

absolute india

VOL. 9, ISSUE 286, MUMBAI | TUESDAY, JULY 26, 2022 | ₹5 | PAGE 08

PUBLISHED SIMULTANEOUSLY FROM MUMBAI, BHOPAL AND NEW DELHI

NATION > 02

Arrest is not meant to be and must not be used as a punitive...



HOLLYWOOD > 06

Iggy Azalea snaps at fan commenting on her twerking...



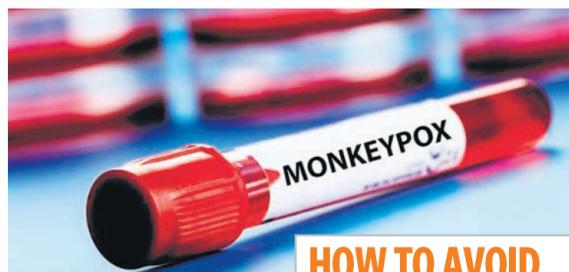
SPORTS > 07

Axar Patel breaks M.S. Dhoni's 17-year-old record with...



MONKEYPOX: IT'S SPREADING

Monkeypox is a zoonotic disease caused by the monkeypox virus, which belongs to the same family of viruses that causes smallpox. The disease is endemic in regions like West and Central Africa but lately, cases have been reported from non-endemic countries too, according to the WHO.



How does it spread?

Human-to-human transmission can occur through direct contact with infectious skin or lesions, including face-to-face, skin-to-skin, and respiratory droplets. Transmission can also occur from contaminated materials such as linens, bedding, electronics and clothing that have infectious skin particles. Touching objects that have been contaminated by monkeypox lesions or fluids may also increase the risk of spreading. The disease has also been reported among three children -- two in the US and one in the Netherlands. Monkeypox, even though is not a sexually transmitted disease, in the latest outbreak, it has mostly been spreading among men who have sex with men, according to Centers for Disease Control (CDC) Director Dr. Rochelle Walensky.

"We do have seen now two cases that have occurred in children. Both of those children are traced back to individuals who come from the men who have sex with men community, the gay men community," Walensky was quoted as saying in an interview with the Washington Post. Monkeypox is usually considered mild and most people recover within four weeks without treatment. However, the disease is frequently uncomfortable or painful, and can sometimes lead to complications that require close medical follow-up. If one has "fever after travelling recently, or you have come in contact with somebody who has manifested symptoms of monkeypox, you should immediately seek consultations from your physician. As of now, prevention is the cure," Koul said.

HOW TO AVOID

According to Dr Manisha Arora, Senior Consultant in Internal Medicine at Sri Balaji Action Medical Institute, avoid coming in contact with an ill person.

The primary measures to control the outbreak are contact tracing and isolation.

It is also important that people confirmed with monkeypox disclose their contacts so they can be alerted to monitor for symptoms. "Always wash hands properly and use an effective alcohol-based sanitiser. Never avoid using masks," Arora said.

WHAT IS MONKEYPOX?

Monkeypox is a rare viral disease, related to smallpox and cowpox. The virus generally causes pimples or blister-like lesions and flu-like symptoms such as fever.

The lesions typically concentrate on the arms and legs, but in the latest outbreak, they're showing up more frequently on the genital and perianal area.

It is transmitted from infected animals to humans via indirect or direct contact.

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The World Health Organisation (WHO) has sounded its highest level of alert for monkeypox and declared the virus as a public health emergency of international concern (PHEIC). In India, a 34-year-

old man from Delhi with no history of foreign travel tested positive for monkeypox on Sunday, taking the country's tally of cases to four. Three cases of monkeypox were earlier reported in Kerala. Monkeypox virus, has crossed over 16,000 cases worldwide, is now a declared public health emergency of international concern like Covid and polio.

Two Indian-origin men shot dead in Canada, 10 days after Ripudaman's killing

NEW YORK | Agencies

Two Indian-origin men have been shot dead in Canada, 10 days after an eerily similar killing of Ripudaman Singh Malik, who had been acquitted of charges of bombing an Air India plane, according to media reports.

Meninder Dhaliwal and Satinder Gill were killed on Sunday at the British Columbia resort village of Whistler. The two latest victims were shot in broad daylight while sitting in a car in a public place like Ripudaman Malik and as in that incident, a car was also found burning nearby, according to media reports.

The two incidents, however, have not been linked by officials. Two persons who have not been publicly identified in connection with the latest killings, CTV reported quoting officials. But there have been no arrests as yet in the killing of Malik. Dhaliwal, along with his brother Barinder, was on a list of six men, four of them of Indian descent, released last year by the Vancouver Police Department which called them "gangsters" who "pose a significant risk to the safety of the public". Police Chief Adam Palmer warned while releasing their pictures, "Our police intelligence leads us to believe that the individuals we have identified today may be targeted by rival



gang members". Dhaliwal was a member of a gang known as "Brothers Keeper" (BK), while Gill was not known to be involved with gangs, the Vancouver Sun reported. Dhaliwal's brother was killed last year in April, the newspaper's website said. CTV said that the Integrated Homicide Investigation Team (IHIT) confirmed Dhaliwal and Gill had been targeted and the shooting was linked to an ongoing gang conflict in British Columbia's Lower Mainland region that includes Vancouver.

The Sun said that the BK has been involved in violent conflicts over the years with the gang known as "United Nations" and with some members of "Red Scorpions". It said that last year Dhaliwal's brother Harb was killed outside a Vancouver restaurant when he was with him and Barinder. Meninder chased the gunman, Francoise Gauthier, and stabbed him

in the eye, but did not face charges, it added.

Gauthier admitted last month in a Canadian court to carrying out the murder and was sentenced to life in prison, the Sun reported.

It said that both Meninder and Barinder had been shot several times in the past.

Ripudaman Singh was acquitted on charges linked to the bombing of Air India's Kanishka that killed all on board the Boeing 747 on a flight from Canada to India in 1985. Once a supporter of the Sikh separatist Khalistan movement, he later made peace with the Indian government, writing to Prime Minister Narendra Modi earlier this year: "I am writing you this to express my deep heartfelt gratitude for the unprecedented positive steps taken by yourself to redress long-standing Sikh demands and grievances."

He was taken off the Indian government's blacklist and granted a visa to visit India in 2019.

Today's politics is about coming to power: Nitin Gadkari

Nagpur | Agencies

Union Minister Nitin Gadkari says he often feels like "quitting politics" as he believes there is more to life. His comment at a function in Maharashtra's Nagpur, his home base, on Saturday caused a flutter.

"A lot of times I wonder whether I should give up politics. There is more to life than politics," Gadkari said at a function to honour social worker Girish Gandhi, who is known to have political links across the spectrum.

The Union Road Transport and Highways Minister said he believed politics is more about social change but it had become more about seeking power. Girish Gandhi, a former Member of Legislative Council, quit



Sharad Pawar's Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) in 2014. Gadkari was telling his audience that he had always tried to dissuade "Girish-bhau" from politics.

"Today what we are seeing is 100 per cent about coming to power. Politics is a true instrument of socio-econom-

ic reform, and that is why, today's politicians must work for the development of education, arts etc in society," said the minister.

"We must understand what the word politics means. Is it for the welfare of the society, the country or about being in government," he questioned.

GoM on online gaming likely to recommend 28% GST

New Delhi: Meghalaya Chief Minister Conrad Sangma-headed GoM on online gaming, after deliberating on the issue for two days is likely to recommend 28 per cent GST on gross revenue from casinos and online gaming companies, sources said.

The GoM is likely to put forth its recommendation before the GST Council, when it meets next month. Sangma had tweeted about chairing a meeting with "the representatives of the Casino industry in Goa" on Sunday and with "stakeholders of the Turf Authorities of India" on Saturday. However, members from Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra, Gujarat, Telangana, and West Bengal did not attend this meeting held over the weekend in Bengaluru and Goa.

The members also visited several places to study operations, in the last GST Council meeting, the GoM was asked to review its earlier recommendations.

CBI arrests 4 in Rs 100 crore RS seat racket, court grants them bail

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) on Monday claimed to have arrested four people for allegedly running a racket by promising seats in Rajya Sabha and other government organisations for Rs 100 crore.

The CBI also conducted raids at seven locations in Delhi, Karnataka and Maharashtra which led them to the recovery of incriminating documents.

The accused were identified as Karmalakar Premkumar Bandgar, Ravindra Vithal Naik, Mahendra Pal Arora and Abhishek Boora. However, the fifth accused identified as Md. Alaz Khan is still at large.

Soon after their arrests, all the four accused moved a bail plea before the Rouse Avenue Court which released them on bail. Bandgar was also impersonating as a CBI official.

The CBI had been intercepting a few calls which led them to bust the racket. They were cheating people on the pretext of offering them Rajya Sabha seat, governorship, or appointment as chairperson of government organisations, ministries and departments.

Arora hatched the conspiracy and discussed the idea with Bandgar and they zeroed in on people



who could pay them a handsome amount. Later, other accused also joined them. Bandgar also claimed that he had links in government.

The CBI was mentioned in the FIR that to impress their targets, the accused Bandgar, Arora, Khan and Naik used to show that they have links in Government. Boora was acting as a middleman with them.

Bandgar even used to call Police personnel impersonating as CBI officials and would threaten them to help his friends. He also tried to influence investigations of the cases of his known persons.

SC notice to M.S. Dhoni in arbitration proceedings against Amrapali group

New Delhi: The Supreme Court on Monday issued notice to former Indian cricket team captain Mahendra Singh Dhoni and also stayed the arbitration proceedings initiated by the Delhi High Court against Amrapali group on his plea.

A bench of Justices U.U. Lalit and Bela M. Trivedi noted that the interest of the Amrapali home buyers has to be secured and the erstwhile management of the Amrapali group cannot be expected to represent the cause of Amrapali in the arbitration proceedings.

It added that in these circumstances, an arrangement has to be arrived at, so that claims made by the homebuyers are satisfied and thereafter, the betterment of Amrapali can be looked into and secured. "We issue notices to two claimants of two arbitrations cases," the bench said, as it stayed the arbitration proceedings before the high court.

The top court was informed that there are two arbitrations before the high court. One of the arbitration cases has been initiated by S.T. Constructions against Amrapali Princely Estate Private Ltd, where Justice B.S. Chauhan has been appointed as the arbitrator.

In the other arbitration case, Dhoni against Amrapali Homes Projects Private Ltd, Justice Veena Birbal, a former high court judge, has been appointed as sole arbitrator to adjudicate the disputes between the parties.

The top court noted that since the Amrapali proceedings are pending with it, therefore notices should be issued in the matter.

▶ IT WAS TARGETING MOSTLY LOCAL YOUTH WHO SUFFERED MOST DURING THE RECENT PANDEMIC AND ARE IN DIRE NEED OF MONEY TO MEET URGENT FAMILY EXPENSES. ONCE DOWNLOADED, THE APP SOUGHT PERMISSIONS TO ACCESS THE VICTIMS' CONTACTS WHICH WERE UTILISED LATER BY THE COMPANY TO BLACKMAIL ITS CLIENTS.

▶ THE CHINESE RACKET CHARGED EXORBITANT INTERESTS AND THE VICTIMS WERE THREATENED, ABUSED AND EVEN BLACKMAILED. THEY SENT DEROGATORY MESSAGES TO THE VICTIM'S CONTACTS ON HIS OR HER BEHALF. THE TELECALLERS ALSO USED VICTIM'S PHOTOGRAPHS FROM AADHAAR AND PAN CARDS TO BLACKMAIL IN ORDER TO EXTORT MONEY FROM THEM.

▶ CLAIMING TO PLAY FAIR, CHINESE INSTANT-LOAN APPS MOMO, CASHBUS, TIMELY CASH, Y CASH, KISSHT, ROBO CASH, FAST RUPEE, CASH MAMA, AND LOAN TIME WERE ALSO OFFERING PAY-DAY LOANS TO INDIANS, TARGETING BORROWERS ON THE LOWER END OF THE ECONOMIC STRATA. MANY OF THESE APPS SHOW MORE THAN A MILLION INSTALLS.

Digital Chinese loansharks spreading wings in India

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Chinese criminal syndicates and gangs are running scam operations illegally in India. Several such digital loanshark cases have been detected in the recent past and it is suspected that the scale of such illegal activities has increased over a period of time.

Recently, a case of so called 'Chinese loan app' racket came to light in Delhi's Dwarka area.

