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WHY IS PM SILENT AFTER NEW REVELATIONS ON RAFALE : CONGRESS

Congress spokesperson Pawan Khera said, "The country which gained due to deal has ordered probe, but the country which lost the taxpayers money, is silent. Why did the Prime Minister not answer the questions raised in France and by the Congress?"



Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Congress party has stepped up its attack on the government over the Rafale deal. A day after it reiterated its demand for a JPC probe, the party questioned the Prime Minister's silence on the issue. Addressing a press conference on Sunday, party spokesperson Pawan Khera said, "The country which gained due to deal has ordered probe, but the country which lost the taxpayers money, is silent. Why did the Prime Minister not answer the questions raised in France and by the Congress?" Khera added. Congress leader Rahul Gandhi too taunted, "Why is Modi government not ready for JPC probe?" The Congress on Saturday demand-

ed Joint Parliamentary Committee (JPC) probe. Randeep Singh Surjewala said, "The scandalous expose of Rafale scam involving corruption, treason, loss to public exchequer has finally been uncovered." The Congress said the role of former French President Francois Hollande and current President Emmanuel Macron is being investigated in France. The Congress alleged that Prime Minister Narendra Modi signed a deal worth 7.8 billion euro to buy 36 Rafale

jets in place of 126 fighter jets. The Congress party questioned the deletion of anti-corruption clause in Rafale deal. "The defects now clearly call for a JPC probe," Surjewala added. The Congress leader's demand came after Mediapart.fr, a media outlet in European country, said that a French judge has been appointed to lead a judicial investigation into alleged corruption and favouritism in the 7.8 billion euro sale to India of 36 fighter aircrafts.

INDIA-US STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP HAS GLOBAL SIGNIFICANCE: MODI



New Delhi: Extending wishes on the occasion of the 245th Independence Day of the US, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday marked a message to President Joe Biden, saying the two countries share values of freedom and that their strategic partnership has global significance. Modi took Twitter to send his message to the US President to express his gratitude towards the American people. "Warm felicitations and greetings to @POTUS @JoeBiden and the people of the USA on their 245th Independence Day. As vibrant democracies, India and USA share values of freedom and liberty. Our strategic partnership has a truly global significance," the Prime Minister tweeted. On July 4, the US commemorates the Declaration of Independence signed in 1776.

Diesel crosses Rs. 100 in MP; Sikkim latest State to see Rs. 100 a litre petrol

Petrol price was increased by 35 paise per litre and diesel by 18 paise a litre, according to a price notification from State-owned fuel retailers

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Fuel prices continued an upward march on Sunday and the petrol was priced at Rs 99.51 per litre in the national capital. While, Diesel price on July 4 crossed ₹100 a litre mark in some places in Madhya Pradesh, while Sikkim became the latest State to see ₹100 per litre petrol price after yet another hike in fuel rates. Petrol price was increased by 35 paise per litre and diesel by 18 paise a litre, according to a price notification from State-owned fuel retailers. The increase, 34th in petrol and 33rd in diesel in two months pushed rates across the country to fresh highs. In Delhi, petrol now comes for ₹99.51 a litre and diesel is priced at ₹89.36 per litre. Fuel prices differ from State to State depending on the incidence of local taxes such as value-added tax (VAT) and freight charges. And for this reason, petrol has crossed the ₹100-



a-litre mark in Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Karnataka, Jammu and Kashmir, Odisha, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Bihar, Punjab and Ladakh. Sikkim joined that list on Sunday. Petrol in State capital Gangtok is now priced at ₹100.15 a litre and diesel comes for ₹91.55. Petrol has crossed ₹100 a litre mark in metro cities of Mumbai, Chennai, Bengaluru, Hyderabad and Pune and it is over ₹99 in other two cities of Delhi and Kolkata. Rates of diesel, the most used fuel in the country, have crossed the ₹100-a-

'Hybrid' terrorists attacking soft targets in Kashmir

SRINAGAR | Agencies

Are part-time terrorists a new challenge faced by the security forces in Kashmir? Senior officials of the security forces and intelligence agencies believe they are. A part-time terrorist, also called a "hybrid terrorist," is an otherwise normal youth without any track record of terrorist activities. "Such youth are given a specific task identified and overlooked by an overground worker (OGW) and once accomplished, they are advised to return back to routine life." The main objective of using a hybrid terrorist is to generate fear among the masses and also create an impression of uncertainty in areas where the part-time terrorist is used," an official said. These youth are different from the sleeper cells of terrorist outfits. A sleeper cell is a group of highly motivated, trained, armed terrorists with a well defined track record of terrorist activities. "A sleeper cell is allowed to hibernate so that a bigger attack is carried out while the

focus of the intelligence agencies and the security forces remains on those cadres of terror outfits who are active in a specific area." A sleeper cell is trained to come back from the rear with an absolute element of surprise to carry out its task. "In sharp contrast to this, the hybrid or part-time terrorist is not an armed cadre. Such a terrorist is given a weapon, most likely a pistol to kill an unprotected, soft target." The movements of the unprotected target are carefully monitored by an OGW who passes on all the relevant information to the hybrid terrorist. The OGW overlooks the attack carried out by the hybrid. "Once the attack is successful, the OGW takes the weapon back and leaves the hybrid terrorist to return back to his otherwise normal life," a senior official of the security forces said. The officer said in almost all such cases, parents and other members of the hybrid's immediate family may not know about the role and involvement of the part-time terrorist.

CONGRESS MULLING TO APPOINT NEW LS LEADER AHEAD OF SESSION

New Delhi: The Congress is considering to replace Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury as leader of the Lok Sabha and appoint a new face to catalyse opposition strategy in the house and outside and corner the government in the parliament. The sources say that this is to offer olive branch to Trinamool leader Mamata Banerjee, as both Adhir and Mamata have been rivals since their Congress days but the impending decision may come after party scored zero in West Bengal Assembly election despite Chowdhury getting free hand.



The possible replacement could be Manish Tewari or Shashi Tharoor. Tewari is MP from Anandpur Sahib in Punjab but has roots in eastern UP and has good relations with Mamata Banerjee and he is also a Brahmin, while Shashi Tharoor, an MP from Kerala has been vocal on several issues. However, a section of the party is battling for Rahul Gandhi but sources say that he is not keen as the floor leader will not get the status of Leader of Opposition as Congress does not fulfill the criteria. Incidentally, both Tharoor and Tewari are from the group of G-23 which wrote letters to Sonia Gandhi for sweeping reforms in the party. As Sonia Gandhi is reaching out to dissenters and opposition leaders, she is building a new team which is more flexible in approach. Chowdhury may be given the task to build the party in state as he is the Chief.

Pushkar Singh Dhami sworn in as Uttarakhand's 11th Chief Minister

Team Absolute | New Delhi

BJP leader Pushkar Singh Dhami was on Sunday sworn-in as the 11th Chief Minister of Uttarakhand. Governor Baby Rani Maurya administered the oath to him and 11 other ministers at a function in Raj Bhavan in Dehradun. The new ministers are Satpal Maharaj, Harak Singh Rawat, Bansidhar Bhagat, Yashpal Arya, Bishan Singh Chupal, Subodh Uniyal, Arvind Pandey, Ganesh Joshi, Dhan Singh Rawat, Rekha Arya, and Yatishwaranand. All were also part of the previous Tirath Singh Rawat government. As per constitutional provisions, the Uttarakhand cabinet can have maximum 12 ministers including the Chief Minister. The swearing-in of Dhami and his ministers has also put to rest all speculations of rebellion by senior leaders Satpal Maharaj, Harak Singh Rawat and others over the election of Dhami. Also, hours before swearing-in ceremony, Harak Singh Rawat, Arya, and Chupal had told IANS that there is no in-fighting and swearing-in of Dhami cabinet will be held as per schedule in



the evening. Dhami was elected Chief Minister at the meeting of the BJP's legislative party in Dehradun on Saturday. The meeting was held in the presence of Central observers, Union Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar and BJP national General Secretary D. Purandeswari. The party's in-charge for Uttarakhand, Dushyant Gautam, was also present. He replaces Tirath Singh Rawat, who late on Friday evening submitted his resignation to the Governor, as he was unlikely to be elected to the state Assembly by the stipulated period. A two-time MLA from Khatima constituency in Udham Singh Nagar district, Dhami, 45, was active in student politics and held different positions in RSS student wing ABVP for almost a decade. He has also served as the President of the state BJP youth wing. Dhami, however, has never held any ministerial position in the past.

High alert in TN, Kerala on possible drone intrusions

Central agencies, according to highly placed sources have tipped the police of both Tamil Nadu and Kerala to be alert and to be prepared for intrusions into the states with certain terror groups exploring the possibilities of using drones.

Team Absolute | Chennai

The Central intelligence agencies are on high alert in Tamil Nadu and Kerala after the twin drone attack at Air force' technical airport in Jammu on June 27, damaging the airport and inflicting minor injuries to a couple of soldiers. Central agencies, according to highly placed sources have tipped the police of both Tamil Nadu and Kerala to be alert and to be prepared for intrusions into the states with certain terror groups exploring the possibilities of using drones. After the Chinese takeover of Hambantota port in Sri Lanka, the coast guard and Indian Navy intelligence has been on high alert over the coastal areas of Tamil Nadu and in southern belts of Kerala. While the security agencies were able to foil the drone attacks in the Jammu area, the cost of intercepting these drones is high and several states are ill-equipped with this technology. Already defense establishment has opened discussions with the Israeli defense establishments for the supply of high-end drone interceptors as Israel is the global leader in this technology. The intelligence agencies have warned the Tamil Nadu and Kerala governments and security agencies of these states as,



according to sources, the agencies received tips of certain terror outfits from across the border preparing themselves for such attacks. Even as India has opened backchannel discussions or Track 2 diplomacy with the Taliban fighters of Afghanistan following the systematic withdrawal of US forces from that country, the intelligence agencies are not leaving any chances and have recommended the southern states to be on high alert. The sea coast of Kerala and Tamil Nadu has been

on the intelligence radar for a few months and with the drone attack in Jammu, the agencies have intensified the surveillance in these two states. It may be noted that the intelligence agencies have warned of certain home-grown terror movements in both these states and the large exodus of terrorists to Syria and Afghanistan from Kerala had led the central agencies to be on high alert. The presence of organisations like Al-Umma and its activities in districts like Coimbatore, Trichy, Kanyakumari, and other southern districts of Tamil Nadu has also been closely monitored by the central agencies. The ascend of DMK government in Tamil Nadu has fanned the ultra Tamil movements of the state and several pro-LITE organisations have issued statements and the demand for the release of the convicts in the Rajiv Gandhi assassination case has also become louder and Tamil Nadu chief minister M.K. Stalin has already written a letter to the President of India for the pardon of these convicts. Taking these factors into consideration, the agencies do not want to take any chances and to be prepared for any eventualities and several individuals and organisations - even paper organisations are under the radar.

Government readies two more labs for Covid vaccine testing

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Two more Central Drug Laboratories have been readied at Pune and Hyderabad for Covid vaccine testing, in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic, and considering the enhanced production of Covid vaccines, the government said on Sunday. According to a Science & Technology Ministry statement, the facility at the National Centre for Cell Science, Pune, has now been notified as a Central Drugs Laboratory for testing and lot release of Covid-19 vaccines, through a gazette notification issued by the Health & Family Welfare Ministry on June 28. The facility at the National Institute of Animal Biotechnology, Hyderabad is likely to receive necessary notification shortly, it said. "With generous support from PM CARES Fund trust in a very short span of time, both the institutions, through relentless efforts, have set up the state-of-the-art modern facilities for this purpose. The facilities are expected to test approx 60 batches of vaccines per month. The facilities are geared up to test existing Covid-19 vaccines and other newer Covid-19 vaccines as per demand of the nation. This will not only expedite the vaccine manufacture and supply but also be logistically convenient considering that both Pune and Hyderabad are the two vaccine manufacturing hubs," the statement said. Currently, India has a Central Drugs Laboratory (CDL) at Kasauli, which is the National Control Laboratory for testing and pre-release certification of immunobiologicals (vaccines and antisera) meant for human use in India. The Department of Biotechnology, under the Science & Technology Ministry, now has set up facilities in its autonomous research institutes, the NCCS, and the NIAB, for batch testing and quality control of vaccines.



WE CAN FIGHT ALONE AND FORM GOVERNMENT IN UP: LALLU

Lucknow | Agencies

Despite hitting rock bottom in the recent panchayat elections, UP Congress chief Ajay Kumar Lallu, on Sunday, expressed confidence that his party has the capacity to fight the elections, without aligning with either the SP or the BSP. He said that the Congress will form the next government on its own.

