

absolute india

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GST CUTS FOR SEVERAL COVID-RELIEF ITEMS

NO CHANGE IN VAX TAX

The GST Council on Saturday decided to slash rates of several Covid-relief items to 5 per cent from existing 12 to 18 per cent levels but kept the much anticipated tax rate on vaccines unchanged at 5 per cent.



- ▶ The GST rate on Remdesivir to 5 per cent from 12 per cent and that of medical grade oxygen to 5 per cent.
- ▶ The rates on the medicines used for black fungus (Mycormucosis) and brought it to nil level.
- ▶ The special duty cuts would be applicable till September 30, 2021.
- ▶ The GST rate on ambulances has been reduced to 12 per cent from the previous 28 per cent.

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Addressing the media, post the GST Council meet, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said that the council agreed to go with the recommendations of the Group of Ministers (GoM) that was single point agenda on the council on Saturday.

She said that while rate of tax on various Covid relief medical items has been reduced, no change had been made in the 5 per cent GST rate on vaccines but it would not impact the public as

vaccination is being provided for free.

She said that the Centre will be paying and receiving 75 per cent of all the tax collected on it that will be further distributed with states. She had earlier said that exempting vaccines from GST would deny input tax credit on raw material and supplies that could impact its pricing.

Sitharaman said that though the GoM recommended the rate cuts till August, the council decided to keep it till September end and later decide if further extension were required.

BYJU'S MOST VALUABLE STARTUP IN INDIA, 11TH IN THE WORLD

The total number of unicorns worldwide is 708 with a valuation of \$2319 billion. Chinese company Bytedance, the parent company of TikTok, is the most valuable startup in the world with a valuation of \$140 billion.



SANJEEV SHARMA | New Delhi

Edu-tech company Byju's is now India's most valuable unicorn startup with a valuation of \$16.5 billion, surpassing fintech company Paytm's \$16 billion valuation. As per CB Insights data, as of June 2021, Byju's is the 11th most valuable startup in the world. Byju's investors include Tencent Holdings, Lightspeed India Partners and Sequoia Capital India. It has recently raised \$350 million from UBS, private equity giant Blackstone, Abu Dhabi state fund ADQ, Phoenix Rising and video conference firm Zoom's founder Eric Yuan. One97 Communications, the parent company of Byju's, has a valuation of \$16 billion with investors like Intel Capital, Sapphire Ventures and Alibaba Group. A unicorn company, or unicorn startup, is a private company with a valuation over \$1 billion. As of June 2021, there are more than 700 unicorns around the world. Popular former unicorns include Airbnb, Facebook and Google. The variants include a decacom, valued at over \$10 billion, and a hectocom, valued at over \$100 billion, CB Insights said. Oyo Rooms is valued at \$9 billion with investors like SoftBank Group, Sequoia Capital India and Lightspeed India Partners. The National Stock Exchange is valued at \$6.5 billion with investors including TA Associates,

SoftBank Group and GS Growth. Ola Cabs is valued at \$6.3 billion and has investors like Accel Partners, SoftBank Group and Sequoia Capital. Zomato is valued at \$5.4 billion with investors including Sequoia Capital and VV Capital. Another food delivery chain, Swiggy, is valued at \$5 billion and its investors include Accel India, SAIF Partners and Norwest Venture Partners. Internet software company Dream11 is valued at \$5 billion with investors including Kaalari Capital, Tencent Holdings and Steadview Capital. Logistics company Udaan is valued at \$3.1 billion and has investors including DST Global, Lightspeed Venture Partners and Microsoft ScaleUp. Fintech company Razorpay is valued at \$3 billion with investors like Y Combinator, Tiger Global Management and Matrix Partners India. Fintech company Pine Labs is also valued at \$3 billion with investors namely MasterCard, Temasek and PayPal Ventures. Logistics company Delivery is another firm that is valued at \$3 billion with investors including Times Internet, Nexus Venture Partners and SoftBank Group. Policybazaar is valued at \$2.4 billion, Renew Power at \$2.28 billion, fintech company CRED at \$2.2 billion, consumer company FirstCry at \$2.1 billion, software company Meesho at \$2.1 billion, while Sharechat is also valued at \$2.1 billion.

WORLD DAY AGAINST CHILD LABOUR

Ayushmann Khurrana highlights issue

Mumbai: Actor Ayushmann Khurrana, who is Unicef's celebrity advocate for their global campaign EVAC (Ending Violence Against Children), has spoken about the practice of child labour as a total violation of child rights, on the occasion of World Day Against Child Labour on Saturday, "Child labour robs children of their childhood and is a complete violation of their rights. Covid-19 has made children, especially girls and migrant children, more vulnerable, exposing them to greater risks. Closure of schools, increased violence at home, death of parents, and job loss within families is driving children to child labour," Ayushmann said.



Indian-origin journo wins Pulitzer

Indian-origin journalist Megha Rajagopalan has won the US' top journalism award, the Pulitzer Prize, for innovative investigative reports harnessing satellite technology that exposed China's mass detention camps for Muslim Uighurs and other minority ethnicities.



This is the 105th year of the Pulitzer Prizes awarded by a board at Columbia University's Graduate School of Journalism in New York recognising the outstanding work.

Arul Louis | New York

The award in the international reporting category that she shared with two colleagues from an internet media, BuzzFeed News, was announced on Friday by the Pulitzer Board.

Another journalist of Indian-origin, Neil Bedi, won a Pulitzer in the local reporting category for investigative stories he wrote with an editor at the Tampa Bay Times exposing the misuse of authority by a law enforcement official in Florida to track children.

In recognition of the proliferation of citizen journalism in the internet age, teenaged non-journalist, Darnella Frazier, was awarded a Pulitzer Special Citation for her courage in filming the killing of George Floyd, the African-American who died in police custody in Minneapolis last year.

Rajagopalan and her colleagues used satellite imagery and 3D architectural simulations to buttress her interviews with two dozen former prisoners from the detention camps where as many as a million Muslims from Uighur and other minority ethnicities were

interned. According to the publication, she and her colleagues, Alison Killing and Christo Buschek, identified 260 detention camps after building a voluminous database of about 50,000 possible sites comparing censored Chinese images with uncensored mapping software. Rajagopalan, who had previously reported from China but was barred from there for the story, travelled to neighbouring Kazakhstan to interview former detainees who had fled there, BuzzFeed said.

The series of stories provided proof of Beijing's violation of Uighurs' human rights, which some US and other Western officials have called a "genocide". Bedi and Kathleen McGrory were given their award for exposing "how a powerful and politically connected sheriff built a secretive intelligence operation that harassed residents and used grades and child welfare records to profile schoolchildren", the Pulitzer Board said.

Can't compare myself to Lionel Messi: Chhetri

DOHA | Agencies

As India football striker Sunil Chhetri said on Saturday that the hype around him surpassing Argentina legend Lionel Messi's tally of 72 goals for his country is misplaced and "the truth is that there is absolutely no comparison between me and him".

Chhetri scored a brace in India's 2-0 win over Bangladesh in the FIFA World Cup 2022 and AFC Asian Cup 2023 qualifier match in Doha earlier this week, which took his tally to 74 goals for the country, two more than what Messi has scored for Argentina.

"I am just happy that I get an opportunity to score for my country, and that is about it. When I see my name there, I feel proud for five seconds that I could do something for my country. I



don't get into the stupid cocoon of comparing myself with all those great players. There are thousands of players who are better than me, and all of them are also fans of Lionel Messi. That's the

gap," said the India team captain, who is preparing for the last FIFA World Cup 2022 and AFC Asian Cup 2023 qualifier engagement, against Afghanistan, on June 15. On how he would greet

Messi if he were to meet the Argentinian star, Chhetri said, "I'd say, 'Hi, I'm Sunil Chhetri, and I'm a big fan'. I will not trouble him. I'm a fan, but all the people I'm a fan of, I don't trouble them much. If I meet him, I'll be happy, if I don't, I'm still good. When I'm sad, I watch Messi's videos, and it makes me happy, so when I meet him, I'll tell him I'm a fan, give him a nice handshake, and that's about it."

There is a lot of talk, even in my family WhatsApp group, and I tell everyone the same thing. The truth is that there is absolutely no comparison between me and him. Along with everyone else in the world, I am also a huge fan (of Messi). There is no comparison whatsoever.

Telangana MP's green challenge making a difference

It was on July 17, 2018 that Santosh Kumar launched GIC with the slogan 'Hara Hai Toh Bhara Hai' (If it is green, it is complete).

The challenge gained momentum with people sending in images, videos, responses, positive opinions about taking part in GIC.

Going beyond the symbolic gesture, Santosh Kumar adopted 2,042 acres of Keesara Reserve Forest. It is believed to be the first instance of an individual adopting a forest for its protection.



Mohammed Shafeeq | Hyderabad

The Rajya Sabha member's Twitter timeline is flooded with pictures of political leaders, actors, sportspersons and other eminent people planting saplings to celebrate their birthdays by accepting his Green India Challenge (GIC).

While greeting other MPs, ministers, legislators, leaders and celebrities on their birthdays, the MP belonging to Telangana Rashtra Samithi (TRS) urge them to plant a few saplings to mark the occasion. They respond by posting photographs clicked while planting the saplings.

Though looks symbolic, this initiative has helped in bringing a silent transformation. The MP's passion about GIC and his continuous efforts to rope in top celebrities have helped the cause and so far led to planting of more than 10 crore

The MP recently brought out the book 'Vruksha Vedam' which has the shlokas highlighting the importance of trees and forests as depicted in the Indian literature. It also explains the importance, medicinal and therapeutic properties of various plants, trees as mentioned in vedas for creating awareness among the general public.

trees in Telangana and other parts of the country. Started in 2015, Haritha Haram is one of the world's largest plantation programme with an aim to increase the forest cover in the state from 24 per cent to 33 per cent. Every year, crores of saplings are being planted across the state under Haritha Haram, a brainchild of Chief Minister K. Chandrababhan Naidu, popularly known as KCR.

Keen to do his bit in promoting green cover, the MP came with the idea of GIC, inviting people from all walks of life to plant saplings.

This idea of adopting and pledging care for reserve forests motivated others. Actor Prabhas of 'Baahubali' fame came forward for protection and development of 1,650 acres of Kazipally Reserve Forest on the outskirts of Hyderabad. The actor gave Rs 2 crore to the forest department for the purpose. He appealed to everyone to plant at least three saplings wherever possible.

Hope you would plant few saplings to mark the special day of your life and see that your followers to do the same in order to achieve the dream of our CM.

Santosh Kumar



BJP leaders quit party over sedition charges against Lakshadweep filmmaker

Thiruvananthapuram | Agencies

Two days after the Kavaratti Police sent a notice to Lakshadweep filmmaker Ayesha Sultana to appear before it on June 20 in connection with her remarks about the spread of Covid in the island, a bunch of BJP leaders quit the party in protest against levelling of sedition charges against Sultana.

The complaint against the filmmaker was registered by Lakshadweep BJP chief Abdul Khader following a debate on a Malayalam TV channel aired on June 7, wherein Sultana had alleged that the 'Centre used biological weapons for the spread of Covid in Lakshadweep', which according to the complainant was 'anti-national'.

Among those who have stepped down is BJP general secretary Abdul H. Mullipuzha and his supporters, who in their letter to Khader said that the charges against Sultana were 'false' and 'baseless', besides pointing out that even the BJP workers have been protesting against the manner in which new Lakshadweep administrator Praful Patel has been ringing in changes in the island.



A local person told reporter on condition of anonymity that this is not the first time that such a thing has happened, as few BJP leaders had quit the party last month also.

"On Monday, we held a day-long hunger strike in protest against the changes being introduced by Patel in the island. Even the BJP supporters took part in that protest. No one who loves the

island will ever agree to the changes that are being forced upon us," said the islander.

Another popular BJP face in the island who has quit the party is A. Hameed.

Without mincing words, Hameed said that there is no point in being the member of a party which has failed to do good to the people of the island, and it's surprising that instead of ignoring what she (Sultana) said, an FIR has been registered based on the complaint.

The notice that has been served to Sultana contains charges under Sections 124 A and 153 B of the CrPC, both non-bailable offences.

Sultana, who hails from Chelath Island in Lakshadweep, is based here and besides being a model, she has also worked in numerous Malayalam films.

Ever since the new administrator took charge, the Congress and the ruling Left in Kerala have been up in arms, alleging that Patel is trying to implement the Sangh Parivar agenda in the otherwise calm and peace loving island.

A unanimous resolution was also passed in the Kerala Assembly earlier this month demanding the removal of Patel.

Five Myanmar militants held with arms in Mizoram



Aizawl | Agencies

Five militants from Myanmar were apprehended with arms and ammunition in a joint operation carried out by the Assam Rifles and Mizoram Police from a bordering village in Lawngtlai district, the police said on Saturday.

Additional Superintendent of Police, C. Lalruatkima, said that the intruders, suspected to be cadres of armed outfit Arakan Liberation Army (ALA) in Myanmar, were nabbed on Friday night from the Kakichhuah village in Lawngtlai district in

southern Mizoram bordering India and Myanmar.

He said the security personnel recovered a 9 mm pistol, a .38 revolver, 55 rounds of bullets and four live grenades from the possession of the ALA cadres.

Lalruatkima said that the extremists were produced in the district court in Lawngtlai with charges lodged under different sections of the Arms Act and the Foreigners Act. The court sent them to police custody for further interrogation by the security officials.

Mizoram has an unfenced international border of 510 km with Myanmar.

5 CHILDREN DROWN TO DEATH IN BIHAR'S SAHARSA

Saharsa (Bihar) | Agencies

A pall of gloom descended on Bihar's Saharsa district on Saturday morning after five children died due to drowning in the Basti area of the district.

The children had gone to take bath in a pond when they slipped into deep water and drowned. All the children were aged between 8 and 14 years.

A police officer said that five children had gone to a nearby pond to take bath. While taking bath, one of them slipped into deep water and started drowning. The others too went into deep water in order to save him, but unfortunately all of them drowned.



Sadar police station in-charge Sanjeev Kumar told reporter that the deceased have been identified as Golu, Arif, Israfil, Mohammad Gulab and Abu Bakr.

He said the police reached the spot after getting information about the incident. With the help of local people, all the bodies have been fished out of the pond and sent for post-mortem.

Guinness record holder on a mission to make India hale & hearty

Gurugram | Agencies

At a time when the Covid-induced lockdowns are weighing heavily on health and fitness activities, as people are staying indoors to keep the pandemic at bay, M.A. Murtoza, who had created a Guinness Record two years ago, is on a mission to make India as fit as a flea. Murtoza, 42, made the country proud by setting the Guinness World Record for most full-contact knee strikes in one hour (team) -- 55,475 -- on July 14, 2019 in Gurugram.

The Guinness record holder is also a fitness trainer and is battling for his 'Fit India' mission. He has been working relentlessly on it for



over a decade now.

In the fitness training world, Murtoza has earned his achievements in a very short period of time.

"My aim behind attempting the world record was to

make the society aware about the importance of health and fitness in today's hectic life. Fit India is not just a mission. It's my passion to encourage people to adopt a healthy and fit

lifestyle," he said.

The fitness freak is presently working with a Manesar-based firm, and after his job hours, he starts working on his passion by providing fitness training to the students, youth and others. He trains students and youth on martial arts, self-defence, physical and mental health.

Along with training and physical fitness, Murtoza's research on physical fitness has also been published in some journals, including the International Journal of Engineering Science and Computing (IJESC) and International Journal of Innovation in Engineering Research & Management (IJIERM), among others.

Doc dances to woo Kerala tribal's to take Covid vax

Thiruvananthapuram | Agencies

The Attapadi areas where a sizeable tribal population lives in Palakkad district has been unwilling to get vaccinated against Covid-19, so a doctor went out of the way to encourage them -- he decided to dance and woo them to get the inoculation done. Arun attached to the Agali health centre along with his staff have been trying their best to get the tribals convinced about the need for vaccination.

"Initially the tribals in the village were unwilling and then I decided along with my staff to dance, soon, the tribals also joined which includ-



ed elderly women. As we danced we told them the need and urgency of getting vaccinated and they agreed," said Arun. In the hamlet they tested and vaccinated 25 tribals and found out that four of

them were Covid positive. Incidentally Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan had promised special vaccination camps to be organised in tribal hamlets and the camps have been started.

MASSIVE FIRE BREAKS OUT IN DELHI'S LAJPAT NAGAR MARKET

New Delhi: A massive fire broke out in a showroom in Lajpat Nagar market in Delhi on Saturday, a fire official said. More than 15 fire tenders have been rushed to the spot to douse the blaze. Officials said they received an alert from Lajpat Nagar market regarding a massive fire that broke out at Block-1, Central Market, Lajpat Nagar. "Fire is in a showroom. Thirty fire brigades have been rushed to the spot. Details are awaited," said a fire official. The incident took place after over a month of lockdown.

Truth does not concern PM, propaganda does: Priyanka

Team Absolute | New Delhi

In another direct attack on the Prime Minister, Congress General Secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra on Saturday alleged that Prime Minister attempted to hide the truth and shirk responsibility.

She said in her series "Jimmedar Kaun" (Who is responsible), "Good governance in a crisis is about confronting the truth, seizing responsibility, and taking action. Unfortunately, the Modi government did none of these. Instead, from the beginning of the pandemic, it made every attempt to hide the truth and to shirk responsibility".

