

# absolute india

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## Show us debate in Parliament, reasons: SC on Tribunal Reforms Bill

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Supreme Court on Monday expressed deep distress with the Centre for not making appointments to various tribunals despite recommendations made by the Selection Committee and also shot a volley of question at the Modi government on the Tribunals Reforms Bill, 2021, which was passed by Parliament last week, re-enacting provisions already struck down by the apex court. A bench headed by Chief Justice N.V. Ramana told Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, why introduce the bill with the provisions, which were struck down by the top court. "In spite of all that (court directions), few days back we have seen, the ordinance which was struck down has been re-enacted. We are not commenting on Parliament proceedings. Of course, the legislature has prerogative to make laws. At least we must know why the government has introduced the bill despite being struck down by this court...I have not come across any debate, which took place in Parliament (over the bill). Please show us the debate -- the reasons and all that".

### Whether Govt Bought Pegasus Or Used It?

The Centre had informed the top court that to dispel any wrong narrative spread, it will constitute "a committee of experts in the field which will go into all aspects of the issue".

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Supreme Court on Monday asked the Centre to bring on record a detailed affidavit addressing the contentions of petitioners, whether the government bought Pegasus or used it, or if it wasn't used at all. A bench headed by Chief Justice N.V. Ramana asked the Centre to furnish a detailed affidavit with the information whether Pegasus was used or not. Justice Ramana told Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, representing the Centre, "The petitioners want to know whether the government had bought or used Pegasus. If not,

then what steps the government took to inquire into the alleged illegal interceptions using Pegasus.

Mehta submitted that the government has nothing to hide and the expert committee may go into whether Pegasus was used or not and also all other aspects. He added that there are unsubstantiated media reports. Reacting on the scope of committee to examine the Pegasus issue, the Chief Justice added there are areas which the committee can go into while some they can't and further queried Mehta, "how will the committee examine the aspect of procurement of Pegasus?"

Mehta replied, the top court may lay down the terms of reference of the committee. He further added that if lordship approves, a committee can be constituted of neutral experts and not government officers.

The Chief Justice told Mehta to tell the court by Tuesday, whether the government wants to file another detailed affidavit in the matter and scheduled the matter for further hearing on Tuesday.

### Man, woman set themselves on fire in front of SC

A man and a woman set themselves ablaze in front of the Supreme Court complex on Monday, but were rescued by police and bystanders and rushed to hospital. Their motive was yet unclear. The two have not been identified so far, and Delhi Police are probing the matter to ascertain the reason behind their action.

# ASHRAF GHANI IN OMAN TO ESCAPE TO THE US

THE RUSSIAN EMBASSY IN KABUL HAS SAID THAT AFGHANISTAN PRESIDENT ASHRAF GHANI HAD FLED THE COUNTRY WITH FOUR CARS AND A HELICOPTER FULL OF CASH AND HAD TO LEAVE SOME MONEY BEHIND AS IT WOULD NOT FIT IN, THE RIA NEWS AGENCY REPORTS.

► The Taliban said on Monday that discussions are underway in Doha about a future government in Afghanistan, including its structure and name, and they are expected to report on the process in the very near future.

► A high-ranking official of the Taliban told TOLNews that their leadership is busy in discussions in Doha and is in contact with the international community and political parties within Afghanistan.

► The Taliban's political deputy leader Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar said that the current moment is a test for the Taliban.



TEHRAN | Agencies

The exact location of fugitive Afghan President Ashraf Ghani is unknown, but he is said to have travelled to Oman to escape to the US, Mehr News reported. The Taliban effectively sealed their

control of Afghanistan on Sunday, pouring into the capital city of Kabul without facing any resistance even as Ghani fled the country and the government collapsed.

It was initially reported that Ghani along with national security advisor Hamdullah Muhib and head of the administrative office of the President, Fazel Mahmood Fazli, left Afghanistan for Tajikistan, but Dushanbe denied that, the report said. It was then said that he had traveled to Uzbekistan. Ghani has been accused of treason by Afghans and presently, no official information is available about his location.

Afghanistan Defence Minister Bismillah Mohammadi, in a tweet apparently referring to Ghani and his associates, lamented that they "tied our hands behind our backs and sold the homeland, damn the rich man and his gang".

### India making efforts to bring citizens from Afghanistan

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Indian intelligence and security establishments are making all efforts to bring its citizens from Afghanistan with Air Force transport aircraft already being mobilised and a few of them kept on standby.

Fearing attacks on the Indian community working with private companies in Afghanistan, the intelligence agencies have sent out alerts to them to be ready to be transported back to the country. Unlike the United States Central Intelligence Agency which gathered the sense that Taliban will take months to capture Kabul, India's Research and Analysis Wing (R&AW) was fully aware that "it was just a matter of days". Also sensing the Afghan warlords would not be able to resist Taliban advances, unlike in the 1990s, Indian security establishments made all efforts to vacate the citizens from Afghanistan. Currently, Indian Embassies in Afghanistan are secured and all necessary precautions have been placed. "The rest of the Indians will be evacuated soon," said a source.

# Abdul Ghani Baradar is the face of insurgent victory

KABUL | Agencies

Abdul Ghani Baradar, the Taliban leader freed from a Pakistani jail on the request of the US less than three years ago, has emerged as an undisputed victor of the 20-year war in Afghanistan, the Guardian reported.

While Haibatullah Akhundzada is the Taliban's overall leader, Baradar is its political chief and its most public face. In a televised statement on the fall of Kabul on Sunday, he said the Taliban's real test was only just beginning and that they had to serve the nation. The story of his adult life is the story of the country's unceasing, pitiless conflict. Born in Uruzgan province in 1968, he fought in the Afghan Mujahideen against the Soviets in the 1980s. After the Russians were driven out in 1992 and the country fell into civil war between rival warlords, Baradar set up a madrassa in Kandahar with his former commander and reputed brother-in-law, Mohammad Omar. Together, the two founded the Taliban, a movement spearheaded by young Islamic scholars dedicated to the religious purification of the country and the creation of an emirate. Fueled by religious fervour, widespread hatred of the warlords and substantial support from Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) agency, the Taliban swept to power in 1996 after a series of stun-



ning conquests of provincial capitals that took the world by surprise, just as the movement has done in recent weeks. Baradar, Mullah Omar's deputy who was widely believed to be a highly effective strategist, was a key architect of those victories, the report said. Baradar played a succession of military and administrative roles in the five-year Taliban regime, and by the time it was ousted by the US and its Afghan allies, he was deputy minister of defence.

During the Taliban's 20-year exile, Baradar had the reputation of being a potent military leader and a subtle political operator. Western diplomats came to view him as on the wing of the Quetta Shura, the Taliban's regrouped leadership in exile, that was most resistant to ISI control, and most amenable to political contacts with Kabul.

### Uzbekistan shot down Afghan military plane

Moscow: A plane believed to be carrying fleeing Afghan military personnel was shot down by Uzbekistan's air-defence system after it crossed into the neighboring nation's airspace, officials in Uzbek capital Tashkent revealed on Monday, Russia Today reported. A spokesman for the Uzbek Defence Ministry told RIA Novosti that, on Sunday night, "The air defence forces of the Air Force of Uzbekistan suppressed an attempt to illegally cross the air border of Uzbekistan by an Afghan military aircraft."

### Expect inflation to remain in range of 2-6%, says Sitharaman

► ON THE HIGH FUEL PRICES, THE MINISTER SAID THAT NDA GOVERNMENT IS PAYING FOR REDUCTION IN PRICES OF PETROLEUM PRODUCTS DURING THE TIME OF MANMOHAN SINGH GOVERNMENT, DUE TO THE INTEREST AND PRINCIPLES HAVING TO BE REPaid ON OIL BONDS FROM THAT PERIOD.



tions will enhance confidence of people. Further, the minister said that demand will pick up as lockdown is lifted in several states.

On the withdrawal of retrospective taxation, Sitharaman said that the rules for the recent taxation amendment bill will be framed soon. "We will have to wait for the rules to be framed under the recent taxation amendment bill," she said.

On the GST compensation issue, Sitharaman said that if GST revenues collection continues like this, then the Centre would be able to pay compensation as per the agreement.

# Fearing Govt Whitewash, Scientists Leak Draft Part Three of IPCC Report

► IPCC PUBLISHED ITS LATEST CLIMATE ASSESSMENT REPORT ON AUGUST 6 - THE FIRST OF THREE PARTS. A GROUP OF IPCC SCIENTISTS HAVE LEAKED A DRAFT OF THE THIRD REPORT.

► THE REPORT FINDS THAT "THE TOP 10% OF EMITTERS GLOBALLY, WHO ARE THE WEALTHIEST 10%, CONTRIBUTE BETWEEN 36% AND 45% OF EMISSIONS, WHICH IS 10-TIMES AS MUCH AS THE POOREST 10%, WHO ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR ONLY ABOUT 3% TO 5%."

► CLIMATE SCIENTISTS HAVE EXPRESSED ALARM AS THEIR WARNINGS ABOUT THE NEED FOR FAR-REACHING POLITICAL-ECONOMIC REFORMS TO STAVE OFF CIVILISATIONAL COLLAPSE GO UNHEEDED.

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Concerned that aspects of its conclusions will be diluted by policymakers,



a group of scientists has leaked a draft of a forthcoming IPCC report, which argues that to avert further climate chaos, global carbon emissions must peak by 2025 and all fossil fuel plants worldwide must be shuttered by the end of the decade.

Journalists Juan Borda and Fernando Prieto, who first reported on the leaked draft in CTXT, a Spanish news outlet,

argued that while the authors don't specifically mention capitalism, the report shows that the pursuit of capital accumulation for accumulation's sake "has brought us to the current critical point."

Avoiding the most catastrophic consequences of the climate emergency, Borda and Prieto wrote, requires fundamentally transforming the global economy, including a

rapid shift away from the carbon-intensive goal of endless GDP growth.

Economic inequality and carbon inequality go hand-in-hand, with rich people in every country bearing greater responsibility for planet-heating emissions than the poor. Oxfam has found that the world's wealthiest 1% emit more than twice as much carbon dioxide as the poorest 50% of humanity, and the leaked IPCC draft also highlights how affluent households are generating an outsized share of greenhouse gas pollution through disproportionate levels of SUV use, meat eating, and air travel.

IPCC researchers say that wealthy people must adopt lifestyle changes to reduce greenhouse gas pollution.

### Series of protests in US to mark Pak's I-Day as 'Black Day'



WASHINGTON | Agencies

The Expose Pakistan Campaign Committee has said the US and allies should impose sanctions on Islamabad for occupation, terrorism and genocide.

The participants of the auto-caravan in Washington reiterate that Pakistan's support for banned terrorist organisations to occupy Afghanistan and Indian Kashmir, and cultural and racial genocide in occupied Balochistan, Gilgit-Baltistan, Sindh and Pashtunistan, and support to the communist-China to expand CPEC for economic marginalization of indigenous communities and apartheid warrants trade sanctions, placement on FATF's Black List and expulsion from UN Human Rights Council.

It said the growing nexus between China-Pakistan-Iran will promote colonialism in Afghanistan with irreparable consequences for women and children. Pakistan military's interference in Afghanistan is a concern for US national security interests that needs immediate redress.



# Covid victims ex gratia: SC gives Centre four weeks more for guidelines

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Supreme Court on Monday granted four weeks more to the Centre to frame guidelines in connection with payment of ex-gratia to dependents of those who succumbed to Covid.