"The Congress would fight the assembly polls in Uttar Pradesh next year under Priyanka Gandhi Vadra's supervision and that under her leadership, the party will make a comeback in the state after over three decades," he said in an interaction with media persons.

Claiming "winds of change" were blowing in the state, he said: "Badlav ki aandhi hai, jiska naam Priyanka Gandhi hai (There is a storm of change and its name is Priyanka Gandhi)".

Lallu said the Congress, with just five legislators has proved to be a more effective opposition than the Samajwadi Party which has 49 MLAs in the 403-member Assembly.



Asked if Priyanka Gandhi would be made the chief ministerial face by the party for the UP polls, he said it is the party's national leadership that would decide on who should be the chief ministerial face. Congress General Secretary Priyanka

Gandhi is likely to visit several districts this month with an aim to enthuse the cadre and prepare the party for a pitched electoral battle with the ruling BJP.

The Congress will forge an alliance with the people and the party is confident they will beat it, he added.

On whether votes could get divided if the SP, the BSP and the Congress contest separately, Lallu said the people had given opportunity to all the other political players in the state but they were not able to stay true to the faith shown by the people, and now it was the Congress' turn.

He said that Congress workers had taken the fight against the state government to the streets and over 1 lakh party workers are facing cases filed against them.

"I myself have been detained more than 80 times in a year, over 40-50 cases were filed and I went to jail four times," Lallu said.

He further stated that the Congress got 50 lakh votes in Lok Sabha polls and in the assembly elections, it got 51 lakh votes, but in zila panchayat polls, it got 1,52,00,000 votes.

Kejriwal writes to PM, bats for 'Bharat Ratna' for doctors



Team Absolute | New Delhi

Amid the Covid-19 pandemic when hundreds of doctors lost their lives while serving in hospitals and other healthcare centres in India, Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal said the country's highest civilian award 'Bharat Ratna' should be given this year to Indian doctors.

In a letter to Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday, Kejriwal has stated that people of India want to award Indian doctors with Bharat Ratna this year.

"Indian Doctors should receive Bharat Ratna this year. 'Indian Doctor' means all doctors, nurses and paramedics. It will be a true homage to all martyred doctors. It will be an honour of those who have been serving without caring for their lives and families. The whole country will be glad if Bharat Ranta is given to doctors," Kejriwal said in the letter.

Kejriwal's letter further read, "If there is no rule to award 'Bharat Ratna' to a group, then I would request you to change the rule. All people of India are grateful to the doctors and they will be happy if Bharat Ratna is given to doctors."

As per the Indian Medical Association (IMA), around 800 doctors have sacrificed their lives while serving during the second wave of the Covid-19 pandemic across the nation, of which maximum 128 doctors lost their lives in Delhi, followed by Bihar - 115, and around 80 doctors have died in Uttar Pradesh.

According to the IMA, 748 doctors had died in the first wave of the pandemic.

Coaching hub of India, Kota crumbling under Covid pressure

Kota | Agencies

The educational hub of India, Kota, with an estimated worth of Rs 1,200 crore before the Covid-19 pandemic, has now been reduced to one-fourth of its value, due to the new variant which has forced students to leave the city and resort to online studies. Thousands of caterers, hostel and PG owners have been left in the lurch, looking for alternate livelihoods. Around one lakh people engaged directly or indirectly with the coaching hub have lost their livelihood.

Four decades back, Kota was an industrial city of Rajasthan. However, later, it transformed into a premier coaching centre of the country as aspiring students dreaming of making it big in medical and technical streams came here.

Each year, around 1.50 lakh students from all over the country register themselves at various institutes here. However, now the town wears a desolate look as hardly 10-15 per cent students have stayed back.

"It is like a nightmare for us when hundreds and thousands of students have left Kota in fear and haste. The city's economy has crumbled. Only 10 per cent of the hostels and PGs have students. Around 80 per cent of employees working in these hostels have lost their jobs. Also, we are facing tremendous challenges in repaying our loans," said Naveen Mittal, president of the Kota Hostel Association. Kota's 70 per cent economy has been dependent on these students spending around Rs 2 lakh to Rs 2.50 lakh each per annum. With around 3,000 hostels, over 25,000 PGs, around 1,800 mess and several cafes, tiffin centres, breakfast stalls and other businesses, the city was thriving as a coaching hub. Many residents here converted their homes into hostels and PGs.

Now around 80 per cent of the mess owners have downed shutters. The president of the Mess Association of Kota Jashmesh



Singh said. "Thousands of people have become unemployed and have gone back to their native places. Running a mess for 4-5 students is difficult so most of them have downed their shutters." Around 90 per cent of the students left Kota last year during the first wave of the pandemic. Many states arranged special buses and trains were also run to take away the students from the city.

However, January 2021 brought hopes of revival when around 45,000 students returned to Kota in the first two months of the year. Admissions started at the coaching institutes and students were asked to follow Covid behaviour. But the hopes were dashed in two months as a devastating second wave forced students to leave and all other facilities were shut due to the lockdown imposed in April. Although, the lockdown has been relaxed offline classes have not resumed yet.

Despite having over 10 mega, 50 small and individual coaching institutes in Kota, the students have resorted to online mode of education. A senior representative of a coaching institute said that offline admissions have decreased but demand for online classes has soared. Also, their expenses on running offline classes have reduced considerably.

Mittal meanwhile said: "It will take around two years for us to come back on track."

Jamia sheds ghosts of 2020 by hitting all the right notes

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Jamia Millia Islamic University in the national capital, which was in news last year mainly for non-academic and controversial reasons, has been gradually coming out of the "unsavory" episodes this year by setting new records on the academic front.

In a moment of pride, the Jamia team has won Toycathon 2021. Six researchers got the Prime Minister's Research Fellowship. Also, Jamia students have received the International 'Diana Award 2021' and the International Outstanding Achievement Award for Film Making. A team of three students from the Department of Civil Engineering, has won this year's Toycathon-2021 competition. The Toycathon was an inter-ministerial initiative of the Innovation Cell of the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Women and Child Development, Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Ministry of MSME, Ministry of Textiles and Ministry of Information and Broadcasting. A mathematical board game has been designed by the students of Jamia. Prime Minister Narendra Modi had personally interacted with the participants of Toycathon-2021 through video conferencing. Toycathon had 1.2 lakh participants. More than 17,000 ideas were submitted. After the grand finale, out of 1,567 ideas, only 117 were selected.

Jamia Vice Chancellor Professor Najma Akhtar congratulated the winning team and said that since the inception, the university has been playing an important role in nation building. "Jamia always strives to bring out the hidden talent of its students so that they can become successful and responsible citizens," she said.

Kaif Ali, a student of Jamia Architecture graduate, was awarded the 'Diana Award 2021'. Established in memory of Diana, Princess of Wales, the award is given by a charity named after her. It is supported by both his sons, The Duke of Cambridge and The Duke of Sussex.

Kaif did a research on how architecture can help prevent the spread of a disease like Covid-19. He designed a prefabricated sustainable shelter that would not only help reduce the transmission of the virus but could also house people.



Kaif told that this design is now being used in Lagos, Nigeria. It has been recognized by the Government of India, Commonwealth of Nations and the United Nations as one of the top 11 emerging innovation start-ups addressing climate action. Also, the Jamia students have won the Outstanding Achievement Award (LIAF) in the student category at the Arthouse Film Festival on June 15 this year. The students have made a special film 'Dhai Pahar' (Two and Half Moments).

Sixteen Jamia students including six girls have

cleared the Indian Administrative Services exam this month. The students who received coaching and training at Jamia's Residential Coaching Academy (RCA), have also cleared the Bihar Administrative Service examination.

Selected students will be appointed as SDM, DSP, Revenue Officer, Commercial Tax Officer etc in Bihar. In June, an eco-friendly cement invention by Dr Ibadur Rahman, Assistant Professor, Department of Civil Engineering, Jamia, got patented. Rahman said that this invention along with other researches from AMU, have been granted a patent as an intellectual property by the Australian government. Earlier, in May this year, six scholars from Jamia were awarded the prestigious Prime Minister's Research Fellowship (PMRF). These students have been selected in May this year under the Lateral Entry Scheme of December 2020 drive. The students who have been selected for the Prime Minister's Research Fellowship are Fozia Tabassum, Momina from the Department of Civil Engineering, Azra Malik from the Department of Electrical Engineering, Feroz Khan from the Center for Nanoscience and Nanotechnology, Aliya Tyeab from the Fundamentals of Science and Ashi from the Center for Physiotherapy and Rehabilitation Sciences.

98% DELHI GOVT SCHOOLS MAINTAIN PUPIL-TEACHER RATIO: SIOSDIA

Team Absolute | New Delhi



Around 50 per cent of the schools being run by the Delhi Municipal Corporation (MCDs) in the capital have failed to maintain pupil-teacher ratio (PTR) under the Right to Education (RTE) Act, Delhi Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia said on Sunday. On the contrary, schools operating under Delhi government have achieved 98 per cent PTR, Sisodia, who hold the Education portfolio, said at a press conference. Citing a Central government report, he said: "MCD's schools are not in good condition and are counted amongst the lowest category schools. These schools are tarnishing the image of entire Delhi." The Central government's report suggested that around 58 per cent schools under East Delhi Municipal Corporation have failed to maintain the PTR, while for North and South MCDs, the figures are 46 and 39 per cent, respectively.

"This establishes the fact that BJP-ruled MCDs are so incompetent that they haven't been able to provide teachers to their students. This is putting Delhi's reputation at stake," Sisodia said.

Punjab still ISI's key destination for pushing drugs into India

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Even as intelligence agencies are not unaware of the fact, Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) continues to pump illegal drugs into India through Punjab -- the state lying on the border between the two neighbouring countries. And heroin has been the major narcotic being smuggled into India to generate funds which, experts indicate, are used to fund militancy in Kashmir. After heroin, poppy is the second most smuggled drug followed by opium.

As per the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) data collated from all frontiers on the 3,323 km India-Pakistan border, over 979 kg of heroin was seized from the Punjab frontier in the last two-and-a-half years from January 1, 2019 to May 31 this year.

Smuggling of drugs from Pakistan was at its peak in 2020 during the last three years when 506.241 kg of heroin was seized at the Punjab border. The number was almost half in 2019 when 232.561 kg heroin was confiscated.

Till May 31 this year, the data reveals, a total of 241.231 kg of heroin was seized.

Besides heroin, opium and poppy have also been the choice of smuggling but the number was comparatively very less. Poppy is the second most preferred drug being smuggled from Pakistan after heroin. Poppy is mainly smuggled into India through the Rajasthan frontier. A total of 23 kg poppy has so far been seized at the Rajasthan border till May 31 this year. The number of poppy recoveries was 70 kg in 2020 and 54 kg in 2019.

In all the recoveries, the Border Security Force (BSF), one of the seven Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs), played a key role as they seized these narcotic drugs at the border before it reached the drug smugglers in Punjab and Rajasthan.

Along with the BSF, the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) plays a key role in curbing the drug menace in India. It has seized many consignments



of drugs in joint raids with the BSF troopers based on inputs. The vicious cycle of drug trafficking from Pakistan linking terrorists and the ISI's role was uncovered in late 2018 when the Indian Army and the intelligence arm of the Union Finance Ministry, the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI), seized a huge cache of arms and ammunition and drugs, including heroin worth Rs 105 crore, during a joint operation conducted near the Line of Control (LoC) at Chamb (Akhnoor Sector) in Kashmir. It was the first time when the agencies here came to know about the direct involvement of terrorists in smuggling drugs meant to be pushed into Punjab. The strong connection between the terrorists operating in the Valley and the drug traffickers in Punjab was also unravelled then. The agencies then also came to know about how terrorists are facilitating the movement of drugs from across Pakistan to Punjab by acting as couriers. The money being paid by the drug traffickers of Punjab is used by terrorists to fund the purchase of sophisticated weapons to foment terror in Kashmir.

Despite the fact being known to the agencies, the ISI, whom the intelligence agencies see as the brain behind all illegal cross border activities against India, did not change its tactics and keeps pushing drugs mostly through the border touching Punjab.

Be cautious to protect kids from seasonal diseases: Doctors to parents

Hyderabad | Agencies

Even as the whole world is reeling under the burden of Covid-19 pandemic, parents should be aware of various seasonal diseases that may occur during the rainy and winter seasons and must protect their children from these infections, doctors said. Most common seasonal diseases are Influenza, Dengue, Malaria, Typhoid, and a few other viral infections that mimic those infections. The reasons for the spread of these diseases include water clogging, contamination of water bodies, improper sanitisation, rainwater puddles and overcrowding.

