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BOXER POOJA RANI ENTERS QUARTERFINALS IN OLYMPIC GAMES



Tokyo: Boxer Pooja Rani stormed into the quarterfinals in the women's middle-weight category (69-75 kg) after beating Ichrak Chaib of Algeria 5-0. The 30-year-old Indian boxer, who is a two-time Asian championships gold-medallist, put up a dominant performance against the 20-year-old, dominating in all three rounds. All the five judges gave Pooja 10 in all three rounds while Ichrak got nine in all except in the second round when one of the judges gave her eight. Pooja's quarterfinal bout will take place on July 31 (Saturday). The boxer from Bhiwani, Haryana is making her debut in the Olympics. She had failed to qualify for the Rio Olympic Games after she lost in the second round of the AIBA Women's World Boxing Championships in 2016.

Mamata meets Sonia; discusses political situation, Pegasus

NATIONAL 'KHELA' BEGINS



"Everyone has to come together to defeat the BJP. Alone, we (Trinamool) are nothing; everyone has to work together. I want to see 'sachche din, bahut achche din dekh liya' (I want to see truthful days, seen enough of good days). Now 'khela' (game) will happen in the whole country."

Mamata Banerjee, CM, West Bengal

Govt curtailing oppn voice: Rahul Gandhi

"The entire opposition is here... our voice is being curtailed in Parliament. The government has said no discussion... Why shouldn't we have a discussion on the floor of the House? Narendra Modi has put a weapon (Pegasus) and is snooping on opposition leaders, journalists, activist's phones. If we (the opposition) agree there will be no discussion on Pegasus, the issue will get buried. They say we are disturbing Parliament. But we want to fulfill our responsibilities and this is against the democratic process."



West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Wednesday met interim Congress President Sonia Gandhi and Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal and discussed the current political situation in the country as well as the Pegasus snoogate row. The meeting between these leaders is being seen as part of the efforts to put forward a united opposition against the BJP ahead of the next Lok Sabha elections scheduled in 2024.

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Mamata Banerjee met Sonia Gandhi on Wednesday. Rahul Gandhi was also present during the meeting held at Sonia Gandhi's residence at 10 Janpath here.

After the meeting, Banerjee termed the meeting as positive, saying that the results will be seen in the coming days. She said the Pegasus spyware row was also discussed in the meeting, and asked why the government is not responding to the alleged snooping charges. "If the Pegasus issue is not discussed in the Lok Sabha or the Rajya Sabha, where will it be discussed? The government should answer," she said.

Asked if she would be the face of the opposition in the 2024 Lok Sabha elections, Banerjee said, "I am not a leader, I am a worker. I am a person from the streets. All the opposition parties will sit together and decide who will lead the fight against (Prime Minister Narendra) Modi. Later on Wednesday evening, Banerjee met Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal and discussed current political issues. The meeting between Banerjee and Kejriwal was held at the official residence of Trinamool Congress MP Abhishek Banerjee in the national capital that lasted for about an hour. On Tuesday, she had also met Congress leaders Kamal Nath and Anand Sharma, among others.

OPPN ONLY SEEN AT PC OR ON TWITTER: NADDA

New Delhi: Hitting out at the political opponents, BJP chief J.P. Nadda on Wednesday said that in the last one and a half years, opposition leaders are only seen at press conferences or on Twitter.

"For last one and half years, opposition parties have gone into isolation and have got themselves locked in. The opposition leaders have completely disappeared from the public domain. Leaders of opposition parties are only seen either in press conferences or on Twitter. On the other hand, crores of BJP workers are working united to serve people." Nadda blamed opposition parties for stalling the country's fight against Covid. "When PM was getting the country prepared to fight against Covid, the opposition behaved irresponsibly by raising different issues. From the start the opposition acted against humanity."



SP-NCP alliance in UP on the cards

Lucknow: The Nationalist Congress Party (NCP), led by Sharad Pawar, will contest the Uttar Pradesh Assembly elections in alliance with the Samajwadi Party (SP). Though the Samajwadi Party is yet to make any official announcement on the alliance, NCP general secretary and UP in charge K.K. Sharma said, "That is what Pawar Sahab exactly wants. We should contest in alliance with the main opposition party to check the BJP from coming to power in every state. In UP, the main opposition party is SP." The alliance partners have yet not discussed the number of seats they would contest.

14 PARTIES ATTEND OPPN MEET, AAP ALSO JOINS IN

New Delhi: Fourteen opposition parties met here on Wednesday to devise a strategy to corner the Centre on issues like the Pegasus snooping row and Assam-Mizoram discord. Among the 14 parties was the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) which has so far not been part of any joint opposition strategy. The meeting was, however, not attended by the Trinamool Congress as the MPs were meeting Mamata Banerjee at the same time. The opposition leaders on Wednesday met in the chamber of Rajya Sabha Leader of Opposition Mallikarjun Kharge in the Lok Sabha where Rahul Gandhi was also present. They decided that the opposition parties will press the government to order probe in the Pegasus snooping row. Congress MP Rahul Gandhi will move adjournment motion in the Lok Sabha on the Pegasus issue demanding a probe in the alleged snooping row. In the Rajya Sabha suspension notices have been served on the Pegasus scandal and Assam-Mizoram discord.

Nine killed, seven missing in Himachal flash floods



SHIMLA | Agencies

At least nine people were reported missing following flash floods at two places in Himachal Pradesh in the past 24 hours, officials said on Wednesday.

Seven were washed away in a flash flood in the Tozing rivulet in Udaipur subdivision in Lahaul-Spiti district, some 15 km from district headquarters Keylong, after a cloudburst. Two people were killed in Chamba district.

Special Secretary, State Disaster Management Authority, Sudesh Mokhta told the media that the search operation has been on to trace three missing from

the flash flood in Lahaul-Spiti. Two have been rescued.

In Kullu district, four people, including a Delhi tourist, have drowned in the swollen Parvati river in Manikaran. Reports say traffic on the Manali-Leh highway was also hampered owing to massive landslides. Several vehicles, including tourists, have been stuck on the highway. The Mandi-Kullu-Manali national highway was also disrupted from Chandigarh due to landslides at several places ahead of Mandi town. The government has issued an advisory for tourists and locals to refrain from high mountains, wandering near rivers and other places vulnerable to landslides.

7 DEAD, 27 MISSING IN J&K'S KISHTWAR CLOUDBURST

Jammu: Seven people died, 12 were rescued while 27 went missing on Wednesday in flash floods triggered by cloudburst in J&K's Kishtwar district. Shafiq Hussain, Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Kishtwar told reporters seven bodies have been recovered and 12 persons rescued in the cloudburst that hit Hunzar village in Dachan area of Kishtwar. The officer said heavy rain is continuing in the area that has been hampering the rescue operation. Rescue teams had to cover 25 kms of motorable road and then trek 15 kms to reach the disaster site, SSP added.

India, US discuss strategic partnership



Team Absolute | New Delhi

India and the US on Wednesday discussed measures to deepen their strategic partnership, along with Indo-Pacific cooperation and issues of regional security, including Afghanistan. Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Wednesday that the India-US Strategic Partnership will be of even greater global significance in the coming years, in the context of the challenges posed by Covid-19, global economic recovery and climate

change. Modi made these remarks in a meeting with visiting US Secretary of State Antony Blinken.

Blinken conveyed greetings of President Joe Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris to the Prime Minister.

He briefed the Prime Minister on his fruitful exchanges with External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar and National Security Advisor Ajit Doval earlier in the day and expressed strong commitment to further deepen India-US strategic relations in various sectors including defence, maritime security, trade & investment, climate change, and science & technology. Both countries cooperate on a wide range of diplomatic, economic, and security issues, including defence, non-proliferation, regional cooperation in the Indo-Pacific, shared democratic values, counterterrorism, climate change, health, energy, trade and investment, peacekeeping, the environment, education, science and technology, agriculture, space, and oceans.

No proposal to review new IT rules: Govt



New Delhi: Reiterating its stand that the new IT rules do not infringe the right to privacy and the freedom of expression, the government on Wednesday told Parliament that there is no proposal to review them. In a written reply in the Lok Sabha, Minister of State for Electronics and IT, Rajeev Chandrasekhar said that these rules were a result of public consultations, comments and suggestions received during stakeholders' meetings and are used in bringing accountability of these intermediaries to their users. "There is no proposal with ministry to review the rules," he said. The rules also prescribe additional due diligence to be followed by significant social media intermediaries.

THE CHAMPION



Poverty is never an excuse for achieving one's dreams. India's most loved Saikhom Mirabai Chanu at her humble home in Manipur after winning Silver Medal in the Tokyo Olympics. (Courtesy/Source: Rajat Sethi, Advisor to Manipur CM)

IAF formally inducts Rafale aircraft into 101 Squadron

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Indian Air Force (IAF) on Wednesday formally inducted the Rafale aircraft into its 101 Squadron at the Air Force Station in Hasimara under the Eastern Air Command (EAC). Hasimara in West Bengal earlier had a MiG 27 Squadron that has now been decommissioned. It is a strategic base for Indian Air Force operations because of its proximity to Bhutan. The Chumbi Valley, where lies a tri-junction between India, Bhutan and China, is close to Doklam where a standoff took place in 2017. The tri-junction has been matter of concern for all the three nations. IAF chief Air Chief Marshal R.K.S. Bhaduria said that the induction of Rafale had been carefully planned at



the importance of strengthening IAF's capability in the eastern sector. The fighter aircraft are equipped with HAMMER missiles. They will also be armed with beyond visual range missiles like Meteor, SCALP and MICA, increasing their ability to take on incoming targets from a distance.

Maha govt slashes school fees by 15 per cent

On Wednesday, the MVA led Maharashtra government decided to slash school fees by 15 per cent for the current academic year.

Team Absolute | New Delhi

School Education Minister Varsha Gaikwad told reporters, "Maharashtra cabinet today decided to slash school fees by 15 per cent for this academic year. A detailed order of this decision will be issued soon." This decision is taken on the lines of the Rajasthan government, she said. Parents' bodies have been demanding some relief from the state government in terms of slashing school fees in view of the COVID-19 pandemic situation. Schools continue to remain closed in Maharashtra due to the pandemic and amid fear of a likely third wave.

"Schools affiliated to various education boards, including the Maharashtra board, have informed the state government earlier that they will abide by rules regarding the slashing of fees. The government order will cover various issues and intricacies to avoid any confusion among the parents and school management," the minister added.



Centre clears DICGC Bill 2021 ensuring Rs 5 lakh for depositors

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Union Cabinet on Wednesday approved the Deposit Insurance and Credit Guarantee Corporation Bill, 2021 that proposes to provide relief to small depositors by providing guarantees on their life savings. According to Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, the bill will increase insurance amount on each depositor's bank deposit to Rs 5 lakh in both principal and interest. The increase in insured amount from Rs 1 lakh to Rs 5 lakh will cover 98.3 per cent of all deposit accounts and 50.9 per cent of deposit value. "This is higher than what cover is provided internationally, that is about 80 per cent of deposit accounts and 20-30 per cent of deposit value," she said. "We have approved the 'Deposit Insurance Credit Guarantee Corporation', which was created in case people faced difficulties after @RBI imposes moratoriums on banks," Finance Minister said. The amount guaranteed under the Act



will be available to depositors of all banks and financial institutions including those sectors where the bank has gone into moratorium. Also, the new bill will provide a time-bound process to clear the insured deposit amount. This will have to be cleared within 90 days, irrespective whether the bank is undergoing a resolution or going in for liquidation.



CENTRAL FORCES TO BE DEPLOYED ALONG ASSAM-MIZORAM BORDERS

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The North East Democratic Alliance (NEDA) led by Home Minister Amit Shah has decided to deploy Central forces along the Assam-Mizoram borders which witnessed bloody clashes between the police forces of the two northeastern states on Monday, which led to the death of six Assam police personnel.

The decision to deploy Central paramilitary forces was taken during a meeting chaired by Union Home Secretary Ajay Bhalla on Wednesday, sources said, adding that the Central forces were chosen to ensure neutrality and direct supervision from New Delhi.

Bhalla chaired the meeting which was attended by Mizoram Chief Secretary Lalnunmawia Chuauungo and DGP S.B.K. Singh, along with Assam Chief Secretary Jishnu Baruah and DGP Bhaskar Jyoti Mahanta.