The racket was being run by some Chinese handlers in the garb of a local consulting BPO firm, Fly High Global Services and Technology. The modus operandi started with the simple advertisement for 'On Stream' online loan app in social media to attract customers who wished to avail hassle-free loans in min-



utes. Over the last four months, the gang had allegedly extorted around \$12 million, of which 30 per cent was the commission of the Indian local firm. The local police, who raided the three-story building in Dwarka and arrested

the kingpin, were surprised to find around 150 staff working in the firm along with around 300 SIM cards in the name of a different local company. Chinese entities had penetrated into the Indian credit market and are

exploiting Indian borrowers making use of some loopholes in the legal system.

They are attracting customers who are under duress. The borrowers were charged exorbitant processing fees and interest rates, pushing many lower-middle-class people into the debt trap and forcing them to even commit suicide. Indian investigating agencies informed that various fintech companies in collusion with Indian non-banking financial companies (NBFC) had indulged in predatory lending, violating the guidelines of Reserve Bank of India. Fintech companies backed by China had memorandum of understanding (MoU) with NBFCs for providing instant personal loans for terms ranging from seven to 30 days, by-passing the regulatory system.



ARREST IS NOT MEANT TO BE AND MUST NOT BE USED AS A PUNITIVE TOOL: SC

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Supreme Court said when power of arrest is exercised without application of mind and without due regard to the law, it amounts to an abuse of power and noted that machinery of criminal justice has been relentlessly employed against the petitioner.

The top court made several more observations in its order, which was uploaded on Monday, while granting bail to Alt news-founder Mohammed Zubair last week.

A bench of Justices D.Y. Chandrachud and A.S. Bopanna said arrest is not meant to be and must not be used as a punitive tool because it results in one of the gravest possible consequences emanating from criminal law: the loss of personal liberty.

"Individuals must not be punished solely on the basis of allegations, and without a fair trial. When the power to arrest is exercised without application of mind and without due regard to the law, it amounts to an abuse of power," it noted.

The bench added that the criminal law and its processes ought not to be instrumentalised as a tool of harassment.

"Section 41 of the CrPC as well as the safeguards in criminal law exist in recognition of the reality that any criminal proceeding almost inevitably involves the might of the state, with unlimited resources at its disposal, against a lone individual," it said.



The bench said police officers are vested with the power to arrest individuals at various stages of the criminal justice process, including during the course of investigation. However, this power is not unbridled, it pointed out. As counsel for Uttar Pradesh attempted to persuade the top court that the petitioner must be barred from tweeting when he is on bail, the bench said a blanket order directing the petitioner to not express his opinion - an opinion that he is rightfully entitled to hold as an active participating citizen - would be disproportionate to the purpose of imposing conditions on bail.

"The imposition of such a condition would tantamount to a gag order against the petitioner. Gag orders have a chilling effect on the freedom of speech," said the bench.

The top court noted that bail conditions imposed by it must not only have a nexus to the purpose that they seek to serve but must also be proportional to the purpose of imposing them.

"The courts while imposing bail conditions must balance the liberty of the

accused and the necessity of a fair trial. While doing so, conditions that would result in the deprivation of rights and liberties must be eschewed," said Justice Chandrachud, who authored the judgment on behalf of the bench.

The top court had last week granted bail to Zubair in all the 6 FIRs registered by the Uttar Pradesh Police in different districts over his tweets and clubbed these FIRs with the Delhi FIR.

The bench said: "The machinery of criminal justice has been relentlessly employed against the petitioner. Despite the fact that the same tweets allegedly gave rise to similar offences in the diverse FIRs mentioned above, the petitioner was subjected to multiple investigations across the country."

The bench said Zubair will be trapped in a vicious cycle of the criminal process where the process has itself become the punishment. "It also appears that certain dormant FIRs from 2021 were activated as certain new FIRs were registered, thereby compounding the difficulties faced by the petitioner," it added.

The top court disposed of Zubair's plea by granting him bail in all the UP Police cases and also gave him liberty to move the Delhi High Court seeking the quashing of the cases. The top court clarified that its directions will apply to future cases, registered on the basis of tweets which were part of the previous FIRs.

I WILL NOT SPARE MY OWN MINISTER IF FOUND GUILTY: MAMATA BANERJEE

Kolkata | Agencies

After the top leaders of Trinamool Congress distanced themselves from state minister Partha Chatterjee following the latter's arrest by the ED in connection with the teacher recruitment scam, West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Monday made it clear that the onus of the scam lies with Chatterjee and his close associate Arpita Mukherjee.

Breaking her silence on the issue during a state government event to felicitate acclaimed persons from different fields, Banerjee said, "Supporting corruption is neither my passion nor my habit. I cannot say that everyone is innocent. I want to clearly say that the money recovered from the residence of a woman (Arpita Mukherjee in this case) has no connection either with the Trinamool or the state government."

"If anyone is found guilty, let him be imprisoned for life. But I am saddened by the way my name is being dragged into the issue of recovery of cash. I will not tolerate such false propaganda any more."

The Chief Minister also referred to a viral video, where she could be seen sharing the dais with Arpita Mukherjee during the inauguration ceremony of a Durga Puja.



"I go for inauguration of many pujas. How am I supposed to know whom the organisers have invited? How could I know that she was Partha's friend? I do not spare even my party-men if they are at fault. I do not and will not spare my own minister if found guilty," Banerjee said.

The Chief Minister's attempts to disown Chatterjee became evident when she blamed a section of the media for allegedly linking her and Trinamool Congress with the cash recovery from Mukherjee's residence.

6 die after drinking illicit liquor in two Gujarat districts

Ahmedabad | Agencies

At least six persons have died in Ahmedabad and Botad districts of Gujarat after drinking illicit liquor, officials said on Monday.

In both districts at least 14 to 20 persons fell ill after drinking the liquor.

Ahmedabad Range Inspector General V. Chandrashekar told the media. "Four dead bodies were brought from Dhandhuka Taluka at the government hospital, four other persons are under treatment, their condition is stable."

The officer further said, "Two bodies were disposed of in the morning and two were sent for the post-mortem and only after the report comes, the police will be able to know whether they died because of any chemical or any other reasons." But, the family members told the police that the deceased and those under treatment had drunk country liquor on Sunday night. In Botad district, two patients were admitted to the hospital. Arti Parma's husband Vashram was rushed to the



hospital on Monday morning after he complained of vision loss and vomiting.

According to her, Vashram and 10 others from the Rojida village had drunk country liquor and most of them had fallen ill.

Bhavnagar Range Inspector General Ashok Kumar Yadav rushed to Botad. A medical team from the Bhavnagar district hospital has also been rushed to Botad hospital, said sources. Despite a ban on the sale and manufacturing of liquor in Gujarat, country-made and IMFL liquor is easily available in the state.

Those deprived for centuries are seeing their reflection in me: Prez Murmu

Team Absolute | New Delhi

President Droupadi Murmu on Monday said that it is a matter of great satisfaction that those who have been deprived for centuries and those who have been denied the benefits of development, poor, downtrodden, backwards and tribals are seeing their reflection in her.

In her address after taking oath as the 15th president of India, Murmu said that she started her journey of life from a small tribal village in Odisha in the eastern part of the country. From the background that she came from, it was like a dream for her to get elementary education, she said.

"Despite many obstacles, my determination remained strong and



I became the first daughter of my village to go to college. I belong to the tribal society. I have got the opportunity to rise from serving as a ward

councillor to becoming the President of India. This is the greatness of India, the mother of democracy," she said. She noted that it is a tribute to the power of Indian democracy that a daughter born in a poor house in a remote tribal area can reach the highest constitutional position in the country. Murmu said that attaining the post of President was not her personal achievement, it was the achievement of every poor person in India. "My election is a proof of the fact that the poor in India can have dreams and fulfil them too. And it is a matter of great satisfaction for me that those who have been deprived for centuries and those who have been denied the benefits of development, those poor, downtrodden, backwards and tribals are seeing their reflection in me," she said.

4 Cong Lok Sabha MPs suspended for entire Monsoon Session

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Four Congress Lok Sabha MPs were suspended for the entire Monsoon session on Monday over unruly behaviour.

The four Congress MPs -- Manickam Tagore, Ramya Haridas, Jothimani and T.N. Prathapan -- have been suspended for the entire Monsoon Session ending August 12 for holding protests with placards inside the House. Speaker Om Birla had earlier warned them to behave and not to hold the placards inside the house if they wanted to protest.

As the proceedings began in the Lok Sabha at 2 p.m. Monday after the swearing-in ceremony of President Droupadi Murmu, the opposition members started sloganeering on the issue of price rise and hiked GST rates. Some MPs were seen holding placards and banners and some Opposition MPs reached the well of the House.

The Speaker said the government was ready to discuss the issues. He warned them against waving placards as it violated the rules of the House.

"Any member who brings placard into the House



will not be allowed to take part in House proceedings. This is a temple of democracy, it is the responsibility of the members to maintain the dignity of the House," said Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla as the opposition MPs continued sloganeering. Later, the four MPs went near Mahatma Gandhi's statue on the Parliament grounds and raised slogans

THREE DEAD AS CAR RAMS INTO DTC BUS IN DELHI

New Delhi: As many as three people were killed and two others sustained injuries when a car in which they were travelling rammied into a stationary DTC bus in the national capital on Monday, an official said.

Deputy commissioner of police Brijendra Kumar Yadav said that a PCR call was received at 7.04 a.m. regarding an accident on highway near Nanangli Pooona area.

When the police reached the spot, they found that a car bearing a number plate of Himachal Pradesh has rammied into a Delhi Transport Corporation bus which was at that time standing on the road to board passengers. "The ill-fated car had five occupants including three women," the DCP said.

They were identified as Jyoti Sharma (27), Nisha (32), Jamna (62), Sunil (driver) and one-and-half year olds child of Nisha, all residents of Hamirpur, Himachal Pradesh.

"All the passengers in car were found injured and they were shifted to Babu Jagjeevan Ram Memorial hospital, where all the three females were declared brought dead," the DCP said.

Covid cases continue to rise in NE states

Guwahati | Agartala | Agencies

Fresh Covid cases are continuing to rise across northeastern India with the authorities in most of these states yet to take any serious precautionary measures.

After a gap of many weeks, four new fatalities -- one each from Assam, Manipur, Nagaland, and Tripura -- were reported.

The Tripura government has imposed the mask mandate again and will levy a fine of Rs 200 to anyone not wearing one.

Meanwhile, the Manipur government, who had first extended the summer vaca-



tion up to July 24, has again extended it up to August 7 for all schools including government, government-aided and private.

In Assam, the positivity rate has shot up from 7.89

per cent on July 1 to 10.29 per cent on July 25. However, an official of the National Health Mission said that the increase in positivity rate in the past few weeks is not alarming.

India logs 16,866 new Covid-19 cases, 41 deaths



Team Absolute | New Delhi

In the last 24 hours, India reported 16,866 new Covid-19 cases, a decline against the 20,279 registered the previous day, the Union Home Ministry said on Monday.

Also in the same period, there were 41 additional fatalities which took the nationwide Covid death toll to 5,26,074.

The active caseload dropped to 1,50,877, accounting for 0.34 per cent of the country's total positive cases. The recovery of 18,148 patients in the last 24

hours took the cumulative tally to 4,32,28,670. Consequently, India's recovery rate stands at 98.46 per cent.

While the daily positivity rate rose to 7.03 per cent, the weekly positivity rate stood at 4.49 per cent.

Also in last 24 hours, a total of 2,39,751 tests were conducted across the country, increasing the overall tally to over 87.27 crore.

As of Monday morning, India's Covid-19 vaccination coverage exceeded 202.17 crore, achieved via 2,66,70,946 sessions.

6 KILLED AS SUV FALLS INTO GORGE IN JAMMU-SRINAGAR HIGHWAY

Srinagar: Six people were killed and three others injured after an SUV they were travelling in fell into a gorge on Jammu-Srinagar highway in Jammu and Kashmir's Ramban district, police said on Monday.

Police said the incident took place when the driver of the SUV, carrying a marriage party, lost control over the vehicle in Ramsu stretch of Jammu-Srinagar highway on Sunday.

While five occupants of the vehicle were killed on the spot, an injured woman admitted for treatment to SKIMS Srinagar succumbed to her injuries this morning.

"Six people have been killed in this accident and three others injured", police said.

Drone covers 20 kms in 30 minutes to deliver frozen food in Gurugram

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Get ready to receive mouth-watering cuisines right in your balcony as homegrown drone startup Skye Air Mobility on Monday said that it has successfully delivered frozen food to Cloud kitchen startup Curefoods via its unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) that travelled an aerial distance of 20 kms in less than 30 minutes.

After receiving food at its Cloud kitchen outlets in Gurugram, Curefoods now looks at food deliveries to the customers in the near future.