Flu is spread through droplet transmission, while dengue and malaria are caused by mosquito bite and diarrhoeal disease and water borne jaundice occurs due to consumption of contaminated water. Cold, cough, sneezing, rapid breathing, loose stools, vomiting, headache, body pains, fever, refusal of feeds are some of the common symptoms associated with flu-like illness. Other diseases also share some of the symptoms. Most of these infections are self-limiting and require only symptomatic medication along with adequate hydration.

"Visit to a paediatrician is important if a child has a fever for more than 3 days, experiencing fast breathing, reduction in urine output, lack of interest in food, unbearable abdominal pain or blood in stools or vomit. Getting hospitalized in these times of a global pandemic is not good for children, and parents must take good care to ensure it," said Dr. Prayaga Jyothsna, Consultant Paediatrician, SLG Hospitals said.

Most of these infections are easily diagnosed and can be treated effectively with medication, and diseases like flu and typhoid are preventable with vaccines, and malaria and dengue can be prevented by control of mosquitoes, the



doctor added. "Ensure healthy and balanced diet and limit your child's favourite roadside stall's monsoon special, Sev puri, Pani Puri, chutney, pakoras, etc. for hygienic reasons. A daily bowl of hot vegetable soup or herbal tea is mandatory for your entire family to normalise body temperature and to boost immunity. Give your children plenty of fresh fruits and green leafy vegetables that are washed properly. Make children drink clean, boiled or filtered water as it keeps their body hydrated and healthy. Ensure that there is no stagnant water either in your house or in your neighbourhood. Stagnant water is a breeding ground for mosquitoes," said Dr. Anjul Dayal, Consultant Paediatrician, Continental Hospitals.

Dr. Prashanth Chandra, Consultant - General Medicine, Gleneagles Global Hospitals said parents should communicate with young children in an age-appropriate

manner by using simple terminologies about Covid-19 to create awareness. "Efforts should be made so that a consistent routine is followed by the child, with enough opportunities to play, read, rest, and engage in physical activity. Provide more praise and social reinforcements to children compared to material reinforcements." Doctors pointed out that due to the lockdown and subsequent online schooling of the children there is restriction of mobility and confinement to home leading to sedentary lifestyle. This can potentially cause a huge surge in obesity or increased weight gain in children. Due to online schooling, the amount of time spent on screen has increased leading to various eye related problems such as dry eyes, vision and accommodation problems, etc. It is important parents stay cautious of every such aspect which would have an adverse impact on the child and could lead to hospitalisation.





GOVERNOR ANANDIBEN PATEL VIRTUALLY ADDRESSED THE 39TH CONFERENCE OF AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF PHYSICIANS OF INDIAN ORIGIN

DOCTORS BRING SMILE ON THE FACE OF SUFFERING HUMANITY: GOVERNOR

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Governor Anandiben Patel said that Indian culture's acceptance to follow that prevention of disease is better than its cure, the concept of Yoga and the traditions of cleanliness have helped a lot in preventing the epidemic.

Patel said that only doctors have the power to bring smile on the face of suffering humanity. They are an incarnation of God. She expressed her gratitude for the services of the doctors and the medical assistance, cooperation and guidance extended to India by the expatriate doctors of Indian origin during the unprecedented crisis facing humanity during the Covid pandemic. She was addressing the 39th conference of the American Association of Physicians of Indian Origin (AAPI), an organization of Indian-origin doctors, virtually from Raj Bhavan, Lucknow. More than 500 Indian origin doctors joined the conference.

Governor Patel said that despite the huge population, the vaccination drive for all is being successfully carried out rapidly in India under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. She said that under self-reliant India, development works in the health sector and strengthening of infrastructure are being done continuously. There were only six AIIMS med-



ical institutes in the country in the year 2014, which has now increased to 15. In the field of health, the budget allocation in the year 2021-22 has doubled as compared to earlier. Terming the loss of life in the medical field during the Covid pandemic as unfortunate, Patel paid tribute to them. She said that the medical community has an important role to play in alleviating the sufferings of humanity and saving lives. So the doctors should take full care of their health. Keep updating yourself constantly with the new experiments happening in the field of medicine. She said that citizens of Indian origin living in

America have maintained constant contact with their motherland and they continue to support the people of India. Governor said that the Association of American Physicians of Indian Origin (AAPI) has a proud history in the field of medicine, service to humanity and supporting physicians in their profession and efforts to excel. Hundreds of programmes are being run by AAPI in the field of women empowerment, TB free India, clean drinking water projects, global medical education, cancer care etc. She expressed her gratitude to the organization for the strategic cooperation extended by the organization in providing oxygen concentrators to the whole of India and in meeting the challenge of during the Covid pandemic. Congratulating the organization for its continues progress, she recalled the efforts made in the fields of social service, environment, education and health in the joint partnership of Global Life and to help Thalassemia patients in Gujarat. She expressed hope that AAPI and Global Life organization will continue to cooperate in the same way in the service to humanity.

Patel said that she is first an educationist and then a political person. Along with teaching, she has worked in many fields. She firmly believes that along with education in rural areas, work for women empowerment is also necessary.

Special campaign on July 5 for second dose of vaccine

Chouhan has appealed to the citizens that after the first dose, it is also necessary to take the second dose to protect against corona as the war against corona is not over yet.

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan said that a special campaign would be launched on July 5 for the second dose of Covishield in the vaccination campaign being run in the state. On this day only the second dose of the vaccine will be administered. To strengthen the corona protection cycle in the state against corona infection, it is necessary to take both the doses of Covishield.



Chief Minister Chouhan has appealed to the citizens that after the first dose, it is also necessary to take the second dose to protect against corona as the war against corona is not over yet. He said that the success of the mega campaign is a testament to the awareness shown by the general public towards vaccination. Chouhan called upon those who have got the first dose of the vaccine, they must also reach the vaccination centre for the second dose with social distancing.

BUSINESSMAN FAKES COVID REPORT TO GET AWAY FROM WIFE, BOOKED

A businessman in Indore who wanted to get away from his wife for a couple of days, has been booked for producing a fake Covid-19 report.

Indore: A man in Indore has been booked for producing a fake Covid certificate to claim that he had tested positive for the disease. Asked why he committed the crime, family members said he wanted to get away from his wife. Ejaz Ahmed, who hails from Mtown district, is a businessman. He had an argument with his wife and decided that he needed some time away from her.

According to family members, Ejaz downloaded a Covid-positive report from the internet and edited it using Photoshop. He then cited the report to tell his wife and family members that he had tested positive for Covid-19 and would need to stay at a state-run Covid centre for a few days. When he did not return home after a month, Ejaz's wife became suspicious and asked her father to verify the Covid report. Upon contacting the private laboratory at Yashwant Plaza near Gwaltoli police station in Indore, the wife's father came to know that the report was fake. Later, the owner of the laboratory, Vinita Kothari, lodged a police complaint at Gwaltoli police station in this regard. The police have registered a case against Ejaz Ahmed under section 465 and 469 (Punishment for forgery) of the Indian Penal Code (IPC). "We are currently looking for Ejaz," the police said.

BJP MLA Withdraws Recommendation Of Fund For Oxygen Plant

The opposition Congress said the allegations contradicted Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan's claim of providing efficient governance.

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Madhya Pradesh BJP MLA Rajyavardhan Singh on Friday said he has withdrawn his recommendation to allot money from his Local Area Development Fund for an oxygen plant at a civil hospital in Rajgarh district as the administration kept delaying it. While a local official denied Singh's allegations, the opposition said it contradicted Chief Minister Shivraj Singh

Chouhan's claim of providing efficient governance.

In a letter to the district collector, Rajyavardhan Singh, an MLA from Narsinghgarh, said he had recommended the allotment of ₹47 lakh from his Local Area Development Fund for an oxygen plant at Maharaja Civil Hospital at Narsinghgarh in April amid rising demand for the lifesaving gas due to a spike in cases of coronavirus. He withdrew the recommendation after the collector informed him that a plant was being set up through a Corporate Social Responsibility initiative of ONGC. However, as he later learnt that the plant will be set up at Sarangpur, he again allotted money for a plant at the Narsinghgarh hospital, which was approved by the divisional commissioner on June 15, Mr Singh said. A few days later he was

informed that the National Highway Authority of India was setting up an oxygen plant in Narsinghgarh, Singh said in the letter.

Nothing has happened in this regard so far and he has now decided to withdraw the allocation, the MLA said.

Rajgarh collector Neeraj Kumar Singh told reporters that the process of setting up an oxygen plant is underway but the MLA withdrew his recommendation. He denied that the project was earlier shifted to Sarangpur.

State Congress spokesperson KK Mishra said that the episode showed the administration's indifference.

"The government is not serious even about oxygen plants which are required in the fight against the pandemic. This has exposed the good governance claims of the government," he said.

Forest official suspended for 'forging' documents to get promotion

Deputy ranger RS Dubey claimed he was suspended as had complained against MP Culture Minister Usha Thakur in January this year for allegedly not allowing him to perform his official duty.

Team Absolute | Mhow

A forest deputy ranger has been suspended from service for allegedly producing forged documents to get promotion, an official said on Sunday. However, deputy ranger RS Dubey claimed he was suspended as had complained against Culture Minister Usha Thakur in January this year for allegedly not allowing her to perform his official duty.

Divisional Forest Officer, Indore, Narendra Pandya said, "A staffer, Mukesh Yadav, had submitted a written complaint against Dubey, stating that the latter produced forged documents for getting promoted as deputy ranger from forest guard." As the complaint was submitted

before the Coronavirus-induced lockdown, it took time to investigate the charge, the official said.

"The allegation was found correct following which the deputy ranger was suspended from service two days ago," the official said.

When contacted, Dubey claimed senior officers and local politicians were "after him" since the day he complained against Mhow MLA and state minister Thakur in January this year.

He alleged that his seniors were continuously trying to find fault, even a minor one, with him.

"Some teams had visited forest compartments falling under my jurisdiction in search of any encroachments on forestland, but they were not able to find any. Finally, they have suspended me on

this very old issue of forged documents on an allegation of one of my colleagues, he said.

Dubey said he will move court against the suspension order.

Earlier, he had alleged that Thakur, along with some supporters, barged into the forest office premises at Badgonda on January 10 and forcibly took away an earth-moving machine and a tractor-trolley seized over digging work in the protected area in Badgonda.

Badgonda is a part of the Mhow Assembly seat represented by Thakur. After Dubey had sought registration of a police case against the minister, he was transferred from Badgonda in Mhow tehsil to Manpur. Dubey said his transfer was quashed following a court's direction in March this year.



CM PLANTED KADAMBA SAPLING

Bhopal: Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has taken a pledge to plant saplings daily. In this sequence, Chouhan planted a Kadamba sapling in Smart Park on Sunday. Kadamba is a flowering tree. Its leaves are like mahua leaves and fruits are round like lemon. It is important in increasing greenery and improving the environment.

'CM's Son Pressurised Cops To File Case Against Sajjan Verma': Congress

Team Absolute | Bhopal

After a case was filed against former minister and Congress MLA Sajjan Singh Verma and a few others for inaugurating a bridge in Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan's Budhni constituency, party's Madhya Pradesh Committee (MPCC) Secretary Rajesh Chouksey claimed that Shivraj's son Kartikey Chouhan pressurised the local police to file a case against Verma for obstructing government business.

Chouksey stated, "Sajjan Verma was going from Nasrullaganj to Nemawar as soon as he got the news of the killing of five people in Nemawar. While on his way, a newly constructed bridge built in Budhni Vidhan Sabha area, which was to be inaugurated by the Chief Minister, was commissioned by Verma on the demand of the public. Under pressure from Chief Minister Shivraj Singh's son Kartikeya Chauhan, the local police registered a case against Sajjan Verma for obstructing government's work and damaging public property. Congress, which is protesting across the state, demands the withdrawal of the case against Sajjan Verma."

The Congress conducted protests across various Madhya Pradesh districts on Saturday, July 3, in response to the case filed against Verma. At the Divisional

Commissioner's office, Congress leaders protested and raised slogans against Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan. Congress leaders also sent a letter to Divisional Commissioner Pawan Sharma, addressed to the Governor, requesting that the case against Sajjan Verma be dismissed.

This comes after the Madhya Pradesh police filed a case against former Congress minister Sajjan Singh Verma and a few others on Saturday for inaugurating a bridge across the Seep river that was built without the approval of the relevant authorities. In the Sehore district, the bridge was opened in Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan's Budhni seat. Verma and others were charged after passing through the Panda village construction site without permission and without doing load testing.