A bench of Justices D.Y. Chandrachud and M.R. Shah asked Additional Solicitor General Aishwarya Bhati whether the other directions as given by the court in the order have been complied with.

As Bhati requested some time to seek instructions in the matter, the court, while granting the extension, also asked the ASG to place on record an affidavit mentioning steps taken in connection with other guidelines in the judgment within two weeks.

In July, the Centre had moved the Supreme Court seeking additional four weeks to frame ex-gratia payment scheme for the kin of those who succumbed to Covid, after the court, on June 30, directed the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) to frame appropriate guidelines within a period of 6 weeks.



In an application seeking extension, the Centre had said: "Applicant respectfully submits that exercise to frame guidelines for payment of ex-gratia payment to the victims of Covid-19 disaster under Section 12 (iii) of the DMA (Disaster Management Act) is in active consideration of the NDMA and going on."

It emphasised that this exercise, though at an advanced stage, requires

a little more in-depth examination before it is finalised and implemented, adding that any accelerated formulation "may result in undesirable results".

"The applicant UOI is respectfully praying that this court, in the interest of justice, be pleased to extend the time for six weeks granted to the applicant to frame the guidelines of the judgment dated June 30, 2021, by

another four weeks so as to enable the NDMA to come out with a comprehensive and robust policy," added the application.

On June 30, the Supreme Court had said the Centre failed to perform its statutory duty cast under Section 12 of the DMA, to issue minimum standards of relief for families of those people who lost their lives to Covid-19. It directed NDMA to recommend guidelines for ex gratia assistance on account of loss of life to the family members of the persons who died due to Covid-19, within 6 weeks.

The bench had noted that if the statutory authority has failed to perform its statutory duty cast under the statute or constitutional duty, the court would be absolutely justified in issuing a writ of mandamus directing the authority to perform its statutory duty.

The top court order came on PILs which were filed by advocates Gaurav Kumar Bansal and Reepak Kansal seeking court's intervention for payment of Rs 4 lakh ex-gratia amount to the Covid victims' families.

# Prime Minister interacts with Indian Olympic contingent



Team Absolute | New Delhi

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday met the Indian athletes who competed in the recently-concluded Tokyo Olympic at his residence over breakfast here on Monday. India recorded its best-ever medal tally in Tokyo, winning a total of seven medals -- one gold, two silver, and four bronze. After India's historic performance in Tokyo, Prime Minister Modi had invited the Indian contin-

gent for the Independence Day function at Red Fort on Sunday. Modi and Tokyo Olympic gold medallist javelin thrower Neeraj Chopra shared some lighter moments over breakfast. The Prime Minister also shared ice-cream with Tokyo Olympics bronze medallist shuttler P.V. Sindhu, as promised before the Olympics. The men's hockey team, which an Olympic medal after 41 years, presented the Prime Minister with an autographed hockey stick. On

Saturday, President Ram Nath Kovind had hosted a 'high tea' for the Indian Olympic contingent at the Rashtrapati Bhavan. Vice President M. Venkaiah Naidu was also present on the occasion. On Sunday, during his Independence Day speech from the rampart of Red Fort, Modi had lauded the performance of the Indian athletes and said that the country is proud of them for bringing glory to the nation and that their feat has inspired the future generation.

# Sushmita Dev meets Abhishek Banerjee, joins Trinamool

Team Absolute | Kolkata

Few hours after former MP and Mahila Congress chief Sushmita Dev resigned from Congress, she flew to Kolkata and joined Trinamool Congress after a one-hour meeting with Trinamool Congress All India General Secretary Abhishek Banerjee. Later she went to the state secretariat at Nabanna to meet chief minister Mamata Banerjee.

In the morning, after sending her resignation to Congress President Sonia Gandhi, the former Congress MP from Silchar in Assam, came to Kolkata and met Abhishek Banerjee at his South Kolkata office at 12.30 p.m. She was accompanied by Trinamool Congress Rajya Sabha member Derek O'Brien. Dev and Banerjee



had a meeting for over one hour and after that she joined Trinamool Congress.

"I visited Kolkata this morning accompanied by Trinamool Rajya Sabha member Derek O'Brien. I had the opportunity to meet All India Trinamool Congress General Secretary Abhishek Banerjee. We had a very, very good discussion. He has a very good vision about the

party. Then, we three went to meet Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee and had an excellent discussion. She has an excellent vision for the future of the party. I hope to be helpful in that regard," Dev said after her meeting with Mamata Banerjee.

She also said that she would be addressing a press conference in Delhi on Tuesday.

# Shillong violence: Judicial panel to probe ex-militant's 'killing'

Shillong | Agencies

The Meghalaya government on Monday ordered a judicial inquiry into a former militant leader's "killing", which triggered violence, including stone-pelting and arson in Shillong on Sunday, officials said.

An official said that the state cabinet, in its meeting, decided to constitute a judicial inquiry under the Commission of Inquiry Act, to look into the events that took place on the morning hours of August 13.

He said that apart from the judicial enquiry, the cabinet meeting, chaired by Chief Minister Conrad K. Sangma, also decided to set up a peace committee, which would be led by Deputy Chief Minister Prestone Tynsong, with Ministers Hamletson Dohling and Renikton Tongkhar



Lyngdoh as members.

"The committee will co-opt other members from the civil society including religious organisations and other stakeholders. At the same time, keeping in mind the overall situation that is still prevailing in Shillong, the cabinet decided that the curfew, which was promulgated on Sunday night, would be extended till 5 a.m. on Wednesday," the official said.

# Man hangs wife over dowry in UP

Hardoi | In a shocking incident, a man first beat up his wife on a road in full public view and then hanged her. The woman died during treatment. According to reports, the incident took place in Tundwal village under Sursa police circle last month but came to light only after a video of the incident went viral on Sunday.



The husband, Manoj is seen in the video dragging his wife Saraswati on to the road and beating her. He then sat on the woman's chest and continued to beat her. Later he hanged her. On learning of the incident, the woman's father, Manohar Lal, reached their home and rushed his daughter to a medical facility where she died during treatment. Manohar Lal told reporters that he was afraid of reporting the matter to the police but gathered courage after the video went viral. Manoj had been demanding a gold chain and a buffalo as dowry and had been torturing his daughter for the same. Manoj had married Saraswati in 2011. Circle Officer Vikas Jaiswal said that the case had been registered and the accused would be arrested soon.

# India needs to strengthen security set up at J&K borders: Experts

Team Absolute | New Delhi

In the wake of the Taliban taking full control in Afghanistan, experts have cautioned the Indian security agencies to increase vigil on the international border with Pakistan in Jammu and Kashmir.

There are apprehensions that Pakistan's ISI may push Afghan militia into Jammu and Kashmir to disturb the prevailing security scenario.

In this regard, they have anticipated that the redeployment of Pakistani terrorist groups like Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) and Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM), who have targeted Jammu and Kashmir and other parts of India in the past, may be activated again. "The security agencies



in India need to be careful and on high alert and need to take all possible steps to check the infiltration from the Pakistan side into Jammu and Kashmir. The ISI was also instrumental in pushing the Afghan militia into J&K when they were ousted from Afghanistan after the US

security forces launched military operations against them," former Home Secretary GK Pillai told reporter. A senior official in the security set up said on the condition of anonymity that this may seriously undermine the aspirations of the Kashmiri population for

peace and the desire of the Indian government to work for the sustainable development of the region.

Referring to the Soviet invasion and occupation of Afghanistan in 1979 that witnessed a heavy resistance movement by the Afghan local militia for eight years when the Soviet troops withdrew in 1988, the experts recounted how Pakistan's deep state diverted vast stockpiles of Afghan war arms and ammunition to Kashmir in the late 1980s to fight a proxy war that continues till date.

However, some experts also feel that it is a little early to speculate about such things as the present Taliban appears to be different from what it used to be in 1999.

# ONE MORE LAB TO NOW TEST, RELEASE COVID-19 VACCINES

New Delhi: The Union Health Ministry on Monday approved one more laboratory for batch testing and release of Covid vaccines to strengthen and speed up the mass vaccination drive, an official statement said.

The Ministry approved and authorised the National Institute of Animal Biotechnology (NIAB), Hyderabad, as a Central Drug Laboratory (CDL) for testing and lot release of Covid-19 vaccines. The Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation had furnished a draft notification to the Health Ministry for notifying the NIAB as a CDL.

# 5 drowned, 5 missing after boat capsizes in Bihar's Gopalganj

Team Absolute | Patna

Five persons died and five others were missing after a boat capsized on the Gandak river in Bihar's Gopalganj district on Monday, officials said.

The dead included two minor children and one woman. They are identified as Akash Kumar (13), Pawan Kumar (10), Brajesh Gupta, Pushpa Devi and one other.

SDM, Sadar, Upendra Pal Singh: "The victims are on the way to Ramjeeta from Kuchaikot to see a fair. There were 10 people on the boat wanting to cross the overflowing Gandak river." "As per preliminary investigation, the river had extremely high waves and the boatmen probably lost control due to strong wind and waves. The boat capsized in the middle of the



river. "As soon as we learnt of the accident, a rescue operation was initiated by the disaster management. The divers managed to retrieve five dead bodies so far," he said, adding that operations are underway to trace other missing persons. In another incident, three minors became victims of electrocution in Bihar's Muzaffarpur district on Monday. The children, identi-

fied Badal Kumar, Avinash Kumar, and Vishnu Kumar, were admitted to the S.K. Medical College and Hospital, where their condition is said to be critical.

The accident took place due to the negligent attitude of power distribution company officials. The children jumped in a pit without knowing that live wire had fallen into it.

# 3 MAOISTS FROM CHHATTISGARH SURRENDER BEFORE ODISHA POLICE

Bhubaneswar: A day after the country celebrated 75th Independence Day, three hardcore Maoists from Chhattisgarh, carrying a total cash awards of Rs 9 lakh on their heads, have surrendered before Odisha police on Monday. The group of these three cadres had been specifically deployed by the outfit to resurrect Mahanadi Area Committee to activate north Kandhamal and adjoining axis, which was moribund since 2018, he said.

They have preferred to surrender and join the mainstream in the light of the appeal of the Odisha government to surrender and join the mainstream society and be a part of the developmental initiatives and the proactive surrender and rehabilitation policy, the DGP said.

# Covid-19 hit nuclear families more than joint families: Study

Chennai | Agencies

Nuclear families got hit more severely than joint families due to Covid-19, finds a study by HDFC Life Insurance Company Ltd.

Private life insurer HDFC Life said on Monday that the Covid-19 pandemic has resulted in a drop of 4.8 points in 2021 Life Freedom Index (LFI) as compared to 2019.

Nuclear families have been the most impacted with an LFI drop of 10.5 points, while joint families have been stable, possibly due to a better support system in the time of crisis, finds the study.

As per HDFC Life's study, consumer confidence has been low post the two waves of Covid-19, and current financial plans seem inadequate. Hence, the most significant drop is observed in the financial sufficiency and adequacy index.

The insurer said that LFI enables the measurement of 'financial freedom' of consumers across



four key segments: Proud parents, wisdom investors, young aspirants and smart women. It includes four sub-indices: Financial Awareness Index, Financial Planning Index, Financial Sufficiency and Adequacy Index, and Financial Liberty Index.

The latest 2021 LFI study was conducted along with NielsenIQ across 14 cities with 1,987 respondents.

According to HDFC Life, some of the key findings are:

- The impact of Covid-19 is more severe across metros in comparison to Tier 1 and Tier 2 cities.
- Almost 90 per cent consumers have faced salary cuts or business losses to some extent, due to which the respondents are still concerned about Covid-19.
- Familiarity with term insurance increases by 11 points; for endowment and unit linked plans it is up by 10 points.

