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WHO reports 'sharp' increase in Covid deaths

Most of the new deaths were reported from the Americas and South-East Asia Regions.



Geneva: The World Health Organization (WHO) said that a "sharp" jump was reported in the number of the global Covid-19 deaths in the week between July 19-25.

In a statement on Wednesday, the world body said that with over 69,000 fatalities, the number of Covid-19 deaths reported during the period increased by 21 per cent week-on-week, said the WHO. Meanwhile, the global number of new Covid-19 cases was also increase, with 3.8 million new infections confirmed in the

above mentioned week, Xinhua news agency reported.

The number new cases rose by 8 per cent compared with the previous week, which was largely attributed to substantial increases in the Americas and the Western Pacific Regions, the WHO added.

As of Thursday, the overall global Covid-19 caseload has increased to 195,865,047, while the deaths have surged to 4,185,754 and vaccinations soared to 3,960,681,747, according to the Johns Hopkins University.

MP HAS HIGHEST COVID ANTIBODIES: SERO SURVEY

New Delhi: At least two-third of the population surveyed in 11 states were found to have developed coronavirus antibodies, according to the findings of a serosurvey by the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) done between June 14 and July 6. Madhya Pradesh leads the chart with 79 per cent seroprevalence while Rajasthan comes second with 76.2 per cent. Seroprevalence in Maharashtra is 58 per cent. Similarly, the lowest antibody count has been found in Kerala which is just 44 per cent. According to the report, Bihar has 75.9 per cent, Gujarat 75.3 per cent, Chhattisgarh 74.6 per cent, Uttarakhand 73.1 per cent, Uttar Pradesh 71 per cent and Andhra Pradesh 70.2 per cent sero prevalence. Similarly in Karnataka, it is 69.8 per cent, Tamil Nadu 69.2 per cent, Odisha 68.1 per cent, Punjab 66.5 per cent, Telangana 63.1 per cent, Jammu and Kashmir 63 per cent, Himachal Pradesh 62 per cent, Jharkhand 61.2 per cent, West Bengal 60.9 per cent, Haryana 60.1 per cent, Assam 50.3 per cent.

CENTRE OFFERS 27% OBC QUOTA, 10% FOR EWS IN MEDICAL ADMISSION

▶ The decision would benefit nearly 1,500 OBC students in MBBS and 2,500 OBC students in postgraduation courses, besides benefiting around 550 EWS students in MBBS and around 1,000 EWS students in postgraduation courses every year.

▶ The AIQ scheme was introduced in 1986 under the directions of the Supreme Court to provide for domicile-free, merit-based opportunities to students from any state to study in a medical college located in another state.

▶ The AIQ consists of 15 per cent of total available undergraduate seats and 50 per cent of total available post-graduate seats in the government medical colleges.

Sections (EWS) in the All India Quota (AIQ) scheme for medical courses.

The reservation is meant for undergraduate and postgraduate medical and dental courses -- MBBS, MD, MS, Diploma, BDS and MDS -- from the current academic year (2021-22) onwards. Soon after the decision, Modi lauded the step in a series of tweets, saying: "Our government has taken a landmark decision for providing 27% reservation for OBCs and 10% reservation for Economically Weaker Sections in the All India Quota scheme for undergraduate and postgraduate medical/dental courses from the current academic year." This will immensely help thousands of our youth every year get better opportunities and create a new paradigm of

social justice in our country." In 2007, the Supreme Court had introduced 15 per cent reservation for SCs and 7.5 per cent reservation for STs in the AIQ scheme. In order to provide benefit to students belonging to the EWS category in admission to higher educational institutions, a constitutional

amendment was made in 2019 which enabled the provision of 10 per cent reservation for the EWS category.

Intel, Ministry of Education launch 'AI For All' in India

New Delhi: Chip maker Intel on Thursday joined hands with Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE), Ministry of Education to announce the launch of an initiative -- 'AI For All' -- that aims to create a basic understanding of Artificial Intelligence (AI) for everyone in India.

The initiative is a four-hour, self-paced learning programme that demystifies AI in an inclusive manner. It is applicable to a student, a stay-at-home parent and to a professional in any field or even a senior citizen. The programme, available in 11 vernacular languages, aims to introduce AI to one million citizens in its first year.

The four-hour open content resource is divided into two sections -- AI Awareness (1.5 hours) and AI Appreciation (2.5 hours). The segment on AI Awareness provides an elementary understanding of AI, misconceptions around AI and its application potential. At the end of each stage, participants will be given personalised digital badges that can be shared on social media, the company said.

Academic Bank of Credit

An Academic Bank of Credit that will provide students with flexible options for entry and exit in higher education. "Multiple entry/exit will help students break away from the shackles of sticking to one stream. One can select their course and can exit if they are not interested. This is a revolutionary change," said the Prime Minister.

ENGINEERING STUDIES IN FIVE REGIONAL LANGUAGES

New Delhi: 14 engineering colleges in 8 states of the country are going to start engineering studies in five Indian languages Hindi, Tamil, Telugu, Marathi and Bengali. A tool has also been developed for translation of engineering courses into 11 Indian languages. On the occasion of the completion of one year of the new education policy, Prime Minister said that I want to give special congratulations to the students who are going to start their studies in the regional language. Its biggest benefit will be to the poor of the country. Studying in mother tongue will increase the self-confidence of poor children. Justice will be done to his talent.



Pandemic pushes digital payments, Reserve Bank of India index up 30%

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The Covid-19 pandemic and restrictions associated with it has pushed up digital transactions in the country.

An indicator to faster adoption of online payment medium is the Reserve Bank of India's Digital Payment Index. After moving at moderate pace over the years, the index has jumped sharply 30 per cent between March 2020 and March 2021.

The pandemic is one of the reason while people are increasingly preferring digital payment mechanism over physical mode. But improvement in the digital payment infrastructure has also pushed up this adoption.

The index for March 2021 stands at 270.59 as against 207.84 for March 2020, announced while launching the index on January 1, 2021.

The RBI-DPI index has demonstrated significant growth in the index representing the rapid adoption and deepening of digital payments across the country in recent years, the apex bank said in a statement.



Starting from March 2018, the index stood at 153.47 in March 2019, 173.49 in September 2019. This improved to 207.84 in March 2020, 217.74 in September 2020 and further increased to 270.59 in March 2021.

Parliament passes Factoring Regulation (Amendment) Bill, 2021

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Parliament on Thursday passed the Factoring Regulation (Amendment) Bill, 2021, following its passage in the Rajya Sabha. The Bill was passed by the Lok Sabha earlier this week.

In industry parlance, 'Factoring' is defined as a financial transaction in which a business sells its accounts receivable to a third party for debt financing. This legislation will make it easier for small businesses to monetise their receivables. The Bill intends

to include non-NBFC players that can engage in factoring business.

The amended legislation will allow 'factors' (such as NBFCs) to acquire the receivables of a company at a discount and realise them from entities that owe the money. This will help the company monetise its receivables quickly and tackle cash-flow problems.

The new legislation has also lifted the eligibility requirement for entities to become factors. This is expected to allow a lot of opportunities to the non-bank lenders.

Ex-minister's car hits vehicle in Hubballi

Hubballi: The vehicle of former minister Shivaram Hebbur hit a vehicle in the convoy of Karnataka Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai in Hubballi on Thursday.

The incident occurred after the CM's convoy left the airport for 'Keshav Kunj'. Bommai made a pit-stop visit at Hubballi, which is his hometown, prior to his scheduled tour to flood-hit Uttara Kannada district. The driver of Hebbur's vehicle was trying to keep up with the convoy when he lost control and hit one of the vehicles in it.

Israel inspects NSO Group offices after Pegasus revelations



Team Absolute | New Delhi

Israeli authorities have inspected the offices of surveillance outfit NSO Group in response to the Pegasus project investigation into abuses of the company's spyware by several government clients, The Guardian reported.

Officials from the Defence Ministry visited the company's offices near Tel Aviv on Wednesday, at the same time when Defence Minister Benny Gantz arrived in Paris for a pre-arranged visit, in which he discussed the Pegasus revelations with his French counterpart.

French President Emmanuel Macron spoke to Israel Prime Minister Naftali Bennett last week to stress the importance of "properly investigating" the project's findings, the report said.

The Defence Ministry said in a tweet that the visit conducted by several state bod-

ies was related to disclosures stemming from the Pegasus project -- a consortium of 17 media outlets, including The Guardian, which revealed last week that government clients around the world have used the hacking software sold by NSO to target human rights activists, journalists and lawyers.

As the scale of the disclosures has become clearer, diplomatic pressure has mounted on Israel to explain the nature of the relationship between NSO and the state under the tenure of former Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, the report said.

The wider Pegasus project investigation found that the Israeli government gave the NSO explicit permission in 2017 to try to sell the hacking tools to Saudi Arabia in a deal reportedly worth at least \$55 million, the report said.

Very heavy to extremely heavy rainfall to continue across India

Team Absolute | New Delhi

India will very likely continue to be battered with heavy to very heavy rainfall with extremely heavy rainfall at isolated places, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) said.

It further predicted heavy rainfall at isolated places over Jammu, Kashmir, Ladakh, Gilgit-Baltistan & Muzaffarabad, east Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Assam, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram, and Tripura.



Heavy rainfall is also predicted for central Maharashtra and Konkan and Goa regions that have seen widespread extremely heavy rainfall last week.

IMD forecast for Friday held heavy to very heavy rainfall with extremely heavy falls at isolated places are very likely over Uttarakhand, Jharkhand and Gangetic

West Bengal, heavy to very heavy rainfall at isolated places over Himachal Pradesh, Punjab, Haryana, east Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Bihar and Odisha and heavy rainfall at isolated places over Jammu, Kashmir, Ladakh, Gilgit-Baltistan & Muzaffarabad, east Rajasthan, west Madhya Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram, Tripura, central Maharashtra, and Konkan and Goa.

Can't prosecute Good Samaritan for providing oxygen amid 2nd wave: Delhi HC

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Delhi High Court on Thursday pulled up Delhi's Drug Controller for initiating prosecution against AAP MLA Praveen Kumar for procuring medical oxygen amid the second wave of Covid. A division bench observed there is no need to initiate prosecution, especially against the backdrop where both Delhi government and the Centre failed to provide sufficient medical oxygen to the people. In this case, it said, then every gurudwara, temple or church, social organisation and every good Samaritan, providing medical oxygen amid second wave, should be booked. "How can



you prosecute him? Both GNCTD and Union failed in providing sufficient oxygen to people in Delhi. There were some Samaritans who provided oxygen. You can't prosecute them," it said. The court also asked the Drug Controller to make a distinction between those MLAs or public representatives, who helped people by distributing oxygen, and those who indulged in stocking key drugs such as Remdesivir or Fabi Flu.

