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Zydus on EUA nod for first plasmid DNA Covid vax

'HISTORIC MILESTONE'

ZyCoV-D IS A THREE-DOSE VACCINE WHICH WILL BE ADMINISTERED FIRST ON DAY ZERO, THE 28TH AND THEN ON THE 56TH DAY. WITH THIS APPROVAL, INDIA NOW HAS ITS FIRST COVID-19 VACCINE FOR THE ADOLESCENTS IN THE 12-18 AGE GROUP, BESIDES THE ADULT POPULATION, THE COMPANY SAID IN A STATEMENT.

Zydus Cadila



J&J seeks regulator nod for vax trials in 12-17 age group



Team Absolute | New Delhi
Zydus Cadila on Friday announced that it has received Emergency Use Authorisation from the Drug Controller General of India for ZyCoV-D - the world's first plasmid DNA vaccine for Covid-19. ZyCoV-D is a needle-free vaccine administered using the Pharmajet - a needle free applicator, which ensures painless intra-dermal vaccine delivery. The company plans to manufacture 10-12 crore doses of ZyCoV-D annually. It also plans to

seek approval for the two-dose regimen of the vaccine. ZyCoV-D is a Plasmid DNA vaccine which, when administered, produces the spike protein of the SARS-CoV-2 virus and elicits an immune response mediated by the cellular and humoral arms of the human immune system, which play a vital role in protection from disease as well as viral clearance. The Covid-19 vaccine was also tested in the adolescent population in the 12-18 years age group in India

and was found to be safe and very well tolerated. ZyCoV-D had already exhibited a robust immunogenicity and tolerability and safety profile in the adaptive Phase 1/2 clinical trials carried out earlier. Both the Phase 1/2 and Phase 3 clinical trials have been monitored by an independent Data Safety Monitoring Board. The vaccine is stored at 2-8 degrees Celsius but has shown good stability at temperatures of 25 degrees Celsius for at least three months.

New Delhi: The American-based pharma major Johnson & Johnson (J&J) has applied to the Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation (CDSCO) for permission to conduct a vaccine trial of the Covid-19 single shot Janssen vaccine in India on children of 12-17 age group. The American pharma J&J said in a statement that it had submitted its application on Tuesday, and that it is "imperative" to ensure all sections of the population, including children, are vaccinated against the coronavirus as quickly as possible to stop the virus. The single-shot vaccine of J&J is the second Covid-19 vaccine which has already been approved for the Emergency Use Authorisation (EUA) through the fast-track approval route by the Drug Controller General of India.

"This is a historic milestone with ZyCoV-D, a product of Indian innovation becoming the world's first DNA vaccine being offered for human use and supporting the world's largest immunisation drive. We are particularly happy that our vaccine will contribute to this fight against Covid-19 and enable the country to vaccinate a larger population, especially in the age group of 12-18 years."

Pankaj R. Patel, Chairman, Cadila Healthcare

Taliban searched closed Indian consulates in Kandahar, Herat

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Taliban have searched the closed Indian Consulates in Kandahar and Herat two days ago and the reportedly took some documents from the two missions, sources in the security set-up said. According to the sources, the insurgents broke into the Consulate buildings and also took parked vehicles. India has four Indian consulates located in Kandahar, Herat, Mazar-e-Sharif and Jalalabad which were closed after the Taliban took control of Kabul on August 15. Amidst the critical situation in Afghanistan, the Indian Embassy personnel were evacuated by an Indian Air Force C-17 aircraft on Tuesday, bringing back 120 Indians, including ITBP personnel from the Kabul airport. The evacuation of remaining Indian workers were also discussed in the meeting of



the Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS) wherein the Prime Minister Narendra Modi directed to take all necessary steps to bring them back. The government has also introduced a new category of visa, "e-Emergency X-Misc Visa", under which all Afghan nationals can apply to

visit India. The emergency visa will be valid for six months first. Earlier, the Indian embassy in Kabul was functioning with reduced staff members but evaluating the critical situation in the country, the government decided to call all of them back.

Pak Army used militants trained by LeT to aid Taliban

New Delhi: Pakistan's nefarious role in aiding the Taliban to seize power in Afghanistan is becoming clear with the exposure of the identity of militants trained and dispatched by the Pakistan Army. A large number of them are from Punjab (Pakistan), who were dispatched by the army after a short stint of training at camps run by the Lashkar-e-Taiba to beef up the ranks of the Taliban. Punjab is home to two of the most notorious Pakistan Army supported terrorist groups - Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) and Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM). Although the exact number of Punjabi militants, mostly from the LeT, is not known, various estimates suggest a figure of over 10,000. In Kandahar, the LeT cadres were seen fighting alongside the Taliban. Scores of LeT cadres have also been killed.

Nehru, Vajpayee were ideal leaders of Indian democracy with dignity: Nitin Gadkari

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Union minister and former Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) chief Nitin Gadkari has hailed former Prime Ministers Jawaharlal Nehru and Atal Bihari Vajpayee as two "ideal leaders of Indian democracy". The Road Transport and Highways minister said that ruling party and Opposition leaders should "introspect" and act with dignity for a healthy democracy. He made the comments while responding to a question asked by a news channel anchor on the Opposition's protests during the monsoon session of Parliament which ended two days ahead of its schedule. "Vajpayee aur Nehru, yeh Hindustan ke loktantra ke do adarsh neta the, aur dono kehte the ki main apne loktantrik maryada ka paalan karunga (Vajpayee and Nehru were the two ideal leaders of Indian democracy. Both the leaders used to say that they would act according to the democratic dignity)," Gadkari told Hindi news channel News Nation at an event. He further said that Atalji's legacy is a source of inspiration for all leaders and Nehru has also made a big contribution to Indian democracy. Gadkari was asked to respond on the nature of current leadership in Indian democracy and disruptions in



Parliament. Senior BJP leader said both ruling and opposition parties must introspect. He said the roles of parties keep changing as the one who is in Opposition today will be leading the government tomorrow, and those who are in power today will be in Opposition. He said that a "strong Opposition" is necessary to keep a "check on the government" in a healthy democracy. "Therefore the Congress party should become a strong Opposition and do the work of a responsible Opposition," he added.

SONIA EMPHASISES ON OPPN UNITY AHEAD OF 2024 LS POLLS

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Congress interim President Sonia Gandhi on Friday said that the Monsoon Session of Parliament was a complete washout entirely due to the governments obstinate and arrogant unwillingness to discuss and debate urgent issues of public importance. She also emphasised on opposition unity ahead of the 2024 Lok Sabha elections to give the country a government that believes in the values of the freedom movement and in the principles enshrined in the Constitution. She made the remarks at the meeting of the 19 opposition parties which was chaired by her. The Congress leader said that the Pegasus snooping scandal that affects each and every citizen, the repeal of the three anti-farmer laws - the agitation of farmers that has been going on for the past nine months, the price rise of essential commodities and the continuing assault on federalism and the institutions of our democracy needed to be dis-



cussed. Sonia Gandhi said that in spite of this, the session was marked by the "determined unity" that all Opposition parties demonstrated for over 20 days in both the Houses. "We functioned in a coordinated manner with daily discussions among our floor leaders," she said, adding that it was entirely due to the opposition parties that the Constitutional Amendment Bill was passed to

restore the long-standing rights of states to identify and notify OBCs. The meeting was attended by leaders of the Trinamool Congress, the Nationalist Congress Party, the DMK, the Shiv Sena, the Jharkhand Mukti Morcha, the Communist Party of India, the Communist Party of India-Marxist, the National Conference, the Rashtriya Janata Dal, the All India United Democratic Front, the VCK, the Loktantrik Janata Dal, the Janata Dal-Secular, the Rashtriya Lok Dal, the Revolutionary Socialist Party, the Kerala Congress-Mani, the Peoples Democratic Party, and the Indian Union Muslim League. However, the Samajwadi Party, the Aam Aadmi Party, and the Bahujan Samaj Party stayed away. The meeting called by Sonia Gandhi is being seen as a measure taken by the Gandhi family to reassert their position as the central figures among the Opposition. During the Monsoon Session, former party chief Rahul Gandhi had met several leaders of the Opposition over breakfast.

P.V. Narasimha Rao father of economic reforms in India: CJI

Hyderabad: Chief Justice of India N.V. Ramana on Friday stressed the need for arbitration, mediation, and conciliation as investors want "ease of doing business" and the proposed International Arbitration and Mediation Centre in Hyderabad would go a long way in helping both domestic and foreign investors in settling their disputes as early as possible.

He also described former Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao as the father of economic reforms in the country, noting that the reforms started during the Congress leader's rule. "You know the father of the economic reforms in the country is none other than P.V. Narasimha Rao, 'Telangana Bidda' (son of Telangana). Under his leadership, in India for the first time, economic reforms started," he said. He noted that in the Indian culture, all our disputes are sorted through mediation, negotiation and conciliation.



Truck overturns, 13 labourers killed in Maha's Buldhana



Mumbai: At least 13 labourers were killed when a truck carrying iron rods overturned in Maharashtra's Buldhana on Friday. A few labourers also suffered injuries, following which they were rushed to a government hospital in Jalna district. According to officials, the truck driver was trying to evade a crash with a car approaching from the opposite direction. The incident occurred near Duserbid village at Tadegaon Phata on Sindkhedraja-Mehkar Road around 12 noon when the labourers were being taken for the work on the Nagpur-Mumbai Samruddhi Expressway project. Officials said a total of 16 labourers were travelling in the vehicle that was also transporting steel for the highway project. The personnel of the Kingaon Raja police station rushed to the spot and began the rescue operation as soon as they received the information. While some of the injured were taken to a state-run hospital in neighbouring Jalna district, others were admitted to Sindkhedraja hospital. Most of these labourers were from Bihar and Uttar Pradesh.

ED OFFICIAL SEEKS RETIREMENT, MAY CONTEST UP POLLS ON BJP TICKET

New Delhi: ED officer Rajeshwar Singh has applied for retirement from government service and is expected to join the BJP and contest the forthcoming Uttar Pradesh Assembly polls, official sources said on Friday. Singh is currently posted as the joint director of the Enforcement Directorate (ED) at its zonal office in Lucknow. A B.Tech and PhD in police, human rights and social justice, Singh joined the federal anti-money laundering investigations agency in 2009 on deputation from Uttar Pradesh where he was serving as a state police service officer. Sources said that the application is yet to be accepted. Singh, who hails from Sultanpur in Uttar Pradesh, was permanently absorbed into the ED cadre in 2015.

2 ITBP PERSONNEL KILLED IN MAOIST ATTACK

Sundarraaj P, Inspector General of Police for Bastar range, said the Maoists took away an AK-47 rifle, two bulletproof jackets and a wireless set.

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Two personnel of the Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP), including an Assistant Commandant, were killed in a Maoist attack at Narayanpur district in Chhattisgarh on Friday. Sundarraaj P, Inspector General of Police for the Bastar range, said the attack took place around noon when a squad of ITBP's 45th battalion was on an area domination exercise. About 600 metres from the



Kademata camp of the 45th battalion, the Maoists opened fire at the ITBP squad, Sundarraaj said.

He added that Assistant Commandant Sudhakar Shinde, from Nanded district in Maharashtra, and Assistant Sub-Inspector Gurmukh Singh, who hailed from Raikot in Punjab, were killed in the firing. The Inspector General said reinforcements have been rushed to the spot and bodies of the two ITBP personnel are being recovered. Earlier this year, on April 4, 22 security personnel were killed in an ambush by Maoists at the Sukma-Bijapur border area.

Narayanpur, Rajnandgaon and Kondagaon are the three districts in Chhattisgarh where ITBP personnel have been deployed for anti-Maoist operations. Currently, eight battalions of the paramilitary force are deployed in the state. The Bastar division, which comprises the districts of Bastar, Dantewada, Bijapur, Narayanpur, Sukma, Kondagaon and Kanker, has been at the centre of the government's fight against the Maoists.