She alleged that the Prime Minister simply retreated and wait-



ed for the worst to pass. "The Prime Minister of India has behaved like a coward. He has let our country down. The whole world has wit-

nessed his incompetence at governance. His vast capacity for vanity has been exposed. Indians do not come first for him. Politics does. Truth does not concern him, propaganda does," she said.

She further said, as a consequence, when the second wave hit the country with unprecedented force, the government lapsed into a state of inaction. This inaction enabled the virus to spread with far greater ferocity and cause untold suffering.

She quoted Hindi poet Nirala to show the tragic situation, "The waters of the river Ganga were filled with corpses. There was no wood left in crematoriums to cremate the dead. In the blink of an eye, my family had vanished from before me."

Bihar migrant workers return to cities as 2nd Covid wave subsides

Team Absolute | Patna

As the second wave of the coronavirus pandemic subsides, migrant workers across different states have started returning to work leaving their native villages. The government has assured about providing employment to the workers who have returned to the cities for resuming employment.

After the onset of the second wave of coronavirus and the imposition of lockdown across the country, the migrant workers had returned to their native villages fearing a repeat of the chaos and apathy faced last year.

However, due to the gradual opening of businesses in big cities the migrant workers have again started coming back to the cities.

Train tickets are being sent by mill owners to several migrant workers living in Muzaffarpur and other districts of north Bihar. The workers living in Sakra block of Muzaffarpur district have left for Mumbai, Delhi and other places.

The migrant workers say that when they returned to the cities, they thought they would find some job but they are not getting



the kind of jobs in which they are skilled. They say that in some areas employment is being provided under the MNREGA scheme but it is not possible for all people to get work under it.

Niranjan Kumar of Charpokhari village in Bhojpur district says, "At present, farming and agriculture is almost at a standstill. Work is expected to be available only at the time of planting. However, so many people have

returned from their native villages that there is no possibility of getting fair wages in agriculture. Money is available working outside their native villages."

In Gopalganj district, at present a large number of migrant workers are not returning to the cities but many who had returned were called by their owners. However, there are many workers across villages who fear a third wave of the coronavirus. Such labourers say that they will venture outside but hearing about the danger of a third wave they will have to return again to their native villages.

They say that they are looking for work in their native villages but if they fail to get any work then they will have to move to cities to feed themselves. The migrant workers of Gopalganj, Bhojpur, Kaimur are moving towards Punjab for farming.

It is a relief that the situation is not as bad as last year. After the second wave of Covid-19, many migrant workers who returned to their native villages are still in search of work.

Last year, migrant workers were called back for work by sending interstate buses from many big cities.

719 doctors died in 2nd wave, Bihar records highest deaths

Team Absolute | New Delhi

As many as 719 doctors have died during the second wave of the Covid-19 pandemic, according to the latest report by the Indian Medical Association (IMA) with Bihar reporting the highest number of 111 doctors dying in the line of duty.

The second wave of coronavirus pandemic across the country is not over yet. This is the reason doctors are losing their lives every day while saving the lives of Covid-infected patients.

According to the IMA, a total of 1,467 doctors have died so far since the start of the coronavirus pandemic. As many as 748 doctors had lost their lives during the first wave of the pandemic.

Delhi is the only state after Bihar where more deaths of doctors have been reported. According to official figures, 109 doctors have died in Delhi, 79 in Uttar Pradesh, 43 in Rajasthan, 39 in Jharkhand and 35 in Andhra Pradesh.

The coronavirus pandemic curve also seems to be flattening across the country, as 84,332 new Covid-19 cases were reported in the last 24 hours and 4,002 infected persons lost their lives due to the virus, according to the union health ministry data.

According to the information provided by the IMA, most of the doctors between 30 to 55 years have lost their lives during the second wave of Covid-19, including resident doctors and doctors working as interns. Apart from these doctors, some pregnant women doctors have also lost their lives in the line of duty.

"Stairs Don't End" Neither of progression nor degradation"



Shrikant Verma

absolute india

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No exemption to mainstream media from New IT Rules: Government

EVERYBODY SURRENDER

"Making any exception of the nature proposed will be discriminatory to the digital news publishers who do not have a traditional TV/print platform," the ministry said in a clarification to digital news publishers, publishers of online curated content or OTT platforms and associations of digital media publishers.

The government's clarification came as

the National Broadcasters Association (NBA) had recently written to the I&B ministry urging it to "exempt and exclude" the traditional television news media and its extended presence on digital news platforms from the ambit of the Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules 2021, saying they are already

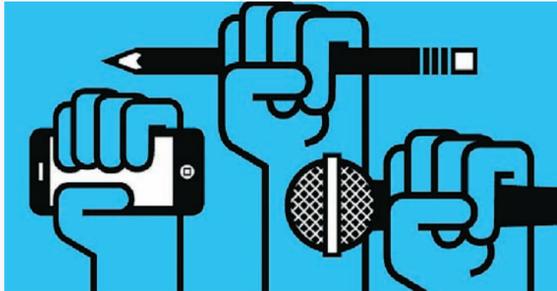
"sufficiently regulated" by various statutes, laws, guidelines, codes and regulations.

Noting that code of ethics requires such digital platforms to follow the existing norms or content regulations, which are in vogue for the traditional print and TV media, the Ministry said, there is no additional regulatory burden for such entities.

Team Absolute | New Delhi

All mainstream media, including print and electronic, will have to comply with the provisions of IT Rules, 2021 with immediate effect without exemption as the government has refused to exempt them from the ambit of the new digital media rules. Ministry of Information and Broadcasting (I&B) has said that the rationale for bringing the websites of the organisations under the ambit of the law is "well-reasoned". Accordingly, it said, the request for exempting the digital news content of such organisations from the ambit of digital media rules 2021 cannot be acceded to. The Ministry also clarified that when any news and current affairs content of a digital news publisher is transmitted on an OTT platform, such content would be outside the regulatory responsibility of that platform.

The ministry noted that the television news channels already have a self-regulatory mechanism in place to adjudicate grievances relating to the violation of the programme code under the Cable Television Network



It does recognise that entities having traditional TV and print media are already registered with the government either under the Press and Registration Books Act or the Uplinking and Downlinking Guidelines of 2011. The digital version/digital publication of the organisations having traditional news platforms (TV and print) may be following internal guidelines of the self-regulatory bodies. Accordingly, if the organisations so desire, they can request the same self-regulatory bodies to serve as the Level II of the self-regulatory mechanism, after ensuring consistency with the Digital Media Rules, 2021,

Act, 1995 and their internal codes or guidelines. The ministry also dismissed the concerns that the oversight mechanism stipulated under the digital media rules would lead to excessive government control over the functioning of the digital news

publishers and the OTT platforms.

"In this regard, it may be mentioned that even at present, in respect of the traditional TV channels, there is an oversight mechanism in the government by way of an inter-ministerial committee

(IMC), which looks at certain grievances relating to the violation of the Programme Code, a mechanism which is in existence since 2005," said the Ministry. Over the last 15 years, the IMC has given recommendations by way of advisories, warnings etc in respect of a large number of cases involving the content of both news and non-news channels in relation to the Programme Code and in almost every such case, the TV channels have accepted the recommendations of the panel, the Ministry said. In the overall context, the Digital Media Rules, 2021 may be complied with by the digital news publishers and the OTT platforms without any misapprehensions, it added.

The Ministry further said that the publishers may furnish the requisite information in the prescribed format immediately, take urgent steps for appointing a grievance officer, if not done, and place all relevant details in the public domain, constitute self-regulatory bodies through mutual consultation so that the grievances are addressed at the level of publishers or the self-regulating bodies themselves.

Winds of change blowing strongly in Union Cabinet

IT APPEARS THAT THE IMPENDING RESHUFFLE MAY FINALLY TAKE PLACE EITHER ON JUNE 13 OR JUNE 20.

The names of Sarbananda Sonowal, Jyotiraditya Scindia, Chirag Paswan, Trivendra Singh Rawat, Anupriya Patel, Sushil Modi, Meenakshi Lekhi, Jayant Sinha, Mahesh Jethmalani, Rajiv Ranjan and Lallan Singh were discussed as possible new inductees. Of these, leaders like Anupriya Patel, Jayant Sinha and Sonowal have earlier been in the Union Cabinet.



THE PORTFOLIOS WHICH COULD SEE CHANGES INCLUDE

- Industry and commerce
 - Law
 - Agriculture
 - HRD
 - Civil aviation
 - Steel
 - Food processing
- However, Defence, Home and Finance will clearly remain the same as none is likely to be disturbed.

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Triggering off speculation about the long-awaited Cabinet reshuffle, Prime Minister Narendra Modi met Home Minister Amit Shah and party President J.P. Nadda on Friday. The meeting assumed even more significance after Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath's meetings with

the same personages in the national capital. A reshuffle in Uttar Pradesh, which goes to the polls next year, is also not being ruled out. Thereafter, meetings took place with small groups of five-six ministers where their work was evaluated and discussed. Many of the existing ministers have multiple portfolios, some of which may be shed in favour of the new inductees.

Farmers to protest at Raj Bhavans on June 26 against farm laws



Team Absolute | New Delhi

The protest by the farmers against the new farm laws introduced by the Central government has been nearing 200 days and in order to intensify their agitation, the farmers have announced a sit-in at Raj Bhavans across the country on June 26. Bharatiya Kisan Union (BKU) leader Dharmendra Malik told reporter that June 26 will be celebrated as "Save Agriculture, Save Democracy Day". At the same time, by showing

There will be a protest of farmers on June 26 and black flags will be shown. A memorandum will also be sent to President Ram Nath Kovind.

Samyukta Kisan Morcha

black flags at Raj Bhavans and giving memorandum to the President through the Governor in every state, "we will stage our protest". According to farmer leaders, on June 26, former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi had imposed Emergency in the country. "Even today, the Modi government has also imposed an undeclared emergency in the country," they submitted. Farmers

have been protesting at various borders of the national capital since November 26 last year against three newly enacted farm laws -- Farmers' Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion and Facilitation) Act, 2020, Farmers (Empowerment and Protection) Agreement on Price Assurance and Farm Services Act, 2020 and Essential Commodities (Amendment) Act, 2020.

2 civilians, 2 cops killed in Sopore militant attack

Srinagar: Two civilians and two policemen were killed and 7 others were injured on Saturday in a militant attack on the security forces in J&K's Sopore town. Earlier reports had said only one civilian was injured in this incident. Police said two civilians and two policemen were injured when militants hurled a grenade at the security forces in Sopore town. Later they succumbed to critical injuries in the hospital during treatment. "Four policemen and 3 civilians were also injured in this attack which took place in the main market of Sopore town," police said. "Reinforcements have reached the spot to carry out searches. The area has been cordoned off", police said. Reports reaching here said that the militants targeted a vehicle of the local police with a grenade in the main market of Sopore town.



Digvijaya Singh's Clubhouse chat part of toolkit, says BJP

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Intensifying its attack on Congress party over leaked audio of Digvijaya Singh's Clubhouse chat, the BJP on Saturday said that it was a part of the 'toolkit' mentioned a few days ago. The saffron party suggested that the Congress party should name it as ANC (Anti National Clubhouse) in place of INC (Indian National Congress). Digvijaya Singh's remarks to a person, who the BJP said was a journalist of Pakistani origin, was seized by the saffron party



a relook on the issue," Singh said, according to bits of conversation available on social media. As the BJP attacked him, Singh posted a tweet in Hindi in an apparent jibe at the ruling party. "This bunch of illiterate people cannot probably differentiate

between 'shall' and 'consider'," Digvijaya Singh, the former Madhya Pradesh chief minister said. Addressing a press conference, BJP National Spokesperson Dr Sambit Patra said, "It is quite possible that what Digvijaya Singh has said in Clubhouse chat must have been stage managed. Digvijaya Singh or a senior Congress leader must have instructed the Pakistani journalist to ask such a question. It's all part of that toolkit mentioned a few days ago." He mentioned everyone saw how the veteran Congress leader Digvijaya Singh was spewing venom against India outside and how he is toeing Pakistan's line.

with the SAD, including eight seats in the Doaba region, seven in Malwa and five in Majha region. He said the both the SAD and the BSP have the same ideology and have always worked for the welfare of the farmers, poor and 'khet mazdoors' (field labourers). Mishra, while terming the development as a red letter day for Punjab, said, "The BSP has chosen to align with the



strongest party in Punjab. The BSP has a considerable hold over the 31 per cent Dalit votes in the state. The concentration of these votes is mainly on 23 seats in the Doaba region. Earlier, the BJP used to contest 23 seats in Punjab in alliance with the SAD. The Akali Dal-BJP alliance had come to power in 2007 before being ousted by the Congress in 2017.

with the SAD, including eight seats in the Doaba region, seven in Malwa and five in Majha region. He said the both the SAD and the BSP have the same ideology and have always worked for the welfare of the farmers, poor and 'khet mazdoors' (field labourers). Mishra, while terming the development as a red letter day for Punjab, said, "The BSP has chosen to align with the

No heat wave conditions likely in next five days: IMD

Fishermen are advised not to venture into sea areas

Besides, heavy to very heavy rainfall at a few places with extremely heavy rain at isolated places is very likely over Konkan and Goa, Chhattisgarh, sub-Himalayan West Bengal, Sikkim, Odisha, Assam, Meghalaya, Uttarakhand, east Madhya Pradesh, Vidarbha and Telangana.

The latest report of the National Weather Forecasting Centre of the IMD received on Saturday evening predicted heavy rainfall over the next 24 hours at isolated places in Delhi, over the Gangetic West Bengal, Jharkhand, Bihar, Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram, Tripura, Himachal Pradesh, Punjab, Haryana, Chandigarh, west Uttar Pradesh, west Madhya Pradesh, central Maharashtra, Marathwada, Kerala and Mahe, coastal Karnataka, coastal Andhra Pradesh and Yanam.

Team Absolute | New Delhi

In a sign of relief from the sweltering summer heat prevailing in most parts of the country, the India Meteorological Department's (IMD) on Saturday also forecast "no heat wave conditions likely over any part of the country during the next five days". As per the Met department, the conditions are favourable for further advancement of southwest monsoon into some more parts of Madhya Pradesh, remaining

parts Chhattisgarh, Odisha, West Bengal, Jharkhand and Bihar, and some parts of eastern Uttar Pradesh during the next 24 hours. Maximum temperature of more than 40-degree Celsius as on Saturday were recorded at most places in west Rajasthan; at many places in Haryana, Chandigarh and Delhi; and at a few places over east Rajasthan, Punjab, west Madhya Pradesh and Gujarat. On Friday, the highest maximum temperature of 44.2-degree Celsius was reported in Ganganagar in west Rajasthan.



BANGLADESH INKS PACT WITH CHINA TO BUY VACCINES

Sumi Khan | Dhaka

Bangladesh has signed a pact with China to buy the Sinopharm Covid-19 vaccine, said Health Minister Zahid Maleque. The Health Minister said this during a programme at the National Institute of Cardiovascular Diseases here. Earlier, the country had received seven million Covishield doses through a contract. Besides, India gave Bangladesh 3.3 million vaccines as a gift. On May 27, the Cabinet Committee on Public Purchase approved a proposal to buy 15 million doses of the Sinopharm Covid-19 vaccine.

During a briefing post meeting, a Cabinet Division official said the authorities would purchase the vaccine at \$10 per dose. The price disclosure created some confusion, as Beijing had said that Bangladesh would have to pay \$15 per dose to buy the vaccine. Bangladesh started its nationwide Covid-19 vaccination drive on February 7 by administering Covishield, manufactured by Serum Institute of India (SII). On April 25, the government suspended administering the first doses with Covishield, as SII had been unable to provide the number of doses now, many people were waiting for second jabs after receiving their first.



HEAVY RAIN LEADS TO WATERLOGGING IN PARTS OF MUMBAI, TRANSPORT SERVICES HIT

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Heavy rains, coupled with thunderstorms and strong winds, lashed Mumbai and its suburbs on Saturday, leading to disruption of train and bus services as tracks and roads got waterlogged at several locations.

A Central Railway spokesperson said that the suburban train services between Dadar and Kurla stations on the main line were suspended after the water rose above the track level, while a Brihanmumbai Electric Supply and Transport (BEST) official said that several of its buses had to be diverted due to water-logging at some points. Waterlogging was witnessed at several locations in Bandra East, Hindmata, King's Circle, Kurla Kamani and Wadala,



with BEST diverting its buses on at least 17 locations due to waterlogging on roads.

Maharashtra's Mumbai, Raigad and Ratnagiri districts very likely to receive extremely heavy rainfall on Sunday and Monday, states the Regional Meteorological Centre, Mumbai.

Some parts of Mumbai witnessed water logging on Saturday morning due to

continuous heavy downpour in the city. Several areas in Sion East and Andheri sub-way have been flooded due to the rain. The India Meteorological Department (IMD) has issued heavy rain warning for Mumbai on June 13-14 in addition to a tidal wave warning.

Meanwhile, Mumbai mayor Kishori Kishor Pednekar has notified that

strict action would be taken against those who are found dumping garbage in the drains and gutters.

Raigad district received an average of 54 mm rainfall in the last 24 hours ending Saturday morning, with Mhasala recording the highest 100 mm showers, an official said. The district administration has issued a red alert in the region warning people of heavy rains, he said. Last year, the average rainfall recorded by the district till June 12 was 238mm, while this year, it has risen to 311mm, the official said.

