

absolute india

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Vinesh enters final of Poland Ranking Series...

SC DECLINES TO PASS ORDER ON MORATORIUM AMID COVID2.0, SAYS

NOT FINANCIAL EXPERT

▶ The plea contended that the bank or financial institutions should refrain from taking action for auction in respect of any property of any citizen or person or party or anybody corporate for a period of six months.



“ We accept that we aren't experts in financial matters. We can't anticipate financial implications. These issues are in the realm of policy decisions.”

AIIMS INI CET EXAMS POSTPONED BY ONE MONTH

The Supreme Court on Friday ordered postponement of AIIMS INI CET Examination, 2021, scheduled on June 16, by one month. At the beginning of the hearing, the top court asked the counsel representing AIIMS to consider postponing the exam by a month, which was scheduled on June 16. Justice Banerjee said, "Situation in Delhi has improved but in other places figures are high. Can't this be postponed by a month?" AIIMS counsel Dushyant Parashar submitted that if the exam is stayed then there will be an unprecedented crisis. He submitted that several doctors will be recruited by this exam and these petitioners can apply in the next September session exam. "If stay is granted there will be no doctors," said Parashar.

“ We are of the opinion that June 16 date is arbitrary. We direct the exam to be postponed by one month. Needless to say, exam can be held any time after the expiry of one month. We will not entertain a petition in the matter to cancel the exam. How can we say don't conduct the exams at all? The court added that, "this has never happened. We can't entertain a request to waive the exam completely.”

RS 4 LAKH TO COVID VICTIMS

The Centre on Friday informed the Supreme Court that it was considering a plea to provide monetary compensation of Rs 4 lakh to the family members of those who have died due to Covid-19. Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, representing the Centre, submitted before a bench that the issue raised in the PILs is important, and the government would file its response in the matter. Mehta said that the government is contemplating a national policy, and sought two weeks to file its reply. After a brief hearing in the matter, the bench said: "The Centre seeks time to file a reply. Solicitor General Tushar Mehta says issues are under consideration and a reply will be filed... List these petitions on June 21."

STATES/UTS MUST IMPLEMENT "ONE NATION, ONE RATION CARD" SCHEME

The Supreme Court Friday said states and union territories must implement "one nation, one ration card" scheme as it allows migrant workers to get ration at the place of their work in other states as well where their ration cards are not registered. The top court also took strong note of the delay in development of a software meant to register workers of unorganized sector to create a national database and posed queries to the Centre as to how the benefit of free food grain till November this year under the 'Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Yojna' would reach to migrant labourers having no ration cards.

YOGI MEETS PM, NADDA WITH EYE ON 2022 POLLS

UP politics in flux

It is learnt that in the meetings the central leadership emphasised on better coordination and connection between the government and the organisation which is reportedly missing.

▶ Decision on role of alliance partner Apna Dal, Nishad party and others in Uttar Pradesh government also discussed. Whatever is decided between Adityanath and the central leadership will be executed in Lucknow and it will be visible in the coming days.

▶ Sources claimed that based on the feedback collected by the central leadership, it has been decided to go for a reshuffle in the Uttar Pradesh government as well as in the party's state unit.



Earlier, Thursday evening, Nishad Party Chief Sanjay Nishad and his son also met Shah. Rumours had started circulating in Lucknow last fortnight ever since BJP national General Secretary (organisation) B.L. Santhosh and state in-charge Radha Mohan Singh visited Lucknow to review the party's preparations for next year's Assembly elections. Santhosh had taken feedback from the state ministers and MLAs, which had fuelled speculation about possible changes in the party and the government set up in the state.

Modi." Taking to Twitter, Adityanath said: "Today, I had the privilege of meeting with respected Prime Minister Narendra Modi and getting his guidance. I wholeheartedly thanked the Prime Minister for taking out time from his busy schedule."

After meeting Modi, the UP Chief Minister met BJP chief J.P. Nadda. The Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister termed it as a courtesy meeting. The key agenda of both the meetings were next year's Uttar Pradesh Assembly polls along with Covid management, vaccination, impact of

farmers protest in the western part of the state and cabinet reshuffle, sources said. Sources said a cabinet reshuffle will take place in the coming days to include new faces and also fill vacancies. Sources said the role of alliance partner and new recruit Jitin Prasada was also part of the discussion between Adityanath and the BJP central leadership and the Prime Minister.

The role of former bureaucrat turned politician A.K. Sharma, an aide of Prime Minister Modi, was also discussed in the meetings.

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Friday called on Prime Minister Narendra Modi and BJP chief J.P. Nadda and discussed governance as well as the political situation in the state. After the meeting, the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) tweeted, "Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh Yogi Adityanath met PM Narendra

US FDA denies emergency use approval for Covaxin

The FDA had on Thursday recommended Ocugen, the US partner of the Indian vaccine maker, to "pursue a Biologics Licence Application (BLA) submission instead of an EUA application" and "requested additional information and data".

Team Absolute | New Delhi

A day after the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) denied approval for emergency use of Covaxin, the Hyderabad-based Bharat Biotech on Friday said that it is following the recommendation for additional data and will work for full approval. The process will extend Covaxin timelines for seeking US approvals, the company said in a statement. The company said that no vaccine manufactured or developed from India has ever received EUA or full licensure from USFDA. Covaxin has received approval for emergency use from 14 countries with more than 50 countries in the process. Ocugen recently announced that it secured exclusive rights to commercialise Covaxin in Canada and has initiated



“ Our US partner, Ocugen, has received a recommendation from the FDA to pursue Biologics License Applications (BLA) path for COVAXIN which is full approval instead of EUA. All applications have to follow the BLA process, which is the standard process for vaccines.”

Bharat Biotech discussions with Health Canada for regulatory approval.

Mukul Roy returns to Trinamool

Kolkata | Agencies

In a big blow to the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in West Bengal, its all-India Vice President and MLA Mukul Roy joined the Trinamool Congress on Friday along with his son Subhrangshu Roy, almost four years after deserting the Trinamool camp for the saffron brigade. Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, who was present at the

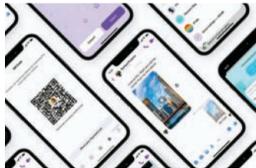


Trinamool Bhavan during the meeting to induct Roy back into the party fold, said that more people will come out of the BJP and join the Trinamool Congress. Roy, who had left Trinamool Congress in 2017, said, "I am having a nice feeling for being among familiar people again. I shall not work for the BJP again, so I have come back here. This has a kind of

homely atmosphere. Hinting that more people from the BJP are likely to join the Trinamool, the Chief Minister said, "Trinamool will welcome everybody who is sober and gentle. But there are some people who betrayed the party before the elections and badmouthed the Trinamool leaders. They are betrayers, and the party will never accept them."

FB INTRODUCES NEW CHAT THEMES, PAYMENTS IN MESSENGER

New Delhi: Facebook has added new chat themes and a quick reply bar in its Messenger app, along with an ability to send and receive money from anyone, even if you're not Facebook friends (for the users in the US). The new chat themes are now available in Messenger and Instagram. The new quick reply bar to the Messenger media viewer makes it easier to have conversations sparked by a cool photo



or video without needing to go back to your main chat thread. Just tap on the photo or video

and send a response through the quick reply bar at the bottom of the screen. Swipe up to exit the full-screen media viewer and head back to your main chat thread.

Facebook has also rolled out the ability for US Messenger users to leverage QR codes and payment links when they want to send or request money with Facebook Pay, even if they're not connected on Facebook.

Cong leaders protest against fuel price hike in Delhi



Team Absolute | New Delhi

Hundreds of Congress workers on Friday staged protest at several petrol pumps across the national capital against the spiralling prices of petrol and diesel, hitting record highs. Several senior Congress leaders including K.C. Venugopal, former Union Minister Ajay Maken, Delhi Congress chief Chaudhary Anil Kumar participated in the protest at several locations in Delhi. Speaking to media, Venugopal, Congress General Secretary (organisations), said, "When the UPA government was in power, tax on petrol and diesel was Rs

9.20. Now it is Rs 32 and we demand the government to roll back the excise duty hike on petrol-diesel." He added that fuel should come under the purview of GST.

Meanwhile, the Delhi Congress chief rode a horse tanga on the capital's streets to mark the protest. The Congress leaders brought the tanga to register their protest over the rise in the fuel prices across the country. Several other cities also reported for protest across the country.

The petrol price has crossed Rs 100 per litre in several parts of the country, while the diesel price also saw a massive rise as it selling over Rs 85 a litre.

Chorus for reform within Congress grows again

Team Absolute | New Delhi

In wake of the departure of UP leader and former Union Minister Jitin Prasada, the chorus for reforms within the Congress has grown louder with a section of leaders calling for a "major surgery" in the party. These party leaders contend that only those with surname should not be promoted in the party but those with a mass base and for this, the party should go for elections to the Congress Working Committee, the party's highest decision-making authority, and to the Congress President's post. The Congress, which is reeling after its defeat in 2014 and 2019 general elections, had already seen

ing an exodus of leaders from Assam followed by Goa, Manipur, Madhya Pradesh and Karnataka, leading to it losing its grip in these states.

However, Congress insiders say that "these young people want power without any effort and do not have commitment towards the party". But the larger question remains that the leadership is unable to hold the people because of its electoral defeats, the leader added.



Modi Cabinet could see expansion, Sushil Modi, Scindia likely contenders

With no change in the ministries since the Modi government began its second term in 2019, and a string of key Assembly elections, slated for next year, a reshuffle may be on the cards this month.

▶ Among the names doing the rounds for induction are that of Raja Sabha member and former Bihar Deputy Chief Minister Sushil Kumar Modi. Jyotiraditya Scindia, whose defection led to the fall of the Congress government in Madhya Pradesh, is also a contender. UP regional party Apna Dal leader Anupriya Patel is also looking for a berth.

Team Absolute | New Delhi

▶ The Modi government, sworn in on May 30, 2019, had 57 ministers - 24 Cabinet Ministers, 9 Ministers of State (Independent Charge) and 24 Ministers of State, against 45 in the first Modi government.

With BJP chief J.P. Nadda meeting Prime Minister Narendra Modi thrice within a week, speculations of a cabinet expansion have gained ground. Nadda had met Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday, with Union Home Minister Amit Shah also present. According to sources, the UP Assembly elections and the ministerial reshuffle was on the agenda. On Thursday too, Nadda had called on the Prime Minister at his residence, and had met him once more recently. A senior BJP leader, who did not want to be named, said: "No reshuffle has taken place since the government took over on May 30, 2019. However, there was a



reshuffle months after the first Modi government took over in May 2014." Another senior party functionary also said that a cabinet expansion or reshuffle is due and it may likely take a matter of days or weeks. The Prime Minister is also reviewing the works of the ministers in his cabinet. Some ministers like Dharmendra Pradhan, Prakash Javadekar and Hardeep Puri had already met the Prime Minister. Sources said based on the review of works, underperforming ministers will be dropped from the Modi cabinet.



BIHAR'S BIG NDA ALLIES IN DILEMMA OVER ISSUES RAISED BY SMALLER PARTIES

Manoj Pathak | Patna

Larger parties like the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and the Janata Dal United (JD(U)) which are part of the ruling National Democratic Alliance (NDA) government in Bihar are in a dilemma over the issues raised by smaller allies like Hindustani Awam Morcha (HAM) and the Vikassheel Insaan Party (VIP).

By raising such issues, the tension between the parties which are part of the NDA is quite evident. There is already a tussle between HAM and the BJP, the largest constituent party in the NDA. HAM Chief and former Bihar Chief Minister, Jitan Ram Manjhi, has put the Bihar government in a spot by advising it on various issues. Now another smaller NDA alliance partner VIP has also created problems

for the Bihar government by demanding a refund of the money collected from the members of the Legislative Assembly and the Bihar Legislative Council.

Manjhi's HAM has said that some BJP leaders are trying to destabilise the Bihar government. The HAM has demanded the formation of a coordination committee for the NDA.

Manjhi demanded a caste-based census on Friday. Manjhi tweeted from his official Twitter account, "Census of the country is necessary in the present situation but due to Covid-19 pandemic, the census work has been put on hold. Why avoid caste-based census when elections are held in the country?"

The HAM Chief wrote demanding that the government must start a 10-year census along with a caste-based census without any further delay.



Earlier, Manjhi had put pressure on the Central government by demanding a special status for Bihar.

VIP Chief and cabinet minister, Mukesh Sahani, has advised the NDA government to stop internal

feuds but has raised the promise of providing employment to 19 lakh people in Bihar.

Sahani tweeted from his official Twitter account, "Requesting all NDA colleagues to refrain from mak-

ing unnecessary rhetorical statements. All of us must come together with the people of Bihar and work on the promise of generating 19 lakh jobs." The VIP Chief has written to Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar demanding return of the money taken from the members of the Legislative Assembly and the Legislative Council. Sahani wrote in his letter that since 2020 till now the development work for the people in each area has come to a standstill. Now that Prime Minister Narendra Modi has announced to give vaccines free to the states, the Chief Minister should give power to the MLAs to use the amount of the voluntary fund under the regional development head so that the latter will be able to do development work in their areas and help to improve medical facilities.

BJP is a sinking ship, I will not ride on it: Om Prakash Rajbhar

Lucknow | Agencies

Former Uttar Pradesh cabinet minister and Suheldev Bharatiya Samaj Party (SBSP) President, Om Prakash Rajbhar, has taken a jibe at the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and said, "BJP is a sinking boat, whosoever wants to ride on it is welcome to do so, but I will not ride on it."

Apna Dal President Anupriya Patel and Nishad Party Chief Sanjay Nishad have met Union Home Minister Amit Shah amid speculation that has started months before the Assembly elections in Uttar Pradesh next year.

Rajbhar tweeted on Friday, saying, "BJP is a sinking boat, whosoever wants to ride on it is free to do so, but we (SBSP) will not ride on it. Whenever elections are near, the BJP remembers the deprived and the backward sections of society. Whenever a



Chief Minister has to be chosen, he is brought from outside the state and made the CM. Four-and-a-half years have passed but the issues on which my party had reached an agreement with the BJP, not a single work has been completed."

The SBSP President wrote, "The rights of the backward communities were looted during the

recruitment of teachers in Uttar Pradesh. With what face will the BJP, which has failed to give representation to the backward community, ask for votes among the community? They remember the backward community only at the time of seeking votes. The SBSP formed the Bhagidari Sankalp Morcha whose aim is to defeat the BJP."

DEATH BY DROWNING LISTED AS DISASTER IN UP

Lucknow: The Yogi Adityanath government in Uttar Pradesh has listed 'death by drowning' as a disaster, making the victim's family eligible for a compensation of Rs 4 lakh under the state disaster relief fund (SDRF).



Death by suicide, however, will not be considered for compensation. According to an order issued by additional chief secretary (revenue) Renuka Kumar, this is in addition to nine situations considered disasters under the SDRF. Death by drowning in a well, river, lake, pond, canal, pit and puddle will also be considered as a disaster from now on. The district magistrate, where the death takes place, will have the authority to determine whether the death was an accident or suicide as the families of suicide victims will not be eligible for state assistance.

To ensure this, a panchnama of the victim will have to be carried out compulsorily. For the release of funds under any category of disaster, the SDM will have to verify the claim of the family. This step is being taken to ensure that no fraudulent claims are made.

Ahmedabad shopkeepers/vendors to need vax or 'no Covid' certificate

Gandhinagar | Agencies

Small traders, street vendors, shop owners, and others, who can fall into the 'super spreader' category, must produce either vaccination certificate or an RT-PCR negative certificate, less than 10 days old, in order to continue their business in Ahmedabad, an order said on Friday.

"All the vegetable vendors, hotel/restaurant employees, roadside food vendors, auto/ taxi drivers, cleaners, paan shop/teashop owners, hair salon, beauty parlour owners, private security agency staff, self-employed like carpenter,



electrician, plumber, mason and shopping mall

employees will have to produce vaccination cer-

tificate or a 10 day RT-PCR negative report to continue business in revenue areas of Ahmedabad district," says the order issued by Additional District Magistrate, Harshad M. Vora.

The vaccinated persons will have to produce cell-phone messages or certified copy or card issued after the vaccination, when asked by the authorities. If they fail to produce it, legal procedure will be carried out against them under the provisions of the Epidemic Act, the Disaster Management Act, the Covid-19 guidelines and the Indian Penal Code.



LANDSLIDE BLOCKS JAMMU-SRINAGAR HIGHWAY

Jammu: The strategic Jammu-Srinagar national highway was blocked on Friday by a massive landslide in the Ramban district. Traffic Department officials said the massive landslide occurred in the morning in Seri area which resulted in closure of this road link between the landlocked Kashmir Valley and the rest of the country.

"Landslide debris clearance is going on. Traffic would be allowed after the highway is fully restored," an official of the traffic department said.

All supplies of essentials of life are routed to the valley through the Jammu-Srinagar highway.

Extremely heavy rain expected in Mumbai Sunday

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Mumbai and neighbouring areas are "very likely" to receive extremely heavy rainfall at isolated places on Sunday, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) said in a report on Friday evening.

It also issued a similar 'red alert' for Ratnagiri and Raigad districts in coastal Maharashtra.

A few places in Mumbai and neighbouring Thane may receive heavy rains on Saturday too, it said.

Rainfall of more than 204.5 mm in 24 hours is considered as extremely heavy. "Mumbai, Thane, Raigad and Ratnagiri districts are very likely to receive extremely heavy rains at isolated places on Sunday. Raigad and



Ratnagiri districts have similar alert for Saturday as well," said the Regional Meteorological Centre of the IMD here. Mumbai and Thane districts would "very likely receive heavy to very heavy rainfall at a few places (on Saturday)," it added. In the rest of

Maharashtra, there would be moderate rains with thunderstorms and lightning in the next two days with varied intensity, the forecast said. Mumbai got respite from rains on Friday after a downpour over the last two days brought the city to a halt.