L-G again rejects Delhi Govt's panel to probe deaths due to oxygen shortage

New Delhi: Delhi Lt Governor Anil Bajjal has again rejected the Delhi Government's request to set up a panel to investigate the deaths due to alleged oxygen shortage during the second wave of the Covid pandemic, said Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia on Friday. Sisodia, who is also the nodal minister for Covid management in the national capital, stated that no one can deny that Delhi grappled with an oxygen shortage during the peak of the second wave of the Covid pandemic (April-May) and several people died due to oxygen shortage. "The Central Government has again rejected the proposal to form a committee to investigate the deaths due to lack of oxygen," Sisodia tweeted. The Delhi Government had formed a four-member panel in June this year to look into the deaths due to shortage of oxygen. However, the committee was rejected by the L-G.



RAJIV GANDHI 77TH BIRTH ANNIVERSARY: PM MODI, SONIA PAY TRIBUTES

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Rich tributes were paid to former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi on Friday on his 77th birth anniversary. In a tweet, Prime Minister Modi said, "Tributes to our former PM Shri Rajiv Gandhi Ji on his birth anniversary."

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, Congress interim President Sonia Gandhi, Leader of Congress party in Lok Sabha Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury and others also floral tributes to Rajiv Gandhi at a function held at the Central Hall of Parliament. After paying floral tributes to the former Prime Minister at Central Hall of Parliament, Defence Minister Singh tweeted, "Paid tributes to former Prime Minister of India, Rajiv Gandhi ji on his birth anniversary at Parliament



House today." In a series of tweets, Chowdhury, leader of the Congress party in Lok Sabha, said, "Today is the 77th birth anniversary of great visionary leader late Rajiv Gandhi, being celebrated across the country, who espoused the philosophy of 'Power to the People',

instead of power to the party." "Who gave birth to the Computer Revolution which is 'Digital India' in its new incarnation, and so on, I pay my tribute to my departed leader, RAJIV JI," Chowdhury said. Among others who paid floral tributes were several sitting and

former MPs. The Secretary-General of Lok Sabha, Utpal Kumar Singh, also paid floral tributes. The portrait of Rajiv Gandhi was unveiled by the then President of India, Dr. Shankar Dayal Sharma, in the Central Hall of Parliament House on August 20, 1993.

EMPIRES OF TERROR ARE TEMPORARY, SAYS PM MODI

Gandhinagar: Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Friday that "empires created out of terror can dominate for some time, but their existence is never permanent as they cannot suppress humanity forever", a remark that assumes significance in the backdrop of the Taliban takeover in Afghanistan. The Prime Minister made the remarks after virtually laying the foundation stones for a couple of development projects at the Somnath temple in Gujarat. This temple (Somnath) was destroyed multiple times in its centuries old history. Its idols were destroyed. Every attempt was made to destroy its existence. But whenever it was brought down, it stood up once again. This temple is not only a symbol of faith in India, it is also a symbol of reassurance globally," Modi said during his virtual speech. "Truth cannot be defeated by the untruth. Faith cannot be crushed under terrorism. The thought behind creating an empire through terrorism might dominate for some time in a certain period, but it cannot rule forever. Its existence cannot be forever and it cannot suppress humanity for long," the Prime Minister added.



Kashmiri youth thrashed outside his office in Gurugram

Team Absolute | Gurugram

Kashmiri youth was allegedly thrashed by six unidentified men outside his office in Sector-44 of Gurugram on Thursday night. However, the matter was reported to the police only on Friday. The victim was identified as Tariq Bhat (22) of Handwara town in Jammu and Kashmir. He has been working in a corporate office as Financial Advisor for two years. The victim told the police that around 8 p.m. on Thursday, he was leaving for his home when the six men caught hold of him from behind and dragged him to a nearby park that was isolated at that time and beat him without saying anything. "The victim told the police that he doesn't know who they were and why they beat him. The victim has received some injuries on the chest, back and head during the incident. The matter was reported to the police on Friday afternoon. "We took the victim to the incident site to know what happened the previous night. We are also scanning the CCTV footage of the spot to establish the identity of



the men who were behind the incident," Jasvir Singh, station house officer (SHO) of Sushant Lok police station, told reporter. The corporate office where the victim is working tweeted that "We stand in support of our employee, Tariq Bhat and are in constant touch with local authorities to help him. The wellness of our employees is paramount to us and we will do everything possible to ensure the safety of everyone". However, sources claimed that a day before the incident, the victim had an argument with a colleague in his office who had warned him not to speak in a loud voice.

Elderly couple brutally murdered on festival day in Bengaluru

Bengaluru | Agencies

In a shocking incident, miscreants killed an elderly couple within the limits of Kumaraswamy Layout in Bengaluru on Friday. The incident, which took place on the day of the Varamahalakshmi festival, has shocked the city.

The deceased persons have been identified as Shantharaju (65), a former mechanic with the Bangalore Metropolitan Transport Corporation (BMTC), and his wife Premalatha (62). The elderly couple was stabbed and strangled by the miscreants. The police have formed four special teams to nab the assailants.

According to the police, the couple, who didn't have any children, lived in their own property in Kashi Nagar. They had rented out two houses and lived in that income. The couple spoke to their neighbours till afternoon. However, they were found murdered later. Preliminary investigations suggest the crime to be the handiwork of known persons. The police suspect that the miscreants spent time with the victims



before committing the crime, as three glasses were found on the table.

The miscreants stabbed Shantharaju and then used a pillow to suffocate him to death. Premalatha was dragged to another room where she was strangled to death with a cable wire. The police are checking the CCTV footages of the area, besides recording the statements of the neighbours. Bengaluru Police Commissioner Kamal Pant and Additional Police Commissioner Soumendu Mukharjee have rushed to the spot. The police are also checking if anything has been stolen from the house as one almirah was found open, Kamal Pant said.

2 RUSSIAN WOMEN FOUND DEAD IN RENTED HOMES IN GOA VILLAGE

Panaji: In two separate incidents, two Russian nationals, both women, were found dead in their respective rented homes in a North Goa village of Siolim over the last 24 hours, North Goa district police said on Friday. While Alexandra Djavi, 24, was found hanging from a ceiling fan at her rented home late on Thursday, the other Russian national Ekaterina Titova, 34, was found dead in her apartment on Friday. "There were no injury marks on the remains of Titova. Both cases have been registered as unnatural deaths and are being investigated," a Goa Police spokesperson said. Over the last decade, Goa has emerged as a popular tourist destination for Russian travellers. The village of Siolim is located close to the beach villages of Morjim and Arambol, which are popular with Russian tourists.

Two terrorists neutralised in Kashmir encounter

Srinagar | Agencies

Two terrorists have been killed in an ongoing encounter between militants and security forces at Khreh in Pampore area of South Kashmir's Pulwama district, officials said on Friday. The army said that its Rashtriya Rifles Battalion received information from the SSP of Awantipora about the presence of two terrorists in the Khreh area. "The Battalion launched an operation at 1 a.m. on Friday, along with the J&K Police," the army said. "They drew heavy volume of fire from terrorists hiding in the village at 2.40 a.m. The security forces quickly isolated the house, ensuring that other innocent civilians were not caught in the crossfire." The army said the terrorists were repeatedly asked to surrender, but they refused. Intermittent exchange of fire continued throughout the night. "At around 6.30 a.m., one terrorist



tried to escape from the house by opening firing on the troops, but he was neutralised. The second terrorist continued to fire from inside the house but was contained by the troops on ground. By 9.15 a.m., the second terrorist was also neutralised," the army said. One slain terrorist has been identified as Musaab Mustaq Bhat, a resident of Kheruh

belonging to the Hizbul Mujahideen. The identity of the other is yet to be ascertained. "Bhat was involved in untold atrocities on local people, including the killing of Javid Ahmed Malik, a government employee, on July 23 at Luragam," the army said. One AK-47, one pistol and other warlike stores were recovered from the terrorists.

Tej Pratap in reported altercation with Tejashwi at Rabri Devi's house

Team Absolute | Patna

Angry words were reportedly exchanged between RJD leaders and brothers Tej Pratap Yadav and Tejashwi Yadav as they came face to face in their mother Rabri Devi's 10 Circular Road residence, sources said.

The residence is the home-cum-office of Tejashwi Yadav as well, and sources inside said that Tej Pratap Yadav, who came with the demand for taking action against RJD state chief Jagadanand Singh who had sacked Akash Yadav as RJD youth wing's state chief a couple of days ago, reportedly used harsh words with his younger brother.

Seeing the situation, Tejashwi Yadav's chief strategist Sanjay Yadav intervened, and drew Tejashwi Yadav away. Tej Pratap Yadav then stormed off, and slammed Sanjay Yadav for "disrupting talk" between two brothers.

"Sanjay Yadav wants to create differences between me and Tejashwi Yadav. Who is he to come between two brothers? When I was



interacting with Tejashwi Yadav inside the premises for not more than 2 minutes, Sanjay Yadav came there and took him away from us," he told media persons outside.

However, eyewitnesses claimed that Tej Pratap Yadav was talking in an angry tone with Tejashwi Yadav, and the situation might have turned ugly if their interaction continued, and Sanjay Yadav intervened at the right time to take Tejashwi Yadav away.

Sources also said that Tejashwi Yadav has decided to take strong action against Tej Pratap Yadav who was involved in humiliating many senior leaders of the party. He had compared late Raghuvansh Prasad Singh to a 'lota' (water jug), is continuously humiliating Jagadanand Singh, and also used abusive words for senior leader Shivanand Tiwari on Thursday.

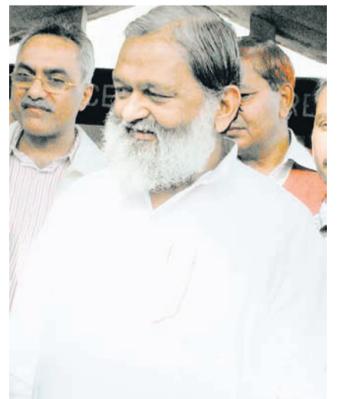
HARYANA HEALTH MINISTER VIJ PUT ON OXYGEN SUPPORT

Team Absolute | Chandigarh

Haryana Health Minister Anil Vij, who earlier contracted coronavirus, was put on oxygen support on Friday after his oxygen levels dipped alarmingly, a doctor said. Dhruv Chaudhary, Head of Pulmonary Medicine Department of the Post-Graduate Institute of Medical Sciences, Rohtak, who is monitoring Vij's condition, told the media that Vij was put on oxygen support at his residence in Ambala city, some 50 km from here.

He said the minister's oxygen level dipped below 80 in the morning. By the evening the oxygen saturation reached 89, but it was still low. "We are monitoring his condition and if required, he will be hospitalised," Chaudhary added.

On November 20, Vij was given a shot of Bharat Biotech's 'Covaxin' for which he had volunteered. Later, the Hyderabad-based Bharat Biotech had said the efficacy of its Covid-19 vaccine could be determined only 14 days after a second dose. "Covaxin has been designed to be efficacious. Covaxin clinical trials are based on a two-dose schedule, given 28 days apart. The vaccine efficacy will be determined 14 days post the second dose," the company had said in a statement.



UP first state to complete seven Crore Covid tests

Lucknow:

Uttar Pradesh has become the first state in the country to carry out more than seven crore Covid tests.

A government spokesperson said that, "The testing protocol by the World Health Organisation for Uttar Pradesh is 32,000 tests per day, whereas Covid testing in the state has averaged 2.5 lakh tests a day for the past few weeks."

Meanwhile, Uttar Pradesh reported 29 new Covid positive cases and 35 recoveries on Thursday, bringing the total number of active cases in the state down to 407.

Cases were reported from just 16 districts, with Lucknow reporting the highest number of new cases at five. Banda and Bulandshahr also reported one death each.