90% Indian women ate less during Covid-19 lockdown

Researchers from the Tata-Cornell Institute for Agriculture and Nutrition, analysed surveys of food expenditures, dietary diversity and other nutrition indicators at the national, state and district levels in the states of Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Odisha. Nearly 90 per cent of survey respondents reported having less food, while 95 per cent said they consumed

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Nine out of 10 women in India had less food, impacting their nutrition levels, during the 2020 nationwide lockdown imposed in response to the Covid-19 pandemic, according to a new study.

Most concerning, the drop was due to decreased consumption of foods like meats, eggs, vegetables and fruits, which are rich in micronutrients that are crucial to good health and development. The study, published in the journal *Economia Politica*, indicated a decline in household food expenditures and women's dietary diversity in May 2020 compared to May 2019. The national lockdown to slow down the spread of Covid was in force from March 24 to May 30, 2020. Disruptions to agricultural supply chains subsequently led to price fluctuations, especially for non-staple foods, in less developed districts. The surveys also



"Women's diets were lacking in diverse foods even before the pandemic, but Covid-19 has further exacerbated the situation. Any policies addressing the impact of the pandemic on nutritional outcomes must do so through a gendered lens that reflects the specific, and often persistent, vulnerabilities faced by women."

Soumya Gupta, Research Economist, TCI



VYAPAM SCAM

CBI FILES SUPPLEMENTARY CHARGE SHEET AGAINST 73

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) on Thursday said that it has filed a supplementary charge sheet against 73 people in connection with its probe into the Vyapam scam case related to MPPMT-2012 examinations.

A CBI spokesperson here said that the agency has filed supplementary chargesheet against 73 accused, including 13 new accused.

The official said that the CBI had registered a case on July 31, 2015 against 587 accused and taken over the investigation of the case earlier registered in Bhopal on the Supreme Court's July 9, 2015 order transferring the investigation of Vyapam scam cases from the STF to it.

In the case, it was alleged that the accused had adopted a unique 'engine bogie' system or method of cheating in MPPMT-2012 by engaging intelligent students from out of Madhya Pradesh as solver candidates for allowing copying of their answers by the beneficiary or bogie candidates and also manipulation of digital data and OMR answer sheets of accused candidates for passing these candidates in MPPMT-2012.

The official said that the CBI had earlier filed a charge sheet against 592 accused including 245 new accused in the court of



Special Judge, Vyapam cases, Bhopal on November 23, 2017, and during further investigation, found real identities of impersonators, traced absconders etc.

"In the supplementary charge sheet, 54 accused persons related to manipulation of digital data and OMR answer sheets and 19 accused related to impersonation were charge sheeted," he said.

He further said that it was alleged that 19 accused candidates had deliberately left ovals of 120 to 130 questions blank on their respective OMR answer sheets during the examination and the accused Vyapam officials manipulated the digital data of OMR

answer sheets (computer data) and subsequently blackened the corresponding answer circles in the OMR answer sheets so as to illegally pass these candidates.

"Untampered data of accused candidates was also recovered and it showed that these candidates had filled up less answer circles. In conspiracy with these candidates, their guardians and middlemen, the said Vyapam officials manipulated digital data and OMR answer sheets of these candidates to enhance their marks and to illegally pass them in MPPMT-2012," he said.

It was also alleged that the then Principal System Analyst of Vyapam, Bhopal had pre-

pared the excel sheet containing the names of the accused candidates, their sponsors, the roll numbers, amounts paid or to be paid, marks and category etc. and the said excel sheet was also recovered, he said.

The official said that it was further alleged that impersonation was found out during investigation and 16 accused candidates were named in chargesheet as the impersonators who belonged to Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, and Rajasthan.

"The real identities of these impersonators were ascertained by making use of innovative techniques including obtaining and scrutinising data of the candidates of PMT Examinations from 2010-2014 of some states and AIPMT etc, details of bank account, credit cards or debit cards used for making payment of the examination fees and identifying or checking social media profiles created by using the mobile phone numbers, email IDs which were filled in the application or counselling forms of impersonators, database of photos of more than 18 lakh aspirant PMT students, MBBS students as well as registered doctors collected from medical colleges, coaching centres, MCI, Medical Education Directorates of some states etc and data base along with photos of untraceable or unidentified candidates scrutinised through experts and photo matching exercise," the official said.

Two arrested in Goa for raping woman from northeast



Panaji | Agencies

Two persons have been arrested from Quepem in South Goa for allegedly raping a 25-year-old woman from the northeast for three days after confining her in a flat, police said on Thursday.

The accused, identified as Shambhunath Singh, 32, a resident of Delhi and Sudhakar Naik, 63, who resides in South Goa, have been sent to five days police custody by a local court.

The woman, who hails from a northeastern state, had been lured to Goa by Singh on the pretext of offering her a job. However, she was allegedly raped by the duo, under the influence of alcohol, after she arrived in

the coastal state on July 26.

On Thursday, the woman escaped from the flat where she was being kept by the accused and called the police control room, after which an offence was registered under Sections 376 (rape) and 343 (wrongful confinement) of the Indian Penal Code, police said. The incident comes at a time when Chief Minister Pramod Sawant has faced flak over his comments on Wednesday, blaming parents for the rape of two minor girls at a South Goa beach on the night of July 24. Sawant had said that parents should introspect why their wards were hanging out on beaches after nightfall.

Rajbhar asks women to 'thrash BJP leaders' in UP

Lucknow | Agencies

Om Prakash Rajbhar, president of the Suheldev Bhartiya Samaj Party (SBSP) and former minister, has asked women voters to "beat BJP people who come to them seeking votes."

"BJP wale vote mangne do pair pe aye, to unko char pair pe wapas bhejo (when BJP people come to you seeking your vote on two legs, thrash them so that they go back with the support of others)," Rajbhar said during a party meeting.

Reiterating his statement later, he told reporters, "Yes, I told the women present at my Varanasi meeting earlier this week that if BJP leaders have not fulfilled their promises of ensuring a 33 per cent reservation for them and checking inflation, they should be sent on four legs (carried away by others) if they come to seek your votes again."

He further said, "They (BJP leaders) consume 'ganja' and daru (liquor) and start making tall promises in their speech. Women voted for them but they have failed to fulfil any of their promises including Rs 15 lakh in every bank account. The promise of two crore jobs has also remained unfulfilled while the price of LPG, pulses and mustard oil have increased massively."



The SBSP president was a minister in the Yogi Adityanath government but was dismissed in the midst of the Lok Sabha elections in 2019. He has been actively campaigning against the BJP since then and has set up the Bhagidari Sankalp Morcha, comprising a number of smaller parties, including the AIMIM.

OPPOSITION FLOOR LEADERS TO MEET ON FRIDAY TO CHALK STRATEGY

New Delhi: Floor leaders of like-minded opposition parties will be meeting on Friday morning to devise their strategy in both houses of the Parliament to corner the government. The meeting will take place in office of the Leader of Opposition in Rajya Sabha, Mallikarjun Kharge as the opposition is targeting the government for not discussing the Pegasus project snooping row, farm laws, and fuel hike in the house. The government's action of passing bills amid din has also not gone down well with the opposition.

Parliamentary Affairs Pralhad Joshi and Union Minister and Leader of House in the Rajya Sabha Piyush Goyal had met opposition leaders at Kharge's office on Thursday to resolve the impasse, but the latter insisted on discussion on the snooping row and fuel price rise

Himachal to airlift 175 tourists stranded in Lahaul-Spiti



SHIMLA | Agencies

A total of 175 tourists, including 16 children and 60 women, stranded in Udaipur in Himachal Pradesh's remote Lahaul-Spiti district for the past two days as roads have been closed for traffic after the landslides, will be airlifted on priority, an official said on

Thursday.

The state government has been requested to provide a chopper to airlift all the stranded tourists, Deputy Commissioner Neeraj Kumar told the media. He said the tourists have been put up at nearby government rest houses and accommodations. Kumar said traffic on the Manali-Leh highway and the Manali-

Udaipur highway have been restored. Chief Minister Jai Ram Thakur is reaching the spot on Friday morning to review the ongoing road restoration work and the relief operations.

The government has issued an advisory for tourists and locals to refrain from high mountains, wandering near rivers and other places vulnerable to landslides.

Assam Police to probe role of Mizoram MP in border violence

Guwahati/Aizawl | Agencies

An Assam Police team, including CID officers, is going to Delhi to probe Mizoram's Rajya Sabha member K. Vanlalvena's alleged role in the Monday's violence along the inter-state border, which left six Assam cops dead, officials said on Thursday.

A senior Assam Police official said that the decision to question Vanlalvena was taken following his "controversial interview to the electronic media in which he allegedly has warned the Assam police with objectionable words".

Contacted by reporter for a response, Vanlalvena said: "I do not have any comment now. I have not received any official information." The most violent clashes



along the Assam-Mizoram border left six Assam Police personnel dead and around 100 civilians and security personnel of the two neighbouring states injured,

including an Inspector General of Police in Assam and Cachar Superintendent of Police Vaibhav Chandrakant Nimbalkar. Assam Police's Special

Director General G.P. Singh, in a tweet, said: "Assam police team including officers of CID are leaving for Delhi to take lawful action relating to conspiracy behind the incident in light of media interviews of Rajya Sabha MP Sri K Vanlalvena indicative of his active role in conspiracy."

In another tweet, he said that a case has been registered at the Dholai police station in Cachar district in the killing of Assam Police personnel, under various provisions of Indian Penal Code, and the Arms Act besides Prevention of Damage to Public Property Act.

An uneasy calm now prevails on the border areas where the Central Reserve Police Force and Assam and Mizoram Police have been posted.

WOMAN RAPED AFTER BOARDING 'CAB' IN GURUGRAM



Gurugram: A fashion brand employee was allegedly raped by a cab driver on her way back home after she boarded it thinking it was a share cab, the police said here on Thursday. The incident took place on Wednesday night when the accused drove her to a secluded place where he allegedly committed the crime inside the car. An FIR in this regard has been registered at the DLF Phase-2 police station in Gurugram. The victim is a resident of Delhi who works with a fashion brand outlet on the MG Road here.

Muslims can't be treated as special class, says plea in SC against Sachar panel

Team Absolute | New Delhi

A plea has been moved in the Supreme Court challenging the implementation of the Sachar committee report which recommends welfare schemes for the Muslim community.

The petitioners, termed followers of Sanatan Vedic Dharma, said that they are against the notification in 2005 by the Prime Minister's Office to constitute a high-level committee, under chairmanship of Justice Rajender Sachar (retd), to prepare a report on the social, economic and educational status of Muslim community, as a society governed by rule of law, gives no space for the administration to show any inclination or favour to any religion or religious group.