DILIP KUMAR DISCHARGED FROM HOSPITAL

Mumbai: Bollywood veteran Dilip Kumar was discharged from Hinduja Hospital in Khar on Friday, his official Twitter account informed fans. The actor had been admitted on June 6 after experiencing breathlessness.

A tweet on the microblogging site read: "With your love and affection, and your prayers, Dilip Saab is going home from the hospital. God's infinite mercy and kindness through Drs. Gokhale, Parkar, Dr. Arun Shah and the entire team at Hinduja Khar. --Faisal Farooqui #DilipKumar #healthupdate."

The senior actor's wife, actress Saira Banu, was seen with him while leaving the hospital. She had earlier requested fans to not believe in rumours about his death. In a note posted on Dilip Kumar's Twitter account a few days ago, she had said: "Past few days my beloved husband, Yousuf Khan, has been unwell and recuperating at a hospital in Mumbai. Through this note, I want to thank all of you for keeping him in your prayers and for all the love and affection. My husband, my Kohinoor our Dilip Kumar Sahab's health is stable and doctors have assured me that he should be discharged soon." Requesting netizens to not pay heed to rumours, the actress further wrote: "I urge you not to believe in rumours. While I ask you to pray for Sahab's health, I am praying that the almighty keep all of you safe and healthy during this pandemic." This was the second time in a month that Dilip Kumar was admitted to hospital.



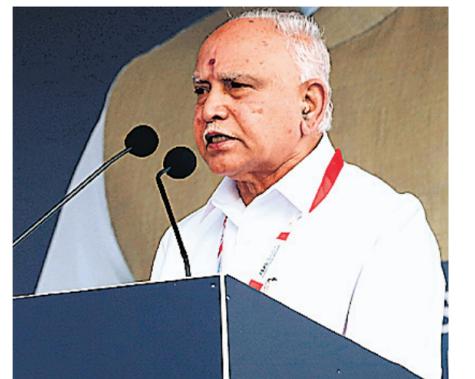
Will stay at helm for rest of my tenure: Yediyurappa

Hassan (Karnataka)

A day after Karnataka BJP in-charge Arun Singh's endorsement, embattled Chief Minister B.S. Yediyurappa declared on Friday that he will remain at the helm for the next two years.

With the state Assembly elections are due only in 2023, Yediyurappa has sent out a strong signal to his detractors that he's here to stay.

Speaking to the media here after chairing a Covid review meeting with the district officials, the Chief Minister declared that with the party's national leadership ruling out leadership change in Karnataka, he would work with greater zeal and responsibility. Just few days ago, Yediyurappa



had expressed his willingness to resign as the Chief Minister if the BJP's central leadership demanded so. However, Arun Singh's endorsement on Thursday has come as a shot in the arm for the 78-

year-old BJP leader. Amid the mayhem caused by the Covid pandemic, Yediyurappa has been fighting the latest bout of dissident activities from his detractors in the party.

TWO KIDS INJURED AS BOMB EXPLODES IN BIHAR'S ARARIA

Team Absolute | Patna

Days after the Banka blast, Bihar's Araria district saw an explosion on Friday that left two minors injured, police said.

The bomb exploded at Rampur Chowk (east) under Baigachi police station in the district, injuring Mohamad Afroz (12) and Mohamad Jaish Alam Washimo Rahim (13). Police also recovered two live bombs from the spot. Baigachi SHO Harendra Kumar said: "As per statement of the victims, they were playing in the area when the bomb exploded. They sustained splinters injuries and were admitted in the Araria Sadar hospital." "During investigation, we have recovered 2 crude bombs from the area. The local criminals are on our nerves," he added. The Banka blast, three days back, left a cleric named Abdul Momin dead.



Chennai EOW arrests Ravi Parthasarathy, kingpin of Rs 1 lakh cr IL&FS scam

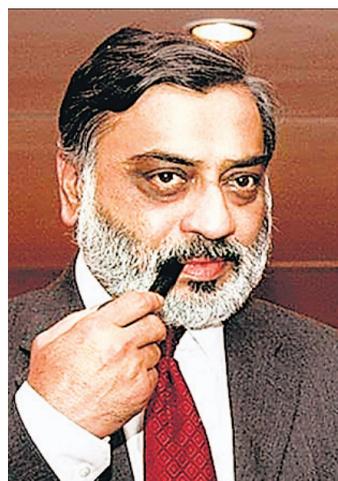
Team Absolute | Chennai

The Economic Offences Wing (EOW) of Chennai Police said on Friday that it has arrested Ravi Parthasarathy, the former Chairman of IL&FS Group, in the Rs 1 lakh crore scam, which triggered a liquidity crisis in the financial services market in 2018.

EOW DSP Prakash Babu confirmed to IANS that Parthasarathy has been arrested and taken into police custody for 15 days. He added that his bail hearing will come up for hearing on Monday.

Parthasarathy, the kingpin, mastermind and chief architect of the Rs 1 lakh crore IL&FS scam, has been arrested by the EOW in connection with Crime No. 13 of 2020, dated September 20, 2020, the EOW of Chennai Police said in a statement.

"The accused, Ravi Parthasarathy, is the former Chairman and Managing Director of the entire IL&FS Group. The IL&FS Group, which consists of more than 350 group companies, was used as a



vehicle to perpetrate fraud by then management of IL&FS Group which was headed by the then Chairman and MD-CEO Ravi Parthasarathy," said the EOW.

The EOW stated that the FIR has been registered in connection with the complaint given by 63 moons Technologies Ltd, which lost a sum of Rs 200 crore. Complaints from various other depositors have also been received by the EOW. The anticipatory bail petition filed by the accused Mr. Ravi Parthasarathy was also dismissed by the Hon'ble Madras High Court. Earlier, the Chennai EOW-II in connection with the same criminal case had arrested and remanded other co-accused with the scam namely Hari Sankaran and Ramachandran Karunakaran who were former Directors and Managing Directors of the Financial Establishment who were close aides of the master mind Ravi Parthasarathy. The accused Ravi Parthasarathy was produced before the TNFD Court, Chennai after following due procedure and the court has recorded the arrest and remanded him for judicial custody. Aggrieved depositors and investors can forward their claims to EOW, Chennai (eow@chennai.gov.in) or call No. 9551133229

The king pin and the master mind of the several crore IL&FS & ITNL Financial scam, Mr. Ravi Parthasarathy, has been arrested by Economic Offences Wing (EOW) II, Chennai in connection with Crime No. 13 of 2020 dated 28.09.2020. The prime accused Mr. Ravi Parthasarathy was the former CEO/Chairman of the entire IL&FS group. The IL&FS group which consists of more than 300 group companies was used as a vehicle to perpetrate one of independent India's largest financial fraud by then management of IL&FS group which was headed by the then Chairman and CEO Mr. Ravi Parthasarathy.

The FIR has been registered under section 409, 420 r/w 120B of IPC and Section 5 of the TNFD Act in connection with the complaint given by Moons Technologies Ltd who has lost a sum of Rs.200 Crores. Complaints from various other depositors have also been received by the EOW. The anticipatory bail petition filed by the accused Mr. Ravi Parthasarathy was also dismissed by the Hon'ble Madras High Court. Earlier, the Chennai EOW-II in connection with the same criminal case had arrested and remanded other co-accused with the scam namely Hari Sankaran and Ramachandran Karunakaran who were former Directors and Managing Directors of the Financial Establishment who were close aides of the master mind Ravi Parthasarathy. The accused Ravi Parthasarathy was produced before the TNFD Court, Chennai after following due procedure and the court has recorded the arrest and remanded him for judicial custody. Aggrieved depositors and investors can forward their claims to EOW, Chennai (eow@chennai.gov.in) or call No. 9551133229



DELHI REPORTS 238 NEW COVID CASES, 24 DEATHS

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Delhi reported 238 new Covid cases and 24 deaths in the last 24 hours. The daily positivity rate was at 0.31 per cent, according to the health bulletin. Delhi has a total of 3,922 active cases, out of which 1,238 are in home isolation.

A total of 504 people recovered in the same period, taking the total so far to 14,01,977. With the new cases and fatalities, the cumulative tally has gone up to 14,30,671, while the toll has risen to 24,772.

The national capital, which has witnessed an unprecedented surge of Covid-19 cases and resulted in its health system nearly overwhelmed, continued to witness reduction in daily cases, positivity and deaths

The national capital that has witnessed an unprecedented surge of Covid-19 cases and resulted in its health system nearly overwhelmed, continued to witness reduction in daily cases, positivity rate and deaths since the last few weeks.

since the last few weeks. After a one and half month strict lockdown, Delhi has started unlocking partially since the last two weeks. This is the second straight week the unlock process is progressing but certain restrictions

to combat the Covid-19 spread are still in effect. In the first phase of unlocking, the Delhi government has allowed construction work and factories to bring the economy of the city on track. Markets, and malls

were allowed to open, on odd-even basis, from last Monday, while the Delhi Metro also resumed services. The city government will make an announcement of the third phase of unlock on Saturday.



BJP, AAP continue sparring over doorstep ration scheme

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The issue of delivery of subsidized food grains at the doorstep, which has sparked a political war between Delhi's ruling Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) and the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) led Central government, again brought both the parties to a confrontation on Friday.

The fresh standoff between the AAP and the BJP began after Union Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad on Friday attacked Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, calling his doorstep delivery of food grains scheme a 'jumla' and accused the AAP of links to the 'ration mafia.'

Addressing a press conference, the Union Minister also accused the Arvind Kejriwal-led AAP government of not implementing the Centre's 'One Nation, One Ration Card' scheme under which economically weaker sections get subsidised food grains.

"This ration delivery to homes sounds like a novel idea. But, if you check the details you will find loopholes and possibilities for corruption. Is this what Arvind Kejriwal wants? Do you (Kejriwal) want to break the law and fool the people?" Prasad said.

He also accused the Kejriwal government of failing to provide oxygen to the people of Delhi during the peak of the second wave of the Covid-19 pandemic.

"We introduced 'One Nation, One Ration Card' based on Aadhaar. People can get their



ration at fair price shops anywhere in the country, and can even divide portions with the family back home. Sad to say only three states have not implemented it - Delhi, Bengal and Assam," Prasad added.

Later, responding to the charges, Delhi Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia said the oxygen shortage in Delhi was the failure of the Centre and not the Delhi government.

Addressing a digital press conference, Sisodia said, "People were knowing that BJP means Bharatiya Janata Party, but now it has become 'Bharatiya Jhagda Party'. BJP's leaders do nothing but abuse the opposition. Every time, they will fight with state governments, instead of helping the states in development issues." Earlier, AAP head and Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal had accused the BJP of supporting the 'ration mafia'.

27% succeeded in getting vax appointment on CoWIN in last 7 days: Survey

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Only 27 per cent of those who tried to get Covid vaccine appointment on the CoWIN/Aarogya Setu app in the last seven days were able to do so, said a survey by LocalCircles. The survey sought to understand the magnitude of issues with the CoWIN portal that still persist. When people were asked about their experiences with the CoWIN site, 21 per cent said "was able to register and get an appointment easily", while 6 per cent said "was able to register after many attempts and get an appointment".

Breaking down the poll further, 44 per cent said "was able to register easily but couldn't get an appointment", 20 per cent said "was able to register only after many attempts but couldn't get an appointment", while 9 per cent said "wasn't able to register due to OTP or other issues". On an aggregate basis, the findings of the poll indicated that only 27 per cent of those who tried to get the Covid vaccination appointment on CoWIN site or Aarogya Setu app in the last seven days were able to do so. This question in the survey received 8,278 responses.

The survey also said that with vaccine hesitancy at a low of 18 per cent, many more people are now seeking the vaccine as compared to early March. This coupled with supply, pro-



urement and distribution issues has led to a shortage with 70 per cent citizens surveyed having someone in their social network who could not find a vaccine dose when they went for vaccination in May.

The availability of vaccines is likely to rise in the coming months with India placing an order for 400 million additional doses.

The survey found that 70 per cent citizens had someone in their social network who could not find a vaccine dose when they went for vaccination in May.

The percentage of citizens who were unable to find a vaccine dose at the vaccination centres went up by almost 4 times from April to May.

GMDA to resolve water-logging woes ahead of monsoon season

Team Absolute | Gurugram

The Gurugram Metro-politan Development Authority (GMDA) is working on various measures to fix the water-logging issues ahead of the monsoon season this year.

GMDA CEO Sudhir Rajpal has directed the officials of the Municipal Corporation of Gurugram (MCG), National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) and DLF to install more water pumps and deploy additional manpower in the water-logging prone areas. Rajpal said that GMDA, MCG, NHAI and DLF should work together closely to address the water-logging woes. The GMDA CEO also instructed the officials that complaints received through the Integrated Command and Control Centre (ICCC) during the monsoon season should also be resolved.

They will be addressed by sending the officers of the agency to the spot, he added.

Last year, the city was plagued by massive traffic congestion due to lack of coordination between various departments.

"A special team of the district administration will be on patrol during the monsoon season to deal with the water-logging problem across the city. Mobile pump vans and additional water pumps have been installed with operators at multiple underpasses and stretches," said a senior MCG official. "The civic body is making all necessary efforts during the monsoon season so that the commuters on Delhi-Gurugram expressway along with the city's internal roads don't face any



problem related to traffic jams. To ensure the smooth traffic in the city traffic personnel will be deployed 24x7 along with recovery vans at water-logging prone sites," he added.

Meanwhile, the Gurugram police have identified 24 points within the city which could be vulnerable to heavy traffic jams during rains. These points are Shankar Chowk, Atlas Chowk, Iffco Chowk, Signature Tower underpass, Sector-31, Jharsa Chowk, Rajiv Chowk underpass, Hero Honda Chowk underpass, Vatika Chowk, Subhash Chowk, Bata Chowk, Atul Kataria Chowk, Huda City Centre, Hanuman Chowk, Ghata More, Kherki Daula toll plaza, Rampura Chowk, IMT Chowk in Manesar, Panchgaon Chowk, Bilaspur Chowk, Kapriwas, Himgiri Chowk sector-10, Ambedkar Chowk in Sohna and Jamalpur in Pataudi. The police department has planned to deploy additional force to manage traffic during the rainy season.

DSEU TO CONDUCT APTITUDE TESTS FOR ADMISSION IN DEC-JAN

New Delhi: Delhi Skill and Entrepreneurship University (DSEU) will conduct aptitude tests of students between December 2021 to January 2022 and based on the tests, students will be admitted. To encourage more students for tests and admission, DSEU will reach out to students at their schools to involve them for various technical learning classes under it. Delhi Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia, after a digital meeting with Vice Chancellor (DSEU) Neeharika Vohra and principals of several Delhi government-run schools, on Friday said it (DSEU) would focus on conducting 360 degree assessment. "While most universities continue with their old practice of admitting students based on grade lists, DSEU will be the first university in India which will focus on the overall interest, talent and mindset for entrepreneurship. Such a practice is new in India but not unpopular abroad," Sisodia, who is also the Education Minister in the AAP-led Delhi Government, said.

He informed that in the current year, DSEU will admit 6000 students out of which 4500 will study diploma courses and 1500 will study degree courses. "The purpose of this interaction is to provide information to all students from Class 9 to Class 12 on the DSEU. This university will cater to all those children who want to study skill and entrepreneur courses. In the coming years, this DSEU will add immense value to the market and create a pool of individuals who will not only be job seekers but job providers."

'Delhi government is under the control of ration mafia'

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The BJP on Friday alleged that the Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal-led Delhi government is under the control of ration mafia.

Addressing a press conference on Friday, Union Minister and senior BJP leader Ravi Shankar Prasad said: "Arvind Kejriwal is talking about home delivery of ration, while he could not provide delivery of oxygen at doorstep or medicine from mohalla clinics.

Home delivery of ration is also a 'jumla'. The Delhi government is under the control of the ration mafia."

Referring to the Food Security Act, Prasad, said: "Act provides periodic audit and monitoring of ration shops by a vigilance committee." He said that the government gives wheat at Rs 2 per kg, rice at Rs 3 per kg across the states under Food Security Act, while the rice and wheat cost Rs 37 and Rs 27 per kgs respectively. "The government gives



subsidised food grains to the states for distribution through ration shops. The government had spent about Rs 2 lakh crore annually on subsidies," he said.

Prasad added that like last year, under the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana, this year also free ration is being given to the poor till November. He further said that the government provides 37,573 tonnes of food grains to the Delhi government for distribution among 73 lakh people every month. The Union Minister asked why

the Kejriwal government did not implement 'One Nation, One Ration Card' in the national capital, which was rolled out across the country except in three states. He further claimed that after four lakh bogus ration cards found in Delhi, the Kejriwal government stalled authentication of PoS (point of sale) machines within four months of introducing it in January 2018 under pressure from the ration mafia.

"Why authentication of beneficiaries through PoS machines has not started in Delhi's ration shops from April 2018 till now," Prasad said.

He also claimed that the Kejriwal government has no data of SC/ST beneficiaries in the city.

The Minister added that the Delhi government should come out with a new scheme for home delivery of rations and purchase food grains from the centre. "Government will provide ration for new scheme of Kejriwal at reasonable price," he said.