Shrivardhan taluka received 80 mm rainfall in the 24-hour period, followed by Uran with 76 mm, Murud with 71 mm, while the hill station of Matheran recorded 56 mm showers, it was stated. IMD scientist Shubhanga Bhuze said that owing to the low pressure & strengthening of westerly

winds entire Konkan region including parts of Mumbai and Thane to continue to receive rains. In the 24 hours ending 8.30 am on Saturday IMD Santacruz observatory has recorded heavy rain of 107 mm rains & IMD Colaba observatory 90 mm. Heavy rain warning for Mumbai for today and next three days.

Mumbai's eastern suburbs received 89.30 mm rainfall, eastern suburbs witnessed 92.38 mm rain, and Mumbai 79.66 mm rain during last 24 hours.

Mumbai Police in a statement on Saturday said, heavy showers this morning have led to waterlogging at Andheri Subway, Khar Subway, Bhoiwada-Hindmata, RAK-National Market wadala, Sion-Jain society, Gurukrupa society, Matunga-Opp police station, Kurla-Lion Garden, Kalpana junction, Shivaji park-Senapati Bapat Marg

■ The weekly positivity rate in the metropolis has come down to 4.4% and oxygen bed occupancy is at 27.12%

■ A detailed five-level plan to unlock Maharashtra came into force in Maharashtra on 7 June

Mumbai moves to Level 2 but restrictions will not be eased



Team Absolute | Mumbai

Although the Covid-19 positivity rate has declined in Mumbai, the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) has decided against easing restrictions in the city for the time being. Civic chief Iqbal Singh Chahal on Friday issued fresh orders stating that Mumbai will continue to observe restrictions means for Level 3 areas although it has moved to Level 2. Chahal said the city will be under Level 3 rules till the cases come down to 200-300 per day. As many as 696 fresh infections were recorded in Mumbai on Friday. The BMC stated the weekly positivity rate in the metropolis has come down to 4.4% and oxygen bed occupancy is at 27.12%. BMC's order is in follow up of this state government order which enabled all local authorities to take their call on easing the restrictions further of making them stricter as per their situation. A detailed five-level plan to unlock Maharashtra came into force in Maharashtra on 7 June, providing relief to the residents and traders in

areas where Covid-19 cases have dipped considerably. As per the state government's plan, the easing of restrictions in a phased manner is being implemented based on the positivity rate and occupancy of oxygenated beds in districts and cities. The public health department is required to declare the positivity rate and oxygen beds occupancy percentage for each district every Thursday. The government has defined "Level 1" areas as having a positivity rate of less than 5% and occupancy of oxygenated beds should be below 25%. "Level 2" will include areas with a positivity rate below 5% and oxygenated bed occupancy between 25% and 40%. For "Level 3", the areas will be required to have a positivity rate between 5% and 10% or oxygenated bed occupancy of more than 40%. Further in "Level 4", the positivity rate should be between 10% and 20% or oxygen bed occupancy of more than 60%. To be categories in "Level 5", the strictest level, areas will be required to have a positivity rate of more than 20% or occupancy of oxygen beds should be more than 75%.

Maharashtra HSC Result 2021:

Government Permits 'All Pass', Criteria Soon

Following the cancellation of HSC or Class 12 final exams, the Maharashtra Government on Friday permitted the state education board to pass all students.

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Following the cancellation of HSC or Class 12 final exams, the Maharashtra Government on Friday permitted the state education board to pass all students. School Education Minister Varsha Gaikwad said the board has been permitted to promote students on the basis of internal assessments. "Following the cancellation of state board exams for Std XIIth due to the pandemic, government has permitted the board to pass ALL Std XIIth students based on internal assessments," Gaikwad tweeted.

The criteria for evaluation will be announced soon, the minister said. "All students will pass based on an internal assessment. The criteria for internal evaluation will be announced by the State Board soon," Gaikwad added. Following the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE), the Maharashtra government on June 3 cancelled HSC or Class 12 final exams.



The Class 10 (SSC) board exams in the state were cancelled earlier due to a surge in Covid-19 cases. After cancellation, Gaikwad had said her department would soon announce decisions regarding the internal assessment system for students as well as policy for CET (Common Entrance Test for admissions) and other entrance examinations. "The Maharashtra government has announced cancellation of Class 12 exams today. The school education department will soon announce its decisions regarding internal assessment as well as policy for CET and other entrance examinations," Gaikwad had said in a video message.

Sources in the government said that the total COVID-19 deaths tally can go further so each day and new death figures will be added in the total COVID-19 death tally of the state government.

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The Maharashtra health department revised its total COVID-19 death toll by adding up more than 10,693 deaths in the total tally of COVID-19 fatalities deaths across the state. The total deaths in Maharashtra were calculated 1,06,367 since the outbreak of the pandemic. However, the opposition BJP alleged that the Maharashtra government concealed these death numbers and now in the name of technical glitches they are adding up now. Leader of Opposition Devendra Fadnis said that he was warning the Maharashtra government not to conceal any positive cases or the deaths as well.

"This is not the issue of pride or insult, but the transparency is very important to fight against this deadly virus. I have also written several occasions to the government to be transparent during the

Maharashtra government revises its total COVID-19 death tally, adds more than 10,000 fatalities



pandemic," Fadnis said. Sources in the government said that the total COVID-19 deaths tally can go further so each day and new death figures will be added in the total COVID-19 death tally of the state government. According to the state health department, they collect data on positive cases and death tally from various government sources at various platforms. "Sometimes, the private hos-

pitals do not share the information about the positive cases and deaths caused by COVID-19 on time and that piled up data is later collaborated. So, it is not a deliberate attempt but it is part of the system. As and when they receive the information then it is immediately added in the total tally of the positive cases and deaths," said a health department official. "In the month of May, there were large numbers of positive cases and deaths and though administration was to maintain the daily data, they were busy making beds and other services to tackle the pandemic. Therefore, most of the left of the numbers are from May," said an official from the state health department. He added that the situation is normalized and therefore they have asked the local administration to verify and cross-check the given and left out information about the positive cases and deaths. Chief minister Uddhav Thackeray also said that the Maharashtra government will not hide any information related to COVID.

TMC ANNOUNCES ATTENDANCE ALLOWANCE FOR STUDENTS



The administration in Maharashtra's Thane city has decided to disburse an attendance allowance of Rs 1,200 every six months to students of civic-run schools.

Thane: In a bid to encourage children to attend online classes, the administration in Maharashtra's Thane city has decided to disburse an attendance allowance of Rs 1,200 every six months to students of civic-run schools, an official said on Friday. The decision was taken in a joint meeting between mayor Naresh Mhaske, Thane Municipal Corporation (TMC) commissioner Dr Vipin Sharma, officials of the education department among others, the official said. The money will be transferred directly into the bank account of students every six months, deputy municipal commissioner Sandeep Malavi said. Students who attend classes for at least 20 days in a month will be eligible to get the allowance, and they will lose out on the same, if they fail to attend classes, he said. At least 30,000 students of civic-run schools will benefit from the scheme, Malavi added.

THREE VILLAGES IN NANDURBAR DISTRICT VACCINATE ALL IN 45-PLUS AGE GROUP

Falling in one of Maharashtra's backward and tribal dominant area, Sind Gavhan, Purushottamnagar and Sagali villages achieved this record with the help of joint efforts made by the local administration and the elected representatives, it added.

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Dispelling misconceptions and rumours related to immunisation, three villages in Nandurbar district have achieved 100 per cent vaccination of the 45-plus age group, a release from the district administration said on Thursday. Falling in one of Maharashtra's backward and tribal dominant area, Sind Gavhan, Purushottamnagar and Sagali villages achieved this record with the help of joint efforts made by the local administration and the elected representatives, it added. The people in tribal-dominated Nandurbar were initially reluctant about vaccination as they believed that it could cause Covid-19, and that people would die from side effects. But "a multi-level public



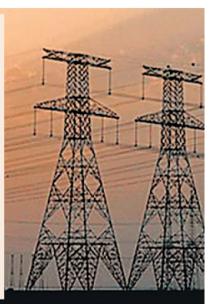
awareness drive to clear all misconceptions achieved desired results," the release said. Additional CEO of zilla parishad, Shekhar Roudal, district collector, MP, MLAs and senior leaders visited these villages and established a dialogue with the people. Later, audio clips - busting the myths about vaccination - recorded in tribal languages were circulated. Village elders were also roped in to deliver the message. Roudal said that while vaccination numbers have hit 80 per cent in a few villages, it is more than 50 per cent in the remaining 30 to 40 villages. Purushottamnagar in Shahada taluka was the first in the district to achieve 100 per cent vaccination for the 45-plus age group. In all, 431 people above 45 years in Sindgavhan village have been vaccinated.

Electricity bill won't be waived off in Maharashtra: Raut

Team Absolute | Mumbai

There will be no waiver on electricity bills for people in Maharashtra, clarified State Energy Minister Nitin Raut on Friday, asserting that the bills have to be paid. Speaking to reporters here Raut said, "Electricity bill will not be waived off in Maharashtra, it will have to be paid. It is the work of Central Government and State Government... whenever the Central Government takes a decision, the State Government will support it. It will then work to provide relief to the people." Raut's remarks came at a meeting held at the Maharashtra State Electricity Distribution Company Limited (MSEDCL) Joint Managing Director's Office on Friday. The minister asked the MSEDCL to ensure quality services to the consumers while prioritising to keep power supply smooth.

Electricity bill will not be waived off in Maharashtra, it will have to be paid. It is the work of Central Government and State Government... whenever the Central Government takes a decision, the State Government will support it. It will then work to provide relief to the people.



He directed MSEDCL to ensure uninterrupted power supply to all customers without any delay. In view of the problems that may arise, the system should be more vigilant in preparing for the immediate solution, said the minister. He further directed MSEDCL to immediately dispose off complaints received from customers, adding that providing quality services to

the customers is an important responsibility of the system, warning that no negligence would be tolerated.

He also directed the state-run power company to submit work report on a monthly basis. Last year, the Maharashtra Energy Ministry and MSEDCL received severe criticism from the opposition and the people of the state over inflated electricity bills.

LEOPARD HUNTS PET DOG IN NASHIK, TERRIFYING VIDEO GOES VIRAL

Nashik: A terrifying moment of a leopard hunting a dog was captured on camera in a village in Maharashtra. The incident happened in the Bhuse village of Maharashtra's Nashik district in the wee hours of Friday. The CCTV footage of the incident shows a pet dog sleeping at the doorstep of a house. Few seconds into the video, a leopard sneaks into the house and approaches the sleeping dog. The leopard attacks the dog and runs away with it, grabbing it in its mouth by the neck. The video has gone viral on social media, racking up more than 29,000 views. Netizens had mixed reactions to the video. One user said, "Survival of the fittest." Another wrote, "Raw nature. The owners should've kept their pet indoors."



A third user added, "This is what happens when cities start settling in the forest." Yet another posted, "Encroaching the forests and rampantly increasing estate as if humans are the only living beings that can exist on the planet. There will be repercussions of all these deeds humans are doing. Tomorrow if not today." In February, a stray dog got stuck with a leopard inside a toilet in Bilnele village under Puttur taluk of Dakshin Kannada district of Karnataka for at least 7 hours. The leopard had chased the dog into a toilet after which locals locked them inside and informed the forest officials. Villagers and officials took photos and videos of the animals from the toilet's window after removing the asbestos sheets. The forest department officials tried to catch the leopard by using nets, tranquiliser but the leopard managed to escape. Later, the dog was rescued safely.

HIGH COURT INITIATES JUDICIAL PROBE INTO MUMBAI BUILDING COLLAPSE



At least 12 people, including eight children, were killed and seven others injured after two floors of a three-storey residential building collapsed on an adjoining single-storey house at Malwani in suburban Mumbai late on Wednesday night.

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The Bombay High Court has initiated a judicial inquiry into the building collapse incident in Malwani area of Mumbai, which claimed 12 lives.

It said that the incident proved that there existed absolute lawlessness in the municipal wards in Mumbai as well as its adjoining areas. At least 12 people, including eight children, were killed and seven others injured after two floors of a three-storey residential building collapsed on an adjoining single-storey house at Malwani in suburban Mumbai late on Wednesday night.

A bench of Chief Justice Dipankar Datta and Justice GS Kulkarni directed the inquiry commissioner to submit the preliminary report of the incident by June 24.

The bench said that it had been immensely pained by the incident, in which eight innocent children lost their lives.

The court said that those in-charge of the concerned municipal ward must be held accountable. It further noted that between May 15 and June 10 this year, four incidents of building collapse were reported in Mumbai and its adjoining areas, in which a total of 24 people died. "What is happening? How many lives will be lost? What type of

buildings are these? Were they identified as dangerous or illegal, but not demolished or were they not identified?" the high court said. "You (municipal authorities) can't play with lives of people. We have to hold those in-charge of the concerned ward responsible. Eight innocent children died on the first day of the rains," it said.

The high court said that there was no will among the civic officials to check the instances of illegal construction, or to demolish illegal structures. "This is nothing but lawlessness. You can realise the pain we are facing due to the death of people, including innocent children," the high court said. "This pain should also be felt by the corporators. We are shocked. This is a man-made disaster and nothing else. Every monsoon it has to happen. Why it cannot be prevented?" the high court asked.

The bench was presiding over a PIL that it had initiated suo motu (on its own) last year following an incident of building collapse at Bhiwandi in Thane district. While the PIL was not scheduled initially for a hearing on Friday, the bench sought its production after taking suo motu cognisance of the Malwani incident.

The high court will continue the hearing on June 24.



WILL LEAVE NO STONE UNTURNED FOR POSSIBLE THIRD WAVE OF CORONA: CM

Team Absolute | Bhopal Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan and Union Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas & Steel Dharmendra Pradhan on Saturday dedicated a 200-bed oxygenated temporary Covid hospital and laid the foundation stone of Oxygen Bottling and Refilling Plant near Bharat Oman Refinery at Bina in Sagar. Chouhan said that we will leave no stone unturned for the possible third wave of Corona. For this, all arrangements are being made in advance. In this sequence, the hospital was dedicated in Bina.



are being ensured. He said that this hospital has been developed as a precautionary measure and we pray to God that no such need arises for this hospital.

Chouhan said that in this sequence, bottling and refilling plant is being constructed in collaboration with Bina Refinery, so that necessary oxygen will be available for the treatment of Corona infection. Also, oxygen cylinders can be sent to other places through refilling and Madhya Pradesh will be self-sufficient in terms of oxygen.

Chouhan said that Corona infection is now under control in Madhya Pradesh. Today the state's Corona positivity rate is 0.46 percent. There are 24 districts of the state where not a single case of Corona has been reported today. As of today, there are three cases in Sagar and 15 in entire Bundelkhand but we should neither be reckless nor must we stop taking precautions.

Rather, we must continue to adopt consistent Covid Appropriate Behavior i.e. behavior to prevent Covid infection, which includes wearing mask, using sanitizer or soap, not forming crowds and get vaccinated.

Chouhan said that this is the time to show restraint and patience. At present, no big events such as weddings, religious rituals and other programmes can be organized. Infection spreads only due to carelessness and laxity. Only restraint and precautions will come in handy in preventing infection. He said that media should also play its role in educating the public. Along with this, Corona warriors should also make the public aware. Chouhan said that it is necessary for everyone to follow the rules under the present circumstances.

Chouhan gave three measures to prevent Corona infection which includes the active cooperation of the government, the public and the Crisis Management Committee. He said that in future also active cooperation of Crisis Management Committee is required. He said that the government has set a target of conducting 80 thousand tests per day. After Corona testing, positive and suspected persons are being immediately isolated in Covid Care Centers. Similarly, door-to-door surveys and fever clinics under Kill Corona campaign has also helped in controlling the infection.

Chouhan and Pradhan inspected the hospital and held discussion with officials and doctors regarding the arrangements. Chouhan said that initially a 200 oxygen-bedded hospital has been started. Number of beds will be increased as per need. Chouhan sought detailed information about the availability of medicines, oxygen, beds, injections, paramedical staff etc. in the hospital. Seven wards have been created in the hospital, in which 6 wards have 30 beds each and one ward has 20 beds. Doctors, paramedical staff will be available round the clock in all the wards. The hospital premises has a Pathology lab, X-ray machine for all types of tests and mess for nutritious food.

A fever clinic and a vaccination center will also be operated in the hospital. Patients suffering from cold, cough, fever will be examined and Corona infection will be tested. Along with this, the work of vaccination will be conducted in the hospital.



Southwest monsoon arrives ahead of normal course

Orange alert for 6 districts as monsoon set to advance, while another yellow alert forecasting a "thunderstorm with lightning and lightning falls" has been sounded for isolated places in five divisions including Indore, Gwalior and Chambal.

