh agreement to lay a gas pipeline, prospects of Russian President Vladimir Putin visiting Islamabad for the very first time were on the cards.

The project, previously named The North-South Gas Pipeline, has now been renamed as Pakistan Steam Gas Pipeline, in which a gas pipeline will be laid from Pakistan's Karachi city to Kasur. It is a flagship project

between the two countries, which intends to remove the memories of rivalry of the Cold War and bring both countries on the road to bilateral ties. Both Pakistan and Russia have been working to materialise Putin's visit. In April, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov visited Islamabad after a gap of at least nine years. As per official details, Lavrov came with a message that Moscow was willing to extend all possible help to Islamabad and create pathways for bilateral relations.

Prime Minister Imran Khan has already extended a formal invitation to President Putin. Experts have said that with the signing of the Pakistan Steam Pipeline agreement, the visit of President Putin has become even more significant and important. Pakistan is anxious to have President Putin inaugurate the groundbreaking of the gas pipeline project, which is expected to be held later this year or in early 2022. Pakistan and Russia are also seeking more avenues of cooperation.

NRI girl among winners of Apple 'WWDC21 Swift Student Challenge'

Indian-American student Abinaya Dinesh, 15, has been chosen among the winners of annual 'WWDC21 Swift Student Challenge', Apple announced on Tuesday. She has created an app called Gastro at Home, which she plans to launch on the App Store this summer.

Cupertino (California) | Agencies

Passionate about the intersection of medicine and technology, Dinesh helped other young women learn the basics of programming and machine learning in her hometown of North Brunswick, New Jersey.

"I went to a gastroenterologist and he diagnosed me with a pelvic floor disorder," said Dinesh, "but then told me nothing about how I was supposed to get better."

The 'Gastro at Home' app offers people with gastrointestinal disorders a way to access information and resources, especially because those types of conditions can sometimes be sensitive to talk about.

Apple has selected 350 Swift Student Challenge winners from 35 different countries and regions, as it opens all-virtual Worldwide Developers Conference 2021 from June 7-11. "This year, we are incredibly proud that more young women applied and won than ever before, and we are committed to doing everything we can to nurture this progress and reach true gender parity," said Susan

Prescott, Apple's vice president of Worldwide Developer Relations and Enterprise and Education Marketing.

"I think it's important that we keep pushing the boundaries of what's possible, because nobody is going to do it for us," Dinesh, who is among the three young women winners, said in a statement. Over the last year, Dinesh has also started her own nonprofit, Impact AI, to foster learning and ethical practices in artificial intelligence among young people.

As part of it, she launched an eight-week high school programme called 'Girls in AI' to teach young women the basics of programming and machine learning.

"I'm super big on teaching," said Dinesh. "Showing the next generation that this technology exists and can lead to huge advancements in medicine and society is so important." After she graduates high school, Dinesh has her sights set on either medical school or a degree in computer science so she can keep finding new ways to use technology to advance the medical field.

Gianna Yan started creating apps when she was 13 and hopes to one day work at the

intersection of social justice and technology.

When the pandemic began, Yan's immunocompromised grandparents struggled to get essential supplies, like groceries, delivered to their home in Hawaii.

Sisters Gianna and Shannon Yan built the Feed Fleet app to connect volunteers and at-risk individuals for free grocery delivery.

Yan is also designing an app that will help students report incidents of sexual assault on school campuses, and another that assists with breast cancer self-examinations and detecting heart disease in women.

Damilola Awofisayo started her own hackathon and now teaches other young women how to code through workshops and fellowships. The result is TechHacks, a nonprofit that describes its mission as "creating a supportive environment for girls everywhere to create, problem-solve, and showcase their talents alongside like-minded females to compete and work with."

"We started TechHacks with the idea that we know what we like, we know what we don't like, and we know what can make it better for girls specifically," Awofisayo said.





WOMEN'S TEAM WILL PICK LESSONS FROM MEN'S TEAM: MITHALI

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The India women's team, due to play its first Test in seven years this month, will seek guidance on English conditions from men's team with which it travels to England on Wednesday night for a full tour, said India women's Test captain Mithali Raj on Tuesday. "Yes, I am sure the girls have been interacting whenever they have crossed path [with male cricketers]. Good to have them around because they have played a lot in the UK. You can ask them questions and they can help out because most of the girls are playing the Test format for the first time," said Mithali. "So it can really help them if they exchange notes and gain some more experience from their talks and their tours," she said. India women last played a Test in 2014 against England. They play a Test in England from June 16 in Bristol and a day-night Test in September-October in Australia. Mithali said getting to play two Test matches in a year is welcome.