Road network in illegal colony razed during demolition drive

Team Absolute | Gurugram

The department of town and country planning (DTCP) razed a road network and electric poles which were being constructed in an illegal colony developed on six acres of land in Kherki Daula in Sector-77 during a demolition drive on Thursday day, officials said. The officials said an illegal colony was being developed by six persons, including a former MLA. In connection with the matter, the case was registered under sections 10, 7(I), and 7(ii) of the Haryana Development and Regulation of Urban Areas Act, 1975, at the Kherki Daula police station earlier in April 2021. The case was registered against Praveen Yadav, Deepak Chugh, Manorama, Mahender Sharma, Sombir Jakhar, and former Gurugram MLA Umesh Agarwal. The



DTCP officials said, despite registering an FIR, a road network and an electricity pole was also erected in an illegal colony. "The former MLA reached the spot to interrupt the demolition drive but was pacified by the DTCP officials. A road network and an electricity pole was erected in an illegal colony which was razed by a team of the DTCP," Krishan Kant, station

house officer of the Kherki Daul police station told IANS. DTCP officials said that they had received a tip-off that a colony was being carved out on six acres of land - an institutional area - in Sector 77 later they conducted an inspection and found that a colony was being developed here, and roads were being laid, they said. "We again conducted a joint inspection with the revenue department and found that two property dealers, and former MLA Umesh Agarwal were promoting the illegal colony. A complaint was lodged with the police, and a case was registered in April," a DTCP official said. The DTCP officials said that a road network, electric poles, and an office were constructed on the land. "This is an institutional area and development of an illegal colony can't be allowed in this area. No permission was taken for developing it.

SBI Card supports Gurugram administration in fight against Covid

New Delhi: Credit card major SBI Cards and Payment Services has collaborated with the Gurugram administration in its fight against the pandemic. In a statement, the company said that it has pledged over Rs 2 crore to support the Gurugram administration by helping them with ventilators, BiPAP machines, test kits and ambulances for managing the Covid-19 situation. This collaboration is part of an ongoing national initiative by SBI Card, wherein the company is partnering with various administrations, NGOs and medical institutes under different healthcare and meal support programmes. As the second wave of novel coronavirus has severely affected people and put pressure on the healthcare system, SBI Card has partnered with the Gurugram administration by committing 12 ventilators, 20 BiPAP machines, 30,000 test kits and 2 ambulances. Rama Mohan Rao Amara, MD & CEO, SBI Card said: "In these testing times, SBI Card is committed to support the community and the nation in the fight against Covid-19 pandemic. We hope that this contribution will aid the efforts being made by the Gurugram administration." Yash Garg, Deputy Commissioner, Gurugram, said: "It is imperative for everyone to follow the well laid out guidelines and stay safe, it is equally important to have effective on-ground mechanism to support those affected, as also to gear up for the future. We are thankful to SBI Card for extending their support to augment our efforts."

WATCH YOUR SPEED IN DELHI, THESE ARE THE NEW LIMITS

The notification states that rash driving on Delhi roads is endangering lives and it is necessary to regulate speeds of vehicles to ensure safety.

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Watch your speedometer the next time you are out driving because the Delhi Traffic Police has revised the maximum permissible speed limits on the roads of the capital for all categories of vehicles. The revised limits for different roads and categories of vehicles have been published in Delhi Gazette. The notification, dated June 8, states that rash driving on the city roads is endangering the lives of drivers and passengers and it is necessary to regulate speeds of vehicles to ensure safety.

The maximum speed for M1 category of vehicles, comprising private cars and app-based cabs such as Ola and Uber, ranges from 50 km/hour to 70 km/hour on city



roads. For narrower roads in residential and market areas, and service lanes, the top speed has been capped at 30 km/hour for this category. For two-wheelers, the maximum permissible speed limit is now 60 km/hour on city roads and 30 km/hour in residential and mar-

ket areas. M2 and M3 category vehicles can now be driven at a maximum of 60 km/hour in the city. This category, defined in the notification as vehicles used for carriage of passengers comprising nine or more seats in addition to the driver's seat, mostly comprises buses. For other categories of vehicles, including three-wheelers referred to as Gramin Sewa or Phat-Phat Sewa and goods carriers, the maximum speed limit remains at 40 km/hour. The order caps the maximum speed on loops of flyovers at 40 km/hour for all categories of vehicles. The new speed limits have come into force and civic agencies have been directed to erect signboards to inform drivers of the revised limits. Speaking to media persons, Joint

Commissioner of Police, Traffic, Meenu Choudhary said the speed limits have been revised under four classifications. "We have made the speed limit for cabs and taxis at par with cars with this notification," she was quoted as saying. "Where the speed limit for cars is 50 km/hour, the speed limit for two-wheelers will be 50 km/hour but where the speed limit for cars is 70 km/hour, it is 60 km/hour for two-wheelers," she added. According to Delhi Traffic Police data, the capital saw 5,610 road accidents in 2019 which claimed 1,463 lives. The number dropped to 4,178 accidents in 2020, partly owing to the nationwide lockdown and other Covid restrictions. As many as 1,196 deaths due to accidents were reported last year.



EDUCATION AND HEALTH ARE GOVT'S PRIORITIES: CHIEF MINISTER CHOUHAN

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has said that education and health are the priorities of the Madhya Pradesh government. Extensive work is being done in both the areas in the state. Along with the expansion of education, full attention is also being paid to its quality.

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has said that education and health are the priorities of the Madhya Pradesh government. Extensive work is being done in both the areas in the state. Along with the expansion of education, full attention is also being paid to its quality. Create smart classes in colleges, so that students can get education through virtual medium as well. Chouhan virtually laid the foundation stone for the upgradation work of Government Vikram Mahavidyalaya Khachrod at a cost of Rs. 2 crore 20 lakh. He also interacted with the people present through video conferencing. Union Minister for Social Justice and Empowerment Shri Thawar Chand Gehlot, Higher Education Minister Mohan Yadav and MP Anil Firojia attended



through VC from Khachrod. Principal Secretary Higher Education Anupam Rajan was pres-

The work of medical college in Ujjain will also start soon. While addressing virtually from Khachrod,

ent. Chouhan said that health facilities will be boosted even at small places in the state. Health facilities will be expanded in all villages, towns and small cities. Chouhan said that a primary health centre has been approved in Khachrod at a cost of one crore 32 lakh. Its work will be completed in a year. Neelkantheshwar Mahadev Temple will also be renovated at Khachrod at a cost of Rs 20 lakh.

Union Minister Thawar Chand Gehlot said that Chief Minister Chouhan is synonymous with development in the state. The region is developing at a fast pace. The work of the Madhya Pradesh government to end the corona infection is very commendable. Higher Education Minister Mohan Yadav said that Chief Minister Chouhan has doubled the budget of Higher Education Department. The building of every government college in the state, which has land available, is being constructed. Two crore 20 lakh rupees have been approved for the construction works in the World Bank project at Government Vikram College, Khachrod. In this, construction of six class rooms, six laboratory rooms and staff rooms with Rs. 27 lakhs, upgradation with Rs. 65 lakhs, ramps for differently-abled students with Rs. 8 lakhs and additional development work with Rs. 20 lakhs are to be done.

Fuel prices can be reduced by Rs 25: Diggy

CASES FILED AGAINST DIGVIJAYA SINGH, 29 OTHERS FOR 'UNLAWFUL ASSEMBLY'

Senior Congress leader and former State Chief Minister Digvijaya Singh said here on Friday that due to rising prices of fuel, consumer goods are also getting expensive.

Cases have been registered against 30 people, including Congress leaders Digvijaya Singh and PC Sharma, under IPC section 188 and 145, ASP Ankit Jaiswal said.



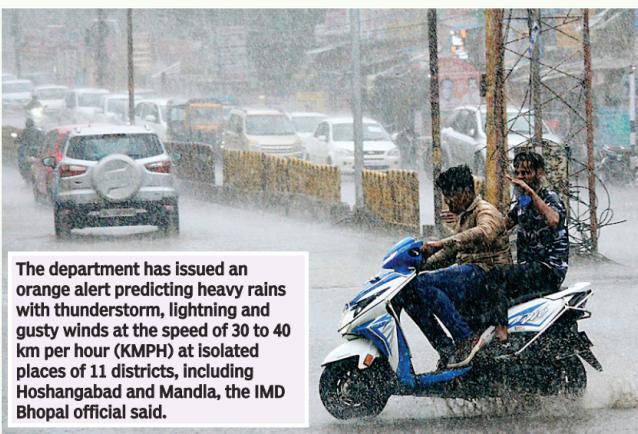
Team Absolute | Bhopal

Senior Congress leader Digvijaya Singh has said that fuel prices in India can be reduced by at least Rs 25. Singh said that the fuel prices can be reduced by cutting heavy excise duty. "At least Rs 25 can be reduced in fuel prices by cutting excise duty," said Congress Rajya Sabha MP and former chief minister Digvijaya Singh. He said that due to rising prices of fuel, consumer goods are also getting expensive. "Where are those who once used to criticise UPA govt over fuel price hikes? With rising fuel prices, consumer goods are also getting expensive," Singh said.

Digvijaya Singh said this while he and other Congress leaders in Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh were staging demonstration against the BJP Government over high prices of petrol and diesel. Meanwhile, the Bhopal Police has registered a case against Congress leaders - Digvijaya Singh, PC Sharma and 30 others for "violating COVID-19 protocols". "Case has been registered against 30 people, including Congress leaders Digvijaya Singh and PC Sharma, under Section 188 (Disobedience to order duly promulgated by public servant) and 145 (Joining or continuing in unlawful assembly knowing it has been commanded to

disperse) of the Indian Penal Code (IPC)," informed Bhopal Police. According to Assistant Superintendent of Police (ASP) Ankit Jaiswal, cases were registered under sections 188 and 145 of the Indian Penal Code. "Cases have been registered against 30 people, including Congress leaders Digvijaya Singh and PC Sharma, under IPC section 188 and 145," ASP Jaiswal said. The Congress held a nationwide protest on Friday in view of the rising prices of petrol and diesel. Party leaders along with workers demonstrated across the country holding placards and raising slogans against the central government.

Monsoon Advances; IMD Issues Orange Alert in 11 Districts of MP



The department has issued an orange alert predicting heavy rains with thunderstorm, lightning and gusty winds at the speed of 30 to 40 km per hour (KMPH) at isolated places of 11 districts, including Hoshangabad and Mandla, the IMD Bhopal official said.

Team Absolute | Bhopal

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) on Friday issued an orange alert, predicting heavy rains with thunderstorm in 11 districts of Madhya Pradesh, as southwest monsoon advanced into the state. Rains lashed large parts of the central state during the day, with Parasaria area of Chhindwara receiving 90.1mm rainfall, the highest, in the last 24 hours, ending 8:30 am on Friday, senior meteorologist P K Saha of IMD Bhopal said. After covering Jabalpur and Hoshangabad divisions, large parts of Indore and Shahdol divisions and parts of Bhopal and Sagar divisions, southwest monsoon is advancing to other parts of the state. The department has issued an orange alert predicting

heavy rains with thunderstorm, lightning and gusty winds at the speed of 30 to 40 km per hour (KMPH) at isolated places of 11 districts, including Hoshangabad and Mandla, he said. A yellow alert predicting likely thunderstorms with lightning and wind gusts at the speed of 30 to 40 KMPH has been issued for isolated places of four divisions, including Indore, Gwalior and Chambal, the official said, adding that similar weather conditions have been forecast for 20 districts, including



Bhopal and Jabalpur. These alerts are valid till Saturday morning, it was stated. Mercury dropped in the parts of the state that received good rainfall, with Jabalpur recording the maximum and minimum temperature of 31.0 (-8) and 23.4 (-4) degrees Celsius respectively, Saha said. Bhopal city recorded 21.2 mm rainfall while Pachmari, a hill station in Hoshangabad received 21.0 mm rainfall between 8:30 am and 5:30 pm.

CM PLANTS MAULSHREE SAPLING IN SMART GARDEN

Bhopal: Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan on Friday planted a sapling of Maulshree in Smart Garden. Chouhan plants a sapling every day. Maulshree is a well known tree. It is called Kesava in Sanskrit, Maulsiri or Bakul in Hindi. Maulsiri is a medicinal tree. It has been used in Ayurveda for centuries. Maulshree is also used for the prevention of Vastu defects. Its bright green leaves and beautiful texture makes the tree attractive. Maulshree's evergreen trees with lovely fragrant flowers that give pleasure to the mind are found along the roads and in the gardens.

Coal India is carrying out important work for the country: Chief Minister

Northern Coalfields presents funds for oxygen plants to Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan. Rs 10 crore was presented to the Health department for setting up five oxygen plants and Rs one crore 75 lakh to AIIMS Bhopal under CSR Fund.

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Representatives of Northern Coalfields Limited, Singrauli Madhya Pradesh presented cheques worth Rs.11 crore 75 lakh to Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan at Mantralaya on Friday for setting up oxygen plant. Rs 10 crore was presented to the Health department for setting up five oxygen plants and Rs one crore 75 lakh to AIIMS Bhopal under CSR Fund. During a discussion with the Northern Coalfields officials, Chief Minister Chouhan said that Coal India Limited is doing



significant work under Corporate Social Responsibility. Madhya Pradesh government will always support in these works. CMD, Northern Coalfields, Prabhat Kumar Singh told Chief Minister that he wishes to open a Mining Engineering College and Medical College in Singrauli with the help of the government and with CSR funds. Chouhan said that Madhya Pradesh government will extend full cooperation in this. Chouhan was informed by the officials of Northern Coalfields that reclamation work is also being done on

the lands mined by them in Singrauli. Work is also being done for the airport there. The institute gets works worth Rs 100 crore done every year from CSR fund. This contribution has been made with the aim of equipping the health services infrastructure with modern facilities in the Covid-19 disaster. With this initiative taken under social responsibility, five PSA oxygen plants of 1500 LPM capacity will be set up in medical colleges of Bhopal, Indore, Rewa, Jabalpur and Sagar. At the same time, an oxygen plant will also be set up at AIIMS Bhopal.

CM PAYS TRIBUTES TO PT. RAM PRASAD BISMIL

Bhopal: Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan garlanded the portrait of Pandit Ram Prasad Bismil, the great hero of Kakori incident, on his birth anniversary on Friday. Chouhan paid floral tributes at his residence remembering him. Bismil was born on June 11, 1897 in Shahjahanpur, Uttar Pradesh. Pandit Ram Prasad Bismil was a prominent fighter of the revolutionary stream of the Indian independence movement, who was hanged by the British government at the age of 30.

Private hospitals can return vaccine doses to government: MPHC

The Court has directed the government to get chief medical and health officers to verify the returned stock and process refunds.

Team Absolute | Jabalpur

The Madhya Pradesh High Court has allowed private hospitals to return COVID-19 vaccine doses to the government and directed the latter to get chief medical and health officers to verify the returned stock and process refunds. A division bench of Chief Justice Mohammad Rafiq and Justice Sujoy Paul observed that vaccination has to be done free of cost now in view of a change in the Union government's policy. "The hospitals referred (applicant private hospitals) may return the indicated number of vials/vaccine doses (anti-coronavirus vaccine) to concerned CMHOs of Jabalpur, Gwalior, Ujjain and Narsinghpur. The CMHO shall duly verify the same and the amount paid in-lieu

thereof shall be refunded to the concerned hospital within a period of one month," the HC order of Thursday said.

As per the application filed by Indian Medical Association and Nursing Home Association, seven private hospitals of Jabalpur, as well as one private hospital each in Gwalior, Ujjain and Narsinghpur have shown willingness to return the number of vials/vaccine doses remaining with them to the government after change in the vaccination policy, amicus curiae and senior advocate Naman Nagrath said.

The court issued the direction while hearing a bunch of petitions, including a suo motu one, on issues related to the COVID-19 pandemic and treatment provided to patients.

CM to launch temporary Covid Hospitals at Bina and Budhni

WORK ON INFRASTRUCTURES STARTED TO FACE THE THIRD WAVE OF CORONA

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan will inaugurate the newly constructed 200 oxygen bedded temporary Covid hospital near BORA at Bina in Sagar district on Saturday. Union Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas, Dharmendra Pradhan will also be present on the occasion. Chief Minister Chouhan will also inaugurate oxygen-equipped 300 bedded Covid Care Center at Budhni in Sehore district on Saturday itself. These hospitals will be an important part of the preparations being made to face the third possible wave of Corona.

Chouhan informed that the state government has prepared an effective action plan to face the third wave of Corona, according to which all arrangements are being ensured in advance. In this sequence, the health infrastructure of the state is



being strengthened and temporary hospitals are being built especially in places where oxygen is available. With this place located in remote rural areas, the people of the area will not even have to go to cities for treatment.

Construction work of 1 block of 200 beds has been almost completed in this ambitious scheme for the prevention and control of Corona infection, as per the intention of Chief Minister. The work of toilets, water supply, electric supply, oxy-

gen supply, approach road including road construction has been completed. Pipelines have been laid for water supply. To keep the hospital dome air conditioned, coolers etc. have been installed. Instruments have been installed at points near the pipeline beds to transport oxygen from BORA's oxygen plant to the patients in the hospital dome. Nursing staff block, fever clinic, help desk etc. have also been set up in the centre. Special care has also been taken of flooring so that there is no difficulty in transporting the patients by stretchers and wheel chairs etc.

The temporary Covid Care Center set up in Budhni will have hospital-like facilities. This is a 300-bedded Covid Care hospital equipped with oxygenated beds. The centre will start with 100 beds as of now. Soon additional 200 beds will be increased. Keeping in mind the possible third wave of

Corona, all necessary arrangements have been made in making this center. There will be a separate 50-bed ward for children in this center, the construction of which is going on at a brisk pace.

This Covid Care hospital is divided into two parts, in which there are 144 beds each in A block and B block. Apart from this, there will be a separate OPD ward of 12 beds. Special care has been taken to provide better facilities to Covid patients here. The 12 bedded OPD will be convenient for the patients coming for health check-up. Separate booths have been set up for the convenience of patients and family members and for the smooth operation of the hospital. There will be separate rooms for administration, nurses, doctors, store etc., There will be arrangements of help desk, security, police, CCTV, central AC system, fire suppression, electrical system etc.



