

absolute india

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Deadly Kabul blasts leave large toll, US confirms troops' deaths

TERRORIST ACT: TALIBAN

Sources in the Afghanistan health ministry said that at least 60 people, including women and children, were killed and 150 others, including Taliban guards got injured in the blast. The prime suspect for the suicide attacks at Kabul airport on Thursday is the Islamic State affiliate in Afghanistan known as Islamic State Khorasan Province (ISIS-K or ISKP), The Guardian reported.

KABUL | Agencies

Twin blasts at the Kabul airport, which is thronged by crowds of desperate Afghans seeking to flee the country after the Taliban takeover, on Thursday, followed by one at a nearby hotel, where processing of refugees takes place, caused numerous casualties, including US troops (at least 12 soldiers). Pictures off the spot showed a pile of bodies and some reports put the number of dead as high as 60, but there was no official confirmation till the time going for print.

Two back-to-back explosions were reported from outside the crowded Kabul airport on Thursday evening, another went off later in the night.

"We can confirm that a number of US service members were killed in today's complex attack at Kabul airport. A number of others are being treated for wounds. We also know that a number of Afghans fell victim to this heinous attack. Our thoughts and prayers go out to the loved ones and teammates of all those killed and injured."

John Kirby, Press Secretary, Pentagon



Courtesy: Daily Mail Online

Twelve US soldiers, two US officials and a medical officer were among those killed and three others were injured. The airport blast was said to have taken place outside one of its

gates where British and US troops are stationed to oversee the evacuation process. It is suspected to be a suicide attack. The Taliban termed the explosions outside Kabul airport a "terrorist

act". Taliban spokesperson Zabihullah Mujahid said that the group has "strongly condemned" the attack outside Kabul airport, adding that it took place at an area controlled by US forces. While the Kabul airport saw two explosions within minutes from each other, two more blasts was reported hours later. As per initial reports, the third was a Taliban vehicle hitting an improvised explosive device in central Kabul. The attacks came amid warnings by the western nations of a terror strike at the airport as evacuation of foreign citizens continues. In a response, French President Emmanuel Macron said that the situation has "profoundly deteriorated" in Afghanistan. He called for caution before the situation descended into one "that we can't control" and added that the situation around the airport remains very dangerous.

Evacuating Indians top priority: Govt

New Delhi: The Centre on Thursday said that the situation in Afghanistan is very critical after the Taliban's seizure of power on August 15 and evacuating the remaining Indians was the top priority of the government. Briefing leaders of various parties at an all-party meet here, External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar said: "India is trying to evacuate as many people as possible from Afghanistan and evacuating Indian personnel was a top priority." He said India has adopted "a wait and watch policy" on the situation in the war-torn country, sources said.

The External Affairs Minister also informed the all-party meeting about the setting up of a round the clock 'Afghanistan Cell' on August 16 to help the stranded Indians and other Afghan nationals who wanted to come to India, fearing Taliban's prosecution and an special category of emergency visas for Sikh and Hindu Afghans by the Union Home Ministry, the sources added.



35 evacuees from Kabul lands at Hindon

New Delhi: The Indian Air Force (IAF) plane, C-17 Globemaster carrying 35 evacuees from Kabul, landed at the Hindon Air Force Station in Ghaziabad on Thursday. The 35 evacuees comprised 24 Indian and 11 Nepali nationals. All the evacuees will be taken by ITBP buses from the airport to a quarantine centre at Chhawala.

"2ND COVID WAVE NOT OVER YET": CENTRE WARNS OF FESTIVE SEASON SPIKE

Be Careful

"The second surge has not yet concluded. It is not over and, therefore, we have to maintain all necessary precautions, particularly in light of our experience that after every festival we see a spike. The coming months of September and October are crucial for us because we would be celebrating a few festivals. Thus, festivals have to be celebrated with Covid-appropriate behaviour."

Rajesh Bhushan, Union Health Secretary



country in the past 24 hours. Of these, 58 per cent were reported from Kerala while the rest of the states were still showing a declining trend, said Bhushan. Meanwhile, in an interview to a news outlet, Dr Soumya Swaminathan, Chief Scientist at the World Health Organisation said that "India could have reached some sort of stage of endemicity" in terms of the overall Covid-19 situation.

22 students in Mumbai testing positive

Mumbai: Twenty-two students from a boarding school and orphanage in Mumbai -- 15 of them children -- have tested positive for coronavirus. The St Joseph's School and Orphanage -- open through lockdowns for orphans and underprivileged children -- has been sealed by the city's civic body Brihanmumbai Corporation. Health Minister Rajesh Tope said their health is stable and they are receiving treatment. Four of the students -- aged below 12 years -- have been shifted to the paediatric ward of the Nair Hospital. Of remaining students, 12 are in the 12-18 years age group while six are above 18, and all of them have been admitted to the Covid care centre at the Richardson and Crudas company's premises, the official said. The BMC conducted RT-PCR tests at the school located in Dongri area on August 24 after some students complained of Covid-19-like symptoms. Of 95 students, 22 tested positive for the viral infection.

INDIA'S FRESH COVID CASES NEAR TO 50K IN 24 HRS

New Delhi: India on Thursday reported 46,164 new Covid cases, around 22 per cent jump in the last 24 hours. A total of 607 deaths were also reported in the time span, pushing the total death count in India at 4,36,365, according to the data released by the Union Health Ministry. On Wednesday 37,593 fresh infections and 648 deaths were reported in the last 24 hours, and on Tuesday the country had registered 25,467 new cases and 354 deaths in the last 24 hours.

"The potential for the Covid-19 virus to become endemic... that is when a virus is constantly maintained at a threshold in a geographic community with occurring outbreaks. At this moment, it is a little premature to say that the virus will become endemic since the currently available data doesn't suggest that reinfection rates are high."

Dr Ravi Shekhar Jha, HoD, Pulmonology, Fortis Escorts

CRPF to provide security to CBI teams probing post-poll violence in Bengal



Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Centre has provided security cover by CRPF to the CBI teams probing cases of post-poll violence in West Bengal, sources in the security set up said here on Thursday.

According to the sources, four companies of Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) have been deployed for providing security to the CBI teams probing the matter. Some of the CRPF person-

nel will accompany the investigating teams during their visits to the areas where violence reportedly took place after the declaration of Assembly election results on May 2.

According to the sources, the CBI registered nine cases on Thursday related to the post-poll violence in the state. Four units of Special Investigation Team (SIT) have also been moved to the crime scenes across the state, the sources said.

Guj HC declines govt plea to lift stay on sections of 'love jihad' law

Gandhinagar | New Delhi

Rejecting the state government's plea to rectify its August 19 order, the Gujarat High Court on Thursday refused to vacate its stay on Section 5 of the Gujarat Freedom Of Religion Amendment Act 2021, noting that it couldn't find any reason to make any changes. The court also said that the stay on Section 5 remained effective only for inter-faith marriages.

While protecting inter-faith marriages by consenting adults from the rigours of the law, the court had, prima facie, observed that the law "interferes with the intricacies of marriage including the right to the choice of an individual, thereby



infringing Article 21 of the Constitution Of India".

The division bench comprising Chief Justice Vikram Nath and Justice Vaishnav observed that the

provisions of the law, commonly known as the 'love jihad' law, put parties who have validly entered into inter-faith marriage "in great jeopardy".

INDIA LIBERALISES UAS OPERATIONS VIA DRONE RULES, 2021

New Delhi: Centre has replaced the UAS Rules with the liberalised Drone Rules, 2021 which are built on a premise of trust, self-certification and non-intrusive monitoring. In March 2021, the Ministry of Civil Aviation (MoCA) had published the UAS Rules, 2021. "They were perceived by academia, Startups, end-users and other stakeholders as being restrictive in nature as they involved considerable paperwork, required permissions for every drone flight and very few 'free to fly' green zones were available," MoCA said in a statement. "Based on the feedback, the Government has decided to repeal the UAS Rules, 2021 and replace the same with the liberalised Drone Rules, 2021." The "Unmanned Aircraft Systems" (UAS), commonly known as drones, offer tremendous benefits to almost all sectors of the economy like agriculture, mining, infrastructure, surveillance, emergency response, transportation, geo-spatial mapping, defence, and law enforcement.

Crisis deepens for Congress in Chhattisgarh, 36 MLAs to reach Delhi

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Amid the rift in the Chhattisgarh Congress Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel will reach Delhi on Friday and meet the Congress leaders. It is also expected that he might meet former party president Rahul Gandhi, sources said. However the crisis in the state has deepened with 36 odd MLAs also coming to New Delhi to meet senior leader KC Venugopal and apprise him of the situation in the state. Twenty more MLAs will board a flight on Friday.

While TS Singh Deo on Thursday categorically said that he will take on any responsibility given to him by the party high command, he also said that everyone is an aspirant for the top post in the state. On Tuesday, Rahul Gandhi had met Chief



Minister Bhupesh Baghel and TS Singh Deo who is a contender for the top post.

After the meeting, Chhattisgarh Congress in-charge P.L. Punia speaking to the media said, "There was no discussion on a change of leadership in Chhattisgarh." The meeting of these two leaders with Rahul Gandhi came amid Deo's reported claim for the top post in the state, demanding rotational chief ministership.

Supreme Court on use of sedition law on suspended IPS officer

'Very disturbing trend'

Team Absolute | New Delhi

A bench headed by Chief Justice of India N.V. Ramana on Thursday orally pointed out at a disturbing trend, where police officials siding with the party in power, later getting targeted when the another political party comes into office.

Chief Justice said, "When a political party is in power, police officials side with it... then, when a new party comes into power, the government initiates action against those officials. This is a new trend, which needs to be stopped". The bench also com-



prising Justice Surya Kant further added that this is a very disturbing trend in the country and the police department is also responsible for it. The top court made these observations while granting protection from arrest to a suspended senior ADG

rank-officer, Gurjinder Pal Singh, against whom two criminal cases -- sedition and amassing disproportionate assets -- have been filed by the Chhattisgarh government. The top court directed the police not to arrest Singh in the cases for now.

However, it directed Singh to cooperate with the agencies in the ongoing investigation.

Centre clears all 9 judges recommended by SC

New Delhi: The Centre has approved all nine names recommended by the Supreme Court Collegium, including three women judges, for the appointment as judges to the top court. According to sources familiar with the development, the names have been sent to the President for approval. Last week, the Supreme Court Collegium, which is headed by Chief Justice N.V. Ramana and comprises Justices -- U.U. Lalit, A.M. Khanwilkar, D.Y. Chandrachud and L. Nageswara Rao, had recommended nine names, including eight high court judges and a senior advocate for the elevation to the top court.

Hindu leader announces reward on Narayan Rane's head

VARANASI | Agencies

Vishwa Hindu Sena president, Arun Pathak, has once again, made a controversial statement on social media.

Pathak, who is reportedly absconding for three months in the case of pasting the posters of the prime minister and the chief minister in Varanasi, has announced on Facebook and Twitter, a reward of Rs 51 lakh for beheading Union Minister Narayan Rane.

Pathak is wanted in the case registered at Bheulupur police station but the police have failed to trace him.

Arun Pathak wrote on Facebook and Twitter that a reward of 51 lakh would be given to the one who beheads Union Minister Narayan Rane.

At the same time, he tweeted that the ashes of Narayan Rane will not be



allowed to be immersed in Kashi. It was Balasaheb who made Narayan Rane a Shiv Sainik and to get cheap popularity, Rane attacked

Balasaheb's son, he stated. Senior officials, meanwhile, did not comment on the incident.



MYSURU GANG RAPE:

RAPISTS MADE VIDEO, DEMANDED MONEY

Team Absolute | Mysuru

More horrific details have come out in the Mysuru gang rape. The miscreants had made a video of their act of sexual assault of the college girl and demanded Rs 3 lakh for not making it viral on social media, police sources said on Thursday. The incident of the gang rape had taken place on Tuesday late in the evening. A gang of six miscreants in an inebriated state had targeted the victim who had come to the isolated place with her male friend. They had attacked her male friend with a small boulder.

Sources say that the miscreants had stripped the girl and raped her for nearly two hours. Since, the place is isolated and people feared the movement of leopards, the miscreants were sure that their act would go unnoticed and no one would come to the girl's rescue.