The trials witnessed up to six flights per day, each carrying a payload of 5 kg in temperature-controlled boxes that maintained a negative 20-degree temperature to keep the frozen food fresh.

The deliveries of frozen food hap-



pened with a series of BVLOS (beyond visual line of sight) trials from Curefoods warehouse in Jhundsari to the Curefoods Kitchen Outlet at Golf Course Road, Gurugram. "This is indeed a first-of-its-kind initiative in the direction to

utilise cutting-edge technology to deliver food. With the ongoing BVLOS trials, we anticipate gathering more data on route, flight, cost-economic viability in order to develop models for commercial flights to begin in the next few

months," said Ankit Kumar, CEO, Skye Air Mobility.

Skye Air used its most reliable UAV, Skye Ship One, to facilitate real-time deliveries ensuring optimal flight safety and throughout temperature monitoring.

Skye Ship One is currently the most reliable delivery drone in India, having completed more than 1,200 flights. "Starting with B2B pilot kitchen deliveries which ensure a larger quantity at a lesser cost, we will be looking at B2C food deliveries soon in the future," said Ankit Nagori, Founder, Curefoods.

Founded in 2020, Skye Air has successfully operated over 1500 flights so far.

Skye Air has been offering its expertise spanning different verticals such as healthcare supplies, agri-commodities, food and grocery delivery.



CM UDDHAV THACKERAY WAS ABSENT FROM OFFICE, ALLEGES TEAM SHINDE

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The Eknath Shinde faction of Shiv Sena on Monday took a dig at party president Uddhav Thackeray questioning how many times he had visited the office of Maharashtra chief minister when he was in power and whether he gave time to the party workers.

Deepak Kesarkar, the spokesperson for the Eknath Shinde faction, said Thackeray's "public appearances" have increased now, referring to the party outreach programmes launched by the Sena president after the collapse of his government last month.

A day earlier, Thackeray inaugurated a ward-level Shiv Sena office in south Mumbai and addressed party workers.

"We have raised three questions and we have not yet received answers. As the chief minister (November 2019-June 2022), how many times did Uddhav Thackeray go to his (chief minister's) office in Mantralaya and meet Sena workers? Now, the frequency of his public appearance has increased," Kesarkar told reporters.



The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) had often criticised the 'absence' of Uddhav Thackeray in the CM's office during the COVID-19 pandemic.

A rebellion led by Shiv Sena veteran Eknath Shinde and 39 MLAs led to the collapse of the Uddhav Thackeray-led Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) government last month. Shinde was sworn in as the chief minister on June 30 with Devendra

Fadnavis of BJP as deputy CM.

Kesarkar also sought Thackeray's reply on the claims made by rebel Shiv Sena MP Rahul Shewale that it was finalised in 2021 that Shiv Sena will join hands with former ally BJP while it was still ruling the state in alliance with the Nationalist Congress Party and Congress.

"We also asked Thackeray about the details of the claims made by

Sena rebel MP Rahul Shewale that it was finalised in 2021 itself to join hands with the BJP. If it was true then why these 12 MLAs were suspended and the deal called off," he asked.

During the Maharashtra Assembly's monsoon session last year, 12 MLAs of the BJP were suspended for one year for allegedly misbehaving with the presiding officer in the Assembly Speaker's chamber.

The Supreme Court later observed that the suspension of these MLAs for one year is prima facie unconstitutional.

Kesarkar said Maharashtra needs peace for progress.

He said there is no point in organising rallies against leaders of the Shinde camp and trying to pressure them. "In the last two-and-a-half years (when MVA was in power) maximum time was spent on criticising the Union government. How can one achieve development if you do not keep good relations with the Central government?" he asked without taking the name of Sena MP Sanjay Raut who is a vocal critic of the Centre.

Bullet Train project: JICA gives 3rd tranche of Rs 6K-crore loan

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) has decided to give the third tranche of Rs 6,000-crore for the upcoming Ahmedabad-Mumbai High Speed Rail, or the Bullet Train project, an official said here on Monday.

The Official Development Assistance (ODA) agreement of Japanese Yen (JPY) 100,000-million (@ Rs 6,000 crore) was signed between JICA India Senior Representative Watanabe Jun and Ministry of Finance Additional Secretary R.K. Mishra.

The project aims to develop a high-frequency mass transportation system by building the high speed rail between Ahmedabad and Mumbai, using Japan's Shinkansen technology or 'Bullet Train' and enhancing mobility in the country for regional economic development. Jun said that the project has become a symbol of India-Japan collaboration



with Japan introducing its high speed rail technology for India's first such initiative, slated to cost around Rs 1.08 lakh crore, with over 80 per cent funding through loan from JICA.

"We have witnessed great progress in the civil works so far. The day is approaching when the Shinkansen System developed in the project will contribute to region-wide economic and social development to generate incomes for local residents," Jun remarked. Besides simplifying mobility and ease of connectivity with a safe and reliable inter-

city transport system, the collaboration will ensure technology transfer to boost the Make in India drive. Earlier, in 2017, the JICA had provided around JPY 250,000-million (@ Rs 18,000 crore) for the 508 kms long project being implemented by National High Speed Rail Corporation Ltd.

The pet initiative of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the Bullet Train project was scheduled to be completed by 2022-end, but has been plagued by delays in both Gujarat and Maharashtra and may be only partially operational by 2028.

Mumbai Police probe death threats to actress Katrina Kaif

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The Mumbai Police have registered a complaint by Bollywood actor Vicky Kaushal against a person who has allegedly threatened his British-wife, actress Katrina Kaif, an official said here on Monday.

The complaint has been lodged by Santacruz Police Station against the person for posting death threats on social media and stalking the 39-year-old Katrina.

The police have filed the plea under various sections of Indian Penal Code and IT Act and are probing the matter, said the official.

It may be recalled that the couple had recently gone to Maldives to celebrate Katrina's birthday on July 16 and had posted their holiday memories on social media, after which she was issued dire threats. The developments come barely a month after megastar Salman Khan and his dad Salim Khan also received death threats from certain gangsters with links to the Moosewala gang.

While the police have beefed up security for the father-son celeb duo, Salman is report-



edly seeking a gun license but the police have denied the contentions.

Uddhav Thackeray faction challenges election body order in Supreme Court

Team Absolute | Mumbai/New Delhi

Uddhav Thackeray's Shiv Sena faction has requested the Supreme Court to stop the Election Commission from deciding on who has control of the party - whether Mr Thackeray or Chief Minister Eknath Shinde - till a decision is taken on disqualifying MLAs who had revolted against Mr Thackeray, the former Chief Minister of Maharashtra.

Shinde faction, after forming government with the BJP's support, claims it is the "real Shiv Sena". The Election Commission has told both the Sena groups to give documentary evidence and written statements by August 8 to prove who represents the Maharashtra party. Only after that the Election Commission will hear the matter.

Thackeray faction in a petition told the Supreme Court that the Election Commission can't decide which group represents the Shiv Sena till there is clarity on the disqualification of rebel Sena MLAs - who hopped from Gujarat to Assam to Goa in a political operation last month - and dethroned Thackeray. In their petition, Team Thackeray said



the Shinde group is trying to "illegally cobble up numbers and fabricate an artificial majority in the organisation". The issue is already pending before Supreme Court, and if Election Commission proceeds with the matter now, it will cause irreparable injury...An inquiry into a matter which is sub judice before the court amounts to interference with the judicial proceedings and thus, amounts to contempt of the court," Team Thackeray said in the petition filed by Shiv Sena General Secretary Subhash Desai. In a letter to the constitutional body responsible for allotting party symbols and holding elections, Team Shinde claimed it has the support of 40 out of 55

MLAs and 12 out of 18 Lok Sabha MPs.

"...It is evident that there is a split in the Shiv Sena, one group of which is being led by Eknath Shinde and the other group is being led by Uddhav Thackeray, both the groups claim to be the real Shiv Sena with their leader being the alleged president of Shiv Sena party," the Election Commission said on Saturday in a notice to the two camps seeking documentary evidence for the party's control by August 8. The Election Commission said it will take the next step for a "substantive hearing" only after getting the documentary evidence and written statements. The Shinde camp had asked the Maharashtra assembly Speaker to disqualify Team Thackeray. The Supreme Court on July 11, however, told Speaker Rahul Narwekar not to proceed with the plea seeking Team Thackeray's disqualification. The Shinde camp has said their Sena rivals need to be disqualified for defying the party whip during the trust vote and the election of the Speaker last month. Both camps have been asked to frame by Wednesday issues for consideration by a larger bench of the Supreme Court, and the matter would be heard on August 1.

India's domestic demand to sustain growth

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Domestic demand will help sustain India's growth momentum as high-frequency data for June remained strong, with gains concentrated in services-led consumption, whilst data for industrial activity exhibited a mixed trend and external demand moderated further, Morgan Stanley said.

Early trends for July indicate data holding across sectors with mobility (ex-residential) fairly steady and unemployment levels lower than in the previous month. Credit growth continues to rise -- it has reached its highest level since April 2019.

CPI remained stable at 7 per cent YoY in June, similar to May's levels, in line with our estimate. Global commodity prices have moderated and high-frequency food prices



have increased at a softer-than-expected pace. The moderation in commodity prices has brought a respite to rising WPI inflation, which moderated a tad in June, to 15.2 per

cent YoY, with monthly sequential rise being the slowest in six months. Trade deficit made another high but is likely to moderate gradually: The trade deficit widened to an all-

time high of US\$25.6 billion in June, averaging US\$20.7 billion in CYTD2022. On a three-month annualised basis, the trade deficit has widened to 8.7 per cent of GDP, while the trade deficit ex oil is tracking at 4.3 per cent of GDP in June, Morgan Stanley said.

Global growth is expected to slow to 1.5 per cent YoY in Q4 December 2022 from 4.7 per cent in Q4 December 2021. "We see three channels of transmission: 1) slower trade growth, 2) tighter financial conditions, and 3) changes in commodity prices. We thus lower our expectations of export growth, which is already showing some signs of moderation, with some follow-through to domestic capex demand, given the correlation between exports and capex," Morgan Stanley said.

Heavy police force deployed at Aarey colony, protestors detained

The Mumbai Police on Monday beefed up deployment in the Aarey colony area and detained two protestors who reached the site despite being served notices under the Criminal Procedure Code (CrPC), an official said.

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The police had on Sunday served notices under section 149 of the CrPC to Tabrez Sayyed and Jayesh Bhise prohibiting them from assembling unlawfully to protest the construction of the metro car shed in Aarey, the official from Vanrai police sta-

tion said. The police deployment has been increased in the area, he said, adding that barricades have been put up and roads have either been closed or diverted. According to protestors, only residents are being allowed to enter the Aarey colony area and the police are intercepting people

coming from outside. A video alleged of cutting and falling of trees in Aarey is being circulated by protestors on social media. The Brihanmumbai Electric Supply and Transport (BEST) Undertaking has diverted a few buses plying on the route due to felling of trees, an official said.

Ex-UP MLA's absconding son arrested from Pune

In a major breakthrough, the Uttar Pradesh Special Task Force (STF) has arrested Vishnu Mishra, son of former MLA and muscleman Vijay Mishra, from Pune in Maharashtra, late on Sunday night.

Team Absolute | Pune

Vishnu was carrying a reward of Rs 1 lakh after being named in a gangrape case registered in Bhadohi district in 2020. A red corner notice was also issued against him, so that he could not escape abroad. Vishnu Mishra had been absconding for two years. The accused will be taken on a transit remand and brought to Uttar Pradesh. A STF release said that,

"Cases are registered against Vishnu for grabbing a relative's firm and a gang rape in Bhadohi. In August 2020, a case was filed against Vishnu, his father and also his mother Ramlali Mishra, who is also a former MLC, for grabbing the firm and building of one Krishna Mohan Tiwari. In September 2020, a singer of Varanasi, filed a case against Vishnu, his father, and grandson Vikas Mishra for gang rape." On August 14, 2020, the

police had arrested Vijay Mishra from Agar district of Madhya Pradesh, and he is currently lodged in Agra Jail while his wife Ramlali Mishra has taken bail from the High Court. Vijay Mishra has over 70 criminal cases registered in his name and 10 cases are being heard in MP/MLA court. He had won the Gyanpur assembly seat for three consecutive terms, including the 2012 election which he contested from jail.

Everything depends on air traffic control in aviation: Bombay HC

Team Absolute | Mumbai

In aviation, everything depends on the air traffic control and with one mistake anything can happen, the Bombay High Court remarked on Monday while hearing a plea on dangers to aircraft by high-rises near Mumbai airport.