Sehore Assistant Superintendent of Police (ASP) Sameer Yadav said, "On the basis of a report filed by Somesh Srivastava who is Sub-Divisional Officer at PWD, a case has been lodged against a former minister Sajjan Singh and other people for passing through a construction site in Panda village without permission and load testing. A case has been registered under Sections 188, 269, 270, 336 of the Indian Penal Code and in other relevant sections of the Disaster Management Act." The investigation into the matter is underway.

CM pays tribute to Swami Vivekananda

Bhopal: Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan paid homage to Swami Vivekananda on his death anniversary on Sunday. Chouhan garlanded his portrait at his residence. Swami Vivekananda was a renowned and influential spiritual teacher of Vedanta. Swami Vivekananda was born on January 12, 1863 in Kolkata.

His real name was Narendra Nath Dutt. Vivekananda had special interest in music, literature and philosophy. Swamiji had assimilated all the ideologies of Vedas, Puranas, Bible, Quran, Dhammapada, Guru Granth Sahib and philosophy at the age of 25. He represented Sanatan Dharma on behalf of India in the Vishwa Dharma Mahasabha held in 1893 in Chicago, USA. Even on the last day of his life, on July 4, 1902, he did not change his meditation routine and meditated for two to three hours in the morning and attained Mahasamadhi piercing his Brahmrandhra in the meditative state itself.



CM TO DISCUSS CONTROL MEASURES FOR THIRD WAVE OF COVID

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan will address the district level, block level and village level Crisis Management Groups from 6 pm on 5th July on Monday regarding vaccination and control of third wave of Covid. In this address, all the ministers, state-level officers in charge will join the regular link of Covid review. The members of the District Level Crisis Management Group and all the Divisional Commissioners, Inspector Generals of Police, Collectors, Superintendents of Police will join the NIC Centre. Other members will be able to watch and listen to

the address on Webcastu link, Facebook Live, YouTube, Twitter, apart from Doordarshan and all regional TV channels. Address to join the program online www.twitter.com/ChouhanShivraj, www.facebook.com/ChouhanShivraj, www.youtube.com/ChouhanShivraj, www.twitter.com/OfficeOfSSC, www.facebook.com/OfficeOfSSC, webcast link is https://webcast.gov.in/mp/cmevents. All the collectors of the state have been directed to make arrangements to inform the district, block and village level Crisis Management Group members and other officials.

Shocker On Camera: Women Beaten With Sticks By Family

One woman shrieks out in pain as she is kicked and dragged by her hair while she tries to escape, videos show.

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Two women get slapped, kicked, dragged by the hair and beaten with sticks by at least seven people in disturbing videos that have emerged from Madhya Pradesh.

The tribal women, who are cousins, were tortured in full public view by their family members because they were apparently talking to their maternal cousins - enraging the family. Many onlookers watched the crime, even recorded videos, but no one intervened to save the women from the bashing.

The incident happened on June 22 and just days later the videos were shared widely on

social media after which the police intervened. The young women were sent for a medical check-up and seven people, including one woman's mother and brother, have been arrested, police said.

The brutal crime took place in Dhar district's Pipalwa village. Videos show the women standing near a river when their cousins gang up on them and beat them up.

One woman shrieks out in pain as she is kicked and dragged by her hair while she tries to escape, videos show. One accused repeatedly thrashes her with a stick till it breaks. In another video, the woman's mother too joins in the barbaric

torture - slapping her, pulling her hair and hitting her with a slipper.

The woman was apparently then taken back to the village where the torture reportedly continued. The bruised cousins were seen sitting motionless in another video as a big crowd surrounded them.

The incident occurred days before a similar savagery where a 19-year-old woman was tied to a tree and beaten with sticks on camera by her father and cousins in adjoining Alirajpur. The family members were apparently angry at the woman, who got married three months ago, for leaving the house of her in-laws and coming home for a visit.





MAHARASHTRA BREAKS ITS DAILY VACCINATION RECORD, ADMINISTERS OVER 8 LAKH VACCINE DOSES

The state health department data shows that till date a total of 48.05 lakh Covid vaccine doses have been administered in Pune district.

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Maharashtra administered 8,01,847 Covid-19 vaccine doses on Saturday, surpassing its previous daily record, Additional Chief Secretary Dr Pradeep Vyas said.

Till late on Saturday, the total count of doses administered in the state was 3.39 crore. "We have surpassed our previous best performance in Covid vaccination," Dr Vyas said.

The previous best daily record was on June 26 when we were able to administer 7,38,704 vaccines in a single day, Dr Vyas said, adding that for the last three months the state has been able to consistently maintain their top position in the vaccination drive. After Maharashtra, at second position is Uttar Pradesh, where a



total of 3.26 crore vaccine doses have been administered, followed by Gujarat, which has registered a total count of 2.65 crore vaccine doses administered till July 3. Meanwhile, state health department officials said that they had received a stock of 12.5 lakh vaccine doses on July 2.

The state health department data shows that till date a total of 48.05 lakh Covid vaccine doses have been administered in Pune district. In the

age group 45 years and above, a total of 19.55 lakh have got the first vaccine dose while 7.13 lakh have got both jabs. In the 18-44 age group, a total of 14.69 lakh beneficiaries have got the first dose while 37,199 have got both vaccine doses.

Pune district has administered the first vaccine dose to a total of 1.5 lakh health care workers and both doses to 1.07 lakh in this priority group. A total of 2.4 lakh front line workers have got

the first vaccine dose while 1.20 lakh have got both jabs.

Dr Sanjay Deshmukh, assistant director (Health), Pune circle, said that on July 2 they received another batch of a total of 1.25 lakh Covishield and 30,600 Covaxin doses. So far Mumbai tops the list of districts that have administered the highest number of vaccine doses till date. Mumbai has administered over 58 lakh vaccine doses till date.

5 Injured In Explosion At Chemical Plant In Palghar

The explosion took place around 11.30 pm on Saturday at the chemical plant located in Boisar industrial area (Palghar), a fire official said.



Team Absolute | Palghar

Five workers were injured in a fire following an explosion at the plant of a chemical company in Maharashtra's Palghar district, officials said on Sunday.

The blast took place around 11.30 pm on Saturday at the chemical plant located in Boisar industrial area, a fire official said.

After being alerted, local firemen rushed to the spot and carried out rescue and relief operations.

"Five workers received burn injuries due to the fire after the explosion. They have been

admitted to a local hospital for treatment," an official from Boisar police station said.

The cause of the explosion is not yet known, he said, adding that a probe is on into the incident. The incident took place at Bharat Chemicals in the Boisar Tarapur Industrial area of Palghar district. Fire tenders rushed to the spot after getting information. Injured were shifted to nearby Thunga hospital.

The local fire department had rushed to the spot after being alerted about the blast. Following rescue and relief operations, five workers were sent to the hospital for treatment of burn injuries.

MPSC functioning needs to be reviewed: Fadnavis

Fadnavis made the statement while reacting to the death by suicide of the MPSC aspirant who took the extreme step as the final interview of the state civil services exam had not taken place.

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Former Maharashtra chief minister and BJP leader Devendra Fadnavis on Sunday said that the functioning of the Maharashtra Public Service Commission (MPSC) needs to be reviewed.

He made the statement while reacting to the death by suicide of the MPSC aspirant who took the extreme step as the final interview of the state civil services exam had not taken place. Swapnil Lonkar died after hanging himself in Pune's Hadapsar area and left behind a suicide note. He had cleared the 2019 preliminary and main exams and was waiting for the final interview to take place. He had cleared the 2020 preliminary exam as well. Fadnavis stated that Lonkar's suicide is unfortunate and added, "It is very serious (matter) and the



functioning of MPSC needs to be reviewed. Interviews don't take place.

Several posts (of members) are vacant. These students give the examination with lots of expectations and if exams are not conducted for two years, then it pushes them into depression.

"We request the government to conduct the review to bring the change in the MPSC's functioning."

MAHARASHTRA JOINS 200 INTERNATIONAL STATES TO FIGHT CLIMATE CHANGE

Team Absolute | Pune

Aaditya Thackeray, state minister for Environment, announced Maharashtra's entry and its future efforts towards becoming a climate-resilient state.

Maharashtra has joined the 200-odd global states and regions fighting climate change in collaborating with Under-2, an international non-profit organization working in climate mitigation. Aaditya Thackeray, state minister for Environment, announced Maharashtra's entry and its future efforts towards becoming a climate-resilient state. He said, "The state is taking concrete green steps in coordination with other ministries to tackle climate change. Maharashtra is keen to work with its global counterparts and share the critical insights we all have observed through our interventions." The second-most populous state in the country is at a higher risk of facing the effects of climate change in future, given its vast coast-line and drought-prone areas. "As one of the largest Indian states, this is a welcome boost for environmental leadership provided for the planet in South Asia," said Tim Ash Vie, director, Under-2 Coalition Secretariat at the Climate Group. This group was constituted in 2015 with over 230 governments committing to the Paris Agreement.



14 lakh people fined during second wave for not wearing masks in public

The Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation and Railway authorities have collected fines to the tune of Rs 28.2 crore between February 16 and July 1 this year.



crore from over 29.38 lakh citizens in Mumbai.

According to BMC, most offenders 2,02,050 people were caught in the K-West ward, which includes Andheri (West), Versova and Juhu beach areas, amounting to fines of over Rs 4 crore. The ward in the western suburbs also has the highest number of sealed buildings and floors in the city and the second-highest number of active Covid-19 cases (987).

Of the total 66 active sealed buildings, 33 are in K-west. Also, out of 2,143 sealed floors, 341 are in K west.

On July 1 alone, 3,784 people were penalised by the

BMC's clean-up marshals and an amount of Rs 7,56,800 was collected. The municipal corporation had made it mandatory to wear masks in public places last year. A fine of Rs 200 is levied in case of non-adherence. There are 1,200 marshals deployed across the city with 50 marshals in each of the 24 municipal wards to fine people for not adhering to Covid norms. Mumbai had witnessed an unprecedented surge in Covid 19 cases since February 10. It had recorded its highest-ever single-day case count on April 3 at 11,573. The city has been reporting around 600 daily cases since June.

Team Absolute | Mumbai

During the second wave of the Covid-19 pandemic, Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) and Railway authorities have reportedly penalised 14 lakh people and collected fines to the tune of Rs 28.2 crore for not wearing masks in public.

This amount was collected between February 16 and July 1. From April 8 last year to July 1 this year, the BMC has collected fines worth Rs 59.16

Permit local trains to ply for vaccinated Mumbaikars: Milind Deora

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Amid growing demand to allow the general public to travel in Mumbai and suburban local trains, former minister and senior Congress leader milind Deora has demanded that the government of Maharashtra should permit local train travel to those vaccinated.

Due to rising Covid-19 cases, currently, only state government and public administration officials are allowed to commute in trains.

Stating that 10 per cent of Mumbaikars are fully vaccinated and 33 per cent have had one jab, Deora said, "GoM should permit local trains to ply for vaccinated Mumbaikars. This will also boost vaccine acceptance."

He also highlighted that lockdowns and high employee commuting costs have gutted Mumbai's economy, putting MSMEs out of business.



On Saturday, the Bombay high court also said that it cannot permit lawyers to travel by at least till the end of July as the Maharashtra State Covid-19 Task Force apprehends a third wave of the pandem-

ic. Over a week ago, the government also amended the fivelevel Unlock plan after spike in Covid-19 cases and removed levels one and two. Now, level 3 is having the maximum relaxation.

PATIL ASSURES TRANSPORTERS OF 'ZERO HARASSMENT' BY COPS

Mumbai: Police personnel through their department heads have been directed to consider the extension given for the renewal while examining the documents. The police department will ensure that the examination of the documents does not lead to the harassment of these transporters. Following complaints from several transporters in, the minister of state for home and transport Satej Patil has stepped in and assured them not a single heavy goods vehicle driver will be harassed by . "I have taken the issue seriously. The transporters say that they are harassed for not renewing documents, licences, etc. But the government has already given an extension for document renewal to domestic goods carriers and public transport buses till September 30. This will be strictly implemented," Patil said. He assured the transporters that there would be no harassment by for the non-renewal of the documents till the extended date. In a tweet, Patil said "Police personnel through their department heads have been directed to consider the extension given for the renewal while examining the documents. The police department will ensure that the examination of the documents does not lead to the harassment of these transporters."

3 cops injured after mob attack in Thane

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Three policemen were injured in an attack by a mob while they were trying to nab a criminal in Thane district, officials said on Sunday.