The meeting was also attended by the Director General of CRPF, Kuldip Singh. The governments of Assam and Mizoram have blamed each other in public for the border disputes after Monday's bloody clashes, which took place two days after Shah chaired a meeting of NEDA on July 24.

Chachar, Karimganj and Hailakandi districts in Assam's Barak Valley share 164 km borders with three Mizoram districts -- Aizawl, Kolasib and Mamit. Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa



Sarma said on Wednesday, "The people of Assam and Mizoram have shared close relations and common interests for decades. Nobody is an enemy of the other. Then why use arms? Such border disputes can only be resolved amicably and through discussions."

"It might be that some people in Mizoram are annoyed after the Assam government curtailed the drugs trade chain from Myanmar to other parts of India via Mizoram and Assam. A section of Mizoram police might have clandestine relations with the armed civilians of that state.

The Mizoram government must probe this with utmost priority. I request the Mizoram Chief Minister to look into this serious issue," Sarma added.

Meanwhile, Mizoram Chief Minister Zoramthanga on Wednesday urged the people to maintain peace and calm.

"I sincerely request all to stay calm and promote peace in this time of great difficulty. Mizoram hopes for an amicable solution with the help of intervention from the Central government," he tweeted.

RAKESH ASTHANA TAKES CHARGE AS DELHI POLICE CHIEF



New Delhi: A day after the Centre appointed former CBI Special Director Rakesh Asthana as the Commissioner of Delhi Police, the 1984 batch Gujarat cadre IPS officer took charge on Wednesday and said that he aims to focus on core policing matters.

Asthana arrived at the police headquarters here on Wednesday morning and took charge in the presence of several senior officials. He was accorded a ceremonial guard of honour upon his arrival.

After taking charge, Asthana addressed the top police brass. Hailing Delhi Police as the premier police force in the country with a formidable reputation in delivering services and handling challenging situations, Asthana outlined the basic policing duties -- prevention and detection of crime and maintenance of law and order -- and drew attention to the special tasks that need to be carried out on priority.

18 killed in UP as truck rams into stationary bus



EX-GRATIA ANNOUNCED

Prime Minister has announced ex-gratia of Rs 2 lakh each, from PMNRF for the next of kin of those who lost their lives in the tragic accident in Barabanki on Wednesday morning. The injured would be given Rs 50,000 each.

Barabanki | Agencies

Eighteen people were killed when a truck rammed into a double-decker bus on the Lucknow-Ayodhya National Highway under the Ram Sanahighat police circle. Fifteen persons have been seriously

injured and have been referred to the Trauma Centre in Lucknow. According to reports, the accident took place in the early hours of Wednesday. The bus was going from Haryana to Bihar. According to reports, the double-decker bus on the Kalyani River bridge on the Ayodhya border, was halted following an axle breakdown. Due to heavy rains and poor visibility, a truck coming from Lucknow at a high speed hit the bus. The collision was so strong that most of them died on the spot. Most of the bus passengers had got down from the bus and were sleeping on the roadside when the accident took place. ADG Zone, Lucknow, S N Sabat confirmed the death toll.

Raj Cong MLAs register their grievances with Ajay Maken

Jaipur | Agencies

A number of Congress MLAs in Rajasthan registered their grievances against the functioning of some senior ministers in the state government during a one-to-one feedback session with the party's state in-charge Ajay Maken, here on Wednesday.

Maken is on a two-day visit to Jaipur to iron out the differences between two factions within the Congress in Rajasthan, one led by Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot and the other by former Deputy CM Sachin Pilot.

As per the schedule, Maken completed his interaction with around 66 MLAs from 12 districts on Wednesday, and is scheduled to meet the remaining MLAs on Thursday to get feedback on the functioning of the state government. As per sources in the Congress, Maken raised five issues while collecting feedback from the MLAs, which included the working of the in-charge ministers, their performance, the right candidate for filling the vacant positions of district president and



block president, and strategy to bring the state government back on track in Rajasthan. During the interactions, many MLAs raised questions over the working methodology adopted by some senior ministers, including Health Minister Raghu Sharma, Education Minister Govind Singh Dotasra, PHED Minister B.D. Kalla, Cooperative Minister Parsadilal Meena, Transport Minister Pratap Singh Khachariyawas and UDH Minister Shanti Dhariwal.

ADDITIONAL DISTRICT JUDGE DIES IN ROAD ACCIDENT IN JHARKHAND



Ranchi: An Additional District Judge (ADJ) of Dhanabadi district died after being hit by a vehicle while he was out for morning walk, the police said on Wednesday. Anand Uttam was taking a morning walk when a vehicle crushed him near the Magistrate Colony in Dhanabadi. He was admitted to a nearby hospital where he succumbed to his injuries.

Initially the police treated him as an unknown person. Later, the family members approached the police following which the body was identified. No one has been arrested in connection with the case so far. Uttam was posted in Dhanabadi six months ago.

Parents must introspect why teenagers hang out on beaches at night: Goa CM

The parents of teenagers need to introspect as to why their wards hang out on the state's beaches after dark, Chief Minister Pramod Sawant told the state Assembly on Wednesday.

Panaji | Agencies

Sawant was responding to accusations levelled by the Opposition MLAs, who had alleged a breakdown in the law and order situation in Goa after two minor girls were allegedly raped on the popular Colva beach in South Goa on the night of July 24.



"Ten children went for a party on the beach. Out of the 10, six returned home. The remaining four, including two boys and two girls, stayed on the beach the whole night. When a 14-year old girl spends the night on the beach, the parents too have to introspect, they too should be taking care," the Chief Minister said in his reply to a calling attention motion moved during the ongoing Monsoon Session of

the state Assembly. "It is also our responsibility. Just because children are not listening (to their parents), we cannot leave all the responsibility to the police," Sawant said.

Four persons, namely Asif Hateli, 21, Rajesh Mane, 33, Gajanan Chinchankar, 31, and Nitin Yabbal, 19, have been arrested in connection with the alleged rape incident.

The Opposition, meanwhile, slammed the Chief Minister's comment on the rape issue.

Former Deputy Chief Minister Vijai Sardesai said that Goa's brand image should be that anyone is safe to travel in the state till late into the night.

"That should be Goa's brand image. As a Home Minister, you should say 'we are so safe, you can travel at night. Nothing will happen,'" Sardesai said.

RAJYA SABHA PASSES JUVENILE JUSTICE AMENDMENT BILL AMID OPPN SLOGANEERING

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Rajya Sabha on Wednesday passed the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Amendment Bill, 2021, amid sloganeering by the opposition on the Pegasus issue.

The opposition also did not participate in the discussion on the floor of the House. Speaking in favour of the Bill, Women and Child Development Minister Smriti Irani said,

"This is a very important Bill as it relates to children."

She also appealed to the opposition to be a part of the discussion, to which NCP's Fauzia Khan replied that the House should discuss the Pegasus snooping issue as it concerned national security.



During the passing of the Bill, the opposition continued to hold placards and raise slogans. The House was adjourned soon after the Bill was passed.

Earlier, the House was adjourned twice over the Pegasus issue -- first till 12

noon then till 2 p.m.

Ahead of the commencement of the House proceedings on Wednesday, 14 opposition parties had met to devise a common strategy to corner the government on issues like the Pegasus snooping row and Assam-Mizoram border disputes.

Heavy downpour lashes Gurugram, disrupts traffic movements



Gurugram | Agencies

A few hours of rain on Wednesday morning caused heavy water-logging and the flood-like situation on multiple stretches and areas in Gurugram.

Nearly 70 per cent of the city was submerged in an average of 3-4 feet of water with the two worst-hit areas being the Delhi-Gurugram Expressway service lane near Jharsa Chowk, Iffco Chowk, Narsinghpur, Bilaspur, Sohna Road, Basai

Chowk, Sohna Chowk, Sector 4-7-9, Hanuman Chowk, Dhankot, Fazilpur Chowk, Vatika Chowk, Subhash Chowk, Baghtawar Chowk, Atul Kataria Chowk, Kapashera border, Udyog Vihar, Jobpura, Sadar Bazar, Mahavir Chowk, Dundahera, Bhimgarh Kheri, near Medanta underpass and Jawala Mill.

Apart from these areas, Wazirabad road, Sanjay Gram Road, Sheela Mata Road, Old Delhi Road, Palam Vihar Road, Kartepuri Chowk Signature Tower Chowk and Hero Honda Chowk were also badly affected by the waterlogging.

Both vehicular traffic and pedestrian movement were disrupted due to waterlogging on several roads.

Morning rush hour traffic was badly affected and the police struggled to keep the vehicles moving. The policemen were seen standing in knee-deep water while struggling to keep traffic going.

People also took to Twitter to post pictures and videos of their areas.

The rain water not only submerged the city's main stretches and connecting roads but also accumulated at the offices of Municipal Corporation Gurugram (MCG) and Haryana Sahari Vikas Pradhikaran (HSVP).

The city's bus stand in old Gurugram was completely submerged in rainwater.

UP WOMAN CONSTABLE HELPS DELIVER CHILD ON ROAD

Shahjahanpur: In a heart-warming gesture, a woman Uttar Pradesh Police constable helped a pregnant woman deliver her child on the road in the state's Shahjahanpur because the ambulance was not immediately available. Rekha, 30, a resident of Jalalabad, had arrived in Shahjahanpur on Monday and went into labour as soon as she got off a roadways bus.

Constable Bintu Pushkar, with the help of the woman's mother, covered her with a sari and helped her deliver a girl child on the road itself.

Superintendent of Police, City, Sanjay Kumar said that in view of the emergency situation, the other police personnel stopped the movement of traffic on the road to ensure safe delivery.

Later, Rekha and her baby were admitted to a medical college and both are healthy.

Pushkar is now being widely acclaimed on the social media for helping the woman in crisis.

States/UTs advised to conduct serological prevalence surveys

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Centre on Wednesday advised all states and Union Territories to conduct SARS CoV2 serological prevalence surveys, in consultation with the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), to generate district-level data.

According to a Health Ministry statement, Union Health Secretary Rajesh Bhushan, in a letter to state/UT counterparts, said: "The findings of such studies can then be utilised quickly by the respective state/UT to guide objective, transparent and evidence-based public health response to Covid-19."

Noting that the ICMR has recently conducted the National Serological Survey in 70 districts across the country, he said this was designed to capture the extent of the spread of Covid infection at the national level, and its results "do not reflect the heterogeneity of



sero-prevalence between districts and even between states". "The national ICMR survey showed that over 400 million Indians continue to remain vulnerable to Covid-19 as two-third of the general population was found to have SARS-CoV-2 antibodies," he said. While a majority of the Indian population

The ICMR has conducted serological survey from June to July 2021 on the basis of over 28,975 samples (patients), including adults and children (aged 6-17 years). The first sero-survey was conducted in May-June 2020, in which sero-prevalence was found to be 0.7 per cent. During the second survey in August-September 2020, sero-positivity was recorded at 7.1 per cent. The third survey was conducted in December 2020-January 2021 and found 24.1 per cent having SARS CoV2 antibodies.

has been exposed to the virus in last two months, over 67.6 per cent was found to have antibodies against SARS CoV2 virus that causes Covid-19, according to the statement.

BOMMAI EMULATES MODI, BOWS DOWN BEFORE ENTERING ASSEMBLY

Bengaluru | Agencies

Karnataka Chief Minister Basavaraja Bommai on Wednesday bowed down on the steps of the Vidhana Soudha on Wednesday while entering for the first time after taking over the top post. Prime Minister Narendra Modi had also bowed down at the steps of the parliament on entering it for the first time in his new post.

Bomma, who came straight to Vidhana Soudha after being sworn-in at the Raj Bhavan, stopped for a while and bowed down on the steps. On media persons' request, he repeated the act. Bommai stated that he will take everyone along with him as the government is faced with financial and social challenges. "I will convert these challenges into stepping stones of success. The people of the state have faced the crisis of corona and floods twice and their problems



need to be addressed." I am going to have a good team and I will be one of the team members. People will feel the change of my administration. I am yet to form a cabinet. First, I will meet top leaders of the party to convey my regards in New Delhi for giving this opportunity. Later, in consultations with the top leaders, ministries will be allotted in a week's time," he said.