The miscreants had hit the victim's friend repeatedly with a small boulder, slapped and assaulted him. Both pleaded that they won't tell anyone about the incident. Even after that, the gang continued their attack and left them at the isolated place in an



almost unconscious state.

Somehow, the victim and her friend reached a hospital and told the authorities that they were attacked. They did not reveal what actually happened fearing the release of the video. But later the victim's male friend told the police about the rape. The police have recovered empty bottles and cans of beer from the area. The police sources said they are working on tracking calls from the tower location as they suspect the miscreants of spending more time there. Meanwhile, the National Commission for Women has taken suo motu notice of the gang rape case and registered a case. Rekha

Sharma, the Chairperson, has stated that the commission would meet the victim on Thursday. Opposition leader Siddaramaiah has slammed the government that it has failed to maintain law and order in the state. Incidents of loot, attacks are on the rise, he said. The police are gathering information from the friend of the victim but no breakthrough has been made so far. The state government has appointed ADGP Pratap Reddy to head the investigation into the incident. The police are searching for clues as no CCTVs are installed in that area. As per preliminary information obtained from the girl and her friend, the rapists spoke in

GANG RAPES HAPPEN ALL THE TIME, SAYS K'TAKA MINISTER

Bengaluru: After Home Minister Araga Jnanendra's shocking comments on Mysuru gang rape case, it is the turn of Minister for Labour Shivaram Hebbar to make another loose comment on the serious crime. Shivaram Hebbar said here on Thursday that such incidents of gang rape happen all the time. Such incidents have occurred during the times of other governments also. These things have been taking place for quite a long time. "It is not that such incidents are taking place only when our party came to power. Women have been targeted earlier," he added.

Kannada indicating they are locals. The police are waiting for the detailed statement of the victim and drawing up sketches of the miscreants based on the information given to them.

Yogi to withdraw cases of stubble burning against farmers

Team Absolute | Lucknow

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has announced that the government would withdraw cases against farmers and revoke fines imposed on them for burning crop residue in the fields.

He also said that having cleared Rs 1.42 lakh crore cane arrears pending since 2010, his government would now enhance the state support price of cane after consulting all the stakeholders in this regard.

The crushing of cane in sugar mills would start from October 20 in the western region, from October 25 in the central region and in the first week of November in the eastern region, he said. In an interaction with a



group of farmers, late on Wednesday evening, the chief minister further said that farmers' power connections would not be snapped for dues and the government would also bring a one-time settlement scheme (OTS) to waive interest on the power dues.

He said the government was committed to the welfare of farmers and bringing about qualitative change in

their lives by enhancing their income with the help of various schemes launched by the central and state governments.

The government purchased a record 56 lakh MT of wheat from farmers on the minimum support price despite the pandemic whereas wheat purchase was as low as six lakh MT in 2016-17, said the chief minister.

WING COMMANDER BOOKED FOR RAPE, PHYSICAL ASSAULT WITH WIFE

Team Absolute | Patna

A woman in Bihar's Bhagalpur district registered an FIR against her husband alleging rape, mental and physical harassment, an official said on Thursday. In a complaint to the Bhagalpur police, the woman alleged that her husband, Suman Kumar, who is a wing commander with the Indian Air Force and is posted at air force station Purnia, has taken away her elder son. "My husband has taken away my four and a half year old son

from me. He also told other employees of the air force station that I am his son's surrogate mother," the woman said. "I got married to Suman on June 2, 2015 in a temple in Bhagalpur. I gave birth to the first child in 2017 and second in 2020. After the birth of my second child, Suman's behaviour started changing. Initially I thought that the behaviour is changing due to excessive workload. Hence, I ignored it. But his rude behaviour with me intensified. He frequently assaulted me as well which I had objected to while residing in Bhagalpur," the victim said.

11 cops suspended for hooch tragedy in Agra

Agra: The Uttar Pradesh government has suspended eleven policemen, including three SHOs, after a report by senior officials who investigated the hooch tragedy resulting in death of ten persons. The viscera report confirmed the cause of the deaths, though the local police had earlier denied that spurious alcohol had killed more than half a dozen villagers under Dauki police station. A team led by ADG zone Rajiv Krishan visited the villages and interacted with the family members of the deceased. Three inspectors of the state Excise department have also been suspended.

12 babies infected with Covid in Odisha's Balasore

Team Absolute | Bhubaneswar

As many as 12 babies have tested Covid-19 positive in Odisha's Balasore district, officials said on Thursday.

Out of these, four infants (under one month) are under observation at the Sick Newborn Care Unit (SNCU) at the District Headquarters Hospital (DHH), while another six are under treatment at the hospital, said Chief District Medical and Public Health Officer, Dulalsen Jagadev.

Among the six kids, three are under one year and three above one year, he informed. Besides, two infants, who



tested Covid-19 positive, were discharged from the hospital on Wednesday, after their parents decided to shift them to Cuttack, Jagadev said. He added that the children infected with Covid-19 are not so serious and have mild symptoms. The district health officials

are keeping a close eye on them, added the official. Meanwhile, the state has reported 849 fresh Covid-19 cases, of which 130 are below 18 years. The state government has confirmed the death of another 66 persons due to Covid-19, taking the toll to 7,628.

Delhi Police officer's son shoots man in head near IGI

Team Absolute | New Delhi

A man was allegedly shot in the head near Delhi's Indira Gandhi International (IGI) Airport, while he was going in his car along with his friends early on Wednesday.

The victim, who was identified as Sandeep Bhati, was in his Hyundai Verano along with three friends when the incident took place around 5 a.m., according to the police. He is learnt to be critical and undergoing treatment in a private hospital in Noida.

The police said the accused fired two bullets at Bhati's car. The first one hit the rear glass of the vehicle



while the second hit Bhati on his head.

"We received information through PCR call and when we reached the spot, we were informed by one of his (Bhati) friends that they were on their way back from a

temple in Bhiwadi when an unknown person started following them from the airport," said Ingit Pratap Singh, DCP Southwest district.

The accused has been identified as Nitin Singh Raghuvanshi and a case has

been registered under IPC sections for rash driving, attempted murder and the Arms Act on the complaint of Bhati's friends, the DCP told reporter. He informed that during the investigation, police scanned CCTV footage from the Delhi-Gurugram border to Kalkaji and identified the Swift car that was driven by the accused.

"After the firing incident, accused Nitin Raghuvanshi went to Kalkaji and sent his car to a repair shop in Okhla from where our team has seized it. His mother, Archana, is a Delhi Police officer. The family lives in a police colony in Kalkaji," Singh added.

DON'T AGREE WITH HOME MINISTER'S TAKE ON MYSURU GANG RAPE CASE: BOMMAI

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Karnataka Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai on Thursday stated that he does not agree with the statements of Home Minister Araga Jnanendra on the Mysuru gang rape case. "I will not agree with his statements. I have directed him to clarify the issue. He has made those statements while reacting to the criticism by the opposition parties and I don't agree with his statements," he said. Jnanendra has said that the gang rape has taken place in Mysuru and opposition Congress is "raping him" in the state capital. He also said that the girl should not have gone



to such a lonely place late in the evening. Bommai also directed the police department to report to him directly on the gang-rape case. "I have spoken to ADGP Pratap Reddy, who is heading the investigation and told him to consider the case seriously.

The same has been communicated to the state police chief," he said. The police are in touch with the victim, her male friend and their parents. The investigation is being conducted on the available information. "Our government considers such incidents with at most seriousness," he added.

India's Covid vax coverage crosses 60cr-landmark

Team Absolute | New Delhi

In a significant achievement, India's Covid-19 vaccination coverage has crossed the 60-crore landmark on Wednesday. The country's total vaccination count under the mass vaccination drive now stands at 60,24,25,271.

An official said that more than 66 lakh vaccines doses were administered since Tuesday.

Union Health Minister Mansukh Mandaviya on social media posted: "Under PM Narendra Modi ji's 'Sabko Vaccine Muft Vaccine' initiative, India

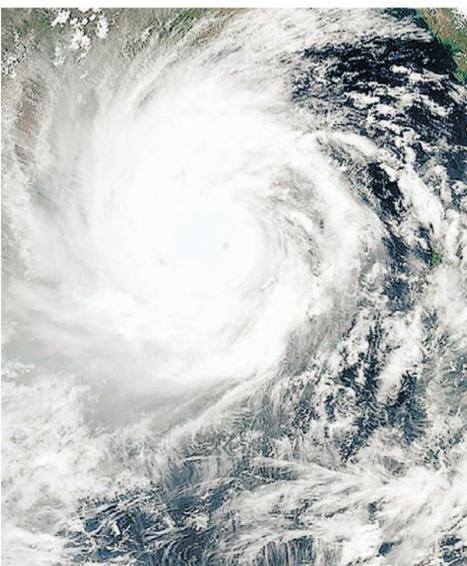


crossed the 60 crore vaccination mark. Congratulations everyone!"

In another tweet, he said, "The country with the mantra of 'Sabka Swasthya, Sabka Suraksha', India is advancing towards Covid 19 vaccination. India took first 85 days for 10 crore vaccines, next 45 days for 20 crores, 29 days for 30 crores, 24 days for 40 crores, 20 days for 50 crores. And now it took only 19 days to complete 60 crore vaccinations."

The Centre on Wednesday also reviewed the Covid-19 vaccination progress in all states and UTs.

'2020 TROPICAL CYCLONE SEASON COSTLIEST IN RECORDED HISTORY'



Nivedita Khandekar | New Delhi

The 2020 North Indian Ocean (NIO) tropical cyclone season was the costliest in recorded history, with damages amounting to excess of \$16 billion, the 'State of Climate in 2020' report said. "The majority of the damage was driven from the impacts associated with Super Cyclone Amphan, amounting to \$13.9 billion," said the report prepared by the American Meteorology Society.

The report, prepared by more than 530 scientists from over 60 countries, including India, was released in the US on Wednesday.

There were 102 named tropical cyclones across all ocean basins last year, well above the 1981-2010 average of 85 storms. Of these, three tropical cyclones reached Category 5 intensity.

The North Indian Ocean (NIO) tropical cyclones season

typically occurs between April and December, with two peaks in activity: May-June and October-December.

These are caused by the presence of the monsoon trough over tropical waters of the NIO during these periods. The Bay of Bengal, on an average, experiences four times more tropical cyclones than the Arabian Sea.

"The damage associated with Amphan was estimated to be at \$13.9 billion, the costliest cyclone recorded in the basin. In India alone, 98 deaths were reported, along with fatalities in Bangladesh and Sri Lanka. West Bengal was most impacted by Amphan.

"In June, the Indian Red Cross Society reported that 2.9 million houses in the state were damaged or destroyed. A 24-hour accumulated rainfall of 240 mm was recorded at Alipore, and storm surge of approximately 15 feet inundated low-lying areas of West

Bengal. Bhutan was also affected by flash flooding," the report said.

"Cyclone Nisarga resulted in six fatalities and damage of over \$800 million was reported. Farmers living along the coast of Raigad and Ratnagiri in Maharashtra suffered devastating losses, and crops including coconut, betel, and mango were destroyed. Significant rainfall (190 mm) was reported at Mahabaleshwar (Maharashtra), and up to 130 mm was reported at Mormugao (Goa) by the Indian Meteorological Department," the report said.

"Cyclone Nivar (November 23-25) formed in the Bay of Bengal and tracked toward the west-northwest, passing to the northeast of Sri Lanka. On November 25, Nivar made land-fall crossing the Tamil Nadu and Puducherry coasts. Nivar reportedly resulted in 14 deaths and damage of around \$600 million," it added.

Major global findings of the report:

- The global annual average atmospheric CO2 concentration rose to 412.5 parts per million last year, the highest in the modern 62-year measurement record and in ice core records dating back as far as 800,000 years
- Year 2020 was among the three warmest years on record dating to mid to late 1800s
- Globally, upper ocean heat content was record high in 2020
- Global average sea level rose to a new record high at about 3.6 inches (91.3 mm) higher than the 1993 average
- The 2020 Southwest Asian Monsoon season (June to September) was the wettest since 1981
- The Arctic mean surface air temperature was the highest on record



MP IMPLEMENTS NATIONAL EDUCATION POLICY 2020 (NEP 2020)

Madhya Pradesh Government on Thursday launched the National Education Policy 2020 (NEP 2020) in Bhopal.