Team Absolute | Bhopal Southwest Monsoon arrived in Madhya Pradesh on Thursday, seven days ahead of its normal course, prompting the Indian Meteorological Department (IMD) to issue an alert for districts in Jabalpur and Shahdol divisions. Last time, monsoon arrived so early in the state was in 2013. Last year, monsoon hit the state on June 13. Several

parts of the state, including Bhopal, Jabalpur and Gwalior received showers in the last 24 hours, said PK Saha, senior meteorologist of IMD Bhopal. "The northern limit of monsoon passes through Betul and Mandla districts of Madhya Pradesh. With this, monsoon reached parts of the state. Usually, the advent of monsoon takes place on June 17, however, this is for the first time in recent memory that it has hit the state seven days ahead," Saha said. Saha further said though southwest monsoon did not spread (advance) on Saturday in Madhya Pradesh, it is going to advance in the state in the next 24 hours. Southwest monsoon had covered entire Jabalpur and Hoshangabad divisions, large parts of Indore and Shahdol divisions and some parts of Bhopal and Sagar divisions on Friday, a day after its onset in some parts of MP, the senior officer said.

Large parts of Madhya Pradesh received rains in the last 24 hours, Saha said, adding Devri in Sagar district in eastern MP and Nasrullaganj at Sehore district in western MP recorded 113 mm and 106 mm rainfall, respectively in the last 24 hours ending 8.30 am on Saturday. The department has issued orange and yellow alerts, which are valid till Friday morning. An orange alert has been issued with a forecast of heavy rain, thunderstorm, lightning and gusty winds at the speed of 30 to 40 KMPH for isolated places in districts of Jabalpur and Shahdol divisions, while similar prediction has been made for six districts, including Betul and Khandwa, it was stated. A yellow alert of thunderstorms with lightning and wind gusts at the speed of 30 to 40 KMPH has been issued for isolated places in Bhopal, Sagar and Gwalior and two other divisions, and nine districts including will witness similar weather conditions, the IMD said.

Data Points At Possible Undercounting Of Covid Deaths In State

Team Absolute | Bhopal Indicating a possible massive undercounting in COVID-19 deaths in Madhya Pradesh, the number of reported deaths in the state during the second wave of the pandemic was over three times more than the average number of deaths reported during these months in pre-Covid times. However, the official figures for Covid deaths are only a fraction of these excess deaths reported. According to data from the Civil Registration System, which was first accessed by journalist Rukmini S, 59,000 deaths were reported on an average in Madhya Pradesh, in the April-May period

of 2018 and 2019. However, during these two months this year, which also marked the peak of the second wave, 2.3 lakh deaths were reported in the state. This marks a 290 per cent increase compared to the average deaths in these months during pre-Covid times. Most of these 1.74 lakh excess deaths were reported in May (1.3 lakh deaths). However, the government's data on Covid deaths for April and May show that only 4,100 people died of Covid in Madhya Pradesh in these two months. This is only a fraction of the excess deaths reported during this time, raising the question of whether Madhya Pradesh is possibly undercounting Covid deaths. This is not the first time that ques-

THIS IS NOT THE FIRST TIME THAT QUESTIONS HAVE BEEN RAISED ABOUT MADHYA PRADESH'S COVID DEATHS DATA

tions have been raised about Madhya Pradesh's Covid deaths data. Absolute India had earlier reported that in April this year, in Bhopal district alone, figures compiled from crematoriums and cemeteries showed that 3,811 people with Covid had died. However, government data showed only 104 Covid deaths in the district in April. The Madhya Pradesh government did not immediately respond to requests for a comment. On Thursday, Bihar's massive revision in its Covid deaths figure to over 9,000 became controversial with a 72 per cent jump, raising more questions. Because of Bihar's update, India reported 6,148 new deaths that day, the highest single-day spike.

Heavy rain lashes Bhopal, 4 persons trapped after tree falls on eatery

While three persons have been rescued, one person was trapped till filing this report. The injured are undergoing treatment at Hamdia Hospital in critical condition.

Bhopal: Four persons trapped after a tree uprooted and fell on a roadside eatery on Saturday evening. While three of them have been rescued, one was trapped, till filing this report. Rescue operation is on the incident took place at Bhopal Talkies square. The heavy rains coupled with strong winds lashed the city. Many trees were uprooted and many localities also witnessed waterlogging. The heavy rainfall also led to a disruption in Power supply in the area. Though identities of victims are yet to be established, officials of Bhopal Municipal Corporation said the injured were undergoing treatment at Hamdia Hospital in critical condition. BMC officials said that there were four persons including two customers and two employees present at the shop, when a tree uprooted and fell on it. On getting information, a rescue team of BMC officials and police rushed to the spot and started the rescue operation.



Congress ka hath, Pakistan ke sath: CM Chouhan

Bhopal: The Bhartiya Janata Party on Saturday launched a scathing attack on senior Congress leader and former Madhya Pradesh chief minister Digvijaya Singh after his alleged audio clip surfaced on social media. In the alleged audio clip, Singh is heard saying the Congress party has to have a relook at the decision of abrogation of article 370. The comment of Singh was revealed in an alleged clubhouse audio chat released by BJP IT cell leader Amit Malviya, drawing BJP's ire. BJP leaders alleged Congress party of propagating Pakistan's agenda in India. Chief minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan said 'Congress ka Hath Pakistan ke sath. "What they (Congress party) will re-think? Do they want impose Article 370 in Kashmir to promote separatism or patronize terrorism? They (Congress party) speak exactly what Pakistan

wants them to speak. Sonia Gandhi will have to clear her party's stand," Chouhan said in a video clip that was released on his twitter page. Singh made this alleged comment while replying to a query by a Pakistan origin journalist while participating as a speaker in clubhouse audio chat. "The decision of Revoking article 370 and reducing statehood of j&k (Jammu and Kashmir) is an extremely sad decision and the Congress party would certainly have to have a re-look on the decision," Digvijaya Singh is heard saying in the alleged audio chat. Senior BJP leader and state minister Vishvas Sarang said that Kashmir is an integral part of India. "It is very unfortunate comments of Singh. It is an act of sedition. If anybody would try to harm the unity and integrity of the country, strict action would be taken against him," Sarang told journalists.



OVER 300 COVID VACCINATION SITES CLOSED IN INDORE

Several vaccination centers were closed in Indore from Thursday due to the shortage of vaccines, however, the Health Department was able to get only 11,000 vaccines, after which only nine vaccine centers were opened instead of 350 centres, that too for the administration of the second doses only.

Team Absolute | Indore

Due to a shortage of vaccines in Indore, district health authorities on Friday opened only nine vaccination centres out of 350 for administering the second dose of Covid vaccine to beneficiaries. Several vaccination centers were closed in Indore from Thursday due to the shortage of vaccines, however, the Health Department was able to get only 11,000 vaccines, after which only nine vaccine centers were opened instead of 350 centres, that too for the admin-



istration of the second doses only. Dr Tarun Gupta, Immunization Incharge, Health

Department while talking to media persons said, "According to the amount of stock we had, we have put it at nine centers today for the second dose. Yesterday we had run out of vaccines, today we have got 11,000 vaccines so that tomorrow we will give a second dose to 30 centers. Vaccine stock is expected to be received by Monday." "We have received around 11,000 doses of Covaxin yesterday which will be utilized for the second dose of the vaccination to people of age group above 45 years old and 18 above. They can take their second dose in

these two to three days. The campaign is especially for the second dose of vaccine," he added. However, those who came for the first dose of vaccine were asked to come later by the authorities. Arti Kumari, a local who came for the first dose of vaccine said, "I came for vaccination but the authorities told me to come tomorrow." While Veeru Pawar another local said, "The authorities said the doctor is not here and the vaccine is also finished. I sell vegetables, we have been told to get vaccinated otherwise we would not be allowed to sell vegetables."

Crisis Management Group of the state is being seen as a model in the country

CM INAUGURATES 300 BEDDED COVID-19 CENTRE AT BUDHNI

BUDHNI'S COVID CARE CENTRE WILL BE EQUIPPED WITH MODERN FACILITIES

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan and Union Petroleum Minister Dharmendra Pradhan inaugurated 300-bedded temporary Covid Centre at Budhni in Sehore district. Chouhan said that we only pray that no one may need to come to this hospital and the third wave of corona does not come. Chouhan said that we have to take all precautions to prevent a possible third wave of corona. For this, everyone will have to wear a mask, follow a distance of two yards and it is necessary to get the vaccine of Covid. Nevertheless, if there is a crisis, we have to prepare for it, only for this the hospital has been built. Chouhan said that we are conducting about 80 thousand tests daily, out of which more than 1500 tests are being done daily in Sehore. Corona is under control but don't be careless. Due to negligence, the second wave of Corona hit and there will be serious consequences if we do not learn even now. He said that the government entrusted the responsibility to the Management Crisis Group and the public, as a result of that we could control Corona. Chief Minister said that the system of Crisis Management Groups in Madhya Pradesh from district to village and ward level is being seen as a model to fight against corona in the country. The government will continuously do more and more tests, treatment will be provided immediately after the identification of the patient. With this we will be able to eliminate Corona soon. Chouhan said that the Kill Corona campaign will continue. The Crisis Management Group will make the public aware about the prevention from Corona. Do not crowd, get vaccinated, apply mask, keep distance, people have to follow Covid appropriate behaviour. Chouhan said that people should show restraint and patience. If the third wave is to be stopped, then the public will have to cooperate. We can stop this only with everyone's cooperation. Chouhan said that vaccination must be done. The vaccine itself gives protection against this epidemic. Chief Minister thanked Prime Minister Narendra Modi from his heart for the decision to conduct the vaccination at the national level. He said that at the time of need of oxygen, the central government airlifted and sent oxygen to the state. Chouhan said that under the able leadership of PM Modi, we have been able to stop the second wave of corona virus. Pradhan said that Madhya Pradesh has succeeded in controlling corona under the able leadership of Shri Shivraj Singh Chouhan. The model of Crisis Management Group of Madhya Pradesh is exemplary. Chief Minister Chouhan inspected the arrangements of Covid Care Centre and Covid Care Centre Budhni has hospital like facilities. This centre will be of 300 beds, in which 100 beds will be oxygen rich. Keeping in mind the possible third wave of corona, this centre has been prepared, in which all necessary arrangements have been made. The centre has a separate 50-bed ward for children. Covid Care Hospital is divided into two parts, which will have 144 beds in A and B blocks. Apart from this, a separate OPD ward of 12 beds has also been made. Special care has been taken so that the patients of Covid coming here can get better facilities. The twelve bedded OPD will be convenient for the patients coming for the health check-up. Keeping in view the convenience of the patients and relatives visiting here, separate booths have been made for the smooth operation of the hospital. Administration room, nurse room, doctors room, store room have all been made separately. Along with this other facilities include help desk, security, police, CCTV, central AC system, fire fighting, electrical system etc.

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INDIAN SIM CARDS USED IN CHINA FOR FRAUDS UNDER LENS

Revealing the shocking fact, Han, a 36-year-old Chinese national who has been a wanted criminal in India, informed the agencies that he has so far taken around 1,300 Indian SIM cards to China using fake documents from India since 2010.

Rajnish Singh | New Delhi

Indian agencies are engaged in getting details of 1,300 SIM cards as they were being used by a gang of Chinese to hack accounts and commit financial frauds, a suspected activity of a Chinese intelligence agency. All the telecom operators are learnt to have been directed to report to the agencies concerned soon after they find any suspicious link related to any SIM cards being operated from outside India, said a source. Han, through his associates, used to hide the SIM cards in undergarments and send these to China. "These SIM cards were used to hack accounts and to do other financial frauds," said the Border Security Force (BSF) who arrested the suspected Chinese spy who allegedly sneaked into Indian territory crossing India-Bangladesh border in West Bengal's Malda district. "The purpose was to cheat people using SIM cards to get their money out of money transaction machines," said the BSF, which is responsible to guard 4,096 km India-Bangladesh border. The agencies have also raided the hotel of the Chinese national which he has been running from Gurugram named "Star Spring" where some of his colleagues from China were working. A resident of Chinese city of Hubei, Han entered Bangladesh on June 2. From interrogation and his recovered passport, it was



As per the information, the agencies have sought from the telecom operators to make a list of all Indian SIM cards being operated from China since 2010.

The move comes after the agencies learnt that 1,300 SIM cards were used to hack accounts and to commit other financial frauds. The revelation comes after Han Junwe, a Chinese intruder arrested on Thursday, told the agencies about it during his interrogation.

learnt that Han reached Dhaka on June 2 on a business visa and stayed there with a Chinese friend. On June 8, he came to Sona Masjid in Chapainawabganj district (Bangladesh) and stayed in a hotel there, the statement said, adding he was trying to enter Indian territory today (Thursday) when he was caught by the BSF troopers. During interrogation, the Chinese said that even before this he has come to India four times. He had come to

Hyderabad in 2010 and Delhi-Gurugram thrice after 2019. He visited India more than four times. On further questioning, Han said when he had gone to his hometown Hubei, one of his business partner Sun Jiang used to send him 10-15 numbers of Indian mobile phone SIMs after a few days, which were received by him and his wife. But a few days ago, his business partner was caught by the Anti-Terrorist Squad from Lucknow.



Uttar Pradesh mulls to develop wetlands as tourist spots

Lucknow | Agencies

Uttar Pradesh is planning to develop its main wetlands as tourism, academic, recreation and water sports activities hubs.

These include eight wetlands, designated as wetlands of worldwide significance (Ramsar Websites).

UP has the maximum variety of Ramsar websites among the many 42 in India.

The eight wetlands of worldwide significance in UP include Higher Ganga River (Bulandshahr), Sarsai Nawar Jheel (Etawah), Saman Fowl

Sanctuary (Mainpuri), Sandi Fowl Sanctuary (Hardoi), Samaspur Fowl Sanctuary (Rae Bareilly), Parvati Arga Fowl Sanctuary (Gonda), Nawabganj bird sanctuary (Unnao) and Sur Sarovar (Agra).

According to a government spokesman, "As a result of efforts of the forest and other departments of UP, a number of wetlands have been designated as wetlands of worldwide significance.

The primary website to get this standing was the Higher Ganga River in 2005 and until 2019, this was the only one Ramsar website in UP. Today we have eight such sites."

These parks are wealthy in biodiversity. The wetlands are home to many vegetation (terrestrial and aquatic) and animals (terrestrial, aquatic, amphibians, reptiles, birds, bugs).

The state authorities additionally plan to develop them as locations for nature lovers and vacationers," he said.

The event plan consists of the development of roads for straight-forward accessibility, boarding and lodging amenities, motion across the space, leisure actions like boating and water sports activities and on-line amenities.

Child marriages on the rise in Tamil Nadu amid Covid

Team Absolute | Chennai

With the Covid pandemic creating a financial crisis and parents finding it difficult to make ends meet, girls under the marriageable age are being married off in the state. A study conducted by the NGO Child Rights and You (CRY) found that child marriage is rampant in the districts of Dharmapuri, Salem, Ramanathapuram and Dindigul in the state. The study states that there could be a higher number of child marriages in these districts that had witnessed 318 cases of child marriage in May 2020, a whopping 40 percent increase from May 2019.

The month of May is considered most auspicious for marriages in Tamil Nadu and the figures for May 2021 are yet to be compiled. However, there was a worrying trend in the number of girls



getting married off citing poverty of parents and other reasons. According to CRY, in May 2019 Salem district

recorded 60 child marriages while in May 2020 the figure was 98. Dharmapuri district had 150 cases in May 2019 and in May 2020 the figure was 192.

In the 2011 census it was reported that in Tamil Nadu, 8.26% of girls in the age group of 6-19 were married off. Statistics show that Dharmapuri (11.6%) and Salem (10.9%) are the two districts with the highest number of child marriages.

M Jayam, Director, Salem People's Trust working in Dharmapuri and Salem districts, told IANS, "Most of the parents don't have any cash and they find that during the lockdown period they can conduct the marriage cheaply. Marriages are held spending less than Rs 20000 and parents cite this as an excuse to marry off the girl."

She said that more than the tribal hamlets in these districts, the study by her organization at the grassroot level found that the urban areas are more prone to these child marriages.



Markets with live wild animals create utmost risk for human health: Lancet

New York | Agencies

After finding a link between Covid-19 and a seafood market in China's Wuhan, many governments around the world have pushed for the closing of so-called "wet markets". While the origins of the virus are still unknown, a widespread shuttering of all wet markets could have the unintended consequences of disrupting critical food supply chains, stimulating an unregulated black market for animal products, and stoking xenophobia and anti-Asian sentiment, said researchers from Princeton University in New Jersey, US.

The paper, published in the journal The Lancet Planetary Health, found that the markets that sell live animals carry the greatest risks to human health and biodiversity, especially if they are selling live wild animals -- which are connected to emerging infectious diseases. These are the markets that policymakers should target as they attempt to mitigate future infectious disease outbreaks, the researchers said. Targeting these markets would also prevent disruptions to local food supply chains while reducing human health and biodiversity dangers. On the other hand, a majority of the

Markets selling live wild animals pose the greatest risk to human health and biodiversity, say researchers while arguing against the blanket ban on "wet markets" around the world.

informal markets, which specialise in fresh meat, seafood, and other perishable items in open-air settings, pose little risk to human health or biodiversity.

"In the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic, many nations temporarily shut down their wet markets, but that's not going to last -- eventually some will be opened up while others will be more closely regulated or closed altogether," said David S. Wilcove from the Princeton's Center for Policy Research on Energy and the Environment. "Our work presents a way to tell which ones are worth focusing on for tighter regulation or closure," he added.

Further, the researchers also emphasised that these markets alone are not solely responsible for global pandemics. Instead, they represent one node of zoonotic transmission potential along the global wildlife trade supply chain.