"The reason UP is able to keep the infection under control is the aggressive testing," the spokesman said. On Thursday, the state carried out more than 2.36 lakh tests.



Political debate erupts in Bengal over CBI probe into post-poll violence

Kolkata | Agencies

A day after the Calcutta High Court ordered a CBI probe into the post-poll violence in West Bengal, a political debate has erupted in the state over the neutrality and ability of the central probe agency.

While the BJP has welcomed the court's decision, the ruling Trinamool Congress is of the opinion that the CBI is nothing but a 'caged parrot'.

On Thursday, the Calcutta High Court handed over the investigation of serious crimes such as rape and murder during the post-poll violence in West Bengal to the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI). Similarly, the division bench also formed a Special Investigation Team (SIT) to investigate the lesser crimes that occurred after the dec-

laration of Assembly election results in Bengal on May 2.

Speaking to the reporters here, senior Trinamool leader and state Health Minister Chandrima Bhattacharya said, "It is a verdict of the Calcutta High Court and I have nothing to say on that. The high court has given order for CBI investigation, so let them probe the matter."

"But there is one thing that I would like to mention. Just a day before the high court's order, the Madras High Court had said that the CBI has become a 'caged parrot', which is enough to understand the ability and neutrality of the investigating agency." The BJP, on the other hand, hailed the high court's decision and said the party is hopeful that the truth will finally come out now.

Speaking at a rally, BJP state unit



chief Dilip Ghosh said, "This is not the local police which the state government can put under pressure. This is the CBI. When they (CBI sleuths) will take you outside



the state, everything will come out. There are some Trinamool leaders who know this better than me." Ghosh was referring to Sudip Bandyopadhyay and some other

Trinamool leaders who were tried by the CBI in Odisha in the Saradha ponzi scam case.

Meanwhile, the CBI on Friday wrote to the West Bengal DGP, seeking details of cases filed in connection with the post-poll violence in the state after the declaration of Assembly election results on May 2.

A CBI source had said on Thursday night that the agency has formed four teams each comprising six officers to probe the matter. "Four special investigation units have been constituted to probe the cases related to post-poll violence in West Bengal," the source said, adding that each team will be headed by a joint director-level officer.

The source also said that the investigating officer will soon visit the state to initiate probe.



BJP FRANTIC TO PATCH UP WITH UDDHAV THACKERAY, CLAIMS SHIV SENA LEADER

Quaid Najmi | Mumbai

Making a startling claim, a senior Shiv Sena leader Kishore Tiwari said on Friday that the state Opposition Bharatiya Janata Party is "frantically trying" to patch up with Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray.

The BJP is also willing to concede all demands of Sena -- its former partner for over two decades -- which has now allied with the Nationalist Congress Party and Congress to head the Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) government in the state.

More so since Thackeray could emerge as a major national Opposition contender in the 2014 Lok Sabha elections, which has spooked the BJP, he pointed out, in comments to a private local TV channel. Tiwari -- accorded an MoS status, added: "Every two weeks or so, the BJP leaders call up the CM, requesting to bury the past and start afresh."

"In fact, people like Leader of Opposition Devendra Fadnavis, even want me to mediate between the Sena-BJP and hammer out an understanding between the two parties," Tiwari later elaborated to



correspondent.

He contended that since the past over six months, Fadnavis and other BJP bigwigs are seeking appointments with Thackeray Sabh "to clinch a settlement" comprising Thackeray remaining CM for full five years with their support, with choice of ministries and smoothening all other irritants.

However, the CM has given a 'thumbs down' sign -- even publicly as recently as last June -- to all BJP's overtures, while making it clear that -- "I have given my word to the NCP-Congress and will not betray them."

Top Sena leaders, including

Thackeray, have repeatedly accused the BJP leadership of "treachery and breaking its promise of equal power-share arrangement," made in February 2019, ahead of the Lok Sabha elections. Later, the BJP allegedly reneged on it, virtually calling Thackeray a 'liar', which ultimately resulted in the unprecedented MVA government taking power in November 2019. At one point in November 2019, worried BJP leaders from New Delhi had woken up Thackeray at 3 a.m., begging to forgive-and-forget, bury the hatchet and start on a clean slate, Tiwari said.

Still not succeeding, Tiwari said

the BJP resorted to 'wrecking the brand-new MVA' with Fadnavis suddenly becoming CM of a two-man government in an unprecedented dawn ceremony at Raj Bhavan.

"It was only the determination of the NCP President Sharad Pawar, Sena MP Sanjay Raut and other Congress leaders that the bloodless coup on democracy was exposed...Fadnavis' so-called second-term lasted barely 80 hours," a grim Tiwari recalled.

After that mega-failure, he said the BJP leaders kept targeting the CM and his family members personally, and attempted to drag them into the Sushant Singh Rajput death case. "Till date, the BJP is constantly harassing the MVA, misusing central agencies, filing fake cases against Sena, NCP leaders or ministers and their families, not sparing even ex-BJP leaders who joined MVA...All these gimmicks are intended to force a break-up of the 3-party alliance," Tiwari declared.

The strong reactions of the Sena's "farmer-face" came after questions on the renewed attacks on Shiv Sena launched by Union Industry Minister Narayan Rane since Thursday during his 'Jan Ashirwad Yatra'.

Jewellers to go on strike on Aug 23 over 'arbitrary' hallmarking norms

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Jewellers across India will go on strike on August 23 against "arbitrarily" implemented mandatory hallmarking process in the country by the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS).

The strike has been called by the National Task Force for Hallmarking, formed by 350 associations and federations representing all four zones of the entire gems and jewellery industry. The objective of this committee is to ensure a smooth implementation of mandatory hallmarking across the country, said a statement by the task force on Friday. There have been two committees formed and almost 10 meetings held but no relief has yet been offered in writing by the BIS or the Ministry of Corporate Affairs, it said, adding that BIS, being a standards and quality assurance institution, is playing the role of a "revenue department" with gems and jewellery industry becoming a very soft target for them.

"Jewellers have waited for almost two months with



complications piling up and impractical laws resulting in industry collapse," the statement said. Ashok Minawala, member of the National Task Force on Hallmarking, noted that jewellers have always welcomed hallmarking, but they cannot accept the new HUID (Hallmarking Unique ID) as it has nothing to do with the purity of gold.

"The new HUID is a 6-digit code, which BIS feels will improve gold purity, but BIS cannot prove even one element of how it can improve the purity, apart from it being just a tracking mechanism," he said. "The consumer wants perfect quality of gold jewellery which we are happy to deliver. The new process has been made a 'destructive process' that damages our

jewellery being hallmarking," said Minawala, who is also a former Chairman of the All India Gem and Jewellery Domestic Council.

He was of the view that the element of cancellation of registration, penal provisions, search and seizure will ultimately bring "Inspector Raaj" in the industry. Dinesh Jain, member of the task force, noted that hallmarking has been made mandatory in 256 districts from June 16, 2021 and it is estimated that yearly, almost 10-12 crore pieces are manufactured in India.

In addition, existing stock of almost 6-7 crore pieces are yet to be hallmarking, he said, adding that it takes the total count of pieces to be hallmarking in a year to almost 16-18 crore pieces.

Finance Ministry amends FEMA norms to raise FDI limit in insurance

The Finance Ministry has notified amendments to the Foreign Exchange Management Rules to increase in limit on foreign direct investment (FDI) in the insurance sector to 74 per cent.

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Currently, the cap on FDI in the insurance sector is 49 per cent. As per the Foreign Exchange Management (non-debt instruments) (second amendment) Rules, 2021 notified by the government

on Thursday, applications for FDI in private banks having a joint venture or subsidiary in the insurance sector may be addressed to the Reserve Bank of India for consideration in consultation with the Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India to ensure that the limit of foreign investment of 74 per cent for the insurance sector is not breached.

In May, the government had notified the Indian Insurance Companies (Foreign Investment) Amendment Rules, 2021 that makes appointment of resident Indian citizen mandatory, at least one amongst the Chairperson, Managing Director, or Chief Executive

Officer.

In the Budget session earlier this year, the Parliament approved the raising of FDI limit in insurance from present 49 per cent to 74 per cent.

To be able to enhance FDI to 74 per cent level, companies would be required to have minimum 50 per cent independent directors on the board. An exception is given where the chairperson is an independent director. In such case, one-third of directors would be independent.

Moreover, such companies would be required to retain net profits for dividend declaration, where prescribed solvency margins are not met for a financial year.

MAHA REPORTS 4,365 COVID-19 CASES, 105 DEATHS

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Maharashtra reported 4,365 new coronavirus cases and 105 deaths on Friday, while 6,384 patients recovered from the viral infection, a health department official said.

The state's infection tally thus rose to 64,15,935, while the death toll reached 1,35,672. Nandurbar district in north Maharashtra did not record a single active COVID-19 case for the fifth day in a row.

As many as 6,384 patients were discharged from hospitals during the day, taking the recovery count to 62,21,305. There are 55,454 active cases in Maharashtra.

The state's COVID-19 recovery rate stands at 96.97 per cent, while the fatality rate is 2.11 per cent.

As many as 2,06,848 coronavirus



tests were conducted since Thursday evening, pushing the total tests conducted so far to 5,19,21,798. Ahmednagar district reported the

highest 577 new infections, followed by Satara at 554. Satara district also recorded the highest 17 deaths during the day. Among the eight administra-

tive regions of Maharashtra, Pune region reported the highest 1,858 new COVID-19 cases, followed by 890 cases in the Kolhapur region.

The Nashik region reported 699 new cases, Mumbai 696, Latur 161, Aurangabad 29, Akola 18 and the Nagpur region recorded 14 new cases.

Of 105 deaths reported during the day, the highest 33 fatalities were reported from the Pune region, followed by 32 in Kolhapur and 12 in the Mumbai region. Nashik and Latur regions reported 10 and five deaths, respectively. Akola and Nagpur regions reported eight and five deaths, respectively, while no death was reported in the entire Aurangabad division.

Mumbai city reported 319 new cases and six deaths, while Pune city reported 201 infections and one fresh fatality.

Nashik signs 'Race To Zero' pledge

Team Absolute | Nashik

Nashik has become the first non-metro city in Maharashtra to sign the 'Race To Zero' pledge for going net zero on greenhouse gas by 2040.

The pledge has already been signed by Bengaluru, Chennai, Delhi, Kolkata and Mumbai.

Net Zero is an ambitious target where an institution, a city or a country aims to attain a balance between the amount of greenhouse gas produced and the amount removed from the atmosphere.

The United Nations' 'Race to Zero' is the largest 'credible alliance' of companies, cities, states, regions, investors, universities and other



actors, aiming to halve carbon emissions by 2030. "The Rs 20.5 crore grant from the Centre to reduce air pollution will be utilized for con-

struction of electric crematoriums and waste management technologies for Nashik Municipal Corporation (NMC). These will directly tackle

greenhouse gas emissions and climate change," NMC Commissioner, Kailas Jadhav said.

In addition, Nashik has also prioritized carbon free transport in the city by developing smart roads and dedicated cycling infrastructure. It has also planned the development of a clean public transport system using electric buses and CNG fuel, a statement said. "As part of the 'Race to Zero' campaign, Nashik has committed to set aggressive targets for reducing air pollution, procure more electric buses and reduce municipal solid waste. In addition, the city will be promoting clean energy sources such as solar energy," added the statement.

HC raps Maha govt for refusing to share Deshmukh case papers with CBI

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The Bombay High Court on Friday questioned the Maharashtra government's refusal to share certain documents with the CBI for its probe against former state home minister Anil Deshmukh, and said that unless the documents are seen how can the central agency decide if there was any nexus with him over alleged corruption in police transfers and postings. The state government had

earlier claimed that the documents sought by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) did not have any relevance with the agency's corruption probe against Deshmukh.