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Madhya Pradesh Government today has launched the National Education Policy 2020 (NEP 2020) in Bhopal. With this, Madhya Pradesh becomes the second state after Karnataka to implement NEP 2020. Formally launching the education policy, Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan in his address has asked the Vice Chancellors of the universities of the state to not be only confined to their universities, adding that they should also visit colleges, tour and show a new direction to the education system.

Lauding the features of NEP 2020, the Chief Minister also said, "The aim of education is to impart knowledge, skills and values of citizenship. This policy allows you to study Physics and Chemistry as well as become a scholar of Hindi or Sanskrit."

Chief Minister Chouhan also added that the government will have to prepare children who become job creators, not job seekers.

During the launch of NEP 2020, Higher Education Minister Mohan Yadav said that the government is planning to implement NEP 2020



within four years in all the regions of the state, which includes 16 government universities and 40 private universities. The government, Mr Yadav added, will also be introducing agricultural science as a subject in Vikram University and Rani Durgavati University.

The NEP 2020 approved by the Union Cabinet on July 29 last year envisions major reforms in the school and higher education systems. Formulation of the new National Education Policy (NEP) is a live example of cooperative federalism to achieve a common goal of making India a global hub of knowledge, Union Education

Minister Dharmendra Pradhan said on Tuesday, August 24, while commemorating one-year achievements of the policy.

Governor Mangubhai Patel said that the educational institutions of the state should become flying launch-pads for the students so that they can touch the infinite heights of life. In order to provide opportunities to the students to pursue education of their choice and need, the universities should arrange web based online courses and credits of active knowledge. By encouraging easy access to education, equality, quality and utility of education responsible through the National

Education Policy, we can change the future of the country. The University should implement the policy by making the best use of its efficiency and knowledge base in accordance with the vision and philosophy of the National Education Policy Makers. The academic environment of the universities should encourage creative thinking, logical judgment and the spirit of innovation in students. The student should be equipped with the necessary skills, knowledge. There should be no linguistic hindrances in education. Education should be easy for disabled students also.

CM Chouhan said that we will make the youth so skillful that they automatically get employment. Education that cannot make a person capable and self-dependent in earning a livelihood is useless. It is necessary to make arrangements for employment oriented education and skill upgradation. The new National Education Policy fulfills the resolve of Prime Minister Narendra Modi to ensure all round development of the new generation along with education and skill promotion. Chouhan thanked PM Modi for the new National Education Policy.

Modern technology necessary to double farmer's income: CM

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has said that in order to double the income of the farmers, it is necessary to connect the latest discoveries and developing technology in the field of agricultural science with the farmer's field. Agri genomics is such a scientific field, which can ensure high yield, insect resistance and crop quality. Nandkumar Singh Chouhan (NKC) Center for Genomics Research will prove to be a milestone in providing updated scientific information to the farmers.

Chouhan was virtual inaugurating the center set up by Nucleom Informatics in Hyderabad from the Chief Minister's residence.

Dushyant Singh Baghel, Managing Director of Nucleom Informatics informed that Asia's largest genomics lab will be set up in Indore by his institute at a cost of 165 crores. Chief Minister Chouhan has said that the state government will provide all possible help in setting up the lab.

Chouhan recalling the efforts made by Nandkumar Singh Chouhan for the up-liftment of agriculture in Nimar area, he said that he also played an important role in getting the DNA Bill passed in the Parliament. The efforts being made by his family in the field of agriculture and animal husbandry to provide world-class scientific information to the farmers of the country are commendable. Chouhan said that soybean crop in the



state is continuously getting spoiled. Farmers are greatly affected by this. Soybean crop improvement experiments can be done using agri genomics. This will benefit the farmers of the state.

It is noteworthy that Agri Genomics is a scientific field, which is contributing to crop improvement. Due to this, more production of better quality crops is possible by improving the pest resistance in the crop, stress tolerance of plants. Nucleom Informatics started its journey in this field in 2013. The work of genome sequencing of animals is also being done by the organization.

Endangered Fishing Cat Exhibition on the Cultures of Northeast India" inaugurated at IGRMS Caught On Camera

The evidence of the fishing cat's presence was also witnessed earlier around the Ken river in Panna Tiger Reserve but it was captured on camera for the first time recently, the government said.



in the tiger reserve, an official release by the government said. The evidence of the fishing cat's presence was also witnessed earlier around the Ken river, which covers a 55-km-long stretch within the PTR, but this endangered animal was captured on the camera for the first time recently, it said. This species of cat, which

mostly feeds on fish, is becoming extinct, it added.

The hunting of fishing cats is prohibited as per Schedule-1 of Indian Wildlife Protection Act 1972, the release said.

The biologists who are interested in research and study on the fishing cat can come and study here, it added.

This exhibition is an incomparable example of Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat said Parthasarathy Sen Sharma

Team Absolute | Bhopal

The "Exhibition on the Cultures of Northeast India" was inaugurated by Parthasarathy Sen Sharma (IAS), Additional Secretary, Ministry of Culture, Government of India on Thursday, 26th August, 2021 in the Indoor Museum building, Veethi Sankul of Indira Gandhi Rashtriya Manav Sangrahalaya. He said that this exhibition will promote unity in different parts of the country through cultural linkages. This exhibition is an incomparable example of Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat. Many dignitaries were present on this occasion.

PK Mishra, Director, Manav Sangrahalaya said that the culture of Manipur, Nagaland, Assam, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Tripura, Arunachal Pradesh, Sikkim has been displayed state wise in the exhibition based on the cultures of Northeast India in the Vithi Sankul Indoor Exhibition Building. Each culture has its own corpus of unfathomable material expressions and the utilities of which are deeply



influenced by the place and environment, where they live. The North-Eastern region of India is comprised of a multi-ethnic set up of a plural society where variants of indigenous cultures are intricately looped and interconnected with profound cultural practices. This exhibition showcases more than 500 ethnographic objects representing the

mosaic material cultures of the eight states. N Sakmacha Singh, Museum Associate further told about this exhibition that for an easeful representation of the North-East Indian collection of IGRMS, objects are displayed in 12 thematic sections to provide a glimpse of the rich cultural heritage of the region. In this exhibition - Mythical World of the Paphal, Manipur, The Satra Culture of Assam, Tripura, Meghalaya and Mizoram Collections, Textiles of the North-East India, Tribal Ornaments of Arunachal Pradesh, Traditional Weapons of the tribes of North-East India, Naga Collections (Narratives of the Fertility Cult), Sikkim Corner (Sikkim and the Sikkimese).

Director PK Mishra and officials guided Parthasarathy Sen Sharma in Coastal Village-Desert Village Open Air Exhibition, Vithi Sankul, Tribal Habitat Open Air Exhibition, Himalaya Village, Kumhar Para Traditional Technological Park and Rock Art Exhibition Site.

PVT SCHOOLS TO STAGE PROTESTS TO DEMAND RESUMPTION OF PHYSICAL CLASSES

Bhopal: The Madhya Pradesh Private School Association wants schools to reopen for all classes with a standard operating procedure in place immediately. At least 45,000 private schools affiliated to the Madhya Pradesh Board of Secondary Education will stage sit-in protests across the state from September 2 to demand reopening of schools for all classes in compliance with COVID-19 safeguards. The Madhya Pradesh Private School Association wants schools to reopen for all classes with a standard operating procedure in place immediately, president of the association Ajeet Singh said on Thursday. "The association is not going to suspend online classes or physical classes for students of Classes 9 to Class 12 held on different days in a week," Singh said. He further demanded that the state government pay the dues of private schools that have provided education to unprivileged children under Right to Education (RTE), he said. "The state government has not paid dues accumulated under RTE in the last three years," he added. Among other demands, private schools also want the state government to immediately scrap the annual renewals of recognition of schools. "We are being asked to pay around Rs 20,000 annual school recognition renewal fees.

3 college-mates rape first-year student as her friend watches on

Three college students allegedly raped a woman studying in the first-year of graduation in Madhya Pradesh's Indore. The victim, in her complaint, said her woman friend watched the three take turns to rape her.

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Three college students allegedly raped a woman studying in the first-year of graduation in Indore. The woman had accompanied the three accused to Mandu in the Dhar district of Madhya Pradesh at

the insistence of a woman friend, who is the fourth accused in the case.

The incident took place on August 23 when they were returning from Mandu to Indore, according to the police, who have registered a case against the four accused. They were yet to be arrested, the police said.

The complainant, in her statement, said the accused had filmed the entire incident, thrashed and threatened her asking her not to speak to anyone about the crime.

She said all the three accused took turns to rape her after they spiked her cold drink. Her woman friend watched the three take turns to rape her.

The incident took place at one of a flat rented by one of the accused persons under Lasudia police station area.

According to the police, the complainant's friend, identified as Pooja

Narvaria, came to her house along with three of her friends - the three accused identified as Ashish, Nipul and Punit - on August 23.

Pooja asked the complainant, a first-year college student to accompany her and her friends to Mandu.

The police said, "The five persons - Pooja Narvaria, Ashish, Nipul, Punit and the victim - drove to Mandu on August 23 in a car and spent time during the day."

"While returning to Indore at around 4 pm, one of the accused - Ashish - gave the victim a cold drink that was probably laced with sedatives." "The victim regained consciousness at around 10 pm when she found herself at a flat rented by Ashish in the Scheme Number-56 area. The three accused then took turns to rape the victim while Pooja watched on."

According to police, the woman was also

thrashed and threatened by the four accused. At first, she agreed to do what she was told to do by the accused. However, she narrated the incident to one of her friends and her friend subsequently informed her own parents about the incident.

Police said the victim was at first scared to inform her parents about the incident. However, she later confided in her parents on Tuesday.

The victim's parents then took her to the Lasudia police station and filed a complaint. The victim's statement was recorded and a case of gang-rape was registered.

Indore Superintendent of Police Ashutosh Bagri said the flat, where the crime was committed, was raided immediately after the complaint was filed.

"All possible hideouts of all the four accused are being raided and we are expecting to arrest them soon," Bagri said.

CM SAPLED THE KARANJ PLANT



Bhopal: Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan planted a sapling of Karanj in the Smart City Garden on Thursday. Chouhan plants saplings every day as per his resolution. Karanj is considered important in Ayurvedic medicine. Karanj is also used in religious functions and processes.

Couple, kid trampled to death by wild elephants

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Three people including a couple and their grandson were trampled to death by a herd of wild elephants in Anuppur district on Thursday, the second such incident in the region in the last few months, officials said.

Incident was reported from Belgaon area of Nimaha panchayat where the elephants invaded the village causing major destruction to the properties and killing three of them near the farm. The location is close to Chhattisgarh from where nine elephants strayed in, officials say. One of the deceased has been identified as Gaya Prasad Ketrwat.

Anuppur DFO A N Ansari told the media that there was a movement of wild elephants in the area since Wednesday. Villagers had tried to shove them back to Chhattisgarh. However, they returned through another route in the wee hours.

Forest Officials had issued an advisory against the wild elephants. Officers

informed that the family members of the deceased would be compensated as per the rules.

In April 2020, three persons were killed by a herd of wild elephants in the same district. Two were women, who were working in their farm and a man who was guarding crops.

That incident was reported from Purga village under Pushprajgarh tehsil of the district. There were more casualties thereafter. In February, an elderly man and his two grandsons aged 12 and 13 years were chased and crushed to death by a herd of wild elephants near the Sanjay Tiger Reserve in Sidhi district. This incident was reported from Haiki village, located 85 km from the district headquarters.

The deceased were identified as Gorelal Yadav, 60, and his grandsons Ramkripal (12) and Ramprasad (13). Children were playing outside when the herd of elephants around seven came towards them. Ram Kripal also came outside the house hearing noise. He

raised an alarm and asked the children to run away. However, the elephants chased and trampled them, killing all three on the spot. One of the children who was inside survived the mishap. Later, angry residents of the village, bordering Chhattisgarh, had staged a blockade on the Tilwari-Janakpur Road in protest demanding compensation. Officials also informed that the Madhya Pradesh government had been sending proposals to the MoEF seeking separate budgets for elephant management programmes and inclusion of this state in the Project Elephant. The matter has been taken to top authorities. In December 2019 BTR authorities had requested the state government to frame a compensation policy for properties damaged by wild elephants to ward off conflicts with humans. A herd of 40 elephants that had strayed in from neighbouring Chhattisgarh had been giving a tough time to farmers by not only raiding their farms, but also taking away their rice sacks.