A division bench of Chief Justice Dipankar Datta and Justice M S Karnik was hearing a public interest litigation filed by advocate Yashwant Shenoy, seeking action against construction of buildings above the prescribed height limit in the vicinity of the city airport.

As per Shenoy, these buildings pose a risk to aircraft taking off and landing at the airport here and may some day lead to an untoward incident. Chief Justice Datta said the issue concerns everyone. He also referred to the recently released Ajay Devgn-starrer Hindi film "Runway 34". "I happened to see a movie 'Runway 34'. Nothing depends on the pilot. Everything



depends on the air traffic control," Chief Justice Datta said. "We think the pilot has announced that we are set for landing or take off and the temperature outside is so and so and every-

thing is fine. But it all depends on several other factors. One mistake here and there...anything can happen," he said. The bench directed the Maharashtra government and the

Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation to file their affidavits on what action it has taken on the issue. The court said it would hear the matter further on Friday.



EDITOR'S SPECS

NO NIGHT LANDINGS

There are 25 airports across the country which don't have night landing facilities. Kushinagar airport, Shimla airport and recently inaugurated Deoghar airport in Jharkhand are among the list of 25 airports. The ministry of civil aviation on Monday said in the Rajya Sabha that the upgradation or modernisation of airports, including provision of night landing facility is a continuous process and is undertaken by Airports Authority of India (AAI) and other airport operators from time to time depending on the availability of land, commercial viability, socio-economic considerations, traffic demand and willingness of airlines to operate to/from such airports etc. "Presently night landing facility which is purely demand and need based on operational requirement of airlines and availability of land is not available at 25 operational airports with scheduled flight operations," said the ministry. The list of airports not having night landing facility also include airports like Kullu and Dharamsala in Himachal Pradesh, Bilaspur and Jagdalpur in Chhattisgarh, Kalaburagi in Karnataka, Kolhapur and Sindhudurg in Maharashtra and Ludhiana in Punjab among others. AAI has undertaken installation of a night landing facility at Kolhapur airport. A team of Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) has carried out the inspection of the airport on June 10, 2022. AAI has already initiated action for compliance of the observations made by DGCA during the inspection. The country has over 100 operational airports and officials said that the airports not having night landing facilities are mostly those recording lower air passenger traffic. Airports Authority of India, which manages most of the airports in India, takes up a particular one for consideration for providing night landing facilities, when airlines show an interest during night operations.

Information and Intelligence

DC Pathak

Even to a lay man, the word intelligence denotes exclusive information or special knowledge linked to some out-of-the-normal doings or profile of an individual or an organised group -- which were not visible on the surface or known in the open.

One keeps this knowledge to oneself unless it has an adverse personal bearing, requiring the individual to seek the support of someone else -- possibly in authority -- to do something about it.

Today, the internal security scene in the country, marked by surreptitious operations of anti-national elements working on behalf of an external adversary, has made it necessary that the citizens realise that the new kinds of threat like terrorism, urban Naxalism, communal violence triggered by agent provocateurs, promotion of undesirable activity under the cover of a civil society forum and use of drug trafficking for funding underground enemy agents, are meant to harm both the nation as well as its people and that a new level of responsibility has arisen for them to watch out for any such unusual activities and discreetly share that knowledge with the custodians of national security.

This can, however, happen only if trustworthy arrangements are built by the latter to quietly utilise this vast public resource of information of intelligence value. The call of the time universally is for a nation to make sure that in addition to the fundamental work of intelligence agencies of accessing secret information on the hidden plans of the enemy, there is inflow of information from the enlightened public in a manner that the State would be able to make good use of it for the cause of national security.

It is not known how the 'Fusion Centres' catering to this need are working for Homeland Security in the US but there is no doubt that citizen's awareness is going to be of great help in a situation where more than the threat of an open military attack, the danger of trans-border covert offensives of the enemy are

becoming the order of the day. India has particularly been a target of these for a long period now. All intelligence ultimately is information but all information is not intelligence. Intelligence is information with the special stamp of containing a futuristic indicator of hostile activity.

It is a new paradigm of internal security that openly accessed information often contains elements of intelligence that an enlarged scan and analysis could muster to the great advantage of security.

Open source information has traditionally been a valuable store for reading trends that are relevant to security issues. Social media and cyber space have acquired a new-found importance now in as much as a comprehensive scrutiny of the same could help in detecting the footprints of an adversary.

WhatsApp groups with foreign links, notably directed from Pakistan, came to notice during NIA investigations into the recent terror acts of Amravati and Udaipur. Exploiting communal conflicts for generating militancy and recruiting terrorists using faith-based motivation has become pronounced casting an added burden on Central and state intelligence agencies, of keeping track of the socio-economic scene in an area and examining in depth if any attempts at 'radicalisation' are being made.

Intelligence function of police stations, not only for organised crime but also from the angle of national security, is now extremely important -- the Centre-state cooperation for strengthening the same should be seriously pursued.

This in turn will help keep India an open, democratic and easily accessible country. An upshot of this new security paradigm is that the role of the state police goes beyond the maintenance of law and order and includes a keen participation in the safeguarding of internal security as well. Investigation of crime could sometimes unearth valuable leads of intelligence value on the security front. This added dimension of work requires an upgrade of the quality of police force in the country.

In the era of proxy wars, the army

is being utilised on our own soil in counter-terror operations and for putting down insurgency movements. To avert collateral damage, intelligence-based actions are a must. Close collaboration among civilian intelligence agencies and the DMI has to exist and this is being successfully worked on here.

Apart from the periodical meetings between the chiefs of intelligence on both sides and the meetings of Strategy Planning Group (SPG) now chaired by the NSA, which are attended by the service chiefs, liaison between the local army units in the field and the representatives of SIB on the ground has to be kept up.

Intelligence on what is happening across our borders is another matter of exchange of information between civil and defence organisations in the context of Jammu & Kashmir, the Northeast and the India-China border. A new dimension of proxy offensives is the possible damage clandestinely caused to our establishments of strategic importance and vital national assets to weaken India. These include, among others, our nuclear, space and missile development centres, cyber base on which Railways, civil aviation and power grids work and systems used for running refineries, metropolitan transport and steel plants. The Intelligence Bureau has been overseeing the security of such assets through briefings organised for the security set-up of the individual enterprise. This should be further developed into a two-way interaction through which these establishments would also give feedback on any suspicious activity with a bearing on national security, noticed by them.

The point is that the country needs to tap all areas from where information of intelligence value could be garnered.

India's principal adversaries -- Pakistan and China -- are acting in concert against India and apart from the provocative activities on the borders, they are now taking to destabilising this country by instigating internal discords using their agents -- with Pakistan particularly spreading radicalisation to recruit 'lone wolves' for acts of terrorism

here. Pakistan has put Indo-Pak relations in a Hindu-Muslim framework and stepped up its efforts to claim that the primary identity of Indian Muslims is the one that made them a part of Ummah.

The developments, including the outbreak of violence over the alleged anti-Prophet remarks by now suspended BJP spokesperson Nupur Sharma, made during a TV discussion, have amply proved that Pakistan is planning to whip up Islamic militancy in India by exploiting communal issues.

The desperate desire of those in political opposition here to somehow retain the minority votes -- even if it meant going along with anti-India expressions of many leaders of the Muslim community -- is being taken advantage of by Pakistan. The concept of nationalism and nation is decry by many opposition leaders as an idea smacking of Hinduism and taken to a point where they even advocated that saluting the national flag and standing during the singing of national anthem should be made optional for the minorities.

No wonder that some civil society groups in league with anti-India lobbies at home and abroad have lately become active in floating narratives of majoritarianism, autocracy and human rights to run 'politics by proxy' against the Narendra Modi regime.

Keeping track of all this does not require the classical cloak & dagger style of intelligence collection, but needs enlarging of the area of coverage with the help of 'observers' so that any play of an 'alien hand' in what is happening on the ground do not go unnoticed.

The challenge for the security set up is to remain well informed of 'open activities' that provide a 'cover' for what is nefarious and detrimental to national security and integrity.

In the post-Cold War world, geopolitics is shifting to produce for India a new spectrum of friends and adversaries. The large democracies -- including the US -- have a natural friend-

ship towards India and Prime Minister Modi's tested policy of building bilateral relationships that are mutually beneficial in terms of economy and security and are in alignment with global peace, which has somewhat marked out the two adversaries of India -- Pakistan and China -- in the eyes of the world.

This is why the international community is by and large on the side of India on the points of friction between this country and the two hostile neighbours across the border. The military alliance between a Marxist dictatorship and a fundamentalist regime -- with their give and take on Afghanistan after the reinstallation of Kabul Emirate of Taliban and collaboration in many things that went against the interests of the democratic world -- has not gone unnoticed by the rest of the international community.

Pakistan is using Chinese drones for its covert cross-border operations of dropping arms, explosives and drugs on our side. The Sino-Pak axis has, however, helped enlarge the arc of friends for India and added to the utility of information on world developments that could be gathered from open interactions with friendly countries as different from intelligence-gathering operations. Friendly liaison is a valuable storehouse of information of intelligence value for India -- it multiplies the importance of diplomacy as a means of supplementing the objective of strengthening national security. Friendship with all countries has facilitated the rise of India as a major power in the world whose counsel is respected -- and responses to the approach of India to Ukraine-Russia military conflict showed that. It needs to be mentioned here that the extraordinary performance of the NSA, and the effective elucidation of our foreign policy by the External Affairs Minister, have been of singular help to Prime Minister Modi in carrying India to this new height.

(The writer is a former Director Intelligence Bureau)

international

Moldova's PM 'very worried' Russia will invade her country next

London | Agencies

Moldova Prime Minister Natalia Gavrilita has said she is very worried that Russia will invade her country next, while warning that no country is safe from Russian President Vladimir Putin, media reports said.

Natalia Gavrilita's warning came after Moscow's forces made gains in Ukraine's south and east, near to the Moldova-Ukraine border, in recent months, Daily Mail reported.

Analysts believe that Kremlin is trying to create a land bridge between Russian-occupied territory in eastern Ukraine and Transnistria - an unrecognised breakaway region supported by Russia - in order to cut Ukraine off from the Black Sea, the report said. Transnistria controls a narrow strip of land that is found mostly between the Dniester river and the Moldovan Ukrainian border. It declared independence from Moldova following a brief military conflict in 1992, but is internationally still recognised as being part of the Eastern European country.

"It's a hypothetical scenario for now, but if the military actions move further into the



southwestern part of Ukraine and toward Odessa, then of course we are very worried," Gavrilita told CNN's Fareed Zakaria on Sunday. "We are very worried, especially considering that troops are on the territory of the secessionist Transnistria region. We are doing everything possible to maintain peace and stability and to ensure that the fighting does not escalate." With just 2.5 million people, Moldova is a tiny nation, especially when compared to neighbouring Ukraine which had a population of over 40 million before the Russian invasion began on February 24.

Over 85 million Americans under excessive heat warnings

Washington: In the wake of a persistent heat wave, more than 85 million Americans are under excessive heat warnings or heat advisories, according to the US National Weather Service (NWS). It said that numerous record highs were forecast to be tied or broken in the Northeast of the US, with heat index values up to 37.4 degrees Celsius in parts of Pennsylvania, Delaware, New Jersey and Oklahoma, Xinhua news agency. On July 21, 73-year-old man from Allentown, Pennsylvania succumbed to excessive heat exposure, complicated by underlying medical conditions, according to local officials. Meanwhile, a 66-year-old woman who had underlying health conditions died of heat also on July 22 in Dallas county, Texas. It's estimated that hot temperatures in July have led to dozens of deaths including at least 17 fatalities from Maricopa county, Arizona. The temperature also caused post-ponements or adjustments of sports events and delays of trains. The Boston Triathlon, originally scheduled for Sunday, has been postponed to August 21 while participants competed in the New York City Triathlon with shortened courses on Sunday. The US National Railroad Passenger Corporation issued multiple alerts from over the weeked on delays of its services in the Northeast due to heat-related speed restrictions.

Pak says Indian passengers to be strictly monitored for Covid

Islamabad | Agencies

Pakistan has announced telescopic monitoring of Indian passengers arriving in the country through air or land routes amid a surge in Covid-19 cases caused by the Omicron sub-variant BA-275.

The Directorate of Health Sciences issued a circular in this regard on the instructions of Health Minister Qadir Patel, The Express Tribune reported.

Lahore's Allama Iqbal International Airport (AIIP) has made foolproof arrangements for monitoring of Indian passengers, the report said.

As per instructions, monitoring of Indian passengers will be conducted at all entry points including airports, Wagah-Attari border, and Peace Corridor Kartarpur Gurdwara.