The incident took place at Kasai Wada in Bhiwandi town on Friday when a joint team of the Gujarat police and Bhiwandi crime branch, in plain clothes, went in search of Jamil Qureshi (38), against whom criminal offences were registered by Valsad police in the neighbouring state.

In a bid to evade arrest, Qureshi jumped out of the window of his flat, located on the fourth floor of a building, and died, Deputy Commissioner of Police, Bhiwandi Zone, Yogesh Chavan said. The family members

of the deceased and locals subsequently came out in the locality and alleged that the policemen pushed him to death.

The irate mob also allegedly manhandled some policemen, the official said. Some videos, purportedly showing a number of men and women beating up policemen and hitting them with stones, went viral on social media. A sub-inspector and two constables from the Bhiwandi police team received injuries in the incident and they were taken to a local hospital for treatment, Chavan said. The Nizampura police have identified the culprits and registered a case under IPC sections for rioting, assault or criminal force to deter public servant from discharge of his duty, wrongful restraint, and other relevant provisions.

Stranded in Iran for 18 months, 5 Indians move PM for 'ghar-wapasi'

Team Absolute | Mumbai

In a heart-wrenching development, five Indian sailors stranded in Iran for 18 months have appealed for help to Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Minister for External Affairs S Jaishankar, to return home.

Harbouring dreams of a better future for themselves, the five youngsters all holding valid qualifications and documents had flown to Iran to join merchant navy ships in 2019, through an Indian agent.

They are: Aniket S. Yempure, 29 and Mandar M. Worlikar, 26, (both Mumbai), Pranav A Tiwari, 21, (Patna), Naveen M Singh (New Delhi), and Thamizh R Selvan, 31, (Chennai).

However, while sailing on the high seas off Oman in February 2020, the five were unknowingly trapped in a treacherous maritime narcotics smuggling racket, leading to their arrest, jail and even after being acquitted in the case, they are still grounded in a foreign land for 18 months.

In India, their frantic family members

have written several letters to the Prime Minister, Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), the Iranian authorities there and in India, the Indian diplomats stationed in Iran for intervention, but to no avail.

"As events unfolded after February 2020, little did these boys realize that not only their dreams would be shattered, but they would also be imprisoned and kept away from their families in India," rued Aniket's distraught father in Mumbai, Sham Yempure.

From mid-2019, all the excited youngsters on their maiden sea-jobs were doing their duties enthusiastically till one 'black voyage' in February 2020 on a ship, 'MV Artin10', owned by an Iranian, Razaee Mukkadam which literally changed the course of their lives. The ship's master, Capt M Rasool



Gharebi took them on board for a series of long voyages lasting around 6-7 weeks, sailing from Iran to Kuwait, Muscat (Oman) and other ports, delivering different types of cargo. "On the afternoon of February 20, 2020, Capt. Gharebi suddenly ordered the ship to stop in the high seas and drop anchor, around 140 kms from Muscat. A few

hours later, another vessel came and unloaded what appeared to be small 'rice-bags' on our ship," Aniket Yempure told IANS from an unknown location around Chabahar. Since this mid-sea cargo transfer was illegal as per international maritime laws, Worlikar and his co-crew quietly recorded it on their mobile phones as evidence for the Customs and Iran Police authorities at the next port. Unexpectedly, the very next morning

(February 21, 2020), an Iran Navy ship intercepted and arrested them all on the high seas and transferred them to the naval ship. During interrogation, Capt. Gharebi admitted that "the Indian crewmen were innocent and had no knowledge of the illicit cargo transfer operation" which he masterminded in the high seas.

At one point, the Captain attempted suicide by stabbing himself, but since the navy ship was near the small Konarak Port, rushed to hospital and survived. The five Indians were also offloaded at the same port town, arrested by the local Counter-Narcotics Department, and shunted to custody by a Konarak Court. Even Capt. Gharebi and later the ship owner Mukkadam were nabbed in the same case. "We felt doomed and helpless...It was only at this stage we learnt that the 'rice-bags' loaded on our ship in the high seas actually was 1.50 tonnes of banned narcotics being smuggled through the sea," said Aniket, as they prepared to spend the next 382 days in jail without committing any crime!

Repeal, not modify 3 farm laws: Maha farmers' body to MVA govt

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The All India Kisan Sangharsh Coordination Committee on Saturday appealed to the Maha Vikas Aghadi government in Maharashtra to ensure that the three central farm laws are fully repealed and not accepted with any modifications. AIKSCC President Ashok Dhawale and other AIKSCC leaders said in a joint statement that the Maharashtra government is trying to bring the new farm laws in the state by making certain changes to the three controversial laws enacted by the Centre last year.

"However, making amendments to the draft of the central laws will not change the

purpose behind them nor the 'anti-farmer' and corporate character of these laws," said Dhawale.

Keeping in mind the sentiments and expectations of the farmers' groups across India, the state government should not rush to enact these laws on the lines of the Centre since the farmers have demanded a complete repeal of the laws.

In the joint statement, Dhawale, ex-MP Raju Shetti, Medha Patkar, Pratibha Shinde, Namdev Gawde, SV Jadhav, Ajit Navale, Kishore Dhamale, Subhash Kakute, Subhash Lomte, Seema Kulkarni, Raju Desale, and others pointed out that the Supreme Court has already stayed the implementation of the contentious farm laws.



EDITOR'S SPECS

Covishielders not allowed in EU!

As the European Union (EU) is reopening borders to non-EU tourists especially those who have been fully vaccinated against Covid-19, travellers inoculated with the Indian-made AstraZeneca vaccine, or Covishield, could face problems when entering the bloc, the European Commission suggested. While the AstraZeneca vaccine produced in Europe, branded Vaxzevira, has been greenlighted by the European Medicines Agency (EMA), the Indian version Covishield has not even requested for the market authorization, according to Stefan De Keersmaecker, the Commission's spokesman for health issues, an agency reported. In the UK, where AstraZeneca is the prevalent vaccine in use, a share of the population has received the Indian-made jab, manufactured by Serum Institute of India (SII). In total, five million doses were imported from India, but health authorities said they were not called Covishield and considered the same product as those produced in north Wales and Staffordshire, according to the BBC. An EU-wide Digital Covid Certificate officially entered into force on Thursday, allowing people to travel within the EU-plus area without restrictions if they can either prove to have been fully vaccinated with the EMA-approved vaccines, or have tested negative or recovered from the infection. Meanwhile, EU member states have the right to accept travelers vaccinated with jabs approved by the World Health Organization (WHO), among which is the Covishield. Media reports said only a small number of the 27 member states have announced the acceptance. In response to concerns that people from the UK may be denied entry when traveling to the EU, Keersmaecker said the European Commission is working to solve the problem. "In order to assure a coordinated approach here, the Commission is obviously in contact in discussion with the member states to go through these different vaccines and to see which is the best coordinated approach," said the spokesman.

DIVIDED DALIT VOTERS TO SCRIPT A NEW STORY IN UTTAR PRADESH!

Vinod Kumar Shukla

Social engineering is new normal for poll management and Bahujan Samaj Party, Samajwadi Party and the Bharatiya Janata Party have been winning elections by arrogating vote bank of each other after Brahmin, Dalit and the Muslim vote bank of Congress fragmented. Brahmins switched side to the BJP, Dalits became vote bank of the BSP and Muslims shifted their loyalty towards the SP by selectively voting for Muslim candidates of any other political party. At present, Brahmins are in double mind in Uttar Pradesh but don't have any other alternative to vote except the BJP as their past experience with the SP and the BSP had not been good. Muslims will decide at the last moment but would certainly vote to defeat the BJP candidates except a minuscule number of Muslim women voting for the BJP. Dalits who constitute around 18 per cent of the total voters in the state are the most confused lot. They have been voting for the BSP ever since Mayawati came on the political horizon of Uttar Pradesh. This catapulted her to occupy the seat of chief minister for four times in Uttar Pradesh. But various experiments of social engineering eroded the support base of Mayawati and people from the Dalit community started questioning if Dalit empowerment is confined to her own caste and family among Dalits. The last Assembly elections are testimony to the fact that people have started distancing themselves from the BSP and the party was confined to 18 seats in the 2017 Assembly elections in Uttar Pradesh. The credibility of Mayawati touched the Nadir with the former CM joining hands with her most bitter political enemy -- the Samajwadi Party whose leaders allegedly once tried to kill her. She performed better in the 2019 Lok Sabha election when she contested election alone but was still way behind her strength. Since poll-related activities started in Uttar Pradesh, every political party except has started working. If the BJP is trying to



cajole its miffed ally Apna Dal led by Anupriya Patel and trying to woo Nishad and Rajbhar voters then Samajwadi Party is trying to win over leaders from the BSP to bring them to its fold. The SP has gone to the extent of claiming to win 350 seats in the next Assembly elections. The BSP announced to go its alone in the 2022 elections with another player AIMIM announcing to contest over 100 seats in the state which has been trying to create a Dalit-Muslim alliance in the country for long. They succeeded and managed to send two members in Parliament. All this is happening at the cost of BSP as Mayawati is gradually losing her grip over Dalits in the state, radical Dalit voters may join the party of Assaduddin Owaisi. A newfound Dalit messiah -- Chandrashekhar Azad 'Ravan' -- is also active in the state and he may join Samajwadi Party to create some political space for himself and also to expand his support base. He has started Cycle Yatra in the state from July 1. He knows it very well that contesting elections alone will not reap any benefit. It will simply be a waste of resources. So an alliance with the

SP may prove to be a pragmatic move for him. The Congress appears to be lagging behind in terms of poll preparations for 2022 elections which has the maximum chances of winning over angry Brahmin votes to its fold from the BJP but the Congress is losing one after another leader to the BJP. The recent visit of President Ramnath Kovind to Kanpur is being looked upon by political analysts as a tactic to garner Dalit votes. A section of Dalits has already been voting for the BJP. So, for the 2022 Assembly elections Dalits appear to be the most divided lot as to whom to accept as their leader. Mayawati still has influence over the bigger chunk but BJP has made inroads into the community in past few years. But most interestingly, the new emerging Dalit icon Chandrashekhar Azad 'Ravan' has a major influence over youths of the community by expressing caste identity with pride. A certain section of the community always remained with the Congress keeping its vote bank to at least 10 per cent. So, Dalits appear to be divided in the state making the election interesting.

Corporate Fraud: Is Promoter Unquestioned Authority Bolstered by Professionals' Complicity?

Jacob Puthenparambil



Over the past seven years, corporate India has seen more fraud than in the past 70 years. After the excesses post the GFC where credit was loose and corporate India ambitions ran faster than their business acumen it took years to absorb the fall-out from defaults, NPLs and recovery proceedings. However, the rise in corporate fraud was somewhat perplexing as it was disappointing. Since the IBC was implemented, many such discoveries unearthed as independent resolution professionals take charge of the company's affairs. Additionally, banks and financial institutions have no incentive to compromise or gloss over transgressions, which in the era before the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, would have either gone undiscovered or covertly allowed to exist without acknowledgement of its existence. Promoters have an unquestionable grip on their companies, lenders and minority shareholders. Even professional employees get the wrong end of that stick. It also depends on how one defines management conduct. Frauds and misdeeds at financial institutions (such as banks and NBFCs) have tremendous ramifications given the inherent leveraging of driven business models. The demise of Yes Bank, Religare, Laxmi Vilas Bank, IL&FS and DHFL all have been mired with fraud, corruption and siphoning -- showing that the misconduct of whether promoters or professionals has been laid bare. In contrast, there are the likes of BR Shetty (promoter of NMR Health and Finbar) blaming their professional management for the intricate fraud in their company.

Avantha Group (led by promoter Gautam Thapar) received similar blame with the promoter claiming ignorance, delaying the resolution process. Meanwhile, the case of Cox and Kings is more like a thriller movie than a corporate process where the promoter (Peter Kerkar) claims he was duped by collusion between his management, banks and investors. It's hard to believe that promoters helmed affairs for over two decades in each of these companies and yet don't know what the company's true affairs look like. Anyone who's interacted with senior management in promoter-owned Indian companies (including the likes of SEBI and RBI) can tell you that the finances of every Indian company are controlled by the promoter's family with an iron grip. That's one reason bankers in India always want personal guarantee of promoters, because they are implicitly acknowledging that promoters treat the companies as their own wealth, so transferring between the promoter's wealth and company assets cannot be prevented. Hence, bankers should be able to go after the promoter's assets if the company's assets are insufficient for debt repayments. Undoubtedly, promoters have the power, authority, ability and opportunity to know if there were rogue employees or if this is a crafty scheme to benefit from perceptions of high performance and stock prices as well as deflecting risk on the way down.

international

ISRAEL STRIKES GAZA AFTER INCENDIARY BALLOONS LAUNCHED

The sources said that late Saturday night, the Israeli war jets fired two missiles at a military training post south of Gaza city that belongs to al-Qassam Brigades, the armed wing of the Islamic Hamas movement, Xinhua news agency reported.