# Woman set on fire for lodging molestation complaint

Mahoba (Uttar Pradesh) | Agencies

A 30-year-old woman was allegedly set on fire by parents of a man, who had been booked in a molestation case lodged by the victim.

The woman was admitted to the Jhansi medical college in a critical condition after the attack on Sunday evening.

Kulphar station house officer (SHO) Mahendra Pratap Singh said that the parents of the man were allegedly angry over the registration of the case against their son.

"On Saturday, she had registered a case against her neighbour for beating and molesting her. The accused was taken into custody. The girl, later in a statement to police, said that angry over the registration of the case, parents of the accused poured kerosene over her and set her afire," the SHO said. The mother of the accused has been taken into custody and the matter is being probed.





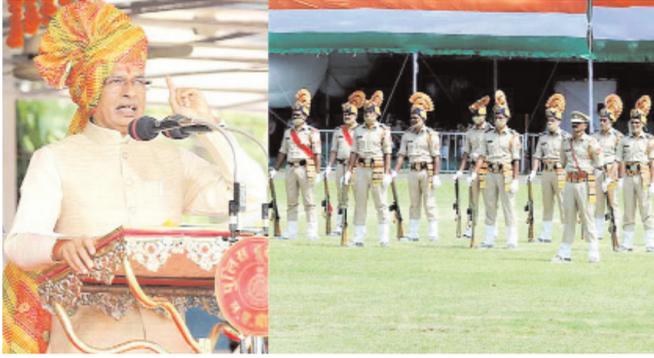
# Only public cooperation can build Atmanirbhar MP: CM

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has said that every citizen will have to try his best for the development of the state. A public participation model has been developed in the state for the purpose of taking decisions together with the people for the development of the state. Organizing panchayats of different classes will be started again in the state. The schemes for the welfare of the people will be made in collaboration with the people and their implementation will also be done through the people. Atmanirbhar Madhya Pradesh will be built with public participation. We need the cooperation of the people, without the cooperation of the people, the government alone cannot build a new state.

Chouhan was addressing the public after flag hoisting and saluting the parade at the state level Independence Day celebration programme organized at Lal Parade Ground today. Chouhan said that the citizens of the state should sincerely follow their duties and obligations, follow Corona appropriate behaviour, respect women and participate in cleanliness campaign for the creation of Atmanirbhar Madhya Pradesh. Chouhan said that together we will build a prosperous, developed and Atmanirbhar Madhya Pradesh. I dedicate myself for the creation of such a Madhya Pradesh.

Chouhan has said that our state will be first in the country in building an



Atmanirbhar Madhya Pradesh in compliance with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's resolve of Atmanirbhar Madhya Pradesh. We have to apply a tilak of self-reliance on the state's forehead with the kumkum of public participation and akshat of good governance. We have to walk along together.

Chouhan said that our government is committed to social justice along with inclusive development. Be it the issue of Other Backward Classes, the welfare of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes or the matter of safety and respect of women, the state government is working continuously in all the fields. A special campaign will be launched from September 18, celebrated as

Balidan Divas of Raghunath Shah Shankarshah, to honour the sentiments, culture, values, tradition, employment and education of Scheduled Tribes, which is continue till November 15 on Bhagwan Birsa Munda Jayanti.

Chouhan said that the protection, honour, employment and education of the Scheduled Castes will be fully taken care of. A provision of Rs 17 thousand 980 crore has been made for this in the budget. Special provision has been made for the Backward Classes by PM Modi by making amendments in the Constitution. The Backward Classes Commission has been given the status of a Constitutional Commission. Our

government will leave no stone unturned in the implementation of 27 percent reservation for backward classes. A new commission will be constituted to study the social, educational and economic condition of the backward classes, which will study the conditions of the backward classes on a large scale and give its recommendations for improving their conditions. Our government is committed for the welfare of the backward classes.

Chouhan said that the culture of the state is rich enough and its diversity is amazing. Decision has been taken to establish an Advaita Vedanta Sansthan at Omkareshwar, a huge statue of Acharya Shankar will be installed here and research work will also be undertaken. Along with building a memorial for Goddess Ahilya Bai and Bajirao Peshwa, a huge memorial will be built in Gwalior in the memory of Atal ji. Chouhan congratulated the police for its successful campaign against mafia in the state. Continuous efforts are being made to equip the police force with modern resources and new technology. Rigorous campaign against liquor mafia continues. Strict provisions have been made in this direction. A provision of capital punishment has been made for criminals engaged in the illicit and spurious liquor trade. The Muskan campaign that has been launched in the state for protection of women in the state has yielded good results. The police campaign against Naxalites has also been effective.



## CM pays tributes to Veerangana Avanti Bai

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan paid homage to Veerangana Avanti Bai Lodhi on her birth anniversary. Chief Minister garlanded the portrait of Veerangana Avanti Bai at his residence. Avanti Bai Lodhi was born on August 16, 1831 in village Mankehani, District Seoni. In her childhood, she had learned fencing and horse riding. Rani Avanti Bai of Ramgarh was the architect of the liberation movement in Rewanchal in the revolution of 1857. A postal stamp has also been issued by the

Department of Post in the memory of Rani Avanti Bai. Chouhan paid homage to Subhadra Kumari Chouhan, the great freedom fighter, famous poet of Hindi, who awakened national consciousness with immortal poems like Khub Ladi Mardani, on her anniversary. Chief Minister garlanded her portrait at his residence. Subhadra Kumari Chauhan was born on August 16, 1904 in Nihalpur village near Prayagraj. She started composing poems from her childhood. Her works are full of vigour and a sense of nationalism.

### CM OFFERS FLORAL TRIBUTES AT SHAURYA SMARAK

Bhopal: Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan planted a Kadamba sapling at Shaurya Smarak on the occasion of Independence Day. Chouhan plants saplings every day in fulfilment of his resolve. Chouhan laid a wreath as a tribute to the immortal martyrs at the Shaurya Memorial pillar located in the memorial. Chief Minister paid floral tributes at the statue of Bharat Mata at Shaurya Smarak and sang the national anthem with the youth as part of the Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav programme. Khajuraho MP VD Sharma, Chief Minister Chouhan's wife Sadhna Singh, Suhag Bhagat, Hitanand Sharma and Principal Secretary Culture and Public Relations Shiv Shekhar Shukla were present.



Eves of leading ladies club celebrated independence day at Bhojpur club with a theme of Indian Tricolour. They danced on the tunes of patriotic songs and remembered the day that "we should cherish the independence for which our soldiers sacrificed their lives."



# Governor honours Freedom fighters and families of martyrs

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Governor Mangubhai Patel honoured the freedom fighters and the families of martyrs on the occasion of Amrit Mahotsav on Independence Day. On behalf of Governor Patel, the officials of Raj Bhavan honoured the Bhopal resident freedom fighters and the families of martyrs by presenting them with shawls, shripal and fruits.

Bhopal resident freedom



fighters Devisharan, Parvati Devi, Savitri Devi, Chandravati Singh, Mukhtar Khan, Habib Nazar, Narayan Prasad Narolia, Manikchand Choubey, Mohammad



Jamir, Narayani Devi and Laxmikant Mishra were honoured. Bhopal resident martyr Major Ajay Kumar's father RN Prasad, martyr Major Jaji Joseph's wife

Mini Joji, martyr CFN Ramswaroop's wife Savita Devi, martyr signalman Ramesh Kumar's wife Laxmi Bai, martyr constable Ashok Kumar Patel's mother

Ramvati Patel, martyr Havildar Harish Chandra Pal's wife Laxmi Pal, martyr Devashish Sharma's mother Nirmala Sharma, martyr Shivkumar Mishra's wife Budhi Devi, martyr Sukhpal Singh's wife Bhupendra Kaur Sandhu, martyr Gopal Prasad Patel's wife Rekha Patel, martyr RK Singh's wife Girbala Singh, martyr Deepak Sharma's mother Madhavi Sharma and martyr Naik Dinesh Chandra's wife Ganmala Devi were honoured.

## Governor Patel hoists flag at Raj Bhavan

Bhopal: Governor Mangubhai Patel hoisted the national flag in a dignified ceremony at Raj Bhavan on the auspicious occasion of Independence Day. He met the employees and children of Raj Bhavan Secretariat and distributed sweets. On this occasion Principal Secretary to Governor DP Ahuja, Additional Secretary Manoj Khatri, Law Officer DPS Gaur, Assistant to Governor Subhash Anand, Agam Jain, Controller Surabhi Tiwari, Under Secretary Finance Alok Dubey and all the officials and employees posted in all departments of Raj Bhavan were present.



Begums of Bhopal, The Ladies Club celebrated Independence Day at Maulana Azad School, Eidgah Hills with great zeal and fervor.



## RECEPTION ORGANISED AT RAJ BHAVAN ON ID

Bhopal: On the occasion of Independence Day, a reception was organised at Raj Bhavan. The visitors, including Governor Mangubhai Patel, Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan, greeted each other on Independence Day at the function.

The reception was attended by the former Governor of Haryana Kaptan Singh Solanki, Chief Secretary Iqbal Singh Bains, Director General of Police Vivek Johri, judges, eminent citizens honoured with Padma awards, chairpersons of corporations, vice-chancellors of universities, religious leaders of different religions, senior officers of police, army and administration, sports talents, corona warriors and office-bearers of political and social organizations were present.

# MP Police has lived the mantra of patriotism and public service: CM

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has said that Madhya Pradesh Police has literally lived the mantra of patriotism and public service. Strict and effective action has been taken in Madhya Pradesh against all criminal elements including all types of mafia, those who commit crimes against daughters, naxalites, adulterers etc.

Chouhan said that Madhya Pradesh Police has protected the people while risking their own lives during the Covid crisis. During this many of our police colleagues were also martyred. I salute them all. Such an example of service to suffering humanity is rarely found in the world.

Chouhan was speaking at the honour ceremony of the President's Medal winning police officers held at the Chief Minister's residence today.

Chouhan said that effective action has been taken against Naxalites in Madhya Pradesh. We are taking continuous campaign against all types of mafia including land mafia, drugs mafia, liquor mafia, mineral mafia in the state, their back



has been broken. Strict legal provision up to the death penalty has been made for those involved in the business of spurious liquor.

Chouhan said that more than 4 thousand missing daughters have been traced from different places of the country and brought back home by running a Muskan campaign by Madhya Pradesh Police. We are taking strictest action against those who commit crimes against daughters.

Chouhan said that our police and home

guards have done commendable work in saving and helping the people during the recent floods in the state. During this, 6800 people were saved from drowning.

Chouhan said that the entire police staff, including the police officers who have done excellent work, would also be awarded in the function organised on the foundation day of Madhya Pradesh on November 1.

Chouhan said that our women police personnel have also done excellent work in

public safety and action against criminals. Mahila police stations have been started in almost every district in the state. 33 percent seats are reserved for women in Madhya Pradesh Police Recruitment.

Chouhan said that the promotion process is stalled in the state due to the ban from the court. We found a way to boost the morale of the police and gave them high posts. This process will continue in future also. In the beginning, Director General of Police Vivek Johri gave detailed information about the achievements of Madhya Pradesh Police. He told that due to Covid last year, the award ceremony could not be held. Madhya Pradesh Police has taken effective action against the mafia, naxalites, those who commit crimes against women and children. The police did an excellent job during the Covid period. A large number of Karmaveer Yodha medals have been awarded to our police comrades. More than 11 thousand police personnel have been given higher posts in Madhya Pradesh Police. Continuous training of police force, skill up-gradation, installation of CCTVs in police stations and other sensitive areas etc. is going on.