Cricketers can't be Naomi, need media support

"Personally, I have never really felt that I should forego a press conference because I think women's cricket right where it stands, it needs the media support and it is important for players also to sort of try and help in the growth of the sport. So, I guess it is important to know that we need to interact and promote the sport."

Differences a 'thing of past'

Mithali Raj, on Tuesday said that the differences she had with team coach Ramesh Powar during his previous stint three years ago have also been sorted out and the team is looking ahead to the tour of England. Asked about her relation with Powar at a press conference here, Mithali said: "It has been three years. We are in 2021 and we should be looking forward to many more series coming."

Shafali continues to lead T20I batting rankings, Smriti fourth

Dubai | Agencies

Teenage India batswoman Shafali Verma continues to top the ICC women's T20I batting rankings released on Tuesday.

The 17-year-old player, being touted as the successor to Smriti Mandhana, has 776 points and is leading second-placed Beth Mooney of Australia by 32 points.

India's T20 vice-captain, Smriti, is fourth with 693 points. Jemimah Rodrigues is the third Indian in the top 10 of the T20I batting rankings with 640 points.

The notable surprise in the list is Scotland all-rounder Kathryn Bryce, who has become the first batswoman from her country to make it into the top 10 after finishing as the leading scorer in the four-match T20I series



Ireland, which the latter won 3-1. Kathryn, 23, who was named the ICC Women's Associate Player of the Decade in December, has gained nine slots to reach 10th position in the rankings. India also has two bowlers

in the top 10 list, with off-spinner Deepti Sharma at the sixth spot (705 points) and left-arm spinner Radha Yadav (702 points) at the seventh. England's Sophie Ecclestone leads the rankings with 799 points.

Elina, Jennifer advance; Garbine bows out of French Open



Paris | Agencies

No.5 seed Elina Svitolina of Ukraine came back from a 2-5 second set deficit to defeat teenage wildcard Oceane Babel of France 6-2, 7-5 to enter the second round of the French Open on Tuesday.

No.13 seed Jennifer Brady of the USA too secured a place in the second round with an easy win against Latvian Anastasiya Sevastova 6-3, 6-3. But former French Open champion and No. 12 seed Garbine Muguruza of Spain made an early exit, losing to Ukrainian teenager Marta Kostyuk 1-6, 4-6.

This was 18-year-old Marta's first win over a top 20 opponent, and it came in 89 minutes against the 2016 French Open champion. No.25 seed Ons Jabeur of Tunisia beat

Kazakhstan's Yulia Putintseva 7-5, 6-2. Ons will next face Australian wildcard Astra Sharma -- who defeated qualifier Irina Bara Romania 7-6(5), 6-2 -- in the second round. After easing to the first set against the junior world No.7 Oceane, Elina nearly paid the price for a lapse in concentration in the second. Leaking 15 unforced errors, frequently from commanding positions in rallies, she dropped serve to fall behind 0-3. Garbine, a two-time Grand Slam title winner, struggled with a medical time-out midway through the match against teenager Marta. She eventually lost for the first time in her career in the opening round of the French Open. "I was so ready and so prepared. My aggressive game today, I'm really glad it worked. I want to keep on going with this game," Marta said at the press conference.



SHAKIB, MUSTAFIZUR UNLIKELY TO GET NOCS FOR SUSPENDED IPL

Dhaka: Bangladesh all-rounder Shakib Al Hasan and pace bowler Mustafizur Rahman are unlikely to get no-objection certificate (NOC) for playing in the Indian Premier League (IPL) when it resumes this year in the UAE. Shakib plays for two-time IPL champions Kolkata Knight Riders (KKR) while Mustafizur represents Rajasthan Royals. "Given our schedule, it is almost impossible (for Shakib) to get the NOC; I don't see any possibilities, nor any opportunity. The (T20) World Cup is coming up, which makes every game important for us," Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) president Nazmul Hassan told a local TV channel. Mustafizur, too, because of his importance in white-ball cricket, is unlikely to get the BCB nod for the IPL. Bangladesh recently completed a 2-1 victory over Sri Lanka at home and will be touring Zimbabwe for a Test, three ODIs and three T20Is in June-July. They will then play Australia at home in a five-match T20Is series in July-August.

India cricketers set to tour England with families

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Indian cricket team, its support staff as well as coaching staff have been given permission to travel with their families on the upcoming tour of England.