Meanwhile, the coronavirus positivity rate has decreased from 2.96 per cent to 2.74 per cent across Pakistan, according



to the statistics issued by the National Institute of Health (NIH) on Sunday.

During the past 24 hours, three more people died of Covid-19-related complications, the NIH said.

During this period, 19,402 Covid-19 tests were conducted, out of which 532 came out positive. The positivity rate was thus found to be 2.74 per cent, as compared to the previous day's 2.96 per cent.

According to the NIH, 179 people were in critical condition.

Pakistan reels from another upsurge in the coronavirus pandemic, this paper reported that citizens in Karachi have largely forgone the standard operating procedures (SOPs) issued to curb the highly-contagious disease. These SOPs include wearing face masks, maintaining distance from others, and washing hands or using hand sanitizers to maintain protective hygiene.

2 DEAD, 5 INJURED IN LOS ANGELES PARK SHOOTING

Los Angeles | Agencies

Two people were killed and five others injured in a shooting at a park in Los Angeles, authorities said. At around 3.45 p.m. on Sunday, officers received numerous radio calls of a shooting in progress near the baseball field at Peck Park, Xinhua news agency quoted the Los Angeles Police Department as saying in a statement. Officers responded and located multiple victims, the statement added.

The paramedics transported seven victims to local hospitals, said the Los Angeles Fire Department, adding that two of the shooting victims were pronounced deceased and the other five victims were being treated for various injuries. Police said that an unknown number of firearms were located at



scene and will be booked as evidence. It remains unknown how many suspects were involved or if this is a gang related incident, the police added. The Los Angeles Police Department declared a citywide tactical alert after the shooting. Witnesses said hundreds of people were gathered for a car show and other activities around the park. When gunfire erupted, people immediately ran from the scene in terror, reported KABC-TV, the West Coast flagship station of the ABC network.

Japan volcano erupts for 2nd straight day

Tokyo | Agencies

The Sakurajima volcano in Japan's Kagoshima prefecture erupted for a second straight day on Monday, after evacuation orders were issued the previous day, the weather agency said.

Following the latest eruption, the Japan Meteorological Agency (JMA) raised its eruption alert for the volcano two notches to the highest level of 5 on its warning system, reports Xinhua news agency.

An evacuation order was initially issued to residents of the towns of Arimura and Furusato, both in the vicinity of the volcano, with the JMA saying that large volcanic rocks could fall in parts of Kagoshima city within 3 km of two craters.

The weather agency also said people should be on the alert for



pyroclastic flows within a radius of about 2 km of the volcano.

"Volcanic activities of Sakurajima are becoming intense. People in residential areas should be on the highest alert for large volcanic rocks falling nearby," a JMA official told reporters here. There were no reports of injury or damage from

Sunday's eruption that occurred at around 8.05 p.m., although the agency reiterated its evacuation warning. The government is continuing to assess the situation and a task force has been set up at the Prime Minister's Office to monitor the situation. Sakurajima is one of Japan's most active volcanoes.

SL delays rollout of national fuel pass QR code system

Colombo | Agencies

Sri Lanka's Information and Communication Technology Agency (ICTA) on Monday announced that the rollout of the national fuel pass QR code system will be delayed.

It was earlier announced that gas stations around the country would start issuing fuel using the national fuel pass QR code system from Monday, reports Xinhua news agency.

However, the ICTA said that the fuel pass will only be used in select-



ed stations. Director of the ICTA Dasun Hegoda said the system will be implemented nationwide after a few days.

"Right now, the pilot project was only held in Colombo. Now we will implement it in selected gas stations in all 25 districts," he said.

The fuel pass was introduced to ensure a weekly fuel quota for motorists given that Sri Lanka is unable to import fuel in adequate quantities due to the ongoing financial crisis, said Minister of Power and Energy Kanchana Wijesekera.



Chouhan takes part in President Murmu's oath taking ceremony

TODAY IS A HISTORIC DAY FOR THE COUNTRY: CM

CM congratulates President Draupadi Murmu

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan took part in the oath taking ceremony of the President of India of Draupadi Murmu in New Delhi on Monday. In a discussion with the media, Chouhan said that today is a historic day for the country. A girl belonging to a poor tribal family, born in independent India is the President of India today. He said that when she was taking the oath, our hearts were filled with excitement amidst tears of joy.

Chief Minister said that President Draupadi Murmu, in her address, said a very good thing that one must continue to work for others' welfare without bothering about one's interest or loss. This shows her simple personality and high thoughts. He said that I consider it my good fortune that she is now the President of our country. Chouhan extended warm congratulations and best wishes to Draupadi Murmu on taking oath as the President. CM Chouhan has tweeted that - "The journey of President Smt. Murmu from ward corporator to the highest post of the country will inspire the society and her vast experience will give a new direction to the society."

Chief Minister said that after taking oath today, Hon'ble President Smt. Draupadi Murmu, in her first succinct address, put forward brilliant views on democratic values and its power along with struggles and challenges of her life, which are exemplary and inspiring for all of us. Chouhan said that Hon'ble President Smt. Draupadi Murmu in her address has mentioned the lines of eminent poet Bhim Bhoi of Jagannath region, "Mo Jeevan Pache Narke Padi Thau Jagat Udhaan Heu". This is the basic mantra of public service. The President has expressed the feeling through these lines that I am not worried about the good or bad things in my life, the goal of my life is public welfare and the salvation of the poor. CM said that we will continue to follow this sacred idea in letter and spirit.

brilliant views on democratic values and its power along with struggles and challenges of her life, which are exemplary and inspiring for all of us. Chouhan said that Hon'ble President Smt. Draupadi Murmu in her address has mentioned the lines of eminent poet Bhim Bhoi of Jagannath region, "Mo Jeevan Pache Narke Padi Thau Jagat Udhaan Heu". This is the basic mantra of public service. The President has expressed the feeling through these lines that I am not worried about the good or bad things in my life, the goal of my life is public welfare and the salvation of the poor. CM said that we will continue to follow this sacred idea in letter and spirit.

Family performs last rites on the road, claims no crematorium

"The incessant rains have filled our fields and we have no cremation ground in the village. We were left with no option," said the family members performing the last rites.

Team Absolute | Bhopal

In a shocking incident shaming humanity and bringing to the fore the flaws of the system, natives of Ajnaul village performed the last rites of one in the middle of the road, reason, lack of cremation ground in the village.

"The incessant rains have filled our fields and we have no cremation ground in the village. We were left with no option," said the family members performing the last rites.

"Even though the government claims to take its plans for development to the last mile, this is the truth of those claims. The villagers are still hoping and pleading," added the family. "The families perform last rites in their own respective fields. Several complaints and requests pleading for a crematorium ground have been registered to the Sarpanch and the officials, but to no avail," claimed the villagers. Congress District President Man Singh



hoping and pleading," added the family. "The families perform last rites in their own respective fields. Several complaints and requests pleading for a crematorium ground have been registered to the Sarpanch and the officials, but to no avail," claimed the villagers. Congress District President Man Singh

Kushwaha said that it is an embarrassment to the state. "This exposes the true face of the BJP government, where people are yearning for even basic facilities. I assure people of all help," he said.

Notably, the Madhya Pradesh government claims to have spent crores of rupees annually to develop rural

areas. Schemes like MNRGA have been launched for the development of the village and to provide basic facilities to the villagers.

But village Ajnaul falling under the Mehgaon assembly constituency of Bhand is still struggling with its basic needs and have to pay for the flaws of the system.

Continue rain triggers flood-like situation in State BRIDGE CONNECTING BHOPAL TO HOSHANGABAD COLLAPSED

Continued rain for the three days in several parts of Madhya Pradesh has prompted the authorities to make the people alert with flood-like situation. Almost big and small size rivers in the state including- Narmada, Betwa, Tava, Shipra, Gopad-Banas and many more are reportedly flowing above danger marks.



bridge is under guarantee period and the contractor concerned will do the repair works. According to reports, the said bridge was constructed last year. In the last 24 hours, Bhopal city has recorded 8.7cm rainfall. At the same time, Bhopal district has received 7.1cm rainfall. In districts like Guna, Ashok Nagar, Sheopur, Vidisha, Rajgarh, Neemuch, Tikamgarh, Panna, Satna, Rewa, Sidhi, Betul, Chhindwara, Seoni, Mandasaur, Sehore, Bhopal, Narmadapuram, Harda, and Sagar, the Meteorological department has predicted heavy rainfall.

Meanwhile, moderate rains are expected in areas like Ujjain, Burhanpur, Shajapur, Morena, Raisen, Ratlam, Dewas, Khandwa, Dhar, Narsingpur, Damoh, Singrauli, Mandla, Balaghat, Jabalpur, Anuppur, Chhatrapur, and Agar.

For four to five hours duration in the above districts, wind speed is likely about 40 km per hour.

Continued rain for the three days in several parts of Madhya Pradesh has prompted the authorities to make the people alert with flood-like situation. Almost big and small size rivers in the state including- Narmada, Betwa, Tava, Shipra, Gopad-Banas and many more are reportedly flowing above danger marks.

Highways and many roads connecting one from another part of the state are submerged with rain water. Reports received from various locations suggested that there is flood-like situation in many areas, schools, community health centers, government offices and residential colonies. A bridge built on National Highway connecting capital city Bhopal to Raisen collapsed on Sunday

night, slowing vehicular movement and causing traffic snarls on other roads. Similarly, a 40-meter patch of newly constructed bridge on National Highway connecting Bhopal-Jabalpur and Nagpur (Maharashtra) caved in near Bhopal.

Further, highway connecting Sheopur (MP) to Kota (Rajasthan) remained closed for two days due to water flowing above from small size bridges built on roads.

Notably, an elderly woman's body was cremated on road in Bhand district owing to submergence of existing cremation space by swollen Sindh river.

Meanwhile, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) has issued 'Orange and Yellow' alerts pertaining for different parts of the state. Bhopal city has recorded 8.7 cm rainfall in the last 24 hours, according to regional office of IMD in Bhopal.

There is flood-like situation in Bhopal as almost all lakes and dams have received rainwater above danger marks. Sensing the alarming situation, the administration has opened extra gates of dams (dams built on several rivers, including Narmada, Betwa, Kaliyasot etc.) to release water.

According to IMD, heavy rain is likely in various districts like Guna, Ashok Nagar, Shajapur, Raigarh, Rewa, Satna, Sidhi, Bhopal, Chhindwara, Sagar and many more.

Accused of helping BJP in polls, AIMIM lodges FIR against Cong leader in MP

An FIR was lodged against Madhya Pradesh Congress vice-president Abbas Hafeez as he called All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimeen (AIMIM) a 'B' party of the BJP and accused its chief Asaduddin Owaisi of helping the saffron party in recently concluded urban polls in Madhya Pradesh.

Team Absolute | Bhopal

An FIR was lodged against Madhya Pradesh Congress vice-president Abbas Hafeez as he called All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimeen (AIMIM) a 'B' party of the BJP and accused its chief Asaduddin Owaisi of helping the saffron party in recently concluded urban polls in Madhya Pradesh.

Owaisi's AIMIM contested urban body elections for the first time in Madhya Pradesh

and made remarkable entry. FIR against Hafeez was lodged in Bhopal for his statement against Owaisi, accusing him of catching 'red-handed helping BJP'. Hafeez made this claim in a video message uploaded on his official Twitter handle a couple of days back.

Hafeez made this allegation referring the result of Burhanpur mayoral post, where the Congress candidate lost election against the BJP with a margin of 542 votes. Congress claimed that the BJP won Burhanpur mayoral post with the help of AIMIM. In a statement, Hafeez argued that Congress lost by a slim margin because AIMIM cut into party's vote bank. He also alleged that AIMIM chief Owaisi has 'caught red-handed helping BJP'. Subsequently, MP cadre of AIMIM on Friday registered an FIR against Hafeez under section 504 (Intentional insult to provoke breach of peace) at Ashoka Garden police station in Bhopal. Although, FIR was registered by AIMIM leaders in Bhopal, the Congress accused the state ruling BJP's hand behind this issue. The development prompted senior Congress leader and Rajya Sabha MP Digvijaya Singh to

jump in support of Hafeez. "What has Abbas Hafeez said so wrong? It is yet another evidence that BJP's police promptly registered the FIR. The BJP's police force doesn't show such promptness in other cases," Digvijaya wrote on Twitter.

MP BJP unit was yet to respond on the issue.

Earlier, Madhya Pradesh Congress Committee (MPCC) head and former chief minister Kamal Nath during a press conference had claimed that both - the Congress and the BJP could have won 7-7 mayoral posts, had the AIMIM not helped the saffron party.