A division bench of Justices S S Shinde and N J Jamadar was hearing an application filed by the CBI alleging that the government was not cooperating by refusing to hand over certain documents in connection with a probe against the NCP leader.

Additional Solicitor General Aman Lekhi, appearing for the CBI, on Friday said the government by refusing to hand over the documents was acting in contempt to a July order passed by the high court, which said that the agency had the power to inquire into corruption in police transfers and the reinstatement of police officer Sachin Waze. The bench noted that earlier the state government had said that it was not averse to any investigation.

Maha NGO seeks PM's nod to 'adopt' 1,000 stranded Afghan students

In a first of its kind humanitarian gesture, a Maharashtra NGO has sought permission from Prime Minister Narendra Modi to 'adopt' around 1,000 stranded Afghan students who are in dire straits after the Taliban takeover of their motherland, here on Friday.

Quaid Najmi | Mumbai

In a letter to the PM, NGO Sarhad's President Sanjay Nahar, Working President Surendra Wadhwa and Chief Organiser Santsingh Mokha narrated the plight of the young students in Pune, Mumbai, other parts of the state and rest of India.

"Since the Afghan issue has become explosive and internationally 'politically sensitive', we cannot undertake the task without the Indian government's permission and selection of the needy Afghan students," Nahar told correspondent.

Sarhad has immediately collaborated with the 'Shri Guru Teghbahadurji 400th Prakash Purab-2021 Committee' and is in talks with Jain, Buddhist and Muslim groups to help in the noble cause, with a government representative helping identify the needy youngsters, he added.



"We have decided to launch the initiative with 50 needy students in Pune right away, the rest we shall take up after the Centre's signal and participation of other religious and educational groups," Nahar assured. Through the initiatives, Sarhad and other groups-educational institutions will provide the full lodging, boarding, financial help with fees and other requirements of these students till the situation in Afghanistan normalizes.

Afghani students heaved a sigh of relief after the positive SPPU meeting and the upcoming help from the NGOs, even as diplomatic and other regular channels remain practically shut since a week now.

Afghan Students Association of Pune (ASAP) President Wali R. Rahmani and ASAP girls' coordinator Farzana Amiri termed the Sarhad move "as extremely positive and would boost the morale of the Afghani students stuck here with limited resources".

Around 11,000 Afghan students, including around 35 per cent women, study in colleges and universities across India, with the largest chunk of around 5,000 in Maharashtra, according to Rahmani.

They include around 3,000 in Pune, 700 in Mumbai and the rest scattered in other cities, though the Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) data shows less than 2,500 students here on government scholarships.

GORHE PRAISES NAVI MUMBAI CIVIC BODY FOR WORKS DURING PANDEMIC



Thane: Deputy Chairperson of the Maharashtra Legislative Council Neelam Gorhe on Wednesday lauded the Navi Mumbai Municipal Corporation (NMMC) for its development and welfare works undertaken during the coronavirus pandemic. At a meeting, she reviewed the work done in Navi Mumbai during the pandemic by different civic agencies.

During the review meeting, municipal commissioner Abhijit Bhangar made a presentation on various works done by the civic body. Gorhe praised the NMMC for taking care of orphaned children and providing support to women during the health crisis. She said the Navi Mumbai civic body can be a role model for other municipal corporations.



THE CONDITION OF THE ROADS OF THE STATE SHOULD NOT DETERIORATE, START THE WORK IMMEDIATELY

The work of the CPA agency is over. Chief Minister Chouhan took a meeting regarding the maintenance of roads.

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has said that the condition of roads in the state should not deteriorate. The work of repair and maintenance of roads should be done continuously. There should be no potholes on the roads, wherever the roads are bad, start repairing immediately. There will be no excuses in the work.

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Chouhan said that short term and long term planning should be done for



repair and maintenance of roads of all places including Bhopal. Expressing deep displeasure over potholes on many roads of Bhopal and not being repaired immediately, Chouhan directed to start the work immediately.

Chief Minister Chouhan said that four agencies PWD, Municipal Corporation, CPA and Bhopal Development Authority are doing the work of roads in Bhopal city. Due to the presence of more agencies, the work cannot be done quickly. CPA (Capital Project Administration) is not needed, so its work should be ended immediately. Chief Minister Chouhan

directed Chief Secretary Bains to fix agencies for the work.

Do restoration work with construction. Chief Minister Chouhan said that public has to face inconvenience due to delay in restoration work by construction agencies during road, sewage works etc. Restoration work should be ensured along with the main work. Do not leave the road paved. The capital project administration in Bhopal city has a total length of 92.5 km. At present, the condition of the roads is worse due to the ongoing work of pipeline and sewerage in the Kolar Road area.

The Municipal Corporation of Bhopal has 710 km of main roads of the city. Also there are internal routes. The Public Works Department has a total of 400 km of roads, including 13 major roads and 25 colony routes.

Airstrip will be built in every district of MP: Shivraj Singh

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has said that an airstrip will be built in every district of the state to fulfill Prime Minister Narendra Modi's dream of connecting small towns with air facilities. Along with this, necessary arrangements will be made to connect the districts with flight. Inaugurating new IndiGo flights from Jabalpur to Delhi, Indore and Mumbai through video conference with Union Civil Aviation Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia, Chief Minister Chouhan also requested Union Minister Scindia to name Jabalpur airport after Rani Durgavati.

It has been told that from today Jabalpur to Mumbai and Delhi air service started and Jabalpur to Hyderabad and Indore will be available



from 28th August. Similarly, flight service from Indore to Mumbai and Jabalpur will also start from August 28.

Chief Minister Chouhan has said that it is the resolve of Prime Minister Narendra Modi that even a citizen wearing Hawai Chappal can travel by air. We want to bring this day to India as soon as possible. The UDAN scheme is an attempt to make this resolution a reality. Union Civil Aviation Minister Scindia is engaged in fulfilling this objective with full dedication and dynamism.

When Union Minister Scindia took charge, 424 flights per week were being operated from different places of Madhya Pradesh, which has now increased to 588 per week.

Chief Minister Chouhan appealed to Union Minister Scindia to give special cooperation to Madhya Pradesh in starting air service in small towns. Chief Minister Chouhan said that Jabalpur is very rich in tourism, culture and historical perspective as well as industrial and commercial sectors.

Over Rs 400 cr development plan for Jabalpur airport approved



Team Absolute | Bhopal

Civil Aviation Minister Jyotiraditya M. Scindia said on Friday that a Rs 421 crore scheme has been approved for the development of the Jabalpur airport in Madhya Pradesh.

"The new developments include con-

struction of a new 10,000 sq ft terminal building, a new ATC tower, and extension of the runway from 1,950m to 2,750m to make it feasible for bigger aircraft operations," Scindia said. The minister was speaking at an event to virtually flag off the IndiGo flight on the Jabalpur-Delhi route.

"From today, Jabalpur has additional flight connectivity with the national capital - Delhi - and the financial capital of the country - Mumbai. The city will further get additional connectivity with Indore and Hyderabad from August 28," Scindia said.

"It gives me immense pleasure to announce that in the last 35 days, we have commenced operations of 44 new flights in Madhya Pradesh, out of which 26 aircraft movements have been attributed solely to Jabalpur. We are not only reviving the old routes despite the pandemic, but are also commencing new routes," he added. Jabalpur has now become the 69th domestic destination connected by IndiGo.

CHIEF MINISTER CHOUHAN PLANTED A SAPLING OF KARANJ



Bhopal : Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan planted a sapling of Karanj in Smart Udyan today. Chief Minister Chouhan plants a sapling every day in the order of his resolve. Considered important in Ayurvedic medicine, Karanja is also used in religious works.

Appointment of Vice Chancellor in 2 universities of state

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Governor Mangubhai Patel has made appointments in two universities of Madhya Pradesh. Jabalpur's Divisional Commissioner B Chandrashekhar has been made the vice-chancellor of Madhya Pradesh Medical Science University, while Vijay Kumar has been entrusted with the responsibility of vice-chancellor of Maharishi Panini Sanskrit and Vedic University, Ujjain. Governor Patel has appointed the Vice-Chancellor after consultation with the State Government in exercise of the powers conferred in section 13 of the Schedule to the Madhya Pradesh Medical University Act, 2011. Commissioner B. Chandrashekhar has been appointed as the Vice-Chancellor of the University with immediate effect till further orders along with the present



duties. Similarly, Governor Patel has appointed Mr. Vijay Kumar, Professor, Department of Vedas and Grammar, Kavikulguru Kalidas Sanskrit Vishwavidyalaya, Ramtek Nagpur, to the post of Vice-Chancellor of Maharishi Panini Sanskrit and Vedic University, Ujjain. The Governor and Chancellor Patel

has appointed the Vice-Chancellor in exercise of the powers conferred by sub-section I of section 28 of the Maharishi Panini Sanskrit and Vedic University Act, 2006. The tenure of Professor Vijay Kumar as Vice-Chancellor will be for a period of four years from the date of assumption of charge.

BAN ON TRANSFERS LIFTED TILL AUGUST 31

Bhopal: Once again the ban on transfers has been removed in Madhya Pradesh, now transfers can be done till August 31. Earlier the transfers were put on hold on August 7 due to floods and heavy rains. It is to be known that under the transfer policy of district and state level officers and employees in the state, orders were issued regarding the transfers of June 24, in which provision for transfers was made from July 1 to July 30. After that the date of transfers was extended to August 7.

Due to heavy rains and excessive rainfall in many parts of the state, the situation of flooding and transfer orders could not be issued by the government. Additional Secretary, General Administration Department, Lalit Dahima has issued an order to all the Heads of Departments, Heads of Departments, Divisional Commissioners and District Magistrates on Friday, saying that the State Government has extended the period of relaxation of restrictions on transfers to August 31.

Olympians will be prepared in CM for the Years 2024 and 2028: Chief Minister

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has said that Indian players have set a record in Tokyo Olympics and have opened doors for future possibilities. Their stellar performance has inspired us. Therefore, we have decided to find new talented players and train them in 18 sports academies of Madhya Pradesh. We will bring out not one but many such players, who will bring laurels to the country and the state in the Olympics or in various national and world level competitions. Chief Minister has appealed to the youth interested in sports to register themselves in the talent search campaign of the state. Chouhan released this message through the media from his resi-



dence.

Upcoming players will get training. Chief Minister has said that our eyes are on 2024 Paris Olympics and 2028 Lance Angels Olympics. We will get medals by taking out more Olympians from Madhya Pradesh, we will win medals for the country. We do not want to leave any stone unturned in this. I appeal to all the sons and daughters who are interested in sports to register themselves in the talent search campaign of Madhya Pradesh so that new names can come up in our talent search. This will help budding sportspersons to advance for the glory of the country by training them. Chouhan said that register yourself, participate in talent search program, be a good sportsperson, the government is with you.

Task force and administration handled the relief and rehabilitation front : Chief Minister

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has said that life has been affected due to the great horror of flood in Gwalior-Chambal division. The task force of 12 departmental ministers constituted by the state government to assist the victims has come down to the affected areas and took the relief and rehabilitation front. The administration is also engaged in relief work with full force. Relief, rehabilitation and reconstruction work is in progress. Relief distribution work is going on fast among the affected. Immediate ration and food grains have been managed. Temporary accommodation is also being arranged. The assessment of crop damage is being done. A detailed assessment of

the damage is yet to be done. The distribution of one lakh 20 thousand rupees has been started for each house destroyed in the floods. Chief Minister Chouhan gave this information in a discussion with media representatives at Smart Udyan.

Chouhan said that rehabilitation work is also going on. Electricity system has been restored in Sheopur district. Now only five villages are left with electricity restoration work. After the flood waters recede, special arrangements are being made so that the disease does not spread in rural and urban areas. Reconstruction work such as building broken roads and pools will take time. The minister in charge is paying special attention to this. Central team has also visited the area.