INDONESIA'S MT. MERAPI SPEWS HOT CLOUDS UP TO 2 KM

Jakarta:

Indonesia's most active volcano, Mount Merapi has emitted hot clouds three times up to 2 km into the sky from its peak, according to the Geological Disaster Technology Research and Development Centre. The first hot clouds were erupted at 8.11 a.m. on Friday to as high as 2,000 metres for 167 seconds and the next hot clouds were flowing at 8.18 a.m. to 1,500 metres high for 99 seconds, reports Xinhua news agency. The third eruption of hot clouds were streaming down at 10.38 a.m. for 127 seconds. Located between Yogyakarta and Central Java provinces, the status of the 2,968-metre high volcano is currently at its third level of danger. The centre has urged people not to move to the dangerous zone within a radius of 3 km from the volcano's peak and to stay away of rivers that flow from Merapi, such as Kuning, Boyong, Bedog, Krasak, Bebeng and Putih rivers. The volcano's 2010 eruption killed more than 200 people and forced hundreds of thousands to flee their homes. Indonesia has 127 active volcanoes and about 5 million people within the danger zones.



Low base: India's pharma sector growth accelerates in May

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Low base effect accelerated the growth of India's pharma sector in May, India Ratings and Research (Ind-Ra) said. The ratings agency opined that the 47.8 per cent YoY growth in India's pharmaceutical market (IPM) during May 2021 was led by a low base effect. Last year, the IPM declined by 8.5 per cent YoY in May 2020 due to the lockdown. "IPM growth would have been stronger on an adjusted basis," Ind-Ra said in a statement. "Acute therapies namely anti-infective, analgesics and vitamins benefited significantly due to the second Covid wave as these therapies have a direct/indirect role in the treatment of Covid patients. Acute therapy growth was also aided by the low base in May 2020." As per the report, during May 2021, volumes grew 31.5 per cent YoY, price growth was 7 per cent and products launches were at 9.3 per cent, attributed to acute therapy products. "Ind-Ra estimates the market to grow 8-



10 per cent YoY in size during FY22." Besides, it cited that acute therapies such as anti-infectives, analgesic and vitamins witnessed sales growth of 141.19 per cent YoY, 50.3 per cent YoY and 59.8 per cent YoY respectively, while gastro grew 47.7 per cent YoY during May 2021. "Growth under-performance was observed in chronic therapies during the month, with cardiac and anti-diabetic growing 31 per cent YoY and 20.2 per cent YoY, respectively." "However, on a moving average total (MAT) May 2021 basis, a growth out-performance was observed across these therapies."

Covid lockdowns cut NOx emissions, global ozone by 15%: NASA

Washington | Agencies

As the coronavirus pandemic slowed global commerce to a crawl in early 2020, emissions of nitrogen oxides (NOx) -- which create ozone, a threat to human health and to climate -- decreased by 15 per cent globally, according to a study led by scientists at NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory in southern California. As a result of the lower NOx emissions, by June 2020, global ozone levels had dropped to a level that policymakers thought would take at least 15 years to reach by conventional means, such as regulations. The more stringent the lockdown a nation imposed, the greater the reduction in

emissions. For example, China's stay-at-home orders in early February 2020 produced a 50 per cent drop in NOx emissions in some cities within a few weeks; most US states achieved a 25 per cent drop later in the spring. The total result of the reduced NOx emissions was a 2 per cent drop in global ozone -- half the amount that the most aggressive NOx emission controls considered by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, the authoritative body of international experts on climate, were expected to produce over a 30-year period. Ozone reductions from the reduced NOx emissions quickly spread both around the globe and from the sur-

face upward more than 10 kilometres. "I was really surprised at how large the impact on global ozone was. We expected more of a local response at the surface," said JPL scientist Jessica Neu, in a statement. However, both NOx emissions and global ozone will climb again as the world economy revs back up, revealed the findings published in the journal Science Advances. Ozone protects us from destructive solar radiation when it's high above Earth in the stratosphere. Ozone at the surface was estimated to cause 365,000 deaths globally in 2019 by damaging the lungs of vulnerable people, such as young children and those with asthma.

80% IN PATNA UNAWARE OF CLEAN AIR ACTION PLAN: SURVEY

Team Absolute | Patna

Majority of the people in Patna are not aware of air pollution, according to a survey conducted by the Centre for Environment and Energy Development (CEED) the report of which was released on Saturday.

The report said that 80 per cent of the people are not aware of Patna's Clean Air Action Plan, an initiative launched by the Bihar government in 2019.

Nearly 55 per cent are not satisfied with the steps taken by the respective departments and enforcement agencies to control air pollution in the city, it said.

The report indicated that



88 per cent of the people do not have an idea where to go and lodge any complaint on polluting sources or subsequent violations.

"The main objective of this public survey was to gauge the mood and per-

ception of the people on air pollution and its impact on public health. This study also presents the overall awareness of the people on various initiatives taken by the state government to contain air pollution," said

Ankita Jyoti, Senior Programme Officer at CEED.

The survey was conducted in March and April this year in the Patna urban agglomeration area covering suburban and central regions with directly interviewing cross-section of people to get a representative view of the city.

The results of the survey strongly favour the significant role of issuing health advisories because scientific evidences also suggest that air pollution is strongly linked to health risk.

Nearly 90 per cent of the respondents are of the view that regular health advisory is critical to reduce the exposure level especially during high pollution days.



RUSSIA-US TIES AT LOWEST POINT IN YEARS: PUTIN

Moscow | Agencies

Just days ahead of the much-awaited summit with his American counterpart Joe Biden, Russian President Vladimir Putin said that Russia-US relations were at their lowest point in years.

"We have a bilateral relationship that has deteriorated to its lowest point in recent years," Putin told NBC News in an interview on Friday which will be aired on June 14.

But he said that Biden is a career politician and there is hope that there will not be any impulse-based movements, TASS News Agency reported.

He "is radically different from (former US President Donald) Trump because President Biden is a career man. He has spent virtually his entire adulthood in politics"

"That's a different kind of person, and it is my great hope that yes, there are some advantages, some disadvantages, but there will not be any impulse-based movements, on behalf of the sitting US president," Putin said.

Meanwhile, he also denied a Washington Post story saying that Russia is preparing to supply Iran with



an advanced satellite that would enable Tehran to track military targets in the region, Xinhua news agency reported citing the NBC News interview. "It's just fake news," Putin told NBC News. "At the very least, I don't know anything about this kind of thing. Those who are speaking about it probably know more about it. It's just nonsense, garbage."

Biden, who is on the first foreign trip of his presidency to Europe, will meet Putin on June 16 in Geneva, Switzerland. Relations between Washington and Moscow have been

adversarial in recent years.

The two sides have obvious differences on issues related to Ukraine, cybersecurity, human rights, and US election interference.

In his Wednesday remarks to US troops and their families at Royal Air Force Mildenhall base in the UK, Biden said that Washington wants a stable and predictable relationship with Russia. "But I've been clear: The US will respond in a robust and meaningful way if the Russian government engages in harmful activities," he warned.

EGYPTIAN PREZ, SAUDI CROWN PRINCE DISCUSS REGIONAL ISSUES



Cairo: Egyptian President Abdel-Fattah el-Sisi and Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman discussed regional issues and bilateral relations during an in-person meeting. The meeting took place on Friday in Egypt's Red Sea resort city of Sharm El-Sheikh, reports Xinhua news agency. In a tweet on Friday, the President said: "Our meeting focused on discussing ways to develop joint relations between our two countries. Our visions on regional and international issues of common concern also coincided." The President hailed the relations between Egypt and Saudi Arabia.

Iran regains voting rights at UNGA

"I can confirm to you today that the Islamic Republic of Iran has paid the minimum amount due and is no longer under Article 19 of the UN Charter," Xinhua news agency quoted Farhan Haq, deputy spokesman for UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, as saying on Friday.

United Nations | Agencies

Iran has regained its voting rights at the UN General Assembly (UNGA) after a partial payment of its dues in arrears, a spokesman at the world body has confirmed. "I can confirm to you today that the Islamic Republic of Iran has paid the minimum amount due and is no longer under Article 19 of the UN Charter," Xinhua news agency quoted Farhan Haq, deputy spokesman for UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, as saying on Friday. Article 19 stipulates that a member state can no longer vote in the UNGA if it is at least two years in arrears for membership dues.

Majid Takht Ravanchi, the Iranian Ambassador to the UN, tweeted on Friday



that his country had to struggle for six months for payment of its dues as a result of US sanctions. "Illegal US sanctions have not just deprived our people of medicine; they have also prevented Iran from paying our dues in arrears to the UN. After more than six months of working on it, the UN today announced it has received the funds. All inhumane sanctions must be lifted now," he added.

In a letter dated May 28, Guterres had informed the UNGA that the Central African Republic, the Comoros, Iran, Sao Tome and Principe, and Somalia were at least two years in arrears.

Iran had to pay a minimum of \$16.25 million to regain its voting rights.

With Iran's payment, the country was allowed to vote in Friday's election of five non-permanent members of the Security Council.

Kim Jong-un chairs meeting to enhance army's fighting efficiency

Seoul | Agencies

North Korean leader Kim Jong-un chaired a meeting during which he discussed measures to further enhance the fighting efficiency of the armed forces, state media reported on Saturday.



Pyongyang's official Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) said that Kim presided over Friday's meeting of the 8th Central Military Commission of the WP, which was attended by members of the Central Military Commission, commanders of the services and corps commanders of the Korean People's Army and other members of the relevant departments. "The enlarged meeting set forth important tasks for further enhancing the fighting efficiency of the revolutionary

armed forces and bringing about a fresh turn in the overall work of national defence as required by the recent fast-changing situation around the Korean peninsula and the internal and external environment of our revolution and discussed the organisational issue," Xinhua news agency quoted the KCNA as saying.

At the meeting, Kim analysed the prevailing situation and the real state of the work of the army and indicated the strategic tasks to be permanently held fast to and the ways to developing the armed forces, the report said. The meeting also dealt with organisational issues of dismissing, transferring and newly appointing some commanding officers of the services and those of some units at corps level, according to the KCNA.

Pak budget focuses on CPEC, employment, poverty reduction

Islamabad | Agencies

Pakistan's budget for the next fiscal year (July 2021-June 2022) focuses on the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) and sustainable development goals (SDGs) for economic development, creation of employment opportunities and poverty alleviation.

Finance Minister Shaukat Tarin, who presented the budget in the National Assembly (NA) on Friday, said that the government will focus on the CPEC projects, including the Gwadar port and special economic zones (SEZs) to create jobs and push the growth wheel, reports Xinhua news agency.

Further tax relaxations will be given to investors interested in the SEZs under the CPEC, the Minister added. Tarin said that the government has proposed 9.3 billion PKR (\$59 million) for the development of the CPEC railway project Main Line-1 to improve



the North-South communication.

He proposed a total budget of 8,487 billion PKR for the financial year starting July 1, 2021 with a fiscal deficit of around 6.3 per cent of GDP, including 2,135 billion PKR for the public sector development program, increasing the funds by 37 per cent against the current year's development allocations.

The Minister added that the country would manage to get 1,246 billion PKR from foreign lenders and 2,417 billion PKR from locals while the government will also spend 3,060 billion PKR for

interest payments.

According to the proposed budget, Pakistan's defence service budget in the next fiscal year will be 1,370 billion PKR, 16 per cent of the total budget, a drop from the 18 per cent allocation in the previous budget. The government has also allocated a budget of \$1.1 billion to purchase Covid-19 vaccines to meet the target of inoculating 100 million people by June 2022.

Tarin said that the government has allocated special funds for hydropower projects, anti-carbon emission projects, tourism, special technology zones, public housing loans, agriculture development and power distribution.

Starting from June 14, the NA will start a debate on the proposed budget for the next 10 working days, after which it is likely to conduct voting to approve the budget on June 28.

Following the approval, the budget will be presented before the Senate or the upper house.

GUNMEN KILL 5 CIVILIANS IN KABUL

Kabul: At least five civilians were shot dead by unidentified gunmen in Kabul, police in the Afghan capital said on Saturday. Late Friday night, the victims were singled out by the gunmen from several vehicles carrying civilians from a wedding party and were kidnapped from the Arghand-e-Payyan area, the police said in a statement. They were shot dead at the same area shortly after kidnapping, reports Xinhua news agency. "Initial report says that the Taliban terrorist group might have carried out the shooting," the statement added. Those among the killed was Ghazi Uryakhil, a local elder, residents told local media.

CHINA'S MARS ROVER SENDS 1ST SELFIE, 'TOURING' GROUP PHOTOS

Beijing | Agencies

China has revealed new images from its Zhurong rover on Mars, including a beautiful selfie of the rover next to its landing platform.

The first batch of scientific images of the rover, the panoramic view of the landing site, the topography of Mars were released by the China National Space Administration (CNSA) on Friday, calling it "tour group photos". Zhurong joined NASA's Perseverance on Mars, making China the second country to land and operate a rover on the Red Planet.

The picture of the "touring group photo" shows the rover travelling about 10 metres south of the landing platform, releasing the separate camera installed at the bottom of the vehicle, and then retreating to the vicinity of

the landing platform.

"The separate camera took pictures of the movement of the rover and the photo of the rover and the landing platform. The image is transmitted to the rover through wireless signals, and then relayed back to the ground by the rover through the orbiter," CNSA said in a statement. China landed a probe on a planet other than Earth for the first time on May 15.

The Zhurong robot is due to study the planet's surface rocks and atmosphere. It will also look for signs of life, including any subsurface water or ice. The six-wheeled solar-powered Zhurong rover, resembles a blue butterfly and has a mass of 240 kg. It also has an expected lifespan of at least 90 Martian days (about three months on Earth). Barely a week after its arrival, Zhurong also sent back first footage from Mars -- two photos and two videos.

Israel to further ease entry restrictions

Tel Aviv | Agencies

Israel will further ease restrictions on the entry of foreign tourists starting from July 1, according to a statement issued by the country's Population and Immigration Authority.

Since March 2020, non-Israelis have been given permits to enter only if they are vaccinated or have recovered from Covid-19, and have a first-degree family member living in the country, reports Xinhua news agency.

Under the new decision signed on Friday by Interior Minister Aryeh Deri, following the decrease in Covid-19 morbidity and the increase in vaccination rate in many countries, non-Israelis from countries with a high vaccination rate will be allowed to enter Israel after a rapid procedure.

The decision was made after consultation with Health Minister Yuli Edelstein, Foreign Minister Gabi Ashkenazi and professionals at the



ministries. In another development on Friday, a joint statement issued by the Ministry of Health and the Prime Minister's Office said Israel will lift the ban on travel to Turkey, Ethiopia and Ukraine on June 14.

However, the travel ban from Israel to India, South Africa, Mexico, Brazil, Russia and Argentina will remain.

Israeli citizens and permanent residents who want to travel to the six countries must apply to an exceptions committee.

The government has also lifted the ban on the entry of non-essential escorts into the passenger terminal, and the obligation of airlines to operate a minimum number of check-in counters in each flight.

111 MILITANTS KILLED IN 24 HRS IN AFGHANISTAN

Kabul: At least 111 Taliban militants were killed in the last 24 hours across Afghanistan, the Ministry of Interior said in a statement.

"Following a series of government forces air and ground operations, 111 Taliban fighters have been killed and 79 others wounded in Wardak, Kandahar, Uruzgan, Zabul, Badghis, Faryab, Nimruz, Helmand, Takhar and Badakhshan provinces in the past 24 hours," Xinhua news agency quoted the Ministry statement issued on Friday as saying.

The forces also detected and foiled 12 explosive devices in different parts of the country, the statement added. The Interior Ministry however, did not say if there were any deaths among the security forces.

Since the official withdrawal of the US and other NATO troops in Afghanistan on May 1, the Taliban have intensified attacks on provincial capitals, districts, bases and checkpoints.

Tens of thousands of Afghans have been displaced in the past few weeks. The withdrawal of international troops is due to be completed by September 11 at the latest.



MORE MYANMAR SOLDIERS JOINING DEMOCRACY MOVEMENT

Kolkata | Agencies

More and more soldiers in Myanmar, fed up with the orders to shoot peaceful protesters since the February 1 coup, are in revolt mode and have joined the movement for restoring democracy in the country. IANS joined an online discussion organised by the civil society organisation Thanakha Global Alliance on Friday. Joining the discussion, two former military officers called on the movement to protect soldiers and officers who have joined the movement after refusing to obey orders to shoot innocents.

The officers preferred anonymity for fear of action against family members. One told the discussion that at least 800 military personnel, from Private (Sepoy) to Major, have joined the democracy movement.

They were aged between 20 and 35, clearly pointing to huge unease in the military rank and file over

the brutal suppression of the democracy movement after the military takeover.

Daw Miemie Winn Byrd, a retired US Army lieutenant colonel, Naw May Oo, a tactical adviser to Karen State-based ethnic armed group the Karen National Union, and former Myanmar military captains Nyi Thuta and Lin Htet Aung took part in the discussion.

Nyi Thuta blamed the Tatmadaw (military) leadership for dividing the people and rank-and-file members of the military.

Thuta called on the Burmese people not to hate all military personnel, but to focus on fighting the dictatorship. Of the Myanmar military's some 400,000 troops, only around 20 per cent are committing violence against the people, the former captain claimed.