MP PIONEER IN THE COUNTRY TO IMPLEMENT NEP

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Bhopal: The Union Minister for Education, Skill Development and Entrepreneurship, Dharmendra Pradhan has said that Madhya Pradesh is the pioneer state to implement the National Education Policy 2020. The National Education Policy will be the key to realizing the aspirations of the students and youth of the state and empowering them. Pradhan has congratulated the people of Madhya Pradesh and Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan through a tweet.

It is noteworthy that today Governor Mangubhai Patel and Chief Minister Chouhan implemented National Education Policy 2020 in Madhya Pradesh.

Scindia writes to railway ministry to start double railway track in Gwalior region

Team Absolute | Gwalior

Union Civil Aviation Minister, Jyotiraditya Scindia has written a letter to the railway ministry, to start a double railway track in Gwalior-Guna-Maksi region.

There is about 400 km of single railway track connecting Gwalior-Guna-Maksi. Because of which a few trains pass from the area and people of these areas face problems in travelling. Scindia wrote in the letter that if the double railway track starts, then some trains of Gwalior-Mumbai rail route can be run on this track. It will also reduce the traffic load on the main track and the people here will also get new trains.

Scindia is, however, trying for a long time for making the double track and for starting electric trains on this track. Electrification work has been completed and the work of doubling the track is yet to start. The survey work for the track was approved in the year 2012-13 because of his efforts. The survey was completed in the year 2017 and the report is pending for the approval of the Railway Board. The estimated cost of this project is Rs 2822 crore.

Notably, since Jyotiraditya Scindia became the Union Civil Aviation Minister, he has been expanding the air services in the Gwalior-Chambal division. The city has now been connected with direct air service to many big cities and states.



EDITOR'S SPECS

Desperation of Afghans

Afghanistan's seizure by the Taliban has raised grave fears of a return to past patterns of human rights violations, and stoked desperation among many Afghans. In recent weeks there were harrowing and credible reports of the impact on civilians of violations of international humanitarian law, as well as violations and abuses of human rights, by the parties to the conflict. In particular, credible reports of serious violations of international humanitarian law, and human rights abuses, taking place in many areas under effective Taliban control. They include, among others, summary executions of civilians and hors de combat members of the Afghan national security forces; restrictions on the rights of women, including their right to move around freely and girls' right to attend schools; recruitment of child soldiers; and repression of peaceful protest and expression of dissent. Many people now fear reprisals by the Taliban against those working with the Government or the international community; people who have worked to advance human rights and justice; or those whose lifestyles and opinions are simply perceived to be opposed to the Taliban ideology. There are grave fears for women, for journalists and for the new generation of civil society leaders who have emerged in the past years. Afghanistan's diverse ethnic and religious minorities are also at risk of violence and repression, given previous patterns of serious violations under Taliban rule and reports of killings and targeted attacks in recent months. The UNHCR has estimated that an additional 270,000 people have been forced to leave their homes and livelihoods since January 2021, bringing the total displaced population to more than 3.5 million.

India must urgently make efforts to be an honest broker in US-Iran relations

In light of the meltdown in Afghanistan, it is of utmost urgency to prevent a major eclipse and detriment to global, Indian, and American values and interests in the middle-Asia theatre.

Robinder Sachdev

To start with, this column invites the reader to imagine "middle-Asia" as a vast geography that comprises Iran, Afghanistan, Pakistan, the countries of Central Asia (Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan), Azerbaijan, and the southern regions of Russia. This entire region is now coming under the influence of China, Pakistan, Turkey, and of course, Russia.

Out of the above, Iran is the only one thus far which is not yet fully in the Chinese orbit. If the US sanctions from Iran are not lifted soon, Iran will slip away into the China-axis. It is to be noted that Iran and China have recently signed a 25-year Cooperation Program, in March 2021, wherein China will invest US\$ 400 billion in Iran, in exchange for guaranteed and heavily discounted supply of oil from Iran.

China's influence on Central Asia can be seen from another prism also - Apart from trade and economy links, about 20 per cent of defence procurements of some of Central Asian countries is from China now - up from barely 2 per cent about 7 years ago.

In above background, the US and India will soon have not even a toehold in the geography of middle-Asia. The only way to get a foot in the door in middle-Asia, for India and US, is to work closer with Iran - on trade, infrastructure, health, climate change, and such subjects. And this cannot be done till the American embargo continues, and till the sanctions continue Iran will keep sliding to the China-axis.

The emerging scenario in Afghanistan means that now it is in global, and national interests of the United States and India that Iran must not be pushed further into an orbit of Chinese influence.

Thus, the US must lift sanctions on Iran, so that both the US and India, and other global community, can start engaging with Iran on variety of trade



and projects, and also people-to-people exchanges. The US and India both will do well to remember the proverbial phrase, "If life hands you a lemon, make lemonade".

If Iran sanctions are not lifted, and normal relations that allow for trade and people-to-people relations with Iran are not restored, then the global community, and both the US and India, and the idea of liberal democracy, may be locked out for a long time from the theatre of middle-Asia.

Plus, expense of logistics of any export-import trade with nations of Central Asia - Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, and even Tajikistan - will become prohibitive for the US, EU nations, and India, among others, leading to cost of their goods and services becoming non-competitive in this region.

Among other, even in the future of technology, the middle-Asia region would increasingly adopt Chinese technology standards. With Iran leaning

towards China, and Afghanistan under the Taliban, and international access of logistics of goods and services at competitive rates denied to the 5 Central Asian nations, China will be placed well to provide and monopolize the supply of hardware, fibreoptic cables, and next-gen AI technologies to these nations, and thereby extend its hegemony of technology standards and ideology in this entire region of middle-Asia.

One of the cardinal principles of leadership is to not be distracted during chaotic times. Instead of wasting time and energy on fire-fighting the same old battles in Afghanistan, world leaders must immediately look at the bigger picture and the wider region, and calibrate an immediate strategy for middle-Asia. Today it starts with brokering an honest deal between the United States and Iran, that is mediated by India.

(The writer is the President of Imagindia Institute. The views expressed are personal)

TIME FOR A PROGRESSIVE LAW ON ONLINE GAMING - LESSONS FROM TAMIL NADU

Abhishek Ranjan

The Tamil Nadu government played to the gallery, when in November 2020, in the backdrop of the Assembly elections, it decided to pass an ordinance banning online games.



In a single stroke of the pen, the ordinance banned all online games, even saying that "games of mere skill, if played for wager, bet, money or other stake" cannot be allowed in the state. Three billion people play online games across the world -- this is about 40 per cent of the world population. They play all types of games -- racing, sports, action, puzzle, quiz, chess to card games. It is not possible to club lakhs of games that exist in the world under one category. Of the three billion people who play online games, there is a good percentage of people who pay entry fees to participate in online skill tournaments or enter tournaments to earn prizes, and these were the people being deprived by the Tamil Nadu law. The Madras High Court in its recent judgement rightfully held that the Tamil Nadu ordinance was excessive and disproportionate to the object sought to be achieved. It also held the law as violative of Article 19(1)(g) of the Constitution, which guarantees all citizens the right to practice any profession or carry on any occupation, trade or business. The Madras High Court thus upheld what the Supreme Court and several high courts have affirmed in numerous judgments that games of skill, whether online or offline, is a perfectly legitimate activity. Let's examine the rationale put behind by the Tamil Nadu government and also by the critics of online gaming. Some say in online games, players end up spending a lot of money for buy-in and add-ons. Sure, compulsive shoppers end up overspending on Amazon and Flipkart, but that should not be a reason for banning them. Many responsible gaming apps have best practices that limit the amount of money one can use to play these games. Also, there are regular notifications to warn players if they are spending too much money. Regulation can be introduced to ensure all gaming apps follow this rule. The second argument that is put forth is that gamers spend too much time on the gaming platform. This could be true not just for skill gaming apps, but for any online game like Free Fire or Battlegrounds Mobile India, or streaming platforms like YouTube or Netflix. More importantly, the law makers should not be misled by ill-informed activists and have detailed discussions with experts and industry bodies. What is important is that the law should weed out all unscrupulous players and only promote and encourage skill gaming platforms that adhere to the highest standards of ethics and fair play.

(The writer is the Founder of Policy Matrix, a public policy think-tank based in New Delhi. The views expressed are personal)

international

AMERICANS WARNED TO GET AWAY FROM KABUL AIRPORT OVER IS THREAT

Americans in Afghanistan are being warned to stay away from the Kabul airport due to threats tied to the Islamic State (IS) terror group.



Kabul | Agencies

The US Embassy in Kabul sent out an alert early Thursday, asking US citizens not to travel to the airport "because of security threats outside the gates". The New York Post reported.

Senior US officials told the media that the warning was related to specific threats involving the IS and potential vehicle bombs.

The State Department security alert also told Americans who were at three specific airport gates to "leave immediately", without further explanation.

"Because of security threats outside the gates of Kabul airport, we are advising US citizens to avoid trav-

elling to the airport and to avoid airport gates at this time unless you receive individual instructions from a US government representative to do so," the statement read.

US citizens who are at the Abbey Gate, East Gate, or North Gate now should leave immediately," it added.

President Joe Biden on Tuesday cited "the acute and growing risk of an attack" by the IS affiliate in Afghanistan, known as ISIS-K, as a reason not to extend the withdrawal timeline. "Every day we're on

the ground is another day we know that ISIS-K is seeking to target the airport and attack both US and Allied forces and innocent civilians," the President said.

A US official told CNN on Wednesday that Washington has received a "very specific threat stream" of intelligence related to multiple potential attacks by ISIS-K against crowds of Afghans who have swarmed the airport day after day in a desperate attempt to get a place on an evacuation flight.

Japan's ruling party to hold leadership polls on Sep 29

Tokyo: Japan's ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) on Thursday formalised the decision to hold an election to choose its new President on September 29, with the campaigning slated to start on September 17.

Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga, whose term as LDP President is to expire on September 30, has said he will run in the leadership race, reports Xinhua news agency.

Being re-elected ruling party chief would possibly make sure he remains as Prime Minister. Earlier in the week, LDP Secretary General Toshihiro Nikai and LDP Diet affairs chief Hiroshi Moriyama expressed that they will back the re-election of Suga as the party president. This year's election will be held with voters expanded to include rank-and-file members of the LDP and allied groups, lifting uncertainty about whether Suga will secure a second term.

In addition to the party's presidential election, the timing of a general election has received attention as the four-year terms of House of Representatives lawmakers expire on October 21 and the Prime Minister has the power to dissolve the lower house for a snap election.

Aus govt approves plans for rocket launch despite concerns

Canberra | Agencies

The Australian government has granted approval for rockets to be launched from the state of South Australia (SA) despite local opposition.

Christian Porter, the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology, announced regulatory approval for a commercial rocket launch, which will take place later this year at the Whalers Way Orbital Launch Complex operated by Southern Launch, reports Xinhua news agency.

The decision has paved the way for commercial launches from the site. The Whalers Way launch site will initially support a test launch campaign for up to three suborbital rockets. Lloyd Damp, the CEO of Southern Launch, told the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) on Thursday that the final government approval was a welcome step.

"This is an exciting development on our journey to establish the first site in Australia capable of launching commercial satellites into orbit,



enabling South Australia to start capturing part of the A\$5.5 billion global space-launch market," he told ABC News. Southern Launch announced plans to build the complex at Whalers Way, which sits at the tip of the Eyre Peninsula west of Adelaide, the capital city of SA, in 2018. However, locals in Whalers Way and the surrounding area remain opposed to the launch site.

Southern Launch representatives recently held community information meetings with locals seeking further details about the project's Environmental Impact Statement

(EIS). Penelope Taylor, whose property neighbours Whalers Way, told the ABC there were alarming details in the 3,000-page document.

"They're going to be trucking millions of litres of water and, at this stage, there's no consideration on how that's going to affect Port Lincoln's water source," she said.