# WELFARE OF BACKMOST AND LOWERMOST PERSON IS OUR PRIORITY: CM

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has said that the country has entered the 75th year of independence today. On this day it is my pleasure that I have got the opportunity to unveil the statue of Babasaheb Ambedkar, the architect of our Constitution. Chouhan said that the struggle that Ambedkar underwent to provide justice to the backmost and the lowermost, continues to inspire us even today. This is the priority of our government. Efforts being made to effectively implement the concept of social justice were made possible by his ideas. Chouhan was addressing the virtual unveiling programme of the statue of Babasaheb Ambedkar, at Narsinghpur on the completion of the 75th year of independence. A 6 feet 5 inch high statue has been installed by the municipality in Ambedkar Park, Itwara Bazaar, Kandeli in Narsinghpur. Former MLA Shri Kailash Jatav was present in the programme organized in Narsinghpur. Chouhan said that the tireless efforts made by Ambedkar in the field of women's education and his struggle for eradication of caste system has resulted in the right to equality, education, security, respect and employment for the deprived sections. The state government is following his path in this direction. A budget provision of Rs 19 thousand 980 crores has been made by the state government for the welfare of scheduled castes. The salvation of all is our goal. The state government is making every effort to ensure the availability of education and employment opportunities.



# OBC QUOTA: PAWAR SAYS AMENDMENT A 'FRAUD', SEEKS CASTE CENSUS

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Termining the recent Constitutional Amendment, restoring power to states to have their own OBC lists for reservations in government jobs and education "a fraud", Nationalist Congress Party President Sharad Pawar on Monday demanded a caste-based Census, providing states empirical data and hiking the cap on reservations above 50 per cent.

He said that unless the 50 per cent quota limit imposed by the Supreme Court in its 1992 landmark verdict is relaxed, states cannot prepare their own lists of socially and educationally backward classes (SEBCs).

"In reality, it (the amendment) will be of no use... The Centre took away the rights of the states around a couple of years ago to prepare and maintain their SEBC lists and that has been restored now. The government has betrayed the OBCs. Today, almost all states have more than 50 per cent reservations," said Pawar sharply.

Giving details, he said the percentages for different states are: Madhya Pradesh - 63 per cent, Tamil Nadu - 69, Haryana - 57, Rajasthan - 54, Lakshadweep - 100, Nagaland - 80, Mizoram - 80, Meghalaya - 80, Arunachal - 80, Maharashtra - 65, Haryana - 67, Rajasthan - 64, Telangana - 62, Tripura - 60, Jharkhand - 60, Uttar Pradesh - 59,



Himachal - 60, Gujarat - 59, Karnataka - 50 per cent, etc.

He said that since the Centre is silent on the issue of relaxing the 50 per cent quota limits, the Maharashtra government will be in no position to restore the proposed 12 per cent in education and 13 per cent in government jobs for the Maratha community that was scrapped by the Supreme Court in May. While the Centre later gave a 10 per cent quota for Economically Weaker Sections,

almost 90 per cent states have exceeded the 50 per cent quota limits, so the Centre's move will be of no use now, he claimed.

The NCP chief said the state NCP Minister Chhagan Bhujbal has been repeatedly demanding the empirical data from the Centre to enable the state conduct surveys and prepare their own SEBCs list.

While the previous UPA-II Government had initiated steps in this direction, Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government put this on the backburner, he claimed.

Now, even BJP MPs like Sanghamitra Maurya and ruling NDA allies are making the same demand, Pawar said, hinting that the issue could soon snowball and the Constitution may have to be amended further to relax the 50 per cent ceiling. The NCP will now create public awareness all over the state and unite all Opposition parties on the critical social issue on which the country has been deceived by the government, he said.

While MP Supriya Sule presented the party's viewpoint in Lok Sabha and other MPs also spoke, the ministers did not give satisfactory replies, Pawar said. Pawar was flanked by NCP chief spokesperson and Minister Nawab Malik, Housing Minister Dr Jitendra Awhad and NCP state General Secretary Shivajirao Garje at his media briefing.

# Maha War of words: Shiv Sena fires missile at Gadkari's 'letter-bomb'

Team Absolute | Mumbai

A couple of days after Union Minister for Highways Nitin Gadkari dropped a 'letter-bomb' in Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray's lap, the Shiv Sena has hit back in full force.

Accusing Sena leaders and activists in some places like Washim of giving "threats, making irrational demands" from contractors or officials, Gadkari said the works on the national highway projects in the state are being affected.

The Bharatiya Janata Party central minister, hailing from Nagpur, virtually threatened to stop the ongoing works in the Washim district and even yank off all future highway projects from Maharashtra if such acts are not reined in. Taken aback by the harsh tone of the soft-spoken Gadkari's letter, Thackeray promptly asked Home Minister Dilip Walse-Patil to direct the Director-General of Police (DGP) Sanjay Pandey to probe the issue.

Simultaneously, senior Sena leader Kishore Tiwari - accorded a MoS status - launched a missile asking why Gadkari did not publicise his earlier letter to Prime Minister Narendra Modi in which he had named BJP political and elected leaders from all over India making 'extortion demands' from road contractors. Gadkari's grouse pertains mainly to the Washim-Akola section of the ongoing highway projects, where he said Sena activists



burnt road building machines and warned that if the Sena leaders and elected representatives repeat such behaviour it will be difficult to continue with the projects. Responding, Sena MP from Washim-Yavatmal, Bhavana Gawali-Patil said Gadkari was "misled" and pointed out that around 90 per cent of the work in her constituency was completed, although there were local hurdles in some areas which she would find out.

Claiming that most political parties are engaged in such activities in lucrative road contracts, Tiwari alleged that even the minister and his family's companies "have a finger" in all road and toll contracts. He said that right from 2014, contractors owing allegiance to certain BJP politicians grab the roads-tolls contracts and for a hefty commission, give a sub-contract even to bankrupt companies or black-listed entities, but after complaints of inferior quality, several projects were stopped many times.

# Govt comes up draft norms for green energy

Team Absolute | Mumbai

In a step ahead for India's clean energy targets, the Power Ministry has released draft norms for green energy.

The Ministry has circulated the Draft Electricity (Promoting Renewable Energy Through Green Energy Open Access) Rules, 2021, and sought comments on it within 30 days, said an official statement.

These rules are proposed for purchase and consumption of green energy, including the energy from waste-to-energy plants.

The draft rules entail Renewable Purchase Obligations (RPO), green energy open access, nodal agencies, procedure for grant

of green energy open access, banking, and cross subsidy surcharge.

With regard to tariff, they propose that "the tariff for the green energy shall be determined by the Appropriate Commission, which may comprise of the average pooled power purchase cost of the renewable energy, cross-subsidy charges (if any), and service charges covering all prudent cost of the distribution licensee for providing the green energy".

The proposed rules regarding green hydrogen state "green hydrogen" is the hydrogen produced using electricity from the renewable sources, and the obligated entity, including the industries, can also meet

their RPO by purchasing it.

The quantum of green hydrogen would be computed by considering the equivalence to the green hydrogen produced from one MWh of electricity from the renewable sources or its multiple. The norms shall be notified by the Central Commission.

These draft rules also propose guidelines for green energy open access, stating that "The Appropriate Commission shall put in place regulations in accordance with this Rule to provide Green Energy Open Access to consumers who are willing to consume Green Energy. All applications for open access of Green Energy shall be granted within a maximum of 15 days."

# Of 76 Delta+ Covid Cases In Maharashtra, 10 Had Taken Both Vaccine Doses

Of the 13 known strains of the Delta Plus Covid variant, Maharashtra has till now reported three -- Ay.1, Ay.2, and Ay.3.

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The number of cases with the Delta Plus variant of the disease has reached 76, data released today showed. Of these, 10 had received both doses of one of the Covid vaccines and 12 the first, the government has said.

Overall, 10 new cases of highly infectious Delta Plus variant were reported in the past 24 hours, according to the data released today by the state. Of the 13 known strains of the Delta Plus variant, Maharashtra has till now reported



three -- Ay.1, Ay.2, and Ay.3.

Five deaths of Covid patients with the Delta Plus variant have been reported till now, including one from the capital Mumbai. Of these, two were fully vaccinated.

The overall number of daily Covid cases has been under control in most parts of the state, officials said. There are, however, some districts -- Pune, Satara, Kolhapur, Solapur, Sangli, Ahmednagar, and Ratnagiri -

which are under surveillance as they are still adding many cases.

The state reported around 4,800 new cases in all yesterday, with 130 deaths. Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray, delivering his annual Independence Day address yesterday, asked people to stay cautious. He warned that if the numbers spike again, the government could reimpose a lockdown.

"Just yesterday, we achieved a milestone of vaccinating 9.5 lakh citizens on a single day," he said. "But the threat is far from over. New strains of the virus are being detected in other countries...we have to take care that the threat doesn't hit us."

Maharashtra is the worst Covid-affected state in the country with over 1.35 lakh fatalities till now and nearly 64 lakh cases reported -- around 4,800 on Sunday alone.

# Anurag Kashyap tweets Afghan filmmaker's appeal to end the 'silence'

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Even as the world was updating itself on the swift fall of Kabul and the Ashraf Ghani government in Afghanistan, an appeal to the international community to end its silence from an Afghan filmmaker presents a grim picture of the tragedy that the country confronts as it is overrun by the Taliban.

The appeal, shared by filmmaker Anurag Kashyap on Twitter, is from Sairaa Karimi, director-general of Afghan Film, the state-run film production company that has been around since 1968.

Karimi writes passionately about the horrors the Taliban has been inflicting upon the people -- selling girls off as child brides to their fighters, gouging out the eyes of women who did not wear the "right" clothes, assassinating members of the government, notably the head of media and culture, as well



as a comedian, a historian and a poet, and displacing hundreds of thousands of families, who are now living in insular conditions in Kabul, their babies dying because there's no milk. Questioning the "silence" of international humanitarian organisations on the situation in Afghanistan, and the legitimacy of the Doha peace talks, Karimi writes, "We have grown accus-

tomed to this silence, yet we know it is not fair. We know that this decision to abandon our people is wrong, that this hasty troop withdrawal is a betrayal of our people." Karimi points out that the so-called peace talks had only emboldened the Taliban step up their war against the legitimate government of Afghanistan and brutalise the people. Warning of the imminent descent of

her country into the dark days when the Taliban first ruled Afghanistan, Karimi says the "immense gains" made especially by the younger generation over the last 20 years "could be lost again" because of "this abandonment". Highlighting what Taliban rule could mean for Afghanistan's creative community and its women, Karimi writes: "If the Taliban takes over it will ban art.

I and other filmmakers will be next on their hit list. They will strip away women's rights, we will be pushed to the shadows, to our homes, and our voices will be stifled into silence. Just in these few weeks, the Taliban have destroyed many schools and two million girls are now forced out of school." Karimi ends her open letter with an appeal to the world to stand behind people like her who will "stay and fight for my country". Will the world listen to her, or as she fears (but hopes against) "turn its back on us?"

# No trolls, just 'likes': Kareena posts little Jeh's pic with Saif, Taimur

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Bollywood diva Kareena Kapoor Khan has shared a much-loved picture of little Jeh, who was most recently the subject of an unsavoury troll attack, with her elder son, Taimur, and her actor-husband Saif Ali Khan, who's celebrating his 51st birthday with his family in the Maldives.