The plea argued that power to appoint a commission to investigate into the conditions of socially and



educationally backward classes vests with the President under Article 340 of the Constitution. "It is relevant to mention that the entire Muslim community has not been identified as socially and educationally backward class and therefore, Muslims, as a religious com-

munity, cannot be treated as a special class entitled for benefits available to backward classes," it said.

The plea sought a direction to restrain the Centre from placing reliance on and implementing the Sachar Committee report submitted on November 17, 2006.

Punjab to bring law to benefit 31% SC population

Chandigarh | Agencies

In a move that will earmark a part of the state's annual budget for welfare of the Scheduled Castes in proportion to their population in Punjab, Chief Minister Amarinder Singh on Thursday gave the go-ahead for putting a new Bill for this before the Cabinet, paving the way for its enactment in the next Assembly session.

The Punjab State Welfare and Development of Scheduled Castes (Planning, Earmarking and Utilisation of Financial Resources) Sub-Allocation Bill, 2021 will also enable the government to put in place an institutional mechanism to formulate and monitor the implementation of the Scheduled Caste Sub Plan (SCSP), and matters connected with it.

The legislation, when passed in the Assembly, will provide the state



government a platform to ensure the overall development of Scheduled Castes through effective implementation of various welfare schemes under the SCSP, an official statement said. Punjab has the highest percent-

age of SC population in the country, at 31.94 per cent.

There would be a single mechanism for flow of funds under SCSP, and the Finance Department would remain the controlling authority for this purpose.

The progress of the SCSP would be reviewed and monitored at state, district and block levels, as per procedure and by the committee as prescribed. Each department shall ensure transparency and accountability at all levels in the implementation of the SCSP.

The efficacy of the legislation would be ensured by the systematic and exhaustive procedures on all aspects with respect to the formulation and implementation of the SCSP in the state.

Moreover, the departments implementing SCSP would become liable to implement it in its true spirit for the benefit of stakeholders i.e. Scheduled Castes population in the state. There will also be a provision of incentives for commendable performance and penalties for wilful neglect of any rule under the law by a government functionary.

Mamata meets Gadkari, discusses various infrastructure projects

Team Absolute | New Delhi

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Thursday met Union Road Transport and Highways Minister Nitin Gadkari and discussed several road and infrastructure projects related to her state.

After the meeting, she said: "We discussed issues related to road and infrastructure projects, including transport, road connectivity and manufacturing units of electric buses. We have also discussed building some flyovers in Kolkata."

Banerjee also said that Chief Secretary H.K. Dwivedi will be reaching Delhi on Friday after which another meeting will be fixed for further discussions. After the meeting,



Gadkari's office tweeted: "Chief Minister of West Bengal Mamata Banerjee called on Union Minister Nitin Gadkari Ji today. In the presence of officials they reviewed various road projects being undertaken in the state." Sources said that

Banerjee, who is in the national capital to talk with opposition parties leaders to form a united front against the ruling BJP, will likely meet some key ministers to discuss several projects concerning West Bengal.



MP CROSSES 3-CRORE VACCINATION MARK; CM HOPEFUL OF 100% INOCULATION SOON

As part of the vaccination drive against the pandemic, 3,00,98,663 doses have so far been administered to citizens in MP, including 2,51,95,270 people who have got the first dose while 49,03,393 have received both the doses, officials said on Thursday.

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Over three crore doses of vaccines against COVID-19 have been administered to people in Madhya Pradesh so far as against the eligible population of 5.40 crore, and Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has expressed confidence that the state will soon achieve the target of 100 inoculation.

As part of the vaccination drive against the pandemic, 3,00,98,663 doses have so far been administered to citizens in MP, including 2,51,95,270 people who have got the first dose while 49,03,393 have received both the doses, officials said on Thursday.

According to a health official, 5.40 crore people are eligible for vaccination against COVID-19 in the state. The MP Public Relations Department claimed the state created a record on Wednesday by



administering 10,34,384 doses to people in one day, which it said was the highest in the country.

"Because of the people's awareness and willingness to defeat corona, the state will soon achieve the target of 100 per cent vaccination," Chouhan said on Wednesday.

He thanked people of the state for creating the record of maximum vaccinations in one day in the country. Among the total vaccinations done so far in MP, Indore district, which is the state's industrial hub, is on top with 30,18,551 inoculations, followed by state capital Bhopal-18,86,239 and Jabalpur-13,98,640 jabs, officials said.

According to Indore's vaccination officer Dr Tarun Gupta, 3,10,611 people aged 60 and above have received the first dose so far in the district, against the target set in April of vaccinating 3,01,343 people from the category.

MP Board Class 12 Result Declared, 100 Per Cent Pass

MPBSE MP Board 12th Result 2021: The Madhya Pradesh Board of Secondary Education (MPBSE) has declared Class 12 final results. Students can check their results on board websites - mpbse.mponline.gov.in, mpbse.nic.in, mpreresults.nic.in - and on the MPBSE app. MP Board 12th Science, Commerce and Arts, 12th certificate and special category students' results have been declared together. All eligible students have been declared pass this year, the education minister said in the result press conference.

The board will conduct a special exam later for students who want to improve their results. A total of 6,60,682 students had registered for this year's board exams and results have been declared for 6,56,148 students. Result has been withheld for 3,549 students and cancelled for 985 students.

The minister said around 52 per cent of students have been placed in the first division, 40 per cent in the second, and 7 per cent in the third division.

For students who are not satisfied with marks, can appear for the special exam in September, for one or all subjects, the minister said.

The board had to cancel the Class 12 exams in view of the Covid crisis. The results have been declared on the basis of an alternative assessment scheme.

Class 12 results have been declared using students' performances in the best five subjects of Class 10. All students who had registered for the board exams have been promoted on the basis of this evaluation method.

While announcing the decision to cancel Class 12th MP board exams, the Chief Minister said: "The lives of the students are precious to us. We will worry about their careers later...Class 12 marks will be determined on the basis of best of five marks obtained in various subjects of Class 10."

Team Absolute | Bhopal

The Madhya Pradesh Board of Secondary Education (MPBSE) has declared Class 12 final results. Madhya Pradesh School Education Minister Inder Singh Parmar has announced the results at a press conference. Students can check their results on

CM pays tribute to Late Vidyasagar

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan

remembered freedom fighter Late Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar and garlanded his portrait today on his death anniversary. Late Ishwar Chandra Vidyopadhyay was awarded the title of Vidyasagar in his student days because of his vast knowledge of Sanskrit and philosophy. Late Vidyasagar was born on 26 September 1820 in the Veerasingh village in



Medinipur district of Bengal. Vidyasagar is called the patron of the downtrodden and the poor. Due to his efforts, the law for widow marriage was passed in the year 1856. He raised his voice to educate daughters, at the same time, he also opposed child marriage. Late Vidyasagar passed away on July 29, 1891.

No admission for students facing criminal charges

Students found guilty of misbehaving with faculty, staff, or other students and vandalising property will also not get admissions.

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Madhya Pradesh's higher education department has notified rules barring students facing criminal charges from getting admissions to universities and colleges. The admission process is set to start on August 1 in the state and around 1.17 million students are expected to apply for admissions to higher educational institutes. Students seeking admissions will have to submit declarations that there are no pending cases against them to get admissions.

"College principals have been asked to take an undertaking from every student while giving admission that he or she is not facing any criminal charges in any state of India," said a

college principal, who did not want to be named.

Students found guilty of misbehaving with faculty, staff, or other students and vandalising property will also not get admissions.

A 48-page new rule book for admissions was notified on July 15 and made available to colleges earlier this week.

Student leaders have taken exception to the rules saying they could be misused for targeting students on an ideological basis and for participating in protests against the government or colleges.

"First they banned direct student union elections and now this rule is to stop students from participating in the protests against the government," said Ajay Tiwari, state secretary of the Students Federation of India. He pointed out that students across the state have participated in protests against inflation, three farm laws, and corruption. Tiwari added in some instances, the protesting students were even booked for rioting.

"So, many of these students will be denied

their constitutional right to education because they expressed their constitutional right to protest and dissent," Tiwari said.

Gopil Kotwal of the National Students Union of India said the rules would prevent student leaders from emerging from colleges.

"Most of the leaders, who did not come from political families, rose as a result of active participation in student politics. Now the BJP (Bharatiya Janata Party)-led state government does want colleges to produce good leaders," he said. The Rashtriya Swayamsewak Sangh's students wing, Akhil Bhartiya Vidhyarthi Parishad (ABVP), called the rules bizarre and unacceptable.

"This will definitely end student politics and is against one's right to education," said ABVP's state secretary Praveen Sharma. He added the rules deny a chance to an accused to improve and live a better life. "How can college authorities decide the future of a student even before the court passes its order?" he asked. Congress lawmaker Kunal Chaudhary said he will raise the issue in assembly as the

rules violate the right to education and are discriminatory. "We will not allow this autocratic rule. We will raise this issue in the assembly," he said.

Ruling BJP leader Rajneesh Agrawal backed the rules saying they will not suppress student politics. "Students can raise the issues through peaceful protests as they can learn discipline and respect for the Constitution."

Former high court judge AK Gohil said the Constitution has made education till higher secondary level a fundamental right and the rules punish someone even before a court has taken a view. He called the rules discriminatory. "I think the government should give provisional or conditional admission to students with criminal charges to save their future. If proved guilty, their admission should be cancelled." Higher education department principal secretary Anupam Rajan said they will ensure more clarity in the rules so that genuine students do not suffer. "We will come with a clarification soon."

Congress Slams State Govt's Plan To Print PM's Picture On Ration Bags

The state government will be organising "Ann Utsav" on August 7, which will be virtually addressed by PM Modi.

Team Absolute | Bhopal

The Madhya Pradesh government's plan to distribute ration in bags bearing the pictures of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and state Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan from the next month has not gone down well with the opposition Congress, which on Tuesday dubbed the move a "personal branding" of BJP leaders at the cost of real beneficiaries.

The state government is organising "Ann Utsav" on August 7, which will be virtually addressed by PM Modi. A public relations department official has said that the ration will be distributed in bags to 100 beneficiaries each at 25,435 PDS (Public

Distribution System) shops in Madhya Pradesh on August 7 during the upcoming "Ann Utsav."

Justifying the move to print pictures of the prime minister and the CM on the ration bags, MP's Food and Civil Supplies Minister Bisahul Singh told reporters that ration stock for two months is being provided free by the Centre and for three months by the state government to the eligible families. "We have decided that the beneficiaries of the PDS will be given rice stock of five months in a bag, at the 'Ann Utsav'. What is

wrong in having the photos of the PM given that the Centre is providing free ration to people? Similarly, a ration stock of three months is being given free by the state government," he told reporters on Tuesday. Singh said the pictures of Chhattisgarh chief minister Bhupesh Baghel and the food minister of that state are printed on the ration bags. "The Union government is providing free ration to Chhattisgarh as well so they should ideally put a picture of the PM on the bags along with that of the chief minister (Baghel)," he said.