Action plan made for plastic waste management in MP

While six types of single-use plastic materials will be banned in Madhya Pradesh from January, an action plan has been prepared for the management of plastic waste generated by the use of single-use plastic items in the state. By issuing the Plastic Waste Management (Amendment) Rules 2021 by the Government of India, a time-limit has been set to ban certain materials of single use plastic in the country in two phases. In this, a provision has been made to ban six items plastic stick earbuds, plastic sticks for balloons and decorative material of thermocol from January 1, 2022.

Team Absolute | Bhopal

In the first meeting of the State Level Special Task Force constituted by the State Government, Additional Chief Secretary, Environment Department, Malay Srivastava informed that in the second phase of the draft notification sent by



the Government of India, there is a provision to ban 11 single-use plastic items from July 1, 2022. These items include plates, cups, glasses, forks, spoons, knives, straws, trays, stirrers, sweet boxes, invitation cards, plastic film used for wrapping cigarette packets, packing, and plastic and PVC products made of plastic. Banners with a thickness of less than 100 microns. He said that after the implementation of the ban, an action plan is being prepared by the Department of Industrial Policy and Investment Promotion to identify the small scale industries that will be affected and

connect them with alternative employment. The State Level Special Task Force also decided to prepare an action plan for the management of plastic waste arising from the use of single-use plastic items and send a proposal to the Union Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change.

Also decided to effectively implement the ban of plastic carry bags in the state. In the meeting of the task force, discussions were also held to make the common citizens well aware of the ill-effects of using plastic, spot fine, penalty on the violators.

Various departments are preparing action plans for public awareness.

In the State Level Task Force Committee, Additional Chief Secretary Environment, Principal Secretary Panchayat and Rural Development, Sports and Youth Welfare, Urban Development and Housing, Technical Education and Skill Development, Science and Technology Development, Industrial Development and Policy Promotion, Higher Education, School Education, Commissioner Public Relations and State Coordinator, Swachh Bharat Mission, Rural and Urban.

On receiving the complaint of power interruption, the concerned officers will be responsible

Energy Minister Shri Tomar gave instructions in the meeting of the officials of the Electricity Department.



Team Absolute | Bhopal

Energy Minister Pradyumna Singh Tomar reviewed the operation and maintenance of electricity in Rewa. He has given instructions to ensure uninterrupted power supply in urban and rural areas of the district. He said that the concerned officer would be held responsible on the complaint of power interruption and continuous action would be taken against them.

The Energy Minister said that faulty cables and burnt transformers should be replaced immediately and complaints related to bills should be redressed. He said that he has received more complaints regarding electrical tripping. The Energy Minister said that proper

voltage should be available in urban and rural areas, meter reading should be taken regularly and on time and there should be complete control in the event of tripping. He told the officers that in order to rectify the electricity system of the district by coordinating with the public representatives, any negligence and laxity would not be forgivable. The Energy Minister directed the Chief Engineer to make a register for the maintenance of complaints and visit the area continuously. He said that it would be reviewed again in the next three months. He said that once in a month at the divisional level, the MD should hold a meeting with the MLAs of the respective districts and also review it.



EDITOR'S SPECS

Digital study should be safe

With the pandemic forcing many schools and educational institutions to find online alternatives, 89 per cent people in India believe that schools should educate children on cyber safety, according to a study by McAfee released on Tuesday. Of these, 62 per cent believe that digital wellness and protection should have its own separate curriculum that is taught throughout grade school while 27 per cent feel it should be integrated into technology subjects like IT. Further, 81 per cent of the people in India said that since last year, at least one member in their household started either full time or part time online learning via virtual platforms. Of these 24 per cent learners fall between the age group 5-12, and 9 per cent even under the age of 5. With students as well as teachers now operating from lesser controlled environments, the need to educate them on basics such as phishing, cyber bullying, and inculcating overall cybersecurity hygiene is imperative. Educational institutions must approach cyber security holistically, particularly now that technology pervades nearly every facet of a child's life. As technology has transformed the educational sector, cyber security too must be part of the school curriculum, and entrenched in the way we teach, and the way we learn. To stay safe, one must scrutinise the email/text before replying; maximise privacy settings on all social profiles and engage in safe social networking; use a VPN when children are accessing online learning services from home to protect the privacy of the Internet connection with bank-level encryption to stop hackers stealing personal information like passwords or data. Children must also be educated about fake news, how to spot a phishing scam, make strong, complex passwords, among others.

ISLAND HOPPING IN SEYCHELLES

D.C. PATHAK

With 115 islands, the Seychelles archipelago brags of postcard-perfect beaches that are sure to have visitors drift away to the paradise. But there's more to Seychelles than its many beaches; the nation sprinkled across the water off the coast of East Africa, conceals many surprises for its explorers. Here's a quick glance at what one can do:

Unleash Your Wild Side

Seychelles is inhabited by a unique ecosystem above and below its waters. Home to a range of lush rainforests and 250 bird and 2000 plant species. Seychelles' wildlife is as enchanting as its beaches. The nation's national bird, the black parrot, is also the rarest avian on the planet. This rare species can be spotted by those with a keen eye while exploring the Vallee de Mai Natural Reserve, a UNESCO World Heritage Site on the island of Praslin. Besides, the Vallee is home to the world's largest population of endemic coco-de-mer, a flagship species of global significance as the bearer of the largest seed in the plant kingdom.

Next, spot giant tortoises that roam freely around the sandy coves of Curieuse Island, where preserved wilderness and granite beaches set

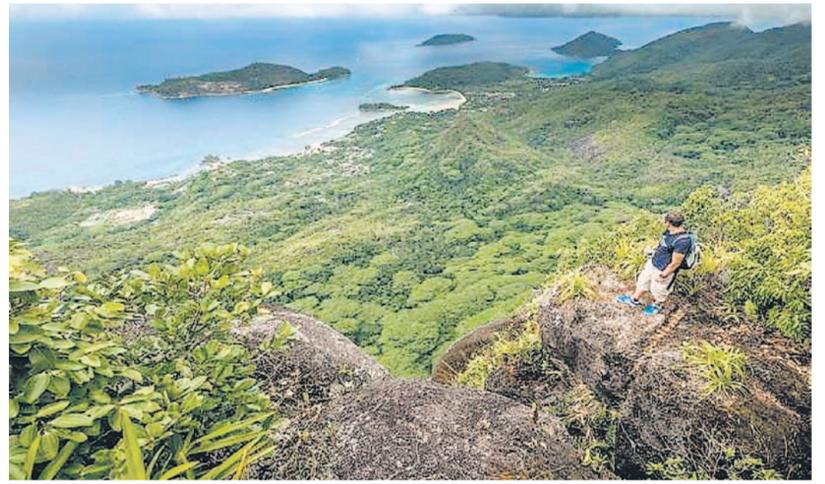
the right ambience for these gentle creatures.

Get a glimpse into the rich marine life with a Semi-Submarine ride from Eden Island on Mahe. Cruise along the most spectacular underwater reefs of Seychelles and spot a variety of sea life swim alongside. From corals, colourful seaweed, sea meadows to schools of fish. We challenge you to keep count of the unique species you spot!

Adventure, Ahoy!

Along with its beaches, Seychelles holds many adventures and the best way to experience them is by enjoying a trek in the region. Nestled in Mahe, Morne Seychellois National Park, the largest national park, stretches across the mountain range Morne Seychellois, the highest peak. Indeed, the reward of completing a hike is the panorama one enjoys from the top. The summit affords unparalleled views of the capital of Victoria.

The fourth largest island in the archipelago, La Digue is a haven for those seeking some time amid nature to unwind. Apart from exploring the island on a bicycle or an oxcart, diving and rock climbing are popular as well. Although, it is the La Pass to Grand Anse Trail, which emerge as a clear winner. The trail passes through French colonial houses, woodlands,



marshy areas, finally leading to the Grand Anse Beach.

Enjoy a Tryst with Culture

The vibrant culture is a result of the many cultural influences. Meander through the markets in Mahe, or simply visit during the Creole Festival to soak up the flavours of the region. History buffs will love the quaint town of Baie Lazare, in Mahe. The 18th-century neo-gothic Baie Lazare Church is a delight to

behold. It also presents a serene panorama of the area. A visit to the National Museum of History is perfect for a time-travel expedition to understand the history while glancing through the paraphernalia on display.

Food for Thought

Just as its culture, Seychelles' cuisine features a healthy amalgamation of flavours from its three adjoining continents to form its very own distinct palate. For a gour-

mand, a tour through the historical sites such as the Jardin du Roi offers an opportunity to sample home-made dishes at a quaint cafe enveloped by the buzz of a typical Seychellois life.

The stunning sunsets of Seychelles are undeniably its finest feature. And they are best enjoyed along a delicious Creole meal, which consists of preparations made with fish and shellfish, heightened with coconut, mangoes and breadfruit served with a bed of garden-fresh vegetables.

INDIAN BUSINESSES SUFFER MORE CYBER ATTACKS WITH REMOTE WORKING

After a year into the pandemic-driven remote working, 40 per cent of Indian businesses reported an increase in the cyber attack volume, severity and/or scope of cyber attacks in the last 12 months in comparison to the global figure of 47 per cent, a new report has showed. While 38 per cent of respondents from India continue to be very concerned about the security risks while working remotely, globally, this figure stands at 39 per cent, according to '2021 Thales Global Data Threat Report', a commissioned study conducted by 451 Research, part of S&P Global Market Intelligence. Despite being over a year into remote working and the possibility of a likely shift to hybrid working mod-

els, security remains a key concern for the Indian businesses, the report said, adding that managing security risks is undoubtedly getting more challenging in the country. "Many organisations experienced heightened security challenges over the last year and with the increasing number of ransomware attacks, organisations are now facing a double extortion threat," said Ashish Saraf, VP and Country Director - India, Thales. "Not only could they be locked out of their critical IT and OT systems but also have their sensitive data released on the Internet," he added. For respondents from India, malware (56 per cent) is the leading source of security attacks followed by ransomware (53 per cent), and

phishing and credential stuffing (both 43 per cent). Malicious insiders (40 per cent), external attacks (25 per cent) and human error (25 per cent) have been spotted by respondents from India as the types of attacks seen with the greatest threat. "The traditional aspect of just relying on a sound backup and restore strategy is no longer sufficient, organisations need to implement a comprehensive digital security including controlling access to data, encryption of sensitive data coupled with secure management and control of encryption keys," Saraf emphasised.

Despite the increased risk remote working has posed to enterprises throughout the

pandemic, nearly half (48 per cent) of respondents from India report that their security infrastructure was not prepared to handle the risks caused by Covid-19. In fact, only one in five (21 per cent) of organisations believe it was well prepared. "Forty eight per cent of respondents from India rank third-party vendor networks as the biggest target for cyber attacks, followed by on-premises legacy applications (44 per cent), cloud-based storage (40 per cent) and web applications (38 per cent)," the report revealed.

international

Al Qaeda celebrates Taliban takeover of Afghanistan

Kabul | Agencies Al Qaeda's Yemeni branch has congratulated the Taliban on their takeover of Afghanistan. "This victory and empowerment reveals to us that jihad and fighting represent the Sharia-based, legal, and realistic way to restore rights (and) expel the invaders and occupiers," Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) said in a statement. "As for the game of democracy and working with simple pacifism, it is a deceptive mirage, a fleeting shadow, and a vicious circle that starts with a zero and ends with it," said the statement carried by SITE Intelligence group, which monitors extremist networks worldwide, a global news wire reported. The Taliban had sheltered Al Qaeda leader Osama Bin



Laden during its rule from 1996 until 2001, when US-led forces toppled it in response to the September 11 attacks, but last week Taliban fighters took control of the capital Kabul at the climax of a lightning offensive. The US considers AQAP the most dangerous branch of Al Qaeda's global network, and has carried out drone

strikes against its fighters in Yemen since soon after the 9/11 attacks.