The Indian team departs for England late Wednesday night -- in the wee hours of June 3 -- for a three-and-a-half month long tour that comprises World Test Championship (WTC) final against New Zealand next month as well as five Test matches against England in August-September.

"Yes, the Indian cricket board has allowed players to travel with their families. They can stay till the time they want to. If they wish to stay for the entire duration, they can," a source, aware of the development,



told reporter. The men's team will travel with India women's team on a charter flight but it is unlikely that women players will travel with families mainly because the tour is shorter. Unlike the men's tour that consists of seven Test matches and

stretches for over 100 days, the women's tour is only month-long comprising one Test, three ODIs and three T20 Internationals against England. The expenses of the spouse or partner's travel as well as the stay is to be borne by the player or spouse, who have to pay for an extra person's charges.

The two teams will reach London on June 3 and will then proceed to Southampton where they will be under quarantine. The players had been serving quarantine in a Mumbai hotel before departure.

The India players had also travelled to Australia with their families except for Virat Kohli, whose wife Anushka was expecting then. The tour of Australia was shorter -- around two and a half months -- than the upcoming tour of England.

ROHIT SHARMA HIT HIS FIRST T20 50 WITH MY BAT: KARTHIK

Mumbai: Former India wicket-keeper Dinesh Karthik revealed that prolific run scorer Rohit Sharma had made his maiden half-century for the national team with his bat. That happened during the 2007 T20 World Cup match between India and South Africa in Durban. Karthik said he was wary about giving his bat to Sharma. "His first-ever international fifty was with my bat. I am very proud of that. Yeah, I was batting with it, I told Rohit, 'What a s*** bat' and he said, 'What? You think this bat is not good enough? Give it to me,'" said Karthik in chat show Breakfast with Champions. "So, I gave it to him. That day, he just walked in straight with the bat in South Africa during World Cup and played amazing innings. No credit to my bat, obviously the batsman, but still.

I remember all those kinds of things and these kinds of things mean a lot to me," he said. Karthik, who last played for India during the 2019 World Cup in England, said he didn't want to give the bat to his teammate because he had been dismissed by fast bowler Shaun Pollock for a golden duck in the fifth over. But, then, Sharma went on to score an unbeaten half-century off 40 balls, smashing seven boundaries and two sixes. Thanks to Sharma's knock, India posted 153 and restricted South Africa to 116 for nine wickets in 20 overs. Sharma, who emerged the highest scorer in the tie, was adjudged the Player of the Match.

Will try to frustrate Williamson with dot balls: Siraj

Team Absolute | Mumbai

India pace bowler Mohammed Siraj on Tuesday said he will try to frustrate New Zealand skipper Kane Williamson with dot balls if given an opportunity to play World Test Championship (WTC) final which begins on June 18 in Southampton. "I will try to bowl in a particular spot tirelessly. I will focus on bowling dots against Kane Williamson, the best batsman in New Zealand line-up, to create pressure on him. It will provoke him to go for shots and there will be a high chance of getting him out," said Siraj a day before the India squad departs for England.

The right-arm pace bowler, who made an impact on India's tour of Australia and played a key role in helping the injury-stricken team win the Test series 2-1, said he will try to draw batsmen on to the front-foot in England since the pitches there are different from those in Australia.



Boult contradicts NZ coach Stead, says he will play 2nd Test

London | Agencies

Pace bowler Trent Boult said on Tuesday he is looking to play the second Test against England beginning June 10, soon after New Zealand team coach Gary Stead had said that the left-arm will miss it and play only the World Test Championship (WTC) final against India from June 18 at Southampton.

The Kiwis play two Test matches against England, with the first one beginning on Wednesday at Lord's. The second Test will be played at Edgbaston (Birmingham) from June 10. While Boult will miss the Lord's Test, he says he wants to play the Edgbaston Test.

"Everything is feeling good with what lies ahead, a big stage for the World Test Championship final, and hopefully I can get over there and be part of that second test as well," Boult was quoted as saying by stuff.co.nz after his final training session, near his home in Mount Maunganui. Boult is expected to reach England on Friday. Stead had earlier told media, "He (Boult) has been home and he has had a week of bowling over there, which has been great, after the fair amount of isolation time at the end of IPL, but our view with Trent right now is it is unlikely that he will play the Test in Edgbaston, and he is more likely to be just available for the one-off Test (WTC final)."