CM condoles death of National Shooter

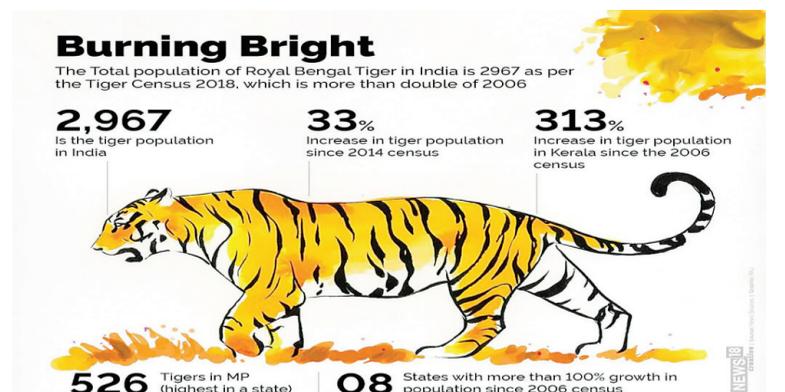
Bhopal: Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has paid tribute to Indore's National Shooter Naman Paliwal, expressing his deep sorrow on his death in a road accident. Chouhan has said in his condolence message that Late Naman Paliwal was a very talented and capable player. May God rest the departed soul at his feet and give strength to his family to bear this great loss.

CM extends greetings on Global Tiger Day

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has congratulated the people of the state and the forest officers and employees who are dedicatedly working for conservation and protection of tiger on the occasion of Global Tiger Day. He said that due to the efforts of the forest employees, the tiger got a favourable environment in the state, due to which the number of tigers increased continuously. He said that the team engaged in this work should work with the determination that they will save the tiger and also increase its number.

Chouhan said that it should be our endeavour that along with material progress, we should maintain a balance with the environment so that the environ-



ment and the tigers also remain safe in the forest. Along with the tigers, other wild animals can also roam freely. Chouhan said

that the dense forests of Panna and Satpura are very safe for the Tiger Reserve. With special efforts, there has been a steady

increase in the number of tigers in these forests. He said that without wildlife the life cycle of man is not complete.

CM PLANTED ARJUN SAPLING



Bhopal: Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan planted Arjun sapling in Smart Park. Chief Minister plants a sapling every day according to his resolve. In the same sequence today he planted Arjun sapling in Smart Park. Arjun tree is a medicinal tree, its bark and juice are beneficial in diseases like those related to heart and tuberculosis. The juice of Arjun leaves is used for the treatment of ear ache, inflammation and fever. This plant is 60 to 80 feet in height. This evergreen tree is found in abundance in the foothills of the Himalayas and in dry places. It is also found in abundance in Madhya Pradesh.

"Ethnic Art Tattoo tradition" Online Exhibition series-59

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Under its online exhibition Indira Gandhi Rashtriya Manav Sangrahalaya (IGRMS), on Thursday presented online with its basic information and photographs and videos the "Ethnic Art Tattoo tradition" situated in the Veethi Sankul the indoor museum building of museum.

About this exhibition, Praveen Kumar Mishra, Director, IGRMS said that Gallery number 5 of the Indira Gandhi Rashtriya Manav Sangrahalaya displays 123 exhibits related to the ethnic arts prevalent in tribal and folk communities of India. The exhibition focuses on the art objects that link to the traditional customs, festivals, socio-cultural and religious rituals of the native communities living in different environmental and geographical settings of the country. The exhibits include intricately carved wooden doors of the Chettiar community of Tamil Nadu, lattice and mural exhibit of the Rajwar community of Chhattisgarh, Paddy craftwork of the Bhotada tribe of Orissa, tattoo tradition of Baiga tribe of Madhya Pradesh, paintings of the aboriginal tribe of Australia and Agaria tribe. In addition, exhibits related to the magnificent craft of iron marriage lamps and artworks related to Chhath puja of the Mithila region, Bihar, are showcased. Display in the gallery in this episode of the online exhibition series, the



audience is introduced to the tattooing tradition of the Baiga tribe from various art forms. Baiga tribe is mainly found in Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, and Jharkhand. Many Baiga people live in Mandla, Dindori, Balaghat, Shahdol, and the Anuppur districts of Madhya Pradesh. In this state, the community is recognized as the particularly vulnerable tribal group (PVTGs). The Baiga tribe has its own speciality of traditions and art, influenced by the surrounding environment and natural resources where they live. One of the impor-

tant art forms of the Baiga tribe is tattoo art which is very special and deeply associated with their socio-cultural belief and economic activities. Women who bear tattoos attain high social prestige. They believe that heavily tattooed women get a special space of respect from their in-laws. About the Sunnapaganu, Umesh Kumar Jhariya, Museum Associate told that - A woman with a meager tattooed body is considered to have reflected the family's poverty, so it is necessary to get tattooed. The tattoo is regarded to be the ornament of

a women's body. At the age of 8-12 years, girls start tattooing their bodies and continue till after marriage. Among the Baiga women, all the tattoos are not prepared at once. There is appropriate age and timings for attaining different types of tattoos on their body. Initially, the upper part of the body is tattooed, especially on the forehead, then the hands, back, thighs, and finally on the chest. Tattooing can be done in any season except the rainy season. The tattoos of Baiga women are prepared by the specialized Badni women who belong to the Badi caste. They travel from one village to the other to perform the work of tattooing. In the Baiga society, many cultural beliefs concerning the practice of tattooing exist, and they are associated with their ethnic identity, aesthetic beauty, spirituality, and an act of healing. Items like Mascara paste, Needles, Asafoetida (Hing), Oil, and cotton are used as essential ingredients and tools used for tattooing. However, common to other tribes and the Baigas in particular, prefer to use the juice extracted from the leaves of a plant, oil of Ramtila, and Bhilwa seed as indelible material instead of Kajal paste. Those interested can see this exhibition from home through the Official site (https://igrms.com/wordpress/?page_id=4043) and Facebook site (https://www.facebook.com/NationalMuseumMankind) of the IGRMS in addition to You tube link (https://youtu.be/S8FTaDipFAK).

IndiGo to commence Jabalpur flight service from August

New Delhi: In its bid to strengthen regional connectivity, private carrier IndiGo will commence flight services to and from Jabalpur, Madhya Pradesh, from August 20. Accordingly, the airline will operate direct flights from Jabalpur to Mumbai, Delhi, Hyderabad and Indore from August 20. The airline said that these new connections will strengthen connectivity between Jabalpur and the key cities in the country, while fulfilling the demand for enhanced connectivity. According to Sanjay Kumar, Chief Strategy and Revenue Officer, IndiGo: "These direct connections will not only enhance trade and commerce, but also boost tourism in Jabalpur, especially at a time when Indians are increasingly looking towards domestic vacations. At present, the airline has a fleet of more than 270 aircraft, operating around 1,000 daily flights and connecting 67 domestic and 24 international destinations."



CBI SEEKS DETAILS OF COPS SHIFTED WHEN DESHMUKH WAS MAHA HOME MINISTER

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Moving ahead in its investigation into the alleged bribery case involving former Maharashtra Home Minister and NCP leader Anil Deshmukh, the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) has carried out searches at 12 locations in Maharashtra and also wrote to the state government seeking details of the officials transferred in his tenure. "One letter has been written by CBI and sent through official channels to Maharashtra government seeking details of transfer posting of police officers when Deshmukh was Maharashtra Home Minister," a CBI source told IANS.

The source said that searches at 12 locations in Maharashtra were conducted on Tuesday after the roles of several people came up.

The source said that the agency carried out searches at the residential premises of ACP Sanjay Patil in Mumbai and Pune and premises of DCP Raju Bhujbal in Mumbai and Ahmednagar. The source said that the CBI also carried out searches at premises of several middlemen in Nashik, Sangli, Thane, Solapur, and Osmanabad districts.

The CBI booked Deshmukh and



several others on April 21 after carrying a preliminary enquiry on the orders of the Bombay High Court. The court had passed directions on the basis of a petition filed by former Mumbai Police Commissioner Param Bir Singh, who alleged Deshmukh had demanded Rs 100 crore be collected as bribes from bars and restaurants in the city.

On March 20, Singh, in an eight-page letter to Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray, alleged that Deshmukh asked now suspended API Sachin Waze to collect Rs 100 crore every

month, including Rs 40-50 crore, from 1,750 bars and restaurants in Mumbai.

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

According to CBI officials, case against Deshmukh was registered after the agency was satisfied there was enough evidence to proceed with a regular case against the NCP leader.

MAHARASHTRA LIKELY TO EASE COVID CURBS

Mumbai: Amid increasing demands for relaxations in lockdown norms, the state government on Wednesday indicated that some restrictions may be eased with Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray set to hold a meeting with the state Covid-19 task force on Thursday. The government is now contemplating allowing shops to remain open beyond 4 pm and also allow people who have taken two doses of the vaccine to travel in local trains, said sources. Sources added that at the Cabinet meeting, ministers raised the issue of granting relaxations citing the growing demands from the trader community and others. A minister said that there is a view in the Cabinet that shops should be allowed to remain open till 7 or 8 pm. "Also, those people who have taken two doses of the vaccine should be allowed to travel in local trains or conduct their business and other activities," the minister added. Reducing weekend lockdown to a one day was also discussed at the meeting, said sources. Health Minister Rajesh Tope told mediapersons that the government could consider allowing some relaxations in 25 districts whose weekly Covid-19 positivity rate is less than the state average.

NCP slams BJP for 'misleading' on Maha floods relief



Team Absolute | Mumbai

The Nationalist Congress Party on Thursday slammed the Bharatiya Janata Party at the Centre for 'misleading' the people that an aid of Rs 701 crore has been sanctioned for Maharashtra farmers as flood relief. Referring to Union Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar's statement on Wednesday (July 28) in parliament that the aid amount was given to the state, NCP Chief Spokesperson Mahesh Tapase said the relief pertained to the floods of mid

2020. "We want to clarify that the amount which the Union Minister mentioned was for the last year's floods when the Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) government had sought Rs 3,701-crore as relief, of which only Rs 701 crore has come, that too, after a year," Tapase pointed out.

For the current flood crisis in the state the Centre has not given any relief to the farmers and the amount sanctioned now (Rs 701 crore) was for the previous year's flood havoc, when Maharashtra had given a relief package of Rs 4,375 crore, he added.