Apart from Burhanpur, the Congress has lost mayoral post in Ujjain with a margin of 700 votes. Out of 16 mayoral posts in Madhya Pradesh, the BJP has won nine, Congress five, while AAP and Independent each won one mayoral posts. Both the AIMIM and the AAP were debutants in Madhya Pradesh urban body elections and the two parties have made remarkable entry in the state where the BJP and the Congress have been dominating so far. Recently, nearly a dozen of local Congress workers joined AIMIM in Bhopal.

Minor girl molestation; Congress stages protest

Team Absolute | Bhopal

A class 4 girl was allegedly raped in a government school in the Kohe-fiza area, police said on Saturday. The incident took place in the school's toilet. The accused has been identified as Lakshmi Narayan Dhanak, husband of a sweeper, working in that school. The victim took admission just 6 days before the incident. When she was heading towards the washroom, the accused accompanied her, grabbed her from behind, molested her and escaped.

The victim identified the accused through his clothing and informed her teacher. The teacher informed the Local Police; the police

rushed to the school, investigated and nabbed the accused after the investigation.

The incident heated up again when the Congress leaders decided to protest against the mishap that took place with the innocent in the school. Congress MLA PC Sharma, Congress State President (Women Cell) Vibha Patel with dozen of congress leaders, walked towards the house of School Education Minister Inder Singh Parmar. When the police officials tried to stop them through barricades, clashes took place between protesters and the police. Amid these clashes, the protesters were incessantly sloganeering against Parmar, asking

him to resign his seat. Congress alleged that "Daughters are not safe under the government of Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan." When the police officials blocked their routes through barricades, Congressmen burnt effigies and continued protesting.

Commenting over the Congress' protest, State general secretary BJP Bhagwandas Sabnani said "The people who are initiating such crimes are of perverted mentality, no one is supporting such criminals. As far as talking about the protest initiated by congress leaders, Congress Party should not play politics in such sensitive cases, Police have arrested the accused and investigation is underway."

CM MAKES COURTESY CALL ON KARNATAKA GOVERNOR



Bhopal: Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan made a courtesy call on the Governor of Karnataka, Thawarchand Gehlot, in New Delhi on Monday. CM Chouhan greeted Governor Gehlot by presenting him a bouquet of flowers.

Man held for molesting his minor niece

According to the police, the 17-year-old victim lodged a complaint against the accused at Pardeshipura police station.

Team Absolute | Indore

A man was arrested for allegedly molesting his minor niece under Pardeshipura Police Station limits in the city on Monday, the police said.

The accused was pressuring her for marriage. According to the police, the 17-year-old victim lodged a complaint against the accused at Pardeshipura police station. The victim told the police that she went to her maternal aunt's home for 15 days in May this year. During which, she noticed a sudden change in the behaviour of the accused. He started communicating with double meaning words and also had obscene talks with her.

A few days later, he started molesting her and used to touch her without her consent. One day the accused grabbed the minor when she was alone. He told her that he loved her and wanted to marry. He even promised her that after marrying her, he would leave her maternal aunt. The victim returned to her home but the accused kept harassing her by making continuous calls on her phone. He even visited her home and harassed her. Fed up with the problem, she informed her mother about the matter. Following which approach the police station and lodged the complaint against him. Acting on the complaint, the police registered a case and arrested the accused.

CM EXPRESSES GRIEF OVER THE DEMISE OF CRICKETER ASHOK JAGDALE

Bhopal: Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has expressed grief over the death of former Madhya Pradesh Ranji cricket team captain and former vice-president of Madhya Pradesh Cricket Association, Ashok Jagdale.

Chouhan has described the death of Shri Jagdale as an irreparable loss to the cricketing world.

He prayed to God to give peace to the departed soul and strength to the bereaved family to bear this loss.

Man Gets Father Murdered, Hired Killer On Facebook: Cops

The man received the killer at Jhansi railway station and arranged for his stay in Labheda Tiraha area of Shivpuri district.

Team Absolute | Shivpuri

A man in Madhya Pradesh allegedly got his 59-year-old father murdered for money after hiring a killer through Facebook, police said on Monday.

The victim, Mahesh Gupta, was shot dead on the intervening night of July 21-22 when he was sleeping in a room of his house in Pichhore town, about 75 km from the district headquarters, Superintendent of Police (SP) Rajesh Singh Chandel said.

The police have arrested three persons - Ajit Singh, the alleged killer hailing from Bihar, Gupta's son Ankit (32) and the latter's friend Nitin Lodhi - in connection with the case, he said. The police suspected the role of Gupta's son in the crime as he was sleeping on the ground floor of his house while his father was shot dead on

the third floor, the official said.

Ankit's interrogation and a probe into the case revealed he was angry with his father as the latter would refuse to give him money due to Ankit's liquor addiction and involvement in gambling and other criminal activities, he said. Ankit searched online and based on the information gathered, he contacted through Facebook a gang from Bihar named 'Ajit King' group for kidnapping and killing his father, promising to pay Rs 1 lakh for it, the official said.

He also took the help of his friend Lodhi in plotting the crime. On July 12, Ankit deposited Rs 10,000 into the account of Ajit Singh, the administrator of the Ajit King group on Facebook. Ankit and Lodhi later received Singh at Jhansi railway station and arranged for his stay in Labheda

Tiraha area of Shivpuri district.

When Singh asked them to pay the money or inform him about the murder plan, Ankit and Lodhi told him the plan was cancelled as they could not arrange the money.

When the killer insisted on being paid, Ankit told him about the plan to kill his father, the SP said. Lodhi allegedly arranged a country made pistol and cartridges which were used in the crime.

On the intervening night of July 21-22, Ankit asked his wife and daughter to sleep in another room on the ground floor and allowed the killer to enter the house around 2 am, he said. Ankit's wife woke up on hearing a gun shot, but he told her it was the sound of lightning strike, he said. After murdering Gupta, the killer left and Ankit locked the house from inside. In the

morning, Ankit told the neighbours and police that some unidentified persons killed his father, the official said.

The police further said Gupta's wife had died about 20 years ago and he lived with his son. Gupta recently got Rs 1 crore compensation after his other son Anil Gupta, who was in the Army, allegedly committed suicide, the official said.

Besides, Gupta also used to get a pension and Ankit was eyeing the money, the official said. Singh was arrested from Gorakhpur railway station in Uttar Pradesh, while Ankit and Nitin Lodhi were arrested from Pichhore town here, he said.

They have been booked under relevant sections of the India Penal Code and further investigation into the case is on, the official said.

CHIEF MINISTER MAKES COURTESY CALL ON LOK SABHA SPEAKER

Bhopal: Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan made a courtesy call on Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla at his residence in New Delhi this morning.



CHIEF MINISTER PLANTS SAPLING ON KAUTILYA MARG IN DELHI



Bhopal: Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan on Monday planted sapling on Kautilya Marg near Madhya Pradesh Bhawan complex during his stay in Delhi. CM Chouhan planted a Champa sapling. During plantation, Chief Minister said that he plants saplings every day for environmental protection. The CM said that it is necessary for the future generation that all people must plant saplings on occasions like birthdays, death anniversaries and marriage anniversaries. He said that by doing this we not only plant trees but also nurture life.



'Nope' gets 'Yes' from audience, tops US box-office with \$44 million debut

Los Angeles | Agencies

Actor-comedian-filmmaker Jordan Peele's latest science-fiction thriller 'Nope' has topped the US box office with its \$44 million debut. Although the ticket sales were slightly behind projections of \$50 million and fall in between the results of Peele's first two films, 2017's 'Get Out' (which opened to \$33 million) and 2019's 'Us' (which opened to \$71 million), reports 'Variety'.

The film demonstrates the director's popularity at the movies and marks a strong start for an original, R-rated horror film. According to 'Variety', 'Nope' stands as the highest opening weekend tally for an original film since 'Us' debuted more than three years ago. It includes Quentin Tarantino's star-studded 'Once Upon a Time in Hollywood', which started with \$41 million in July 2019. 'Nope' was made on a budget of \$68 million, which is significantly more than 'Get Out' (with its slender \$4.5

million budget) and 'Us' (with its \$20 million budget). So the movie will require a little more coinage than Peele's past films to turn a profit. 'Variety' further states that 'Nope' will not open at the international box office until mid-August. The film reunites Peele with 'Get Out' star Daniel Kaluuya - and adds Keke Palmer and Steven Yeun to the mix - in the story of siblings who live on a gulch in California and attempt to uncover video evidence of a UFO.

RUBY ROSE RETURNS WITH 'STOWAWAY'

Los Angeles | Agencies

Australian actress Ruby Rose, who exited the "Batwoman" series two years ago following unsafe working conditions, is returning to a larger screen in a starring role for the new film "Stowaway".

Music video director Declan Whitebloom, who has worked with Taylor Swift and the Jonas Brothers, makes his feature debut, which teams Rose with Frank Grillo and Patrick Schwarzenegger, reports 'Deadline'.

The film is a cat-and-mouse chase in the vein of action films like "Die Hard" and "Panic Room". In it, a tenacious party girl fights to survive after three thieves commandeered her luxury yacht. Unable to escape and trapped on the yacht at high seas, she turns the tables on the intruders and takes matters into her own hands.

'Deadline' further states that Rose claimed last year that she left "Batwoman" over unsafe working conditions on set. Warner Bros TV, which produces "Batwoman", and a former co-star released statements refuting Rose's claims, while a couple of cast members tweeted their support of the show.



Why Kate Moss testified in Depp-Heard trial?

Los Angeles | Agencies

Supermodel Kate Moss shared what made her decide to testify on behalf of her ex-boyfriend Johnny Depp during his May defamation trial against Amber Heard.

According to People, Heard first alleged that Depp pushed Kate Moss down the stairs during her testimony at Depp's UK defamation trial against British tabloid The Sun for calling him a "wife-beater", according to The New York Post.

In November 2020, Depp lost that UK libel lawsuit case and the court upheld the outlet's claims as being "substantially true." In March 2021, Depp's attempt to overturn the decision was overruled.

In Depp's 2022 trial in the U.S. against Amber Heard, where he accused his ex-wife of defaming him in an op-ed about domestic abuse, the staircase incident came up again.

Heard said that she "swung at Depp to defend her younger sister Whitney Henriquez and was triggered when she thought about 'Kate Moss and stairs.'"

However, Moss, appeared virtually



in court in May to deny rumours that the actor shoved her down a flight of stairs while they were dating between 1994 and 1998. "I slid down the stairs and I hurt my back," Moss said under

oath in May. "He never pushed me, kicked me or threw me down any stairs." Now Moss is explaining why she supported Depp in his US trial this year. "I

know the truth about Johnny. I know he never kicked me down the stairs. I had to say that truth," Moss said in an interview with BBC Radio 4's Desert Island Discs, reports people.com.

What's more awkward on camera than sex scenes? Ask Penn Badgley

Los Angeles | Agencies

Actor Penn Badgley has opened up about shooting for raunchy scenes he had to shoot for hit Netflix show 'You' and said faking solo sex acts is more awkward than filming with another person.

Speaking on his 'Podcrushed' podcast, Penn explained: "I have to fake masturbate and even that... I've realised I've not done that so many times on camera. You don't think it's going to be that big of a deal and then you discover it's in front of a camera and a crew with a camera on your face. I have to say sometimes those scenes are harder than with (another) person."

In 'You', Penn plays serial stalker Joe Goldberg who turns to murder and he admitted directors were worried he was making the solo sex act scenes look too "creepy", reports female-first.co.uk.

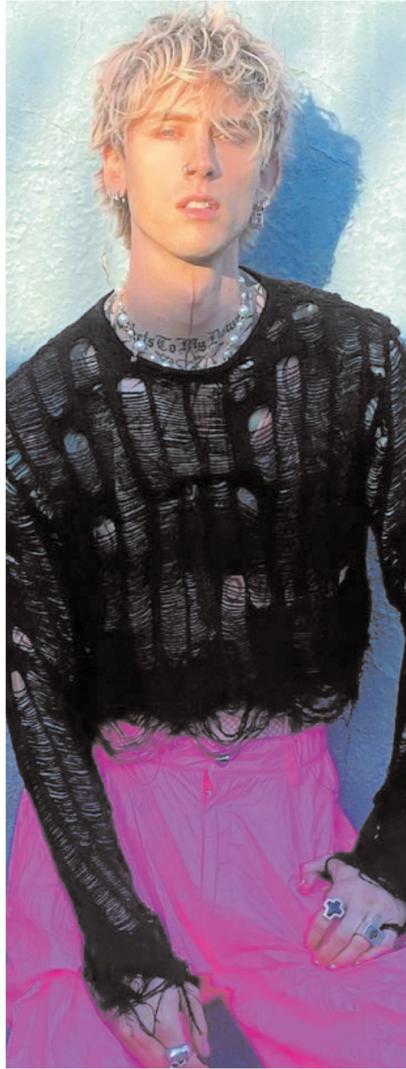
He added: "Every time I've done a masturbation scene "I've always gotten the note to make it less creepy. They say like, 'Close your eyes or go faster or go slower.' I'm like, 'What? This man is f*****g murdering people, and he's masturbating in the street. You're saying I'm making it creepy? How is it that I'm the one making it creepy?'"