Israeli fighter jets carried out airstrikes on the Gaza Strip in response to incendiary balloons launched at southern Israel, according to security sources. The sources said that late Saturday night, the Israeli war jets fired two missiles at a military training post south of Gaza city that belongs to al-Qassam Brigades, the armed wing of the Islamic Hamas movement, Xinhua news agency reported. Several missiles also targeted various Hamas military posts in northern and western Gaza, said the sources, adding that no injury was reported while there were severe dam-

ages at the Hamas military posts and facilities. Earlier on Saturday, Palestinian activists fired several incendiary balloons from the Gaza Strip at southern Israel, causing fires and damages. No injury was reported. Since the 11-day Israeli-Palestinian conflict ended on May 21, Israeli fighter jets carried out several airstrikes on Hamas military facilities and posts in response to incendiary balloons. The Egypt brokered ceasefire between Israel and Hamas-led militant groups continues in the Gaza Strip. However, Gaza activists continued launching arson balloons at Israel, demanding that the Jewish state must end the 14 years' blockade imposed on the impoverished enclave.

ROUHANI DEMANDS US APOLOGY FOR DOWNING IRANIAN AIRLINER IN 1988

Tehran: Iran's President Hassan Rouhani has demanded an apology from the US government for downing an Iranian passenger flight in 1988 after more than three decades. On July 3, 1988, a surface-to-air missile fired from a US warship stationed in the Gulf hit the Iran Air Flight 655, an Airbus A300, killing all 290 occupants on board, reports Xinhua news agency. Addressing a meeting on Saturday, Rouhani said: "The US government has to know that it committed a very big crime in the Gulf in 1988." US apologies, compensation, and an explanation about the reason why awards were given to "the killers and perpetrators of this great crime" are still expected, Rouhani noted. Following the downing of the flight from Tehran to Dubai, Washington had claimed that its forces were acting in self-defense after having mistaken the airliner for a F-14 Tomcat jet fighter. The crew of the US ship received awards at the end of their mission. As part of the settlement, even though the US government did not admit legal liability or formally apologise to Iran, it agreed to pay \$61.8 million on an ex-gratia basis in compensation to the families of the Iranian victims. It was considered was the deadliest aviation disaster involving an Airbus A300.

Philippines Air Force plane crash kills 17 people

Armed Forces of the Philippine chief of staff General Cirillito Sobejana said the plane was transporting troops from Cagayan de Oro City on Mindanao island when it crashed at around 11.30 am on Jolo island.



Philippine Air Force (PAF) plane with 92 people aboard crashed on Sunday while attempting to land on Jolo island in Sulu province, killing 17 persons and injuring 40 others. Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana said in a statement that among the 92 personnel on board the C-130 Hercules transport, three were pilots and five crew members, with the rest being "Army personnel reporting for duty," reports Xinhua news agency. Rescue and recovery operations are ongoing, Lorenzana added. Armed Forces of the Philippines chief of staff General Cirillito Sobejana said the plane was transporting troops from Cagayan de Oro City on Mindanao island when it crashed at around 11.30 am on Jolo

island. "The plane missed the runway and tried to regain power but failed," Sobejana said. "Responders are at the site now," he said, expressing hope that more people on the plane will be saved from the wreckage. The PAF said in an official statement that the C-130 aircraft took off from the airbase in Metro Manila to Cagayan de Oro City in northern Mindanao before heading to Jolo. The crash on Sunday is the latest PAF tragedy this year. In June one of the PAF's newly acquired S-70i Black Hawk utility helicopters, crashed north of Manila, killing six crew members.

Turkey passes new law to protect animals

Ankara: Turkey will no longer classify animals as commodities under a highly anticipated animal-rights bill presented to Parliament after years of efforts from activists and people involved in animal welfare. The bill submitted on June 30 by the ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP) is expected to be enacted into law in the coming weeks after deliberations by lawmakers, parliamentary sources told Xinhua on Saturday. The issue of animal rights has been on the Turkish government's agenda over the past decade due to public pressure on politicians to come up with a solution. The current bill defines animals as "commodities", denying them any rights. Any act of torture or killing of a stray animal in the country is punishable under "damage to commodities" with a small fine. However, the new legislation will redefine them as living beings and seek jail time for anyone who kills, abuses, or tortures animals. In recent years cruelty cases against animals, particularly stray dogs or cats, have made headlines, prompting the AKP and other political parties to seek stricter action against perpetrators. Last month, a man living in Istanbul, Turkey's largest city, was fined for killing and eating stray kittens that residents of his neighbourhood were feeding, local press reported. "The good thing is that their crimes will go on the records of offenders," Pelin Sayilgan, the Ankara representative of the Turkish Animal Right Federation, Haytap, told Xinhua. "We had demanded the banning of zoos, circus animals, fur farms, and pet stores, but the new legislation doesn't include those facts," she said. Citizens believe that the new legislation will deter people from engaging in brutality against animals. The punishment for crimes against animals will be a jail term ranging from six months to four years, which will prevent criminals from getting out on bail or converting the prison sentence to a fine.

NEPAL, INDIA REVISE RAILWAY SERVICE AGREEMENT

Kathmandu | Agencies

In a major boost to the Nepal-India bilateral ties, the two neighbouring countries have revised the Railway Service Agreement on June 30, according to a media report. According to the revised text of the Letter of Exchange, all authorised private container train operators (Indian as well as Nepali) will be able to utilise the Indian railway network to carry freight containers for Nepal's imports or exports, ending the monopoly of the Indian government-owned Container Corporation of India (CONCOR), the report published in the Kathmandu Post daily said. The agreement was signed in 2004 and the two sides have tried to amend it several times in the past. As the countries are planning to expand and extend more cross-border railway service in both passengers and cargo facilities, the agreement was needed to be revised without any delay, a Nepali official told IANS. This liberalisation will allow mar-



ket forces to come up in the rail-container-freight segment in the Himalayan nation, and is likely to reduce transportation costs in the medium term, benefiting the Nepalese consumer, the report added. The new agreement will come into effect after the Cabinets of the two countries endorse it. The agreement also allows the Indian Railway's freight services to bring goods to and take goods from other border points besides Raxaul/Birgunj. "The scope of the present limited cargo movement and facilities from

various Indian ports to bordering Nepali industrial areas has been extended by this agreement," the Kathmandu Post report said citing Nepali officials as saying. As Nepal and India are planning to extend more cross-border railway networks, experts and officials said this agreement has opened new vistas of cooperation in bilateral trade and transit sectors. Nepali officials, experts and business community have welcomed the revised agreement that Nepal is going to get huge concessions in doing bilateral and third-country

trade, the report stated further. Similarly, after the revised agreement comes into force, all kinds of wagons that can carry freight on Indian Railways network within India can also carry freight to and from Nepal. Earlier this facility was limited to only certain kinds of wagons. The liberalisation will particularly reduce transportation costs for automobiles which are carried over special wagons that were not listed in the Railway Service Agreement of 2004, as they did not exist back then. This new liberal policy also authorised Nepal Railway Company owned rail/wagons to operate Nepal-bound freight (inbound and outbound) over the Indian Railways network as per Indian Railway standards and procedures. Earlier this was only allowed for wagons owned by Indian Railway/CONCOR. Former Commerce Secretary of Nepal Chandra Ghimire told the newspaper that with the signing of the new agreement, the monopoly of CONCOR has been enjoying since 2014 has ended with this revised agreement. Since CONCOR was also operat-

ing for Indian companies, it paid less attention to our side, Ghimire said. Nepali traders have long been complaining of difficulties in trading with third countries in the absence of timely evaluation and revision of the Rail Services Agreement with India. With the increase in trade with other countries, Nepal had been demanding there be an extension of railway services to all the trading points across the country. After the agreement comes into force, Indian private operators can transport Nepal-bound cargo from Visakhapatnam and Kolkata ports, as well as, more ports allowing Nepal to use Indian sea ports closer to major customs points of western and far-western Nepal for third-country trade as per the Transit Treaty between Nepal and India. At present rail cargo can be transported only on the Kolkata-Raxaul/Birgunj route. The new agreement will be more important after the planned four more railway links between the two countries come into operation.



JLO AND BEN AFFLECK SNUGGLE UP AT THE HAMPTONS AS THEY HOPE TO 'MARRY THIS YEAR'

Los Angeles | Agencies

Jennifer Lopez and Ben Affleck got quite close to one another while talking some time at The Hamptons in New York. The famous couple, who recently rekindled their romance, is said to be aiming to tie the knot before the year is up. JLo, 51, and Ben, 48, were spotted with their arms around one another during the Fourth of July holiday weekend. The Oscar winner was seen sporting a pair of khakis and a beige sweatshirt while the singer wore slacks and a sweater. The two stars stayed arm in arm during their walk, as JLo placed her hand on the actor's stomach. The recent public outing comes as Ben and JLo are said to be hoping to walk down the aisle sooner rather than later. A source previously told OK! magazine that Ben wouldn't "let Jen get away" a second time as he "doesn't want to lose her again." The insider added: "The new relationship might technically only be a few weeks old, but in reality they are picking up where they left off."

Liam Payne reaches out to ex-fiancee Maya Henry with cryptic posts



Los Angeles | Agencies

Actress-writer Emerald Fennell enjoyed the challenge of finding Cinderella's personality when penning a new musical adaptation of the fairytale.

Fennell has joined hands with Andrew Lloyd-Webber on a new musical version of the classic fairytale and one of the first problems she encountered was how few defining traits the central character has, reports femalefirst.co.uk. "Who was Cinderella exactly? Arguably the most famous heroine in literature, and I could hardly think of a single personality trait. She was very good at housework, very good at singing to small ani-

Emerald Fennell opens up on her 'Cinderella' challenge

mal, very good at being meek and quiet and forbearing, but she wasn't exactly a thrill-ride of charisma," Fennell said. She added, "After centuries of sweeping the chimney, she'd been reduced to little more than a bottle blonde with a martyr complex. Luckily, it takes one to know one so I was up for the challenge." The actress-writer tagged Prince Charming a royal wet blanket and shared Cinderella was making a shoddy romantic decision in falling for him. "There was also a bit of a heart-throb problem in the shape of royal wet blanket and fairytales' most famous foot fetishist, Prince Charming," she wrote in an article for The Times newspaper. "Fairytales aren't supposed to be lectures -- they are hardly the pinnacle of feminist storytelling -- but at the same time it would be nice to believe that a happy ending wasn't dependant on waist-to-hip ratio or the size of one's feet," said the actress.

Los Angeles | Agencies

Liam Payne has reached out to his ex-fiancee Maya Henry with a series of cryptic posts about making "mistakes" and not "letting go". In the early hours of Sunday morning, the former One Direction star headed to his Instagram stories to muse on the state of his relationship. Singer Liam, 27, who revealed he had split from Maya, 21, last month, shared a series of posts and tagged his ex, telling her he "loved" her. Writing in white text on a plain white background, the star mused about the importance of keeping loved ones "close" after making "mistakes. Don't let someone go if you really want to love them even if you have to learn to love them through your own mistakes," Liam wrote. "Let your instinct tell you that you need them and keep them close we are always running out of time we never gain it." In a follow-up post soon after, he joked: "F*** Me I'm Wise," before tagging his ex in another solo post alongside a prayer hands emoji. He concluded the strange series of posts in what appears to be a message directly to Maya: "I love you, we calm."

GBBO star Candice Brown admits her 'mental health nearly broke her'

London | Agencies

After winning the Great British Bake Off, Candice Brown would have been looking to go from strength to strength. But since then, the glamorous 36-year-old has suffered a heartbreaking split from her husband, been diagnosed with ADHD and seen her pub business devastated by the pandemic.

So it comes as little surprise the baker, who won the 2016 series of the show, says she has just

had "the hardest, most difficult, horrible year of my life".

Writing about her emotional ordeal in new book Happy Cooking, out today, she reveals: "This book is testament to the fact that every day I just about put one foot in front of the other and I am here." "Ironic that a book about food (my favourite thing) and mental health has nearly broken me. But in truth it has. This has been the toughest thing I have had to do. I have found it so hard to get things on paper," Candice wrote.