नाम परिवर्तन
सर्वसाधारण को सुचित किया जात है कि जामिले रिज्क-रजायम, मेरा आर्मी नं. JC 7040414, Rank-SUB आयु 46 वर्ष पता: सारा कस्तूरबा, लखीम-आगरा, बिहार-मोहासपुर पुलिस कस्टा इ कि मेरे पुत्र का नाम मेरे सखिब जामुदुद मे रिज्क अजित है। लेकिन सखी दुसरी की मावलीसो पर विविध प्रमाण पर कायदा बोर्ड सर्टिफिकेट पर जामिले रिज्क रिज्क अजित है जो कि एक ही व्यक्ति का नाम है। यह सला पर सही है अगर दुसरे कोई मुझे पाई जाती है तो मैं दुसरा रिज्कमर हूँ।



OBC RESERVATION DEMAND SPILLS OVER TO STREETS IN BHOPAL

The demand for 27 per cent reservation for other backward classes (OBC) in Madhya Pradesh has spilled over to streets with the organisation, OBC Mahasabha, holding a demonstration in Bhopal and trying to march to the CM House on Wednesday.

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Police resorted to mild baton charge and arrested several protesters near Ambedkar Park in Bhopal to disperse them. The office-bearers of the Mahasabha have accused the police of assaulting protesters, including women, while police officers claimed that the protesters abused cops and tried to assault them. Mahasabha national secretary alleged that many of their members were injured, and police had taken the arrested members to an unknown place.



Politics raged on the issue through the day with former chief minister Kamal Nath coming out in support of the protesting OBC Mahasabha members. "Our government decided to increase the reservation for the OBC section to 28 per cent from 14 per cent for their welfare. Due to lack of willpower, weak advocacy and poor presentation (in court), the reservation has not yet been implemented. Congress fully supports the agitation of the OBC Mahasabha," Nath tweeted. "I strongly condemn the use of

force, suppression and arrest of the people participating in the agitation to put forth their demands. If the government can't give justice to this section, it should at least not suppress them," Nath further said. The Kamal Nath-led Congress government had increased the reservation for OBC category to 27 per cent in March 2019. However, the MP High Court stayed this decision in the same month. Recently, on July 16, the High Court ordered continuation of interim stay on the decision and directed that the list of candidates selected through various

exams should be announced on the basis of 14 per cent reservation, while 13 per cent seats should be left vacant. Following this, the state government convened the meeting of its OBC welfare committee in the presence of Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan and decided that the MP government will challenge the High Court order in the Supreme Court. The OBC Mahasabha has, however, decided to take a path of agitation to push their demand for increased reservation quota. Putting in BJP and government versions on Wednesday, Urban Development and Housing Minister Bhupendra Singh said the BJP was totally in favour of OBC reservation of 27 per cent. The state government will be making a strong point in the court in favour of this increased reservation. "Rather, the Congress does not want the OBC reservation of 27 per cent. The Congress has always been against OBCs and there has never been an OBC chief minister of the party in the state. This section was not given any constitutional post. We are making all efforts to implement the increased reservation and I appeal to the protesters to call off their agitation," Singh said.

MP 12th Result 2021 Date, Time: MPBSE Class 12 Result Today

MP 12th Result 2021 Date, Time has been announced by the Madhya Pradesh State Board. Students would be able to check their MPBSE Class 12 Result tomorrow, July 29, 2021 at 12 pm on



Team Absolute | Bhopal

Madhya Pradesh, MP 12th Result 2021 Date, Time has been announced by the Madhya Pradesh Board of Secondary Education. MPBSE Class 12 Result would be announced on Thursday, July 29, 2021 at 12 pm. Students can check their MP 12th Result 2021 once released on the official website, mpresults.nic.in. As per MPBSE press statement, approximately 7.5 lakh students were registered for class 12 exams. Earlier, Madhya Pradesh State Board had cancelled the Class 12 examination due to COVID 19 pandemic and decided to prepare result on the basis of

internal assessment policy. Now that MP 12th Result 2021 Date, Time has been announced, students are advised to keep their credentials ready to check their results. The board has released an official notice mentioning MP 12th Result 2021 Date, Time. MPBSE notice reads, "The Board of Secondary Education will declare the class 12th result on July 29, 2021 at 12 noon." Students must download their MP board admit card 2021 for class 12 as they would be able to check their results through roll number. MPBSE Class 12 Result has been prepared on the basis of Class 10 marks. Students are marked on the basis of best of 5 marks scored in their

Class 10 board exams. However, the state government had earlier made it clear that the students who are not satisfied with their results can appear for a special examination to be held soon after the announcement of the results. Students can also check MP 12th Result 2021 Date, Time on the official websites shared above. In 2020, a total of 8.5 lakh students appeared for the Class 12 examinations, of which 68.81% passed. The year, the board is expected to achieve a higher pass percentage compared to that of last year. Keep following this page and the official website shared above for more updates on MP 12th Result 2021 Date, Time.

OXYGEN PLANT INAUGURATED AT LNCT PREMISES



Bhopal: (JAAP) Air product oxygen plant inaugurated by Omprakash Saklecha, Minister for MSME, Information and Technology, Madhya Pradesh at LNCT premises, Raisen Road, Bhopal. Former Pro-tem Speaker and MLA from Huzur Constituency, Bhopal, Rameshwar Sharma was special guest. JN Chouksey - Chancellor LNCT University, Poonam Chouksey - Vice Chairperson of group, Poja Chouksey & Shweta Chouksey - Director, Dr Anupam Chouksey - Secretary LNCT, Dharmendra Gupta - Director JK Hospital were among other dignitaries were present.

MP ties up with UNESCO for heritage development of Gwalior, Orchha

"Madhya Pradesh since long has maintained a lot of potential for religious tourism. Now with this decisive partnership with UNESCO, historical, cultural and religious tourism will become even more prevalent."

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Madhya Pradesh government has joined hands with UNESCO for heritage-based sustainable urban development of its Gwalior and Orchha cities. The UNESCO is collaborating with the state Tourism Department on its 2011 recommendation on the historic urban landscape as an approach to guide heritage-based sustainable



urban development in the two historic cities. Launching the partnership, Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister, Shivraj Singh Chouhan said: "I thank the Government of India and UNESCO for their assistance and partnership, through which the we are preserving and enhancing our cultural heritage with complete determination." Madhya Pradesh since

long has maintained a lot of potential for religious tourism. Now with this decisive partnership with UNESCO, historical, cultural and religious tourism will become even more prevalent. "State Tourism, and Culture Minister Usha Thakur said that this project will take the two cities of Gwalior and Orchha to the heights of development, from a cultural and

spiritual perspective, while also protecting the natural heritage. "In this important partnership, we will fulfill our role for the planning and development of these two historical cities," she said. UNESCO New Delhi Director and Representative, Eric Falt said: "I would like to congratulate the commitment made by the Government of Madhya Pradesh to preserve its historic towns, which will play an important role to make the urban development of Madhya Pradesh in line with the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals." The UNESCO Historic Urban Landscape approach is a holistic means of integrating goals of urban heritage conservation with those of social and economic development. Gwalior and Orchha, as historical cities with a thriving culture and unique development needs, make excellent cases for this pilot project.

STR receives Earth NatWest Group Earth Heroes Award

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Madhya Pradesh has made another achievement in the field of nature conservation. The Satpura Tiger Reserve of the state has received the NatWest Group Earth Heroes Award in the Earth Guardian category for best management. Forest Minister Kunwar Vijay Shah has congratulated the staff associated with the management of Satpura Tiger Reserve. It is noteworthy that the Satpura Tiger Reserve has also been included in the potential list of World Heritage. Satpura Tiger Reserve in

Hoshangabad district is spread over an area of 2130 square kilometer. It is part of the Deccan Bio-Geographic Region. It is the oldest forest wealth of the country, full of unmatched natural beauty, which has been carefully preserved. The 26 species of flora found in the Himalayan region and 42 species found in the Nilgiri forests are also found abundantly in the Satpura forest area. That is why it is also named as the Northern Ghats like the vast Western Ghats. Some species like the insectivorous Ghataparni, Bamboo, Hisalu, Baruhaldi are found both in Satpura and the Himalayas.

Pregnant woman carried on cot across swollen river due to lack of bridge

Team Absolute | Chhindwara

A pregnant woman in labour had to be carried on a cot to a hospital, although the child delivered at the facility could not be saved. The incident took place due to the absence of a bridge across a swollen river in Chhindwara district, on Wednesday.

This occurred on Tuesday near Tekadhana village under Damua block, which falls under the Chhindwara Lok Sabha constituency earlier represented by Congress's state unit chief Kamal Nath. Dilip Batke, former sarpanch of the village, said that local people have been seeking a bridge over the Bhadanga river since a long time, but the demand has remained unfulfilled so far, which is causing hardships to them. "On Tuesday, Pinki, a 24-year-old vil-



lage woman, was in labour pain and due to rains the river was in spate. Therefore, some villagers decided to take her to the hospital located across the river by carrying her on a cot. They crossed the river by holding the cot over their shoulders, which posed a risk not only to the woman but to themselves," he said. Chhindwara is known for its development in the state, but this incident has exposed the tall claims, he said. "Tekadhana, which is situated about 70 km away from the district headquarters, turns into an island during the

rainy season every year. Local people have been demanding construction of a bridge over the river since a long time," Batke added. The villagers somehow took the woman to Rampur community health center and later to Damua government hospital, where Dr Sanjay Bhakar attended her. The doctor later told the villagers that since the woman's condition was serious, the child could not be saved. "The child could not be saved as the woman was brought to the hospital late in a serious condition," Batke quoted the doctor as saying. The woman was discharged from the hospital after treatment. Damua's chief municipal officer (CMO) P Khande said that people of the village have given a memorandum for the construction of the bridge a number of times and the same was forwarded to the district authorities.

CM PLANTS HARR SAPLING

Bhopal: Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan planted a sapling of Harr in the Bori Resort premises during his stay today. Chouhan has been planting saplings regularly since his announcement to plant saplings every day. In this sequence, he planted saplings today during his stay in Hoshangabad division. Harr tree is very useful in the form of medicine. Its fruit, bark and gum are used as medicine in asthma, stone, eye and heart diseases. The ripe fruit is used as an expectorant and tonic, as well as for cold sores and chronic ulcers, cough, asthma and urinary infections. Harr is used in making Triphala, which is consumed for stomach ailments. A paste of its root is made and applied in the eyes. In tribal areas, people chew its unroasted fruits for cough and the juice of the bark of its stem is given to cure stomach ache.



PROF. DAHERIA IS NEW VC OF HINDI VISHWAVIDYALAYA

Bhopal: Governor Mangubhai Patel has appointed Professor Khem Singh Daheria of Department of Hindi, Indira Gandhi National Tribal University, Amarkantak as Vice Chancellor of Atal Bihari Vajpayee Hindi Vishwavidyalaya, Bhopal. Governor Patel has appointed the Vice-Chancellor under sub-section I of Section-29 of the Atal Bihari Vajpayee Hindi University Act, 2011. The tenure of Professor Daheria as Vice-Chancellor shall be for a period of four years from the date of assumption of charge or the age of 70 years, whichever is earlier.



CM PAYS TRIBUTE TO PANDYA

Bhopal: Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan paid his tributes while condoling the untimely demise of retired Additional Director Public Relations Ravindra Pandya. Chouhan said that during his long service, Pandya rendered his services on various posts in Public Relations and other departments. He was earlier posted as a Press Officer in the Chief Minister's Office. Pandya was a gifted writer and a friendly and popular public relations officer. His services as a Public Relations Officers will always be remembered. He prayed to God to grant peace to the departed soul and strength to the family to bear this loss.

International Tiger Day 29 July

MP has the proud and responsible crown of Tiger State

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Madhya Pradesh got the status of Tiger State by occupying the top place with 526 tigers in the tiger census conducted three years ago at all India level. According to the preliminary indications of the census to be conducted this year, there is a strong possibility of Madhya Pradesh getting recognition as Tiger State this time also.

MP has held the tag of Tiger State in the last decade except in the census of the year 2010 and 2014 when the state of Karnataka remained at top place with maximum tigers.