But on Sunday, AQAP fighters in Yemen's central governorate of Bayda and southern province of Shabwa celebrated the Taliban's return to power in Afghanistan with fireworks and by firing gunshots in the air, the report said.

ISRAEL LAUNCHES MISSILE STRIKES AT SYRIA

Damascus | Agencies Israel launched missile strikes at some sites in the Syrian capital of Damascus and the central province of Homs. The Syrian air defences responded to the attacks late Thursday night, intercepting most of the Israeli missiles, Xinhua news agency quoted a military source as saying to local media. The Syrian authorities were assessing the damages caused by the strikes, the source added.



The sounds of explosions were clearly heard in Damascus as the Syrian air defenses were responding to the attack. A Xinhua reporter in Damascus saw Syrian air defence missiles in the sky before loud explosions were heard. The Israeli attack was the second to hit Syria within two days, after a missile attack targeted military sites in the country's southwestern province of Quneitra on Tuesday.

Israel has repeatedly launched attacks at Syrian military sites under the pretext of targeting the sites where pro-Iran militias are located.

California wildfire grows 10 times in size in 48 hrs

San Francisco | Agencies Fuelled by wind and dry conditions, the Caldor Fire burning in El Dorado county in Northern California has scorched 65,474 acres of land so far, and grew 10 times in size in just 48 hours, according to Inciweb, an interstate incident information system. According to Inciweb, spotting and rollout continued to be the main contributor to fire spread throughout Wednesday evening and multiple new spot fires were expected on Thursday, so the blaze sparked on August 14 had potential to grow further, reports Xinhua news agency. The latest data released by the California Governor's Office of Emergency Services on Thursday revealed that 25,000 people had been evacuated in El Dorado county due to the fast-moving fire. There are 653 firefighters battling the fire, which is zero percent contained. As of Thursday, the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (Cal Fire) said



86 structures had been confirmed destroyed by the fire and nearly 7,000 structures remain threatened. Meanwhile, the Dixie Fire, California's second-largest in history which has been active for more than a month, also swelled more than 60,000 acres in two days.

It prompted a new round of evacuation orders on Wednesday as gusty winds helped spread the fire within about 15 km of Susanville, a town with 15,000 residents.

The Dixie Fire, the nation's largest active fire, burned down 678,369 acres with 35 percent containment as of Thursday, about three times the size of Manhattan.

Global Covid-19 caseload tops 209.9 mn

Washington | Agencies The global coronavirus caseload has topped 209.9 million, while the deaths have surged to more than 4.40 million and vaccinations soared to over 4.82 billion, according to the Johns Hopkins University. In its latest update on Friday morning, the University's Center for Systems Science and Engineering (CSSE) revealed that the current global caseload, death toll and vaccination tally stood at 209,915,414, 4,401,878 and 4,824,177,807, respectively. The US continues to be the worst-hit country with the world's highest number of cases and deaths at 37,291,739 and 625,153, respectively, according to the CSSE. In terms of infections, India follows in the second place with 32,322,258 cases. The other worst countries with over 3 million cases are Brazil (20,494,212), Russia (6,592,705), France



(6,635,417), the UK (6,422,367), Turkey (6,157,742), Argentina (5,116,803), Colombia (4,880,516), Spain (4,758,003), Italy (4,464,005), Iran (4,587,683), Indonesia (3,930,300), Germany (3,854,529) and Mexico (3,152,205), the CSSE figures showed. In terms of deaths, Brazil comes second with 572,641 fatalities. Nations with a death toll of over 100,000 are India (433,049), Mexico (250,469), Peru (197,659), Russia (170,716), the UK (131,690), Italy (128,634), Colombia (123,901), Indonesia (122,633), France (113,366) and Argentina (109,841).

S.Korea to extend toughest social-distancing rules

Seoul | Agencies South Korea on Friday announced its decision to extend the toughest social-distancing rules in the capital area for two more weeks amid the continued Covid-19 resurgence. The Level 4 social-distancing guideline, the highest in the country's four-tier quarantine rules, will be kept in place in Seoul, its surrounding Gyeonggi province and the western port city of Incheon until September 5, Prime Minister Kim Boo-kyum said. It came as the country's fourth resurgence showed no sign of abating, reports Xinhua news agency. On Friday, South Korea reported 2,052 more Covid-19 cases, raising the total number of infections to 232,859. It marked the third-highest daily tally since the country's first case was found in January last year. The daily caseload hovered above 1,000 for 45 straight days. The fourth resurgence was attributable to cluster infections in the greater Seoul area. Of the new cases, 549 were Seoul residents. The number of people residing



in Gyeonggi province and Incheon who tested positive were 633 and 117 each. Under the Level 4 rules, the business hour of restaurants and cafes will be shortened to 9 p.m. from the previous 10 p.m., but the number of people who are allowed to gather after 6 p.m. will be increased from the previous two to four, including two people who are fully vaccinated. The fully inoculated people refer to those who received the second dose of vaccine two weeks ago. In the daytime, the gathering of as many as four people is allowed under

the Level 4 guideline. The virus spread also raged in the non-metropolitan areas. The number of newly infected people in the non-capital region was 702, or 35.1 percent of the total local transmission. In the non-capital areas, the Level 3 social-distancing guideline will be maintained until September 5. Under the Level 3 guideline, any private gathering of five or more people is prohibited, and the multi-use facilities, such as restaurants and cafes, can be run until 10 p.m.

Tear gas fired to control crowds at Kabul airport



Kabul | Agencies Military personnel fired tear gas to control the crowds of Afghans trying to gain access to Kabul airport on Friday, a day after the Pentagon said that order was being restored at the site and evacuation flights from Afghanistan would be accelerating, the Wall Street Journal reported. Soldiers have also fired into the air to disperse the crowd, according to a senior Western official. It was unclear as to whether the soldiers were American, Afghan, British, and other Western troops are also stationed at the airport. There was no immediate

comment from the US military. Soldiers are also emerging from the airport and coming out into the perimeter, which is surrounded by Taliban, to disperse crowds and clear the way for families struggling to get in, videos clips taken by passengers show. Thousands of Afghans are still pushing to get into the airport, following the Taliban's takeover on Sunday. North Atlantic Treaty Organisation allies and partners have evacuated nearly 20,000 people from Kabul airport since last weekend, according to public announcements by officials.



Bond... James Bond



Los Angeles | Agencies

Actor Daniel Craig has topped the list of highest-paid movie stars of 2021, beating actor Dwayne Johnson with whopping \$100 million in earnings.

Craig topped Variety's highest-paid movie stars of 2021 list, reports aceshowbiz.com.

Craig made his money from Rian Johnson's forthcoming 'Knives Out 2' and 'Knives Out 3'.

As for Johnson who lands in the second spot, he is walking off with \$50 million from Amazon's holiday-themed action movie 'Red One'.

Right behind Johnson are Will Smith and Denzel Washington, who both earned \$40 million for their movies 'King Richard' and 'The Little Things', respectively.

Leonardo DiCaprio and Mark Wahlberg, meanwhile, scored \$30 million each for Netflix films 'Don't Look Up' and 'Spenser Confidential'.

On the sixth spot is

actress Jennifer Lawrence, who pocketed \$25 million from 'Don't Look Up'.

Other actors and actresses who made it to the list's top 10 are Julia Roberts (\$25 million from 'Leave the World Behind'), Sandra Bullock (\$20 million from 'The Lost City of D') as well as Ryan Gosling (\$20 million from 'The Gray Man').

Chris Hemsworth and Brad Pitt matched Ryan's \$20 million for 'Thor: Love and Thunder' and 'Bullet Train', respectively.

Actor Michael B. Jordan, on the other hand, earned \$15 million from 'Without Remorse' while Tom Cruise was paid just \$13 million upfront to star in 'Top Gun: Maverick'.

The list also shows Keanu Reeves landing at the 15th spot as he earned \$12-14 million from 'The Matrix 4'.

Joining the A-listers above are Chris Pine, who reportedly earned \$11.5 million from his film 'Dungeons & Dragons' and Robert Pattinson, who earned \$3 million from 'The Batman'.

DANIEL CRAIG BEATS DWAYNE JOHNSON IN LIST OF 2021'S HIGHEST-PAID ACTORS



Los Angeles | Agencies

Demi Lovato, came out as non-binary earlier this year, thinks they will be exploring their gender

Demi Lovato will never finish exploring their gender

"forev-

er", as the singer doesn't think they'll have ever fully finished their gender "journey".

Lovato said: "I definitely think it's a journey forever. There might be a time where I identify as trans. I don't know what this looks like for me. There might be a time where I identify as non-binary and gender nonconforming my entire life."

"Or maybe there's a period of time when I get older that I identify as a woman, I don't know what that looks like, but for me, in this moment right now, this is how I identify."

The "Solo" hitmaker added: "And I have a feeling that it's not going to ever go back to one way or the other, but I just, it's about keeping it open and free and just I'm a very fluid person, and so that goes with how I express myself as well."

Lovato also said the pandemic, as well as their relationship with actor Max Ehrlich, whom they dated in 2020, contributed in their decision to come out as non-binary, reports female-

first.co.uk.

The singer added: "In the beginning, going into March of 2020, I was starting to identify as non-binary. And then I met someone and I got into this straight relationship, and that was great, but that led me to ignoring all the parts of myself that I didn't think were digestible for my partner at the time, who ended up becoming my fiancé."

"And I mean, in hindsight, the dissolution of that relationship was actually probably the best thing that happened to me, because of what that led inside of myself. I was able to stand on my own two feet without needing someone else to validate me or to make me feel accepted."

Lovato said that they said goodbye to everything that held them back from being their "authentic self".



FOUR YEARS IN THE MAKING

London | Agencies

English singer-songwriter Ed Sheeran announced the release date of his new album '=' (Equals) on Thursday on his Instagram page. The 14-song album, which the chart-breaking artiste started writing and recording in June 2017, will be released on October 29 this year. It's the fourth part of Sheeran's 'symbol album' series, following his seminal '-' ('Divide'). Making the announcement, Sheeran wrote emotionally on his Instagram page: "It's been a long, long process. I've been through love, loss, new life, grief and everything in

include Sheeran's single 'Bad Habits' as well his latest, 'Visiting Hours'.

The 14 songs in the album are 'Tides', 'Shivers', 'First Times', 'Bad Habits', 'Overpass Graffiti', 'The Joker And The Queen', 'Leave Your Life', 'Collide', '2step', 'Stop The Rain', 'Love In Slow Motion', 'Visiting Hours', 'Sandman' and 'Be Right Now'.



Ed Sheeran's 'Equals' to be out on Oct 29

between during the whole period of writing it, and I feel like it's really a coming-of-age record. I've never been more proud of a body of work, or more excited/nervous for you all to hear it."

The 30-year-old artiste took a break from music in December 2020 after the conclusion of his Divide Tour. He wrote in his Instagram post: "The next song off of it is called 'Visiting Hours', which I finished for my friend Michael who sadly passed away this year. If you pre-order the album, you get this song with it, but it's also on all platforms from now on. Lots more music to come, but for now I hope you are as excited as me for this album."

'Equals' will be released via Atlantic Records and will

Noel Gallagher to quit drinking for 12 weeks

Los Angeles | Agencies

Oasis legend Noel Gallagher has planned to quit alcohol for 12 weeks, but says he won't start the process until September because he has several parties to attend.

He said: "I'm going on the wagon and I've fixed a date. I think it's going to be like the 12th of September, because I've got parties to attend to and the last one is on the 11th."

He added: "And then I'm going to go on the wagon for 12 weeks I think. I've been ... smashing the ... out of it in Ibiza. I'm going to do three months which takes me up to the middle of December and then I can get in training for Christmas."

The 54-year-old musician had earlier taken another three-month hiatus from alcohol in 2011, and felt "five years younger" afterwards, reports femalefirst.co.uk.