SHERIDAN SMITH SPLITS FROM FIANCE JAMIE HORN AFTER THREE YEARS TOGETHER

Los Angeles | Agencies

Sheridan Smith has "with great sadness" separated from fiancé Jamie Horn after three years together. It comes after the Bafta-winning star, 40, welcomed the birth of their first son Billy in May last year. Cilla actress Sheridan met former insurance broker Jamie, 31, on the dating app Tinder in 2018 and they soon got engaged. In a joint statement given to The Sun on Sunday, the couple said: "It is with great sadness that we have decided to have some time apart. "We both remain completely committed to raising our beautiful boy Billy together. We ask that you respect our privacy during this difficult time. Thank you." The pair appeared in a one-off ITV documentary last year called Sheridan Smith: Becoming Mum which followed her pregnancy.



BRITNEY SPEARS CALLED 911 TO 'REPORT CONSERVATORSHIP ABUSE' HOURS BEFORE COURT HEARING

Los Angeles | Agencies

Britney Spears called 911 to report herself as a victim of conservatorship abuse" the night before her explosive court hearing.

The pop star slammed her conservatorship during a court hearing in June, as she made a series of incriminating allegations.

Britney, 39, called law enforcement in Ventura County, California "to report herself as a victim of conservatorship abuse" just hours before heading into court on June 23, the New Yorker reported.

The singer's message was sealed due to the ongoing investigation, though emergency calls in California are generally available to the public.

A source told the New Yorker that her team began texting one another frantically as they were "worried what Spears might say the next day and discussed how to prepare in the event that she went rogue." During the court hearing, a lawyer for the conservatorship asked that they clear the courtroom and seal her testimony, leading Britney to object.



ABSOLUTE PIC OF THE DAY



Kim Kardashian



3RD ODI:

MITHALI POWERS INDIAN WOMEN TO CONSOLATION WIN



Worcester | Agencies

Captain Mithali Raj scored an unbeaten 75 off 86 balls to power Indian women's cricket team to a four-wicket win over England in the third and final ODI here on Saturday.

Mithali, who became the top run-getter in women's international cricket, hit eight boundaries and kept calm as she took her team over the line despite

the rest of the batters disappointing again. Smriti Mandhana (49 off 57 balls) and Sneha Rana (24 off 22 balls), who added 50 runs for the fifth wicket with Mithali, were the other main scorers.

Earlier, Indian women bowled out England for 219 in the allotted 47 overs -- reduced due to rains. England, who were put into bat, were cruising along at 151/3 in the 34th over with contributions from Heather Knight (46 off 71 balls), Natalie Sciver (49 off 59 balls) and Lauren Winfield Hill

(36 off 52 balls).

However, quick wickets towards the end of the innings pushed England women to the back-foot.

Off-spinner Deepti Sharma was the most successful of the bowlers, picking three wickets for 47 runs while Jhulan Goswami (1/31), Shikha Pandey (1/42), Poonam Yadav (1/43), Sneha Rana (1/31) and Harmanpreet Kaur (1/24) picked a wicket apiece. England bagged the series 2-1.

England cruise past Ukraine into Euro 2020 semis



Rome | Agencies

A flying start in both halves helped England knock out an uninspired Ukraine 4-0 in the Euro 2020 quarterfinals at the Stadio Olimpico to set up an encounter with in-form Denmark on home soil.

England came off with a perfect start and opened the scoring with only four minutes into the game as Raheem Sterling's fine through ball allowed Harry Kane to fire past Heorhiy Bushcan from very close range on Saturday, reports Xinhua. Ukraine needed some time to gain a foothold into the contest but had their first effort on target

with 17 minutes played when Roman Yaremchuk unleashed a dangerous shot to test England goalkeeper Jordan Pickford. However, it remained Ukraine's only chance on target in the first 45 minutes as England controlled possession without creating clear-cut opportunities. After the restart, England gave the Ukrainians a mountain to climb as Harry Maguire doubled the advantage after nodding home Luke Shaw's free kick into the box with two minutes into the second half. Andriy Shevchenko's side was shocked and unable to respond while the relentless England strikers made it 3-0 in the 50th

minute when Shaw's second assist found Kane, who nutmegged Bushcan with a header from central position. Ukraine couldn't put up a resistance against the dominating England as Bushcan neutralised Kane's volley with a diving parry before Jordan Henderson headed home the subsequent corner to round off the 4-0 victory. England controlled the proceedings for the remainder of the game as Ukraine lacked in ideas and penetration. With the result, England advanced into their first Euro semi-finals since 1996 and will now return to Wembley to encounter the in-form Denmark on home soil.

Olympics' Covid discount: Expanded squads for hockey, 4 other sports

Lausanne | Agencies

Recognising the unique situation for the upcoming Tokyo Olympic Games in view of the COVID-19 pandemic, the International Olympic Committee (IOC) has given relief to a few team sports, allowing 'stand-by' or 'alternate' players to be part of certain squads.

This relaxation has been given to hockey, football, water polo, handball, and rugby, whose squads comprised fewer players than that available to them in other international competitions. For example, hockey squads at the Olympics comprise 16 players while at World Cup and other events, they have 18. Similarly, football teams have 18 players in the Olympics and 23 at other major events, though the 23-member squads don't have stand-bys. Thus, to make up for the shortfall, teams have been allowed to keep some standby players in the Olympic host city but out of the Olympic village. "This will not increase the number of athletes on-site in Japan, but will give more flexibility to select within the wider squads, recognising the unique situation for the Olympic Games Tokyo 2020 and giving NOCs [National Olympic Committees] maximum flexibility in choosing match squads," the IOC said in a release on Saturday night.

However, the team sheet for a match will still have the same number of players as in previous Olympics -- for example, 16 in the case of hockey and 18 for football.

The expanded roster would come as a big relief for hockey teams like India that have to sacrifice one goalkeeper to adhere to the number restrictions. Hockey India has picked senior player PR Sreejesh as the lone goalkeeper while Krishan Pathak is among the two players on standby who



would stay at a hotel near the village. Now, Pathak too will be part of the squad, can train with them, and can even be picked in the 16-member roster for matches.

The Olympics start on July 23.

Goiania (Brazil) | Agencies

Lionel Messi scored a goal and provided two assists as

Argentina progressed to the Copa America semifinals with an emphatic 3-0 win over Ecuador here. The new free agent set up Rodrigo de Paul and Lautaro Martinez before scoring with a sublime free-kick in stoppage time on Saturday, reports Xinhua.

The result at Estadio Olimpico in Goiania means Argentina will face Colombia in Brasilia on July 6, with the winner earning a place in the final at the Maracana stadium on July 10.

Defending champions and tournament hosts Brazil will meet Peru in the other semifinal at Rio



de Janeiro's Olympic Stadium on July 5. Ecuador started the game in a

positive fashion and almost took the lead via Enner Valencia's glancing header, which flew just

Copa America: Inspired Messi sends Argentina into semifinals

wide of the target following Pervis Estupinan's probing cross.

Argentina made them pay moments later when Messi set up De Paul, who took a touch before rifling home his first international goal. Ecuador began the second half as they did in the first, controlling possession for long periods but struggling to find a spark in the final third.

Argentina were far more clinical and they doubled their lead through Martinez, who Messi supplied after Angel Di Maria dispossessed Piero Hincapie.

Messi capped off a superb individual display by curling in a 93rd-minute free-kick, awarded after Hincapie pulled down di Maria on the edge of the box.

OLYMPICS: SWIMMER SAJAN PRAKASH SETS SIGHTS ON REACHING SEMIS

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Having sealed an automatic berth in the Tokyo Olympics with an 'A' qualification -- the first Indian swimmer to do so -- Sajjan Prakash has set reaching the semifinals at the Games as his target. To achieve that, Prakash, an inspector with Kerala Police, will have to slash 0.5 seconds from his timing of 1:56:38 in 200m butterfly that he achieved at the Sette Colli Swim Meet in Rome, Italy. "My realistic target at the Tokyo Olympics is to cut down another 0.5 seconds from my current time," he said at a media interaction facilitated by the Sports Authority of India. "It will surely get me into the semifinals and once I get there, I will give it my best shot to reach the final as well." Achieving qualification was a commendable performance for the 27-year-old Prakash, who is making a comeback after spending eight months away from the pool due to a neck injury. The pandemic had made things worse for Prakash, who had participated in Rio Olympics too. The postponement of the Olympics by a year came as a blessing for Prakash as he could complete his rehabilitation and training in Bangkok. The government funded a two-month training camp in Dubai for three swimmers including Prakash between August and October. Prakash will continue to train in Dubai for the next couple of weeks and will leave for Tokyo from there.



Wimbledon: Barbora sets up fourth round clash with world No. 1 Ashleigh

London | Agencies

French Open champion Barbora Krejickova of the Czech Republic booked a spot in the fourth round at Wimbledon with a 7-6(1), 3-6, 7-5 win over Latvia's Anastasija Sevastova.

Barbora will take on world No. 1 Ashleigh Barty, for a place in the quarterfinals after the Australian overcame her doubles partner, Katerina Siniakova of the Czech Republic, to close out play on Centre Court on Saturday evening with a 6-3, 7-5 verdict. Overcoming 56 unforced errors, Barbora edged the former world No. 11 Anastasija in 2 hours and 30 minutes, in a match that saw her come from a break down three times in the first set.



"It was really tough today. I was really just battling with myself a lot, because I wasn't really feeling well.

I really don't remember much what was happening. I was just there. I was just trying to fight for every ball, and it was really up and down," Barbora told wtatennis.com.

On her upcoming match against Ashleigh Barty, Barbora said, "All of this, you know, the way that I fought today, all of this is just extremely good achievement so far. It's perfect result as my debut. Being (in the) second week, you know, I didn't expect it."

MEDVEDEV RALLIES TO OVERCOME CILIC IN FIVE-SETTER

London: World No. 2 Daniil Medvedev of Russia kept his composure and raised his level to overcome 2017 finalist Marin Cilic of Croatia 6-7(3), 3-6, 6-3, 6-3, 6-2 and reach the fourth round at Wimbledon for the first time.

Medvedev will next face Poland's 14th seed Hubert Hurkacz for a spot in the quarterfinal. Hurkacz moved into the fourth round, his best result at a Grand Slam, with a 6-3, 6-4, 6-2 victory over Kazakhstan's Alexander Bublik. "It was an unbelievable match," Medvedev said in an on-court interview after the Saturday evening match.

"I think tennis fans always enjoy watching players come back from two-sets-to-love down and for it to be five sets. I certainly do so when I watch tennis on the TV. It's my first comeback (from 0-2 sets down), and actually what's amazing is against (Belgium's) David Goffin at Wimbledon in 2019, I was two-sets-to-love down and I had a break in the fifth set, but I lost. So when I left the court after the fourth set today, I told myself, 'It's not going to be another one of those'."

"So I'm really happy. When I was 5-0, 40/0 up at the end and Marin came back to 2-5, I thought to myself, 'Again...' Marin is an amazing player and for the first two sets he basically destroyed me," said Medvedev.

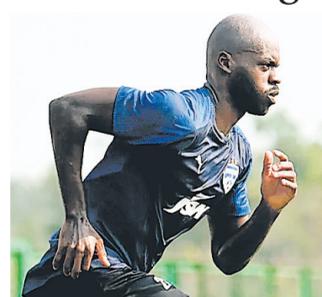


Bengaluru FC sign two-year pact with Gabonese defender Musavu-King

Bengaluru | Agencies

Indian Super League (ISL) side Bengaluru FC have extended by two years the contract of Gabonese defender Yrondu Musavu-King, who was earlier on a short-term pact with the club. The 29-year-old player, who made his debut in a 5-0 win over Nepal's Tribhuvan Army FC in the AFC Cup Preliminary Stage 2 clash in Goa in April, is Bengaluru FC head coach Marco Pezzaiuoli's first foreign acquisition ahead of the new season. Musavu-King has featured at the international level with Gabon, making his debut in a 2014 FIFA World Cup Qualifier against Congo, and has turned out for clubs in Europe's top divisions, such as Granada, Udinese, Lorient and Toulouse, among others.

The Libreville-born centre-back said he was excited and looking forward to the new season. "I had good feelings about this club right from the start, and that is one of the reasons why I have decided to extend my adventure here," said Musavu-King after completing the formalities. The defender's extension follows the arrival of young Indian midfielder



Rohit Kumar, and coach Pezzaiuoli said he was happy to see the club retain Musavu-King, a product of the Caen Academy in France. "Musavu-King is a fantastic professional with a wealth of experience as he has shown during his stay at Bengaluru FC so far," said Pezzaiuoli. Bengaluru FC are back in action next month, when they take on Maldives club Eagles FC in a 2021 AFC Cup playoff clash.