WITHOUT A CAMP, NOT IDEAL TO PLAY FOOTBALL QUALIFIERS: JHINGAN

Doha | Agencies

Defender Sandesh Jhingan on Tuesday conceded that it wasn't an ideal situation for the Indian football team to play a combined qualifying tournament for the 2023 Asian Cup and the World Cup 2022 here without a proper preparatory camp.

The Sunil Chhetri-led India will play Asian championships Qatar on June 3, Bangladesh on June 7, and Afghanistan on June 15, and for that the team will remain in Doha for close to a month.

"Anyone who understands football knows the importance of a proper preparatory camp, and how important a friendly match is in preparation for a major tournament. Owing to the pandemic, we lost out on friendly matches in Dubai which isn't ideal," said Jhingan, who missed the last three matches of the World Cup 2022 qualifiers owing to an injury.



Naomi's pullout may hurt Grand Slams

Paris | Agencies

Naomi Osaka, who pulled out of French Open tournament on Monday due to her mental health and was fined \$15,000 for skipping media interaction on Sunday, is the world's highest-earning female athlete. Her absence from any Grand Slam event may hurt the tournament itself due to heavy interest of sponsors in her. Naomi pipped long-time top grosser Serena Williams to second place and moved into first place in the 2020 Forbes list for highest earning female athletes.

While Naomi's achievements on court are very less compared to Serena's -- she has four Grand Slam

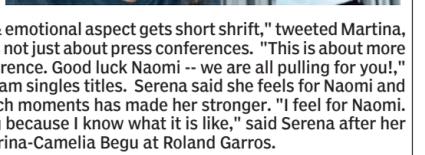
titles against Serena's 23 -- she is the hot property for sponsors, having won multiple Grand Slam titles over the last four years. Serena last won a Grand Slam title back in 2017.

The Japanese world No. 2 earned a massive \$37.4 million in 2020, just \$2.6 million less than men's tennis heavyweight Rafael Nadal (\$40 million). The prize money share of her earnings comprised only \$3.4million. The remaining \$34 million came from endorsements.

According to a report in 2020 in the Forbes magazine, Naomi has 15 endorsement partners, including Nissan Motors, Shiseido and Yonex. Nike wrested her from Adidas, committing about \$10 million annually.

Serena, Martina back Naomi's decision to pull out of French Open

Naomi Osaka has received backing from Martina Navratilova and Serena Williams after the Japanese tennis star pulled out of French Open on Monday. "I am so sad about Naomi Osaka. I truly hope she will be ok. As athletes we are taught to take care of our body, and perhaps the mental & emotional aspect gets short shrift," tweeted Martina, who added that Naomi's decision was not just about press conferences. "This is about more than doing or not doing a press conference. Good luck Naomi -- we are all pulling for you!" added the 18-time winner of Grand Slam singles titles. Serena said she feels for Naomi and wanted to hug her but added that such moments has made her stronger. "I feel for Naomi. I feel like I wish I could give her a hug because I know what it is like," said Serena after her 7-6 (8/6), 6-2 win in first round over Irina-Camelia Begu at Roland Garros.



COVID SLOWS INDIA'S MAY MANUFACTURING GROWTH: PMI

India's manufacturing sector growth slowed down considerably in May, as the second wave of Covid-19 impacted demand and order flow. The PMI ranges between 0 and 100, with a reading above 50 indicating an overall increase compared to the previous month. Accordingly, the headline seasonally adjusted IHS Markit India Manufacturing Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) inched up to 50.8 (index reading) in May same as 55.5 in April.

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The latest index reading pointed to a marginal improvement in business conditions that was the weakest in the current ten-month sequence of expansion. "New orders, the largest sub-component of the headline figure, increased at a marginal pace that was the slowest since the current stretch of expansion started in August 2020. According to panel members, demand was suppressed by the Covid-19 crisis," IHS Markit's May PMI report said. "Firms scaled up production volumes during May,

but the pace of expansion was modest in the context of historical data. In fact, the rise was the weakest in the current ten-month period of growth. Anecdotal evidence indicated that the upturn was curbed by the escalation of the pandemic and difficulties in securing raw materials." Besides, May PMI report said that although new export orders increased at a softer rate, the upturn was solid and outpaced the long-run series trend. "The Indian manufacturing sector is showing increasing signs of strain as the Covid-19 crisis intensifies. Key gauges of current sales, production and input buying weakened noticeably in May and



pointed to the slowest rates of increase in ten months. In fact, all indices were down from April," said Pollyanna De Lima, Economics Associate Director at IHS Markit. "Amid a lack of new work, goods producers reduced headcounts again, with the rate of job shedding quickening in May." According to IHS Markit's Economics Associate Director, the detrimental impacts of the pandemic and associated restrictions seen in

the manufacturing sector are considerably less severe than during the first lockdown when unprecedented contractions had been recorded. "Growth projections were revised lower, as firms became more worried about the escalation of the pandemic and local restrictions." "The overall degree of optimism towards the year-ahead outlook for output was at a ten-month low, a factor which could hamper business investment and cause further job losses."