Joanna Gaines shares being 'misunderstood' can 'strike a nerve'... adding social media does not allows us to go 'deep'

Los Angeles | Agencies

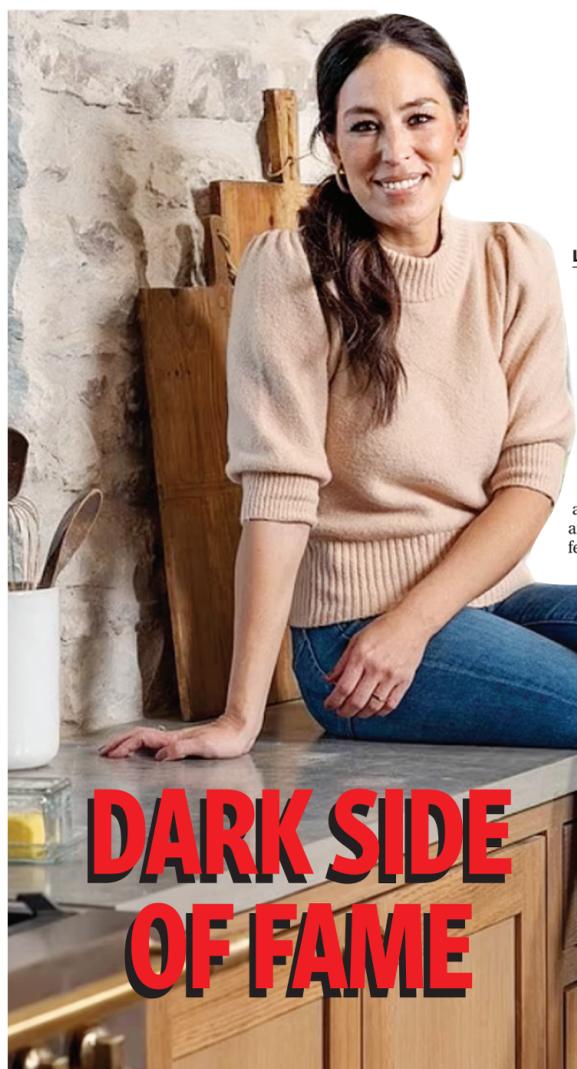
Chip and Joanna Gaines found success with their home improvement show Fixer Upper and now they are overseeing their own network Magnolia as they together raise five children.

But with their popularity has come criticism that is sometimes hard to take. "It didn't take us long to realize that being a part of this new reality also meant being a part of the news cycle," said Joanna in the fall issue of Magnolia Journal. "Stories get written about us, about our family, our plans, our supposed beliefs and

politics."

The TV star, 43, added, "We've been through it enough now to know that it's just part of the territory, and a lot of times it's so unbelievable we can't help but laugh." Sometimes it gets the home improvement expert down as she said we are "living in a world where drama and division are offered up as a source of cheap entertainment." Every now and then, a headline or story will strike a nerve regardless of how off the mark it may be," she added.

"Those times are harder to reconcile because we're human, and the idea that "it's just part of the territory" doesn't make untrue accusations any less painful." The star had also said there is plenty of joy as well in her essay titled A Time for Forward Motion, reports dailymail.co.uk.



DARK SIDE OF FAME



ABSOLUTE PIC OF THE DAY

Ciera squirms



TABLE TENNIS

MANIKA-SATHIYAN PAIR WINS WTT CONTENDER MIXED DOUBLES TITLE

Budapest | Agencies

The Indian pair of Manika Batra and Sathiyan Gnanasekaran won the mixed doubles title at the WTT Contender event in Budapest on Friday.

Manika and Sathiyan beat top seeds Nandor Ecseki and Dora Madarasz of Hungary 11-9, 9-11, 12-10 and 11-6 to become the first table tennis players from India to win a WTT Contender title.

In the final played on Friday, the Indian pair took a 1-0 lead quickly. In the second game, Manika and Sathiyan were trailing 4-7. The duo came back to tie the score at 8-8 and then 9-9. But two errors allowed their Hungarian opponents to win the second game.

The third game saw Manika and Sathiyan leading 9-7. But they conceded the next three points and were down a game point. However, Manika and Sathiyan called for a timeout, allowing the duo to recollect their thoughts and won the game 12-10.



Manika and Sathiyan forced the Hungarian pair, ranked seventh in the World to make errors in the fourth game. They won the game 11-6 and with it, the match as well, gaining 400 points.

This was the first time that Manika and Sathiyan paired together since winning the bronze medal in the

mixed doubles event of the 2018 Commonwealth Games at Gold Coast in Australia.

Manika had partnered veteran Achanta Sharath Kamal at the Jakarta Asian Games, where the duo bagged a bronze medal, and the recently concluded Tokyo Olympics from which they came back empty handed.

RAFAEL NADAL TO MISS US OPEN

Madrid: Rafael Nadal declared on Friday that he will end his 2021 season early due to a foot injury. The move means that the Spaniard will not take part in the US Open starting August 30. "I wanted to inform you that unfortunately I have to end the 2021 season. Honestly, I have been suffering much more than I should with my foot for a year and I need to take some time," tweeted Nadal.

He further tweeted, "After having discussed it with the team and family, this decision has been made and I think it is the way forward to try to recover and recover well. It's a year that I've missed things that matter a lot to me, like Wimbledon, like the Olympics." The troublesome foot injury had caused the 20-time Grand Slam winner to miss the Cincinnati Masters and Canadian Open last week. The foot issue flared up at this year's French Open, where he fell to eventual champion Novak Djokovic in the semi-finals.

Nadal will be the third big absentee from the men's singles event in the US Open. Defending champion Dominic Thiem has been ruled out due to wrist injury while Roger Federer ended his season prematurely for further knee surgery.

WORLD ATHLETICS U20 CHAMPIONSHIPS

Rana finishes fifth in javelin throw

Nairobi | Agencies

While Shaili Singh maintained India's hopes of more medals at the World Athletics U20 Championships by reaching women's long jump final, javelin thrower Ajai Raj Singh Rana came close to the medals but eventually had to be satisfied with a fifth-place finish on Friday.

Rana's best attempt on Friday evening was 73.68m, which came in his fourth throw. However, this was far behind his personal best of 74.75m. Fellow Indian Jay Singh finished sixth with a best throw of 70.74m.

Though both could not replicate their best efforts at Nairobi, the Athletics Federation of India, in a tweet, termed their performance "creditable effort from both the boys on a world stage".

India has so far won only a bronze medal through the 4x400 Mixed Relay team on the opening day of the competition.

Earlier in the morning, Nandini Agasara failed to progress to the women's 100m hurdles final after finishing sixth in 14.16 seconds in the second semifinal. Nandini, who had earned direct qualification to the semis, finished fourth in her heat.

In the men's 110m hurdles, Tejas Shirse came fifth in heat 3, clocking 13.87 seconds, and finished 17th overall. The top three from each heat, along with the next four fastest hurdlers, made it to the semi-finals.

In women's 1500m, India's Pooja missed the semis spot, finishing 11th in Heat 1 with a timing of 4:37.85. It gave her 19th place overall, with only 12 runners progressing to the semis.

In men's 200m, the 19-year-old Shanmuga Srinivas finished fifth in Heat 2, clocking 21.33 seconds. Srinivas' timing put him in 23rd place overall and he missed out on the semis by 0.02 seconds.

In the afternoon session, Sunil Joliya finished 11th in Heat 2 of the men's 3000m steeplechase, with timing of 9:49.23, which was way short of his personal best of 8:55.48. Sunil Joliya placed 22nd overall, missing the final cut by almost 20 seconds.

This is what old age makes you do: Kohli to Anderson



London: The Test series between India and England, which went without incident in the first Test, has got added spice after the second Test as India pulled off a 151-run sensational win amid heated exchanges between Indian and English players. Barmy Army, a club of England cricket supporters who follow the team everywhere around the world, has released a video which shows an altercation between Indian skipper Virat Kohli, who was batting, and England pace bowler James Anderson. The incident happened during the fourth day's play in India's second innings. "This is pure theatre and we are only 2 matches in [emotion: hushed face]. Test match cricket, never change," tweeted England's Barmy Army from its twitter handle. According to the video, Kohli got offended after Anderson had apparently said something.

"What was that? Huh?," asked Kohli. "Swearing at me again? Like Jasprit? Huh?" Anderson responded, "You can swear at me all you want. No one else can." Kohli then said, "You play by your own rules. You're calling me a fucking prick for running too? This isn't your backyard!" The 39-year-old England pacer said, "I think bowlers can run through the crease too." Kohli then sealed the conversation saying, "Yeah, yeah, yeah... chirp, chirp, chirp. This is what old age makes you do."

Relations between the two teams soured towards the end of third day's play, when Bumrah bowled a series of short deliveries at No. 11 Anderson.

IPL: Chennai Super Kings begin training in Dubai

Dubai | Agencies

After completing their six days of mandatory quarantine on arrival in UAE, Chennai Super Kings have started training for the second phase of the 14th Indian Premier League (IPL) at the ICC Cricket Academy in Dubai.

Skipper MS Dhoni, Suresh Raina, Deepak Chahar and Robin Uthappa along with other members of the team arrived in Dubai on August 13.

The official Twitter handle of CSK shared pictures from their practice session.

IPL 2021, which was postponed in May in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic, will resume on September 19 in Dubai with an eye-riveting clash between Chennai Super Kings and Mumbai Indians.

In all, 13 matches will be held in Dubai, 10 in Sharjah, and eight in Abu Dhabi.



India to host FIA-backed Formula Regional Championship, Formula 4

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The FIA-backed Formula Regional Indian Championship and Formula 4 Indian Championship are set to make their debut in the country in February 2022.

The two categories will be held across four cities in the country -- New Delhi, Chennai, Coimbatore and Hyderabad. While New Delhi, Chennai, and Coimbatore already have a racecourse, a FIA Grade Street Circuit will be built in Hyderabad for the event hosted by Racing Promotions Pvt Ltd (RPPL).



The F4 Indian Championships and Formula Regional Indian Championships, which will be based on F3 cars, are both certified by the FIA and will also provide the winners points for FIA Super License

points, which is necessary to participate in major FIA events like the Formula One.

Additionally, the Indian Racing League will run as a support race to Formula Regional and F4 India. It is also expected to act as a feeder series to promote talent to the two FIA-licensed championships, the organisers said in a statement.

In addition to race drivers, Armaan Ebrahim and Aditya Patel, former Formula 1 driver Narain Karthikeyan and cricket legend Kapil Dev have come on-board as mentors and advisors.

SHAILI SINGH IN LONG JUMP FINAL

Nairobi: India's Shaili Singh has reached the final of the women's long jump event in the World Athletics U20 Championships at Nairobi on Friday. Placed in Group B, Shaili began with a jump of 6.34m in her first attempt, which was just 0.01m behind the automatic qualification mark of 6.35m for the final. Her second attempt was a below-par 5.98m. On her third attempt, the 17-year-old recorded her best jump of 6.40m, surpassing the qualification mark. She lived up to the billing of one of the brightest young stars from the Indian athletics circuit.

Training at the Anju Bobby George Academy in Bengaluru, Shaili is coached by Anju and her husband Robert Bobby George. Sweden's Askag Maja, who topped Group A, was the second-best jumper in the qualification with 6.39m. Maysa Lissandra Campos of Brazil came third and was the last jumper to surpass automatic qualification mark for the final with a jump of 6.36m.



Tokyo Paralympics will be our best ever Games: chef de mission Gursharan Singh

Team Absolute | New Delhi

India's Chef de Mission for the 2020 Paralympic Games, Gursharan Singh, on Friday said that the country will bag at least 15 medals, including five gold, in Tokyo and added that "this will be our best ever Games". Singh, who is the secretary-general of the Paralympic Committee of India, was nominated as the chef de mission of the Indian team at the AGM of the governing body.