Kareena posted a picture on Instagram on Monday and it was instantly liked by 8,16,000 people around the world. "Happy Birthday to the love of my life... To eternity and beyond with you is all I want," Kareena captioned the image.

Saif and Kareena, who are fondly called Saifeena by their fans, had tied the knot in December 2012. Jeh was born on February 21 this year and since then there has been a lot of speculation, especially among the trolls, about his name. Saif's actress-daughter Sara Ali Khan, who was most recently seen in the discovery-reality show, 'Mission Frontline', also shared a picture with her father. The 'Simmba' actress tagged her dad as her 'superhero'. "Happiest Birthday Abba. Thank you for being my superhero. My smartest



friend, the best conversationalist, the coolest travel buddy and one of the biggest support systems. Love you," Sara wrote in her caption. Sara is the daughter of Saif from his first wife, actress Amrita Singh.

# 1 Arrested In Film Director's Suicide Case

A person accused in the case of suicide of Marathi art and film director Raju Sapte was arrested from neighbouring Pune district of Maharashtra on charges of extortion, police said on Monday.

Rakesh Maurya, Rajesh Anubhava and Ashok Dubey - alleging that they were not paying his dues worth around Rs 2.5 lakh and instead, asking for money to release the payment and threatening him, he said.

The Dindoshi police had later arrested Rajesh Anubhava, the official said.

Deputy Commissioner of Police (Zone-12), Mumbai, DS Swami said "We got a tip-off that Shrivastav was likely to come to Wakad police station in Pune for attendance, hence we laid a trap and arrested him. He has already secured relief in the case of Sapte's death, but he has been arrested by Dindoshi police in the extortion case."

Sapte, who had worked as an art director for movies like "Ambat Goad" and "Manya the wonder boy", allegedly committed suicide at his house in Pimpri Chinchwad township of Pune district last month.

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The accused, Gangeshwarlal Shrivastav, had secured anticipatory bail in the case of Sapte's death, but was taken into custody at Pune's Wakad police station on Sunday after he appeared there to mark his attendance in the wake of his bail condition, a police official said. On July 31, a labourer lodged an FIR with Dindoshi police in Mumbai against Shrivastav and three others -

# Lockdown in Maharashtra? Uddhav Thackeray Says 'No Option' if Covid-19 Cases Rise, Appeals to Follow Protocol

On Monday, the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation announced that all public gardens, playgrounds, chowpatties and beaches in Mumbai will now remain open from 6 am to 10 pm as part of fresh relaxations in COVID-19 restrictions.

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Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray warned of yet another lockdown in Maharashtra if Covid-19 cases continued to spike, even as the state relaxed several curbs such as resumption of local trains for fully vaccinated and extending durations for parks and beaches to be open.

Thackeray, in his Independence Day address on August 15, appealed to people to follow Covid-appropriate behaviour as he reminded them of the limited availability of medical oxygen.

"We are easing restrictions now. Covid has still not been eliminated so we need to be more alert. Considering the limited availability of medical oxygen, if the number of Covid cases see a rise, then we will have no other option but to reimpose the lockdown," he said.

The state has allowed the general public to board local trains from Sunday, Independence Day, provided they have completed 14 days after getting fully vaccinated.

An offline verification procedure for issuing monthly passes to fully inoculated people to enable them to board local trains has already begun at 53 suburban stations in Mumbai. Also, some restrictions have been eased and malls, restaurants, gyms, salons and spas have been allowed to reopen.

On Monday, the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation announced that all public gardens, playgrounds, chowpatties and beaches in Mumbai will now



remain open from 6 am to 10 pm as part of fresh relaxations in COVID-19 restrictions. Earlier, on June 4 this year, the (BMC) had allowed these places to open for the

public from 5 am to 9 am. Commissioner Iqbal Singh Chahal said that the BMC on Sunday issued fresh guidelines under 'Break the Chain' programme, using powers conferred by the Maharashtra government to decide the timings. "Public grounds, gardens, beaches and sea fronts to remain open from 6 am to 10 pm," Chahal said on Monday.

The state task force on COVID-19 is not in favour of opening schools and colleges from August 17. Thackeray is scheduled to meet members of the task force soon to take a final decision.

The task force had suggested granting more relaxations in restrictions while observing precautions after a meeting. The state government is now preparing new guidelines after receiving various suggestions and instructions from doctors, experts and government departments.

The state government had excluded malls, cinema halls, theatres, religious places and religious gatherings from the purview of relaxations introduced last week.

The government had allowed shops to function till 8 pm in 25 districts, while excluding 11 districts where level-3 restrictions continue to remain in force due to a higher COVID-19 positivity rate. Restaurant owners, malls and other establishments had been demanding that the government extend the current timings. Various artists have also demanded that theatres be allowed to function with restrictions. The government is also under pressure to open religious places.



EDITOR'S SPECS

US wasted money on Afghan forces

The US aid spending watchdog for Afghanistan warned last month that the US military had little or no means of knowing the capability of the Afghan National Defense and Security forces (ANDSF) when required to operate independently of the US forces, despite spending \$88.3 bn on security-related reconstruction in Afghanistan up to March 2021. The Taliban have 80,000 troops in comparison with a nominal 300,699 serving the Afghan government, yet the whole country has been effectively overrun in a matter of weeks as military commanders surrendered without a fight in a matter of hours. It is a tale of two armies, one poorly equipped but highly motivated ideologically, and the other nominally well-equipped, but dependent on NATO support, poorly led and riddled with corruption. The watchdog had, it said, repeatedly warned about "the corrosive effects of corruption" within the force. With its reliance on advanced equipment, and with widespread illiteracy in its ranks, the force could not reliably maintain its strength and combat readiness. The report's clear warnings are likely to be reviewed by US Congress as it seeks to understand why such vast spending on training the Afghan military has led to a collapse to the Taliban in a matter of weeks, leaving western politicians shocked and bemused. It also raises the question of why the Biden administration ever thought it was safe to leave Afghan forces on their own after decades of dependence on the US for key skills, including air cover, logistics, maintenance, and training support for ANDSF ground vehicles and aircraft; security; base support; and transportation services. The US president said as recently as 8 July that there was no likelihood of Afghanistan being overrun. It started its multibillion-dollar training of Afghan forces in 2002 and three years later took control of training both the police and military, so US military trainers have had nearly two decades to ready the Afghan forces for a Taliban insurgency.

DOES TALIBAN VICTORY IN AFGHANISTAN MEAN A PAKISTAN TRIUMPH?

SAEED NAQVI

It is a flawed line of thinking that Taliban victory in Afghanistan is somehow victory for Pakistan too. To the contrary, Pakistan's problems begin now. Pashtun populations on both sides of the border is just one of them. The failure of the Istanbul conference on Afghanistan reflects Pakistan's inability to persuade the top Taliban leadership to attend what was billed as a 10-day jamboree. All participants, including President Ashraf Ghani, were expected to emerge having sorted out Afghanistan from A to Z. Nothing of this happened. Turkish Foreign Minister, Mevlut Cavusoglu came down a few notches in his boss, Tayyip Erdogan's esteem. The Foreign Minister believed that Pakistan would deliver the Taliban at the conference. It could not. Turkey's willingness to "look after" Kabul airport was based on Ankara's anticipation that, at least in the interregnum, Ghani and the Taliban would agree. The Taliban would have none of it. Bring in mechanics, engineers and experts at handling airports, but no military presence "on Afghan soil". Describing Indo-Pak dynamics on Afghanistan as a zero-sum game has antecedents. In 2010, Gen. Stanley McChrystal, as the force commander in Afghanistan, was unhappy that the popularity of India's socio-economic development work distracts Pakistan from its war-on-terror focus. To this, Gen. David Petraeus added his bit: "India's Cold Start doctrine worries Pakistan." It is impossible for an itinerant journalist to gauge public opinion across the board, but my interactions in Kabul, Gardez and Mazar-e-Sharif some years ago surprised me: Pakistan was seen as a troublemaker. India's development works were appreciated. At night all of Kabul was glued to Bollywood on TV. After US Deputy Secretary, Richard Armitage threatened to "bomb Pakistan into the stone age" a terrified President Pervez Musharraf made a U-turn. His army turned upon exactly the mujahideen that Pakistan ISI had trained to see the back of the Soviets in 1989. This about-turn by Pakistan became part of the historic memory of Taliban. That's the rub: the "unreliability" quotient of Pakistan was cited even by the Taliban spokesman who showed disinterest in the Istanbul conference. There is a suspicion that promoting the Turkish profile in Afghanistan may well have



been a Pak ploy to ensure a friendly nodal point, namely Kabul airport in the neighbouring country. Chatter on any high-profile role for Ankara in Kabul is, for the moment, inaudible. Abdus Salaam Zaeef was the Afghan ambassador in Islamabad and a friend of the late Mullah Omar. After Pakistan joined the war on terror, Zaeef found himself in Guantanamo Bay for four years. Zaeef was bitter: "The manner in which they treated our prisoners was worse than the Israeli treatment of Palestinian prisoners." These complaints belong to an era many moons ago. Surely, the situation has changed after Prime Minister Imran Khan took charge. The Taliban today are not the ones who won in 1996. The new Taliban have Shia and Uzbek commanders too but keep your fingers crossed for the women of that country. Like it or not, the Taliban are ascending. Ashraf Ghani, by all accounts has had it. Will he clamber onto the last helicopter out of Kabul? He is being maliciously mocked in this fashion. South Block probably knows the truth but is still clutching onto the myth of Ghani on the Kabul throne. It is short sighted to rubbish the Taliban. Let us face it, they will be dominant in any eventual power sharing. A harried Ghani has fired his army chief as if the chief was responsible for the Afghan National Army spreading out red carpets for the Taliban advancing with breathtaking speed into urban centres -- in addition to the 70 per

cent of territory in their control. Taliban spokesman Suhail Shahleen told the BBC that districts fell because of mediation: Afghan soldiers refused to fight. Was this collapse of a large section of the Afghan Army unexpected? Is one to believe that Green on Blue attacks had ended just because the US media had stopped reporting such incidents? US officers training the Afghan army were frequent victims of their own trainees. Little wonder President Joe Biden was almost bitter: "I don't regret the decision to withdraw." He said the US had spent \$3 trillion for 20 years training and equipping an Afghan army of 3,00,000. "Now it is time for the Afghans to sort it out among themselves." Years ago, a former Governor of Baluchistan, Prof. Habibullah Habib, told me a story which sounded conspiratorial then. "The British Provincial Reconstruction team was doing excellent work in the north of the country." Why did they so willingly agree to vacate the peaceful region for the Germans to take over? What surprised Prof. Habib even more was the alternative destination selected by the British contingent. They chose to be headquartered in the troubled province of Helmand - why? Prof. Habib's question may well have been answered two days ago by a former British Defence Minister, Johnny Mercer, who served in Afghanistan: "A lot

of British blood was spilled in Helmand." He asks angrily: "Was it really for nothing?" Helmand, it must not be forgotten, is the world's largest centre for poppy production which blossomed in 20 years of the war. His colleague, another Defence Minister, Tobias Elwood has gone one better; he wants Afghanistan re-invaded. "Britain must step up and show international leadership, convene a conference of like-minded states and get a plan in place to deliver effective military support. If we don't, everything we fought for since 2001 will be lost." The Mercer-Elwood duo revive images of Laurel and Hardy in frayed army uniform looking after a giant warehouse packed with canned food. News of the armistice has not reached the two, surrounded by mountains of opened cans which have been their only source for food. A bi plane flies low and the pilot asks them what they were doing. "We are in charge of the war's biggest canteen," Hardy says. "But the war ended years ago." As Bobby Talyarkhan used to end his columns, "Do you get me Steve?" (Saheed Naqvi is a senior commentator on political and diplomatic issues. The views expressed are personal.)