SEBI bars 8 entities in Infosys insider trading case, impounds accounts

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) has barred eight entities, including individuals and two financial companies, for being involved in insider trading in the scrip of Infosys. The entities are Pranshu Bhutra, Amit Bhutra, Bharath C. Jain, Manish C. Jain, Ankush Bhutra, Venkata Subramaniam VV, and firms Capital One Partners and Tesora Capital. The investigation found that the total proceeds generated from insider trading was over Rs 3.06 crore. The SEBI has directed the impounding of the bank accounts of those involved and also asked them to create an escrow account jointly and severally and deposit the impounded amount in that account within 15 days from the order. Pranshu Bhutra, a Senior Corporate Counsel of Infosys, being an officer or employee of the



software major, is a connected person and was reasonably expected to have access to the UPSI (unpublished price-sensitive information) and on preponderance of probability basis, he was in possession of the UPSI, the order said. Amit Bhutra and Bharath C. Jain are working partners of Capital One, while, as per a partnership deed of Tesora Capital, Amit Bhutra, Ankush Bhutra and

Manish C. Jain are working partners of Tesora. As per the SEBI order, Capital One Partners and Tesora Capital had made illegal gains of Rs 2.79 crore and Rs 26.82 lakh, respectively, by indulging in insider trading while in possession of UPSI, pertaining to the corporate announcement of audited financial results for the quarter ended June 30, 2020 made by Infosys.

brief

M&M'S MAY OVERALL AUTO SALES RISES TO OVER 17K UNITS

Mumbai: Automobile major Mahindra & Mahindra's May overall auto sales rose to 17,447 units, the company reported on Tuesday. The total sales including passenger and commercial vehicles along with exports had stood at 9,560 units in May 2021. In the utility vehicles segment, Mahindra sold 7,748 vehicles in May 2021, and in the passenger vehicles segment, it sold 8,004 vehicles. M&M's Automotive Division CEO Veejay Nakra said, "We are seeing a strong growth momentum for our entire product portfolio. The Thar is clocking robust bookings, despite extended waiting periods. XUV300 has been a tremendous success and continues to see strong demand. Our power brands (Scorpio and Bolero) continue to do well."



CRUDE, COVID WEIGHT HEAVY ON AIRLINE SECTOR: IND-RA



Mumbai: Rising crude oil prices, along with the impact of Covid's second wave, have substantially increased the challenges for India's airline sector, India Ratings and Research said. "Ind-Ra believes challenges for the airlines sector have risen substantially," the ratings agency said in India's logistics sector. "During January to mid-May 2021, Covid cases in key metros increased multi-fold. The top six metros account for a substantial proportion of the total domestic passenger traffic in the country." According to the report, the sharp spike in cases is leading to fresh restrictions on travel, economic and business activities in the form of lockdowns or reduced market hours.

HDFC BANK DEPLOYS MOBILE ATMS ACROSS 50 CITIES IN INDIA

Mumbai: In view of restrictions imposed in various parts of the country, HDFC Bank on Tuesday announced the availability of mobile ATMs in 50 cities across India to assist customers during the lockdown. In restricted areas, the Mobile ATMs will eliminate the need for general public to move out of their locality to withdraw cash. These mobile ATMs are currently active in various cities including Chennai, Mumbai, Delhi/Gurugram, Dehradun, Cuttack, Ludhiana, Lucknow, Bhubaneswar, Chandigarh, Thiruvananthapuram, Noida, Bengaluru, Mysuru, Jaipur, Panipat, Ambala, Jammu, Nashik, Rewari, Patna among others. From the first week of June, the mobile ATMs will be made available in cities like Pudukcherry, Vizag, Rajahmundry, Madurai, Tirunelveli, Hyderabad, Cochin, Thane, Kolkata etc.