"The days of thinking, 'Let's just go out to Whalers Way, who wants to go see it when you're seeing fuel tankers, barbed wire fences, security guards coming and going all the time? It changes the whole ambience of the place.'

Saudi-led airstrikes pound Houthi positions in Yemen

Sanaa: The Saudi-led Arab coalition launched extensive airstrikes on Houthi positions and their reinforcements in Yemen's central province of Marib in the past 24 hours, a military source said. The airstrikes targeted the Houthis in four frontlines in the western districts of Sirwah and Rahabah, killing dozens and destroying several vehicles carrying weapons and combatants, the source told Xinhua news agency. Meanwhile, the Houthi-run al-Masirah TV reported 17 coalition airstrikes in Sirwah and Rahabah in the last 24 hours, without providing further details.

The Houthis began in February a major offensive on Marib in an attempt to seize control of the oil-rich province, the government's last northern stronghold.

The UN has warned that the offensive on Marib, which hosts nearly 1 million internally displaced people, could lead to a major humanitarian catastrophe.

The UN's recent peace proposal to end the war was publicly rejected by the Houthi group. Yemen's civil war flared up in late 2014 when the Iran-backed Houthi group seized control of much of the country's north and forced the internationally recognized government of President Abd-Rabbu Mansour Hadi out of the capital Sanaa. The Saudi-led coalition intervened in the Yemeni conflict in March 2015 to support Hadi's government.

20 injured in demonstration near Gaza-Israel border

Gaza | Agencies

At least 20 Palestinians protesters were injured during a demonstration near the border between the Gaza Strip and Israel protest against the ongoing blockade imposed on the coastal enclave since 2007.

Witnesses said that hundreds of protesters on Wednesday threw homemade hand grenades at the Israeli army jeeps that were patrolling the border area, adding the soldiers fired teargas to disperse them, reports Xinhua news agency.

Palestinian medics said that of the 20 injured, three were shot and taken to the hospital. On Wednesday, leaders of Palestinian factions, including the Islamic Hamas Movement, called on the people to demonstrate near the borders with Israel against Israel's rejection to ease the tightened blockade, allow the



entry of financial aid and construction materials. Earlier in the day, spokesman of the Hamas-run Health Ministry said in a statement that Osama Id'eih, 32, died in a hospital due to a critical injury he sustained on August 21 during a clash on the borders with Israel.

The demonstration on Wednesday is the second in less than a week.

Observers have expressed deep concerns that the current escalation of violence between the Palestinians and Israel in the Gaza Strip may lead to another wave of tension.

The tension between the two sides which lasted for 11 days and ended on May 21 left more than 250 Palestinians and 13 Israelis dead.

NEPAL'S LARGEST PARTY SPLITS

Kathmandu: The Communist Party of Nepal (Unified Marxist Leninist) (CPN-UML), the largest political party in the Himalayan nation, has formally split as a faction registered a new party with the Election Commission.



The newly-formed Communist Party of Nepal (Unified Socialist) is led by Madhav Kumar Nepal, a former senior leader of the CPN-UML who has the support of 55 members from the CPN-UML Central Committee, reports Xinhua news agency. For the registration of the new party, the 55 Central Committee members and 29 members of federal parliament were present at the Election Commission for the verification process in the day. "The commission has registered CPN (Unified Socialist) after it fulfilled the required legal criteria for the formation of a new party," Komal Prasad Dhamala, assistant spokesperson at the commission, told Xinhua. On the same day, the Janata Samajbadi Party headed for a split as well, as a faction of the fourth largest party registered a new party named Loktantrik Samajbadi Party, Nepal with the Election Commission. The two new parties are expected to join the government headed by Nepali Congress President Sher Bahadur Deuba.



MAHARASHTRA CUMULATIVE VACCINATION TALLY CROSSES 5.48 CRORE

In the ongoing vaccination drive, Maharashtra on August 25 has vaccinated 3,93,842 people through 2641 sessions.

Team Absolute | Mumbai According to data released by the government, Maharashtra, as of 7 am on August 26, inoculated 5,48,65,644 people.

As per the state government data, 1,70,39,419 individuals aged between 18 and 44 years received their first vaccine dose and 16,34,212 received their second dose since the inoculation drive for this age group began on May 1.

So far, 12,92,261 health care workers have been administered the first dose of the vaccine, while 9,77,660 of them have got their second dose.

Similarly, 21,37,732 frontline workers in the state have till now received their first vaccine dose and of them, 13,94,524 got their second dose.

Meanwhile, Maharashtra reported 5,031 new coronavirus cases and 216 fresh fatalities on Wednesday - the latter up nearly 100 from a day ago - taking the infection tally to 64,37,680 and the toll to 1,36,571, a state health department official said.

The state has crossed the 5,000 daily case mark after a gap of 6 days. It had reported 5,225 coronavirus infections on August 19.

Maharashtra had registered 4,355 coronavirus cases and 119 deaths on Tuesday.

Six districts namely Bhandara, Gondia, Nagpur, Washim, Nandurbar and Dhule, did



not report any fresh infection of COVID-19 in the last 24 hours, and same was the case with Chandrapur, Amaravati, Nanded, Parbhani, Dhule and Malegaon municipal corporations (urban centres), the official said. He said 4,380 patients were discharged from hospitals across the state in the last 24 hours, taking the cumulative number of recovered cases to 62,47,414. Maharashtra now has 50,183 active cases, he said. The state has 2,98,264 people in home

isolation and another 2,369 in institutional quarantine, according to the official.

Maharashtra's COVID-19 recovery rate stands at 97.04 per cent, while the fatality rate is 2.12 per cent, he said.

The cumulative number of tests conducted in the state climbed to 5,28,40,805, of which 2,07,995 tests (up from 1,87,121 on Tuesday) were done in the last 24 hours, the official said. He said rural parts of Pune district reported the highest 784 new infections,

followed by Ahmednagar at 673, while Pune city topped the list of fatalities with 50 deaths in the last 24 hours.

Among the eight regions of Maharashtra, the Pune region reported the highest new cases at 2,506 followed by 777 in the Mumbai region. Among the other regions, the Nashik region reported 762 new cases, Kolhapur 742, Latur 167, Aurangabad 39, Akola 27 and the Nagpur region 11, he said.

According to the official, among the 216 fatalities, the highest 125 were reported from the Pune region followed by 33 from the Mumbai region. Significantly, Akola and Nagpur regions did not report any fresh fatality on consecutive second day, while the Nashik region registered 29 deaths, Kolhapur 23, Latur five and the Aurangabad region one, he said.

The official said Mumbai witnessed 342 new COVID-19 cases and four deaths, while Pune city reported 417 infections and 50 fatalities. Among the 50,183 active cases in the state, Pune district has the highest at 12,673, he said. The official said among the 62,47,414 recovered patients across the state, the highest - 10,81,061 - were from Pune district. Coronavirus figures for Maharashtra are as follows: Total cases 64,37,680; new cases - 5,031; total deaths 1,36,571; total recoveries 62,47,414; active cases 50,183; total tests 5,28,40,805.

Mumbai DCP, inspector, ex-cop booked in Rs 17L extortion case

The Mumbai Police have booked a Deputy Commissioner of Police, an Inspector, and a sacked cop in an alleged extortion case of Rs 17 lakh from a property dealer, an official said here on Thursday.

and demanded Rs 17 lakh as extortion money to save him from the consequences.

When they asked for more money, Chauhan refused to oblige, following which they reportedly retaliated with abuses and also assaulted him at his office in Andheri West, and made him sign some blank papers before filing a complaint against him with the MIDC police station.

Following Chauhan's complaint, the Amboli police lodged an FIR against DCP Pathan, Inspector Adhav and ex-cop Mane under various sections of the Indian Penal Code. Further investigations are underway.

DCP Pathan had earlier been booked by the Marine Lines Police in an alleged corruption case of Rs 50 lakh, along with former Mumbai Police Commissioner Param Bir Singh and others, following a complaint filed by a builder named Shyamsunder Agarwal.

Incidentally, Mane is an accused in the investigation into the sensational case of planting an SUV with 20 gelatin sticks near Antilia, the residence of industrialist Mukesh Ambani. He was dismissed from the force in June after his arrest.

Team Absolute | Mumbai

According to an FIR lodged by the Amboli police station in Andheri West, the accused persons are DCP Akbar Pathan, Inspector Chimaji Adhav and dismissed inspector Sunil Mane, confirmed Mumbai Police spokesperson and DCP, S. Chaitanya.

As per an official, a property dealer and financier named Gurusaran Singh Chauhan filed a complaint with the police alleging cheating, fraud, extortion, threats of murder, assault etc. against the trio.

Chauhan claimed that the two police officers and the former cop threatened to file false cases against him

Mumbai neurosurgeon 1st Indian to get AANS honour

Well-known Mumbai-based neurosurgeon Dr. B.K. Misra has been conferred the prestigious American Association of Neurological Surgeons 'International Lifetime Achievement Award in Neurosurgery', an official said here on Thursday.



tament to his dedication and treating thousands of patients under his care.

AANS is the world's apex body of neurosurgeons that has bestowed its highest global recognition to Dr. Misra -- the President of Asian Australasian Society of Neurological Surgeons and the World Federation of Skull Base Societies, and the 1st Vice-President of World Federation of Neurosurgical Societies.

With a long string of credits and firsts, he was the first in the world to execute an Image-Guided Aneurysm Microsurgery, first in south Asia to perform a Gamma Knife Radiosurgery and first in India to perform an Awake Craniotomy for brain tumours. Earlier, he received the Dr. BC Roy National Award-2018, and contributes through numerous publications to improve the quality of education in neurosurgery and facilitate spreading the treatment for neurosurgical patients in poor countries globally.

here. He becomes the first Indian to receive the AANS honour which was conferred on him at a virtual ceremony during the AANS Annual Scientific Meeting 2021 held in Orlando this week.

"We have the best of tech, infrastructure and skills at par with the best in the world to treat the most complex neurosurgical conditions and even have the potential to become the destination for neurological treatment," Dr. Misra said on receiving the award. The Hospital CEO Gautam Khanna lauded Dr. Misra's medical accomplishment and accolades as a tes-

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Well-known Mumbai-based neurosurgeon Dr. B.K. Misra has been conferred the prestigious American Association of Neurological Surgeons 'International Lifetime Achievement Award in Neurosurgery', an official said here on Thursday.

Dr. Misra is the Head of Department of Surgery and Division of Neurosurgery & Gamma Knife Radiosurgery at the PD Hinduja Hospital

Rane Undermined Maharashtra's Pride, His Days In Cabinet Numbered: Sena

An editorial in the Sena mouthpiece "Saamana" also claimed that "Rane's days in the Union cabinet were numbered."

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The Shiv Sena on Thursday claimed Union minister Narayan Rane undermined the pride and prestige of Maharashtra and action against him was taken as per the law over his controversial remarks against Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray.

An editorial in the Sena mouthpiece "Saamana" also claimed that "Rane's days in the Union cabinet were numbered." Earlier this week, Rane sparked off a row over his remarks about slapping Thackeray for what he claimed as the latter's ignorance of the year of India's independence. He was arrested from Ratnagiri in Maharashtra on Tuesday and later granted bail by a court at Mahad in Raigad. His remarks had led to protests across Maharashtra. The Shiv Sena and BJP activists also clashed with each other near his residence in Mumbai on Tuesday. On media reportage of his "imminent arrest" in the case, Rane had said hours before his arrest that he was not a 'normal' (ordinary) man and cautioned the media against such reportage. The editorial in "Saamana" said, "Since Rane is not a normal person, he undermines the pride and prestige of Maharashtra. The BJP should at least understand now. It claimed that Rane has said Maharashtra can't fight the Centre since there is a BJP government. Even Maharashtra's enemies



did not undermine the state like Rane did," the Marathi daily said.