Full-scale fighting between the entire military and the people as a whole would end up in massive bloodshed, he said, adding: "That

must be avoided at all cost."

"Under this system, the rank-and-file members of the military and their families are suffering as much as the people. We will be able to achieve victory with minimal losses if military personnel side with the people. So, the channels should be kept open to allow military personnel to join hands with the public," Thuta said.

Calls to shun military personnel and their families have been growing as part of a social punishment movement against the regime, which has killed more than 800 people since February.

Nyi Thuta said rank-and-file members of the military and their families are subject to oppression by the higher-ups and their families, and the majority do not have the option of walking away from their high-ranking bullies.

His fellow former captain Lin Htet Aung said many military personnel oppose the coup, but dare

not speak out because that would mean risking not only their lives but also of their families.

"They could be imprisoned for long terms if they publicly oppose the coup. Their lives would be at risk. Some officials who implied they stood by the people have been detained," he said. The CDM was made possible by the support of the people, and many more military personnel are expected to leave their barracks if people continue to support those wishing to join, he said. Miemie Winn Byrd, who served in the US Army for 28 years, said the sole duty of the armed forces is to protect the people. "Their duty is to protect the people. They should train to fight wars and defend their country, but not do business and politics. If they do, things will end up in chaos," Miemie Winn Byrd, who is of Burmese origin, said. IANS had previously reported some incidents of mutiny in April and May with both

lower ranking officers and soldiers refusing to shoot on protest rallies.

But the discussion participants pointed to large scale desertions from some units. "Soldiers who have lost near and dear ones during the indiscriminate shootings by the Tatmadaw are reacting sharply," a Burmese TV journalist said on the condition of anonymity. A retired major general, now running his own business, told IANS that "cracks have appeared in the top echelons of Tatmadaw as well. Many generals blame the whole crisis on chief Senior General Min Aung Hlaing and his Chinese backers." He added that the Tatmadaw has never been comfortable with "Chinese designs to turn Myanmar into a surrogate state." "Just a matter of time before a huge revolt engulfs the Tatmadaw. We want a professional army like India and not a political army like Pakistan which sells out the nation."

Canadian politician arrested for violating public health act

Ottawa | Agencies

Maxime Bernier, leader of People's Party of Canada, was arrested for violating a public health act in Manitoba province. Bernier was charged on Friday under the Public Health Act for attending a rally against Covid-19 restrictions in Manitoba and for failing to self-isolate once he got to the province, reports Xinhua news agency. Bernier was pulled out by police who handcuffed him and put him in the back seat of a vehicle of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police on his way to another event. Before his arrest, Bernier got a ticket for violating public health orders

at a rally earlier Friday.

He said he planned to fight it. Local police said Bernier

knew of the health act and has already received a ticket, and the continuation of the offense of violating the current



public health orders in Manitoba has resulted in his arrest. People's Party of Canada spokesperson Martin Masse said in a statement Bernier was "wrongfully arrested" on charges that violate his charter rights. CBC News reported. "This isn't about Covid anymore. It's political repression. This is the kind of stuff countries like China and Russia do," Masse said.

DESPITE PANDEMIC, UPWARD TREND AMONG TELANGANA STUDENTS PLANNING STUDY ABROAD



Hyderabad | Agencies

Despite the Covid-19 pandemic, there has been an upward trend in the number of stu-

dents from Telangana planning to study abroad. A survey by Mumbai-based Yocket, one of India's largest platforms for study abroad aspirants, found out that many students

who wanted to study abroad in 2020 but could not go due to travel restrictions and financial instability, have deferred their plans for 2021. The survey, based on a sample size of about 30,000 students from the state, found that 90 per cent of the students are keen to study abroad. Around 8,000 students went to study abroad from Telangana in 2019. The number went up by 17 per cent in 2020 and surprisingly there is a huge spike in the number of students to 62 per cent in 2021, as compared to 2019. The US, the UK and Canada are the most popular destinations for Telangana students. Over 90 per cent of the students are going to these three countries. Australia and European countries like Germany, the Netherlands and Ireland are also popular among the rest of the students. Computer Science is still the most popular course with about 50

per cent of students planning for it. Courses with a mix of management and technology like Management Information Systems (MIS) are also gaining popularity in recent years, as per the survey. Other popular courses range from Information Technology to varied engineering courses like Electrical Engineering, Mechanical Engineering, Civil Engineering, Industrial Engineering, Automobile Engineering, Aerospace Engineering, and Chemical Engineering. Yocket has also found out that the majority of the students from Telangana are planning to fund their education by the means of an education loan. About 55 per cent of students have preferred to take loans for their study abroad plans while 30 per cent of students are willing to arrange it by themselves and 15 per cent of students want a scholarship.

Google team uses AI to create next-gen chips faster than humans



Team Absolute | New Delhi

As the world faces acute semiconductor or chip shortage, a team of Google researchers is working on to design next-generation artificial-intelligence (AI) chips, and has created an AI model that allows chip design to be performed by artificial agents with more experience than any human designer. The new AI method utilises past experience to become better and faster at solving new instances of the problem. "Our method was used to design the next generation of Google's artificial intelligence (AI) accelerators, and has the potential to save thousands of hours of human effort for each new generation," the team wrote in a paper appeared in the scientific journal Nature. "Finally, we believe that more powerful AI-designed hardware will fuel advances in AI, creating a symbiotic relationship between the two fields", they noted. In about six hours, the model could generate a design that optimises the placement of different components on the chip. To achieve this, the Google team used a dataset of 10,000 chip layouts for a machine-learning model, which was then trained with reinforcement learning. "Our RL (reinforcement learning) agent generates chip layouts in just a few hours, whereas human experts can take months," Anna Goldie, research scientist at Google Brain, who took part in the research, said in a tweet. "These superhuman AI-generated layouts were used in Google's latest AI accelerator (TPU-v5)!" She added.

Facebook acquires VR game developer BigBox VR

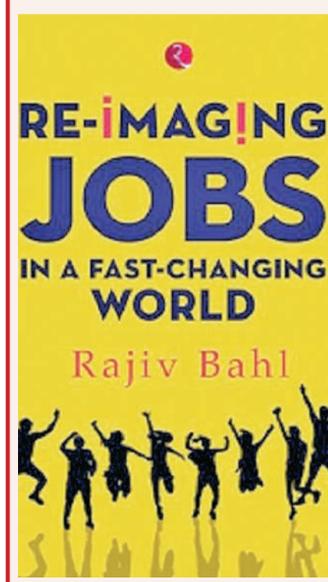
San Francisco | Agencies

Facebook has acquired BigBox VR, makers of the popular battle royale virtual reality game titled Population: One for an undisclosed sum. 'Population: One' has been a runaway hit, earning more than \$10 million on the Oculus Store "after just a few months". "POP: ONE stormed onto the VR scene just nine months ago and has consistently ranked as one of the top-performing titles on the Oculus platform, bringing together up to 24 people at a time to connect, play, and compete in a virtual world," said Mike Verdu, the VP of content at Facebook Reality Labs. BigBox VR may be small, but they are a mighty, nimble team of game industry vets who seamlessly nail the game development duality of craft and data-driven live service. "We're excited to help BigBox VR grow and accelerate their vision for POPULATION: ONE as a state-of-the-art VR social gaming experience, as well as pursue future projects, with access to the resources and support of Facebook and Oculus Studios," Verdu said in a statement on Friday. As part of the Oculus Studios family, BigBox VR will have the opportunity to grow POP: ONE and cultivate its community with the full support of Oculus Studios resources, and, in the future, pursue other projects. 'POP: ONE' will continue to be supported on all its current platforms. Facebook said that it is exploring many ways to accelerate VR, including investments in third-party content, AAA IP, hardware, and more.



SCHOLARSHIP ALERT

Scholarship Name 1 :	The Bhumi Fellowship 2021-22
Description	: Bhumi is inviting applications from young graduates between 20 and 30 years of age and offering a two-year, non-residential fellowship to them towards improving the quality of education in India. The fellowship aims to create a cadre of changemakers who transform schools in the short-term and lead the next movement in education in the long-term.
Eligibility	: The fellowship is open for final year students/graduates between 20 and 30 years of age. They must have past volunteering or work experience in any field. They should be passionate about transforming the education system with a willingness to commit to a two-year full-time fellowship.
Prizes & Rewards	: INR 18,000 per month and other benefits
Last Date to Apply	: 30-06-2021
Application mode	: Online applications only
Short Url	: www.b4s.in/absolute/THB1
Scholarship Name 2 :	IIT Jodhpur Senior Research Fellowship 2021
Description	: Indian Institute of Technology Jodhpur invites applications for IIT Jodhpur Senior Research Fellowship 2021 from postgraduate degree holders. The fellowship is meant for the project titled, "Ga2O3-based Nanomaterials with Controlled Defect and Impurity Composition for Advanced Electronic Devices".
Eligibility	: The fellowship is open for candidates below 35 years of age who hold an M.Sc. degree in Physics/ Chemistry/ Nanotechnology/ Materials Science with CSIR/UGC NET or GATE with 2 years of Research Experience, or an M.Tech. degree in Microelectronics/ Electronics/ Nanotechnology/ Physics/ Materials with GATE or NET with 2 years of Research Experience. The desired qualifications of the candidates must also include knowledge in thin film deposition, optoelectronic devices, device fabrication, material characterization, etc.
Prizes & Rewards	: INR 35,000 per month plus HRA
Last Date to Apply	: 25-06-2021
Application mode	: Via email only
Short Url	: www.b4s.in/absolute/RSR4
Scholarship Name 3 :	COVID Crisis (Jyoti Prakash) Support Scholarship Program 2021
Description	: COVID Crisis (Jyoti Prakash) Support Scholarship program aims to support children who are left vulnerable and with very little or no financial support for their further education owing to a COVID-led crisis in their family.
Eligibility	: The scholarship is open for Indian students from Class 1 to Graduation. Those who have been through any of the following crisis situation - loss of parent(s)/earning family member since January 2020 or loss of job/employment of an earning family member, can apply.
Prizes & Rewards	: Up to INR 30,000 per year and mentorship benefits
Last Date to Apply	: 30-06-2021
Application mode	: Online applications only
Short Url	: www.b4s.in/absolute/CCSP1
Scholarship Name 4 :	IIT Jodhpur Research Associateship (Quantum Heat Engines) 2021
Description	: Indian Institute of Technology, Jodhpur invites applications for IIT Jodhpur Research Associateship (Quantum Heat Engines) 2021 from Ph.D. degree holders. The fellowship is meant for the project titled, "Quantum Heat Engines".
Eligibility	: The fellowship is open for candidates below 50 years of age who hold a Ph.D. degree in Sciences. They should be proficient in Quantum Physics. Those who have submitted their thesis are also encouraged to apply. At the time of joining, a Ph.D. defense should be completed.
Prizes & Rewards	: INR 47,000 to INR 54,000 per month
Last Date to Apply	: 25-06-2021
Application mode	: Via email only
Short Url	: www.b4s.in/absolute/AQH7



Author Rajiv Bahl's new literary take on jobs post-pandemic

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Reflecting on this time of great change brought about by new discoveries and breakthroughs happening continuously in nearly every field of human endeavour, economics enthusiast and acclaimed author of 'The Economic Reactor' Rajiv Bahl has come up with a new book on work in an ever-changing world. Titled 'Re-imagining Jobs in a Fast-Changing World', the 2021 book is published by Rupa Publications. It proposes a Universal Supplementary Income Scheme to create over a hundred million jobs in India. A seasoned entrepreneur, Rajiv is also known in the startup ecosystem as the Founder of Fun Foods, an internationally popular brand later acquired by a multinational food major. No matter where

we look, we see rapid change either already upon us, or being imminent. Says the author: "Never before in the history of our species have we encountered such rapid change. It is important that we understand the magnitude of the coming changes and where we are headed as a civilization and also how we may cope with the changed circumstances that the rapid changes will usher in upon us." The book's first part looks closely at the changes that are being wrought in eight distinct spheres of human activity that the author thinks will have the largest impact upon the way we live our lives. The eight areas are: Artificial intelligence, energy, manufacturing, the sharing economy, transport and connectivity, water purification and desalination, agriculture and meat production, and health

and well-being. In addition, the author has summed up the changes coming to the construction industry, automated clothes manufacturing and automated home cooking solutions. At the end of each chapter, which studies one of these areas, the book analyzes the likely consequences of the developments in that field. It examines both the desirable and worrisome consequences. The consequences are similar across all fields. The desirable consequences are that all goods, including energy, manufactured goods of all sorts, clean water, agricultural produce, meat production and health delivery will become cheaper, of better quality and less damaging to the environment. The one worrisome consequence that runs through all fields is that jobs will become scarcer.

Learn six Indian language basics with AR lenses

Team Absolute | New Delhi



Social media platform Snapchat has combined learning with fun through 'learn language' lenses created by Nepal-based lens creator Atit Kharel. The lenses help Snapchatters understand the basics of six Indian languages -- Hindi, Marathi, Bengali, Punjabi, Telugu and Kannada. They combine augmented reality and machine learning to recognise over 1000 objects and translate their name to the language one is learning, in real-time, Snapchat said in a statement. The new feature was launched to reinforce the company's localisation efforts in India to build locally and culturally relevant experiences, it said. A member of the Snap Lens Network, Atit Kharel is a digital creator who created the 'learn language' lenses following his own passion for the multilingual Indian

culture. He comments: "I have always been fascinated by the cultural diversity in India and the range of languages spoken here. The idea behind these lenses was to make learning Indian languages fun and easy -- especially for new learners. Augmented reality can be really entertaining and can make learning more interactive and accessible." The lenses are available on Snapchat by searching 'Learn Bengali', 'Learn Telugu', 'Learn Kannada', 'Learn Hindi', 'Learn Marathi', 'Learn Punjabi' or by scanning the Snapcode or searching for Atit Kharel's official profile, said Snapchat. How to use these Lenses: Snapchatters have to point their cameras at an object to scan it, and the Lenses will simultaneously display, along with a phonetic transcription of the word to help with pronunciation. In an effort to engage youth, Snapchat has previously released localized lenses, filters and stickers.

'Revenge' travel is the new buzzword

Team Absolute | New Delhi

For some, camping in their backyard could have come closest to an adventure during our days in quarantine. With trains and flights suspended and hotels closed down, all we could do is 'dive into good ol' travel memories. But thanks to vaccine roll-out at the start of 2021, there's optimism among travel enthusiasts towards the prospect of travelling to their desired destinations again. Those struck by wanderlust have started planning their next trip. But since leisure travel is no longer how it used to be before the pandemic, compliance with safety measures is indispensable. Post-pandemic travel could revive the travel industry with a whopping surge in bookings in the latter part of the year. After being advised not to step out of the confines of our homes for over a year, stepping out into the world could be vengeance for those 'lost' days. This is where the concept of 'Revenge Travel' sprouted from.

WHAT IS REVENGE TRAVEL?

"The surge in flight/train and hotel bookings have been anticipated by the stakeholders in the travel industry after the vaccination drive starts gaining pace. After the dreadful hiatus of staying at home, travel enthusiasts are planning longer and more luxurious vacations. Thus, 'revenge travel' is all set to become a phenomenon," says Dinesh Kumar Kotha, Co-Founder and CEO, Confirmtkt.

A BOOM IN TRAVEL INDUSTRY

Kotha feels: "Travellers, all across the world, laying out their plans for 'revenge travel' would stimulate a massive boom in the travel industry.

try. However, post-pandemic travel might be costly due to the rising air/train and hotel fares. The increasing cost is due to the additional safety gears and accessories while travelling such as the cost of PPE kits for air travel, sanitization of the hotel, etc."

TRAVEL GUIDELINES AND SAFETY STANDARDS

With the beginning of these efforts to sustain the new normal, the certification of the vaccination status of the travellers is important. Besides, the passenger would also need to show an RT-PCR test negative report and undergo health screening at the airport/railway station. Another notable change would be the absence of meal services on flights/trains, which only means that you must plan your trip taking into account such aspects, Kotha says.





French Open

DJOKOVIC SHAKES THE ORDER BEATS NADAL TO ENTER FINAL

Paris | Agencies

Novak Djokovic dashed Rafael Nadal's hopes of winning a record 21st Grand Slam title and his 14th French Open after the world No. 1 overcame the Spaniard 3-6, 6-3, 7-6(4), 6-2 in a four-hour-22-minute semi-final that was replete with moments of brilliance as well as errors.

Nadal, who went into the match with 105-2 (win-loss) record and with a 7-1 record against the Serb, was the outright favourite to win the match and set up a final clash with Greek Stefanos Tsitsipas. For, he had lost only one set in this year's tournament prior to Friday's semi-final.

But the chinks in his game began to show early. The first set, though won by the Spanish world No. 3 with a 6-3 margin, went on for 61 minutes. Nadal saved a couple of break-points in the very first game of the match and then went 5-0 up before Djokovic fought back to show that he is up for the fight and won't take the Nadal challenge lying down.

The Serb, who was also the last player to beat Nadal in the French Open back in the 2015 quarter-finals, then took the second set. The seventh game was the heart of the set, indeed the match, as neither gave an inch. The biggest difference though were the double faults. Nadal committed eight of them against Djokovic's three. Between 2005, when he won his first French Open and 2020 when he won his last of the 13, Nadal had not won the title at Roland Garros only on three occasions --- in 2009, when he lost to Robin Soderling in the fourth round; in 2015, when he lost to Djokovic in the quarter-finals and in 2016 when he had to pull out of the third round due to injury.