international

MEDIA DECRIES BIDEN'S STATEMENT ON AF AS ONE OF THE MOST SHAMEFUL IN HISTORY

Washington | Agencies

US President Joe Biden's statement on Saturday washing his hands of Afghanistan deserves to go down as one of the most shameful in history by a commander in chief at such a moment of American retreat, the editorial board of the Wall Street Journal said. As the Taliban closed in on Kabul, Biden sent a confirmation of US abandonment that absolved himself of responsibility, deflected blame to his predecessor, and more or less invited the Taliban to take over the country, the editorial board of WSJ said. With that statement of capitulation, the Afghan military's last resistance collapsed. Taliban fighters captured Kabul, and President Ashraf Ghani fled the country while the US frantically tried to evacuate Americans from the war-torn nation. The jihadists the US toppled 20 years ago for sheltering Osama bin Laden will now fly their



flag over the US Embassy building on the 20th anniversary of 9/11, the report said. "Our goal all along has been to offer constructive advice to avoid this outcome. We criticised Donald Trump's deal with the Taliban and warned about the risks of his urge to withdraw in a rush, and we did the same for Biden. The President's advisers offered an alternative, as did the Afghanistan Study Group. Biden, as always too assured of his own foreign-policy acumen, refused to listen," WSJ said. "One more year, or five more years, of US military presence would not have made a difference if the Afghan military cannot or

will not hold its own country," Biden had said. But the Afghans were willing to fight and take casualties with the support of the US and its NATO allies, especially air power. A few thousand troops and contractors could have done the job and prevented this rout, WSJ said. "When I came to office, I inherited a deal cut by my predecessor, in which he invited the Taliban to discuss at Camp David on the eve of 9/11 of 2019, that left the Taliban in the strongest position militarily since 2001 and imposed a May 1, 2021 deadline on US forces. "Shortly before he left office, he also drew US forces down to a bare minimum of 2,500. Therefore, when I became President, I faced a choice - follow through on the deal, with a brief extension to get our forces and our allies' forces out safely, or ramp up our presence and send more American troops to fight once again in another country's civil conflict," Biden had said.

Malaysian PM resigns after losing majority support in Parliament

Kuala Lumpur | Agencies

Malaysian Prime Minister Muhyiddin Yassin announced his resignation on Monday after losing majority support in the lower house of Parliament. In a televised speech, Muhyiddin said he and his cabinet had resigned as demanded by the federal constitution as he no longer enjoyed the support of the majority of MPs, reports Xinhua news agency. He explained that although he had initially sought to test his support in Parliament, the withdrawal of support by a dozen of MPs from his own coalition and the rejection of cross-party cooperation by the opposition had left him with no alternative. "With that, I have lost the support of the majority. So, there is no need for my legiti-



macy as prime minister to be determined in the parliament," he said following a meeting with Malaysia's King Sultan Abdullah Sultan Ahmad Shah. In a separate announcement, the National Palace confirmed that Sultan Abdullah has accepted Muhyiddin's resignation. "His majesty accepted the letter of resignation from the most honourable Muhyiddin Yassin as prime minister and the posts of the entire cabinet with immediate effect today (Monday)," said the statement. It added that Muhyiddin would continue as a caretaker Prime Minister until a suitable replacement is determined. According to Malaysia's constitution, the King, as the country's supreme head of state, appoints a parliament member as the Prime Minister, whom in his view commands the majority of the MPs. Muhyiddin became the Prime Minister in March last year following the abrupt resignation of his predecessor Mahathir Mohamad, but he has been holding on to power with a slim majority in the parliament. Muhyiddin's resignation came after Ahmad Zahid Hamidi, president of the United Malays National Organization (UMNO), a component of the ruling Muhyiddin coalition, withdrew UMNO's support for the Prime Minister together with a number of UMNO MPs.

4 Palestinians killed in clashes with Israeli soldiers in West Bank

Ramallah | Agencies

Akram Rajoub, governor of Jenin, said that Israeli soldiers killed four Palestinian men early in the day after the soldiers stormed the city and clashed with dozens of Palestinians, reports Xinhua news agency. He added that two of the killed were taken to hospital in Jenin, with the bodies of the other two held by the Israeli army. In a statement, the Palestinian Health Ministry identified the victims as Saleh Ammar, aged 19, and 21-year-old Ra'ed Abu Seif. Two others are in serious condition and receiving medical treatment, said the statement. Meanwhile, Israeli media reported that the army killed four Palestinians and wounded four others during the



clashes. Witnesses told Xinhua that an Israeli army force stormed Jenin at pre-dawn and clashed with Palestinian militants, adding that they heard intensive gunfire and explosions. Israel Radio reported that the Israeli army has been preparing for a military operation in Jenin following previous clashes between the Israeli army and Palestinian gunmen in the city.

NEPAL, INDIA REVIEW PROGRESS IN INDIA-FUNDED PROJECTS

Kathmandu | Agencies

Kathmandu: Nepal and India on Monday reviewed the progress made in various India-funded projects in the Himalayan nation. The review exercise was carried out during the ninth meeting of Nepal-India Oversight Mechanism under the co-chairmanship of Foreign Secretary of Nepal, Bharat Raj Paudyal, and Ambassador of India to Nepal, Vinay Mohan Kwatra. The meeting reviewed the progress of the projects being implemented under bilateral economic and development cooperation, Nepal's Ministry of Foreign Affairs said in a statement. During the meeting, discussions were held on the status of implementation of all the ongoing projects, including Terai roads, cross-border railways, Arun-III hydropower project, petroleum products pipelines, Pancheshwar multipurpose project, post-earthquake reconstruction, irrigation, power, and transmission lines, construction of Nepal Police Academy, integrated check-posts, Ramayana circuit, HICDPs, motorable bridges over Mahakali river, agriculture and cultural heritage, among others. It was the first meeting after the formation of the Sher Bahadur Deuba-led government one month ago. The Nepal Foreign Ministry said that both sides underlined the need for the expeditious implementation of bilateral projects. To this end, they agreed to take necessary measures to address the problems and remove the obstacles in the course of implementation of projects, the statement added.



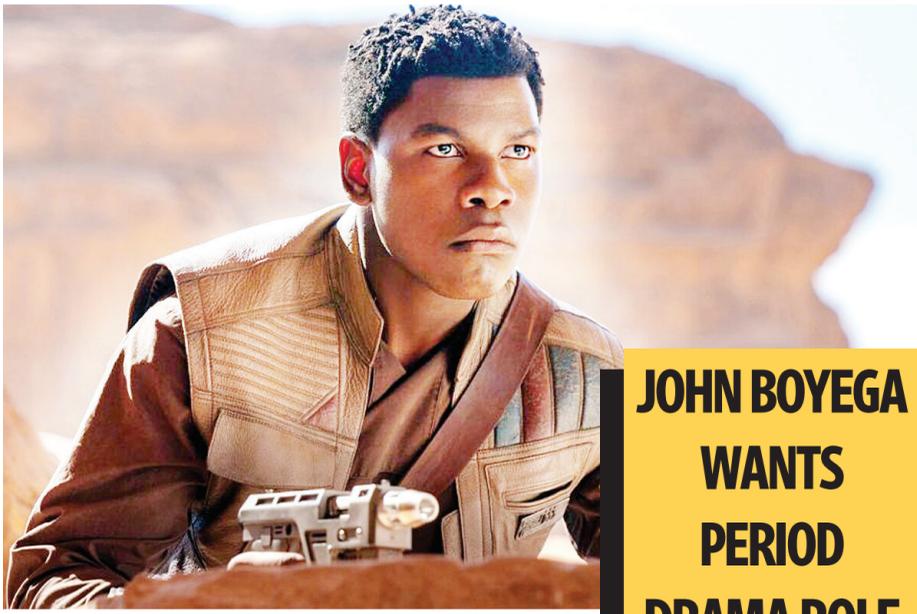
8 people dead in Kabul airport amid chaos

Kabul | Agencies

At least five people have been killed at the Kabul airport and three stowaways were reported to have fallen to their deaths from an airborne plane as thousands of Afghans are desperately trying to get on flights out of the country amid increasingly chaotic scenes, the Daily Mail reported on Monday. US troops fired shots in the air at the Hamid Karzai International Airport to prevent hundreds of civilians running onto the tarmac after they took over Afghanistan's air traffic control. Witnesses said it was not clear whether the victims were killed by gunshots or in a stampede. Footage published by Asvaka showed three stowaways falling to the deaths after clinging on to the wheels of a military plane as it



took off from Kabul airport. Panicked Afghans were also seen climbing up the outside of an airbridge in a bid to get onboard planes and chasing a US military C-17 down the runway. Videos also showed hundreds of people running alongside, and in front of, a US Air Force plane preparing to take off, the Daily Mail report said. All commercial services have been suspended, with only military flights leaving the country as the UK, US and other western countries repatriate their citizens. It comes as the UK Ministry of Defence confirmed the first British nationals had landed at the RAF base Brize Norton after being evacuated from Kabul. The Taliban swept into the capital on Sunday after the Western-backed government collapsed and President Ashraf Ghani fled the country, bringing a stunning end to a two-decade campaign in which the US and its allies had tried to transform the country.



### JOHN BOYEGA WANTS PERIOD DRAMA ROLE

Los Angeles | Agencies

Actor John Boyega, known for his performances in films such as "Star Wars: The Force Awakens", "Pacific Rim 2" and "Detroit", is keen to feature in a period drama after watching the hit series

"Bridgerton".

He feels that he has a future in period pieces, reports femalefirst.co.uk.

"I think it might not be that show, but I think I definitely have a future in wearing high boots and hats, and speaking more of a pronounced pronunciation. That is definitely

in my future," Boyega told Entertainment Tonight.

The 29-year-old actor shared that he has the necessary horse riding skills after learning how to do so for his role as Finn in "Star Wars: The Rise of Skywalker".

Boyega stars in the new movie "Naked Singularity" as a disillusioned lawyer who teams up with a criminal to pull off a daring drug heist.

### Margot Robbie: Haven't been home for two years

Los Angeles | Agencies

Actress Margot Robbie has not been back to her native Australia in almost two years due to shoot commitments and the Covid-19 pandemic.

"There was the pandemic and before that I was on a film or two. I miss home so much," Robbie, who divides her time between London and Los Angeles, told T Australia: The New York Times Style Magazine.

Currently, the borders of Australia are shut and international travel from Australia is in strict control to help prevent the spread of Covid, reports femalefirst.co.uk.

Robbie, who is popular for her work in "The Wolf of Wall Street" and "The Suicide Squad", feels her success is down to committing "120 per cent" to every project. "You cannot half-a\*\* anything. You have to commit 120 per cent - anything less than that ends up looking stupid," she said.



### ED SHEERAN: I WERE TOLD TO GET A REAL JOB

Los Angeles | Agencies

Singer Ed Sheeran wants children to be encouraged to follow creative dreams as he as a youngster was told to forget his musical ambitions and "get a real job".

"I think kids should be encouraged to be creative. When I was a child, saying you wanted to be a musician, they'd go, 'You need to get a real job.' School is so stressful. You've got all these exams -- maths, English and science -- all these things are very difficult," said Sheeran.

He added: "But what I want to say to kids is if you do what you love, you will eventually get paid for it."