It said action against Rane over his remarks against the CM was done as per the law. "Law is same for everyone - be it a normal or an abnormal person. At least now the BJP should not ask if the rule of law prevails in the state," said the Sena, which shares power with the NCP and Congress in Maharashtra. It said a case was filed against Rane, like it would have been done in any other case. "Someone threatens a person, who then files a case under the IPC and then police act as per the procedure...nothing different happened in Rane's case. Hence, the opposition BJP's claim of a

Talibani rule in the state is baseless," it said. Notably, Leader of Opposition in the state Assembly Devendra Fadnis on Tuesday said the BJP does not support Rane's comments, but the "party stands behind him 100 per cent." Alleging that the state police force was being used as a tool for "vendetta politics", the former chief minister had said there should be law and order and "not Talibani-like governance". The Marathi publication said Fadnis supports Rane, but not his threat to the chief minister. "This wasn't expected from Fadnis, who is a lawyer by profession," it said. "If Rane stops considering himself as great, a lot of problems in his life will be resolved without medication," it quipped.

"If Rane thinks he is great because of his induction into the Union cabinet, then Prime Minister Narendra Modi will surely bring him down from the pedestal," the editorial claimed.

It said PM Modi considers himself a "faki", while Rane thinks he is great. "Surely, Rane's days in the Union cabinet are numbered and Fadnis will have no doubt about this in mind," the Thackeray-led party said. It also said the Shiv Sena and the BJP differed earlier on several occasions, but the kind of clashes that took place following Rane's comments and arrest never happened before. "Rane and his supporters in the BJP are responsible for this," the edit claimed.

KONKAN REGION GETS 63 ADDITIONAL TRAINS ON GANESH CHATURTHI

Mumbai: Union Minister of State for Railways Raosaheb Danve said, "If the demand for train travel increases, we will provide more special trains."

The Union Railway Ministry has given its nod to an additional 63 special trains for Konkan region in Maharashtra during the ten days of Ganesh Chaturthi.

The Union Minister of State for Railways Raosaheb Danve Thursday said, "We have decided to provide an additional 63 special trains to accommodate the demand from people during the festival." Earlier, the railway ministry had already announced plans to deploy 112 special trains between Mumbai and Konkan.

"If the demand for train travel increases, we will provide more special trains. We want to ensure people are not inconvenienced and kept on waiting lists." If the numbers on the waiting list increases considerably, we will put in services of more trains," Danve said. Ganesh Chaturthi is celebrated across coastal Konkan in almost every household and community. A sizeable number of people from Konkan who migrated to Mumbai and its neighbourhood return to their native villages during the festival.

3rd Covid Wave In Maharashtra by Oct End After Festivals?

Maharashtra Health Minister Rajesh Tope cited the Centre's warning that said the state will report over 50 lakh cases during the third wave.

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Maharashtra will be hit by the third wave of the coronavirus by the end of October or the first week of November as most festivities come to an end, and at least 60 lakh people will be infected by Covid-19, state Health Minister Rajesh Tope said on Thursday.

Speaking to reporters after the state cabinet meeting, Tope said that at least 13 lakh will likely require oxygen support.

"We have increased our oxygen capacity to 2000 MT," he told CNN-NEWS18 in an exclusive interview.

The health minister also spoke at length with his Kerala counterpart as the state is battling record infections post-Onam festivities. And with Ganesh Chaturthi, Navratri, Dussehra and Diwali just around the corner, there are fears that Maharashtra will also witness a massive spike as Covid restrictions are being relaxed.

Maharashtra last week further relaxed Covid-19 lockdown curbs it



had put in place in April as cases rose exponentially during the second wave. While cinemas and religious places are still closed, malls have been allowed to open and shop timings have been increased. Market places have also been bustling with festive shoppers.

Vaccination will be the state's top priority, Tope said. Several districts, including Mumbai, have had to temporarily shut the vaccine drive due to a shortage of doses. "We are getting almost 1.2 crore doses per month. The Centre has told us we will get 1.7 crore doses from next month. The priority is to provide second doses to beneficiaries." "We can vaccinate over 15 lakh people on a daily basis (if there is enough stock, he said. Leading experts have repeatedly warned of an imminent third Covid-19 wave in India.

An expert panel, set up by an institute under the Ministry of

Home Affairs (MHA), has predicted that the third wave will hit the country anytime between September and October and suggested significantly ramping up vaccination pace. The committee of experts, constituted by the National Institute of Disaster Management (NIDM), also said that children will have a similar risk as adults since paediatric facilities, doctors and equipment like ventilators, ambulances, etc. are nowhere close to what may be required in case a large number of children become infected.

Children with Covid-19 infection have largely been seen to be asymptomatic or develop mild symptoms. But this becomes worrisome in case children have any comorbidity or other special needs. According to the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, out of all the children hospitalised due to

COVID, 60-70 per cent had comorbidities or low immunity.

The working group committee experts suggested a holistic home care model, immediate increase in paediatric medical capacities and prioritising mental health issues among children, the report said. According to the COVID vaccination dashboard of the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, as of August 2, 2021, 47,85,44, 144 (over 47 crore), individuals have been administered at least one dose of Covid vaccine. The Maharashtra government began bracing itself for the third wave of Covid-19 from July. After ranking high on national Covid-19 charts during both the waves, the state began devising a strategy drawn from both its failures and successes. The public health department has chalked out a Rs 1,676-crore proposal for the Covid-19 plan, which includes Rs 782 crore for essential medicines and consumables for Covid and Covid-associated diseases and Rs 893 crore for newer medicines required for treatment of mild to moderate Covid patients, the report added. The state government will also scale up stocks of essential medicines and testing kits. It's been estimated that eight lakh vials of remdesivir will be required for the third wave and the government is setting up an inventory for 1.25 crore RT-PCR and 87.5 lakh antigen tests.

Bombay HC to Maharashtra govt: Act against shops illegally selling exotic animals, birds

The Bombay High Court has ordered the Maharashtra government to take action against shops involved in illegal sale of exotic animals and birds.

The Bombay High Court has ordered the Maharashtra government to take action against shops illegally selling exotic animals, birds and tortoises in Mumbai. A division bench of Chief Justice Dipankar Datta and Justice GS Kulkarni urged the Maharashtra Animal Welfare Board on Thursday to submit an action taken report by September 2.

The Bombay High Court was hearing a petition filed by Shivraj Patne on the illegal sale of exotic birds and other species. The petitioner also highlighted the poor condition of animals including puppies being kept at shops for sale in Crawford Market. "Small puppies are drugged and kept in the open sun whereas they should be fed their mothers' milk. But they are kept for sale in cramped cages," Advocate Sanjukta Dey, appearing for the petitioner, said.

Advocate Sanjukta Dey has cited court orders that are not being complied with. "It is illegal to sell exotic birds and other species protected under the Wildlife Protection Act. Unless such shop owners or breeders obtain the certificate from the board and requisite licences, they should be barred from carrying out such business," the petition stated. "But here, shop owners procure licences from the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) and have been operating while BMC is not the right authority but the state animal welfare board is."

The Bombay High Court noted that this was a serious issue and urged the state government to look into the matter. The advocate, who had represented the state animal welfare board, was not present during the hearing.

The court then told Manish Paul, representing the state government, to see that action is being taken against those who are involved in the illegal sale of exotic species. "The court said, 'It cannot be that the frontage of the shop has something else and something else is being sold. Machinery has to be activated.'



Las Vegas | Agencies

The trailer of 'The Matrix: Resurrections', the fourth chapter of the 'Matrix' sci-fi film series, was unveiled recently at CinemaCon in Las Vegas. The film stars Priyanka Chopra Jonas and Keanu Reeves in prominent roles along with Carrie-Anne Moss, Jada Pinkett Smith, Yahya Abdul-Mateen II, Jonathan Groff, and Neil Patrick Harris. Lana Wachowski, one-half of the Wachowskis who directed all the three films in the franchise with sister Lilly, has penned and directed the fourth 'Matrix'. According to The Hollywood Reporter, the fourth chapter of the franchise is titled 'The Matrix: Resurrections', studio Warner Bros announced. The film's trailer was screened at CinemaCon - the largest gathering of movie theater owners from around the world in Las Vegas, but not online.

'The Matrix: Resurrections' trailer with Priyanka, Keanu Reeves unveiled



Awkwafina: Find my character 'Katy' connecting

Los Angeles | Agencies

Actress Awkwafina, who will be seen in superhero film 'Shang Chi and the Legends of the Ten Rings', says that she associates with her character in a strong way. The much-awaited film is the first Asian superhero film by Marvel.

"I connect to Katy a lot. She definitely makes some poor decisions, like we all do now and then. She is brave and impulsive

and brash. But she is loyal, and she's really there for Shang Chi when he needs her," says the actress. Starring Simu Liu, Awkwafina, Benedict Wong, Fala Chen, Tony Leung, Michelle Yeoh and Florian Munteanu, this movie is directed by Destin Daniel Cretton. 'Shang Chi and the Legends of the Ten Rings' will release on September 3 in theatres in English, Hindi, Tamil, Telugu and Kannada.

The Weeknd: I just love my work and being creative

Los Angeles | Agencies

Canadian singer-songwriter The Weeknd says he loves being creative and that he struggles to stay away from his work for too long. Asked if he's ever able to wind down and rest, he shared, "I don't even know what winding down really means, I just love work, you know. I love to work. I love my job. I love to create."

"And if I do take a vacation, it can't be for too long because I feel like I'm missing out on everything that I could be doing. So, yeah. I try my best, but no, I haven't in a while. I do staycations if that counts." The singer, whose real name is Abel Tesfaye, is currently in the process of finishing his new album titled 'The Dawn Is Coming', reports femalefirst.co.uk. Currently he's not yet got a release date for the record.

"I'm finishing the new album right now. It should be done by the end of this month and we're just kind of figuring out when to put it out," The Weeknd told The Hollywood Reporter.



SHARON STONE TO RECEIVE 'GOLDEN ICON AWARD' AT ZURICH FILM FEST

New York | Agencies

'Basic Instinct' star Sharon Stone will receive the Golden Icon Award at the 17th Zurich Film Festival. The actress will be honoured with the festival's highest accolade. The star will be in Zurich to accept the honour in person on September 25. The award ceremony will be followed by a screening of Martin Scorsese's thriller 'Casino', which won the actress an Oscar nomination, according to The Hollywood Reporter.

She rose to international recognition when she starred as 'Catherine Tramell' in the erotic thriller 'Basic Instinct' in 1992, for which she earned her first Golden Globe Award nomination for Best Actress in a Motion Picture - Drama. She received further critical acclaim with her performance in Martin Scorsese's epic crime drama 'Casino' (1995), garnering the Golden Globe Award and an Academy Award nomination for Best Actress.

FREDDIE HIGHMORE :

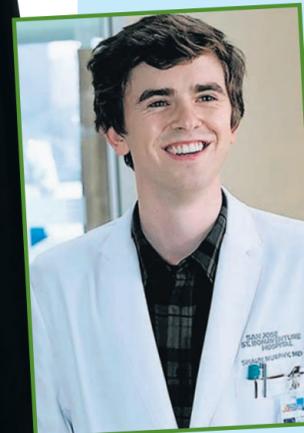
'The Good Doctor' is a tribute to docs

London | Agencies

Actor Freddie Highmore, who plays the character of Dr Shaun Murphy in the series 'The Good Doctor', feels blessed to be safe in the pandemic.

Elaborating on the Covid episodes in 'The Good Doctor' Season 4, he said, "In terms of what we were trying to achieve from the first two episodes of this season with regard to telling the story of our doctors going through the pandemic. The most important thing for all of us was really to pay tribute to the real-life health care professionals, and frontline workers who have been going

through some incredibly tough times that is hard to imagine." He added, "We only play doctors on television. We only pretend to do it, and it really has put that into perspective that we're genuine heroism. And so, it would've felt wrong to not use this opportunity to pay tribute to them." Freddie has been playing the lead role in 'The Good Doctor' from Season 1, on which he also serves as a producer and director. In 2017, he received a nomination for the Golden Globe Award for Best Actor in a Drama Series for his performance in 'The Good Doctor'.



LIL NAS X DEBUT ALBUM 'MONTERO' SET TO RELEASE

New York | Agencies

American rapper Lil Nas X has announced that his forthcoming debut album 'Montero' will release on September 17. The rapper took to Instagram and shared the announcement with a video glimpse of the album trailer.