RIPPLES IN MAHA AS POLL STRATEGIST PK MEETS SHARAD PAWAR

The meeting triggered guesswork whether this could signal a preparation for the 2024 Lok Sabha and Maharashtra Assembly elections amid calls for putting up a united front of all Opposition parties to tackle the Bharatiya Janata Party challenge.

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Maharashtra politics saw a flutter on Friday as much sought-after polls mastermind

Prashant Kishor called on Nationalist Congress Party President Sharad Pawar and the duo broke bread over lunch here. After the luncheon, both Pawar and Prashant Kishor, oft referred to as 'PK' in political circles, kept mum on their meeting, further fuelling speculation.

However, senior NCP leader and Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar brushed aside all gossip, noting that Kishor has already made it clear he will not be designing poll strategies for political parties in future. Similarly, Shiv Sena Chief

Spokesperson and MP Sanjay Raut said many political leaders are in contact with Kishor while other NCP and Congress leaders feigned ignorance over the discussion menu or the outcome.

This morning, Kishor called on Pawar at the latter's Mumbai residence around 11 a.m. and the duo was closeted for nearly 3 hours before the NCP chief saw off his high-profile visitor.

The meeting triggered guesswork whether this could signal a preparation for the 2024 Lok Sabha and Maharashtra Assembly elections amid calls for putting up a united front of all Opposition parties to

tackle the Bharatiya Janata Party challenge.

This was Kishor's first meeting with a prominent Maharashtra leader after his poll strategies succeeded in handsome victories in West Bengal and Tamil Nadu for the Trinamool Congress and the DMK respectively, particularly since the NCP and Sena had thrown their weight behind Mamata Banerjee.

Kishor had met the Shiv Sena President Uddhav Thackeray here shortly before he became the Chief Minister and enjoys close rapport with several leaders across parties in the state.

SENA URGES CM NOT TO IMPLEMENT MODEL TENANCY ACT IN MAHARASHTRA

Team Absolute | Mumbai

A delegation of Shiv Sena leaders Wednesday met Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray and urged him not to implement the Model Tenancy Act, passed by the Union Cabinet, in Maharashtra. Claiming the Act will have an adverse impact on the 25 lakh tenants in Mumbai, the delegation handed over a letter, signed by state Transport Minister Anil Parab, MP and party's chief spokesperson Arvind Sawant, MP and party secretary Anil Desai and a few others, to Thackeray.

"There is no need for a new Act to regulate rent. For that, the existing Bombay Rent Act and Maharashtra Rent Control Act is competent and complete," the letter stated.

The Model Tenancy Act, which was approved by the Union Cabinet earlier this month, seeks to streamline the process of renting property in India and aid the rent economy in the estate sector.

It further said the rent Act should be in the interest of tenants but legislation proposed by the Centre is "exactly the opposite of it." The issue falls under the purview of the state's jurisdiction and there is no need for the Centre to interfere in it, it added.

The Model Tenancy Act, which was approved by the Union Cabinet earlier this month, seeks to streamline the process of renting property in India and aid the rent economy in the estate sector. Last week, the Sena MPs protested against the proposed law. Party MP Rahul Shewale also wrote to Prime Minister Narendra Modi requesting to cancel the proposed legislation.

21 districts in Maharashtra receive excess rains in first ten days of June

Team Absolute | Mumbai

As many as 21 out of 36 districts of Maharashtra got 60% excess rains in the period between June 1 to 10 thanks to heavy showers in the first week, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) said on Friday.

The rainfall in these districts during June 1 to 10 was "largely excess", that is, 60% more than the average rainfall during the period.

Besides Mumbai, the coastal districts of Thane, Raigad and Palghar, all densely populated, are in the list of the districts which witnessed heavy showers. The districts of Ratnagiri on the coast and Buldana, Nagpur and Bhandara in eastern Maharashtra received "excess" rainfall while another eight districts received normal rainfall. Akola and Latur in central



Maharashtra were the only two districts where the rainfall was deficient, which means 20 to 59% less than their average rainfall during this period. Pre-monsoon showers K S Hosalkar, senior scientist, IMD Pune, said that much of these were pre-monsoon showers, "but

intensity was high along with thunderstorms and lightning".

The Regional Meteorological Centre in Mumbai predicted "heavy to very heavy" showers at a few places and "extremely heavy" rainfall at isolated places in the districts of Konkan and also in Goa on

Saturday. The rainfall between 65 to 115 mm in 24 hours is termed as "heavy", 115 to 204 mm as "very heavy" and above 204 mm in 24 hours is considered "extremely heavy." Heavy to very heavy rainfall is very likely at isolated places in Ghat (upland) areas of Madhya Maharashtra as well as in Marathwada on Saturday, the IMD said. The weather bureau also predicted more rain activity on Sunday over Mumbai and neighbouring areas. After two days of heavy rains that disrupted normal life, Mumbai got some respite on Friday.

"It is very likely that north Konkan (Mumbai, Thane, Raigad and Palghar) would very likely see heavy to very heavy rainfall at few places. Isolated places in the same region very likely to receive extremely heavy rainfall on Sunday," the report said.

Now, Maha to give 50-year-old urban trees 'heritage' tag

Team Absolute | Mumbai

In a novel green initiative to conserve nature, the Maharashtra government has decided to accord 'heritage' tags to all trees which are 50-years old and more in urban centres, officials said here on Friday.

The state cabinet presided over by Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray on Thursday approved a proposal to amend the Maharashtra (Urban Areas) Protection and Preservation of Trees Act, 1975, and incorporate the concept of 'heritage trees'.

The Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) government has also decided to form a 'Maharashtra Tree Authority' which will be empowered to take all decisions regarding protection of trees.

"In order to maintain and foster the green cover in the state's urban centres, we have passed the amendment that will safeguard the environment in all cities and provide a robust mechanism to protect heritage trees," said Tourism and Environment Minister Aditya Thackeray.

He expressed gratitude to the Chief Minister, Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar and Revenue Minister Balasaheb Thorat for consistently giving weightage to sustainable development by amending existing laws to address the worldwide climate emergency or global warming.

"Any tree with an estimated age of 50 years or above, shall be classified as a 'heritage tree'. They may belong to specific



species, which would be notified periodically," an official said.

The move comes barely 18 months after Mumbai witnessed a staggering 2,141 big and small trees being chopped off in less than 40 hours - or roughly one tree/minute - by the Mumbai Metro Rail Corporation Ltd. (MMRCL) inside the Aarey Colony, in October 2019.

The Thackeray father-son duo, both nature lovers, was instrumental in drafting the proposed changes in the law to ensure safety of all old trees in urban landscapes.

The Environment and Climate Change Department along with the Forest Department will shortly prepare formal guidelines to determine the age of a tree.

Court Suggests Special Police Cell In Maharashtra For Medical Negligence Cases

The court also said the state must make police officers aware of the existing law about registering offences against medical practitioners.

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The Bombay High Court on Friday suggested that the Maharashtra government consider creating a special cell of well-trained police officers to deal with registering FIRs against doctors over complaints of medical negligence.

A bench of Chief Justice Dipankar Datta and Justice G S Kulkarni also said the state must make police officers aware of the existing law and Supreme Court rulings about registering offences against medical practitioners, following complaints by friends or relatives of patients.

The court was hearing a bunch of public interest litigations (PILs) on management of resources related to COVID-19, and another on rising instances of attacks on doctors by patients' relatives.

On Thursday, advocate Rajesh Inamdar, counsel for one of the petitioners, had informed the court that several doctors working in COVID-19 wards had been receiving notices from the police following complaints by relatives of patients who were unhappy with the treatment, or in cases where patients had succumbed to the disease.



Inamdar was referring to the protocol issued last year by the Maharashtra government that keeps getting revised from time to time and deals with the drugs and line of treatment that must be provided to COVID-19 patients. A doctor representing the Indian Medical Association (IMA), who was also present for the hearing via video-conferencing, then told the court that "doctors were being attacked unnecessarily." He said that while doctors stuck to the protocol as much as possible, the administration of a particular drug or a certain dose, depended on the condition of the patient, his or her comorbidities, response to the line of treatment etc.

The doctor further said sometimes medical practitioners had to prescribe alternate drugs due to unavailability of those mentioned in the protocol. The High Court had said at the time that doctors, already overworked due to the pandemic, must not have to face such harassment, or spend anytime giving explanations to the police. It had directed the Maharashtra Advocate General (AG) for assistance on the existing laws on the issue.

On Friday, the AG submitted a slew of previous Supreme Court judgements to show that the police must not unthinkingly register an offence unless there existed an apparent or reasonable case of negligence. The court then said the police must be trained to ascertain which cases required an immediate registration of offence.

"You (state) must make your police officers aware of the law and the Supreme Court rulings on the issue. There can be a cell consisting of police officers who are well adapted to handle these situations. It will not go to any ABC police officer. All complaints on medical negligence will go to well-trained officers," the bench said. "The position today is that the police must be a little cautious. It should not act immediately unless he or she takes a medical opinion that there is a genuine case of medical negligence. Otherwise, a doctor will not be mentally free while working," the court noted.

The court directed the state to take a decision and place it before the High Court by June 16, following which it will pass an order.

Restrictions to be Relaxed in Pune As Cases go Down



Team Absolute | Pune

As the coronavirus cases are going down slowly in the district, Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar on Friday said the district administration in Pune will consider giving some relaxations if the COVID-19 positivity rate in the city continues to be below 5 per cent in the next two days. "Since the positivity rate of Pune city has gone below the 5 per cent, the administration has decided to give more relaxation to the city," said Pawar, who is also the guardian minister of Pune district.

Part of the unlock process, Pune city had last week come under the state's level 3 category due to high corona cases. However, as the positivity rate is dropping a little below 5 per cent, the city has now moved up to level 2. Under relaxations in level 2, shops will be permitted to operate till 7 PM, while hotels, restaurants, and eateries can function till 10 PM for dine-in with 50 per cent seating capacity and malls can operate by adhering to social-distancing norms.

The deputy chief minister further added that the district and civic administration will observe the positivity rate in the city for the next two days, and if it remains below five per cent, level 2 relaxations will be applicable. On the other hand, Pune mayor Murlidhar Mohol said the positivity rate in the civic limits of Pune has been at 4.95 per cent for one week. However, the positivity

Pune city had last week come under the state's level 3 category due to high corona cases.

rate in the suburb of Pimpri Chinchwad and Pune rural is little above 5 and 10 per cent respectively, these areas will continue to have restrictions as per the level 3 and 4 respectively. The chief minister also talked about Wari procession and added that 100 warkaris (devotees of Lord Vitthal) each from

Dehu and Alandi have been given permission to take part in the annual pilgrimage to Pandharpur in Solapur district.

Maharashtra had on Wednesday reported 10,989 new COVID-19 cases, taking the state's caseload to 58,63,880. It also recorded 261 fatalities, pushing the death toll to 1,01,833. The daily cases in the state have dipped to around 10,000 in the last two days. Maharashtra had reported 9,927 cases on March 9 this year after which the numbers had increased. Mumbai reported 785 new cases of infection and 27 deaths. The total of cases in the financial capital of the country rose to 7,12,840, while its death toll reached 15,033. The larger Mumbai division reported 3,527 cases including 1,078 in Kolhapur district itself. Aurangabad division recorded 188 new cases, Latur division 386 cases, Akola division reported 451 cases, while Nagpur division reported 310 cases.

Don't Want To Be Friends With "Caged Tiger": Maharashtra BJP Chief's Sena Jibe

Team Absolute | Pune

Maharashtra BJP president Chandrakant Patil on Thursday sought to clear the air about his "friendship with tiger" statement and asserted his party doesn't want to be friends with a "caged tiger". Addressing a press conference organised on the occasion of his birthday, he also indicated that the BJP would prefer to contest the upcoming civic body elections in the state alone.

Municipal corporations of Mumbai, Pune and some other major cities are slated for elections in early 2022.

"Recently, I was in a programme where a volunteer working in wildlife field gifted a photo album to me along with a replica of a tiger. Reacting to his gesture, I told him that it's a

nice gift and "we are always friends with tigers," Patil said.

"However, media persons connected the remarks with the Shiv Sena as the tiger is their symbol. It is true that we are always trying to make friends with many, but we would love friendship with a tiger from the forest and not a caged one."

Patil's previous remarks had fuelled speculation that the BJP was seeking to reach out to the Shiv Sena, its former ally which joined hands with the Congress and the NCP, its ideological opponents, to form the MVA government in the state in November 2019.

The BJP leader, who is an MLA from Pune city, said his party wants to retain its top position in Maharashtra and would like to contest civic polls without entering into an alliance with any political out-

fit. He said, "On my birthday I have made a political resolution to retain the BJP's number one position in the state by winning the upcoming civic body elections without making an alliance with anybody."

The former minister challenged political parties in the state to fight elections individually to see where they stand.

Patil applauded Pune city Lok Sabha MP Girish Bapat's initiative to arrange COVID-19 vaccination at home for people from the Kasaba constituency who can not move out due to health reasons.

On his birthday, Patil donated 1,300 COVID-19 vaccination coupons to people from the economically weaker section residing in Kothrud, his assembly constituency, and CNG coupons to autorickshaw drivers from the area.



Ravi Bhatia: I play the guitar as a form of mindful escapism

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actor Ravi Bhatia, who is currently seen in the series "Shukla The Tiger", says lockdown has given him a chance to reconnect with his passion for music. He says music helps him unwind like nothing else.

"I see playing the guitar as a form of mindful escapism, a way to create space between me and my mind. Guitar-playing is beneficial to your overall well-being and mental health in other ways, too, including helping one to develop a greater sense of personal achievement," said the actor.

Ravi says with time he couldn't manage his schedule and had to step away from his passion for music for a while.

"Since childhood, I used to love posing with Guitar. During my teenage years, it became a trend among friends to have jam sessions and play the guitar. That is when I learnt to play the guitar," he recalls.

He adds: "But with professional commitments and a busy schedule I lost my interest. Now, we are mostly free during lockdown. I am practicing it daily for an hour. I am thoroughly enjoying it."

The actor, known for featuring in television shows like "Do DilBandheEkDori Se" and "IshqSubhan Allah", will next be seen in upcoming series "Margaon: The Closed File" which also stars ZeenatAman.



VidyaBalan: I did not set out to break stereotypes

Team Absolute | New Delhi

VidyaBalan has time and again challenged Bollywood stereotypes with her roles, living out her characters with power-packed performances. The actress says it was not something that she did consciously. Ever since she made her Bollywood debut with "Parineeta" in 2005, Vidya has wowed the Hindi audience with her work in films such as "BhoolBhulaiyaa", "No One Killed Jessica", "The Dirty Picture", "Paa", "Kahaani", "Ishqiya", "Mission Mangal", "Tumhari Sulu" and "Shakuntala Devi". She will next be seen in "Newton" maker Amit Masurkar's "Sherni", which casts her as a forest officer.

"I did not set out to break stereotypes but I think through my experiences in life, especially as an actor, I have realised I am not going to let anything come in the way of me being an actor," said Vidya, who has been feted with a National Award and a Padma Shri.

"My passion for what I do has seen me through because I really can't change anything about myself, so I did not set out to break stereotypes. I just said if it doesn't work, too bad it has to work, because I am going to make it work. It has to work because I want to be an actor," she added.

"So, I think those stereotypes were challenged not consciously but probably unconsciously," she said.

Currently, she awaits the release of "Sherni", where she plays an upright forest officer battling social barriers set by the patriarchal society and lackadaisical attitudes within her department.

"Each of us is a Sherni, but it feels wonderful to be called one!"

"Sherni" is scheduled for a digital release on June 18 on Amazon Prime Video.



Team Absolute | New Delhi

It is the navel that provides the essence of life and growth. It supplies nutrition, blood, and oxygen to babies in the womb through the navel. Even as an adult, your navel, which is also the core of your body, is one of the key points of sustenance and growth.

So like other parts of our body which benefit by oiling does the navel as well? Not just the belly button, but the entire body, including our skin, benefits when you oil the navel. It is a primitive tradition described in our Vedas and Ayurveda, in which women and men oil their navels to nourish their entire bodies. Your belly button has been medically proven to be related to various veins throughout your body, and oiling it can help you heal from a variety of ailments.

Preeti Chadha, Founder, IREMIIA shares the importance of oiling the belly button.

*Benefits of oiling
People commonly use mustard, cow ghee (desi ghee) or coconut oil on the navel, but it is ineffective due to the lack of ayurvedic qualities with heating elements. Massage should be with an oil that contains extracts such as neem, tea tree, lemon, grapeseed, and almond oil, which helps cleanse your belly button, for the greatest effects.

*How to practice it?
This procedure takes only two minutes. Pour oil over your belly button and that's all there is to it. Massage your belly button in a circular motion for 5-10 minutes after applying it to your navel. For the best outcome, do so every day before going to bed or after bath. Also, oiling at night can make you feel more relaxed when you wake up in the morning.

Should you oil your belly button?