"I am confident that this would be our best ever Paralympic Games. Our para-athletes have worked very hard in the past years and shown great results in international competitions. They are raring to go at the Games.

"We are expecting around 15 medals, including five gold at the Games. We have high medal hopes in athletics, badminton, shooting and archery," Singh said.

India has a total of 12 medals, including four gold, in 11 Paralympic appearances. In Tokyo, India will field the largest contingent ever with 54 para athletes set to compete in nine sports including -- archery, athletics,



badminton, canoeing, shooting, swimming, powerlifting, table tennis and taekwondo.

Badminton and canoeing are making their debut at the Tokyo 20 Paralympics. The first batch of Indian

players has arrived in Tokyo, with the CDM already in Tokyo to oversee the arrangements.

T Mariyappan, who is India's flag bearer at the Games, has also arrived in Tokyo and there will be a lot of

expectations from the high jumper to clinch his second Paralympic gold in Tokyo. Meanwhile, shooting coach JP Nautiyal was upbeat about the shooters' chances, mentioning Avani Lekhara, Singhraj and Manish Narwal as India's best medal prospects.

"We have a balanced team with young and senior players and many of them are coming up with excellent scores during training that has been ongoing since last month. It has been a great journey for the entire team, which has shown great results in the last few years," said Nautiyal.

World No. 1 and multiple-time world champion Pramod Bhagat will lead India's badminton contingent with gold medal hopes resting on him in the men's SL3 event. Among others, world No. 2 shuttler Krishna Nagar (SH6) and Tarun Dhillon (SL4) are other para shuttlers who are expected to do well.

In archery, India will have Rakesh Kumar and Shyam Sundar (compound), Vivek Chikara and Harvinder Singh (recurve) and woman archer Jyoti Balyan (compound individual/mixed event).

India assured of 21 medals in ASBC Asian Youth & Junior Boxing

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Even before its boxers enter the ring, India is assured of a whopping 21 medals in the Asian Youth and Junior Boxing Championships for men and women in Dubai after many pugilists failed to participate in the event because of Covid-related travel restrictions. As per the draw, among the 21 in the medal rounds, nine have directly made it to the finals.

The Boxing Federation of India (BFI) has fielded a strong contingent at the prestigious ASBC Asian Youth & Junior Boxing Championships. It will be the first time that the two age groups - the junior and the youth - will be playing together at the Asian Championships.

The youth men's and women's teams will comprise of 13 and 12 players respectively as the upcoming event will be played as per the AIBA's newly-introduced



weight classifications. However, 26 boxers, with an equal number of boys and girls, will take part in the junior events.

The 2019 Asian Schoolboy Championships gold medalist Yashwardhan Singh (60kg), Rohit Chamoli (48kg), Usman Mohd Sultan (50kg), Anshul (57 kg), Preet Malik (63 kg), Ankush (66kg), Gaurav Saini (70kg), Naksh Beniwal (75kg) and Rishab Singh (81kg) will lead the Indian challenge in the junior

boys category on the opening day of the competition on Friday.

The 2021 Youth World Championships bronze medalist Bishwamitra Chongathm (51kg) will spearhead the youth men's team while Uttarakhnd's Nivedita Karki (48kg), who grabbed many eyeballs after stunning the world champion Gitika to win gold at the Nationals, will lead the Indian attack in the women's section.



Guess which film characters KJo wants on 'Big Boss OTT'

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Filmmaker Karan Johar has revealed that he would like to see characters Anjali and Rahul from his debut directorial 'Kuch Kuch Hota Hai', which released in 1998.

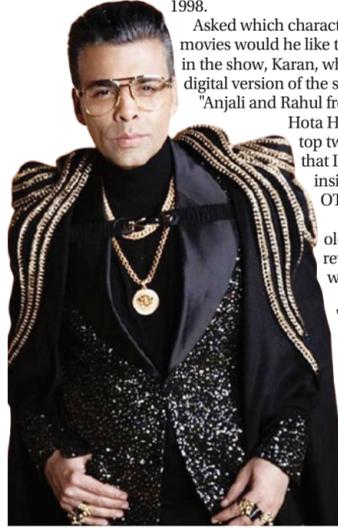
Asked which characters from his movies would he like to see contesting in the show, Karan, who is hosting the digital version of the show, said:

"Anjali and Rahul from 'Kuch Kuch Hota Hai' would be the top two characters that I'd want to see inside the Big Boss OTT house."

The 49-year-old filmmaker reveals the reason why.

He added: "They have an amazing connection and that is what you need in the house currently."

"Big Boss OTT" is streaming on Voot Select.



Ranveer, Alia start shooting for 'Rocky Aur Rani Ki Prem Kahani'

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Bollywood stars Ranveer Singh and Alia Bhatt have commenced shooting for the first schedule of their upcoming film "Rocky Aur Rani Ki Prem Kahani", directed by Karan Johar.

Ranveer on Friday morning posted a video on Instagram. The clip features some behind-the-scenes of the shoot, script reading sessions and the location set up.

The video begins with Karan saying: "Rocky aur rani bilkul taiyyar hai. Chaliye karte hai unke prem kahaani ki shuruat. Lights, camera, action."

As the clip ends, "Schedule one. Shooting begins" is seen written.

Ranveer captioned it: "Shuru ho gayi hai yeh anokhi kahani of Rocky & Rani. Toh dijiye humein apna aashirvaad aur pyaar, aur chaliye iss safar mein hamaare saath!"

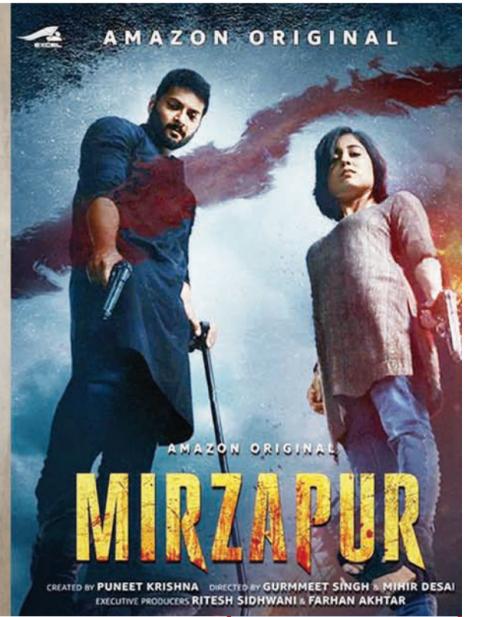


#RockyAurRaniKiPremKahani (The unique story of Rocky and Rani has begun. So give us your love and blessings and join us in this journey!)"

Alia shared the same video and captioned it: "Too many feels to fit in a caption #RockyAurRaniKiPremKahani #RRKPK."

The film has a star-studded cast comprising Ranveer and Alia, along with veterans Dharmendra, Jaya Bachchan and Shabana Azmi.

Other details about the film are still under wraps.



Honoured Abroad

Vidya Balan, Suriya, Manoj Bajpayee, Samantha Akkineni, bag top acting honors at the Indian Film Festival of Melbourne 2021 and Soorarai Pottru, Mirzapur wins Best Film and Series respectively

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The Indian Film Festival of Melbourne (IFFM) announced its grand winners for its 12th edition, which was held virtually. This year's festival boasted an impressive line-up of feature and short films from across the cinemas of India. Representing the theme of Diversity through Cinema, IFFM had an overwhelming response from across the globe.

IFFM honored Pankaj Tripathi with the Prestigious Diversity in Cinema Award presented by LaTrobe University. Additionally, Soorarai

Pottru walked away with the Best Feature Film and Suriya won the Best Actor award from the same film. Vidya Balan won the Best Actress for her widely acclaimed film Sherni and Mirzapur was given the Best Series Award. Ace filmmaker Anurag Basu picks up the Best Director trophy for the feature film Ludo.

Speaking about the winners, the festival's director Mitu Bhowmick Lange, says, "We congratulate all the winners and their teams for making great films that were loved by the audiences across the globe."

On winning Best Documentary Award, Sona Mohapatra said, "At a time when the world is finding its new feet in this new normal IFFM was our first outing after the second wave in India."

On Winning Best Actor in a series for The Family Man 2, Manoj Bajpayee said, "Thank you to all the jury members for honoring me. I must mention - cinema or series - are both highly collaborative."

On winning Best Actress in a series for The Family Man 2, Samantha Akkineni said, "First time at this festival. To be here

amongst such immense talent. I'm grateful and it's such a huge honour."

On winning Best Series for Mirzapur 2, filmmaker Gurmeet Singh said, "Overwhelming to be being around here with such amazing talent. It's all thanks to the writers, OTT is their medium and they gave us such amazing content to work with, so all the credit to them."

On winning the prestigious Diversity in Cinema Award, Pankaj Tripathi said, "This award is special for me, I'm humbled - it's really inspiring for me, my craft."

On winning the Best Actor in a feature film for Soorarai Pottru, Suriya said, "I'm sure all the nominees have given their best. This film is very special."

Thanks to all the fans who have given us so much love. In my career, I felt bored with what I was doing after having worked for 20 years." On winning the Best Actress in a feature film for Sherni, Vidya Balan said, "I'm thrilled to be receiving the award for Sherni which was shot during the pandemic."

Here's a complete list of winners:

- Best Feature Film - Soorarai Pottru
- Best Performance Male (Feature) - Suriya Sivakumar (Soorarai Pottru)
- Best Performance Female (Feature) - Vidya Balan (Sherni) & Honourable mention to Nimisha Sajayan (The Great Indian Kitchen)
- Best Director - Anurag Basu (Ludo) & Honorary Mention Prithvi Konanur (Pinki Elli?)
- Best Series - Mirzapur Season 2
- Best Actress in a Series - Samantha Akkineni (The Family Man 2)
- Best Actor in a Series - Manoj Bajpayee (The Family Man 2)
- Equality in Cinema (Short Film) - Sheer Qorma
- Equality in Cinema Award (Feature Film) - The Great Indian Kitchen
- Best Indie Film - Fire in the Mountains
- Diversity in Cinema Award - Pankaj Tripathi
- Disruptor Award - Sanal Kumar Sasidharan
- Best Documentary Film - Shut Up Sona

Yami Gautam: Always try to make sure I get regional accent correct

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Yami Gautam Dhar has started preparing for her role for upcoming investigative drama 'Lost', which is being shot in Kolkata. The actress says language is fundamental in giving the character a sense of belonging and that she always tries to make sure that she gets the regional accent correct. Essaying a feisty crime reporter based out in the heartland of Bengal, Yami is going the extra mile by learning the language to get into the skin of her character. Yami said: "Language is fundamental in giving the character a sense of belonging and look genuine on screen. I always try to make sure that I get the regional accent or the dialect correct, even for a brief dialogue." "For 'Lost', I am conversing with the Bengali crew on the sets to understand the little nuances of their speech. It is also helping to catch its diction for my role," the actress added. Aniruddha Roy Chowdhury is directing 'Lost', based on the issue surrounding media integrity. Yami also has 'A Thursday', 'Dasvi' and 'Bhoot Police' in the pipeline.

I am enjoying my journey forward: Arjun Kapoor

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Bollywood actor Arjun Kapoor took everyone by surprise with his impressive physical transformation. He considers his fitness journey to be a work in progress and says he is thoroughly enjoying his journey forward.

Arjun said: "I have to tailor-make my diet and constantly customise it because of my constant health journey forward. So, yes, along with the intense workout sessions that I have been doing with Drew Neal, I have changed my meal pattern completely."

Arjun feels healthy food should also be tasty for someone like him to stay motivated. The actor says he is a work in progress with every meal and every workout session.

"Staying healthy is a combination of several factors - training, diet, state of mind, and the desire to take one day at a time. These things, in combination, helps anyone stay on the road to better fitness," said the 36-year-old.



INSTAGRAM PIC OF THE DAY



Pranutan