The state government carried out several innovations to ensure wildlife conservation, due to which MP became the foundation stone of the process of Tiger State. In the last one and a half decade, 167 villages from protected areas were rehabilitated at suitable places to provide habitat for tigers and other wild animals. More than 15 thousand family units living with minimum facilities under inaccessible forest areas were brought out of the forests and settled in village-towns. As a result, wild animals got a free habitat without any disturbance. Along with this, the financial condition of the forest dwellers also improved. In all these innovations, an amount of Rs 900 crore was made available by the state government.

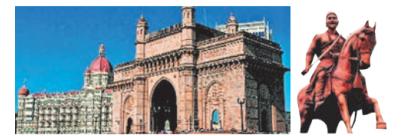
The tigers of the state are found not only in the Tiger Reserves but are also found roaming like other animals in other regional forest div-



sions even in the limits of big cities like Bhopal. In the year 2018, the tigers had become extinct in Panna. An active initiative was taken by the Forest Department for tiger conservation, in which tigers were brought from other protected areas and resettled in Panna Tiger Reserve. Due to the continuous efforts of last 9 years, today Panna Tiger Reserve has returned to its old glory. More than 20 adult tigers and 15 sub adult tigers/cubs are present here. Around 50 tigers including cubs are available in the entire Panna landscape. In the year 2005-06, a new initiative to release the abandoned orphan cubs in their natural habitat was started in the state. Due to this the orphaned tiger cubs reach the zoo. It was possible to release them into their natural habitat as soon as they became adults. In the Ghorela enclosure of Kanha Tiger Reserve, 9 tiger cubs have been released after they turned

adult. This success of the state has got fame all over the world as "Ghorela" model. Tiger census in India is done every 4 years. It has three stages. In the first phase, the data of tigers, other carnivorous and large herbivorous animals, i.e. their claw prints, their droppings, scratch marks and the hunts made by them etc. are collected. This tiger assessment is called "Phase One". This process lasts for a week. Forest employees visit the forests on these seven days to mark the presence of wild animals for the first three days and for the next three days their numbers are collected through the direct presence of wild animals. In the second phase, tiger assessment is done by scientists in laboratories. Scientists collect data about the status of the tiger's habitat area by studying the data collected by satellite. In the third phase, pictures of the presence of tigers are

taken by camera trapping. Statistical analysis of the data and evidence found in these three phases is used to estimate the number of tigers in an area. In the All India Tiger Census, the census work is done in about 30 thousand beats all over India. In this, 9 thousand beats are present only in Madhya Pradesh. This is a very labour intensive and extensive task. Accepting this challenge, the State Forest Department started carrying out its preparations from the year 2017. Under this, several stages of forest guards were organised and they were made capable of it. In this way, the difficult work is calculated in an efficient manner. The tiger is known to be a fearsome and powerful animal. Its roar and growl are terrifying as well as intimidating. Its roar is heard up to a range of 3 km. The hind legs of a tiger are longer compared to the front legs. With this, it can jump 20 to 30 feet at a time. The lower part of the legs of the tiger is padded. Because of this, it quietly reaches close to the victim. The tiger has the ability to run at a speed of 60 kilometers per hour. The specialty of the tiger is that it lives alone and not in a group. Males and females assemble during the breeding season. After the cub is born, it stays with its mother for one and a half to two years and becomes proficient in the art of hunting. The tiger hunts in a clever and agile way and more often during the night. It is well known that it attacks the prey suddenly from behind by ambushing in the bushes.



ANIL DESHMUKH CASE: CBI SEARCHES 12 LOCATIONS IN MAHARASHTRA

Deshmukh has been charged under Section 7 of the amended Prevention of Corruption Act which deals with illegal gratification obtained by a public servant, and Section 120 B (criminal conspiracy) of the Indian Penal Code (IPC).

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Moving ahead in its investigation into the alleged bribery case involving former Maharashtra Home Minister and NCP leader Anil Deshmukh with allegations of bribery and misuse of office, the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) has carried out searches at 12 locations in Maharashtra, including the residence of ACP Sanjay Patil and DCP Raju Bhujbal.

A CBI source told IANS, "Searches at 12 locations in Maharashtra were conducted on Tuesday after the roles of several people came up."

The source said that the agency carried out searches at the residential premises of ACP Patil in Mumbai and Pune while residential premises of DCP Bhujbal in Mumbai and Ahmednagar. The source said,



besides ACP and the DCP, the CBI also carried out searches at premises of several middlemen in Nashik, Sangli, Thane, Solapur and Usmanabad districts.

The CBI booked Deshmukh and

several others on April 21 after carrying a preliminary enquiry on the orders of the Bombay High Court. The court had passed directions on the basis of a petition filed by former Mumbai police commissioner

Param Bir Singh, who alleged Deshmukh had demanded Rs 100 crore be collected as bribes from bars and restaurants in the city.

On March 20, Singh, in an eight-page letter to Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray, alleged that Deshmukh asked now suspended API Sachin Waze to collect Rs 100 crore every month, including Rs 40-50 crore, from 1,750 bars and restaurants in Mumbai. Deshmukh has been charged under Section 7 of the amended Prevention of Corruption Act which deals with illegal gratification obtained by a public servant, and Section 120 B (criminal conspiracy) of the Indian Penal Code (IPC). According to CBI officials, case against Deshmukh was registered after the agency was satisfied there was enough evidence to proceed with a regular case against the NCP leader.

No bail for Raj Kundra in porn case

Kundra, through Senior Advocate Abad Ponda, has filed a separate petition in the Bombay High Court challenging his arrest, which he contended was "illegal," and pressed for quashing all orders of the Metropolitan Magistrate Court remanding him to police and then judicial custody.

Team Absolute | Mumbai

In a huge setback, a Mumbai court on Wednesday refused to grant bail to businessman Raj Kundra and his associate Ryan Thorpe in a case pertaining to alleged production and distribution of porn films.

Accordingly, Kundra -- who was arrested on July 19 by the Mumbai Police -- will remain in judicial custody till August 10, as granted by the court on Tuesday.



Kundra, through Senior Advocate Abad Ponda, has filed a separate petition in the Bombay High Court challenging his arrest, which he contended was "illegal," and pressed for quashing all orders of the Metropolitan Magistrate Court remanding him to police and then judicial custody.

However, on Tuesday, Justice AS Gadkari refused

to grant any interim relief before hearing the police version in the matter and the next hearing has been scheduled for Thursday (July 29).

Kundra is the husband of Bollywood actress Shilpa Shetty and last week the police raided their Juhu home and also recorded her statement, even as the case sent shockwaves through Bollywood.

SIDBI - TransUnion CIBIL MSME Pulse Report

MSME Credit Demand Surges as Markets Open Post Unlock in Jun '21

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Findings from the latest edition of the SIDBI - TransUnion CIBIL MSME Pulse Report indicate that in FY 2021, loans worth Rs 9.5 lakh crores were disbursed to MSMEs. This amount is much higher than the preceding year - FY 2020, when loans amounting to Rs 6.8 lakh crores were disbursed. Government interventions like Emergency Credit Line Guarantee Scheme (ECLGS) under the AtmaNirbhar Bharat program was the major factor in driving this significant surge in credit disbursement to MSMEs. The total on-balance sheet commercial lending exposure in India stood at Rs 74.36 lakh crores in March '21, with YOY growth rate of 0.6%. MSME segment's credit exposure stood at Rs 20.21 lakh crores as of March '21, showing YOY growth rate of 6.6%. This credit growth is observed across all the sub segments of MSME lending.

Report analysis shows a significant surge in credit demand post unlocks after the 1st and 2nd wave of the pandemic. Followed by the initial drop in commercial credit enquiries by 76% during the 1st wave, they recovered rapidly backed by ECLGS intervention and have since sustained close to pre-COVID-19 levels. March '21 commercial credit enquiries were at 32% over pre-COVID-19 levels; this strong momentum was impacted by the 2nd wave, but June '21 again showed a sharp recovery to pre-COVID-19 levels. Speaking on the findings of the MSME Pulse, Sivasubramanian Ramann, Chairman and Managing Director of SIDBI said, "The MSME credit data speaks volumes of success of ECLGS scheme. The scheme has played a major role in 40% YOY growth in disbursements to the sector, thereby reviving the business sentiments among the MSMEs."

Covid attacks: Will avoid 4th time, vows thrice-infected Mumbai medico

Team Absolute | Mumbai

A young Mumbai medico, Dr Shrushti D Halari who shot into national headlines after getting infected thrice by Covid - now vows to ensure the virus doesn't attack her a fourth time.

Dr Shrushti, 26, was first infected on June 17, 2020, while on Covid-19 duty at BMC's Veer Savarkar Hospital in Mulund, and twice again in May and July, after getting fully vaccinated.

She hails from a Gujarati family of medicos, originally of Dholera, with her father Dr Deepak, mother Dr Vaishali, and her younger brother Dhawal, studying for his MBBS, are all fully vaccinated.

Dr Shrushti completed her 3-month assignment and was at home preparing for her MD and later higher medical studies in the US. The entire family also took the two doses of Covishield vaccines in early-March and late-April.

However, the family was perturbed when Dr Shrushti was infected for the second time on May 29 - despite having been fully vaccinated, but recovered fully.

The big shock came on July 11, when the entire Halari family was infected and hospitalized, put on Remdesivir, barely 3 months after their second vaccine doses.

Not suffering from any comorbidity, Dr Shrushti's third encounter with Covid-19



stunned even the medical fraternity with the BrihanMumbai Municipal Corporation officials and other experts terming it as "an unprecedented, extremely rare occurrence".

The BMC has taken the swabs of Dr Shrushti and Dhawal for further analysis by Foundation for Medical Research, to ascertain the type of Covid-19 variant/s that may have struck the Halari family - three with comorbidities, and after getting fully inoculated.

The third time in July "was probably due to Dr Shrushti's low immunity levels on account of her two previous infections and the likely new strains of the virus that are coming to the fore in recent months", surmised Dr Vaishali.

"Actually, even the doctors initially did not believe it was possible, but after our physician Dr Mehul Thakkar's advice, she went for the tests which came positive and she was hospitalized early the next morning," added Dr Vaishali, narrating the harrowing time the Halari household had experienced.

"This has been very tough for the entire family. Now, we shall ensure there is no 4th time," Dr Shrushti said with soft determination. (to IANS).

Dr Vaishali, 48, said the reason the family could emerge from Covid-19 successfully was due to their vaccination doses, medical knowledge, catching the symptoms in time

and getting prompt treatment.

"We consider ourselves fortunate to be fully vaccinated as later it proved to be beneficial for all of us," Dr Vaishali, who is a severe diabetic patient, as also her son Dhawal, 21, and husband Dr Deepak, 56, who suffers from high blood pressure and cholesterol, told IANS. She pointed out that the vaccination doses also helped ensure that their infection was not so severe and now the entire family has completely recovered.

Commenting on the issue, Mumbai researcher-cum-scientist Dr Pradeep Mahajan - Chairman of StemRx Biosciences Solutions Pvt Ltd, said that there's "no permanent cure" for Covid-19 in the world.

"It can strike even after full vaccination as the virus keep mutating, so inoculation is not a 100 per cent guarantee of avoiding Covid-19 altogether," Dr Mahajan - who has pioneered the unique stem cell/platlet-based remedy for the disease, told IANS.

He said that at the rate the virus mutants are being detected, in the near future, vaccination may become compulsory every year, and some global pharma giants are already preparing to give a third booster dose to people in Europe and other countries.

Now in the national limelight, the Halari family is keeping fingers crossed, taking all precautions and adhering to all Covid protocols to keep the virus from visiting their home again.

Retailers call for reopening of malls in Maharashtra

National body of retailers says over two lakh jobs have been affected due to the closure of nearly 50 malls in the state, which has also hit businesses worth Rs 40,000 crore

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Raising concerns over the state of the retail sector, traders have sought immediate relaxation in lockdown guidelines across Maharashtra, particularly in Mumbai, to allow the reopening of malls. The Retailers Association of India (RAI) has pointed out that prolonged closure of malls has seriously jeopardised the entire ecosystem that they support.

Malls in the state have remained shut for over three months since the second wave of Covid-19 hit the region. The association Wednesday issued a statement highlighting that over two lakh jobs have been affected due to the closure of nearly 50 malls in the state which, in turn, has also hit businesses worth Rs 40,000 crore that contribute to a



GST revenue of up to Rs 4,000 crore per month.