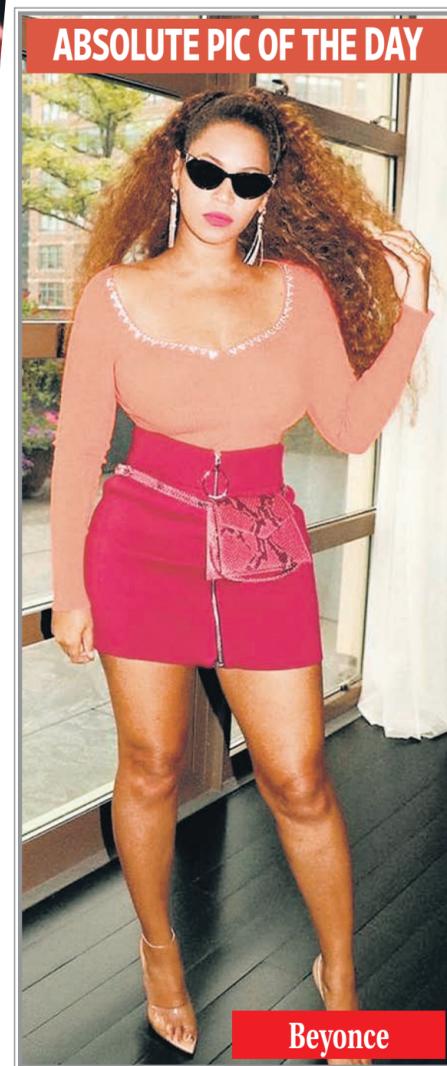
He wrote, "Creating this album has been therapy for me. I've learned to let go of trying to control people's perception of who I am, what I can do, and where I will be. I've realised the only opinion of me that really matters is my own."

The album will have 15 singles like 'Montero (Call Me By Your Name)' and 'Industry Baby'. The singer-songwriter rose to prominence with the release of his country rap single 'Old Town Road'. Several remixes of the song were released, the most popular of which featured country singer Billy Ray Cyrus.

He was the most-nominated male artist at the 62nd Annual Grammy Awards, where he won awards for Best Music Video and Best Pop Duo/Group Performance.

'Old Town Road' earned him two MTV Video Music Awards including Song of the Year, and the American Music Award for Favorite Rap/Hip Hop Song.

Lil Nas X is also the first openly LGBTQ black artist to win a Country Music Association award.



Beyonce





India vs England WTC Cricket series - 3rd Test, Day 2

ROOT'S CENTURY TAKES ENGLAND 345 RUNS AHEAD OF INDIA

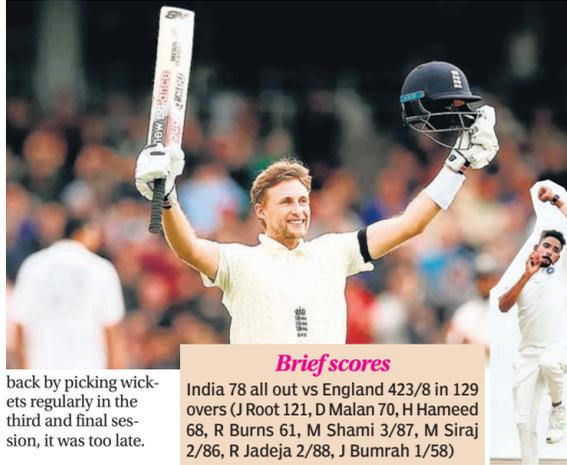
Leeds | Agencies

India had backs to the wall despite making comeback by picking five wickets in the final session on the second day of the third Test as England, riding on captain Joe Root's 121, went to stumps at 423/8, 345 runs ahead.

India were dismissed for 78 on the first day on Wednesday.

Root's 23rd Test century was his third of this series and it helped England build on the opening partnership of 135. Both openers, Haseeb Hameed (68) and Rory Burns (61), couldn't go far after they resumed on the second day at 60 not out and 52 not out respectively.

David Malan (70) and Root added 139 for the third wicket. However, Malan was dismissed at the stroke of tea. Though India managed a come-



Brief scores

India 78 all out vs England 423/8 in 129 overs (J Root 121, D Malan 70, H Hameed 68, R Burns 61, M Shami 3/87, M Siraj 2/86, R Jadeja 2/88, J Bumrah 1/58)

back by picking wickets regularly in the third and final session, it was too late.

SIRAJ SUBJECTED TO BOOS FROM THE CROWD

Pace bowler Mohammed Siraj was introduced to bowling on Thursday, the second day of the third Test, amid boos from the crowd here at the Headingley.

The 27-year-old pace bowler, who took eight wickets in the second Test at Lord's, was brought into the attack only after 15 overs had passed in the day and on arrival to the run-up mark, a section of the crowd began booing him. The Hyderabad bowler was hit by a ball thrown by the crowd on Wednesday, the first day of the ongoing Test. It upset India skipper Virat Kohli.

PARALYMPICS:

Bhavina reaches pre-quarters in women's table tennis

Tokyo | Agencies

India's Bhavinaben Patel reached the Round of 16 in women's Table Tennis Class 4 at the Tokyo Paralympic Games on Thursday.

Bhavina defeated Megan Shackleton of Great Britain 3-1 (11-7, 9-11, 17-15, 13-11) in 41 minutes in their Group A preliminary round match.

Bhavina, who had lost her opening match to higher-ranked Chinese Zhou Ying 3-0 on Wednesday, came back strongly to beat Megan. She won the first game easily but had to use all her experience and skills to quell a strong challenge from Megan, who had won the second game and took her Indian rival to extra points in the next two games. She finished second

in the three-player group and thus qualified for the next stage. Bhavina is ranked



eighth in the world and defeated the British player to keep alive her hopes of getting into the medal rounds.

Bhavina, who won the bronze medal in International Table Tennis Federation Asian Para Table Tennis Championship that was organised from 23 to 31 August 2017 in Beijing, China. She reached the rank-

ing of World No. 2, by winning a silver medal in the individual category at the PTT Thailand Table Tennis Championship in 2011, is participating in her first Paralympic Games.

She trains with coach Lalan Doshi at the Blind People's Association in Ahmedabad.

Won't force Dahiya to participate in Worlds: WFI

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Wrestling Federation of India (WFI) will 'not force' Tokyo Olympic silver medalist Ravi Dahiya to participate in the upcoming World Championships, said an official.

Earlier, it was learned that Dahiya might skip the Championship since he did not get time to prepare for the selection trials that WFI is organising next week to pick the Indian team. The WFI has slated trials on coming Tuesday for the Worlds, set to be held in Oslo, Norway from October 2-10. Speaking to our correspondent, a WFI official said that it is up to Dahiya "to decide whether he wants to go or not".

"We can understand that he might have gotten tired after the Tokyo Olympics as he didn't get time to relax with a number of felicitation functions. He is a hum-



ble person and doesn't know how to say no to anybody," said the official on condition of anonymity.

Asked if it is necessary for the Tokyo Olympics medalist to give trials as well, the official said, "I think there is nothing wrong in asking star wrestlers to appear for trials. He also doesn't have any issue in giving trials. He is just tired and unprepared."

"Bottom line is, if he wants to go to Worlds, he will have to give trials."

Meanwhile on Wednesday, the federation decided to end disciplinary proceedings against the World Championship bronze medalist Vinesh Phogat who will now be free to compete in the trials for the Worlds.

IPL 2021: Four cricketers replaced by RCB for Phase 2; KKR make one change

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Royal Challengers Bangalore, Rajasthan Royals, Punjab Kings, and Kolkata Knight Riders on Thursday announced replacements in their respective squads ahead of the resumption of the IPL 2021 in the UAE on September 19.

Royal Challengers have brought in Sri Lanka's Wanindu Hasaranga as a replacement for Australia's Adam Zampa, according to the media release by the IPL. In the recent three-match T20I series against India in Sri Lanka, Hasaranga bagged a total of seven wickets, including a 4-wicket haul in the final T20I.

Other replacements for RCB are Dushmantha Chameera for Daniel Sams, left-arm quick George Garton for Kane Richardson, and Tim David for New Zealand's Finn Allen.

Meanwhile, Rajasthan Royals have brought in New Zealand wicketkeeper-batsman Glenn Phillips as a replacement for England's Jofra



Archer. South Africa's Tabraiz Shamsi will replace Andrew Tye in the Royals' squad, the statement read.

Punjab Kings have signed Australian fast bowler Nathan Ellis for Riley Meredith. Ellis recently was in the limelight following his hat-trick on his international debut against

Bangladesh earlier this month. The right-arm pacer is also one of the reserve players in Australia's 2021 T20I World Cup squad. Punjab have also picked England leg-spinner Adil

Rashid to replace Jhye Richardson. Knight Riders have brought Tim Southee on board. The veteran New Zealand pacer will be a replacement for Australia's Pat Cummins, it added.

Pandya brothers join Mumbai Indians camp in UAE

Krunal and Hardik Pandya, the star all-rounders of Mumbai Indians have joined the team camp in Abu Dhabi ahead of the second leg of IPL 2021. The defending champions had already begun practising in UAE's capital from August 20. Sharing a picture of the brothers on social media, the franchisee wrote, "Humare Pandya brothers aa gaye (Our Pandya brothers have arrived)." Mumbai Indians will begin the second leg of their IPL 2021 campaign against Chennai Super Kings in Dubai on September 19. The five-time champions are ranked fourth in the table with eight points inclusive of four wins and three losses from seven matches.



ASIAN YOUTH BOXING: VANSHAJ, PREETI, AND 4 OTHERS ENTER FINALS

New Delhi: Indian pugilists Vanshaj and Preeti on Thursday cruised into the finals along with four other compatriots at the ASBC Asian Youth & Junior Boxing Championships in Dubai. According to information received here, Vishal (80kg), Preeti Dahiya (60kg), Simran Verma (52kg), and Sneha Kumari (66kg) were the other Indian boxers to progress into their respective summit clashes.

Giving India a perfect start for the day, Vanshaj put up a splendid show against Iran's Faridi Abolfazl and secured a dominating 5-0 win in the men's 64kg semi-final. Vishal further extended the winning momentum in the youth boys' section as he was equally dominant during his victory against Kazakhstan's Dauren Mamyrbayev by unanimous decision. Meanwhile, Daksh Singh (67kg), Abhimanyu Loura (92kg), and Aman Singh Bisht (+92kg) lost their respective semifinals and ended their campaigns with bronze medals.

In the women's semifinals, Preeti (57kg) and Preeti Dahiya registered contrasting victories in their respective bouts while the other two boxers, Simran and Sneha, were given walkovers.

AMIT ROHIDAS AWARDED BIJU PATNAIK SPORTS AWARD



New Delhi: Indian men's hockey team defender, and drag-flicker Amit Rohidas has been awarded the prestigious Biju Patnaik Sports Award for outstanding performance in Sports & Games by the Odisha government. Rohidas played an instrumental role in India's backline as well as PC defending in the recently concluded Tokyo Olympics Games, where India ended a

41-year wait for an Olympic medal by claiming bronze. Hockey India congratulated Rohidas on getting the prestigious award. The hockey star from Sundargarh district in Odisha has been a regular feature in the Indian team after making a comeback in 2017 and has been part of some of the biggest feats in recent years.

Hockey coach Kalu Charan Choudhury, who has worked towards developing talented players at the grassroots level and has been coaching aspiring hockey players from Odisha for many decades, has won the Biju Patnaik Sports Award for Lifetime Achievement in the promotion of Sports & Games. Siba Prasad was awarded the Coach of The Year award, a release informed on Thursday.

Sreejesh comes in for praise for contributing to anti-doping programme

Team Absolute | Mumbai

India's Olympic bronze medal-winning men's team goalkeeper PR

Sreejesh has come in for praise from the International Testing Agency (ITA) for his contribution towards keeping the sport clean. Sreejesh, who stood like a rock in the Indian goal as the men's won India's first medal in hockey after 41 years at the recently-concluded Tokyo Olympics, was mentioned by the ITA in a tweet on Thursday.

"Congratulations and special thanks to @16Sreejesh who, not only delivered a medal-winning performance for @TheHockeyIndia at @tokyo2020, but also contributes actively to clean sport," the ITA tweet said.

Tagged as "Stick to clean sport" the ITA campaign highlights hockey's clean image in the sporting world where doping has become a real scourge.