The 30-year-old singer said that he's learned more from the low points of his career than the highs.

He said: "You learn way more from failure than you do from success. I have played at Wembley Stadium and I've played a bar in Swindon to one person. And playing the bar in Swindon taught me more than Wembley Stadium."



### Johnny Depp claims being boycotted by Hollywood

Los Angeles | Agencies

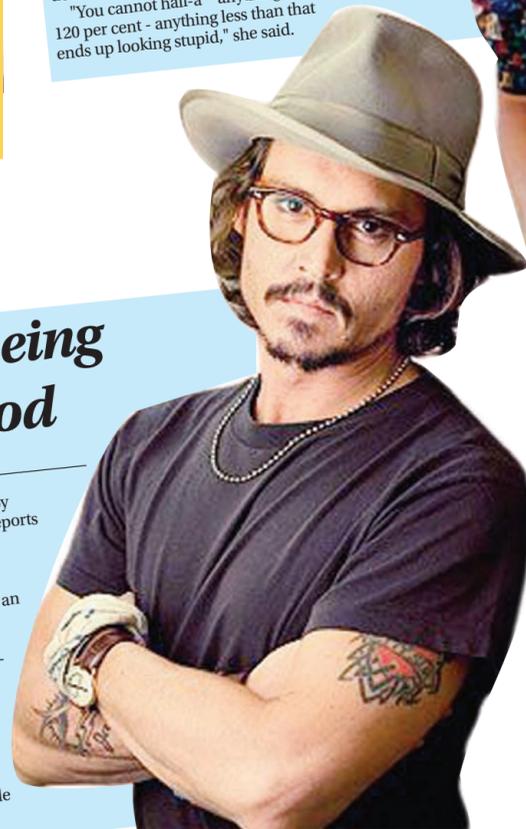
Hollywood star Johnny Depp said that he feels he is being boycotted by Hollywood, as his latest film "Minamata" is yet to get a US release, reports variety.com.

In a new interview with The Sunday Times, Depp called his fall from Hollywood's good graces an "absurdity of media mathematics. Directed by Andrew Levitas, "Minamata" stars Depp as W Eugene Smith, an American photojournalist who helped expose the tragic effects of mercury poisoning on Japanese coastal communities in the 1970s.

Last year, Depp, whose former-wife Amber Heard accused him of domestic violence, lost a libel case against British tabloid, which referred to the actor as a "wife beater" in an article about him and Heard.

The court ruled that the paper proved the content of its article to be "substantially true" and the judge found that 12 of the 14 alleged incidents of domestic violence had occurred.

MGM then reportedly switched the US release of "Minamata" from February 2021 to be announced (TBA) and the actor exited his leading role in Warner Bros.' "Fantastic Beasts" franchise.



Los Angeles | Agencies

'House of Cards' star Robin Wright says she spent her childhood touring the US and learned how to erect a tent, chop wood, hunt deer and then prepare it for the evening's meal by the campfire.

"I've always liked being surrounded by nature, I've been camping all my life, since I was a child, with my family, touring our country in a tent. I know how to chop wood, kill a deer, skin it, smoke its meat and cook it on the grill... Finding yourself in the end with your hands covered with blisters, it's not easy to control it, nature!" she said in an interview with Italian publication IO Donna, reports femalefirst.co.uk.

Wright's most recent role came in the drama movie 'Land', which was also her directorial debut. She plays Edee Holzer, a middle-aged woman who retreats to an isolated cabin in the Wyoming wilderness after experiencing a painful tragedy.

The 'Zack Snyder's Justice League' actress filmed it in the Rocky Mountains.

Robin Wright reveals her secret survival skills



### Hugh Jackman's 'Reminiscence' set for theatrical release in India

Los Angeles | Agencies

Hugh Jackman-starrer 'Reminiscence' is all set to release in select cities in India on August 27.

Talking about the film, Jackman said, "The film explores the idea of memory and nostalgia as something that is potentially addictive, or just enticing to go back and live

in the good old days, remember that time. And with this technology, you can relive it and just stay in the past. But what is the cost of that?"

"And what does it mean for the future of these characters or even the present when you can so easily escape in the past? I think we live in this changing world."

Jackman hopes the movie "res-

onates in that way, where it is wonderful to have memories, but as humans, we have to be constantly creating new ones. I hope in a way that this film opens that sort of discussion."

From filmmaker Lisa Joy comes Warner Bros Pictures' action thriller 'Reminiscence' which also stars Rebecca Ferguson and Thandiwe Newton.



ABSOLUTE PIC OF THE DAY

Iris Law





## INDIA VS ENGLAND CRICKET SERIES, 2ND TEST

# India beat England by 151 runs at Lord's

- India's first two wins at Lord's came in 1986 and 2014.
- Monday's victory also made it a great year for India after brilliant wins at Sydney, Brisbane, and now Lord's.

London | Agencies

Bowlers Jasprit Bumrah, Mohammed Shami and Mohammed Siraj did the star turn as India defeated England by 151 runs in a fifth-day thriller in the second Test here on Monday registering their third-ever victory in 89 years at Lord's, the Mecca of cricket. India put themselves on the threshold of victory in the second Test after reducing England to 67 for four at tea on the fifth and final day. Though Jos Buttler (25) and Ollie



Robinson (9) delayed the inevitable for some time before Bumrah came back to get Robinson out with a superb delivery that caught the batsman plumb in front. Siraj then forced Buttler to knock a faint one to Rishab Pant to make it 120 for nine. He got James

Anderson for a duck to seal the victory. It was Bumrah and Shami who put India on the path to victory -- first with the bat with an unbeaten 89 run stand for the ninth wicket and then with the ball as they got rid of the two openers. Rory Burns and Dominic Sibley. This was the

**Mohammed Shami (56 not out) and Jasprit Bumrah (34 not out) started with the bat as they added unbeaten 89 runs for the ninth wicket to help India set England a challenging target of 272 runs. Bumrah and Siraj then took over with the ball as India bowled out the hosts for 120 runs to seal a memorable victory and take a 1-0 lead in the five-match series.**

first time that English openers had both fallen for a duck in a home Test. No. 3 batsman Haseeb Hameed (9) added 42 for the third wicket

before he fell leg-before to Ishant Sharma. Baird (two off 24 balls) stuck around as Root dominated the 22-run partnership in 6.3 overs but Ishant Sharma again struck to keep India in. But in the end, all that mattered was the way the Indians bowled and batted in the Test, coming up with a great performance when they needed it the most. If it was KL Rahul (129) who did it with a superb hundred and then the tail-enders came to the party and put India on course to victory.

Earlier, India expected Rishab Pant to help them set England a challenging target. But in the end, it was Bumrah and Shami that did that with a superb counter-attacking partnership for the ninth wicket that took the match away from England.

### Brief scores

India 364 and 298/8 decl in 109.3 overs (Ajinkya Rahane 61, Mohammed Shami 56 not out, Cheteshwar Pujara 45, Jasprit Bumrah 34 not out, Mark Wood 3/51, Ollie Robinson 2/45, Moeen Ali 2/84) vs England 391 and 120 all out in 51.3 overs (Joe Root 33; Siraj 4/32 Bumrah 3/33).

## SUPER PROUD OF THE WHOLE TEAM, JASPRIT AND SHAMI WERE OUTSTANDING: KOHLI

New Delhi: Indian skipper Virat Kohli showered praise on bowlers Jasprit Bumrah and Mohammed Shami for their "outstanding" partnership which helped India win the second Test against England at Lord's by 151 runs following a dismal batting collapse by the hosts.

India's tail-end of Shami and Bumrah frustrated England with an 89-run stand before away captain Virat Kohli declared after lunch on 298-8. "Super proud of the whole team. The way we stuck to our plans. Pitch didn't offer much for the first three days. But the way we played in the second innings, under pressure, from Jasprit and Shami was outstanding. We thought with 60 overs to go we could have a crack, and they were outstanding," Virat said after the match.

"Second half of the day, we thought we were on top and our fans got behind us. We feed off the energy of the crowd as well. The best gift we can give to India, but we have three more Test matches and we can't sit on our laurels. That one was gut feel but I like to go with my instinct."



## AFC Cup: Rane strikes as Bengaluru FC enter Group D

Male (Maldives) | Agencies

Indian Super League (ISL) club Bengaluru FC qualified for the AFC Cup (Group D, South Zone) after registering a 1-0 win over Club Eagles of Maldives at the National Stadium here on Sunday evening. New signing Jayesh Rane scored the winner in the 26th minute. The Sunil Chhetri-led Bengaluru FC now join fellow ISL side ATK Mohun Bagan (ATKMB), Maldives' Maziya Sports & Recreation and Bangladesh's Bashundhara Kings in Group D, which kicks off on August 18 with their match against ATKMB. The first real threat from Bengaluru FC came in the 11th minute when Cleiton Silva whipped a nice

ball in from a corner and Alan Costa nodded it to a dangerous area where Yrondu Musavu-King headed it goal-wards only to find the Maldivian goalkeeper Mohamed Faisal.

The very next minute, Bengaluru FC made another good move. Skipper Chhetri ran in from the left and put the ball in deftly from the edge of the box. Silva stretched himself aerially and managed to meet the ball but he wasn't in control of his effort and the ball sailed over the crossbar.

In the second half, Bengaluru FC controlled the game and didn't give any opportunity whatsoever for the Maldivians to come back. All this until the 67th minute



when the Eagles came dangerously close to scoring: after dodging successfully two Bengaluru FC defenders, a Maldivian attacker failed to finish to perfection as his shot went off target.

In the 84th minute, Bengaluru FC got close to scoring their second goal. Chhetri found substitute Augustine in the box but the latter's curler narrowly went over the crossbar.

## SHUBMAN GILL RECOVERS, READY FOR THE IPL

New Delhi: Injured Indian opener Shubman Gill is geared up to play the remainder of the Indian Premier League after recovering from his injury on the shin of his left leg. Gill is in the National Cricket Academy (NCA) and has recovered from his shin pain. He will be departing for the United Arab Emirates (UAE) soon for the IPL. He has been at the NCA for a week now, a source, aware of the development, told IANS. Gill, who will represent Kolkata Knight Riders (KKR) had developed shin pain on his left leg after playing in the World Test Championship final against New Zealand in England in June. He has returned home since. Even though the news of Gill's injury was out in public towards the end of June, the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) had only late last month confirmed. "Opening batsman Shubman Gill sustained a developing stress reaction on his left lower leg (shin) during the World Test Championship final. This was confirmed via an MRI scan. He is ruled out of the tour and has returned back to India," the statement from BCCI had said last month. Gill had scored 132 in seven matches in the first half of the IPL.



## Banned Russia preparing bid for 2036 Olympics

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Banned from bidding for the 2032 Olympics because of alleged state-sponsored doping, Russia is preparing to bid for the 2036 Olympic Games, a senior Russian minister has revealed. According to Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov, Saint Petersburg and Kazan are front-runners to be host cities for the Games.

"The bids are being prepared," Lavrov said, as reported by state-run news agency TASS. "We have several cities - St. Petersburg for sure, and I believe Kazan as well." Russia was banned from bidding for the 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games under the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) sanctions handed out to the country.

Though the Games are still 15 years away, several cities have



already announced their intention to bid for the 2036 Olympics. Among those that have announced their intention to bid for the 2036 Games are Indonesia, with Jakarta as the host, Istanbul (Turkey). There is also a joint bid from Germany and Israel while London, which hosted the 2012 Games, is also in the running.