The best match in Paris: Djokovic

"It was for sure the most beautiful match I've played here in Paris. You tell yourself there is no pressure. But there is a lot of pressure, trust me."

No excuse for the loss, made mistakes: Nadal

"That's sport. Sometimes you win, sometimes you lose. I tried to give my best. I had a big chance with set point, 6-5, second serve in the third set. That is it."

Italy start Euro 2020 campaign with 3-0 win over Turkey



Rome | Agencies

Italy scored their biggest win in European football championship with a 3-0 win over Turkey in the tournament opener.

The Euro 2020, which was postponed last year due to Covid-19 pandemic, is being played in 11 venues.

The Italians, who have won the title only once before -- in 1968 -- and finished runners-up twice, endured a

goalless first half as they lacked finishing touches.

Turkish goalkeeper Ugurcan Cakir parried a powerful header from Giorgio Chiellini as the teams went into break with scores at 0-0. However, eight minutes after restart, Italy found the net through an own goal.

Forward Domenico Berardi hammered in a low cross which deflected off Turkish centre-back Merih Demiral's body and went into

the net.

Then striker Ciro Immobile pounced on a loose ball and fired it past goalkeeper Ugurcan in the 66th minute to make it 2-0.

Lorenzo Insigne scored Italy's third goal in the 79th minute as Turkey proved no match for the Italians in the second half. This was the Azzurri's 28th unbeaten match (23 wins and five draws), their streak going back to September 2018.

Andre Russell hit on helmet in PSL, taken to hospital

Abu Dhabi: West

Indies all-rounder Andre Russell was on Friday taken to a hospital here in an ambulance after he was struck on the helmet by a bouncer in a Pakistan Super League (PSL) match.



Russell -- who was replaced by fast bowler Naseem Shah under the concussion-sub rule -- had smashed two sixes off Muhammad Musa in the 14th over while representing Quetta Gladiators against Islamabad United. He went for a pull-shot but misjudged the bounce as the ball hit him on his helmet. Though the West Indian decided to continue batting after being examined by a physio, he was out the very next ball, caught at third man. Russell was seen being stretchered out of the dressing room to an ambulance during the first over of the second innings. Chasing a target of 133 all out in 20 overs set by Quetta Gladiators, United's openers Usman Khawaja and Colin Munro smashed unbeaten 40 and 90 runs, respectively. United won the match by 10 wickets in 10 overs.

Mirabai qualifies for Olympics

Team Absolute | New Delhi

India's Mirabai Chanu, the 2017 world champion in weightlifting, has qualified for the Tokyo Olympic Games in women's 49 kg category, the International Weightlifting Federation (IWF) announced on Friday.

The 26-year-old from Manipur has qualified on the basis of her world ranking points. The Indian lifter is ranked second in the women's 49kg category with 4133.6172 points in her kitty.

China's Hou Zhihui is top-ranked in 49kg with 4926.4422 points. As per rules of the IWF, top eight lifters in each of the 14 weight categories, including seven in the women's group, are eligible to compete in Tokyo Olympic Games.

Besides Mirabai and Hou, there are two more Asian lifters among top eight in women's 49 kg. Indonesia's Aisah Windy Cantika is ranked fifth and Vietnam's Vuong Thi Huyen is seventh. Two European and two Pan American lifters fill the other four slots.

In men's 67 kg category, India's teenage weightlifter Jeremy Lalrinnunga is ranked 12th and failed to get continental berth for the Tokyo Olympics as it was allotted to Korean weightlifter Han Myeong-mok.



INDIA HAS THE RIGHT MIX OF YOUTH AND EXPERIENCE: MIDFIELDER LILIMA

Team Absolute | Bengaluru

India women's hockey team midfielder Lilima Minz feels the core group, currently preparing for the Olympics, has the right mix of youth and experience which is 'crucial to give the team direction in difficult situations'.

"In the national camp, there is a healthy mix of experienced players who have played many international games for India, and young players who have the hunger and drive to prove themselves at the highest level. This kind of balance allows the young players to have the guidance of senior members who know what it is like to play at the Olympics," said the 27-year-old, who has played 133 games for the country over a decade-long association with the national team. She also said that the



youngsters keep pushing the seniors to perform at their best. "At the same time, these young players keep the senior members on their toes as they know that there is someone who can replace them if (they) do not perform well,"

said Lilima, who was part of the India team which won silver at the 2018 Jakarta Asian Games.

Lilima said that it is helpful to have a core group of players who have experienced an occasion like the Olympics.

South Africa have Windies on the mat after de Kock ton

St Lucia | Agencies

South Africa wicketkeeper-batsman Quinton de Kock hit an unbeaten 141 to hand his team a strong first-innings lead on the second day of the first Test against West Indies who, with just six second-innings wickets remaining, are still 143 runs adrift and look set for an innings defeat.

Pace bowlers Kagiso Rabada and Anrich Nortje took two wickets each as they reduced West Indies to 82 for four at stumps on second day after de Kock's 170-ball knock had taken Proteas to 322 in first innings. West Indies had been dismissed for 97 in first innings on the first day. After Mulder, Keshav Maharaj and Kagiso Rabada were dismissed in quick succession, de Kock added 79 for the ninth wicket with Nortje (7 off 29). He



Brief scores:

West Indies 97 all out and 82/4 vs South Africa 322 all out in 96.5 overs (Q de Kock 141 not out, A Markram 60, R van der Dussen 46, J Holder 4/75, J Seales 3/75)

farmed the strike and went for the big hits. Aiden Markram, who made 60 on the first day, and Rassie van der Dussen, with 46, were the next highest scorers. The 79 runs for the ninth wicket came in just over 12 overs. Jason Holder, with four for

75, was the most successful bowler for the Caribbean side. Windies were then reduced to 51 for four before Roston Chase (21 off 71) and Jermaine Blackwood (10 off 27) stemmed the rot with an unbeaten 31-run partnership in 12.2 overs.

ELEVEN INDIAN DOMESTIC CRICKETERS SIGN UP FOR USA LEAGUE

New York: As many 11 cricketers with domestic experience in India, including ex-India under-19 player Smit Patel, former Delhi batsman Milind Kumar and ex-Gujarat pacer Siddharth Trivedi have been named in the roster for Minor League Cricket T20 (MLC), a 27 city-based franchise tournament in United States of America (USA), said a media report. The six-week league, organised by American Cricket Enterprises (ACE), will start on July 31 and played over weekends. It has drawn in over 80 first-class cricketers from around the world.

The report in Cricbuzz said that New Zealand all-rounder Corey Anderson will represent his home franchise Dallas while South African spinner Dane Piedt will represent DC Hawks. West Indian spinner Rahkeem Cornwall will represent Atlanta Fire while Pakistan players Sami Aslam and Hammad Azam will turn out for Golden State Grizzlies. The report added that 11 players with 'Indian domestic experience' were drafted in the squads.

SHANKAR BAGS SILVER IN USA, MISSES OLY QUALIFICATION MARK

Eugene (Oregon): Tejaswin Shankar, India's men's high jump national record holder, won silver by clearing with a height of 2.23 metres at the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Division 1 Outdoor Track and Field Championships here in the USA.

But 22-year-old Shankar, representing Kansas State University at the NCAA competition, fell short of Tokyo Olympic Games qualification standard of 2.33m. JuVaughn Harrison of Louisiana State University was first with 2.33m while Mayson Conner of Nebraska was third with 2.23m. The Delhi-based high jumper is studying business administration at Kansas State University on a four-year athletics scholarship since 2017. Shankar had skipped the Federation Cup Athletics Championships in March as the dates were clashing with his NCAA indoor season. He won high jump bronze in the NCAA meet with a height of 2.24m.



AFI NOT WORRIED BY JAVELIN THROWER CHOPRA'S MODEST SHOWING

New Delhi: The Athletics Federation of India (AFI) on Saturday said it is not losing sleep over ace javelin thrower Neeraj Chopra's modest performances in warm-up competitions ahead of the Tokyo Olympic Games. "The Lisbon competition on Thursday was low key, but more important was to start at some level. Since Chopra is based out of Europe, we are hopeful he would get to compete in three-four quality competitions in coming weeks before the Olympics," an AFI official told reporter. Chopra's opening throw in Lisbon on Thursday was 80.71m while his sixth and last throw was 83.18m. Chopra generally averages around 85 metres with his throws. Initially, Chopra's last throw was measured as 78.15m, but due to faulty measuring device, it was later changed to 83.18m. The AFI official refused to speak on the technical issue. The AFI official said it is difficult to make a concrete plan for the Olympic-bound squad since the other Indian athletes aren't getting any opportunities to compete on foreign soil due to the pandemic in India.



PANDYA EYES BOWLING AT FULL TILT IN T20 WORLD CUP

New Delhi: All-rounder Hardik Pandya has said that he is looking forward to bowling in every match of the T20 World Cup, which is scheduled to be played in October-November this year. The pace bowler could not make it to the India squad for the Test tour of England since he is unable to bowl long spells due to a persistent back injury but was picked for the white-ball tour of Sri Lanka which takes place next month. Pandya had, in the past, expressed willingness to play only as a batsman in the Test side. But skipper Virat Kohli has said that Pandya can make it to the India Test team only as an all-rounder.



Indian cricket team begins England trip with intra-squad practice tie

Southampton | Agencies

India cricketers, who are serving a 10-day quarantine period here ahead of the World Test Championship (WTC) final, began their England sojourn with a two-day intra-squad practice match here at Hampshire Bowl. The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) released pictures as well as a video on Saturday with the highlights of first day's play on Friday.

India captain Virat Kohli is seen batting, defending and clipping the ball off his toes, as also Shubman Gill and wicketkeeper-batsman Rishabh Pant, who is seen hammering a big shot. Pace bowlers Jasprit Bumrah, Mohammed Shami, Ishant Sharma and Mohammed Siraj are seen bowling. Newcomer Arzan Nagwaswalla is also seen in action. Spinner R Ashwin is also seen rolling his arm over.

Pant apparently reached a milestone as he is shown lifting his bat in celebration.

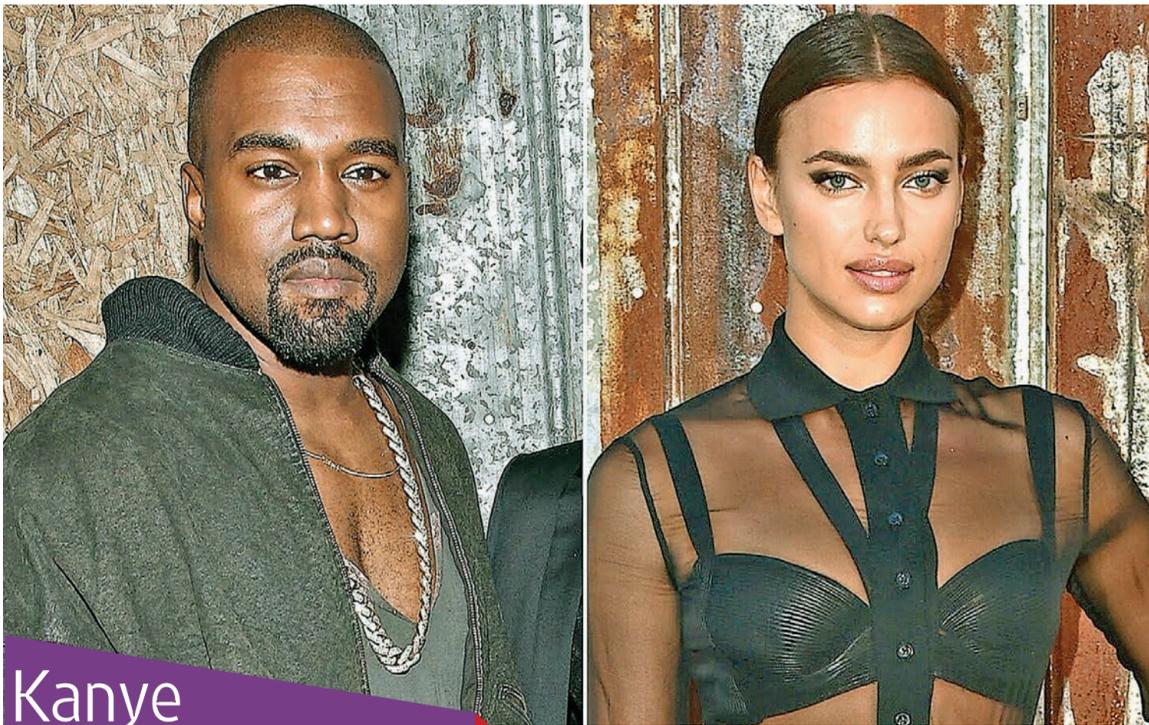
The Indian team is on a three-and-a-half month tour of England where it plays the WTC final against New Zealand from June 18 and then a five-Test series in August-September.

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, India are not allowed to play any local club or county team unlike in the past.

Even New Zealand played an intra-squad warm-up game last month on arrival in Southampton.

However, unlike the Indian cricket board, New Zealand Cricket passed on the details of the match especially the outstanding performances from the day's play.

The Indians had reached Southampton on June 3. Their workload increased gradually as directed by the International Cricket Council (ICC) which is hosting the WTC final.



Kanye West plans 'taking things slow' with Irina Shayk

Los Angeles | Agencies

Kanye West has promised he's "taking things slow" with Irina Shayk and "not looking to have more kids" but credits her for putting the "spring back in his step. Earlier this week, the Stronger rapper was pictured beaming with the 35-year-old model after whisking her away for a "romantic getaway" in Provence, south of France, for his 44th birthday. The pair were spotted arriving on a private jet back to New Jersey following the trip, which came after Kim filed for divorce from Kanye in February. Kanye already has four kids with Kim and Irina has a daughter with ex Bradley Cooper. According to the reports of The Sun, "Kanye is looking more like his old self again. The big smile is back and he's got the spring back in his step again. He's taking things slow with Irina and they are just enjoying each other's company. They have a lot in common, both are 'from the streets' in terms of their interests and know a lot of the same people." "Kanye's not thinking about more kids right now. He has his hands full with his four children who are his entire world. He's just getting back out there again."



Jennifer Lopez and Rita Ora are in secret talks for collaboration on new music

Los Angeles | Agencies

Two pop power-houses are making plans to take over the showbiz world. It is exclusively revealed that American superstar Jennifer Lopez and British talent Rita Ora are in discussions to join forces. The women met in secret in Los Angeles last week and discussed plans for the future, including not only new music but also the possibility of working on a film together. An insider said, "Jennifer is a huge fan of Rita's, and vice versa. They've long wanted to get together and finally their schedules aligned after Rita had finished filming The Voice in Australia." "J-Lo and Rita met at Soho House in LA and spent a couple of hours talking about what they could possibly do together. Nothing was off limits and they talked about both music and films," the source added. Rita has made no secret of how much of a J-Lo fan she is.

Alicia Silverstone says people have been pronouncing her first name wrong

Los Angeles | Agencies

Hollywood star Alicia Silverstone says people have been pronouncing her first name wrong all along. In a social media video that she has posted, the actress not only insists her name is wrongly pronounced, but she also actually demonstrates the right way to do it. Alicia's contention came when a fan asked for the correct pronunciation of her name. "Tell me what your name is and then tell me what people mispronounce it as," the user asked on TikTok, according to a report in femalefirst.com. "My name is Ali-see-yuh. Ali-see-yuh. Not Alee-shya," the 44-year-old actress replied in the video. Alicia then added a caption that read: "Just an FYI... It's Ali-SEE-yuh." The actress rose to global fame with her Hollywood debut as a teenager in the 1993 thriller "The Crush", and consecutive successes that followed included the music video of the Aerosmith rock ballad "Cryin'" later the same year, and the 1995 comedy "Clueless".



Los Angeles | Agencies

Selena Gomez has revealed that her mental health is something she works on 'every day'. Speaking to this week's Stellar Magazine, the 28-year-old said she has several ways of keeping things in check. She said, "I'm in a good place right now. My mental health is something I work on every day," the singer told the magazine. "She added that social media breaks, as well as time with her family, are a must for switching off. "It's important for me to have space and time with my friends and family. When I'm with them, I try to be really present and just enjoy the moment," she says. Selena added that she does "social detox weekends often", during which she logs off for a few days. "I think it's so important to take breaks from scrolling on social media... It makes a big difference with mental health" the Good For You hitmaker added. The Heart Wants What It Wants hitmaker previously revealed she had bipolar disorder, but admits before she got a diagnosis, she felt 'really alone' because she didn't know anyone else felt the way she did.