The ITA tweet also endorsed the International Hockey Federation's (FIH) anti-doping programme, which had top



stars raising awareness about the ill effects of doping.

The ITA is an independent body set up by International Olympic Committee (IOC) to fight doping in sports. It has

been charged with conducting testing at IOC-conducted events and also liaison with Court of Arbitration for Sports (CAS) regarding sanctioning of dope offenders during the mega-events.

VENUS WILLIAMS, KENIN WITHDRAW FROM US OPEN

New York | Agencies

The withdrawals from the US Open tennis tournament continued with two-time champion Venus Williams and Sofia Kenin pulling out of the event starting on August 30. While Venus pulled out due to an injury, Kenin announced her withdrawal, as the 22-year-old American has tested positive for Covid-19. A few hours after Serena Williams pulled out of the event, her older sister Venus too withdrew from the year's last Grand Slam.

Williams tweeted on Wednesday that she would not be participating in this year's US Open starting next week, due to a persistent leg injury. "It's super, super, super disappointing," Williams said, in a video which she posted to her Twitter and Instagram accounts. "I'm having some

issues with my leg all this summer, and just couldn't work through it. I tried my best here in Chicago [at the WTA 250 Chicago Women's Open], but I just was unable to figure out the equation. And there's been so many times where I've been able to figure it out, even not in the best of my health, but this time, I just couldn't make any miracles work." Serena withdrew due to a hamstring injury. On Wednesday evening, Kenin also announced her withdrawal, as the 22-year-old American tweeted that she would be out of the US Open after positive tests for Covid-19. "Fortunately I am vaccinated and thus my symptoms have been fairly mild," Kenin tweeted. "However I have continued to test positive and thus will not be able to compete at the US Open next week."

Relentless Bayern whitewash Bremer 12-0 in German Cup

Berlin | Agencies

Bayern Munich showed no mercy with fifth division outfit Bremer SV and marched to a 12-0 victory by courtesy of Eric Maxim Choupo-Moting's four goals at the close of the first round of the Germany Cup on Wednesday.

Choupo-Moting remained in the thick of things and traded passes with Jamal Musiala, who penetrated the box before drilling the 2-0 lead into the far post corner in the 16th minute.

The Bremer SV helped Bayern Munich to make it three in the 27th minute as Jan-Luca Warm cleared Musiala's attempt into the wrong goal. The hosts were unable to put up resistance



before the break meanwhile Choupo-Moting wrapped up his first-half hat-trick after scoring a brace within seven minutes ahead of the break.

To make things worse for the underdog, the German giants continued on the front

foot and picked up where they left off as Malik Tillman intercepted a misplaced pass before making it 6-0 on the scoreboard, two minutes into the second half.

Two minutes later, Musiala sealed his brace after ham-

mering Choupo-Moting's build-work into the top right corner.

It seemed like Bayern had enough but with 65 minutes gone Leroy Sane tapped home Omar Richards' lay-up.

Things went from bad to worse in the 77th minute as Ugo Nobile committed a professional foul to receive his marching orders.

Relentless Bayern remained in search of more goals as Michael Cuisance made it 9-0 before Choupo-Moting snatched his fourth goal of the night in the 82nd minute.

Ten goals were still not enough for the Bavarians as Bouna Sarr and Corentin Tolisso rounded off the 12-0 on the road.

Nusrat Jahan gives birth to baby boy

Team Absolute | Kolkata

Popular Bengali actress and Trinamool Congress MP Nusrat Jahan has given birth to a baby boy.

According to a medical bulletin issued by the private hospital in south Kolkata where Jahan is admitted, both the child and the mother are doing well. Jahan, who was admitted to the hospital on Wednesday night, gave birth to the child via C-Section surgery at around 12.45 p.m. on Thursday.

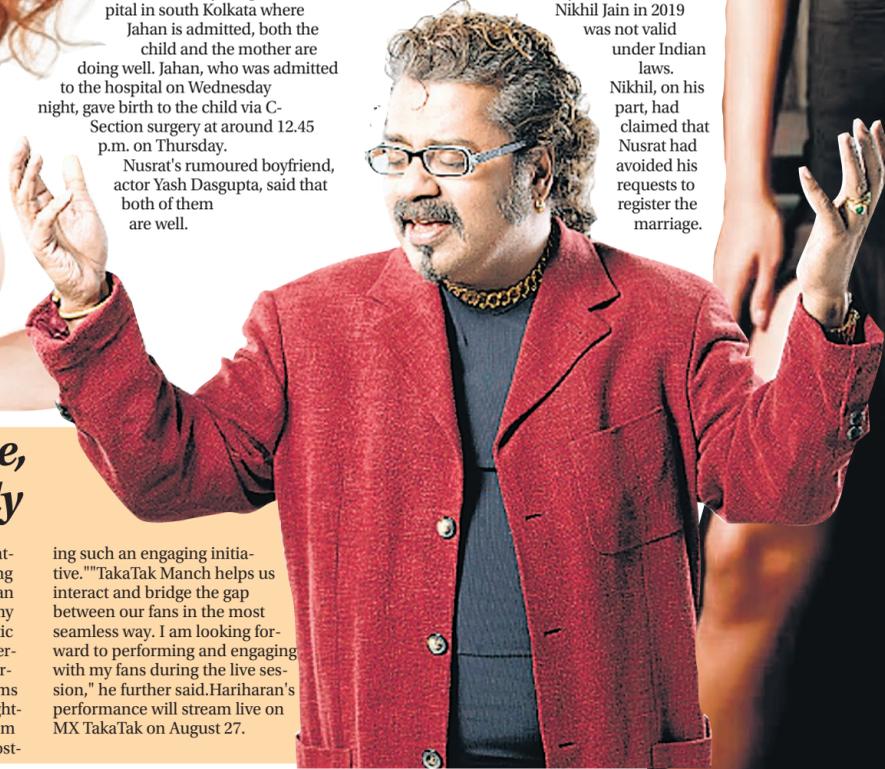
Nusrat's rumoured boyfriend, actor Yash Dasgupta, said that both of them are well.

"For those who have been enquiring about Nusrat's health, the mother and child are healthy and doing well," he said. In an Instagram post shared on Thursday morning, the actress had shared a photograph of herself with the caption: "Faith Over Fear #positivity #morningvibes."

Earlier this year, the actress had courted controversy after she claimed that her marriage in Turkey with businessman Nikhil Jain in 2019

was not valid under Indian laws.

Nikhil, on his part, had claimed that Nusrat had avoided his requests to register the marriage.



RHEA CHAKRABORTY: GRATITUDE IS POWERFUL

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Bollywood actress Rhea Chakraborty, who was under the scanner last year after the death of her actor and boyfriend Sushant Singh Rajput, has penned an inspiring note about gratitude.

On Instagram stories, Rhea wrote, "Take a minute and say 'Thank you. Thank You'. Gratitude is powerful." Rhea, who is currently gearing up for the release of her upcoming film, 'Chehre' starring Amitabh Bachchan and Emraan Hashmi, took to her Instagram handle on Wednesday to share the note. Details about Rhea's role in the film have not been discussed much. The actress has been missing from the posters and teaser of the forthcoming film. However, she made an appearance in the trailer.

'Chehre', directed by Rumi Jafry, also features Siddhanth Kapoor, Krystle D'Souza and Annu Kapoor in pivotal roles. It will be released on Friday in theatres.

Hariharan to perform live, interact with fans digitally

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Renowned singer Hariharan is all set to perform in a live digital session this week.

The veteran singer will not only be performing live digitally but also engage in an interactive session with his fans during the same. For this, Hariharan has collaborated with TakaTak Manch,

an initiative by short video platform MX TakaTak. Commenting on the collaboration, Hariharan said: "Singing live in front of my fans has always been a fantastic experience. The move from performing on-ground to now performing live on digital platforms has been immersive and delightful. In such uncertain times, I'm thankful to MX TakaTak for host-

ing such an engaging initiative." "TakaTak Manch helps us interact and bridge the gap between our fans in the most seamless way. I am looking forward to performing and engaging with my fans during the live session," he further said. Hariharan's performance will stream live on MX TakaTak on August 27.

'Aayi Aayi Bhoot Police' music video out

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Singers Vishal Dadlani and Sunidhi Chauhan's 'Aayi Aayi Bhoot Police' music video will be released on Thursday.

One of the lead actors of 'Bhoot Police', Arjun Kapoor, shared the music video on his Instagram. The other actors in the film are Jacqueline Fernandez, Saif Ali Khan and Yami Gautam.

Arjun wrote, "Party hard with #BhootPolice. #AayiAayiBhootPolice is out now. Crank up the music and tune in!"

Lyricist Kumar has penned the lyrics of the song 'Aayi Aayi Bhoot Police' and Mellow D has sung the rap part.

The music composers of the song are Sachin Jigar, Sachin Sanghvi, and Jigar Saraiya. The music video is choreographed by Remo D'Souza.

'Bhoot Police' will release on September 17 on Disney+ Hotstar.



Rakhi Sawant:

'Bigg Boss OTT' contestants are not entertaining audience

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Rakhi Sawant is not happy that contestants are just sleeping in the 'Bigg Boss OTT' house and not entertaining the audience.

While the contestants seem to be busy with tasks, fights and connections, Rakhi feels that not all contestants are giving in their best to entertain the audience. Rakhi had recently commented on how Shamita Shetty is the best dresser and Neha Bhasin is the worst in the house.

Now she has pointed to Milind Gaba and Raqesh Bapat for not doing anything in the house. Rakhi says, "I really think Milind and Raqesh should wake up now to play the game. Have they gone inside to sleep?"

Looking at the way housemates are playing inside, Rakhi has a little advice to give to the contestants, she says, "Maintain your connections and break other's."



VIJAY, TAAPSEE SHARE FIRST LOOK OF 'ANNABELLE SETHUPATHI'

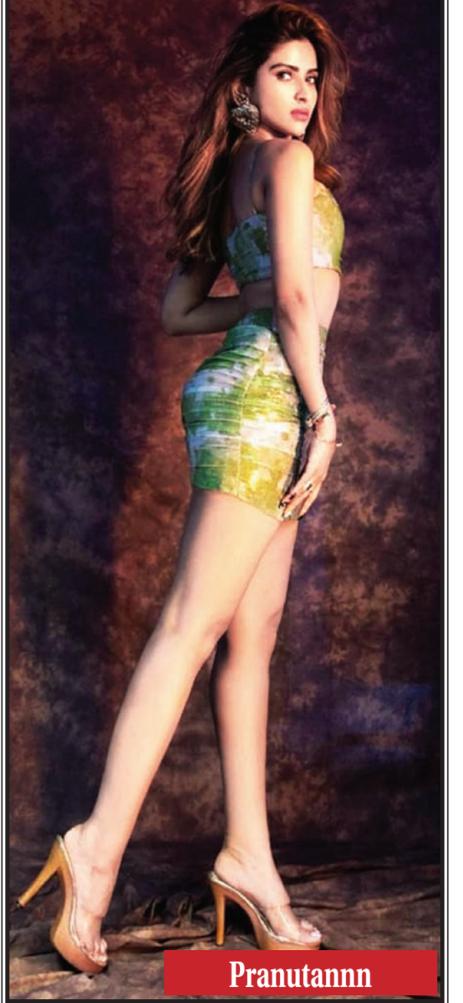
Chennai: Actors Vijay Sethupathi and Taapsee Pannu unveiled the first look of their upcoming Tamil film 'Annabelle Sethupathi' on Thursday. The horror comedy is directed by Deepak Sundarajan. In the first look, Vijay is seen dressed up in royal clothes, as Taapsee has a more British look.

Vijay uploaded the first look on his Instagram and wrote, "Here it is. First look of Annabelle Sethupathi."

Taapsee also uploaded the same posters and wrote, "Coz sometimes one life is not enough to see it all".

'Annabelle Sethupathi' also stars Radhikaa Sarathkumar and Rajendra Prasad. The movie, which was shot in Jaipur, will have a direct OTT release on Disney+ Hotstar. It will start streaming from September 17. The movie, which will release in Hindi, Tamil, Telugu, Kannada and Malayalam, has been titled 'Annabelle Rathore' in Hindi.

INSTAGRAM PIC OF THE DAY



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