Don't need validation from people: Mithali on slow scoring

Worcester | Agencies

Indian women's ODI captain Mithali Raj countered criticism over her slow strike rate, saying she is quite experienced to be seeking "validation from people", and that she is in the team to "play the role that is assigned" to her.

Mithali, who became the top run-getter in international cricket across all formats on Saturday, surpassing former England batter Charlotte Edwards in the third ODI, said during the post-match press conference that, "I do read that the criticism is about my strike rate, but as I have said earlier also, I don't seek validation from people. I've played for a long time and I know that I have a certain responsibility in the team."

The 38-year-old Mithali went past the 10,273 runs scored by Charlotte as India



earned a consolation four-wicket win against the hosts in the three-match ODI series.

Before the third ODI, India had managed 201 and 221, losing both the matches before they won the final ODI, with Mithali scoring an unbeaten 86-ball 75.

Mithali had consumed 108 deliveries for her 72 in the opening ODI at a strike rate of

66.66, while in the second match, she scored 59 off 92 deliveries at a strike rate of 64.13.

"I don't look to please people. I'm here to play the role that is assigned to me by the team management. When you're chasing a target you pick your bowlers, you pick your length, you pick the areas. Because I'm in good flow, I need to make the best use of me in the middle and the entire batting unit revolves around me," said Mithali.

The skipper said she is only following the instructions of the team management.

"That's the job that is given to me by the coach and I look forward to sort of not get bogged down because at some point I know that the top order is already in the dugout and it was important for me to understand the situation and how I can manoeuvre and try to get the match close as possible with the batters who are yet to come," added Mithali.

England name unchanged squad for ODI series vs Pakistan

London | Agencies

The England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) has named an unchanged 16-member ODI squad -- currently playing against Sri Lanka -- for the three-match 50-over series against Pakistan beginning in Cardiff on July 8. Somerset wicketkeeper-batsman Tom Banton, who joined the group for the third ODI against Sri Lanka to be played in Bristol later on Sunday, has been retained in the squad led by Eoin Morgan. "England will name their squad for the Vitality T20 series against Pakistan later this month," ECB said in a statement on Saturday. Ahead of the crucial ODI series against Pakistan, England's stand-in coach Graham Thorpe was quoted as saying by ESPNcricinfo that, "Potentially the Pakistan series could push us further. We've been pleased with our own performances. We didn't want any complacency to creep in. And because of the competition we have, the players want to put in good performances." England made a



clean sweep of the three-match T20 series against Sri Lanka and look set to do the same in the ODI series against the Islanders, who are trailing 0-2. England ODI squad: Eoin Morgan (capt), Moeen Ali, Jonny Bairstow, Tom Banton, Sam Billings, Sam Curran, Tom Curran, Liam Dawson, George Garton, Liam Livingstone, Adil Rashid, Joe Root, Jason Roy, David Willey, Chris Woakes and Mark Wood.



Dia Mirza supports 'pledge to pause' online fake news campaign

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Bollywood actress and UN Environment's Goodwill Ambassador for India, Dia Mirza took to social media on Sunday to promote the United Nations "pledge to pause" campaign. "Pause to stop and think before we share online. During the pandemic fake news and misinformation has polarized us, cost lives and disrupted health efforts - and now it's prolonging the pandemic. If you believe in truth then join me, post the symbol and #PledgeToPause," Dia tweeted.

The actress' tweet comes at a time when fake news and random forwards on social networking apps often misguide people amid the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic.

Meanwhile, the actress who tied the knot with Mumbai-based businessman Vaibhav Rekhi in February this year, is expecting her first child.

Dia announced her pregnancy with an Instagram post in April this year, sharing a photo of her baby bump.

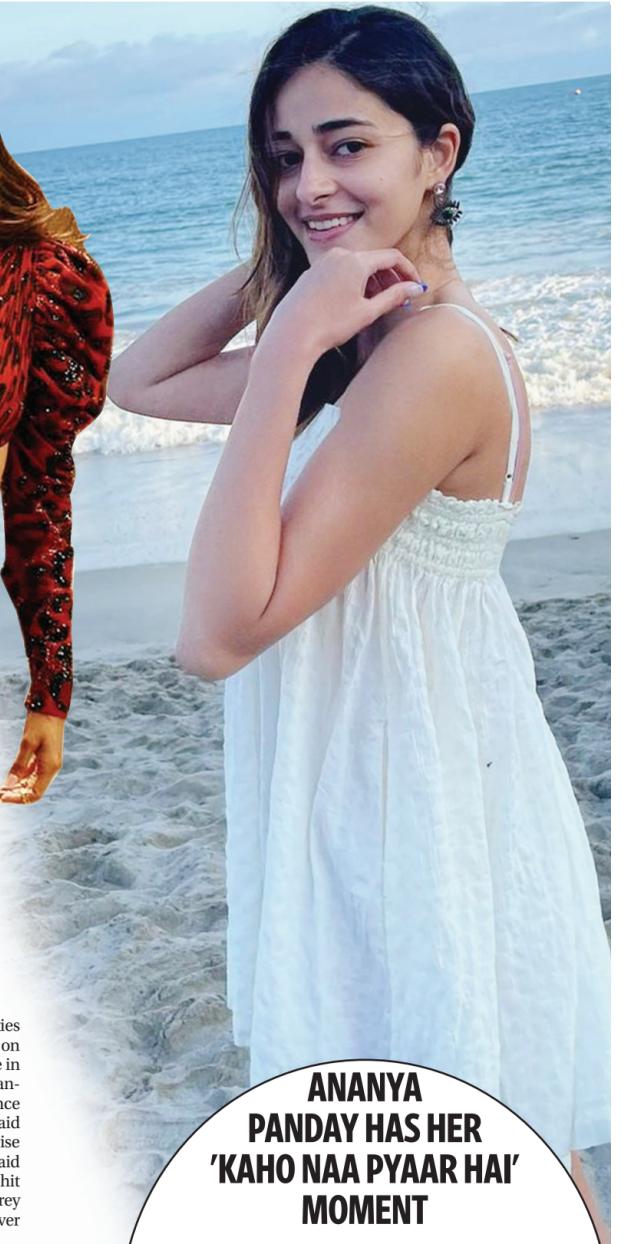
"Blessed to be... One with Mother Earth... One with the Life Force that is the beginning of everything... Of all stories. Lullabies. Songs. Of new saplings. And the blossoming of hope. Blessed to cradle this purest of all dreams in my womb," Dia wrote along with her photograph.



'Chura ke dil mera 2.0' of film 'Hungama 2' to release on July 5

Team Absolute | Mumbai

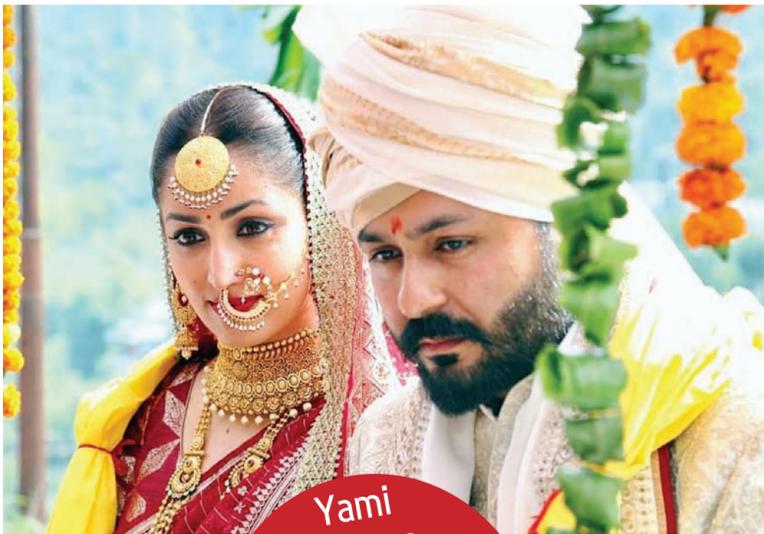
Actress Shilpa Shetty is excited about the upcoming release of the recreated version of her nineties superhit song "Chura ke dil mera", for her new film "Hungama 2". The teaser of the song releases on July 5 and the music video is likely to release a day later. "Chura ke dil mera' has been a milestone in my career. This song has always been special. Now CKDM 2.0 is finally coming out as part of this epic franchise comedy, and I am nothing but thrilled. It was fun and a challenge recreating it after 25 years since the benchmark is so high. Hope the audience loves it as much as I did dancing to the new version," said Shilpa. "It is one of those nineties iconic songs that still strikes a chord with everyone. I hope this reprise version of the song in our film will also resonate the same way with the audience across the nation," said the film's producer Ratan Jain. Directed by Priyadarshan, the film is a follow-up of the 2003 comedy hit "Hungama". It brings back Paresh Rawal in his pivotal role, and also stars Shilpa Shetty, Meezaan Jaffrey and Pranitha Subhash. The film also features Ashutosh Rana, Manoj Joshi, Rajpal Yadav, Johnny Lever and Tiku Talsania. "Hungama 2" will premiere on Disney+ Hotstar on July 23.



ANANYA PANDAY HAS HER 'KAHO NAA PYAAR HAI' MOMENT

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actress Ananya Panday took to Instagram to put up a series of pictures from a beach. However, more than the photographs, the witty caption entertained her followers. The actress said that she was having a "Kaho Naa Pyaar Hai" moment, a reference to Hrithik Roshan starrer in which the protagonists get abandoned on an island. In a white dress with an oversized bomber jacket, Ananya posed in the pictures posted on Sunday and captioned them as: "Having my 'Kaho Naa Pyaar Hai' moment with myself (it clearly didn't end well)." On the work front, Ananya has a film with Vijay Deverakonda titled "Liger" and Shakun Batra's directorial next alongside Deepika Padukone and Siddhant Chaturvedi.



Yami Gautam celebrates a month of her wedding 'with love and gratitude'

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Bollywood actress Yami Gautam took to social media on Sunday to celebrate a month of her wedding with filmmaker Aditya Dhar. Yami tied the knot with her "Uri: The Surgical Strike" helmer in June. The wedding was an intimate affair with only relatives and close friends of the couple in attendance.

Celebrating the completion of one month of her wedding on Sunday, the actress shared a photo from the ceremony on Instagram and wrote: "To a

month filled with love and gratitude. @adityadharfilms." In the photo, the bride and groom can be seen holding a piece of red cloth together.

On the work front, Yami featured together with actor Vikrant Massey in the romantic comedy film "Ginny Weds Sunny", which released digitally last year.

The actress will next be seen in the horror comedy film "Bhoot Police". The Pavan Kripalani directorial also features Saif Ali Khan, Jacqueline Fernandez and Arjun Kapoor. Apart from this, Yami will be seen alongside Abhishek Bachchan and Nimrat Kaur in the forthcoming film "Dasvi".

TITLE OF KARTIK AARYAN'S 'SATYANARAYAN KI KATHA' TO BE CHANGED

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Director Sameer Vidwans, who is set to direct 'Satyanarayan Ki Katha' starring Kartik Aaryan, has released an official statement about the change in the film's title on Saturday night. The director claims the decision to change the name aims to avoid hurting sentiments.

Vidwans shared the statement on Twitter and Kartik re-tweeted it on his verified Twitter handle.

The statement read: "A title of the film is something that emerges organically through the creative process. We have taken a decision to change the title of our recently announced film 'Satyanarayan Ki Katha' to avoid hurting sentiments, even if that's purely unintentional. Producers of the film and the creative team also are in complete support of this decision. We will be announcing a new title for our love story in the due course of our journey. Sincerely, Sameer Vidwans."

Details about the new title are still under wraps.

Co-produced by Namah Pictures and Sajid Nadiadwala's banner Nadiadwala Grandson



Entertainment, the film will mark the first collaboration between Kartik and Sajid Nadiadwala. The film is all set to go on floors towards the end of this year.

INSTAGRAM PIC OF THE DAY



Hina Khan

RAVEENA TANDON, GOVINDA HAVE A 'GRAND REUNION'

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actors Raveena Tandon and Govinda, who have together given multiple hit films, will soon be seen in a project together. While it is unclear what that project could be, Raveena on Sunday, gave a glimpse of the two actors together. In the past, Raveena and Govinda have worked together in films such as "Dulhe Raja", "Rajaji" and "Bade Miyan Chote Miyan" amongst others. Sharing a few selfies together, Raveena captioned the Instagram post: "The Grand reunion! #backtogether to hit the screen again!!!! What? Where? When? Coming Soon... #kisidiscmienjaayein" Raveena will also be seen making her digital debut with "Aranyan". Besides this, she also has multi-lingual "KGF: Chapter 2" with Kannada star Yash and actor Sanjay Dutt.