"Currently, Maharashtra is carrying out the assessment of the exact losses suffered due to the floods last week. Then we shall send a comprehensive report to the Centre for assistance," Tapase said. Taking a swipe at the Centre, he said that it could have sanctioned an immediate ex-gratia relief amount for the Maharashtra farmers without waiting for the loss assessment report, as was done for Gujarat.

However, the Centre has not done this since this state currently has an MVA government of the Shiv Sena-NCP-Congress, he stated.

Shiv Sena hails Mamata for probe panel on Pegasus snoopgate

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The ruling Maha Vikas Aghadi ally Shiv Sena on Thursday lauded West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee for setting up a commission of enquiry into the Pegasus snoopgate that has rocked India and other countries.

Slamming the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) at the Centre for not heeding the Opposition demand for a Joint Parliamentary Committee to investigate the spygate scam, the Shiv Sena termed Banerjee's move as "right".

In sharp edits in the party newspaper 'Saamana' and 'Dopahar Ka Saamana', the Sena said that keeping an eye on ministers, Opposition, judiciary, journalists, lawyers and other citizens to encroach on their private lives was not only a shameful move but a crime.

"This entire matter is related to the country's national security since only a handful of organisations like IB, RAW, CBI, ED, NCB, CBDC, etc., are involved in such acts. Now, if an Israeli agency like Pegasus enters the scene, then it can undermine the country's security, but the Centre seems to be giving it a 'national shelter'. The nation deserves to know the truth," said the edit.

The Sena added that it was expected the Centre would take stringent action and set up a probe commission, but nothing has been done. "Mamata Banerjee has become the first



state to probe the spygate. Her move is right. It has jolted the Centre and will wake up others," the Sena said.

Incidentally, just two days back, Maharashtra Congress President Nana Patole and party MP Suresh Balubhau Dhanorkar made a strong demand to Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray to set up a commission of retired judges to probe the spyware scandal.

The edits pointed out how other countries like France have also announced a probe into the Pegasus scandal, but yet the Indian Government does not consider the matter as serious -- "it appears a bit mysterious".

Referring to the global expose of how more than 50,000 people around the world were being monitored, the Sena called upon all the countries affected to appoint probe commissions and help unravel the masterminds behind the snoopgate scam.

Maha celebrates as eminent author Babasaheb Purandare turns 100

Celebrated author and theatre personality Balwant Moreshwar alias Babasaheb Purandare -- who is renowned for his scholarly works on Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj -- completed 99 years, here on Thursday.

Team Absolute | Pune

A host of leaders starting from Governor Bhagat Singh Koshiyari, Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray, Maharashtra Navnirman Sena President Raj Thackeray, Union Minister Nitin Gadkari, state Bharatiya Janata Party President Chandrakant Patil, Leader of Opposition Devendra Fadnis, and top leaders of various political parties, litterateurs and others warmly greeted Purandare.

Raj Thackeray drove down to the home of the 'Shiv Shahir' (Shivaji's Bard), as he is popularly known, knelt on the floor and touched the feet of the Padma Vibhushan laureate Purandare.

At a felicitation function later, organized by Maharashtra Education Society and Ithaas Premi Mandal, Purandare, known for courting controversies, recalled some anecdotes of his childhood years and expressed a desire to live a few more years to serve society.

A group of women created a gigantic 300-sq-foot



'rangoli' and lit symbolic 99 lamps, performed his 'aarti', honoured him with the customary shawl and greeted him on the momentous occasion as Purandare looked on with cheerfully.

Born on July 29, 1922 at Saswad near Poona (now, Pune), Purandare was fascinated by Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj from an early age and wrote essays and stories which were later published in a book form, 'Thinagya' (Sparks).

Over eight decades of his writing and theatre career, Purandare delivered more than 12,000 lectures on Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj, studied all the forts and history of the Maratha Empire, making him an authority on the subject.

He penned and directed a historical play 'Jaanta Raja' (1985) a theatrical magnum opus performed by over 200 artistes, translated and enacted in five languages and has clocked over 1,250 stage shows in Maharashtra, Goa, Delhi, Uttar Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh and the USA.

Among his prominent works are the monumental two-volume 'Raje Shivchhatrapati', 'Jaanta Raja', 'Maharaj', 'Shelarkhind', 'Gadok Kille', 'Agra', 'Lal Mahal', 'Purandar', 'Rajgad', 'Panhalgad', 'Sinhagad', 'Pratapgad', 'Purandaryanchi Daulat', 'Mujaryache Mankari', 'Fulwanti', 'Savitri', 'Kalawantinicha Sajja',

He was conferred the 'Maharashtra Bhushan' (2015) and the country's second highest civilian honour 'Padma Vibhushan' in 2019.

As Maha floodwaters recede, 213 dead, over 53K homeless

Team Absolute | Mumbai

With the floodwaters in western and coastal Maharashtra gradually draining out after a week, the toll climbed up to 213 on Wednesday, with 53,295 people rendered homeless and living in 349 relief camps, the State Disaster Management Authority (SDMA) said.

At least 8 people are still reported missing, and 52 people are undergoing treatment in various hospitals in Mumbai and the districts, said the SDMA.

Facing the daunting task of rehabilitating the people in the flood-hit areas, the state government said that emergency relief operations have been initiated as per the State Disaster Response Fund (SDRF).

The state cabinet presided over by Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray decided that since the floodwaters have not yet receded in many areas, the decision on providing additional relief shall be taken in a fortnight. Meanwhile, the survey and panchamas of the destruction in all the areas has been taken up on priority, and emergency assistance by



way of household items, clothes, utensils, etc is being rushed to the people.

As many as 435,879 have been evacuated and relocated to safer areas after their homes were badly damaged or totally washed away in the floodwaters, which reached up to 20 feet high in some areas, with 1,351 villages directly affected by the rain fury. The largest evacuation took place from western Maharashtra districts - Sangli (211,808), Kolhapur (162,564), Satara (49,149), Pune (402), followed by Konkan districts - Thane (6,930), Sindhudurg (1,271), Ratnagiri (1,200), and Raigad (2,555), the SDMA said. Nationalist Congress Party President Sharad Pawar and Deputy Chief Minister

Ajit Pawar have said that thousands of homes, roads and huge agricultural lands have been destroyed.

Urban Development Minister Eknath Shinde announced the battered Chiplun town, an important tourist destination, will be fully redeveloped in a planned manner.

A total of 16 NDRF teams, down from 33 on Monday, plus 131 boats and 3 Indian Army teams still remain in the field, helping out the flood-hit people, and even animals, wherever possible.

In the past 7 days since July 22, many parts of the western and coastal regions witnessed unprecedented record rainfall, resulting in over a dozen hillslides and landslips in different districts with a huge human toll, before the rains eased by Monday. With a majority of the big and small rivers, dams, reservoirs, lakes overflow and spilling out the excess waters, villages, towns and cities were flooded and scores of roads - 43 in Ratnagiri alone - in the regions are still closed for inter-district and inter-state vehicular movement, crippling movement of fuel, food and other essential supplies.

Now SEBI nails Raj Kundra and Shilpa Shetty

In 2015, Viaan Industries had made a preferential allotment of 500,000 equity shares. Of this 128,800 equity shares each were allotted to Kundra (referred to as Ripu Sudan Kundra) and Shetty, the promoters of the company.



company Viaan Industries for contravening insider trading rules. Kundra, Shetty and Viaan have been fined for a three-year delay in the disclosure of an allotment of preferential shares. In 2015, Viaan Industries had made a preferential allotment of 500,000 equity shares. Of this 128,800 equity shares each were allotted to Kundra

(referred to as Ripu Sudan Kundra) and Shetty, the promoters of the company.

According to SEBI's Prohibition of Insider Trading Rules, 2015, the promoters had to disclose this transaction to the company within two days if it exceeded Rs 10 lakh in value. The company, in turn, has to relay this disclosure to the stock exchanges within two trading days.

In this case, SEBI said the value of the transaction was Rs 2.57 crore each and the disclosures pertaining to the 2015 transaction were made only in 2019. In reply to a notice from the regulator, Shetty and Kundra acknowledged the mistake and said it was not done with malafide intent.

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Bad news continues unabated for embattled Raj Kundra and his actress wife Shilpa Shetty. Market regulator SEBI imposed a penalty of Rs 3 lakh on the couple and their

Maharashtra floods:

Chiplun mulls floodwall along Vashishti, traders seek Rs 3,500 crore govt aid

The shopkeepers have held the Ratnagiri district administration and irrigation department responsible for the floods saying excess water was discharged from the Kolkewadi dam early in the morning without any alert.

Team Absolute | Pune

Even as the Ratnagiri district administration is contemplating a protective wall along the Vashishti river in Chiplun city to keep floodwaters at bay, over 4,000 traders and shopkeepers, badly hit by the deluge, have sought assistance to the tune of Rs 3,500 crore from the Maharashtra government.

"The plan for the protection wall along the Vashishti river from Kolkewadi dam is being considered. It involves conducting a survey and sorting out technical issues. We are still in the discussion stage," Ratnagiri district collector B N Patil said on Thursday.

Last week, the entire Chiplun city was submerged as the catchment areas of the Vashishti and Jagbudi rivers saw unprecedented rain. The Vashishti river which flows from the Chiplun city had risen to eight metres and the floodwater in the city areas went well beyond 10-12 feet. "The Jagbudi river level had risen close to 12 metres while the Vashishti river was up to 8 metres. The catchment areas of the rivers received 700 mm rain which was unprecedented," the collector said. The Chiplun



Vyapari Mahasangh, which has over 4000 members, however, rejected the official claims and held the district administration and irrigation department responsible for

the floods. "We are used to flooding of our shops and homes up to 5-6 feet. But this time, the water went up to the second floor, way above 10 feet," Kishore Redij, president of Chiplun Vyapari Mahasangh, said. Redij said there was no alert or warning from the authorities. "The excess water was discharged from Kolkewadi dam without any prior intimation, and this was done early morning at around five when most citizens were fast asleep. As a result, we could not even gather or lock up our essential material and move to safety. Some moved to the top floors and stayed there without power, drinking water and food. A few moved outside the city," he said. The collector, however, denied that excess water was released from the dam. "About 10,000 cusecs of water was released from the dam on that fateful day. There was no excess water released. It is because of the flooding of Vashishti and Jagbudi river and the high tide in the sea that flooding occurred in the city area," he said. When the water receded, most citizens who lived on the ground found their houses completely ravaged by the floodwater. "The shopkeepers were equally badly hit. There was nothing left inside. The force of the water was so strong that it broke shutters of most shops and destroyed the material and the furniture inside," he said.