YES BANK LOWERS ITS FY22 GROWTH ESTIMATE FOR INDIA



New Delhi: Yes Bank on Tuesday revised its growth estimate for India for the financial year 2021-22 to 8.5 per cent. Its previous projection was 10.5 per cent. "While all indications pointed to a stable recovery process before the 2nd wave struck, this is now likely to be pushed back to an extent. For FY22, we expect real GDP growth at 8.5 per cent, weaker than our previous estimate of 10.5 per cent," said the report titled 'India GDP: Marathon effort ahead' prepared by Yes Bank's Economist department. It noted that the implementation of lockdown-like restrictions due to the second wave is likely to create a break in the normalisation process in the growth that had started as the economy was unlocked after the tapering off of the first round of infections.

BSE, ESC to join hands to encourage SME, start-up listing

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The BSE signed a MoU with the Electronics and Computer Software Export Promotion Council (ESC) on Tuesday to create awareness about benefits of listing among ICT SMEs and start-ups of the country. The ESC is an organisation sponsored by the government with a mandate to promote export of Information and Communications Technology (ICT) sector from the country and works as a bridge between the government and industry on policy and promotional matters.

It has a strong membership of over 2,300 ICT exporters covering the entire gamut of electronics and IT industry in the areas like consumer electronics, components, instrumentation, telecommunications, computer hardware and peripherals, computer software, and IT-enabled Services. Through this MoU, the ESC shall utilise its pan-India network of Electronics and IT Exporters and evaluate the SMEs and start-ups amongst these for listing on BSE SME and Startup exchange. The ESC shall also assist in sensitising its investor network for investing in SMEs listed on BSE SME exchange. Besides, as a joint effort, the BSE and the ESC shall collectively host joint road shows and events across India to create awareness and promote listing of SMEs & start-ups on BSE SME & Startup exchange. BSE SME & Startup head Ajay Thakur said: "This MoU will help us in reaching out to ESC's pan India



network of electronics and IT exporters and create greater awareness amongst the SMEs & start-ups about benefits of listing on the BSE SME & Startup platform. Considering the economic impact of Covid-19 pandemic, it will further encourage more and more SMEs & start-ups to list and raise equity capital on the exchange to expand and grow their business". ESC Chairman Sandeep Narula said: "SMEs, especially the IT SMEs, are now exposed to greater opportunities than ever for expansion and diversification across sectors. The Indian IT industry, despite initial hiccups, remained resilient during the current crisis and its response will go a long way in cementing stronger partnerships with global clients." Despite its commendable contribution to the nation's economy, the

SME sector does not get the required support and still faces a number of problems with inadequate credit, limited capital and knowledge being on the top. Institutional linkages between the BSE and the ESC will address this important issue for Indian ICT SMEs members of the Council, added Narula. The BSE became the first stock exchange to get the approval from SEBI and had launched its SME platform on March 13, 2012. So far, 337 companies listed on BSE SME Platform have raised Rs 3,497.52 crore from the market and total market capitalisation of 337 companies as on May 25, 2021 is Rs 26,314 crore. Out of this, 99 companies have migrated to the BSE Main Board. BSE is the market leader in this segment with a market share of 61 per cent.

1 Indian firm paying average Rs 55 lakh after ransom attack

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The recovery cost from the impact of a ransomware attack tripled in the last year in India -- up from \$1.1 million (over Rs 8 crore) in 2020 to \$3.38 million (more than Rs 24.5 crore) in 2021 -- as the country topped the list of 30 countries worldwide for ransomware attacks, a new report said on Tuesday. The average ransom payment in India was \$76,619 (over Rs 55 lakh). However, paying up often doesn't pay off as Indian organizations that paid the ransom got back, on average, 75 per cent of their data and only 4 per cent got all their data back, according to 'The State of Ransomware 2021' report by global cybersecurity leader Sophos. The findings showed that 67 per cent of Indian organizations whose data was encrypted paid a ransom to get back their data -- a slight increase on the previous year when 66 per cent



paid a ransom. "While the proportion of organisations hit by ransomware has declined compared to the previous year, Indian organisations are still far more likely to be hit than those in any other country surveyed," said Sunil Sharma, managing director-sales, Sophos India and SAARC. "It is harder and more expensive for businesses to recover from these complex attacks, which can leave their operating budgets significantly affected," he added. The survey polled 5,400 IT decision makers in mid-sized organisations in 30 countries across Europe, the Americas, Asia-Pacific and Central Asia, the Middle East, and Africa, including 300 respondents in India.

Personal finance app Branch is now available in Hindi

Leading personal finance app Branch on Tuesday said it is now available in Hindi to serve more than half a billion consumers in the country.