The actor revealed his colleagues thought keeping his eyes open during those scenes was part of the problem.

He said: "I just remember I wouldn't close my eyes and the director came up to me. He was like, 'Buddy, I think you gotta close your eyes.'"

However, Penn was adamant being creepy was "the f*****g point" of his character.

Penn has starred in three seasons of the hit show and filming on the fourth series kicked off in London back in March.



IGGY AZALEA SNAPS AT FAN COMMENTING ON HER TWERKING

Los Angeles | Agencies

Rapstress Iggy Azalea has reacted angrily to online comments about her twerking. The 'Fancy' hitmaker, who is known for her love to twerk, caught wind of a tweet about her dancing skills which she seemingly found offensive, reports aceshowbiz.com. The fan wrote: "Iggy really be tossin that big m*."

While celebrities sometimes let fans' comments slide, Azalea appeared to feel the need to defend herself. Retweeting the post, she wrote: "It's a good thing I genuinely feel happy about myself & my body cause y'all stay in every comment section talking the most s**t about me & it's very mean spirited & ugly." She went on to add, "Ps. your man 100% wants to f**k me."

Internet users, however, were confused by Azalea's fierce response as they thought that the fan was actually complimenting her. 'Love & Hip Hop: Hollywood' alum Masika Kalysha wrote underneath the post "What did I read? Cuz that's how we compliment women lol."



Machine Gun Kelly groped at concert

Los Angeles | Agencies

Rapper Machine Gun Kelly, who is dating actress Megan Fox, was violated by his fan during one of his latest concerts. He was performing at the Moda Center in Portland, when one of the concert-goers groped him. A video taken by a fellow concert-goer shows MGK performing while standing between the audience, getting up into the seats to get closer to them. One fan, who stood behind the star, started to wrap his hand around the 'My Ex's Best Friend' singer, seemingly trying to get a selfie with the star, reports aceshowbiz.com. A security guard, who was following MGK,

was seen trying to keep the fan in control, but the guy wouldn't let go of the rapper, whose real name is Colson Baker. When MGK walked to another direction, the fan held even tighter into him and wrapped his arm around MGK's waist, reaching to the frontal area. The fan got a handful of MGK's private part for seconds before the 'Bad Things' hitmaker himself removed the man's hand and the security guard forcibly pulled out the guy.

Being the professional he is, MGK continued performing as if nothing happened. According to aceshowbiz.com, MGK has not addressed the incident on his social media account. He, instead, took to Instagram to mark his daughter Casie Colson Baker turning 13.



Rosie Fortescue



DUPLANTIS SHATTERS MEN'S POLE VAULT WORLD RECORD AT WORLD ATHLETICS

Eugene (US) | Agencies

Armand Duplantis from Sweden refreshed the men's pole vault world record with 6.21 metres at the World Athletics Championships on Monday (IST).

Already securing the title with 6.00 metres, Duplantis improved the previous world record of 6.20 metres, set by him at the World Athletics Indoor Championships in March, by one centimetre.

Christopher Nilsen of the United States finished runner-up with 5.94m on his first attempt. Ernest John Obiena of the Philippines settled for bronze on the same height but with one more attempt, Xinhua reports.

Tobi Amusan from Nigeria claimed the women's 100m hurdles title. Less than two hours after setting a world record of 12.12 seconds in the semifinals, Amusan clocked 12.06 seconds in the final, but her winning time was not recognised as a new world record due to a 2.5-



metre-per-second wind behind her.

Jamaica's Britany Anderson and Jasmine Camacho-Quinn of Puerto Rico finished second and third respectively.

Meanwhile, United States poked the women's 4x400m relay gold medal to achieve double victories over the distance here.

Shortly after their men's

teammates won the gold, Talitha Diggs, Abby Steiner, Britton Wilson and Sydney McLaughlin combined for a world-leading three minutes and 17.79 seconds to win.

The US team built its leading position from the second baton en route to victory. Jamaica placed second in 3:20.74, and Britain finished third in 3:22.64.

Boxer Lovlina alleges mental harassment, says her coach denied entry into CWG Village

Birmingham | Agencies

With just three days left for the Commonwealth Games to kick-start, Tokyo Olympics bronze medalist boxer Lovlina Borgohain on Monday took to social media to share her ordeal where she alleged that she had been going through 'mental harassment' due to her coaches being frequently changed.

She said that her preparations for the major events have been constantly impacted because of her coaches, who helped her to a historic medal in Tokyo, being removed without explanations.

In a tweet, the 24-year-old boxer from Assam said that she has been facing problems in training after authorities denied entry to her coaches in the Commonwealth Games Village.

Lovlina said that one of her coaches has been sent home and another has been denied entry into the Commonwealth Games Village.

"Today with great sorrow I want to reveal that harassment is going



on with me. The coaches who helped me win the Olympic medal were removed which hindered my training process. One of the

coaches is Sandhya Gurungji, who is a Dronacharya awardee. Both of my coaches have to be included in the training camp and

Aaj mein bade dukh ke saath ke... ki mere saath bohot harassment... hai. Har baar mein mere coaches... jinhone mujhe Olympics mein... lane mein madad ki, unhe baar... kar mere training process aur... competition mein humesha har... karke hai. Inme se ek coach Sar... Gurungji Dronacharya awardee... Mere Dono coaches ko camp... training ke liye hazar baar hath... band bohot late include kya... Mujhe isse training mein bohot... pareshaniyan uthane padti hai... mental harassment toh hoti hi... Abhi mere coach Sandhya Guru... Commonwealth Village ke baha... unhe entry nahii mil rahi hai or... training process games ke thik... pehle ruk gaya hai. Mere dустe... bhi India vapas bhej diya gaya... Maine itni request karne ke baad... hua hai isse mujhe bohot ment... harassment hua. Mujhe samajh... aarah ki mai game mai kesse... karu. Isko chahie mera last wor... championships bhi kharab hua... politics ke chahie mai apna CV... kharab nahii karna chahti hoon... karti hoon ki main mere desh ke... politics ko tod kar medal la pa... Hind

they are added quite late," Lovlina said in a tweet. "Right now my coach Sandhya Gurungji is outside Commonwealth Village. With all this, my training process has stopped exactly 8 days before the games. My second coach has also been sent back to India. This happened even after I made many requests, due to which I have suffered a lot of mental harassment. I don't know how to focus in the game. Due to this my last world championship was also spoiled. And because of this politics I do not want to spoil my CWG. I hope that I could break this politics and win a medal for my country. Jai Hind," she wrote.

The boxer sealed the berth in the Indian team for the CWG in the 70 kg event with a dominating 7-0 win against Railways Pooja in the selection trials held in Delhi.

Lovlina scripted history when she won the women's 69 kg bronze medal at Tokyo 2020, becoming the third Indian boxer to win a medal at the Olympics after Vijender Singh (bronze at Beijing 2008) and Mary Kom (bronze at London 2012).

Mithali Raj hints at making a comeback to playing cricket for inaugural women's IPL

New Delhi: Legendary India batter and former captain Mithali Raj has hinted at coming out of retirement to play in the inaugural edition of the women's IPL. The inaugural edition of the women's IPL, which could be a six-team event, is assumed to be launched next year.

Mithali, who had announced her retirement in June this year, is keeping all her options open for a possibility of featuring in the first edition of women's IPL.

"I'm keeping that option open. I've not yet decided. There are a few more months to go before the women's IPL happens. It would be lovely to be part of the first edition of the women's IPL," said Mithali on the first episode of 100 per cent cricket podcast by the ICC. While looking back at her 23-year-old career, from making international debut as a 16-year-old to handing the reins over to the next generation, especially teenaged opener Shafali Verma, Mithali elaborated on how the youngster left a profound impact on her mind.

"I have been a big fan of her game. I have seen



that she's one player who has the ability to win the game single-handedly for India against any attack and any team. She is one of those players that you get to see probably once in a generation." When I saw Shafali in a domestic match when she played against Indian Railways, she scored a fifty but I

could see a glimpse of a player who could change the entire match just with her innings.

"And when she played for Velocity in the first edition of the Challenger Trophy (women's T20 Challenge 2019), she played for my team and I saw that she has the ability and the raw power that you rarely get to see at that age to clear the boundary and hit a six at will." Life after retirement hasn't stopped being hectic for Mithali, who had a Hindi language biopic made on her life titled "Shabaash Mithu". Actor Taapsee Pannu portrays her in the biopic, which had a cinematic release earlier this month. "I thought it (retirement) would slow down my lifestyle, in the sense that I don't have to plan my day, week or next series. After I announced my retirement, I was down with Covid, and when I recovered from that I got involved in the promotional events of the movie.

"So far it is as hectic as it has been (as a player), there's no change to my lifestyle yet. Maybe when all these things die down, I'd probably feel the difference of what it is post-retirement," concluded Mithali.

Axar Patel breaks M.S. Dhoni's 17-year-old record with match-winning six

Port of Spain (Trinidad) | Agencies

India overhauled a massive West Indies total to win the second One-day International at Queen's Park Oval by two wickets with a smashing unbeaten 64 from Axar Patel at the back end helping the visitors to take an unassailable 2-0 lead in the three-game series.

Needing 6 off the last three deliveries, Axar smashed a massive six off Kyle Meyer's full toss delivery as India took an unassailable 2-0 lead in the three-match series. With this six, the 28-year-old all-rounder shattered former India captain MS Dhoni's 17-year-old record.

Axar smashed 5 sixes and 3 boundaries which is now the most by an India batter at No.7 or lower in a successful ODI chase.

Earlier this record was with Dhoni when he had registered three sixes during India's chase against Zimbabwe in 2005. Later in 2011, Yusuf Pathan equalled Dhoni's tally twice - against South Africa and Ireland. Chasing a mammoth 312 for victory in a 50-over game is always an uphill task and India were in a sport of bother when they required 100 from the



last 10 overs with Axar Patel and Deepak Hooda at the crease and just five wickets remaining. With Hooda departing for 33 in the 45th over, it was left to Patel to complete the task as the all-rounder hit five sixes and three boundaries in his 35-ball 64 to complete the job.

Could not keep things down in the last five overs: Nicholas Pooran

Port of Spain (Trinidad) | Agencies

West Indies ticked their batting boxes of using their full quota of 50 overs and posting a 300-plus score in the second ODI against India at Queen's Park Oval. But India's batting unit, led by Shreyas Iyer, Sanju Samson and Axar Patel's fireworks at the end meant that the hosts were consigned to their eighth loss on the trot in the format.

After the match, captain Nicholas Pooran rued the inability of his team to keep India quiet in the final few overs of the match.

"We lost it in the last overs, Axar played well and we didn't hold our nerves. We could not keep things down in the last five overs. We felt that it got easier to hit spinners. We gambled with Akeal bowling against left-handers. One wicket would have opened



up things but Axar played brilliantly."

Pooran had special praise reserved for his deputy, opener Shai Hope, who became the fourth West Indian and 10th batter overall to score a century in his 100th ODI. "Hope's innings

was impressive in his 100th ODI, he was exceptional to get a hundred. It was exceptional as a batting group. We tried to compete really hard. We want to win pretty bad in the next game. That's all we are aiming for," added the left-handed batter.

Repechage format introduced in athletics for 2024 Paris Olympics

Eugene (US) | Agencies

The World Athletics Council on Monday introduced a repechage round to all individual track events from 200m to 1500m in distance, including the hurdles events, for the 2024 Paris Olympic Games.

In an innovation to the regular competition format, the new repechage format will see athletes, who do not qualify by place in round one heats, get a second chance to qualify for the semifinals by participating in repechage heats, quite like the format used in wrestling and fencing.

This will replace the former system of athletes advancing through fastest times in heats in addition to the top placings in the first round.

These athletics events will now have four rounds -- round one, repechage round, semifinals and the final, with schedules varying accord-



ing to the specific nature of the event.

"The new format means that every athlete competing in the events with a repechage round will have at least two races at the Olympic Games," said a statement on World Athletics.