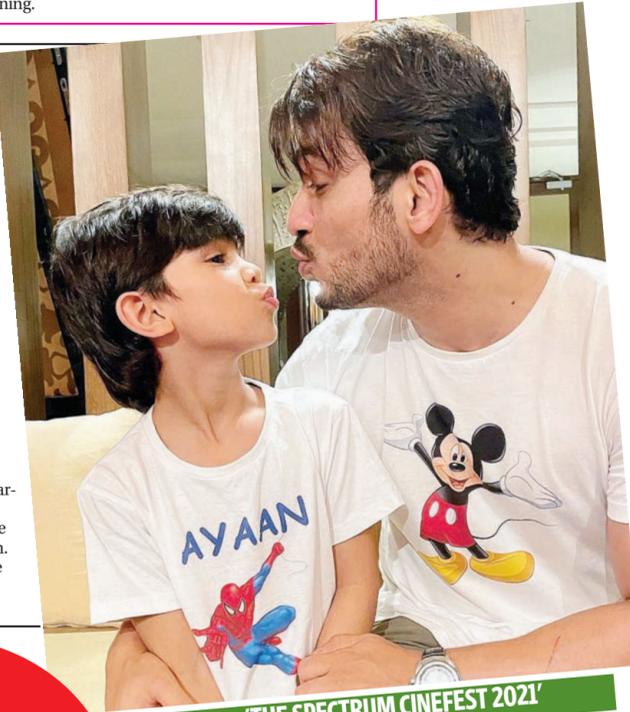
Arjun Bijlani misses son while shooting in Cape Town

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Television actor Arjun is currently shooting in Cape Town for "KhatronKeKhiladi 11" and, being away from him is missing his son. Arjun posted a video collage on Instagram on Thursday to share his sentiments.

The clip features moments shared between him and his son. "To my dearest son, never forget that I love you, and that I will always have your back. Whatever will come your way, know that you will always have my guidance and support. I love you! #missing #myboy #capetown," he wrote as caption.

Arjun's co-contestants in the Rohit Shetty-anchored game show include DivyankaTripathiDahiya, Shweta Tiwari, Abhinav Shukla, MahekkChahal, Nikki Tamboli, Anushka Sen and Rahul Vaidya.



SRISHTI JAIN MEDITATES TO STAY CALM, STRESS-FREE

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actress Srishti Jain feels the Covid 19 pandemic and restrictions have impacted everyone one way or the other. The actress reveals that she follows a certain routine to ensure that she keeps negativity at bay.

"The Covid-19 pandemic has impacted one and all. It has made everyone, including me, feel scared and worried. However, I try to be positive in every situation," she said.

The actress emphasises on the importance of staying away from the phone and spending time with family. She believes it plays an important role in keeping her calm. "I have breakfast with my family and only then do I touch my phone. I guess all this helps me avoid any kind of stress after waking up. Also, when I am home and have free time or when I come back after a stressful day, I go and sit with my family or just my sister and speak to them. I go for walks, too. All this really helps me stay positive and I hope everyone inculcates this into their lifestyle as well," added Srishti, who is currently seen in the Zee Tv show "Humariwali Good News" as Navya.

'THE SPECTRUM CINEFEST 2021' A NATIONWIDE FILM FEST BY MAIMS

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The electronic media club of Maharaja Agrasen Institute of Management Studies under the Department of Journalism and Mass Communication paid tribute to legend Satyajit Ray on 27 May, 2021. The motto of the film fest was to deliberate on the finest art of film aesthetics and celebrating birth centenary of Satyajit Ray.

The Chief Guest, Yashpal Sharma, a known Bollywood actor, theatre artist and producer, enlightened the audience. The guest of honors were Mr. Aditya Ranoliya, Mr. Vishal sharma and Mr. Rohan Shankar.

The festival saw remarkable participation from enthusiastic filmmakers and audiences across India and abroad. Out of over 100 entries, 10 were selected by four external Jury members after much deliberation to showcase in the festival.

In the competition section 1st cash prize of Rs. 11000 was won by Rafu, the second prize of Rs. 7100 was given to a crime thriller Whodunnit, and the third prize of Rs. 5100 to The First Wedding.



Disposable cutlery playing key role amid pandemic

Team Absolute | New Delhi

At the absolute starting point of this pandemic, we understood the significance of disposables and the huge need for disposable cutlery and crockery.

The worldwide pandemic has created a shift in how and in what we eat. As eateries across the Capital offer takeout in such troublesome crossroads, the methods for expendable bundling which has ended up being outstanding amongst other benefits to people in general. However, even now, a portion of cafes serve clients in plastic utensils and takeout

boxes, and compostable cups.

Undeniably this pandemic gave a colossal ascent to the utilisation of expendable items. People in limited numbers are invited to homes during the lockdown and ordering in, ensured cafes use disposables for conveyance purposes.

Coronavirus stays on plastic surfaces longer than most different materials, thus natural flatware disposables give a better outcome in our everyday lives. The advantageous of disposables gives us the opportunity of eating any place, being more secure and eating cleaner.

Various factors have driv-

en people to use disposables, and this has had a significant influence.

It has been widely observed that device reprocessing is frequently associated with residual contamination, which is indeed left by reprocessing agents that fail to reach difficult-to-reach parts of reusable equipment.

The rising demand for disposables like Areca/palm leaf plates, espresso cups and plates made of bamboo and wooden cutlery is best suited in such difficult situations. The cheap availability of disposable cutlery makes it a great option for the general public, including those who are infected with the virus.





The Kar-Jenners say goodbye on the finale of Keeping Up With The Kardashians

Los Angeles | Agencies

Keeping Up With The Kardashians ended its historic television run on Thursday, June 10, 2021. In the episode, Kim finds out she failed the baby bar a second time and will have to retake it again.

During the reunion, Kris Jenner reveals why the show was coming to an end after 20 seasons. Khloe Kardashian also gets a chance in the hot seat, when Cohen grills her



about Tristan Thompson's cheating ways. In the teaser trailer, Kim Kardashian says she owes someone an apology but fans will have to tune in to see who the person in question is. Kourtney Kardashian also revealed a shocking revelation.

She said that her relationship with Scott Disick may have turned out differently had the camera not been on them for so long. However, Kourtney also said that Disick's substance abuse problem was the "ultimate dealbreaker."

Janette Manrara announced new host of It Takes Two

Los Angeles | Agencies

Strictly Come Dancing professional Janette Manrara has quit the show after eight years to be the host of spin-off Strictly: It Takes Two.

The 37-year-old will be replacing Zoe Ball, who stood down as presenter in May after a decade.

Sharing her news on The One Show today, she revealed she will be joining Rylan Clark-Neal on the BBC 2 programme on weeknights, while the dancing show is on air.

Discussing her new role, the Cuban-American star, who is married to co-star Aljaž Škorjanec, admitted she was emotional about no longer taking to the iconic dance floor.

She told hosts Alex Jones and Ronan Keating, "I will not be dancing. I don't want to well up because I have been welling up a lot today, but that has been the hardest part of accepting this amazing honour to join It Takes Two."



K-pop band 'Tomorrow X Together' release first English song 'Magic'

TOM HIDDLESTON GAVE OWEN WILSON 'LOKI LECTURES'

Los Angeles | Agencies

Hollywood actor Owen Wilson has shared that English star Tom Hiddleston gave him Loki lectures and that there were in-depth looks at the God of Mischief and his history.

Wilson said, "Yes, I knew the Marvel movies and had a general knowledge but it was great when I first got down to work in Atlanta because Tom (Hiddleston) would give what we called 'Loki lectures'. They were in-depth looks at Loki and his history in the MCU that opened up the world to me." Wilson also revealed that Hiddleston worked with him individually.

He said, "He worked with me individually, just going over the lore and everything that he felt was important and showing me clips and things. Then also I ended up writing down some of the stuff he said, describing Loki, describing kind of his thoughts and feelings about scenes that he had done." Wilson added, "I think that even worked its way sometimes into dialogue that I would say in this. So, that was really effective."

Hiddleston reprises his popular role as the titular Loki in the series while Wilson is Mobius M. Mobius, an investigative agent who specialises on dangerous 'time criminals' at the Time Variance Authority (TVA), a mysterious organisation that exists outside of time and space. The series also features Gugu Mbatha-Raw, Sophia Di Martino, Wunmi Mosaku and Richard E. Grant. Directed by Kate Herron and written by Michael Waldron, the initial episode of "Loki" has dropped on Disney+ Hotstar VIP.



Seoul | Agencies

Tomorrow X Together, popularly called TXT, have released the music video of their first English song, "Magic".

The boy band comprises Soobin, Yeonjun, Beomyu, Taehyun and Hueningkai. The new video depicts the five boys on a mission to save the human race from a world overrun by machines. They manage to rescue people by feeding pirated broadcasts and disrupting the machine network but are eventually apprehended and penalised with the maximum sentence in court.

"Magic" is a trendy disco pop track and Tomorrow X Together's first English song, released as part of the band's second studio album, "The Chaos Chapter: Freeze".

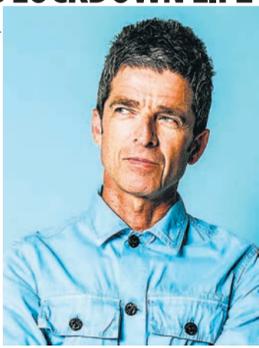
NOEL GALLAGHER IS LOVING LOCKDOWN LIFE

Los Angeles | Agencies

Oasis legend Noel Gallagher says he has had a great time being at home during lockdown induced by Covid-19. "I wish I could preach about clean living but I can't. But I'm loving it. I got really back into... drinking at home, which I haven't done since the 90s, every night watching the telly. I know rock stars who are health obsessed... and are quick to tell you they've been to rehab. It's like, nobody wants to know that. Thankfully, I never felt the need to go," Gallagher said.

Despite lockdown, Noel has managed to get exercise, reports femalefirst.co.uk.

"I eat quite well and do a bit of exercise. I get out on my bike and I've got a gym though I've not used it in six months. But my wife is a fitness fanatic," he shared with the The Sun newspaper's Bizarre column.



Idris and Sabrina Elba launch six-part podcast

London | Agencies

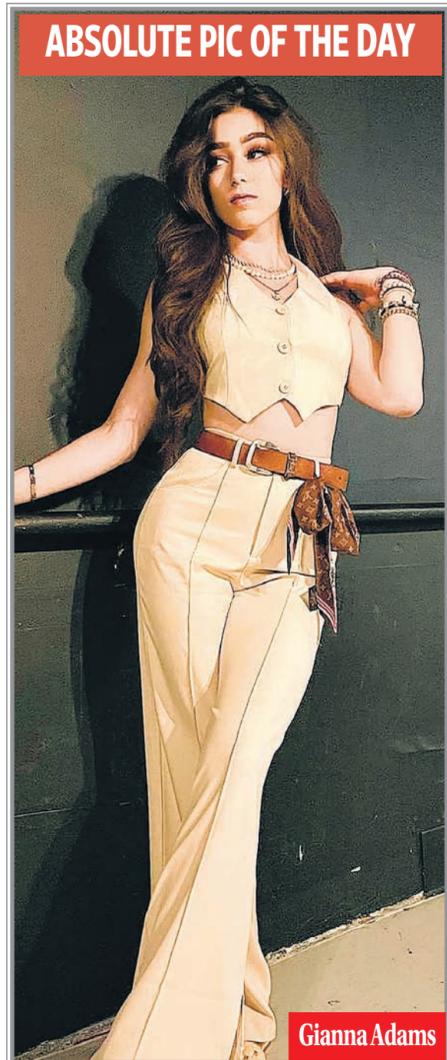
Actor Idris Elba and his wife, model-entrepreneur Sabrina Dhowre Elba, have ventured into podcast domain. The celebrity power couple have launched an original podcast show, "Coupledom With Idris And Sabrina Elba", a six-part series that will see the husband-wife team talk about what makes successful relationships and partnerships work.

Lined up to chat with the Elbas over six parts of the podcast are Kris Jenner and Kim Kardashian West; Ben and Jerry; Christian Louboutin and Mika; Nadiya and Abdal Hussain; Tommy and Codie Oliver; and

Mary and Sharon Bishop Baldwin.

The podcast aims at examining the power of successful relationships and partnerships, and the challenges of maintaining them. Idris and Sabrina Elba aim to engage in free and frank discussions that focus on first-hand experiences of arranged marriage, discrimination and representation. Apart from hosting the podcast, the Elbas also executive-produce the podcast. Amanda Jones has created an original score for the show in collaboration with Idris Elba, who is a rapper and DJ, too. Sabrina Elba summed up: "Coupledom", to myself and Idris, means the realm of shared experiences between two partners in life or business, creating extraordinary outcomes. In our Audible Original podcast, we've truly been able to explore 'coupledom' through some of the world's most interesting duos for honest, unguarded discussions about all the complexities of living a shared life. I've taken so many lessons from our guests' unique partnerships, and I hope listeners of the podcast will be just as inspired as I have been."

The podcast will be available to download from June 24.



Gianna Adams



EDITOR'S SPECS

Realistic politics?

Jitin Prasada, who joined the BJP on Wednesday, was set to join the saffron party in 2019 ahead of the Lok Sabha polls and had even finalized his talks through a BJP MP at that time, but last minute ride to airport with Rahul Gandhi and Priyanka Gandhi Vadra changed the equation and he contested from Dharaura constituency only to be defeated by the BJP. Prasada blamed two minority candidates contesting from Kheri and Sitapur for the polarization in his constituency but he was hopeful to be made the President of the UPCC but was overlooked. After he wrote the letter along with Ghulam Nabi Azad and other dissident Congress leaders as a part of G-23 demanding reform in the party, he was appointed Congress in charge for West Bengal but was bulldozed by Adhir Ranjan Choudhury, so he left the election midway and now has finally joined the BJP. He was prior to this a fierce critic of the Yogi government and had alleged that Brahmins are not treated well in the state. Prasada has formed Brahmin Chetna Parishad to safeguard the interest of the community. Jitin's father late Jitendra Prasada, a former Union Minister and advisor to both Rajiv Gandhi and Narsimha Rao, the senior Prasada contested elections against Sonia Gandhi but lost and after his demise the Congress gave ticket to Kanta Prasad and later Jitin Prasada in 2004. But after his stint as Union Minister Prasada lost his seat in 2014 and 19 and also the assembly elections in 2017. However, after joining BJP he praised the Prime Minister and said BJP is an institutional party and the rest are either regional or person centric parties and it can only deal with the issues faced by the nation. But Congress leader Vishwanath Chaturvedi says that the party gave him everything and Sonia Gandhi made him Union Minister but when party needs good workers he left for greener pastures. Prasada is not the first to leave Congress party. Himanta Biswa Sarma, Jyotiraditya Scindia are the other high profile leaders who took exit route from the Congress. However, it is to be seen if the BJP will benefit from him as the UP government's image after the pandemic has taken a beating and the question is -- will BJP's gambit to lure Brahmins will work? The answer can only come after 2022 elections.

SURVIVORS TURNING SAVIOURS: AN INSPIRING STORY FROM UTTARAKHAND

Siddhi Jain

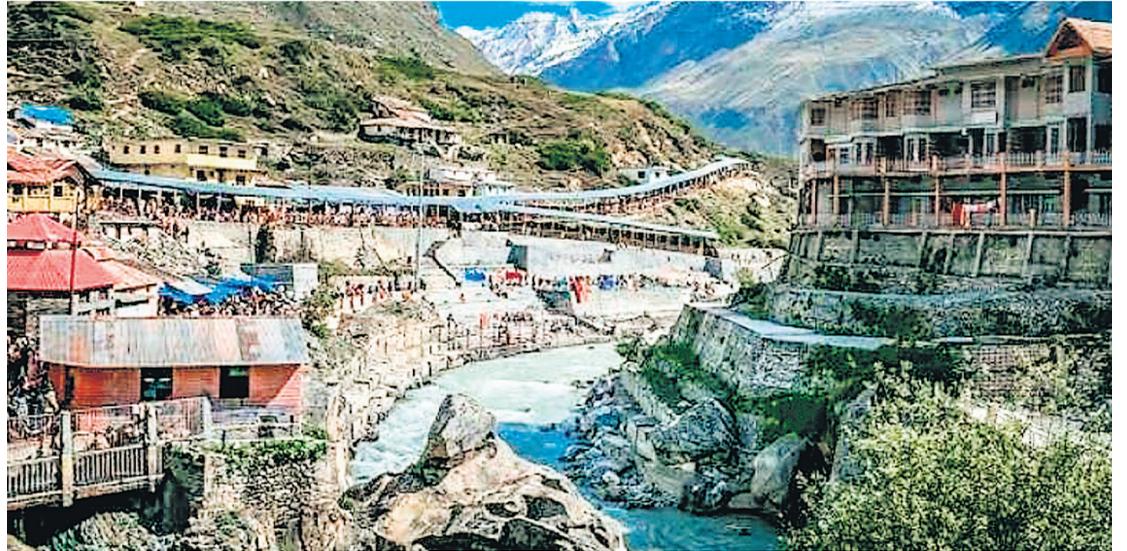
For Dehradun-based social entrepreneur Sachin Upadhyay, a Covid-19 survivor, revealed that two weeks as a Covid patient were the worst in his life the isolation, loss of physical strength, constant inflow of distressing news of illness and deaths.

He believes it was somewhat of a miracle that he came of the disease without any complications.

Now helping almost 200 villages fight the pandemic he is saving lives and building a recovery plan. While the first wave last year had a limited impact on the hilly state of Uttarakhand, he tells IANSLife, this year has been quite different. Not only has the virus reached the cities of Uttarakhand, but it is also infecting people living in villages, including young children.

As the pandemic tightened its grip on the state in late April, Upadhyay mentions receiving numerous calls from people in his village pleading for access to hospitals beds and doctors. Despite being affected himself, he reports transporting almost 60 people from the village to Dehradun and ensuring that they get the medical attention they require. He is happy about the lives he could save, but deeply saddened about the helplessness and lack of medical facilities in hilly remote villages.

As he recovered from the virus, he was clear about what his next mission was it was to bring relief to the villagefolk in Tehri e from where he hails and continues to focus his social upliftment efforts through this organization, The



World Integrity Foundation (TWIF). He consulted with various doctors and discovered that if villagers get timely access to a doctor and primary Covid-19 medication, it could prevent emergencies and the need for intensive care. It was then he says that he developed a roadmap with TWIF's chief coordinator e the mission was to distribute 50,000 medical kits in villages, and ultimately benefit 1,00,000 people with these and other relief efforts, including food supplies and other medical relief.