Owners of malls and shopping centres said each day of shutdown not only hurts businesses but also the livelihoods of employees.

"It is important that the Maharashtra government considers reopening of formal retail spaces, such as malls and shopping centres, at the earliest as they are centres of significant economic activity. In addition to contributing to the exchequer in the form of taxes, they support several livelihoods, including those of vendors, retailers and employ-

ees," said Kumar Rajgopalan, CEO of RAI.

"The reopening of malls will not only help save jobs and businesses but will also pave the way for citizens to shop in a safe and sanitised environment. Malls have the ability to handle crowds more efficiently and safely than markets and hence should be allowed to operate along with stand-alone shops and markets," he said. RAI said the governments of Delhi and Haryana have set an example by reopening malls along with other markets.

"On an average, a mall has 200 retail stores operating in it and over 5,000 business entities associated with it as suppliers and vendors. Restarting malls will help ensure the survival of this ecosystem," the association's statement said.

Most parts of Maharashtra, including Mumbai, are currently in level-3 of Covid-19 restrictions under which only stand-alone shops selling non-essential goods are allowed to operate from 7 am to 4 pm on weekdays. Malls are yet to be opened.

Retailers said they were ready to comply with all Covid-19 protocols if the government permits reopening of malls.

On and off rains likely in Mumbai, Konkan; hefty showers ruled out

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Hefty Mumbai rains have taken a backseat in Mumbai and only short spells of showers have been making an appearance over the commercial capital. In fact, in the past 24 hours as well only light to moderate showers have been reported over Mumbai.

Other parts of Konkan and Maharashtra have also seen a similar trend with rainfall activity being on the light to moderate side itself. During the last 24 hours from 8:30 am yesterday, it was only Mahabaleshwar in Maharashtra that saw heavy rains of 81 mm. Thane recorded 16 mm, Santa Cruz in



Mumbai 14 mm, Colaba in Mumbai 6 mm with similar figures recorded along the coastline. Now, coming to the weather forecast for Mumbai, one can expect on and off light to moderate showers over Mumbai until the end of July. One odd spell of heavy showers cannot be ruled out. Other parts of Konkan including Dahanu, Ratnagiri, Sindhudurg will see light to moderate showers with isolated heavy spells. These rains could spill on

the other side of the Ghats as well and some rainfall activity is expected over Sangli, Satara, Kolhapur, Sholapur as well. Whenever a system forms in Bay of Bengal, the Monsoon surge activates along the West Coast resulting in heavy rains in Konkan etc. However, this system is following more of a northerly track along the Indo Gangetic Plains, thus, rains in West Coast will not be as heavy but some rainfall activity is expected.

Urmila Matondkar seeks to spread cheer in flood-ravaged Maha hamlets

Accompanied by a vehicle loaded with relief supplies and abundance of radiance, she descended on the tiny village where scores of smiling and cheering villagers welcomed her with love and affection.

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Amid the gloom that has engulfed the flood-ravaged districts of Maharashtra, Shiv Sena's glam leader Urmila Matondkar on Wednesday sought to cheer up the people in a couple of villages in Raigad and Ratnagiri, and returned with a lesson on human sufferings.

Urmila drove down this morning to tiny Dadli village and surrounding hamlets in Raigad and later in Ratnagiri - that were completely washed away in last week's rain fury which fuelled the floods in the district and wreaked havoc all over.

Accompanied by a vehicle loaded with relief supplies and abundance of radiance, she descended on the tiny village where scores of smiling and cheering villagers welcomed her with love and affection.

Clad in an earthy-brown salwar-suit with a white dupatta, Urmila reciprocated with equal warmth, mingling freely with the flood-affected folks, lifting a couple of giggling kids, touching some of the shy women and attempting to break the ice with small talk.

At one spot on the outskirts of Dadli, she learnt of a couple and a brother, mentally challenged, who lost everything



including their two bullocks.

Their humble and devastated dwelling was a few meters away from the road, but the undaunted Urmila nonchalantly stepped into nearly 2-3 feet deep muck and sludge, trudged to the family who could scarcely believe their eyes.

"I tried to console them... Offered them some aid kits, and tried to boost their spirits. I promised them that things will improve for them in future and then later they could invite me for a cup of tea," Urmila told IANS from the spot.

A member of her team later informed that she chatted with the villagers, enquired after their welfare, the status of their near and dear ones, and whether the flood survivors were able to get proper food, water, clothing and other items for survival.

In Chiplun - one of the worst-hit areas which was under 15-20 feet water and now has a mournful countenance, she interacted with a few hundred people and distributed aid material. "While in Kolkata for a shoot last week, I had watched shocking images of the Chiplun bus depot which was submerged in 10-12 feet water with only the bus roof visible - and, right now I am standing here and seeing the wreck and ruin caused by the floods," Urmila added.

Shaken to her soul by what she witnessed in her few hours long whirlwind tour, Urmila said the calamity is too huge for words and it will take long for the affected people to return to normalcy.

Maharashtra to further relax lockdown norms? Minister says decision likely soon

Team Absolute | Mumbai

As fresh Covid-19 cases seem to stabilise in Maharashtra, more relaxations in the lockdown norms may be given in the next few days, said state minister Aslam Shaikh on Wednesday.

According to Shaikh, several ministers in the Maha Vikas Aghadi alliance government feel that people who are vaccinated with two doses should be permitted to travel. Further, restaurants may be allowed to stay open for a longer duration. "A decision will be taken soon," he said. The state government has been facing pressure from various quarters to relax rules as several businesses encounter economic hardships. The state reported 6,258 new coronavirus cases

and 254 fatalities on Tuesday, raising its overall infection tally to 62,76,057 and death toll to 1,31,859. With 12,645 patients being discharged from hospitals during the day, the count of recoveries went up to 60,58,751, leaving Maharashtra with 82,082 active cases. The recovery rate stands at 96.54% while the fatality rate is 2.01%.

The Mumbai region reported 1,023 new Covid-19 cases and 39 fatalities, including 344 cases and five fatalities in Mumbai city. Pune region reported 2,356 new cases and 44 fresh fatalities including 222 new cases and two fatalities in Pune city. Since fresh infections are going down even in the regions that were among the worst affected, some curbs may be eased.



EDITOR'S SPECS

Hepatitis: Highly dangerous as Covid

Hepatitis is the second most common infection with high mortality rate after tuberculosis in India, and it is estimated that around 5 crore Indians suffer from Hepatitis-B infections while more than 1.2 crore from Hepatitis-C. On the eve of World Hepatitis Day, experts said vaccination against this virus is as important as against coronavirus. The World Health Organisation considers hepatitis as a serious ailment, and WHO's theme for this year is "Hepatitis can't wait", conveying the urgency of efforts needed to eliminate hepatitis as a public health threat by 2030. With a person dying every 30 seconds from a hepatitis-related illness, it is important to note that India can't wait to act on viral hepatitis. According to experts, Hepatitis-B is the second most common cause of cirrhosis in India, after alcohol consumption, and is the leading cause of liver cancers in India. Being the most important organ of the body, the liver is involved in a multitude of functions and any abnormality or restriction in its function can severely affect the body and can even lead to death. The inflammation of liver is called hepatitis and is caused due to viral hepatitis, alcohol consumption, drug toxicity, autoimmune etc. Excess fat accumulated in the liver too can cause liver damage. For many years, a safe and effective vaccine that offers a 98-100 per cent protection against Hepatitis-B is available in India and around the world. Preventing Hepatitis-B infection averts the development of complications including the development of liver cirrhosis and liver cancer. Healthcare sector in the country must highlight the importance of addressing the prevention of mother-to-child transmission of HBV and call for increased domestic and international awareness programmes, to prevent Hepatitis-B mother-to-child transmission and expand access to hepatitis prevention, testing and treatment services, with a view to achieving the 2030 elimination targets.

MAHARASHTRA'S RECORD RAIN PROVES WE DON'T HAVE TIME

Aaditya Thackeray

The past few years have seen a massive shift in our global climate systems, a fact that we are living with. For most of us in India, unbearably hot summers, colder winters and wetter monsoons are a norm now, setting a new high each time. Despite that, some of us still haven't realized that climate change isn't limited to faraway melting polar caps and the retreating glaciers, but that it is in our own backyards. The question really is: can we stop climate change? Although the climate change agenda has picked up a good momentum and while many countries around the world have set ambitious targets, and some are working towards it, the human race at large still believes that nature will heal itself and we can carry on with our daily activities that have large carbon footprints. While we term this as the last decade for us to do our bit to repair nature, restore our planet, my personal firm belief is that by giving ourselves a decade to repair the damage, we are kidding ourselves into believing we have the (false) luxury of time. The larger question is: to what extent are we willing to stretch ourselves to do our bit for the planet? What will it take to make us realize the damage we inflict on the ecology and the economy? The Australian bush fires of 2019 cost billions of dollars, with hundreds of direct and indirect deaths, thousands of homes lost or affected, and millions of hectares burnt to ashes. The United States of America as of July 9 has faced 1 drought, 2 flooding incidents, 4 severe storms, 1 severe winter storm and multiple forest fires raging through different parts of the country - all in just one year. Canada over the last four years has seen extreme cold (up to -60 deg Celsius) to extreme high temperatures (up to 49.6 deg Celsius). As of this year, Germany, Belgium, United Kingdom are facing torrential rainfall, floods, landslides of the likes shown in movies. As we read this, Maharashtra has faced one of its worst climate change crises in the past few years. The days of monsoons have reduced and the amount of rainfall in a shorter period of time has increased, almost



like several mini-cloud bursts. Apart from which, the numbers of "hottest day yet" have remained consistent each year, while also seeing two cyclonic storms batter the coastal regions of the state like never before within a span of 11 months. This week, the districts of Kolhapur, Sangli, Satara, Raigad, Ratnagiri, Sindhudurg have been lashed by unprecedented rainfall, leading to massive landslides. Towns are under water, farms have been destroyed, people were buried alive. A week prior to the floods in the earlier mentioned districts, Mumbai, Pune, Thane faced unprecedented rainfall, leading to water-logging and landslides. Maharashtra has faced a red-alert situation for over a week at large. What is unique about the landslides in all the cases of Mumbai is that in each location the mud, flood water and debris have broken through protection walls built to prevent landslides, only proving the fury of nature. Along with Maharashtra, states like Kerala, Goa, Karnataka, Telangana, Gujarat have been constantly battered by extreme climate change events. Delhi and Uttarakhand have not been spared either. It's about time that we recognize that this is no longer urban flooding due to crumbling infrastructure. Even as cities upgrade their

storm water drains and pumping stations, the amount of rainfall in a smaller cycle is something that is beyond the grasp of any urban planner today. Change in seasons, extremities in weather events, unpredictable natural disasters have been the norm for at least a decade. For a country like India, it will not just be the hinterlands that will be affected, but cities too. Migration will be chaotic as we find safer grounds to move to in the face of urban and rural natural disasters, and no place is safe anymore. Living standards, life and job security, food security, water security is all at stake for a country like ours, where the monsoon is often said to be "the real Finance Minister." Climate change mitigation and adaptation on behalf of governments and administrators must mean that every decision is weighed against the danger it poses against, or the possibilities it creates, for the environment. For citizens, it must mean moving beyond a movement or a weekend activity to marking a lifestyle change. Another fact we need to establish is without development, there cannot be any good news for the environment. Without the development of renewable energy, charging stations, electric vehicles, we

cannot have a reduction in carbon footprint. Without newly-built eco-friendly green buildings, our sewers will keep getting untreated wastewater that is dumped into the sea. Without modern-day heating systems or cooking methods, we will keep hacking trees for firewood. Without digitization, we will keep hacking forests for paper. The key though is "sustainability". Development and environment are complimentary to each other as long as the development is sustainable and is measured as per the environmental impact it creates in an honest way. For India, we need a National Council of Climate Change Action headed by none other than the Prime Minister and consulted by all the Forest and Environment Ministers and climate change scientists. Although we are administratively separated as States, we share the same future that can either be of hope or doom. Climate change affects us all and therefore this council should have as much importance and need as much as the GST Council or the NITI Aayog. I am a firm believer that India can lead the way in climate change mitigation and adaptation, globally. Our roots of the Vedic worship stem from worshipping the five elements of nature, while our recent past has seen our grandparents lead a life that was sustainable, away from the "use and throw" culture. Our present-day talent of scientists and engineers can absolutely help us innovate newer ways to tackle climate change. When 1.3 billion people take lead, the impact on the world will be tremendous. All we need to do is to accept we in a time of faster-than-ever-before climate change - and we are the catalysts for the same. (Aaditya Thackeray is a cabinet minister in the Maharashtra government. He holds the environment, tourism and protocol portfolios. The opinions expressed within this article are the personal opinions of the author. The facts and opinions appearing in the article do not reflect the views of Absolute India and Absolute India does not assume any responsibility or liability for the same.)