As the 100m already has preliminary heats, before round one, the repechage will not be introduced in this event. In addition, the repechage will not be introduced in distance events as the need for proper recovery between rounds makes the format impractical.

The final regulations of the format, including the timetable as well as system of advancement in each event, will be announced well in advance of the Olympic Games, the statement said.

The Council also approved entry standards for the 10,000m, marathon, combined events and race walk at the World Athletics Championships Budapest 23, which will be held from August 19-27 next year.

Bengaluru FC, Kerala Blasters to face off against Premier League teams in Next Generation Cup in UK

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Bengaluru FC and Kerala Blasters FC reserve squads have arrived in the United Kingdom to participate in the Next Generation Cup, 2022 hosted by the Premier League.

The tournament is part of the long-standing partnership between Premier League and Football Sports Development Limited (FSDL) to support the development of football in India. The youth squads of the two Indian Super League clubs had qualified to compete in the international tournament by virtue of finishing in the top two in the inaugural Reliance Foundation Development League (RFDL) held earlier this year.

The eight-team Next Generation Cup features five Premier League club youth teams and one academy side from South Africa alongside Bengaluru FC and Kerala Blasters FC.



The teams will be divided into two groups and play their first match on July 27 in London and the Midlands. Premier League Chief Executive Richard Masters said, "The Premier League and our clubs look forward to welcoming players from Bengaluru FC and the Kerala Blasters FC for the Next Generation Cup, the first time the youth development tournament has been held in the UK. "I hope everyone taking part in the Cup at Leicester City and Tottenham Hotspur's first-team training facilities enjoys their experience and benefits

from their involvement." Football Sports Development Limited (FSDL) spokesperson said, "It gives us immense pleasure to see young Indian footballers gain international exposure and take their game to the next level. India has immense potential for football and we at FSDL strive to constantly strengthen the sport to establish the country as a global football powerhouse. We wish our players all the best for the tournament and hope this serves as a great learning experience for them." During the tournament, the Premier League and

its clubs will also provide knowledge sharing workshops to best support the ISL clubs involved.

In addition, it will provide a chance for the young Indian footballers to experience playing in the UK and competing against academy sides from the most followed football league in the world. Four Indian officials are also present in England, signalling the latest positive step of the Premier League and Professional Game Match Officials Limited's (PGMOL) relationship with the Indian Super League (ISL) and All India Football Federation (AIFF). This comes as result of an extensive period of collaboration which has also seen PGMOL deliver a number of referee development courses in India as part of the Premier League's Premier Skills programme and wide-ranging support for match officials, their coaches and observers.

Dubai to host Badminton Asia Championships for next five years

Dubai | Agencies

The Badminton Asia Championships, the showpiece continental event for the sport, will take place in UAE for the next five years after Dubai-based sports management and consultant company 'Beyond Boundaries' signed a deal with the Badminton Asia (BA), a report in inside-the-games.biz said.

The two organisations inked the deal last month in Singapore for the hosting of the event in the UAE from 2023 until 2027, according to the report. Manila held the most recent Championships in April 2022.

This will be the first time the Championships will be held in the UAE. The tournament has been held annually since 1991, with the only break coming in 2020 and 2021 due to Covid-19.

The report added that Badminton Asia chief, Anton Subowo, its secretary-general Moosa Nashid and Beyond Boundaries chief executive Sathya Menon were present at the signing ceremony.



"Badminton is one of the most popular sports with an all-time high participation and fan base," said Subowo. "It will be exciting to host the Badminton Asia Championships in a new arena." Malaysia's Lee Zii Jia and Wang Zhiyi of China clinched the men's and women's singles titles at the 2022 event, while Indonesia's Pramudya Kusumawardana and Yermia Rambitan bagged the men's doubles gold. Chen Qingchen and Jia Yifan of China bagged the women's doubles title, while the Chinese pair of Zheng Siwei and Huang Yaqiong won the mixed doubles gold.



SHAH RUKH KHAN READY TO CO-PRODUCE MOVIE WITH ALIA BHATT

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Alia Bhatt's maiden production project, Darlings releases in exactly 10 days, August 5. Ahead of the release, the trailer of the flick was unveiled by the makers today (25 July) at a grand event. The film stars an ensemble cast of top-rated performers such as Shefali Shah, Vijay Verma, Roshan Mathew, and of course, Alia herself. Shah Rukh Khan and Gauri Khan are co-producing the film alongside Alia Bhatt.

To note, the flick marks Alia's debut as a producer. During Darlings press meet, Alia shared that SRK sent her a cute message after watching the film.

The soon-to-be mommy revealed that post deciding to come on board as a producer Shah Rukh called her up and said, "I usually don't co-produce but for you I will". The superstar also told the actress bahut maze karengi and that it will be quite good. She further continued and said after seeing the film again Shah Rukh called me up and thanked me saying, "Thanks u darlings for doing this movie (using the films lingo)." Talking about Darlings, it is a dark comedy-drama which explores the lives of a mother-daughter duo trying to find their place in Mumbai, seeking courage and love in exceptional circumstances while fighting against all odds.

Meanwhile, on the work front, Alia Bhatt is also gearing up for the release of Brahmastra. Directed by Ayan Mukerji, the fantasy drama also features Ranbir Kapoor, Amitabh Bachchan, Mouni Roy and Nagarjuna Akkineni in the lead.



Amitabh Bachchan, Anupam Kher, and Boman Irani starrer slated to release in November

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Ever since the news of Sooraj Barjatya's Production coming up with yet another film titled Uunchai came out, fans have been jumping with joy. This film will see Parineeti Chopra, Amitabh Bachchan, Boman Irani, Anupam Kher, and Neena Gupta in pivotal roles, amongst others.

On July 25th the makers took to their social media and officially announced the release days of the film. Taking to their Twitter handle, the production house tweeted, "The BIGGEST announcement of our diamond jubilee year! Uunchai will be in a theatre near you on 11.11.22. A film by Sooraj R. Barjatya brings a never seen before ensemble on screen."

For the unversed, Uunchai finished its principal shooting earlier this year. The film was extensively shot in Nepal, Delhi, Mumbai, Agra, Lucknow and Kanpur. It marks director Sooraj R. Barjatya's return to the big screen after 7 years. Like all other films of Sooraj Barjatya, Uunchai promises to be a complete family entertainer, taking the legacy of wholesome entertainment forward.



Katrina Kaif shares BTS photos from her upcoming film



Team Absolute | Mumbai

Bollywood actress Katrina Kaif has shared a set of behind-the-scenes pictures from her prep of her upcoming film 'Merry Christmas' starring Vijay Sethupathi.

After returning from her birthday celebrations in Maldives, Katrina has dived straight into work with rehearsals for the film with director Sriram Raghavan.

The actress took to Instagram on Monday morning to share photos from a recent script reading and discussion with Raghavan, and rehearsal of a scene with co-star Sethupathi.

"Work in progress. #rehearsals #merrychristmas #sriramraghavan," she wrote as the caption. 'Merry Christmas' is produced by Ramesh Taurani's Tips Industries in association with Matchbox Pictures Pvt. Ltd.

Katrina, who is married to actor Vicky Kaushal, will also be seen in 'Tiger 3' starring Salman Khan, 'Phone Booth' with Sidhant Chaturvedi and Ishaan Khatter.

Karan Johar announces his next with Shashank Khaitan and Tiger Shroff

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Karan Johar is one of the most loved director-producer of Bollywood. Just like in his films, he makes sure to raise the curiosity bar ahead of announcing a project.

On 24 July, the filmmaker shared that he is going to make a big announcement. The announcement got everyone's tongue wagging speculating that he will spill beans and the upcoming project with Tiger Shroff and Rashmika

Mandanna. And the cat is finally out of the bag! The director shared a glimpse of his next titled 'Screw Dheela' starring Tiger Shroff and helmed by Shashank Khaitan. Sharing the trailer, he wrote, "Arriving with a solid punch of entertainment, super excited to present Tiger Shroff in #ScrewDheela, directed by Shashank Khaitan in an all-new world of action!! (sic)". To note, the details about the leading lady are still under wraps. But as speculations are rife, there are high chances that South star Rashmika Mandanna will be seen opposite Tiger. On the work front, Tiger Shroff has Ganapath alongside Kriti Sanon in his pipeline.



Deepika Padukone is a rare actor with a pan-Indian appeal: Siddharth Anand

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Every detail of Pathaan, starring Shah Rukh Khan, Deepika Padukone, and John Abraham, has been closely guarded by the creators. The Siddharth Anand-directed film has generated a lot of excitement and expectation, thus the directors chose to share the first look of SRK in and as Pathaan on June 25, which also happened to be the actor's 30th birthday. Today, on July 25th, the creators of Pathaan have provided a glimpse of the leading woman of Pathaan, and Deepika Padukone looks furious in it!

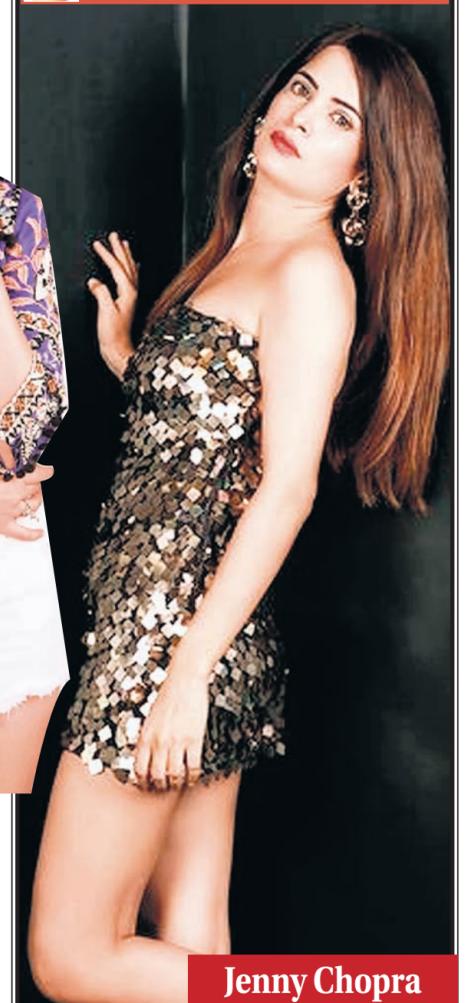
Siddharth Anand, the director, states "Deepika Padukone is a massive, massive star (I have to say it twice) and her presence in Pathaan makes our film even more exciting and grand. No one has yet seen her look in Pathaan and we are thrilled to present a glimpse of her in our action spectacle. Deepika has a fierce role that will blow everyone's mind." Siddharth claims that Deepika will have a magnetic aura in Pathaan. He says, "I have worked with her very early in her career and

have seen her evolve over the years into a completely different and hungry actor. The first look of Deepika Padukone in Pathaan hints at her magnetic aura that people will be a witness to." Deepika, according to Siddharth, is a real pan-India celebrity, and her presence in Pathaan makes the film extremely interesting.

He says, "Deepika is a rare actor with a pan-Indian appeal like no other and having her in a film, looking the way she is, is a huge USP. We wanted to cast someone who has an appeal across gender and age and there is no bigger star in India today than Deepika Padukone. We can't wait to unveil her character in the film when it releases only on the big screen on Jan 25th, 2023." SRK and Deepika are one of the most famous on-screen couples of all time, with blockbusters like Om Shanti Om, Chennai Express, and Happy New Year." They recently sizzled in Spain after leaked Pathaan set photographs went viral on the internet. The glamorous couple shot a tremendously popular song in Mallorca, with SRK showcasing an eight-pack and DP in her bikini body.

Pathaan will be released in Hindi, Tamil, and Telugu on January 25, 2023!

INSTAGRAM PIC OF THE DAY



Jenny Chopra

KHUSHALII KUMAR INJURES HERSELF WHILE SHOOTING

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Khushalii Kumar, who will be seen in the latest music video 'Dhoke Pyaar Ke', has recently got injured on the sets of the song. The actress has learnt jet skiing for the track and while shooting she injured herself badly but she decided to continue the shooting. Commenting on getting injured while jet skiing Khushalii says: "I suggested the director that I wanted to do the jet skiing scene myself to lend authenticity." "While shooting for it I fell off the jet ski but when I see the end product, it all looks worth it," she adds.

'Dhoke Pyaar Ke' features Khushalii Kumar, Ehan Bhat and Vardhan Puri in the lead. Produced by Bhushan Kumar, 'Dhoke Pyaar Ke' with vocals by B. Praak, composition by Rochak Kohli and lyrics by Rashmi Virag is out on T-Series' YouTube channel.