To initiate these efforts, TWIF says it started identifying the source of medicines, and initiated

crowdfunding efforts e the first batch of 1000 kits they distributed in the villages was gratefully received and appreciated. While on their distribution drive, they learnt of the community's need for medicines, face masks, oxymeters, thermometers, and flow meters.

Adds Upadhyay, who is the President of TWIF, "We have distributed 40,000 medical kits and dry ration packets. We are trying to source as many relevant supplies as possible including vaporizers and oxygen concentrators and have expanded our distribution drive to include parts of Dehradun and Uttarakashi based on their

needs."

The medical kits include primary medicines like paracetamol, azithromycin, ivermectin, and vitamin C and zinc supplements. They also include a handout with a description of the medicines and the recommended protocol.

Upadhaya is just one of the many COVID warriors who were not deterred, but rather strengthened by a crisis. He is now focused on building a recovery plan for the thousands of migrant workers who were forced to return home due to the pandemic e skill building and identifying and creating employment opportunities for them are

next on his agenda. Last year during the first wave of the pandemic, TWIF provided dry ration packets and served home cooked food to frontline workers everyday for two months.

"I believe I am a son of the soil. I feel deeply rooted to my people and am deeply affected by the neglect that my state suffers. Covid-19 is an unprecedented crisis, but I believe we are now better prepared to support our people and children and that is a hugely satisfying feeling", says Upadhyay as he urges natives from across the world to come forward and extend help to the mission.

Will BJP strike a deal with BSP supremo Mayawati?

Brij Khandelwal

The mood of the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) vote bank in this Dalit capital of north India continues to remain confused and wavering as the last few elections have marginalised the party.

The deep frustration in the BSP cadre is the result of the gnawing feeling of utter irrelevance of the party in the current political scenario, as well as that of party supremo Mayawati, who looks fatigued and spent out.

Local leaders of the BSP are particularly disenchanted with Muslim politics, and many feel the Muslim votes will again go to the Samajwadi Party.

Ahead of the 2022 Assembly elections in Uttar Pradesh, Mayawati has made new appointments besides restructuring the party organisation, but insiders say the 'josh' (enthusiasm) is clearly missing.

The voters are neither angry nor too happy with the Yogi Adityanath government in Lucknow, according to poll watchers in the city which

has a sizeable population of Dalits, mostly engaged in the shoe industry. At present, all the nine



Also to be noted is the fact that the number of beneficiaries of a slew of welfare measures taken both by the Centre and the state government has been continuously rising. Even during the Covid-19 first and the second

Assembly seats in Lucknow are with the BJP which has three MPs from the district, two in the Lok Sabha and one in the Rajya Sabha. "The last four years have seen social tranquility, though vain efforts were made to flare up the Hathras gang-rape incident. But prompt intervention by the judiciary and the proactive approach of the Chief Minister helped defuse the tension," observed a local Dalit leader.

waves, help poured in from all ends and cases of chill penury or acute deprivation were few, according to a social activist.

Naresh Paras, a prominent activist working for the downtrodden, said, "Chances are that a section of the Dalit votes would go to Chandrashekar Azad of the Bhim Army, a chunk could go to the BJP, but the bulk of the conventional Dalit votes will remain loyal to Bahenji (as Mayawati is popularly

known). Though the Congress too has been trying hard to woo the Dalit votes, it is doubtful if a swing in favour of the Congress could now be engineered."

An analysis of the voting trends and figures points to a gradual decline in the BSP's fortunes, after it swept to power in 2007, winning 206 out of the 403 seats with a vote share of 30.43 per cent.

In the 2012 Assembly polls, Mayawati could win only 80 seats, with BSP's share of votes falling to 25.91 per cent.

In 2017, the BSP could win only 19 seats with a vote share of 22.14 per cent.

In the recent panchayat polls too, the party fared poorly, further demoralising its rank and file.

In Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh too, the BSP has failed to improve its performance and looks set for a total wipe out.

Poll pundits say that the BSP's loss has been the BJP's gain, as the saffron brigades operating at different levels have heavily dented the Mayawati vote bank which was estimated to be between 18 and 21 per

cent. Reports suggest that the BSP supremo has no option other than supporting the Yogi Adityanath government, in return for a Vice Presidential position, or maybe even as a new tenant of the Rashtrapati Bhavan.

"For the BJP, it is more important to consolidate Hindu votes, bring all layers of the Hindu society under a common umbrella, than sharing power with any xyz," a youth leader of the Vishva Hindu Parishad said.

Political commentator Paras Nath Choudhary said that the BJP should definitely try to persuade Mayawati to ally with the NDA and if necessary should offer the Vice Presidential position to her.

"Given the challenges faced by India, it is necessary to strengthen the nationalist forces and bridge the communication gaps among different layers of the society. The need of the hour is to integrate the Dalits with the national mainstream and to work this out there is no harm in bargaining a deal with Mayawati," Choudhary said.

FEDERAL STRUCTURE OF INDIAN DEMOCRACY IS IN JEOPARDY? A SOLUTION

Brijmohan Srivastava

It was in 1999 when there was an uproar in politics in the country on the issue of "Whether a person of foreign origin should be made the Prime Minister or not". Spirit of nationalism always flows in the blood of Marathas, seeing the public sentiments, Sharad Pawar, quit the Congress along with his political colleagues and supporters and formed the Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) on June 10, 1999.

Soon after its formation, NCP procured big success in Maharashtra, NCP joined hands with the Congress to form the government. Since then, the two parties shared power in the state till 2014. We are happy to see that NCP with Congress and Shivsena are still sharing power in Maharashtra.

The way he took a decision to quit congress and formed NCP, his image was made in the country as a politician fighting for nationalism and country, and it remains the same even after 23 years.

Today again, keeping in mind the nationality, the need of the hour is to raise voice for the life and health of 140 crore people of the country, their employment and debt-free life from economic pressure.

Today in India a country of diversity, we need a strong government with strong leadership in centre, in which everyone has faith and its leadership ability and vision is convincing to every-

one.

In the present time Centre-State Relations issue is more of distrust than conceit, which proves that trust has waned. If the Finance Minister of Tamil Nadu or the Chief Minister of Jharkhand and Andhra Pradesh are observing lack of confidence, then it is clear that the trust in the Central government is gradually vanishing. This crisis is not confined to our country, neighboring countries also seems to be affected by feeling of the mistrust because of that only then they are attracted to expansionist and exploitative countries rather than India.

In these ongoing circumstances, the country needs a widely trustworthy politician at the center who can instill confidence. Sharad Pawar is looked as the truest politician in today's political situation, public even opponents have faith on his foresight. In his political career of 50 years, he never lost any election. His experience of working at various posts of government at national level was admired by all, can be seen as best record of proving himself successful in adversity.

Sharad Pawar sahib, whether in power or out of power, senior leaders, officials and ordinary workers of all political parties do not hesitate to communicate directly with him because they believe that he will listen to him and will also help generously. He also has the quality that he adapts everyone as family belonging without any political relationships. The industrialists, traders and

farmers of the country still hold maximum trust on Sharad Pawar.

The players and youth of the country also have deep faith in him. Many examples from villages and cities, of his political acumen and vision and his advice given to deal successfully with the most difficult situations are heard in the political corridors of the country's capital Delhi. The bureaucracy and other employees of the country or of any state are seen saying that there is no other politician like Shri Sharad Pawar who knows how to work with respect and affinity. Thousands of retired people who have worked with Mr. Pawar say that he also takes the responsibility on his shoulders to defend his subordinates for any order given by him. Thousands of his fans who are in the security forces of the country say that no one can match him in taking quick and accurate decisions.

In this long journey of 50 years, Pawar has won trust by influencing various leaders of the world with his methodology. Even today, his vision and credibility is marked by many foreign politicians at various occasions, even though he has never been a foreign minister. Be it media or foreign media, it considers Pawar as the most reliable politician and this is the reason why his every statement always gets importance in the media coverage.

Today the need of such a credible politician in the center of the country is being felt at every level and this is the

reason why many times comparisons are made on different occasions that if Sharad Pawar had been there in this difficult political or administrative situation of the country, what would have been the decision? This great quality is keeping Sharad Pawar relevant figure in the politics of the country and the state even after 23 years of the establishment of the Nationalist Congress Party. This is the reason that when the people of the country are turning away from the BJP leadership are seeing with hopeful eyes on the leaders of other parties, the very first name that comes in their minds is of Sharad Pawar.

Year 2022 will go through the Legislative-Assemblies elections of Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Goa and Punjab

After the election results, the United Progressive Alliance may prepare a strategy for the upcoming Lok Sabha elections. At that time it would be very important to see that how all the alliance partners accept Sharad Pawar sahib's capabilities in the interest of alliance and Nation. India is regarded as a quasi-federal state so it is undeniable that Pawar has the potential to make a real federal democracy at the Centre. Lakhs of Nationalist Congress Party workers are eager to put their lives at the behest of their leader all over India, just waiting for the drums of the call and the sound of the trumpet.

(Author is National Spokesperson and National Secretary, Nationalist Congress Party.)

LUCKNOW: OVER ONE LAKH PATIENTS AWAIT SURGERIES POST PANDEMIC

Over one lakh patients in Lucknow are in the queue for surgeries as the non-Covid services open up.

A huge backlog of surgeries has built up in the pandemic when most hospital closed down for surgeries and only emergency operations were carried out.

A senior faculty member at the King George Medical University (KGMU), disclosed, "There is a backlog of about 45,000 surgeries in KGMU alone. There are surgeries related to gall bladder problems, intestinal issues, tumours, corrective surgeries and even orthopaedic surgeries that had been put on hold due to the Covid pandemic. More of these are elective surgeries that are planned in advance and have no emergency requirement.

Doctors agree that some surgeries, if postponed beyond a point, could prove fatal for the patient.

According to official estimates, the three major government hospitals- King George's Medical University (KGMU), Ram Manohar Lohia Institute of Medical Sciences (RMLIMS) and SPM Civil hospital-used to conduct an average of 300 surgeries in a day before the second wave of the pandemic set in.

Meenu Sharma, 50 has been waiting in the queue since December 2019 for removal of stones in her gall bladder. "Earlier, there was a long wait-

ing, then a private ward was not available and finally, the pandemic set in. I do not know how long I will have to wait for surgery. I get severe pangs of pain but I have no choice but to bear it," she said.

Meenu is presently recovering from Covid and does not know if this will further delay her surgery.

When the second wave of the pandemic intensified in April, majority of the hospital restricted surgeries, except in emergency cases and accidents.

"Besides having a shortage of staff, there is also the increased risk of infection for the patient in the pandemic," said the faculty member.

KGMU Vice Chancellor, Lt Gen Bipin Puri, said: "We will reschedule surgeries on priority to manage the rush after the second wave subsides and normal functioning starts. Patients with complicated issues will be operated first. We are already working on plans to execute maximum possible surgeries without compromising the efficiency."

S.K. Nanda, Chief Medical Superintendent of Civil hospital, said, "We have a plan to extend operation timings, post-lockdown, to address the issue of backlog."

RMLIMS spokesperson Srikesh Singh said, "We are in touch with patients and those whose ailments are in advance stages, will be operated on priority once surgeries begin in full swing."



brief

HIGHLY CONTAGIOUS COVID VARIANTS DETECTED IN SL

Colombo: Sri Lankan health authorities announced on Friday that the two highly contagious Covid-19 variants -- B.1.1.7 and B.1.617.2 -- have been detected in the island nation.

other areas in the country, reports Xinhua news agency. Meanwhile, the B.1.617.2 or the Delta variant, has been detected in a quarantine facility in Waskaduwa in the outskirts of the capital, she added.

US SENATE CONFIRMS 1ST MUSLIM FEDERAL JUDGE

Washington: The US Senate has confirmed Zahid Quraishi to become the first Muslim American federal judge in the country's history. Senators on Thursday voted 81-16 to confirm Quraishi to serve as a district judge for the district court of New Jersey, Xinhua news agency reported.



18 KILLED IN PAK ROAD ACCIDENT

Islamabad: At least 18 people were killed and over 30 others injured when a passenger bus overturned in Pakistan's Balochistan province, local media reported on Friday.

THREE DEAD IN FLORIDA SUPERMARKET SHOOTING

Miami: Three people, including a child, were killed in a shooting inside a supermarket in the US state of Florida, local media reported. The Palm Beach County Sheriff's Office said the shooter is among the victims of Thursday's shooting inside the Publix supermarket.

AFGHAN, PAKISTAN ISLAMIC SCHOLARS SIGN PEACE DECLARATION IN MECCA

Riyadh: Top Islamic scholars from Pakistan and Afghanistan have signed the Declaration of Peace in Afghanistan in the Saudi city of Mecca, the Saudi Press Agency (SPA) reported. The deal paves the way for a solution to the long-standing Afghan crisis, by supporting negotiations between the warring factions and rejecting all acts of violence and extremism in all its forms and manifestations.

G7 LEADERS' SUMMIT TO BEGIN WITH FOCUS ON COVID, CLIMATE CHANGE



London | Agencies

The much-anticipated G7 Leaders' Summit, which will mark the first in-person meeting of the member heads of state since the Covid-19 outbreak last year, is set to begin on Friday with the main focus on the pandemic and climate change.

Johnson, the three-day event will take place in the coastal village of Carbis Bay in Cornwall. Following the inauguration on Friday, the leaders are due to discuss recovery from the coronavirus pandemic, focusing on questions such as Covid-19 vaccine donations and financial aid to build vaccine production sites around the world.

leaders will be joined by Queen Elizabeth II, the Prince of Wales, the Duchess of Cornwall, and the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge at a formal reception, the BBC reported. Afterwards, Prince Charles will host a reception for the G7 leaders and CEOs from the world's largest companies to discuss how the private sector can work with governments to tackle the climate emergency.

mate emergency, with Prince William also in attendance. Last year, the G7 leaders only met virtually last year due to the pandemic. This is also the first major international summit for US President Joe Biden since he came to office in January, which he is attending as part of a one-week Europe trip.

Macron urges European sovereignty ahead of G7, NATO summits

Paris: The European Union (EU) needs to build the framework of its strategic autonomy on economic, industrial and technological issues as well as military values, said French President Emmanuel Macron.



Atlantic alliance was experiencing "brain death", stressed that "the strategic capability autonomy of Europeans should be recognized". Macron said that "NATO must clarify its common values. NATO must build a rule of conduct among allies and NATO must clarify its concept".

Greta Thunberg back for climate protests at Swedish parliament



Stockholm | Agencies

Following a long spell of online protests, Swedish environment activist Greta Thunberg was back in front of the Swedish parliament building on Friday for an in-person demonstration against climate change.

woman protests in front of Sweden's Parliament building in August 2018, calling on politicians to ramp up the fight against climate change. Within months, the climate youth movement 'Fridays for Future' was born, sparking mass demonstrations attended by hundreds of thousands of mainly young participants across the globe.

TALIBAN OVERRUNS ANOTHER CRUCIAL AFGHAN DISTRICT

Kabul: Taliban militants seized control of another important district in Afghanistan's northern Takhar province, officials said on Friday. Ishkimi, a strategically crucial district for both the Taliban and the government, fell to the militants after tough clashes late on Thursday, local council members said.

S Africa 'technically' enters 3rd Covid wave

Johannesburg: South Africa has "technically" entered the third wave of the coronavirus pandemic, the country's National Institute for Communicable Diseases said. The national seven-day moving average incidence, which reached 5,959 cases, exceeded the new wave threshold defined by the Ministerial Advisory Committee of the government.



provincial level. On Thursday morning, Western Cape said it was entering the third wave. The nation plans to vaccinate about 67 per cent of the population by the end of this year with three phases to achieve herd immunity.

GERMAN CITY'S SPECIAL TASK FORCE TO BE DISBANDED OVER EXTREMIST POSTS

Berlin: The special task force (SEK) in the German city of Frankfurt will be disbanded because of right-wing extremist statements in chat groups, a top official said. The announcement was made on Thursday by Peter Beuth, Interior Minister of the federal state Hesse, where Frankfurt is located.

Frankfurt SEK has made its complete dissolution necessary," Beuth said in a statement published by Hesse's Ministry of the Interior. On Wednesday, criminal and disciplinary proceedings were made public against 18 active duty officers and one former police officer of the SEK.

to 2016 and 2017. Some text messages and pictures sent would "raise the suspicion that some members of the Frankfurt SEK have a right-wing extremist attitude", the statement noted. A team of experts would now organize the restructuring of the special unit. A "fundamental restart" was being initiated for the SEK unit and a "completely new management culture has to be created" at lower and middle supervisory levels, said Beuth.

BJP most popular party among Indian diaspora in US : Survey

New York: Agencies

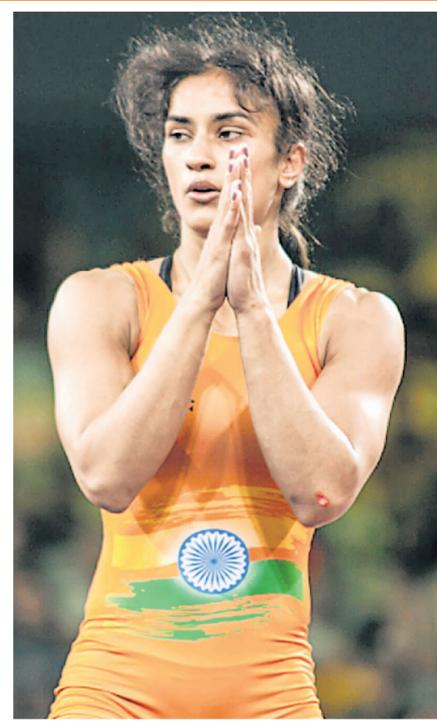
While the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) is the most popular Indian political party among the Indian diaspora in the US, a majority is critical of government policies despite showing overall strong support for the country, according to a study. Thirty-two per cent of Indian-Americans surveyed said they identified closely with the BJP and only 12 per cent with the Congress Party, the study reported.