international

AT A TIME OF DEMOCRATIC RECESSION, ITS VITAL THAT US, INDIA STAND TOGETHER: BLINKEN

Team Absolute | New Delhi A time of rising global threats to democracy and international freedoms -- we talk about a democratic recession -- it's vital that we two world leading democracies continue to stand together in support of these ideals," US Secretary of State Antony Blinken said here on Wednesday. On the first day of his visit to India, Blinken while addressing civil society representatives said, "Here in India, that includes the free media, independent courts, a vibrant and free and fair electoral system -- the largest expression of free political will by citizens anywhere in the world." "We also know that successful democracies include thriving civil societies. That's how citizens become more fully engaged in the life of their communities. It's how we organize and provide the resources to respond to emergencies. And we've seen people and organizations come together throughout Covid-19 in creative and



incredibly generous ways, and civil society is also where we're able to build meaningful connections across our social, religious, and cultural differences," Blinken said. "In short, if we want to make our democracies more open, more inclusive, more resilient, more equitable, we need a vibrant civil society," he added. "And I'm really here to underscore the importance of the relationships between our countries, to try to deepen our ties and extend our cooperation. I think it's hard to find countries with more -- who do more together in more different areas than with the United States and India," Blinken said. "Later today, I'll have a chance to see Prime Minister Modi, External Affairs Minister Jaishankar, an old friend and colleague. We'll talk about many of the critical issues our

countries are working on together, from Covid-19 to climate change, defense, mutual security, trade and investment, education, energy, science, technology. The list goes on and on," Blinken said. "When you put it all together, the relationship between our countries is one of the most important in the world. And I think that's because not only is it a relationship between governments when we're working between our governments, but critically it's through relationships between the Indian and the American people. We're connected in so many different ways -- business ties, university ties, religious and spiritual ties, and of course, millions of family ties," Blinken said. US Secretary of State Antony Blinken commenced his India visit with an address to civil society leaders. Attendees included religious leaders such as Geshe Dorji Damdul of New Delhi's Tibet House, a cultural centre of the Dalai Lama.

Tibetan President thanks US for flagging China's abuses

Dharamsala | Agencies

The President of the Central Tibetan Administration (CTA), Penpa Tsering, said on Tuesday that he is encouraged that concerns about the ongoing abuses in Tibet are being raised by the US, and hoped that China would put an end to 60 long years of repression in Tibet. "I am encouraged that concerns about the ongoing abuses in Tibet were raised by US Deputy Secretary of State Wendy Sherman with the Chinese Foreign Minister," Tsering said in a tweet. "I hope the Chinese leadership heeds the call and puts an end to 60 long years of repression and suffering of Tibetans in Tibet," he added. His response came after the US Deputy Secretary of State's expression of concern. Sherman had raised concerns about China's violation of human rights in Tibet, East Turkestan and Hong Kong, during her visit to China on July 25-26, according to a press note issued by US government spokesperson Ned Price. The concerns were raised during meetings with China's State Councillor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi and other senior officials of the Chinese government. The note quoting Price said: "The Deputy



Secretary raised concerns in private -- as we have in public -- about a range of PRC actions that run counter to our values and interests and those of our allies and partners, and that undermine the international rules-based order. "In particular, she raised our concerns about human rights, including Beijing's anti-democratic crackdown in Hong Kong; the ongoing genocide and crimes against humanity in Xinjiang; abuses in Tibet; and the curtailing of media access and freedom of the press." She also spoke of our concerns about Beijing's conduct in cyberspace; across the Taiwan Strait; and in the East and South China Seas."

Typhoon Nepartak makes landfall in Japan

Nepartak was moving north-northwest at about 30 kph with an atmospheric pressure of 994 hecto-pascals at its center, as the speed of winds reached up to 72 km per hour and maximum gusts of 108 km per hour, the JMA said.



region of Ishinomaki shortly before 6:00 a.m. local time, bringing strong winds and high waves, but is projected to weaken into an extra-tropical cyclone later in the day as it crosses the northeast area and heads toward the Sea of Japan, according to the JMA. Nepartak was moving north-northwest at about 30 kph with an atmospheric pressure of 994 hecto-pascals at its center, as the speed of winds reached up to 72 km per hour and maximum gusts of 108 km per hour, the JMA said. Meanwhile, winds of more than 54 km per hour are blowing within 500 km north and 390 km south of the center, the Xinhua news agency reported.

Tokyo | Agencies

The Japan Meteorological Agency (JMA) said that typhoon Nepartak has turned northward and made landfall on the Pacific coast of the northeastern Miyagi prefecture on Wednesday morning, veering off its primarily expected course toward the Tokyo area, local media reported. The season's eighth typhoon reached the nearby

WH considering vaccine mandate for all federal workers: Biden

Washington | Agencies

That's under consideration right now," he said on Tuesday in response to a reporter's question at an appearance. "If you're not vaccinated, you're not nearly as smart as I thought you were." "On Thursday, I will lay out the next steps in our effort to get more Americans vaccinated," the president said in a statement issued afterward, Xinhua reported. Biden's remarks came against the backdrop of waning vaccination rates in the country despite wide availability of the shots, and as the spread of the more transmissible Delta variant caused a worrisome uptick in caseloads. There are some 4 million employees in total in the executive branch of the federal government, including civilian workers, men and women in uniform, as well as Postal Service personnel, according to government estimates updated in June. It's not yet clear whether the federal vaccine mandate being discussed will apply to members of the military.

US President Joe Biden has said his administration is considering a mandate that requires all federal workers to be vaccinated against Covid-19, escalating the push for vaccination amid the rampant spread of the Delta variant and still-high vaccine hesitancy rates in parts of the country.



The Department of Veterans Affairs on Monday announced mandatory vaccination requirement for its healthcare workers, making it the first federal agency to impose such an order. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), meanwhile, updated its mask guidance Tuesday, now asking fully vaccinated people and kids to wear masks indoors in places with high

COVID-19 transmission rates. Biden in the statement urged Americans to follow the CDC's new guidance, calling the change "another step on our journey to defeating this virus." "I hope all Americans who live in the areas covered by the CDC guidance will follow it; I certainly will when I travel to these areas," read Biden's statement.

Laos opposes politicisation of vaccines, Covid-19 origin tracing

Vientiane | Agencies

The Lao Ministry of Foreign Affairs has said that politicization of vaccines or the origin tracing of Covid-19 virus should be avoided. In a statement dated last Thursday, a spokesperson for the ministry called for "concerted and genuine cooperation and partnership among nations across the world," especially in the face of the current wave of outbreak in which Covid-19 mutation has become more contagious and resistant to available vaccines, the Xinhua news agency reported. "In this context, genuine cooperation should be strongly promoted through development and production of vaccines and medicines," the spokesperson said, adding that "politicization of vaccines or the ori-



gin-tracing of Covid-19 virus should be avoided, as it is a complex scientific matter that requires objective, transparent, inclusive and purely scientific based efforts. "Only through multilateral cooperation, all nations, especially developing countries, would be able to have equal access to vaccines and medicines and thus Covid-19 would be defeated," the spokesperson said. "Lao People's Democratic Republic stands ready to support and contribute to this endeavour," the spokesperson added.



ADELE TIPPED FOR 'MULTIMILLION DOLLAR' LAS VEGAS RESIDENCY

Los Angeles | Agencies

Adele will make her return to the stage with Las Vegas residency in January. Sources in Sin City say she is considering a residency at the strip's newest venue, Resorts World and it has been claimed she could make as much as £100,000 a night.

The Las Vegas Strip has hosted residencies by the world's biggest stars, including Elton John, Mariah Carey, Britney Spears and Lady Gaga. Now Adele - one of the world's best-known voices - is also poised to set up shop in the famous-boulevard of hotels and casinos.

The venue has already hosted performers including Celine Dion, Katy Perry and Carrie

Underwood and it has been claimed that Adele could follow in their footsteps, as soon as January next year.

Adele's last concert, in June 2017, was to 97,500 fans at Wembley Stadium - even though the singer has spoken at length about her problems with stage fright and facing large crowds. The Vegas residency could be perfect for her, as the venue has a capacity of just 5,000. During Adele's last tour she also spoke about how she was not keen to perform around the world in future, as she would prefer to stay in one place for the sake of son Angelo, who is now eight.

The superstar's third album 25 was released in 2015 and all signs point to an imminent return to music.



No time to plan my wedding: Jenna Dewan

Los Angeles | Agencies

Actress Jenna Dewan says she has had no time to discuss her wedding plans with fiancé Steve Kazee, because she's been too busy raising their baby son Callum, who was born one month after the pair got engaged. "It's so funny, we hadn't even had a chance to talk much about our wedding. A month after we got engaged, I had Callum and then a week later, (coronavirus) quarantine began," Dewan said, reports femalefirst.co.uk. The 40-year-old actress, who also has eight-year-

old daughter Everly with former-husband and Hollywood star Channing Tatum, isn't too worried about her wedding plans though.

She also wants her wedding to be unconventional, as she wants to put an "emphasis on simplicity and on presence".

The actress added: "I am a firm believer in staying in the flow of life. I know I will know when it's right. Same goes for the details of the day. I definitely think in the past few years, there's been an emphasis on simplicity and on presence. I'm much more about making what's important real-

ly count, which is each other and our family and having a great time celebrating together."

The "Step Up" star is more interested in having a "meaningful gathering" with her loved ones rather than a "lavish party".

She told The Knot magazine: "At this time in my life, I am definitely more drawn to the meaningful gathering rather than the lavish party. I think it would be really beautiful to have a sustainable wedding dress or work with a designer to create something that is sustainable."

Liam getting back with ex Maya!

Los Angeles | Agencies

Liam Payne has been spotted cosying up to his former fiancée and American model Maya Henry. The couple was spotted dating at a plush poolside bar in upmarket Beaconsfield, Buckinghamshire. Liam wooed Maya with a £3million engagement ring during the first lockdown back in August 2020.

He then announced the pair had ended their ten-month engagement saying he needed to "work on" himself and admitting his actions were "hurting people".

But it looked like Liam was off Maya's naughty list as the old flames sipped cocktails at the exclusive Crazy Bear Hotel pool area before they whizzed off with two male pals in his Rolls-Royce on Sunday. The pair was first linked back in August 2018, shortly after Liam's high-profile split from Cheryl. The couple share son Bear, four. Revealing his split from Maya in June, Liam said: "I feel like more than anything at this point, I'm more disappointed in myself that I keep on hurting people."

LITTLE MIX WAXWORK UNVEILED WITH JESY NELSON

London | Agencies

Ex Little Mix singer Jesy Nelson has been immortalised as a waxwork beside her former bandmates at Madame Tussauds. The girl group pops with colour in the funky exhibit at the London tourist destination.

Jesy takes centre stage, despite quitting seven months ago focusing on her well-being. She can be seen in a blue corset, pink snake-print trousers and a huge fluffy lilac hat. Leigh-Anne Pinnoch sits on her right applauding in a pink and white blazer, while Perrie Edwards crosses her legs on a fluffy throne in thigh-high socks and a silky top. On the right Jade Thirlwall is eye-catching in a lime green minidress and matching elbow-high gloves.

Jesy previously said of the honour: "It's finally happened, Little Mix is at Madame Tussauds London. We're absolutely buzzing and it's the best ten year anniversary present that we could share with our fans."

The models were made before Leigh-Anne and Perrie were pregnant.



Ryan Reynolds loves 'hidden cameos' in 'Free Guy'

Los Angeles | Agencies

Hollywood star Ryan Reynolds feels that the audiences will love the "hidden cameos" in his upcoming sci-fi comedy film "Free Guy".