Russian capital Moscow hosted the 1980 edition of the Summer Olympics during the Soviet era. The IOC had recently awarded the 2032 Games to Brisbane in Australia.

Paris will host the next games in 2023 while the 2028 edition has been awarded to Los Angeles.

## Manchester City start title defence with defeat



London | Agencies

Manchester City's title defence got off to a false start as they lost 1-0 to Tottenham in their opening game of the season. Heung Min-Son's 55th-minute goal gave Tottenham all three points in a game given extra spice by Manchester City's well-publicised pursuit of Spurs' captain, Harry Kane. On Sunday evening, Kane was not included in his side's squad with coach Nuno Espirito Santo saying that the striker, who only returned to training a week ago, was not match fit. Jack Grealish made his debut for Manchester City, but the game showed just why Pep

Guardiola is looking to sign Kane as his side played some pretty football, but lacked bite in their rivals' area, Xinhua reports. West Ham began where they left off last season with a 4-2 win away to Newcastle United after twice coming back from behind in Sunday's other game.

Callum Wilson put Newcastle ahead in the fifth minute only for Aaron Cresswell to level in the 18th minute and although Jacob Murphy put Newcastle back in front before halftime, a second-half blitz saw Said Benrahma, Tomas Soucek and Michail Antonio blitz Newcastle with three goals in 13 minutes, with Antonio also seeing a penalty saved in that spell.

## National football camp returns to Kolkata after 15 years

Team Absolute | Kolkata

The Indian men's football team's preparatory camp kicked off here for the forthcoming international friendlies against Nepal, with 23 of the shortlisted players reporting on Monday. Those competing in the AFC Cup -- currently underway in Maldives -- for their respective clubs will join the camp once the tournament is over.

This marks the return of the national camp in Kolkata after 15 years with the Indian squad last having camped in the city in 2006 prior to the FIFA World Cup Qualifier against Saudi Arabia. "It's a nice feeling for all of us to assemble at the national camp. The primary target is to get ready in our quest to qualify for the AFC Asian Cup China 2023. There is a roadmap laid down and we are confident of making it to China in 2023," midfielder Anirudh Thapa said. The camp will be conducted under a secured bio-bubble, adhering to the laid down health parameters in wake of the current pandemic situation. All the players and



staff have done their RT-PCR tests prior to landing in Kolkata, and the contingent will also be undergoing regular testing during the camp.

Among the list of 23, Seriton Fernandes, Ashish Rai, Rahul KP and Rahim Ali have been called to a senior national camp for the first time. Players from Bengaluru FC and ATK Kolkata will join the camp after completion of their club engagements in the AFC Cup, currently underway in Maldives.

Pronay Halder who didn't travel to Maldives for ATK Mohun Bagan's AFC Cup commitments, and was supposed to join the camp later, has joined his teammates here.

## FEDERER PULLS OUT OF US OPEN, TO UNDERGO KNEE SURGERY

Zurich | Agencies

Swiss tennis legend Roger Federer has announced on Instagram that he will miss the US Open, beginning August 30, and "many months" after undergoing knee surgery.

"I just wanted to give you a bit of an update [on] what's been going on since Wimbledon. As you can imagine, it's not been simple. I've been doing a lot of checks with the doctors as well on my knee, getting all the information as I hurt myself further during the grass-court season and Wimbledon," Federer said in a video posted late on Sunday, which was also put up on aptour.com.

"That's just not the way to go forward, so unfortunately they told me for the medium to long term to feel better, I will need surgery. I decided to do it," said the winner of 20 Grand Slam titles.

"I'll be on crutches for many weeks and also out of



the game for many months, so it's going to be difficult of course in some ways, but at the same time I know it's the right thing to do because I want to be healthy, I want to be running around later as well again and I want to give myself a glimmer of hope to return to the tour in some shape or form."

The Swiss star, who turned 40 on August 8, underwent arthroscopic right knee surgeries in February 2020 and May 2020. Federer has played five tournaments since having those surgeries, all of which came this season. The 103-time tour-level titlist most recently competed at Wimbledon.

## Medvedev tames giant Opelka for Toronto title

Toronto | Agencies

Top seed Daniil Medvedev captured his fourth ATP Masters 1000 crown here on Monday (IST), overcoming American Reilly Opelka 6-4, 6-3 to become the first Russian champion at the National Bank Open since Marat Safin in 2000.

The 25-year-old took down big-server John Isner in the semifinals as he stood two or three feet closer to the baseline on return to counter the height and angle of the serve. Medvedev successfully repeated this against 6'11" Opelka, breaking twice as he won in 85 minutes.

"I could not have dreamt of [this] at one point," Medvedev said in his on-court interview. "With Masters, with Novak [Djokovic] and Rafael [Nadal] playing, it seemed like an



untouchable achievement. Now I have four wins in five finals, which is a good score. I am just happy. I want to achieve more. I am really happy I achieved this in Canada.

## Unseeded Camila Giorgi creates history, bags Montreal title

Montreal | Agencies

Unseeded Camila Giorgi of Italy won the National Bank Open with a straight-sets defeat of fourth seed Karolina Pliskova of the Czech Republic, while Canada's Gabriela Dabrowski made good on home soil along with new partner Luisa Stefani of Brazil, taking the doubles title.

Giorgi stormed to the biggest title of her career with a 6-3, 7-5 win over No. 4 seed Karolina Pliskova in 1 hour and 40 minutes.

This was Camila's first career 1000-level title, her third overall, first since 2018, first above 250 level and first on outdoor hard courts. Previously, the Italian was champion at 's-Hertogenbosch 2015 on grass and Linz



2018 on indoor hard courts. Camila's fine recent form has seen her overcome two notable records for her latest success: Before this year, she was 1-5 against Karolina and 2-6 in WTA finals.

The past two months have seen Camila turn her head-to-head against the Czech around in emphatic fashion. She stunned Karolina 2-6, 6-2, 6-2 in the first round of Eastbourne in June, and backed that up with a 6-4, 6-2 dismissal in the third round of the Tokyo Olympic Games. Here, she meted out Karolina's third final defeat of 2021, following losses in Rome to Poland's Iga Swiatek and at Wimbledon to Australia's Ashleigh Barty.

## RHEA KAPOOR SHARES HER WEDDING-DAY



Team Absolute | Mumbai

Film producer (and Anil and Sunita Kapoor's daughter) Rhea Kapoor's wedding may have excited a paparazzi frenzy, but what was missing was a wedding picture.

The producer of 'Veere Di Wedding' ended the wait on Monday when she shared her first wedding picture with husband Karan Boolani on her official Instagram account. She also wrote a heartwarming note to her husband, whom she called her 'best friend'. The couple got married at a private ceremony in

the Juhu home of the Kapoors on Saturday, August 14.

In her caption, Rhea writes lovingly, expressing her innermost feelings, "12 years later, I shouldn't have been nervous or overwhelmed because you are my best friend and the best guy ever. But I cried and shook and had stomach flips all the way through because I didn't know how humbling the experience would be. "I will always be that girl who had to come home to Juhu at 11 p.m. before my parents fell asleep. Only until now, I didn't know how lucky I was to feel torn. I hope we make a family so close that we have many, many loves of our life ... mine are ..."

## PRACHI DESAI JOINS THE CAST OF 'FORENSIC'

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Prachi Desai has joined Radhika Apte and Vikrant Massey for investigative thriller 'Forensic' directed by Vishal Furia. Talking about her upcoming film, Prachi said, "I am so happy to be a part of this investigative thriller. I play a part that I have never quite attempted before. It is exciting that writers and directors are penning projects that are so unique."

Talking about Prachi being cast in the film, Vishal said: "I am happy that we have Prachi coming on board for the film. She plays a crucial character. She has this intrinsic charm that makes her effortlessly sync with the story."

The suspense thriller 'Forensic' has recently begun shooting. The film is produced by Soham Rockstar Entertainment Pvt. Ltd. and Mini Films, and co-produced by Hunar Mukut.

Prachi Desai was last seen in 'Silence...Can You Hear It?' opposite Manoj Bajpayee. Her upcoming films are 'Kosha' and 'Mashkara'.

## PAWANDEEP EMERGES AS INDIAN IDOL 12 WINNER

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Champawat-born musician Pawandeep Rajan has bagged the trophy of Indian Idol 12 after the longest running season of the singing reality show concluded on Sunday.

The singer was awarded with a cheque of Rs 25 lakh from Sony Entertainment Television.

About his plans with the prize money, Pawandeep said, "I want to open a music school in my district so that little children can learn and move ahead in life. They will get to see how things are done professionally. I've been living with my parents since the start and they have done a lot for me. Whatever I can do in return will always be less."

Pawandeep has also been launched in a music video by Himesh Reshammiya. A few recordings are also lined up.



## Riteish, Tamannaah star in Netflix's 'Plan A Plan B'

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actors Riteish Deshmukh and Tamannaah Bhatia star in the coming-of-age story 'Plan A Plan B', directed by Shashanka Ghosh. Riteish said, "I am elated to be a part of 'Plan A Plan B' and am stoked to be making my digital debut with this film. Working with Shashanka sir has been an absolute pleasure. What excites me the most is the terrific storyline of the film and the journey of this unexpected love story."

Tamannaah called the film "very special" to her.

She added, "Everything from the story to my character won me over right from the start. While her character is that of a matchmaker - making others fall in love, she doesn't want the same for herself. Working on this film has been a great experience with the whole team as we had a blast on the sets almost every time we shot." The film, which is written by Rajat Arora, also stars Poonam Dhillon and Kusha Kapila, and will be released on Netflix.



## Salman, Katrina to jet off to Russia for 'Tiger 3'

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Superstar Salman Khan and actress Katrina Kaif are heading to Russia on August 18 to shoot the international leg of the spy thriller 'Tiger 3', which was put on hold due to the pandemic.

The 45-day grueling schedule is filled with action sequences, and will see Salman and Katrina shoot in

at least 5 international destinations including Austria and Turkey. Given the pandemic, YRF head honcho Aditya Chopra is flying the cast and crew via a jumbo charter.

"YRF is chartering everyone including Salman, Katrina, director Maneesh Sharma, the entire cast and crew for this intense international leg that will see the team pull off some spectacu-

lar shooting schedules! Team Tiger takes off on August 18, 2021!" said a source.

"Tiger 3" is the third part of the spy thriller franchise starring Salman Khan with Katrina Kaif. The first instalment 'Ek Tha Tiger' directed by Kabir Khan released in 2012. The second 'Tiger Zinda Hai' released in 2017 and was directed by Ali Abbas Zafar.

## DIVYA, SHAMITA IN CAT-FIGHT ON 'BIGG BOSS OTT'

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Host Karan Johar lost his cool on housemates Divya Agarwal and Shamita Shetty on an episode of 'Bigg Boss OTT'. The show started with him bashing Divya on her commenting that "I don't need 'Bigg Boss' in my career" to which Karan was furious and said "Tell me, Divya ma'am, if you don't need the show, why are you here? This is 'Bigg Boss' house, there is no party. You all are playing a game, let's get that straight."

After a never-ending argument with the host, Divya emotionally broke down and was seen fighting with Shamita Shetty. At another moment, when Shamita said, "I really don't care", Karan didn't spare her a lashing either. He blasted her saying "I will not care about you if you don't care about yourself and the show." Shamita was later seen wiping away her tears.

Divya accused Shamita of taking her screen time and asserted that she didn't like her diplomacy. Shamita seemed to prefer to hold off the fight for now as she told Divya, "I don't wish to talk to you."



## INSTAGRAM PIC OF THE DAY



Shreeja Raj Gopal