Survey there are 4.2 million Indian-Americans, the study said. Of them, 2.6 million are US citizens, 1.2 million born in the US and 1.4 who took up citizenship after immigrating, and 42 per cent of them have Overseas Citizenship of India, the study said. The study said that more than three-quarters of Indian-Americans place a high value on their 'Indian-ness'.

policies, and 23 per cent critical of most of the government policies. According to the survey, 49 per cent of Indian-Americans rated Prime Minister Narendra Modi's performance favourably, with 35 per cent giving strong approval. But 31 per cent disapproved of his record, with 22 per cent expressing strong disapproval.

American immigrants showed a more negative view of India, with 44 per cent saying it was on the wrong track, while 26 per cent who were immigrants shared the view. Corruption was ranked by the Indian-Americans surveyed as the top problem for India with 18 per cent listing it and the economy came next with 15 per cent naming it.



VINESH ENTERS FINAL OF POLAND RANKING SERIES WRESTLING

Warsaw | Agencies

India's Vinesh Phogat won two bouts on Friday to enter the 53kg freestyle final of the Poland Ranking Series wrestling. She will face Khrystyna Bereza of Ukraine in the final.

Vinesh defeated Russia's Ekaterina Poleshchuk 6-2 in her first bout and scored an emphatic 6-0 win over Amy Ann Fearnside of USA in the semi-finals.

Meanwhile, Anshu Malik has pulled out of the women's 57kg freestyle event as she is down with fever, said a team coach.

"Since Anshu is unwell, it has been decided not to field her in the ranking series," the coach told reporter. On Wednesday, Deepak Punia, who has qualified for the Olympics in the men's 86kg freestyle withdrew from the ranking series due to a niggle in his left hand while Ravi Kumar Dahiya won silver in the men's 57kg freestyle category.

After the Poland Ranking Series, the Wrestling Federation of India will conduct a national coaching camp here. The team will return in the first week of July.



Paris | Agencies

Unseeded Czech Barbora Krejčíková pulled off a remarkable upset by outlasting No.17 seed Maria Sakkari 7-5, 4-6, 9-7 in a French Open women's semi-final match to reach her first Grand Slam final on Thursday. Barbora saved a match point at 5-3 in the third set and went on to win the titanic battle in three hours and 18 minutes.

Barbora will play first-time Grand Slam finalist No.31 seed Russian Anastasia Pavlyuchenkova, who defeated world No.85 Tamara Zidansek of

subdued the challenge from the Greek player and improved to 3-0 in their head-to-head rivalry. Earlier, Anastasia, 29, became the first woman to play more than 50 major tournaments before reaching a final, having made her Grand Slam debut as a 15-year-old wildcard entrant at the Wimbledon in 2007.

The win takes Anastasia into her 21st career final. Her last entry in a final was in 2019 in Moscow. Her first entry into a final was at Monterrey in 2010, where she defeated Slovak Daniela Hantuchova to win the title. If Anastasia wins, it will be her first title since winning the 2018 Strasbourg tournament. In

French Open: It's Barbora vs Anastasia in women's final

Slovenia 7-5, 6-3 in one hour and 34 minutes in an earlier semi-final encounter.

On an 11-match winning streak, Barbora needed five match points over two games. She duly



all, she has won 12 career titles. Anastasia has been the 'junior' opponent to No. 3 Aryna Sabalenka, No. 15 Victoria Azarenka and No. 21 Elena Rybakina in her earlier matches. And now she is the 'senior' pro left in the contest.

Conway, Young lead strong New Zealand reply to England

Birmingham | Agencies

Devon Conway (78 batting) and Will Young (40 batting) steadied the New Zealand first innings after an early jolt and helped the visitors to 130 for one wicket at tea, in reply to England's 303, on the second day of the second and final Test here on Friday. First Test's double centurion Conway (135 balls, 12x4s) and Young (107 balls, 6x4s) have so far added 115 runs for the second wicket at Edgbaston. New Zealand lost Tom Latham (6) at 15, fast bowler Stuart Broad having him leg before the wicket. Earlier, England bowled out for 303 in their first innings on the second day of the second and last Test here on Friday.

Overnight unbeaten batsman Daniel Lawrence went on to score 81 not out (124 balls, 13x4s) -- the same score as opener Rory Burns -- while his unbeaten partner Mark Wood went on to score 41 (80 balls, 7x4s). For New Zealand, Pacer Trent Boult bagged four wickets and Matt Henry three. In reply, New Zealand lost Tom Latham to Stuart Broad in the sixth over of their first innings.



Brief scores
England: 303; New Zealand: 130 for 1 wkt (Devon Conway 78 batting, Will Young 40 batting)

Seales rocks SA after Ngidi's fifer leads to Windies collapse

St Lucia | Agencies

Opener Aiden Markram's 60 helped South Africa reach 128 for four at the end of first day's play in the first Test against West Indies here. The Proteas now lead by 31 runs, after having dismissed the host for 97 in their first innings thanks to a five-wicket haul by pacer Lungi Ngidi.

Debutant pace bowler Jayden Seales took three for 34 in 11 overs to help Windies fight back. After SA skipper Dean Elgar was dismissed in the first over by Kemar Roach with the score on 0, the visiting side looked to resurrect the innings through Markram and debutant batsman Keegan Petersen.

However, Petersen was removed by Seales for 19. He was caught in slips with a ball that rose sharply.

Markram and Rassie van der Dussen (batting 34) then added 79 for the third wicket to put SA in a position of strength before Seales returned to take two wickets. He first removed Markram, having him caught behind and then followed it up with the wicket of another debutant Kyle Verreynne (6), who too was caught behind.



Earlier, fast bowler Lungi Ngidi had captured his second five-wicket haul in Test cricket and Anrich Nortje took four to help South Africa bowl out West Indies for 97 -- their lowest total against the visitors. Only five West Indies batsmen reached double figures, with Jason Holder's 20 (41 balls, 3x4s) being the top score at the Daren Sammy National Cricket Stadium. Ngidi bagged five for

19 while Nortje took four for 35. Kagiso Rabada, another fast bowler, captured the other wicket.

Brief scores

West Indies 97 all out (J Holder 20, L Ngidi 5/19, A Nortje 4/35) vs South Africa 128/4 (A Markram 60, R van der Dussen 34 batting, J Seales 3/34).

PACER ROBINSON TAKES BREAK FROM ALL CRICKET AFTER INT'L SUSPENSION

London: England pace bowler Ollie Robinson, who was suspended from international cricket following resurfacing of his old racist and sexist



tweets, has taken a short break from cricket and will not be available for the first two T20 Blast fixtures for Sussex.

Though he was suspended by England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) from international cricket after his Test debut at Lord's against New Zealand last week, he can still play for his county side Sussex. The county, however, said in a statement that the pace bowler has taken a break. "After a difficult week, Ollie has decided to take a short break from the game to spend time with his young family. Player and staff welfare -- including mental health and wellbeing -- is a priority for the club and, as such, Sussex Cricket fully supports Ollie in his decision," said the club in a statement.

WARNER, STOINIS PULL OUT OF THE HUNDRED

London | Agencies

Australian cricketers David Warner and Marcus Stoinis have pulled out of The Hundred dealing a blow to the tournament organised by England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB). The Hundred will run from July 21 to August 21 and was expected to attract a number of stars from across the world. Warner and Stoinis were contracted by Southern Brave franchise for 100,000 and 80,000 pounds respectively. "It is obviously disappointing to lose players with the ability of David and Marcus, but the realities of Covid mean there are practicalities that are difficult for some overseas players to overcome," the ECB told ESPNcricinfo through a statement. "Replacement overseas players will be signed by Southern Brave, and we look forward to the Hundred show-



casing world-class cricket this summer." Both Warner and Stoinis are part of the 23-member preliminary Australia squad picked for the tours of the West Indies and Bangladesh. It is likely that the duo, along with Pat

Cummins, Steve Smith and Glenn Maxwell, will skip the national assignments as they look to spend time with their families after having spent a lot of time bio-secure environment over the past few months.

WI'S BONNER SUFFERS BLOW TO HIS HEAD, OUT OF FIRST TEST

St Lucia: West Indies No. 3 batsman

Nkrumah Bonner suffered concussion after a sharp bouncer from South Africa pacer Anrich Nortje hit his helmet leading to Keiran Powell taking field as like-for-like replacement on the first day of the first Test. Bonner, who top-edged the first ball he faced off Nortje as he attempted a hook but deflected the ball onto his helmet, continued batting on Thursday despite getting hit before he was dismissed by Kagiso Rabada for 10. The 32-year-old right-handed batsman did not appear on the field when the South Africans batted. "Nkrumah Bonner is currently concussed after receiving a blow to his helmet in the 1st innings -- Kieran Powell replaces him in the field #WIVSA," Windies cricket confirmed on its Twitter handle.



Always ensure everyone gets a chance on India A, U-19 tours: Dravid

Team Absolute | New Delhi

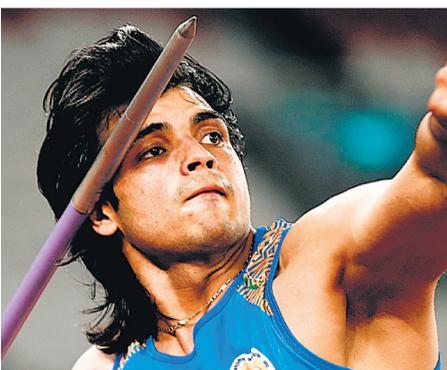
Rahul Dravid, a former India captain and director of cricket at Indian board's National Cricket Academy (NCA), has said he gives every player an opportunity on India A tours to ensure they don't face the frustration he had to face as a youngster. "I tell them upfront, if you come on an A tour with me, you will not leave here without playing a game," Dravid was quoted as saying by The Cricket Monthly. "I've had that personal experience myself as a kid: going on an A tour and not getting an opportunity to play is terri-



ble. You've done well, you scored 700-800 runs, you go, and you don't get a chance to show what you're good at. And then you're back to square one from the selectors' point of view, because the next season you have to score those 800 runs again," added Dravid who is likely to accompany the India white-ball team on tour of Sri Lanka. He has travelled as coach of India A and India under-19 teams.

The 48-year-old former India No. 3, who scored 13,288 runs in Test cricket and 10,889 in ODI cricket, said he always tries to make five to six changes between games at under-19 level.

I didn't go all out, will do that next week: Chopra



Lisbon | Agencies

India's star javelin thrower Neeraj Chopra on Friday said that he didn't go all out while winning gold at the Meeting Cidade de Lisboa here on Thursday because his aim is to push

hard in Sweden next week. "My coach had advised me not to give 100 percent in Thursday's competition as the field wasn't strong. I took the competition as part of my routine training. But I will put more effort next week in an interna-

tional competition in Sweden," the 23-year-old said on Friday.

Chopra won gold with a throw of 83.18 metres in his sixth and last attempt at the Meeting Cidade de Lisboa. The performance was nearly five metres less than his season and personal best of 88.07m, recorded in March in Patiala.

Of the six attempts allotted to each thrower, Chopra in his opening throw hurled the javelin to a distance of 80.71m, while second and third throws were no throws. Even his fourth attempt fetched him 78.50m. Chopra's fifth attempt too was no throw, but he pulled up to reach a distance of 83.18m in his sixth and last throw. The Lisbon competition marked Chopra's return to competition on the foreign soil after nearly 18 months.

Need to put in more than 100% effort in WTC final: Shami

London | Agencies

The India cricket team will have to put in "more than its 100 percent" if it wants to win the World Test Championship (WTC) final against New Zealand commencing in Southampton on June 18, said India pace bowler Mohammed Shami on Friday.

"We need to give our 100, may be 110 percent, in this match because this is the final effort of our two years of hard work. Double your effort in the coming few days," Shami told bcci.tv. Fellow pacer Ishant Sharma, who has played 101 Test matches, said the WTC final is an emotional journey for him.

"This journey, besides being practical, is also an emotional journey. This is an ICC (International Cricket Council) tournament and is a final. It is like a World Cup final.



"Virat has always said that this is not a one-month effort; it is the result of the hard work put in over the past two years. And (for us) there was more hard work because in

between there was Covid-19 pandemic. After that, the rules for WTC changed and we were under tremendous pressure," said Sharma adding that the series against

Australia was the turning point for the team.

"We had a tough series in Australia where we won (2-1 and retained the Border-Gavaskar trophy). I was not a part of that series but I felt that the series gave a different type of self-belief. In India, we had to win by at least a 3-1 margin (against England). We lost the first match and then made a comeback, said Sharma.

Shami felt the belief the team got from the win in Australia was "very good for the confidence".

"The best part was, obviously, there were no senior players and that was a big moment for Indian cricket. The performance of the youngsters in Australia was truly praiseworthy. It has taken our confidence to a different level." Spinner R Ashwin said the WTC final brought some context to Test cricket.

FULL RECOVERY OF INDIAN ECONOMY LIKELY ONLY BY Q3FY22: BRICKWORK

Team Absolute | New Delhi

As the second wave of Covid-19 and the resultant lockdowns have severely impacted the livelihoods and the economy, a report by Brickwork Ratings said that in the current situation full recovery of the economy may become feasible only by the third quarter of the ongoing financial year. It noted that second wave of the coronavirus pandemic has completely shattered confidence and has put businesses at great risk and uncertainty. Although the declining numbers of new infections provide a glimmer of hope, fast pacing the recovery process is possible only when new infections are contained and a significant proportion of the population is vaccinated, it said. "In this situation, full-fledged recovery may become feasible only by the Q3 of the current fiscal," said the report



titled 'Covid 2.0: Lingering Uncertainty over Economic Recovery'.

It also said that time is opportune for the Centre to announce a clear stimulus package to help the recovery process and build confidence among economic agents. "Many have voiced the need to increase cash transfers to the

affected and vulnerable sections, along with targeted transfers to the urban poor," it said. Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman has already asked the departments and public enterprises to front load their capital expenditures, but in a situation where the virus continues to spread fast and restrictions in various

states are still in place, the spending plans can be implemented only in a staggered manner. Noting that the most important measure needed now is to fast track the pace of vaccination, it, however, added that due to vaccine production capacity constraints, unfortunately, there is considerable confusion on the vaccine policy with even the Supreme Court questioning the government on differential pricing. The report observed that the Indian Constitution has placed containing contagious diseases on the concurrent list, and the Centre has a predominant responsibility in this. "Vaccination is a service with enormous externalities, and economic principles dictate that the Centre should bear the entire cost of universal vaccination, although it can use the services of the states and private healthcare facilities to vaccinate people," it said.

Covid dent: PV sales down by over 61% from May '19 levels

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Covid-induced economic volatility contracted the demand for domestic passenger vehicles in May 2021 from May 2019 levels. However, base effect along with low interest rates and some pent-up demand showed an accelerated rise in domestic demand in May 2021 on a year-on-year basis.

Accordingly, sales of passenger vehicles increased to 88,045 in May this year compared to 33,546 units sold during the same period of 2020. The May 2021 figures were lower by 61.2 per cent from 2,26,975 units sold during May 2019 levels. The category includes sub-segments of cars, utility vehicles and vans. A total of 41,536 passenger cars were sold in the domestic market, up from 14,460 units in the corresponding period of 2020. The sub-category had an

off-take of 1,43,449 units. The Society of Indian Automobile Manufacturers (SIAM) said the data does not include sales figures from some key players such as Tata Motors. Besides, sales of two-wheelers increased to 3,52,717 in May 2021 as compared to 2,79,682 units sold during the same period of 2020. Nevertheless, the May 2021 figures were lower by 79.6 per cent from 17,25,204 units sold during May 2019. The overall automobile sectors' off-take representing the sales of passenger vehicles, two-wheelers and three-wheelers rose to 4,42,013 units from 3,15,638 units sold during the

same period of 2020, while the May 2021 figures were 20,04,137 units. "Most part of May this year was under lockdown in many states thus impacting overall sales and production," said Rajesh Menon, Director General, SIAM. "Many members had shut down their manufacturing plants to divert oxygen from industrial use for medical purposes."



Sensex, Nifty climb new highs, end at record closing levels

Both the BSE Sensex and Nifty50 on the National Stock Exchange (NSE) touched their all-time intra-day highs of 52,641.53 and 15,835.55 points, respectively. Sensex closed at 52,474.76, higher by 174.29 points, or 0.33 per cent, from its previous close of 52,300.47 while the Nifty50 closed at 15,799.35, higher by 61.60 points, or 0.39 per cent, from its previous close.

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The Indian stock market continued its bull run on Friday and again settled at record closing highs. Both the BSE Sensex and Nifty50 on the National Stock Exchange (NSE) touched their all-time intra-day highs of 52,641.53 and 15,835.55 points, respectively. Healthy buying was witnessed in metal and IT stocks. Sensex closed at 52,474.76, higher by 174.29 points, or 0.33 per cent, from its previous close of 52,300.47. It had opened at 52,477.19 and touched an intra-day low of 52,388.95 points. The Nifty50 closed at 15,799.35, higher by 61.60 points, or 0.39 per cent, from its previous close. The top gainers on the Sensex were Dr Reddy's Laboratories, Power Grid, and Tata Consultancy Services, while Larsen & Toubro, IndusInd Bank, and Bajaj Finserv lost the most.