Asked for his favourite part of the movie, the 44-year-old star told CinemaBlend.com: "For me it's the Easter eggs, which there are so many Easter eggs in the movie. There's so many little hidden cameos, there's so many moments. I love movies that

acknowledge and play with the cultural landscape, and ('Free Guy') does that in ways that are unexpected and expected, I think."

The "Deadpool" actor tagged the new motion picture as a "fastball of joy", reports femalefirst.co.uk.

He said: "The movie's a fastball of joy, and that's what I wish for people right now; is to just have a couple of hours of pure joy in their lives and leave a theatre the same way I used to leave movie theatres. Just grinning from ear to ear at the experience."

His co-star Jodie Comer added that the movie is more than just "an action-comedy".

Comer said: "And I think for me as well, it's like 'an action-comedy', and everyone thinks, 'Oh I know what that's gonna be.'"

She added: "I think this film has an undertone and it has a message without kind of forcing it down people's throats, like, 'This is what you should take from this movie.' You end up coming away from it actually really moved, and feeling very connected."

ABSOLUTE PIC OF THE DAY



Reese Witherspoon

Bob Odenkirk hospitalised after collapsing on set

Los Angeles | Agencies

"Better Call Saul" star Bob Odenkirk was rushed to the hospital after collapsing on the set of the show.

The 58-year-old star is currently in production on the final season of "Better Call Saul," a spin-off of the wildly popular series "Breaking Bad", reports variety.com.

Odenkirk collapsed on Tuesday at the show's set in New Mexico

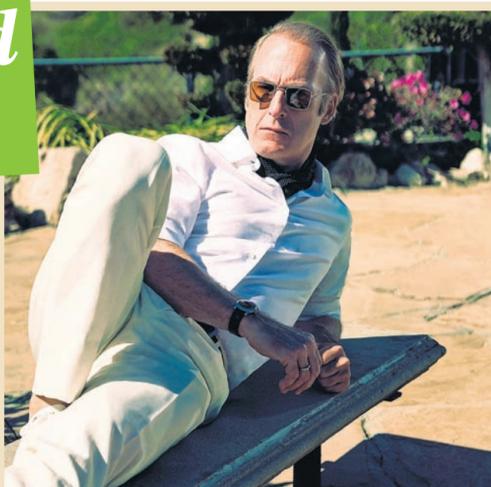
and crew members immediately called an ambulance. Odenkirk is still receiving medical care.

The cause of the collapse has not been disclosed.

The actor portrays con-man lawyer Saul Goodman in "Better Call Saul" and "Breaking Bad." "Better Call Saul" zeroes in on the character's transformation from the criminally-inclined Jimmy McGill to powerful criminal defence lawyer Saul.

Odenkirk's work on "Better Call Saul" has got him four Golden Globe nominations for best actor in a television series drama, and four Emmy nominations for outstanding lead actor in a drama series.

The actor recently starred in the action film "Nobody," which received generally favourable reviews from critics and debuted at the top of the box office charts.



All Eyes on on Rahi- Manu

TO SALVAGE INDIAN SHOOTERS' BATTERED IMAGE



New Delhi | Agencies

Shooters Rahi Sarnobat and Manu Bhaker will look to salvage India's bruised and battered reputation at the Tokyo Olympic Games when they compete in the 25m pistol event at the Asaka range on Thursday. Despite the 15-member contingent getting a nearly two-month long unhindered training-cum-competition stint in Croatia before the Olympic Games and the team being specially flown to Zagreb on a chartered flight to ensure the shooters' and

coaching staff's safety from Covid-19 infection, the squad had so far failed to win a single medal at the quadrennial games. Manu, who has fired blanks in both the women's 10m air pistol and mixed team air pistol event pairing Saurabh Chaudhary at the Olympics, will hope to get her famed touch back when she and the experienced Rahi Sarnobat take the field in the first Precision Round of qualification. Rahi, fresh from an ISSF World Cup stage gold in Osijek, Croatia, leading up to the Games, and Manu, will have to go through two days of qualification on Thursday and Friday (July

30), before the top eight are separated after the second rapid fire round. The 44-strong women's sport pistol field on Day 6 of the Olympic Shooting competition resembles the air pistol competition of Day 2 and will have all the finalists of that event, barring the Chinese who are fielding a different set of shooters. India have the experienced Rahi, the reigning 2018 Jakarta Asian Games champion, in place of Yashaswini Deswal who played the air pistol event. The 15-member shooting squad has six starts to go and is still searching for its first medal at the Games.

Badminton: Sindhu makes it to knockout round



Tokyo | Agencies

Rio Olympics silver-medallist in badminton, India's PV Sindhu entered the women's singles Round of 16 at the Tokyo Olympic Games on Wednesday, overcoming world No. 34 Cheung Ngan Yi of Hong Kong 21-9, 21-16 in her final Group I tie. Sindhu's better court cov-

erage and her use of the angles was the key to her victory against the 28-year old Cheung, who lost her sixth consecutive career match to the tall Indian shuttler. The sixth-seeded Sindhu raced to an 11-5 lead as Cheung fruitlessly tried to push the 26-year old Indian deep into the corners of the forehand backcourt, ending up pushing the shuttles long.

Sindhu, giving almost nothing in the forecourt with superb net play, soon wrapped up the first game 21-9. Cheung fought back in the second game, moving Sindhu to the far backhand corner and taking to a 7-6 lead. But as the rallies grew longer, Sindhu's power came to her rescue on several times. But Cheung's relentless onslaught kept her neck-

and-neck with the Sindhu, who sent a few shuttles wide in trying to end long rallies. Cheung's deception continued to keep her in the match, but Sindhu played an superb down-the-line smash from almost the edge of the backhand corner to make it 15-14. That charged up the Indian to move decisively ahead as she raised the intensity of her game to quickly set up six match points. Sindhu converted on the third, stepping into the net to smash her way to the top of her group and into the knockouts. Sindhu had defeated Ksenia Polikarpova of Israel 21-7, 21-10 in her opening group match on July 25. India's B Sai Praneeth will take on Mark Caljouw of the Netherlands in his final Group D men's singles match later today. Praneeth is out of contention for the knockouts, having lost to Israel's Mishla Zilberman in straight games in his first group match.

Resurgent Indian hockey team aims to get past Olympic champs Argentina

Tokyo | Agencies

Having registered a comprehensive 3-0 win over Spain, the Indian men's hockey team will look to keep the momentum going when they take on defending Olympic champions Argentina in their fourth match of the Tokyo Olympics at the Oi Hockey Stadium on Thursday. The world No. 4 side, which kick-started their Olympics campaign with a 3-2 win over New Zealand, went down against Australia (1-7) in their second match at the quadrennial Games. However, the Manpreet Singh-led side bounced back from the result in convincing fashion against Spain to register their second win in Tokyo and climbed up to the second spot in Pool A. Reflecting on the performance, India skipper, Manpreet said, "I would say, this win is a confidence-booster at this stage. We earned three valuable points, but still a long way to go. We just kept things basic and played to our strengths. However, there are few more things where I think we can focus and work on." Chief coach Graham Reid stated, "You know, we didn't actually play that bad against Australia, but they played quite well, and most of the part, we just couldn't put the balls away from them. It's important that the Indian players kept calm and got the job done against Spain. Good result, but again, I think there are things to work on from an improvement perspective." Earlier this year, the team had a



successful outing during the Argentina tour as they beat the defending Olympic champions in both the FIH Pro League games. They also registered two wins, a draw and a loss in the practice matches against Argentina, held as part of their preparations for the Olympic Games. Speaking about their next match against Argentina, Manpreet said, "No doubt, we had a successful Argentina tour, but that was in the past, and this is a totally different occasion. So, we can't take any teams lightly on a platform like the Olympics. It's going to be a good game, and I think we will just have to stick to our skills and just repeat all the things, we do in our practice sessions."

Women's hockey team loses third successive match

Tokyo | Agencies

The Indian women's hockey team went down fighting 1-4 in their Pool A match against defending champions Britain, and with only two game remaining, -- against Ireland and South Africa on July 30 and 31 respectively -- qualification for the knockouts is getting tougher for the Rani Rampal-led side. India now have to win both their games to qualify for the quarterfinals here. India's lone goal on Wednesday came from the stick of Sharmila Devi in the 23rd minute. India have lost all three Pool A matches so far. India were thrashed by the Netherlands 1-5, before they came up with a much-improved show against Germany, losing 0-2, and on Wednesday, they lost to Great Britain by another big margin. World No. 5 Britain made a quick start and got the opening goal 75 seconds into the match. After an attacking move down the right flank, Great Britain managed to shoot at India's goal, which was superbly saved by goalkeeper Savita. However, Great Britain midfielder Hannah Martin was on hand to capitalise on the deflected shot and scored the opening goal of the match. Britain dominated the early proceedings, as India gradually grew into the game. India managed to earn two penalty corners late in the first quarter but drag-flicker Gurjit Kaur's efforts were blocked. Great Britain ended the first quarter with 71 per cent ball possession and a 1-0 lead. As the second quarter began, India looked to force a higher tempo and played more aggressive hockey from the outset. However, they suffered a setback in the 19th minute as Hannah scored her second goal to double Great Britain's lead. The third quarter began with India earning a flurry of penalty corners soon after the restart. Deep Grace Ekka was on drag-flicking duty this time, but India could not score from their three attempts. Britain scored a third goal in the 41st minute through experienced forward Lily Owsley to go 3-1 up. India began the fourth quarter with attacking intent, lining up four forwards after the restart. They were almost rewarded in the 48th minute when captain Rani Rampal combined with forward Vandana Katariya to create a scoring opportunity.

Mahi Raghav enters quarters in Jr Boxing

New Delhi | Agencies

Haryana boxer Mahi Raghav made a fine start to her campaign at the 4th Junior Girls' National Boxing Championships as she progressed to the quarterfinals after defeating Delhi's Gargi Tomar on Day 2 at the Delhi Public School in Sonapat on Wednesday. The 2020 Khelo India Youth Games champion Mahi lived up to the expectations and registered unanimous victory in the opening round bout of women's 63kg category. Mahi had also represented the country and clinched the gold medal at the Golden Girl Championships in Sweden last year. Apart from Mahi, Tanu (52kg), Rudrika (70kg) and Sanjana (80kg) extended the winning momentum for Haryana and advanced into the next round in their respective categories. Three Maharashtra boxers also emerged victorious on Tuesday. Srushiti Raskar started the proceeding for Maharashtra as she notched up 5-0 victory against Assam's Manalisha Basumatary in the 57kg preliminary bout, while Sana Gonsalves (63kg) and Jagruti Both (70kg) defeated Gujarat's Janhvi Surulia and Tamil Nadu's Srimathi S, respectively with referee stopping the contest in the first round of both the bouts.

2nd T20I: Depleted India lose to Sri Lanka by four wickets

Colombo

A depleted India, who were forced to make seven changes in the XI after nine players were ruled out due to Covid-related issues, stretched Sri Lanka before losing by four wickets in the last over of the second T20 International here on Wednesday night. India had made 132/5 at the R Premadasa Stadium. Sri Lanka, riding on Dhananjaya de Silva's 40 off 34 balls, won with two balls to spare.

Brief scores
India 132/5 in 20 overs (S Dhawan 40, D Padikkal 29, A Dananjaya 2/29, R Gaikwad 21) lost to Sri Lanka 133/6 in 19.4 overs (D de Silva 40 not out, M Bhanuka 36, K Yadav 2/30) by four wickets.

ARCHER PRAVIN JADHAV'S CAMPAIGN AT TOKYO OLYMPICS ENDS

Tokyo | Agencies

Indian archer Pravin Jadhav's campaign at the Tokyo Olympics was brought to an end with a 6-0 loss to USA's Brady Ellison in the second round. In the first set, Ellison started off with a 9 and 10. Jadhav managed to hit 9 and 8. Ellison shot 9 on his final arrow. Jadhav had a 10 on his final arrow, but it was too late in the 28-27 set won by Ellison. In the second set, Jadhav began well with a 10 and 9, eclipsing the 8 and 10 shots by Ellison. On the final arrow, Jadhav scored 7, giving Ellison a small opening. The American shot 9 on the final arrow, wrapping the second set 27-26. Jadhav needed impressive scores in his final set to challenge Ellison. But two 8s followed by a 7 on the final arrow weren't sufficient against World No. 1 Ellison's 8 and two 9s. Earlier, Jadhav knocked out world No. 2 Galsan Bazarzhapov of Russian Olympic Committee in the first round. Jadhav won 29-27, 28-27 and 27-24 to cruise into the next round, where he fell to Ellison.