EDITOR'S SPECS

BJP depends on 'Ashirwad Yatra' in UP
Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP) MPs from Uttar Pradesh will now take out 'Jan Ashirwad Yatras' in the rural interiors of the state to create awareness about the work done by the Narendra Modi and the Yogi Adityanath governments and also seek blessings from the people for the 2022 Assembly elections.

ASSAM-MIZORAM BORDER VIOLENCE HURTING DECADES OLD RELATION BETWEEN 2 STATES

Sujit Chakraborty

Police, traders, workers -- people from all walks of life -- are deeply disheartened over the violent clashes on the Assam-Mizoram borders which recently led to the killing of six Assam police personnel, besides injuring around 100 civilians and security personnel from the two neighbouring northeastern states.

The Assam government curtailed the drugs trade chain from Myanmar to other parts of India via Mizoram and Assam. A section of Mizoram police might have clandestine relations with the armed civilians of that state. The Mizoram government must probe this with utmost priority.

"Subsequently, some more people brandishing weapons and wearing helmets came to the spot and started firing on Assam police personnel, injuring the Cachar SP and an Inspector General of Police," Roy said.

said that hundreds of workers and labourers from southern Assam would be affected by the border disputes, as they frequently go to Mizoram for various government and private works.

MANGO MEADOWS' AWARD WINNING KERALA THEME PARK OWNER SEEKS HELP

Engineer turned passionate lover of nature and creator of an unique agricultural theme park in Kottayam is in dire straits on account of the raging pandemic and he is knocking on all doors for help to ensure that his creation is not taken away by the bank.

N.K. Kurian was an engineer in the Middle East when he decided to set up an agriculture theme park in his home village at Kaduthuruthy in Kottayam in 2005. He brought a 4.5 acre land and started work on his dream project.

acre land in 2018. The vast expanse of his park includes five ponds which sustain 64 species of fishes, 4,800 varieties of trees, cottages for tourists to reside besides all the latest equipment for kids to spend their time playing.

employment to 300 people of which 100 of them are guides. "During the pandemic I asked my employees to take turns and come for the upkeep of the farm. Every month I incur an expense of around Rs 7 lakh and that's how my loan has touched Rs 25 crore now.

Book of Records and the URF World Records for his park. "I have been invited by the Gujarat government to set up a similar park there," added Kurian.

MASSIVE 8.2 QUAKE ROCKS ALASKA

Washington | Agencies

A massive earthquake measuring 8.2 on the Richter scale jolted Alaska and prompted authorities to issue a tsunami warning for parts of the state, according to the US Geological Survey.



Pass. Meanwhile, a tsunami warning has also been issued for Hawaii, said the National Weather Service Pacific Tsunami Warning Center.

runs up the western coasts of South America and North America, continuing across the Alaskan Aleutian Islands to Russia's Kamchatka Peninsula. Then, it heads south, off the coast of Eastern Asia, passing through Japan.

PEDRO CASTILLO SWORN IN AS PERU'S NEW PRESIDENT

Lima | Agencies

Lima: Pedro Castillo has been sworn in as the new President of Peru, after weeks of uncertainty following defeating a right-wing rival in a hard-fought presidential runoff.

Unfortunate to blame Pak for Afghanistan's situation: Imran

Islamabad | Agencies

Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan has said that Afghanistan's repeated accusations against his country for being responsible for its worsening situation was unfortunate, adding that Islamabad has always desired for peace and an inclusive government setup for its neighbour as it goes in favour of the two nations.



force against the Taliban. "We believe that Afghanistan cannot be controlled from the outside. Our policy is to have the best relationship with whoever the people of Afghanistan choose," he said.

Afghanistan for 20 years." The Prime Minister regretted that his country is being blamed for the promoting and spreading unrest in Afghanistan, insisting that an unsettled Kabul was not in Islamabad's interest.

NZ records largest flood flow in almost 100 yrs

Washington | Agencies

Flood flows on South Island's Buller River this month were the largest in New Zealand in almost 100 years, the National Institute of Water and Atmospheric Research (NIWA) announced on Thursday.



7,640 cubic meters per second, the largest direct measurement of river flow ever completed in New Zealand.

The monitoring station is part of NIWA's national network of benchmark hydrometric monitoring stations as well as being a key flood forecasting site for the West Coast Regional Council.

the flood meant debris knocked two sensors out of action, leaving only the back-up providing real time information to inform emergency management decisions.

Youth arrested over California theatre shooting

San Francisco | Agencies

A 20-year-old suspect has been arrested over a shooting incident that left one teenager dead and another wounded at a movie theatre in California, authorities said.



The firearm matched the caliber of the weapon used in the murder, according to the Department. Police said Jimenez was booked on charges of murder, attempted murder, and robbery.

Simon Cowell 'axed' X Factor after 17 years



London | Agencies

Music mogul Simon Cowell has pulled the plug on the ITV talent show after 17 years because he doesn't want the programme to 'become a bit of a joke.' The show, which launched in 2004 and last aired in 2018, is now being shelved by Simon for at least five years.

A representative for ITV confirmed: "There are no current plans for the next series of The X Factor at this stage. Globally, it is still a phenomenon but in the UK, it has become slightly stale."

"Simon remains at the top of his game and knows how to make a hit. He owns the rights to the show, and it's his call - not ITV's - whether or not he drops it."

Simon will now focus on a new big-money gameshow called Walk The Line.

Former stars of the show Jedward and Katie Whissel have reacted to news with glee.

Katie, earlier this year, claimed she was sexually assaulted by somebody on the X Factor team, years after appearing on the show while Jedward have been open in their criticism of the show and its treatment of stars.

The Irish twins, who shot to fame on the show in 2008, penned: "Xfactor has been axed Mission Complete", while Katie, who appeared in 2010, shared the MailOnline's news alert and wrote: "Journey for justice".

Eiza Gonzalez makes history for 'Bulgari'

Los Angeles | Agencies

Mexican actress Eiza Gonzalez has been named as the new model for the high-end jewelry company 'Bulgari'. Eiza shared the news on Instagram on Wednesday as she posted several images where she lit up the diamond pieces from the Italian company. 'Beyond excited to announce that I am joining the @bulgari family! I'm incredibly proud to become the first Latina to be a North American Ambassador,' said the Baby Driver actress. She added, "I want to thank BVLGARI for the

'INCREDIBLY PROUD TO BECOME THE FIRST LATINA TO BE A NA AMBASSADOR'

great honor to be part of such an iconic Italian brand. I'm deeply grateful and thrilled for the future of our partnership #Bvlgari #BvlgariJewelry

#Bzero1 shot by the great @gregswalesart." Past Bulgari models include Bella Hadid, Lily Aldridge and Martha Hunt.

In the shoot by Greg Swales she is seen in a black cut out jumpsuit that makes the most of her lean figure. She is also seen in a strapless white dress that nicely displays a Bulgari necklace.



LIBERTY POOLE IS SET TO EARN £10K PER INSTA POST

Los Angeles | Agencies

Love Island's Liberty Poole is set to be one of the show's biggest earners with the potential to pocket a massive £10k per Instagram post when she leaves the villa.

The blonde Brummie is currently coupled up with Jake Cornish in the ITV2 villa.

Liberty is the first official girlfriend on the dating show after the 24-year-old water engineer popped the question last week.

And as the boys enjoy their first time in the notorious Casa Amour, fans of the pair have their fingers crossed that Jake won't have his head turned. Digital marketing agency 10 Yetis have been tracking the Instagram profiles of all season 7 Love Island contestants to uncover the potential earnings and the popularity of each Islander.

Topping the list of current residents is Liberty, with her Instagram profile attracting a huge 2,011.48% increase in followers since her appearance on the island.



Dua Lipa slams DaBaby for 'homophobic' remarks

Los Angeles | Agencies

Singer-songwriter Dua Lipa slammed DaBaby after he unleashed a "homophobic" rant about HIV and gay people at Rolling Loud music festival recently. Dua Lipa and DaBaby earlier have

worked together on the popular remix of her song 'Levitating'. The singer said, "she's horrified at the ignorant rapper's vile comments." The British singer wrote on her Instagram story: "I am surprised and horrified at DaBaby's comments. I really don't recognize this as the person I worked with." "I know my fans know where my heart lies and that I stand 100 per cent with the LGBTQ community. We need to come together to fight the stigma and ignorance around HIV/AIDS." DaBaby sparked outrage after slamming homosexual people during his set at Rolling Loud festival in Miami, Florida, on Sunday night. The Terrence Higgins Trust, a British charity that works to spread awareness about HIV, released a statement to PinkNews slamming DaBaby's comments. "It's wrong for people living with HIV to be made to feel lesser or excluded because of their diagnosis - it should be unacceptable in the musical industry and in society at large," Richard Angell, campaigns director at the Terrence Higgins Trust, said.

ABSOLUTE PIC OF THE DAY



Joey King

ANA DE ARMAS' 'BLONDE' TO RELEASE IN 2022

Los Angeles | Agencies

Ana de Armas-starrer "Blonde", which is a fictionalised telling of Hollywood star Marilyn Monroe's life will now release in 2022. Directed by Andrew Dominik, who also adapted the novel by Joyce Carol Oates, "Blonde" was one of the year's most anticipated films by industry insiders and consumers, reports variety.com. A specific release date in 2022 has not been set yet and is slated to release on Netflix.

In development since 2010, actresses like Jessica Chastain and Naomi Watts were once attached to the project. Cuban actor de Armas has been a rising star in Hollywood for the past few years with memorable roles in "Blade Runner 2049" and "Knives Out," for which she received a Golden Globe nomination. The film will also star Oscar-winner Adrien Brody, Emmy nominee Julianne Nicholson and Emmy winner Bobby Cannavale. Netflix has an avalanche of projects waiting in the wings for awards consideration, many of which are undated but expected to drop in the calendar year. It includes the directorial debuts of Halle Berry titled "Bruised", Rebecca Hall's "Passing", Jeymes Samuel's "The Harder They Fall" and Lin-Manuel Miranda's "Tick, Tick Boom!", among many others.

"Blonde" is produced by Dede Gardner, Jeremy Kleiner, Tracey London, Brad Pitt and Scott Robertson.



TRAILER OUT

WILL SMITH'S POWERFUL PERFORMANCE IN 'KING RICHARD'



Los Angeles | Agencies

Will Smith delivers power packed performance in the first trailer of 'King Richard' dropped by Warner Bros. The film is a biopic that follows the story of Richard Williams, the father of tennis greats Venus and Serena Williams, in his relentless quest to make them champions. The trailer begins with Venus and Serena arriving to their Compton, California home with dad Richard after tennis practice in the pouring rain to find a white social worker 'checking' on the children. After watching Virginia

Ruzici wins a tournament on television in 1980, Richard became determined to coach his daughters to tennis greatness. He's told in the trailer that the chances of Venus and Serena achieving the type of 'greatness' he saw possible was 'very, very unlikely - and yet he persisted.' "The most dangerous creature on this earth," Richard tells the girls while driving, 'is a woman who can think.' Smith is already getting Oscar buzz for his role as the hard-nosed father turned tennis coach. "Driven by a clear vision of their future and using unconventional methods, Richard has a plan that will take Venus and Serena Williams from the streets of Compton, California to the global stage as legendary icons," reads a press release from Warner Bros.