SBI launches 'Kavach Personal Loan' scheme for Covid patients

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The State Bank of India (SBI) has launched a collateral-free unique loan offering -- 'Kavach Personal Loan' -- for Covid patients. The loan covers expenses of Covid treatment of the customer and his/her family members. Under this scheme, customers can avail loans up to Rs 5 lakh at an effective interest rate of 8.5 per cent per annum for 60 months which is inclusive of three months moratorium, said an SBI statement. This unique product is being offered under the collateral-free personal loan category and comes at the cheapest rate of interest under this segment. Reimbursement of expenses already incurred for Covid-related medical expenses shall also be provided under the scheme, it said. SBI Chairman Dinesh Khara said: "With this strategic loan scheme, our aim is to provide access to monetary assistance - especially in this difficult situation for all those who



unfortunately got affected by Covid. It's our constant endeavour at SBI to work towards creating financial solutions for customers suiting their requirements. In these trying times, the SBI is committed towards taking care of customers' financial emergency for

Covid treatment and other personal expenses in order to effectively overcome the Covid battle, said the statement. This loan product will also be part of the Covid loan book being created by banks as per the RBI's Covid relief measures.

Healthcare by Heartfulness launches Covid Medical Consultation App

Hyderabad | Agencies

Coinciding with Global Wellness Day (celebrated on second Saturday of June every year), Heartfulness group of organizations has launched "Healthcare by Heartfulness" Covid Care app to provide covid consultation and telemedicine support along with its helpline, "Voice that Cares", to offer medical consultation services to those who need it during these stressful times. The free-of-charge service is managed by 1500+ Heartfulness certified trainers and medical professionals from the Heartfulness Institute. Healthcare by Heartfulness was launched by Suchitra Ella, Joint Managing Director Bharat Biotech International, and Heartfulness Guide, Kamlesh Patel (Daaji). Launching the app Ella, said, "I am hon-

oured and humbled to be a part of this initiative. I commend the Heartfulness Institute and the volunteers who have made this initiative possible. I wish the app is successful in decoding the right medical information for the people, which is extremely important in today's times. This initiative will go a long way in helping and supporting every family that uses the app." Speaking about the initiative Kamlesh D Patel also known as Daaji, Global Guide of Heartfulness, said, "At Heartfulness we always strive to strengthen the community. Today, humanity needs our support in terms of resources and medical assistance. I am grateful to all Heartfulness volunteers and medical professionals that are making this initiative successful. Together, we hope to make a positive impact during these difficult times."

'Global shipping crisis result of uneven post-Covid recovery'

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The crisis in the global shipping industry has been largely on the back of uneven post-Covid recoveries of the major importing and exporting countries, according to a report by Drip Capital. Small and medium businesses (SMB) around the world contribute to over 25 per cent of the \$18 trillion maritime trade, said the report, adding that Drip Capital observed that this sector has been going through a more profound and widespread crisis since the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic and the resulting economic contraction. The economic downturn due to Covid-19 led to the plight of the sector. Be it the supply chain disruption, the shortage of shipping containers to skyrocketing freight costs over the last year, many elements have collectively increased the woes of the SMBs across the globe. Titled 'Global Shipping Crisis: The



detrimental impact of the rising tide of freight costs on SMBs', the report said: "While every exporter and importer felt some degree of the brunt from the economic contraction, the most heavily affected were the SMB traders of the world." Noting that China is the largest exporter in the world, with 16.1 per cent of global exports, the report said that when Covid-19 hit this global trade powerhouse, many unfortunate events started unfolding for the shipping industry. "The shipping crisis is a consequence of the uneven post-Covid-19 economic recoveries of the world's largest importing and exporting countries. The novel coronavirus has hit the world with multiple waves and new variants," said the report. However, the difference in the degree and level of its impact on each country meant everyone around the globe experienced lockdowns and the subsequent easing of restrictions at different points in time, it added.

AKVO TRIGGERS A CHANGE WITH #OWNYOURWATER CAMPAIGN

Kolkata: AKVO Atmospheric Water Systems Pvt Ltd, strengthened their foothold in the B2C segment, with a breakthrough campaign #OwnYourWater. The pioneering campaign showcases, in a witty way, how water can literally come from thin air. Elaborating about the campaign, Navkaran Singh Bagga, Founder and CEO AKVO Atmospheric Water Systems Pvt Ltd stated, "Through this campaign we wanted to send out a simple yet strong message of #OwnYourWater. In India, less than 50% of the population has no access to safe drinking water and about 200,000 people die every year for the lack of clean water. Half a billion of the world face severe water scarcity all year around. The fact that drinking water is soon going to be a scarce resource is not new information anymore. AKVO Atmospheric Water Generators are the solution to the problem. Bodhisatwa Dasgupta, Founder and Intern, The Voice Company further added, "What really stood out for me was the technology AKVO had built. It was something straight out of a science fiction movie. The films sort of wrote themselves. I am happy that the films have gotten the traction we hoped they would, and the enquiries are beginning to pour in."

EBIXCASH appoints S RAVI to its board of directors

Mumbai: EbixCash Private Limited, a subsidiary of Ebix, Inc. (NASDAQ: EBIX), announced the appointment of S Ravi, as a new independent director to the EbixCash Board. Ravi brings a vast repertoire of experience across banks, financial institutions, insurance companies, tourism industry, stock exchanges and asset management areas - having held Board positions in eminent organizations across these sectors. S Ravi said, "EbixCash has built a global presence today with clients in 44 countries and a leading presence in India in multiple financial technology segments. EbixCash has also become a bellwether in the remittance, foreign exchange and money transaction space. I am extremely glad to join the board of EbixCash and to be a part of their journey in India." "Ravi has a deep understanding of the sectors in which EbixCash operates, built from his tenures at multiple banks, financial institutions, regulated financial intermediaries and insurance companies, his broad regulatory experience at IRDA, SEBI and RBI and his experience as a chartered accountant." Robin Raina, Chairman, President & CEO Ebix Inc, said, "As the Chairman of Tourism Finance Corporation of India, he also has a thorough understanding of the travel industry. All of these attributes are extremely valuable to his role on the EbixCash Board as we chart our next cycle of growth and progress towards the prospective IPO."

HCL's TechBee Program offers early career opportunities

New Delhi: TechBee, HCL Technologies' (HCL) Early Career Program, is a work-integrated higher education program which contributes to the "Skill India" mission of the government. As a part of HCL's new people strategy for 10+2 students, the program offers IT engineering jobs by equipping the students with future-ready skills. It prepares students technically and professionally for entry-level IT jobs in HCL where candidates undergo an extensive 12-month training for these jobs and the students also get an opportunity to do an internship on HCL projects. While working at HCL, students may also enroll in Graduation Degree program offered by reputed universities like BITS Pilani and SASTRA University. HCL started this program in 2016 with an aim to hire the best talent and enable them to achieve financial independence at the start of their career. So far, over 3,000 students have successfully completed the TechBee program and are now working with HCL. Srimathi Shivashankar, Corporate Vice President, HCL Technologies said, "I am extremely delighted to announce HCL's TechBee Program for Early Careers for class XII pass out students in Madhya Pradesh. The programme has benefitted more than 3,000 students by creating employment as well as helping them pursue higher education. I urge all meritorious class XII students to take this program and start their global IT careers with HCL."

Karnataka HC dismisses plea by Amazon, Flipkart to quash CCI probe

Team Absolute | New Delhi

In a major blow to e-commerce giants Amazon and Flipkart, the Karnataka High Court has dismissed their plea to quash an anti-trust investigation by the Competition Commission of India (CCI). Consequently, both the companies will face investigation under Section 3 of Competition Act. In January last year, the fair market watchdog had ordered an enquiry into the operations of both Amazon and Flipkart on multiple counts, including deep discounts and exclusive tie-up with preferred sellers. In its order, CCI had said that it needs to be investigated whether the alleged exclusive arrangements, deep discounting and preferential listing by Amazon and Flipkart are being used as an exclusionary tactic to fore-close competition. Also, the anti-trust body had added that it needs to be seen if such practices are resulting in an appreciable adverse effect on competition, contravening the provisions of Section 3 (1) read with Section 3(4) of the



Competition Act. "In view of the foregoing, the Commission is of the opinion that there exists a prima facie case which requires an investigation by the Director General (DG), to determine whether the conduct of the OPs (Amazon and Flipkart) have resulted in contravention of the provisions of Section 3(1) of the Act read with Section 3(4) thereof, as detailed in this order," the CCI order had said. Commenting on the High Court decision, the Confederation of All India Traders (CAIT) said: "It fully vindicates the stand of CAIT that Amazon and Flipkart business model is entirely based on violating the FDI policy, rules and other laws and therefore without wasting any more time, the CCI should immediately begin its probe."

Apple supply chain creates 20K jobs in India: Report

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Apple supply chain's shift of operation to India, in line with the incentives provided by the government, has reportedly created around 20,000 job in the country to date. According to a report in DigiTimes Asia, the number could have been higher were it not for the Covid-19 pandemic. Manufacturers including Foxconn, Wistron and Pegatron were all committed to creating certain numbers of job opportunities when they applied to enter the subsidies programme under India's Production Linked Incentive (PLI). As per the report, if Foxconn and

Wistron successfully meet their hiring plans pledged in their PLI application, they will each be adding 23,000 people to their Indian operations by the end of March 2022. "The headcounts at Wistron's operation in India had been already approaching 10,000 when a riot by workers took place at its plant in December 2020, forcing the company to halt and restructure its systems and operations," the report claimed. Pegatron plans to hire 6,000-7,000 workers in India by the end of March 2022, the report added. "Pegatron India has not started operations yet as it only decided the location of its production site in India earlier this year". The number of Apple's suppliers oper-

ating in India increased to nine in 2020, up from six in 2018. The growth of headcounts hired by Apple suppliers will accelerate in sync with the number of suppliers shifting their supply chains to India. In yet another fillip to the Make in India and domestic manufacturing dream of the Indian government, Apple said in March that its flagship and environment-friendly iPhone 12 smartphone will soon be produced in India for the local customers. Apple started manufacturing iPhones in India in 2017 with iPhone SE. Today, Apple manufactures some of its most advanced iPhones in India including XR, iPhone 11, and now iPhone 12.

RHEA CHAKRABORTY TO PLAY DRAUPADI?

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Rhea Chakraborty is in talks to play the iconic character of Draupadi set in Mahabharat epic. The film is supposed to be a modern-day unique take on Mahabharata and Rhea is likely to play today's Draupadi.

A source said, "This would be a massive project with a unique and different take on Mahabharata and the character of Draupadi. The

world that it will be set in will be modern and contemporary, something that hasn't been done before. The role of Draupadi has been offered to Rhea Chakraborty and she is considering it currently. The discussion is very initial though."

Rhea has been keeping a low profile after she was released on bail in the Sushant Singh Rajput case. The actress has been offered films after her trail.

The actress is being careful with the kind of projects she wants to take up. She was last seen in Chehre that starred Amitabh Bachchan and Emran Hashmi.



KRITI SANON CALLS ADIPURUSH HER 'MOST EXCITING PROJECT'

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Kriti Sanon says that the ambitious upcoming period drama "Adipurush" is one of her most exciting projects yet. At an interactive session with fans, a user asked her to talk about the film. "One of my most most exciting projects! Totally different experience loving every bit of it," Kriti replied, along with a note for the film's director Om Raut, "@omraut can we resume sooooooon."

The film is an adaptation of the "Ramayan", where Telugu star Prabhas features as Lord Ram while Bollywood star Saif Ali Khan essays Ravana. A fan also asked her to describe Telugu star Mahesh Babu in one word. Incidentally, Mahesh Babu was her co-star in her debut film, the 2014 superhit "1: Nenokkadine". Kriti replied: "Best! My first ever co-star! So humble and so amazing. I hope I get to work with him again (Sorry that's 19 words)" On handling success and failure, she said: "My Mantra: Never let success go to your head. Never let failure go to your heart." A fan asked about the release of her film "Mimi", to which the actress said she cannot reveal but it will happen soon.

Mrunal Jain in web series inspired by Rohtak Sisters incident

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actor Mrunal Jain, who will soon be seen in Akshay Kumar-starrer "Sooryavanshi", is all set to feature in a web series inspired by the Rohtak Sisters incident. He will be seen playing a central character in the upcoming show, and says it is totally different from what he has done before.

The Rohtak Sisters incident, as it is popularly known, is about two sisters, Arti and Pooja, who thrashed men in a bus in 2014, accusing them of molesting them. "I'm not supposed to be talking much about my role, but I would say that the audience will get to see a different side of me as an actor. I will be



speaking in a different dialect, actually everything is very different from what I have done in the past. It's based on a real-life incident and has a very interesting storyline. The audience will get to know about the various events that took place in the whole story," Mrunal told about the show produced by Azra Syed and directed by Manoj Singh.

Mrunal says he is waiting for workshops to start, in order to prepare for his role. "I'll prepare once I get a proper detailed narration about the character," he informs. The actor mentions he is ready to do bold scenes, but only if the story demands it. It depends on how crucial it is to the storyline," says the

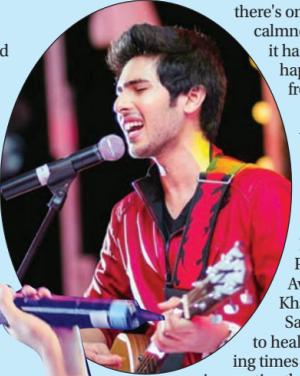
actor. He adds, "As an actor, I would see if it is an actual requirement for the story and is bringing some change to it or just for a sexual purpose. If the latter is the case, then I would definitely not do it." This is Mrunal's second OTT venture after "26 January", and he shared that during lockdown and the pandemic he utilised his time in watching series like "Queen Of South", "The Family Man" and "Money Heist". Speaking of the pandemic, he shared that with a new project in hand his first priority is to get vaccinated while also following the other Covid protocols so that the show wraps up successfully.

Shreya Ghoshal, Armaan Malik among 30 music stars at special concert on World Music Day

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Singers Shreya Ghoshal, Shilpa Rao and Armaan Malik are among 30 musicians who will unite to celebrate World Music Day with a special concert on June 21.

Hosted by Jonita Gandhi, the Lift Up concert will see artistes sharing their love for music, performing their favourite songs, and even sharing anecdotes on how 'that one song' acted as a catalyst for healing and helped them lift up their spirits during the pandemic. "In these times of despair, if



there's one thing that has been a resilient force of calmness and joy for all of us, it is music. I believe it has elevated me, instilled a ray of hope for a happier tomorrow and made me stronger from within," Armaan said.

Others performing at the concerts include Amaal Malik, Rochak Kohli, Tulsi Kumar, Shalmali, Sona Mohapatra, Shaan, Sachin Jigar, Salim-Sulaiman, Arjun Kanungo, Akasa, Raftaar, Asees Kaur, Harshdeep Kaur, Vishal Mishra, Nikhita Gandhi, Shashwat Singh, Anusha Mani, Sangeet Haldipur, Sashaa Tirupati, Jubin Nautiyal, Payal Dev, Stebin Ben, Raghav Meattle, Avanti Nagral, L-Fresh The Lion, Kamakshi Khanna, amongst others.

Said Shaan: "As they say, music has the power to heal and bind us together, and these challenging times have been a testament to that. I feel it is imperative that we cherish its therapeutic force to do away with the gloom that surrounds us, and celebrate together on the day dedicated to spreading goodwill through music." The 'Lift Up' concert will air on June 21, on MTV Beats, Vh1 India and MTV India.

Minissha Lamba launches app to engage with fans

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actress Minissha Lamba has launched her own application, which focuses on providing her fans a scope to engage directly with her via chats and video calls.

"Minissha official app" will let fans connect directly with the actress, which is not possible all the time using social media applications. Apparently, Minissha had always dreamt of talking to her favourite stars while growing up but there was no interface back then.

"There has been a lot of messages from fans and followers on how their messages were lost due to too many comments or messages. That pushed me to work on my own app. I wish to connect to my fans via video chats or normal chats directly and the app empowers me to do so. It's live now and available," she says.

The actress, who was last seen on the silver screen in 2017 film "Bhoomi", also wants her fans to stay safe during the tough times of Covid pandemic.

"I pray and wish for everyone to stay safe during these times. It's been tough and let's stick to protocols to the best of our abilities," she says. Earlier this year, the actress was also part of a play called "Hello Zindagi", which was written by actress Smita Bansal and was performed in New Delhi in March.



Taapsee Pannu: I wasn't first choice for 'Haseen Dillruba'

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Taapsee Pannu has revealed that she was not the first choice of the upcoming mystery thriller "Haseen Dillruba". The actress claims the film came to her after all options were exhausted.

"Haseen Dillruba" was a film I had a very gut feeling about the day I heard the basic idea from (writer) Kanika (Dhillon). Unfortunately, I wasn't the first choice for the film and it came to me after all their options were exhausted," Taapsee said.

She calls the film a candy in an actor's hand. "The good old saying that, if it's

meant for you it will come to you stands true for this case. It's not just a beautifully written mystery, it has such wonderful characters, which is candy in an actor's hands," Taapsee said.

She added, "I am glad I got to experiment with my look and performance with this one because I am definitely not the go-to person for this kind of character conventionally, and we all love to take risks."

The film, which also stars Vikrant Massey and Harshvardhan Rane, is about a woman whose heart longs to live like the words captured in a novel, but who finds herself entangled in the murder of her husband.

Vikrant calls the film a perfect blend of humour, quirk, revenge and romance. "I hope it surprises the audience as much as it surprised me when I heard it first. It was an enthralling experience shooting for," he said. Harshvardhan feels honoured to be in the same frame with some of our "country's finest talent". "Taapsee and Vikrant, have one thing in common I could never make out if they were joking or if they were serious. I always had to look for tiny nuances to understand the pretext," he added.

"Haseen Dillruba", directed by "Haseen Toh Phasee", helmer Vinil Mathew, will be released on Netflix.

INSTAGRAM PIC OF THE DAY



Sonam Kapoor