The 25-year-old Jadhav has been the most impressive amongst the Indian men's archers at the Tokyo Olympics. Among the three Indian male archers, also featuring Atanu Das and Tarundeep Rai, he was the highest-ranked Indian in the ranking round on July 23. He had teamed up with Deepika Kumari for the mixed team event and participated in the men's team event as well, bowing out in the quarterfinals stage to South Korea.

Tokyo Insights: Time we celebrate the likes of Rankireddy-Shetty, Kamal

Tokyo | Agencies

Is winning a medal the only yardstick for success at the Olympic Games? This debate is set to rear its head again as Indian athletes failed to win a medal on Tuesday, the fourth day of full competition at the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games. The silver medal won by weightlifter Mirabai Chanu remains the only medal in the Indian kitty as the country has faced disappointments in shooting with Indians managing to reach only one final thus far -- Saurabh Chaudhary in 10m air pistol competition. He eventually finished seventh. Other stars like Manu Bhaker, Elavelini Valarivan, Divyansh Singh Panwar, and Yashaswini Singh Deswal - all of whom were touted as medal con-

tenders because of their performance in the various World Cups and international tournaments flattered to deceive. In contrast, there are the likes of men's doubles badminton pair of Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty, who could not make it to the quarter-final despite beating the British pair Ben Lane and Sean Vandy in straight games in their Group A match for their second win in three matches. The win meant the Indian pair finished tied on two wins with world No. 1 pair Kevin Sanjaya Sukamuljo and Marcus Fernaldi Gideon (Indonesia) and world No. 3 duo of Lee Yang and Wang Chi-Lin (Chinese Taipei) as the Indians had lost to the Indonesians but beat the Chinese Taipei pair. "We knew the moment Lee Yang/Wang

Chi-Lin (TPE) won, we didn't stand a chance. [Against the British pair] They won in two games and we won in three. It is quite sad. But unfortunately, even after winning two matches in the group, we don't go through. But that is badminton and we have to live with it," said Shetty after the match. "Because of that, we came into it thinking it was going to be our last game in the Olympics. So we weren't under pressure. I feel that we have learned so much from this badminton experience and there are a lot of positives to take home," Rankireddy told the Badminton World Federation (BWF). And indeed that was the same attitude displayed by veteran table tennis star Achanta Sharath Kamal as he was pitted against China's reigning world and Olympic champion Ma Long. Kamal fought

back tenaciously after losing the first game. He won the second game and had his chances in the third too, which he lost in extra points after catching up with his Chinese rival at 10-10. The 39-year-old Kamal played aggressively, attacked his opponent on the backhand and went for high-risk shots, and successfully executed them in the second and third games to frustrate the world No. 1. There was another noticeable performer in woman fencer CA Bhavani Devi, who won a match against a lower-ranked opponent from Tunisia and went down to the world No 3 from France, putting up some fight. Some others like backstroke swimmers, Manaa Patel and Srihari Nataraj, have faced criticism for falling short of their personal best in the Olympic Games pool.



Team Absolute | Bhopal

RAKUL PREET 'EXCITED' TO JOIN 'DR G' CAST IN BHOPAL

Actress Rakul Preet Singh has landed in Bhopal to start her shoot for "Dr G". The actress, who will be seen alongside Ayushmann Khurrana, is thrilled to shoot in the city for the first time.

"I am so excited to be in Bhopal and start shoot of 'Dr G'. Have waited for so long due to the lockdown to start shooting the film. I'm very thrilled and look forward to start shooting with Anubhuti, Ayushman, Shefali ji and the entire cast and crew it's an amazing script and very close to my heart," Rakul says.

This marks her maiden visit to the city of Bhopal. The actress is keen on exploring the city too in between the schedule.

"This is my first time shooting in Bhopal. Had always heard it's a city of lakes and as soon as I landed and my drive to the hotel was so beautiful. It's such a green and pretty city. Can't wait to explore it. I also want to try the poha and jalebi here that I have heard of so much," she says.

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The new dance number of Nora Fatehi from her upcoming film Bhuj: The Pride of India released on Wednesday. The song titled 'Zaalima Coca Cola' received a positive response from her fans within a few hours of its release.

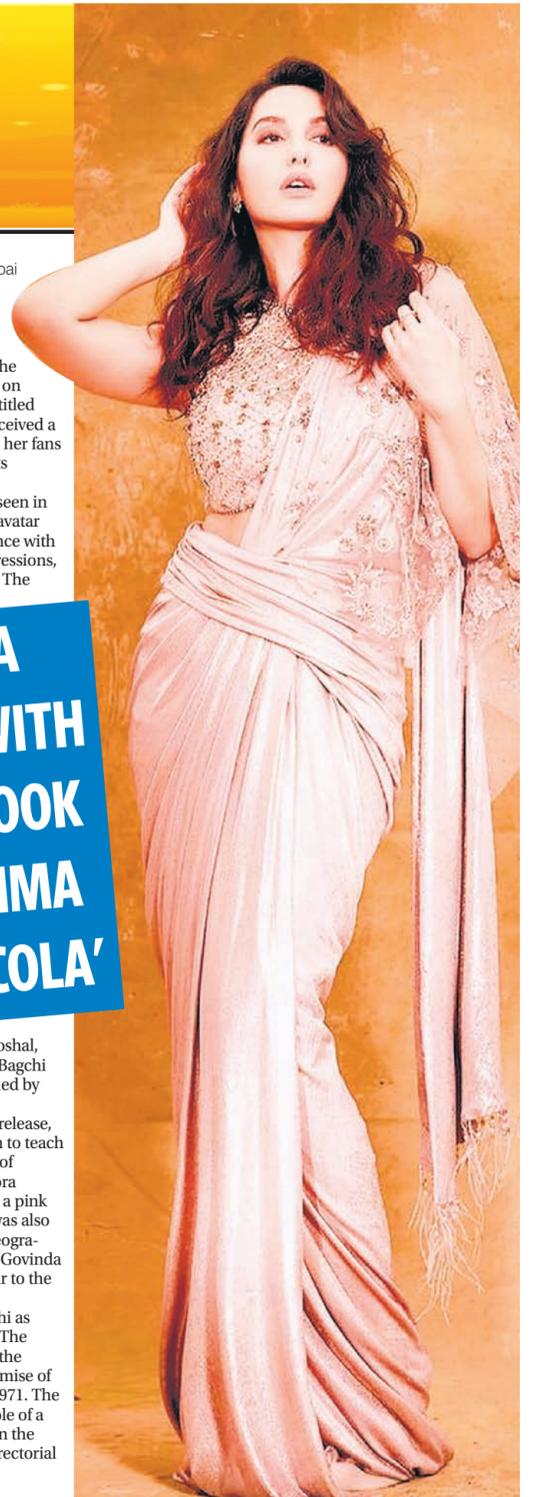
In the song Nora is seen in donning elegant desi avatar impressing the audience with her phenomenal expressions, beauty and elegance. The track is

NORA KILLS WITH DESI LOOK 'ZAAALIMA COCA COLA'

crooned by Shreya Ghoshal, composed by Tanishk Bagchi and the lyrics are penned by Vayu.

Ahead of the song's release, Nora took to Instagram to teach her fans the hook step of Zaalima Coca Cola. Nora looked breathtaking in a pink shimmery saree. She was also accompanied by choreographer Ganesh Acharya. Govinda also added his own flair to the dance video.

Featuring Nora Fatehi as Heena Rehman, Bhuj: The Pride Of India is set in the social and political premise of Indo-Pakistan war in 1971. The actress performs the role of a spy- Heena Rehman- in the Abhishek Dudhaiya directorial venture.



Jay Bhanushali, Monalisa open up on their roles in 'Dhappa'

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actors Monalisa and Jay Bhanushali will soon be seen in the anthology series titled "Dhappa". As the series explores lives of five couples, the actors talk about their part in this 'modern take on love'.

Monalisa who is known for her performances in shows like "Bigg Boss 10" and "Nach Baliye", is quite elated about her first time Hindi web series. She is playing the role of a married woman, "Meera". Revealing more about her character she says: "This is my first Hindi web series. 'Dhappa' is a modern take on the idea of romance and love. I liked the show's novel approach towards small town love stories and the humour that lies in such situations. I play Meera, a married woman who unknowingly steps

beyond the societal boundaries of relationships causing a lot of comic turmoil in her life."

Actor Jay Bhanushali plays a character from a small town in the series.

He says: "Unlike a lot of us who live in big cities, those in smaller towns need to be extremely careful about how and when they express their love. I am part of a story bringing out this situation in a manner that will leave the viewers in splits."

"Dhappa" is a comedy-drama anthology with five different stories of couples who go to extreme lengths to hide their romance from their relatives.

Besides Monalisa and Jay Bhanushali, the show also stars Smriti Khanna, Dishank Arora, Sakshi Sharma and Varun Jain.

The show will start streaming from August on Hungama Play.



Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actress Tamannaah Bhatia will be seen in a special dance sequence in the upcoming boxing drama film "Ghani" starring Varun Tej. She calls it

fun working with the Telugu star. Talking about the same, Tamannaah said: "Working with Varun Tej is always great fun, and I am looking forward to shooting the dance number. The song is really catchy and has an interesting place in the narrative." The choreographer duo Shazia Samji and Piyush Bhagat will choreograph the number. "Ghani" is written and directed by Kiran Korrapati and also stars Bollywood actress Saiee M. Manjrekar. Tamannaah will also be seen playing Varun Tej's sister-in-law in the upcoming Telugu film "F3". The actress is gearing up for the release of "Maestro", "Seetimaar" and "Gurhunda Seethakalam".

TAMANNAAH SHOOT SPECIAL DANCE NUMBER FOR 'GHANI'

SWARA: 'MIMAMSA' IS A THOUGHT-PROVOKING MURDER MYSTERY

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actress Swara Bhaskar said that she will be next seen in a murder mystery titled "Mimamsa", which also features actor Bijendra Kala. In the film, Swara will be seen playing the role of an investigating officer and it is shot in Bhopal. Talking about the film, the actress said: "The experience of shooting for the movie was one of its kind as it kept me invested throughout the shoot and I am sure that the viewers will be too when they get to watch it."

Swara added that this is the first film she shot for after lockdown last year. "That makes the movie extremely special to me, and it helped me have a sense of gratitude for the work I do. Without revealing much, I am just going to say that the movie will take you on a journey that is layered, is mysterious, and thought-provoking," she said.

Produced by Mofly Production and co-produced by K.P. Puri, the film is directed by Gagan Puri.

Puri said: "We have tried to keep a sense of mystery about the movie, and with talents like Swara and Bijendra on board, it only adds to the buzz." The film is currently in its post-production phase and further details about the film's release are expected to be unveiled soon.



Ayushmann Khurrana: Lucky that I chose acting as my profession

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actor Ayushmann Khurrana is currently busy shooting for his upcoming film "Doctor G" in Bhopal. He calls himself lucky that he chose acting as his profession because it has taken him to "incredible destinations". Ayushmann said: "I'm lucky that I chose acting as my profession because it has not only enabled me to live so many remarkable characters but has also taken me to so many incredible destinations." The actor added that this is the first time in his career that he has shot in Bhopal. He said: "For Doctor G, I'm fortunate to be visiting the heart of India and seeing it in its full glory. I'm shooting in Bhopal for the first time in my career and the city of lakes is a beautiful place. I'm bowled over by the warmth of the people and they have won my heart forever."

Ayushmann feels he is blessed to be born in a beautiful country like India. "Earlier this year, I was in the North East for Anek and experienced the spectacular Kaziranga National Park. India is the most beautiful place on the planet. I'm blessed to be born in this country which gives me the opportunity to cherish so much in my lifetime," he added. Ayushmann has a big lineup of films including "Chandigarh Kare Aashiqui" directed by Abhishek Kapoor, "Anek" by Anubhav Sinha and "Doctor G" helmed by Anubhuti Kashyap.



INSTAGRAM PIC OF THE DAY



Neha Malik