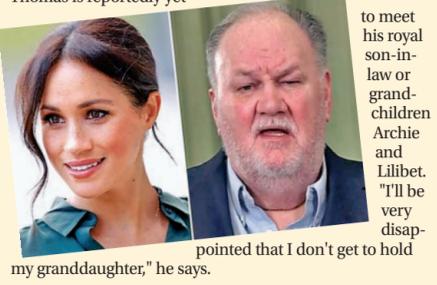
Selena Gomez reveals how she keeps her mental health in check



Meghan Markle's estranged dad threatens to expose 'dirty laundry'

Los Angeles | Agencies

Meghan Markle's estranged father Thomas Markle has threatened to expose "dirty laundry" in an upcoming interview scheduled to be aired on Sunday. Thomas' assertion came in a teaser clip of the impending interview to be aired on the American television news magazine show "60 Minutes", on June 13. The interview, incidentally, happens within days of the birth of Meghan's second child Lilibet on June 4. "You want dirty laundry? This is the first time I've ever discussed these things," Thomas, a former Hollywood lighting director is seen saying in the trailer of the show, according to a report in nzherald.co.nz. He adds that he is still "confused" over what soured the "great relationship" he once shared with his daughter. Meghan married Prince Harry in 2018 but Thomas is reportedly yet

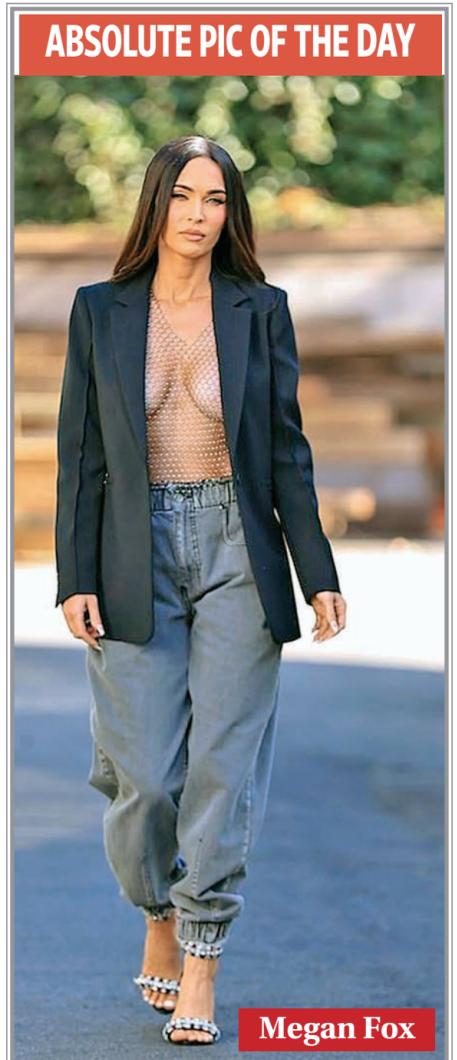


to meet his royal son-in-law or grandchildren Archie and Lilibet. "I'll be very disappointed that I don't get to hold my granddaughter," he says.

Jason Derulo: I've never been a cook

Los Angeles | Agencies

American singer-songwriter Jason Derulo has taken up a new hobby amid the pandemic. He has started trying different recipes in order to put his creativity to good use. "I started off as trying different recipes because we are at home. I had to figure out where to put my creativity. I've never been a cook. This is definitely something new that happened in the pandemic," Derulo said on "The Drew Barrymore Show". His comment came when show host Barrymore asked him about his famous "milli meals". "I started doing this, all of my favourite things into one dish, and I started calling a 'milli meals'. I told fans that every time that I reached a new million, I would do some kind of recipe but I didn't imagine that it was going to be every week or so," he added. Derulo is now coming up with a new single in collaboration with American pop-rock band Maroon 5 frontman Adam Levine. "It was a pandemic collaboration. When that happened, I finished and loved the song. I send it to my friend who's also a writer on the song. He frequently works with Adam as well. I was like find out what makes Adam love it and the rest is history," he said on Barrymore's show, which airs on Zee Cafe in India.



ABSOLUTE PIC OF THE DAY

Megan Fox





Katrina Kaif: POST COVID I'VE HAD TO BE PATIENT WITH MYSELF

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Katrina Kaif on Saturday opened up on getting back to normal life after recovering from Covid. "Back at it. Post Covid I've had to be patient with myself in terms of getting back to exercise -- u have to go at your own pace and listen to your body, u have good days and then days when u feel exhausted again. Going slow and trusting your body's healing process and giving yourself time. Step by step," Katrina wrote in an Instagram post. Katrina battled Covid-19 earlier this year and announced her recovery with a social media post on April 17. "Negative (everyone who checked up on me thank u, it was really sweet felt a lot of love)," Katrina had shared in an Instagram post after recovering. The Bollywood star recently made headlines after her fans shared memes on social media featuring her and her rumoured boyfriend, actor Vicky Kaushal. While Vicky and Katrina are rumoured to be dating for quite some time now, the two have refrained from saying anything about the bond they share.

KARISHMA KOTAK: MANDALA IS EXTREMELY THERAPEUTIC

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actress Karishma Kotak is making the most of lockdown. With shoots stopped owing to the pandemic, she has started taking mandala sessions and online psychology classes. "I took to mandala course online recently and I must say it's extremely refreshing and therapeutic. The work from this form of art seems so intriguing and difficult but they break it down to simple steps and it's quite easy. I am loving the sketching and drawing. I am also taking psychology classes online. The human brain has always interested me. I always think why we do what we do. So, it was only eventual I decided to learn more on it," said Karishma. The actress encourages people to follow their hobbies. "Let's take up our hobbies and start working on them if we haven't already. Let's get vaccinated whenever the opportunity comes and stay safe everyone," she says. Karishma is currently seen on her YouTube channel with the legendary fast bowler Sir Curtly Ambrose in the "Curtly And The Karishma show".



CAN YOU REALLY SHRINK YOUR PORES?

Team Absolute | New Delhi

We've all come across serums and creams that promise tighter pores or even "poreless" skin. But can any serum, face mask, or pore strip truly shrink your pores to an invisible size? As you might expect, the idea that topical products can shrink your pores is false. More importantly, you can never completely eliminate pores; they play an important role in maintaining skin health, and without them, we'd be doomed. It is a myth that it is possible to have a poreless face. Pores are necessary for the normal structure and function of the skin. Pores are simply hair follicle openings, and each pore contains its own sebaceous gland, which produces oil, or sebum. Your skin requires sebum for lubrication and protection, but an excess of sebum can cause breakouts, and a lack of sebum can cause dry skin.



We have no control over the size of our pores due to genetics. However, if you want your pores to appear smaller, Niketa Sonavane, Celebrity Dermatologist and founder of Ambrosia Aesthetics, Mumbai, shares some guide you can follow to help. While it may be cosmetically beneficial to reduce the appearance of pores, we cannot change the size of the pore itself. Instead, there are numerous methods for temporarily refining pores. These include using cosmetic products containing dimethicone, a silicone ingredient that sits on top of the skin and reduces the appearance of pores, such as sunscreen and foundation. Some skin care products can also help to reduce the appearance of pores. Consider products with active ingredients that contain acids, particularly glycolic and salicylic acids, or retinol, as they work to unclog pores. These ingredients promote skin cell turnover, which aids in the unclogging of pores, making them appear smaller.

Kajal Pisal keen on returning to set post Covid recovery

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actress Kajal Pisal, who was lately seen in the shows "Naagin 5" and "Durga: Mata Ki Chhaya", is keen to return to the set. The actress was down with Covid in April, which impacted her work schedule and she could not take up new projects. "I have recovered from Covid-19 completely and am keen to start shooting and take up an interesting new show. I have started giving auditions and hope to join a new show as soon as possible," says Kajal. The actress says she is open to working in digital platforms, too. "After being part of the TV screen for a decade now, I wish to make my debut on the digital platform. While recovering from Covid, I got addicted to some shows on OTT. They are practical and one can relate easily. As an artiste I got influenced to do such beautifully scripted real roles," she points out. She adds: "Most of the time, on TV we get to play roles that are similar. If you play a positive role, then you are always too 'bichari' (the victim) and if you play something grey then it is just too evil. In this regard, OTT as a platform gives you the opportunity to play normal characters. They are neither heavily evil nor too innocent. They look fun and challenge actors too." Kajal is known for her roles in television series such as "Bade Achhe Lagte Hain" and "Saath Nibhana Saathiya" among others.



ILEANA D'CRUZ IS STRETCHING INTO END OF THE WEEK

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actress Ileana D'Cruz is already in the mood for her weekend unwind, going by her new Instagram post on Friday. In an image she posted from a photo-shoot, the actress is seen stretching her back as if gearing up to unwind. She is dressed in a stunning ivory cut-out blouse paired with a shirt. "Stretching into the end of the week," she wrote as caption. Ileana's latest release was the digital film "The Big Bull" starring Abhishek Bachchan. The film was loosely based on the securities scam of 1992. She will next be seen in "Unfair N Lovely", a comic take on India's obsession with fair skin. The film is set against the backdrop of Haryana and features Ileana opposite Randeep Hooda.



ELLI AVRRAM PLAYED CUPID IN EVELYN SHARMA'S LOVE STORY!

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Evelyn Sharma met the love of her life Tushaan Bhandi on a blind date set up by their common friend Elli Avram. Evelyn and Tushaan in fact lived just a street apart in Bandra for several years, but never really got to know each other. In late 2018 Tushaan completed his work assignments in Mumbai and was ready to relocate in Australia. That was when Elli insisted he go on a blind date with her best friend Evelyn, before he left India. "I never believed in love at first sight until I met Tushaan. We knew that night that we would want to spend our life together," says Evelyn. She made the decision to leave behind her original home Germany and India at the start of the pandemic in March 2020 for life with Tushaan in Australia. "It's been a big adjustment to move to a whole new country without being able to see your family and friends, but it is all worth it for a life with my soulmate," Evelyn added. Commenting on their secret wedding, Elli said: "Since I know both Evelyn and Tushaan, I just had this strong feeling that they would be perfect for each other, a complete power couple! Today, I'm so happy seeing these two beautiful souls being happily married. There's no better feeling than this! I wish them forever greatness in their journey together." Tushaan shared everyone needs a friend like Elli.





'SCAM 1992' IS TOP INDIAN SERIES IN IMDB LIST OF HIGHEST-RATED TV SHOWS

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The popular series "Scam 1992: The Harshad Mehta Story" has made it to the Top 10 Highest Rated TV Shows Worldwide list of Internet Movie Database (IMDb). This makes the Pratik Gandhi-starrer directed by Hansal Mehta the highest rated Indian show in

the list of 250 titles.

Scam 1992: The Harshad Mehta Story has a rating of 9.6 out of 10 on IMDb. The show, directed by Hansal Mehta, has acquired the ninth spot in the list globally.

Ratings of a film or series on IMDb are based on user ratings, and done of a scale of 10. The top spot in the list is

taken by "Band Of Brothers" followed by "Breaking Bad" and "Chernobyl".

Other shows featuring above "Scam 1992" are "The Wire", "Avatar: The Last Airbender", "Game Of Thrones", "The Sopranos", "Rick And Morty".

The tenth spot belongs to the Japanese anime series "The Fullmetal Alchemist".



APARSHAKTI KHURANA RELEASES ASEES KAUR'S NEW SONG 'AAYAJADO DA'

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Aparshakti Khurana features in the music video of Asees Kaur's new song "Aayajado da" along with Parul Gulati. Aparshakti released the song on Instagram on Friday. The song written and composed by Nirmaan was launched by Aparshakti on Instagram. Without saying much, he simply wrote as caption: "#Ayajadoda".

The actor recently announced that his wife Akriti and he are expecting their first child. He had uploaded a picture kissing his wife's baby bump. He had captioned the picture as: "Lockdown main kamtoh expand honahipayatohumeinlaga family hi expand karletehain (no increase in work during lockdown, so we thought of expanding the family) #PreggerAlert," he had written.

On the work front, the actor will be seen in the film "Helmet" alongside Pranutan and the series "Stardust".



Kriti Kharbanda completes 12 years in Bollywood, shares journey

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Bollywood actress Kriti Kharbanda has completed 12 years in Bollywood. On Saturday, she took to Instagram to share her experience about the journey with fans. "12 years ago, on the 12th of June, I began a journey. As a teenager, I took my first steps into this industry, that has ultimately shaped me into the person I am today," Kriti wrote on Instagram.

"In my time as an actor, I've met so many people who I'm grateful for. I've learned lessons, and so much about myself. I found my calling, it became my identity. I've had the privilege of working with some of the best people in the industry. So, to everybody associated with my career - be it for a minute, a day, or the last 12 years, I have nothing but gratitude for you," she expressed. "From Pragati, to Dr.Swathi, to Aarti Shukla to Rajkumari Meena, and now Aditi, somewhere along the line I grew up. I went from being an immature teenager who was timid to an adult who is strong and bold. I was kid who loved playing dress up and dancing to the kickass numbers of the 90's and now I get to do that for a living. I cannot

imagine a bigger blessing. Today I watch a full generation and more perform to my numbers, recreating things that I have done, and the feeling is surreal," the actress shared.

Expressing gratitude, she further wrote: "It can be hard to put into words how grateful I feel. I wouldn't be here without the support of my family, my friends, my teachers who gave me the confidence to believe I was destined for bigger things. A big shout out to my fans and fan clubs. You guys believe in me even when I have doubts, and that becomes the driving force for me to do better and believe in myself some more. You guys make me feel like the luckiest girl in the world."

Encouraging youngsters to chase their dreams, Kriti wrote: "While the world looks exciting and glamorous, which it is, it's also tedious and difficult. But then again, what isn't, this is my 24/7 I love who I've become. The simple middle-class girl has become ambitious and self-confident! If somebody out there is reading this, unaware of what path to take, I hope my story serves you well and you find the confidence to take that chance, and jump right into doing the things you love. Maybe 12 years down the line, you'll find yourself where I am, today. Overwhelmed with gratitude and giddy with excitement! Looking forward to many many many more years of this feeling. Thank you once again."

Varun Dhawan wishes mom Karuna on her birthday, calls her his strength

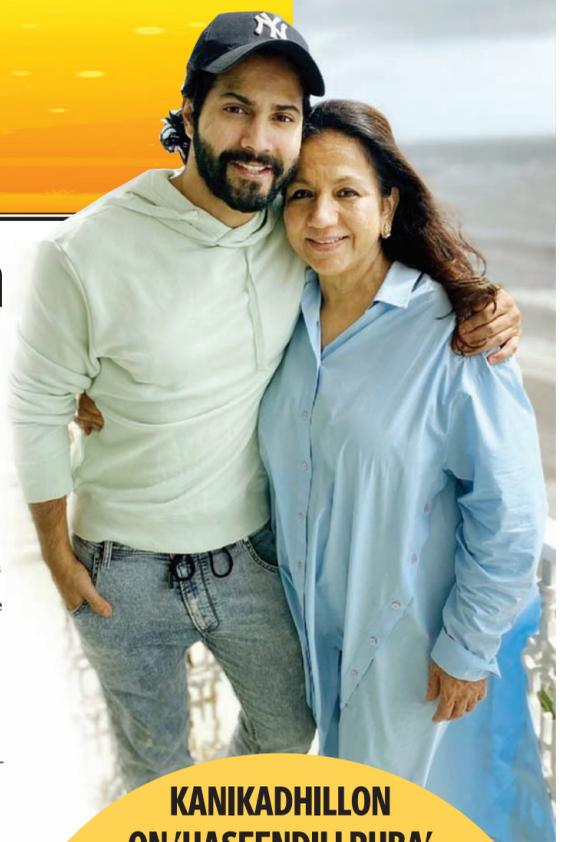
Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actor Varun Dhawan on Saturday took to Instagram and wished his mother Karuna on her birthday. The actor posted a couple of pictures with his mother and captioned them: "She always puts the happiness of others before herself. Thank you for being my strength and conscience."

The post received comments from fans and friends. Among industry friends who wished Karuna were Katrina Kaif, Dia Mirza and Humna Qureshi.

Varun often shares glimpses of his family on social media. The Dhawan family recently celebrated the birthday of his niece and the actor shared snapshots of the family celebration.

The actor has lately been shooting for the supernatural film "Bhediya" along with Kriti Sanon.



KANIKADHILLON ON 'HASEENDILLRUBA' TRAILER: THRILLED TO RECEIVE GREAT RESPONSE

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The upcoming thriller "HaseenDillruba" is writer Kanika Dhillon's second script for actress Taapsee Pannu after the 2018 release "Manmarziyaan". Dhillon is happy that the trailer of the new film, launched on Friday, received over 18,36,383 views by the evening on YouTube. The film is directed by Vinil Mathew and also stars Vikrant Massey and Harshvardhan Rane. "I had a lot of fun writing HaseenDillruba and working with an ace team -- Vinil, Taapsee Pannu, Vikrant Massey," said Dhillon. The film is set to release on July 2 on an OTT platform.



PAPON DEDICATES NEW SONG 'HAATEHAATDHORI' TO PARENTS

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Papon is back with a new track, and fans are excited. Titled "Haatehaatdhori", he has dedicated the Assamese song to his parents, folk singers Archana Mahanta and late Khagen Mahanta. The song was released on Saturday, to mark the seventh death anniversary of his father. "The kind of love that has been captured in the melody, lyrics and visuals of 'Haatehaatdhori' is the one we all long for. I dedicate this song to my parents, who sang together for 50 years and offered their lives to music. It is a very sweet composition and it conveys the message of eternal love without extravagance. This is the beauty of this song. I am excited to know what the listeners think of the song," Papon said. Written by Mukunda Saikia and composed by Hopun Saikia, the independent single talks about old-world romance and the idea of living in love. The video features Arun Nath and Audrey Hatibarua, and showcases a sweet story of an elderly couple, who are deeply in love and have come a long way together.

INSTAGRAM PIC OF THE DAY



Sakshi Malik