Team Absolute | New Delhi

With over 23 million downloads, 4 million customers and 20 million loans processed, Branch International has disbursed over \$600 million to date. The company said in a statement that the Hindi version of the app will address Tier 2 and 3 cities in the overall lending and banking space. "Our deliberate effort to launch our app in Hindi will help a majority of

Hindi-speaking consumers have a better, less-daunting experience and, most importantly, gain access to capital," said Sucheta Mahapatra, Managing Director, Branch. "At Branch, we solve for the financial needs of the average Indian consumer. Language becomes a barrier for users to access funds in this digital-first economy," she added. Branch will use the insights from its Hindi app to expand its services to multiple other vernacular

languages in the coming quarters. "The majority of this Hindi-speaking audience is non-salaried, non-Tier-1 and not served thoroughly by the existing market solutions," the company said. Founded in 2015, Branch has offices in San Francisco, Lagos, Nairobi, Mumbai and Bengaluru. In addition to credit, the company said it aims to roll out high-yield savings accounts, wallets and investments to customers this year.

'SAIRAT' MUSIC CROSSES 1.2BN VIEWS, AJAY-ATUL CALL IT 'INDUSTRY TRENDSETTER'



Team Absolute | Mumbai

The music album of the Marathi blockbuster "Sairat" has crossed 1.2 billion views and streams on YouTube and other streaming platforms. The NagrajManjule directorial, which released in April 2016, has music composed by the National Award-winning composer duo Ajay-Atul.

"It is overwhelming to see the audiences appreciating and loving the music album even today. We have now been able to cross the benchmark that this album has set not only in Marathi cinema, but in the entire Indian film indus-

try. We are grateful to our audiences who have showered the soundtrack with so much love and have helped make this an industry trendsetter," Ajay-Atul said.

The songs of the film are popular even today after five years. The dance number "Zingaat" went on to become a party anthem and was in fact recreated in the 2018 Bollywood film "Dhadak", which was based on "Sairat". Other songs that became hits were "Yadlagla", "Aatachbayakabaavarla", and "Sairatzaalaji". "Sairat's music has crossed over 1.2 billion views and streams across YouTube and streaming

platforms. This is no ordinary feat and is the 'all-time greatest Marathi album', making its place among big Bollywood hits. The popular Zingaat's Hindi version also got a thundering response with over 500 million YouTube views and streams. Ajay and Atul are among the finest music composers we have today in our industry and their fan following is crowd gathering.

We have fans from across the globe loving the album even today," said Anurag Bedi, Chief Business Officer, Zee Music, the label that released the film's music.

Ankita Lokhande: PavitraRishtha made me who I'm today

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Television actress Ankita Lokhande became an overnight star when she paired with late Sushant Singh Rajput on the soap "PavitraRishtha", which released 12 years ago on this day. Marking the occasion, the actress shared an Instagram post with fans on Tuesday, saying that the show made her who she is today. Ankita's post is a collage of scenes of the show featuring Sushant and her, as well as other co-stars including Hiten Tejwani, who later replaced Sushant in the show as the male lead. Tagging the cast and crew of the show, Ankita's post makes special mention of Sushant, said to be her ex-boyfriend, with the hashtag #sushantsinghrajput. "12 Years! Ohh, Yes Yes It's 12 Years Of PavitraRishtha, Time Flies Really Quickly. With more than 66 Awards #Pavitarishtha remains to be one of the most loved show on Indian Television. Here's to 12 glorious years of this iconic show. Which not only gave me Archana but love all across the globe and made me who I'm today," Ankita wrote.

"The story that celebrates joy of life, love, family and friendship. Thank you @balajitelefilmslimited @ektarkapoor for making me Archana and thank you to all the cast and crew. Thank you Maa and Paa for always supporting me. #pavitarishtha #12years #balajitelefilms #archana #ektarkapoor #love #memories," she added.

The show's producer Ekta Kapoor also took to

Instagram to remember "PavitraRishtha". She wrote: "Pain love n angst makes this show the purest bond ever! #pavitarishtha u resurrected my career gave me life long bonds! Thankuuuuu." Commenting on Ekta and Ankita's posts, fans of Sushant Singh Rajput shared how much they were missing the late actor who passed away on June 14 last year.