INDIA'S GREAT WHITE HOPES AT TOKYO



Sindhu continues to impress

Midway through the first game against Denmark's Mia Blichfeldt in the Tokyo Olympics on Thursday, coach Park Tae-sang told India's PV Sindhu that she was rushing with her defence and should be more patient. Sindhu, silver medalist at the Rio Olympics five years ago, changed her tactics and scored points at will as she has reached India a place in the quarterfinals, beating her Danish opponent 21-15, 21-13 at the Tokyo Olympics on Thursday.

Playing aggressive and deceptive shots that kept her opponent on the run throughout the match, Sindhu outplayed Mia in just 41 minutes.

Mia, who was ranked 11th in the world a couple of years back, had sent Sindhu packing from the Thailand Open in January this year, found the Indian star, silver medalist at the Rio Olympics and gunning for gold here, too strong on Thursday and could not play her usual game as Sindhu took control from the start.

When the draw was made, everyone thought that the match against Mia would be the first big challenge for Sindhu in the knockout stages. But the way she played, it appears she is very focused and it will take a lot of effort to stop her. Sindhu will next play the winner of the match between Kim Gaeun of South Korea and Akane Yamaguchi of Japan.



Satish Kumar rolled with the punches

Indian boxer Satish Kumar advanced to the quarterfinals at the Tokyo Olympics with a comprehensive win against Ricardo Brown of Jamaica in the men's super-heavyweight round of 16 on Thursday.

Kumar, the 32 year old from Bulandshahr Uttar Pradesh who is making his Olympics debut, won the +91kg bout by a 4-1 split verdict at the Ryogoku Kokugikan arena. Four of the five judges scored the bout in favour of the Indian boxer.

Both boxers started defensively and kept their distance as they tested each other. Brown went on the attack, but Kumar was able to defend most of the attacks from the Jamaican. The Indian also landed some punches through his better timing and earned points from all five judges. He won the first round 50-44.

Brown, also an Olympic debutant, remained the aggressor in the second round as well but wasn't able to trouble Kumar much. The Indian boxer defended brilliantly and landed timely hooks and jabs. Kumar, despite suffering a slight cut above his right eye and given prompt medical attention, maintained his upper hand and won this round too, getting 10 points from four judges (49-46).

It was a good win for the Indian who next faces reigning world champion Bakhodir Jalolov of Uzbekistan on Sunday.

Atanu Das hits the bull's eye

Dropped from the mixed team competition after a below-par performance in the ranking round, India's Atanu Das came up with a brilliant performance, scoring well under pressure to stun South Korea's 2012 gold medalist Oh Jinhyek to reach the pre-quarterfinal stage in men's individual archery at the Tokyo Olympics on Thursday. Das shot a 10 in the single arrow shoot-out after Jinhyek could manage only nine in an attempt to seal a memorable victory in a second-round match. Pravin Jadhav had replaced Das to partner Deepika Kumari in the mixed team as he had not done well in the ranking round on July 23, finishing second behind Jadhav. But the 29-year-old from Baranagar, West Bengal came up with a brilliant performance on Thursday, one of his best performances ever, as he shot superbly that too under pressure to tie the Korean 5-5 on set points after five rounds at the Yumenoshima Final Field. Earlier, Das had reached the second round after beating Deng Yu-Cheng of Chinese Taipei 6-4 in five sets. Against Jinhyek, Das came back strongly in the second set after Jinhyek had won the first 26-25. Both archers had started tentatively but the Korean shot 8, 9, and 9 in three arrows while Das could manage only 8, 8, and 9. In the next round, Das will meet Takaharu Furukawa of Japan and a win will put him closer to the medal round.



Indian Men's Hockey team washout defending champions Argentina

India scored twice in the last two minutes to beat Rio Olympics gold medalist Argentina 3-1 in a Group A preliminary league match at the Tokyo Olympics on Thursday. India have cemented their hold on the second spot with a match against hosts Japan to go. This win has assured India a place in the quarterfinals with the final Group match against Japan to go.

After a barren first half, India opened the scoring when Varun Kumar, who came into the 16-member team for this match in place of experienced Birendra Lakra, scored off a penalty corner in the 43rd minute. India had denied Argentina many opportunities in the first two quarters but the South Americans came back strongly in the fourth quarter. Argentina earned their first penalty corner and Casella Schuth converted with a brilliant drag-flick to pull Argentina level at 1-1.

Argentina increased pressure and dominated the fourth quarter as they sensed an opportunity to score the winner. However, India sealed victory when they scored twice in the last two minutes when Varun capitalised on a rebound off a shot by Dilpreet Singh to make it 2-1 for India, and then Harmanpreet Singh converted their eighth penalty corner to make it 3-1.

Japan with only one draw against New Zealand are placed last in the group with one point.



Manu fifth, Rahi 25th after 1st qualification round in 25m pistol

Tokyo | Agencies

Manu Bhaker came up with a better performance as she was placed fifth while Rahi Sarnobat, who won gold medal



in a World Cup event in Croatia just before the Olympics, was languishing at 25th spot after the precision round in the women's 25m pistol competition on Thursday.

Going into the two-day qualification round after she narrowly missed making the finals in the women's 10m air pistol competition a few days ago, Manu, the 19-year-old from Jhajjarin Haryana, was in better form as she tallied a score of 292. She was tied on 292 points with Vitalina Batsarashkina of Russian Olympic Committee (ROC), the gold medalist in women's 10m air pistol, and Ukraine's Olena Kostevych.

However, the Indian was relegated to fifth position as she could manage only nine hits in the inner 10 region as compared to 13 by Russian Vitalina -- Olena too had nine shots in inner 10. Manu groupings were laden with 9s and 10s that saw her average 9.733 heading into the rapid qualification segment on Friday. The scores from the two qualification rounds, precision and rapid, will be added and the top eight shooters will advance to the women's 25m pistol final, which will be held later on Friday. While Manu was going great guns, compatriot Rahi Sarnobat struggled to keep with the competition as she slumped to 25th position at the end of the first qualification round. Rahi, the Asian Games gold medalist, scored 287 points with an average of 9.567 and was placed 25th among 44 shooters. The shooter from Kolhapur in Maharashtra had won gold in the World Cup held in Croatia last month but failed to replicate her form on Thursday.

3rd T20: SRI LANKA BEAT INDIA BY 7 WICKETS, WIN SERIES

Colombo | Agencies

Sri Lanka crushed India by seven wickets to win the third and final T20 International and clinch the three-game series 2-1 here at the R Premadasa Stadium on Thursday. Leg-spinner Wanindu Hasaranga took 4/9 in his four overs to help host restrict India to 81/8 in 20



overs. The home side coasted to the total with 33 balls to spare. India had won the ODI series 2-1.

Brief scores

India 81/8 in 20 overs (K Yadav 23 not out, W Hasaranga 4/9, D Shanaka 2/20) lost to Sri Lanka 82/3 in 14.3 overs (D de Silva 23 not out, M Bhanuka 18, R Chahar 3/15) by 7 wickets.



Mary Kom goes down fighting in pre-quarter finals

Tokyo | Agencies

Boxer MC Mary Kom's campaign at the Tokyo Olympics came to an end as the veteran crashed out in the pre-quarter finals by the narrowest of margins against Colombia's Ingrit Lorena Valencia

the Colombian opponent in the quarter-finals of the World Championships 5:0 in 2019, lost the first round as Ingrit was quick to take advantage.

The Colombian 32-year-old, who won bronze at the Rio Olympic Games, took 10 points each from four of the five judges unlike the Indian

2012 Olympic bronze medalist, who could earn 10 from only one judge.

However, Mary Kom managed 10 points each from three judges in the second and third rounds as only two judges gave 10 to Ingrit in those rounds.

But due to Ingrit's big advantage in the first round, the decision went against the Indian boxer who is also a six-time world champion.

This could be the last Olympic Games for the veteran boxer.

Earlier this week, Mary Kom had defeated Dominican Republic's Miguellina Hernandez Garcia 4-1 in the first round.

I'm more than my accomplishments and gymnastics: Biles

Star American gymnast Simone Biles expressed gratitude for the "outpouring love and support" received since her withdrawal from women's individual all-around final in artistic gymnastics at the Tokyo Olympics to focus on her mental health.

"The outpouring love and support I've received has made me realise I'm more than my accomplishments and gymnastics, which I never truly believed before [emoticon: white heart]," said Simone in a tweet posted on Thursday.

Jade Carey, who had the ninth highest score in qualifications, will now participate in the individual all-around event in place of Simone.

The 24-year-old had pulled out from the women's team final on Tuesday after scoring 13.766 on the vault, the lowest mark in the first rotation. Simone was seen talking with a trainer and then exited the competition floor with the team doctor.

She then came back, with a taping on her right leg and hugged her team-mates. She had removed the bar grips and came dressed in jacket and sweatpants, signalling her withdrawal from the team final. The reason behind Simone's withdrawal was cited as mental health concerns.



USA, the defending champions in the competition, were placed second behind the eventual gold medal winners, the Russian Olympic Committee (ROC).

Simone is the most successful USA gymnast of all time. She won four gold medals and a bronze at the 2016 Rio Olympics. She had arrived for the Tokyo Olympics as one of the biggest stars of the mega event.

Djokovic defeats Nishikori to enter semi-finals

Tokyo | Agencies

Serbian tennis star Novak Djokovic cruised into the semi-finals of men's singles event at the Tokyo Olympics here at Ariake Tennis Park on Thursday. The world number one registered a dominant straight-sets 6-2, 6-0 win over Japan's Kei Nishikori in just 72 minutes.

Djokovic, whose best result in Olympics was a bronze medal in Beijing 2008, was not broken even once in the match. Nishikori, considered the local favourite, made 16 unforced errors. Thursday also marked the day when tennis matches at the Olympics began at their new timing, 3pm local time instead of 11am. Djokovic will continue his quest for Olympic glory and a calendar slam against either of Germany's Alexander Zverev or France's Jeremy Chardy in the semi-final. Meanwhile, Russian second seed Daniil Medvedev crashed out of the quarter-finals after a 6-2, 7-6(5) loss to Spain's Pablo Carreno Busta in a clash which ran for an hour and 43 minutes. Busta next faces Karen Khachanov, who was made to work hard for a 7-6(4), 4-6, 6-3 win over France's Ugo Humbert in two hours and 34 minutes.