PARINEETI CHOPRA ASPIRES TO BE LIKE 'GEN Z'

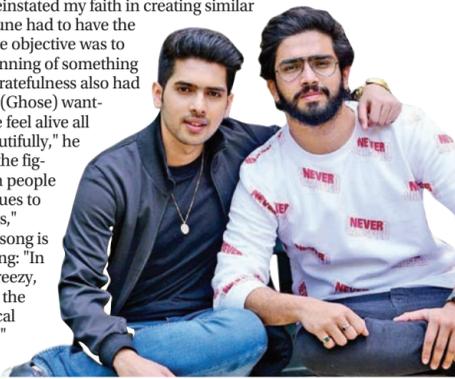
Team Absolute | Mumbai

Parineeti Chopra has sought fan advice. She wants to don streetwear and be like Gen Z, and needs their opinion. "I wanna wear streetwear and be 'candid on Instagram' like Gen Z. Please advise," she wrote as caption for an image from her Turkish holiday. In the image that Parineeti posted on Instagram, she is seen in sweatpants and sweatshirt. She completed her look with sneakers, sunglasses and a satchel. Parineeti's brother Shivang Chopra wrote: "Ahemmm... This is where i shine!!! Lessgo. @parineeti-chopra." The actress has three releases this year - "Sandeep Aur Pinky Faraar", "Saina" and "The Girl On The Train".

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Composer Amaal Mallik gushes about his brother Armaan Malik, saying the latter gives him a hard time choosing new compliments for his singing skills. Armaan and Amaal came together for the song "Kya kiyahai tune" for the web series "Broken But Beautiful 3", a romance drama. "Armaan seems to be giving me a hard time choosing new compliments for his singing. Each time he delivers, I realise this guy can probably sing any genre with ease. This doesn't go to only prove his singing ability but his emotional intelligence as well," Amaal said. He is happy with the response to the song. "The response to 'Kya kiyahai tune' has once again reinstated my faith in creating similar songs of this genre. Melodically speaking, the tune had to have the freshness, the feeling of newly being in love. The objective was to capture the emotion between the end and beginning of something extraordinary," said Amaal. "An underlayer of gratefulness also had to come through lyrics as my director Priyanka (Ghose) wanted to speak about how loving you has made me feel alive all over again, and that I believe was achieved beautifully," he added. "I have a very decent understanding of the figments of love as I have seen serious and broken people around me, and sometimes my relationship issues to have helped me to gather thoughts for my songs," Amaal added. "Coupling him (Armaan) on the song is the talented Palak Muchhal," said Amaal, adding: "In 'Kya kiyahai tune' she sounds effortless and breezy, despite her parts being tough to execute due to the pitch not being very favourable for a female vocal range." The 10-episode "Broken But Beautiful 3" streams on ALTBalaji.

Amaal Mallik: Armaan giving me a hard time choosing new compliments for his singing



ARJUN KAPOOR IS HAPPY AS 'JUNE IS HERE'

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Arjun Kapoor is happy that June is here, because it is his birthday month. The actor posted three pictures on Instagram on Tuesday while sharing the thought. In the images, he is seen posing for the camera dressed in a white T-shirt, red chequered and black pants.

"June is here. Arjun is happy, any guesses why?" Arjun wrote as the caption. Arjun's sister Anshula Kapoor dropped a heart emoji. Actress Parineeti Chopra, his co-star in "Ishaqzaade", "Namaste England", and "Sandeep Aur Pinky Faraar", left a funny retort. "Oho Gift ka Kharacha (Oho need to spend money on the gift)," she wrote. Arjun was recently seen in the digitally released film "Sardar Ka Grandson".

He currently has two films -- "Bhoot Police" and "Ek Villain Returns" -- coming up.

Aahana Kumra: You never know who is fighting a mental health battle

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actress Aahana Kumra took to Instagram on Tuesday to urge people to check on their loved ones amid the ongoing second wave of the Covid pandemic in India. Aahana said it is not easy to understand from outside who is fighting a mental health battle within.

"What sometimes seems may not be! Check on your loved ones... you never know who is fighting a mental health battle... sometimes even those who look the toughest may be going through the most fragile moments of their lives! Reach out! Speak out!" Aahana wrote.

The actress has been addressing health issues amid lockdown lately. On the occasion of World Menstrual Hygiene Day on May 28, Aahana had taken to social media to spread awareness on menstruation and urged all to fight the stigmas surrounding it. On the work front, Aahana will soon be seen in Madhur Bhandarkar's film "India Lockdown", as well as the series "Call My Agent". She also features in the cast of the period drama "Shamsher", starring Ranbir Kapoor, Sanjay Dutt and Vaani Kapoor.

INSTAGRAM PIC OF THE DAY



Deepika Singh