INDIAN ROWERS FINISH 11TH OVERALL IN TOKYO

Tokyo | Agencies

Indian rowers, Arjun Lal Jat and Arvind Singh, ended 11th over in the men's lightweight double sculls competition at the Tokyo Olympics on Thursday.

In Thursday's Final B, the race held to decide the classifications for crews that had failed to advance from the semifinals, the Indian pair rowed hard and finished fifth with a time of 6 minutes 29.66 seconds at the Sea Forest Waterway. Spanish finished first with a timing of 6:15.45 and Poland came second in 6:16.01.

The 11th place is the best performance ever by any Indian rowing crew at



the world's. The scullers had come up with their best timing in the semifinals when they clocked 6:24.41 but could not make it to the top three, who made it to the final. Ireland came first with a timing of 6:05.33,

the world's best timing this season. They had shown steady improvement in Tokyo as Arjun Lal and Arvind Singh had managed only 6:40.33 in the heat and a pedestrian 6:51.36 in the repechage race.

Aditya Roy Kapur to star in Hindi remake of 'Thadam'



Team Absolute | Mumbai

Aditya Roy Kapur has been roped in to star in the Hindi remake of the Tamil hit film 'Thadam'. He says as an actor, getting a chance to do a double role is double the preparation and challenge.

Based on true events, this yet-to-be-titled thriller will see Aditya Roy Kapur in a double role for the very first time in two completely different avatars. Helmed by debutant director Vardhan Ketkar the film is tentatively planned to go on floors in September this year. "I am inspired and excited to be part of telling such an interesting story. The original film was incredibly riveting and entertaining, and it left a lasting impression on me. As an actor, getting a chance to do a double role is double the preparation and double the challenge, and I'm certainly up for it," Aditya said.

Since the release of 'Thadam' in 2019, producer Murad Khetani was keen to make the film for the Hindi audience.

"When I watched 'Thadam' I instantly knew that this story needs to reach the masses. Soon after I reached out to the Tamil makers and acquired the rights of making this film in Hindi. When I shared the story with Bhushanji, he came on board immediately. Aditya has been doing great work and his image as an action hero is being highly appreciated," said co-producer Murad Khetani.

The film is being produced by Bhushan Kumar's T-Series and Murad Khetani's Cine1 Studios.

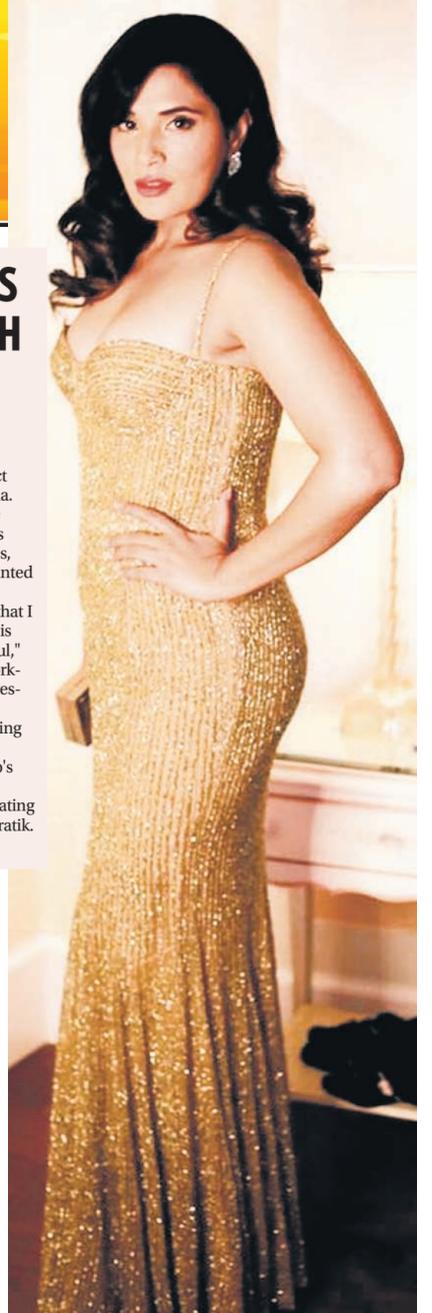
RICHA CHADHA: ALWAYS WANTED TO WORK WITH TIGMANSHU DHULIA

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Richa Chadha will be seen in the upcoming project 'The Six Suspects', directed by Tigmanshu Dhulia.

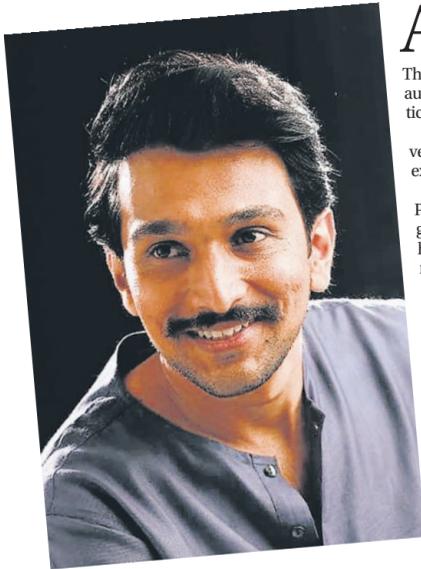
The actress says she has wanted to work with the filmmaker since forever. Richa, who is all set to impress with her role as an investigative officer in the web series, was elated to have collaborated with Dhulia. "I have wanted to work with Tigmanshu Dhulia since forever. And this opportunity to work with him is really an opportunity that I wouldn't have missed. The book from which the show is adapted is so amazing and even the cast is so wonderful," Richa said. The actress added: "It's been great to be working on the show, the shoot is on and I'm playing an investigative officer, my character has so many layers which makes it a very rewarding experience for me to be playing this part". The murder mystery series, which also stars Pratik Gandhi, is an adaptation of author Vikas Swarup's 2008 novel of the same name.

This will be the first time Richa will be seen collaborating with the 'Scam 1992: The Harshad Mehta Story' star Pratik. "The Six Suspects" will stream on Disney+ Hotstar.



Pratik Gandhi discovers the many layers of comedy

Team Absolute | Mumbai



Actor Pratik Gandhi, who became an overnight sensation playing Harshad Mehta in the popular series 'Scam 1992: The Harshad Mehta Story', is all set to make the audiences chuckle with his upcoming romantic comedy film 'Atithi Bhooto Bhava'.

The actor says comedy as a genre has been very interesting for him and that he is eager to explore the various layers of it.

Talking about starring in a comedy film, Pratik told IANS: "I have done a lot of different genres, especially comedy on stage. Comedy has always been a very interesting genre for me. I was always inclined towards it."

The 41-year-old star, who will soon be seen in the upcoming murder mystery series 'The Six Suspects', is keen on exploring the layers of comedy.

"Comedy has multiple layers like slapstick and sarcastic comedy or dark...There are a lot of things and I am eager to explore that," he concluded.

Directed by Hardik Gajjar, the film has been shot in Mumbai and Mathura. The actor will also be seen sharing screen space with actress Taapsee Pannu for a new film tentatively titled 'Woh Ladki Hai Kahaan'.



Hina Khan shares her excitement about movie 'Lines'

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Hina Khan's recent song video 'Baarish' crossed 250 million hits and now her film 'Lines' first song 'Jehlam de dariya' composed by Sufi singer and poet Rohil Bhatia and sung by Yash Chaudhary is out on Zee Music. The actress plays the central character of a vulnerable girl, 'Nazia' in the movie, who is married across the border of Kashmir. The story revolves around how the tensions at the borders become a barrier between the couple.

Sharing her excitement and experience, Hina Khan says: "It is truly a privilege to be a part of this project. I have had a lot of amazing experiences while shooting for this film and especially this song. I am just waiting to see the response of the audience. Looking forward to getting immense love and support from them."

The film is produced by Rahat Kazmi, Tariq Khan, Zeba Sajid and Raj Kushwaha. It is based on the lives of people living on both sides of border in Jammu & Kashmir. The film is set in Poonch, a historical city divided across the border and how the people were divided when the lines were drawn. Along with Hina Khan, the movie also features Farida Jalal, Rishi Bhutani and Ahmer Haider Zahid Qureshi.

The film has released on Vootselect.

POOJA HEGDE JUGGLES HER PAN-INDIA LINEUP

Team Absolute | Mumbai



Pooja Hegde is one of the leading Pan-India actresses of the country with a packed lineup of films from across the country. Juggling between these projects from different languages, Pooja has been hopping from one city to another without a break to catch.

A source close to Pooja shares, "Pooja has been really busy going from a set to set since the lockdown eased. She had been shooting in Hyderabad for Most Eligible Bachelor and Radhe Shyam this past week. Now she has come back to Mumbai for a day after which she will head out to Chennai to start the shoot of Beast from the 1st of August." Hopping from one city to another, the busy actress is shooting for multiple language films opposite all superstars. While she shot for her Telugu film, Most Eligible Bachelor in Hyderabad and the Pan-India project, Radhe Shyam opposite Prabhas, Pooja will start the next schedule for her Tamil film, Beast with Thalapathy Vijay in Chennai within the coming few days as she also manages her foundation, All About Love simultaneously.

The Indian actress has one of the most extensive countrywide lineup of films which includes, Rohit Shetty's Cirkus opposite Ranveer Singh, Bhaijaan with Salman Khan, Pan-India romantic drama, Radhe Shyam with Prabhas, Acharya with Chiranjeevi and Ram Charan, Beast with Thalapathy Vijay and Most Eligible Bachelor.

Sara Ali Khan shares ravishing photoshoot

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Bollywood actress Sara Ali Khan sprinkled monochrome magic with her latest photograph dressed in a gorgeous black bikini top paired with a sarong. Sara posted a set of images on Instagram, where she is seen posing next to a door flaunting her perfect curves in a tiny bikini top paired with a layered sarong with a thigh high slit. "Kash Kabhi Yu Ho Na Hasrate Na Junun Ho... Tera Khyaal Ho Aur Tu Ho Dil Me Bas Sukoon Ho," the actress captioned the image. She also posted a short clip of the shoot to her Insta Stories with the song "Khwab ho tum ya koi haqeeqat" from Dev Anand-starrer "Teen Deviyaan". The 25-year-old actress' picture currently has 1.7 million likes on the photo-sharing website.

Sara will be next seen in "Atrangi Re", co-starring Akshay Kumar and Dhanush, and directed by Aanand L. Rai. "Atrangi Re" is written by Himanshu Sharma and is billed as a cross-cultural love story.



INSTAGRAM PIC OF THE DAY



Nora Fatehi