

absolute india

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STRONG PROTECTION FOLLOWING COVID VACCINATION SHORT-LIVED, SAYS STUDY

Since Covid-19 vaccines first became available to protect against infection and severe illness, there has been much uncertainty about how long the protection lasts and when it might be necessary for individuals to get an additional booster shot.



NEW YORK | Agencies

Vaccine protection against Covid-19 is short-lived and, therefore, booster shots are important, says a new study.

For the study, the team quantified the

likelihood of future infection following natural infection or vaccination by the Moderna, Pfizer, Johnson & Johnson, or Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccines.

The risk of breakthrough infections, in which a person becomes infected despite being vaccinated, depends on

"The mRNA vaccines produce the highest levels of antibody response and in our analysis confer more durable protection than other vaccines or exposures. However, it is important to remember that natural immunity and vaccination are not mutually exclusive. Many people will have partial immunity from multiple sources, so understanding the relative durability is key to deciding when to provide a boost to your immune system."

Jeffrey Townsend, Lead author from Yale University

the vaccine type.

According to the study, current mRNA vaccines (Pfizer, Moderna) offer the greatest duration of protection, nearly three times as long as natural infection and the Johnson & Johnson and Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccines.

GOOD SAMARITAN TRYING TO SAVE OTHERS KILLED IN HYDERABAD



The MBT leader brought to the notice of the commission that digging up work by different departments from Nalgonda Cross Roads to Hafiz Baba Nagar for construction of road over bridge was going on for several months but the authorities concerned were acting with negligence in not filling the pits and removing the debris.

Team Absolute | Hyderabad

A Good Samaritan, who was trying to save lives of others by putting up a board over a pothole in Hyderabad, lost his own life when a speeding car knocked him down.

The shocking incident occurred in Malakpet area of Hyderabad on Tuesday. Mohammed Zahed was injured when a speeding car hit him as he was trying to place a safety board to save road users who were at risk of falling because of the pothole in the middle of the road in front of the office of Director General, Prisons. He was

shifted to Osmania Hospital, where he succumbed late Tuesday.

Liaqat Ali Khan alias Zahed, an employee of Sohail Hotel on the same road, had seen some bikers falling from their vehicles after hitting the pothole. He wanted to do his bit to save others. Majlis Bachao Tehreek (MBT) leader Amjedullah Khan blamed negligence by the Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC) and Telangana State Southern Power Distribution Company Ltd (TSSPDCL) for Zahed's death.

He said despite repeated complaints the pothole was

not filled, causing many accidents.

The MBT leader demanded Municipal Administration Minister K.T. Rama Rao to direct the police to book a case of criminal negligence against the GHMC officials and arrest them. He also demanded Rs 10 lakh compensation and a two-bedroom house under the government scheme for the family of the deceased.

Zahed is survived by wife and four children. He was the sole bread-winner for the family, said Amjedullah Khan who also sought intervention of the State Human Rights Commission.

Kerala village raises Rs 18 cr for treatment of 9-month-old

- Siyad, the father of Siya, told reporter that the child is having difficulties holding her head up and is having trouble in eating and breastfeeding also.
- People of Chorode village in Kozhikode district conducted a massive convention at Athfay auditorium in Chorode for taking forward the collection initiative.



Thiruvananthapuram: A village in Kozhikode district of Kerala has come together to collect Rs 18 crore to treat a 9-month-old Siya Fathima who is suffering from Spinal Muscular Atrophy (SMA).

Medicine for this rare disease has to be imported from the United States and a single dose costs Rs 18 crore. Zolgensma is a gene therapy medicine and a single dose will cure the disease.

Siya, the daughter of Siyad and Fazeela of Chorode started showing difficulties in moving, three months after she was born. The toddler was taken to the Malabar Institute of Medical Sciences (MIMS) where doctors diagnosed her as suffering from Spinal Muscular Atrophy (SMA). Subsequent tests at Bengaluru and Thiruvananthapuram confirmed that the infant was suffering from Type 1 SMA. A committee for fund collection is formed with Chorode gram panchayat president P.P. Chandrashekhara as Chairman and K.P. Abdul Azeez as convener.

Kids weep after teacher is transferred to another school in UP

Chandauli: School children crying and refusing to let go a teacher who has been transferred, is a very rare sight, especially in Uttar Pradesh. Videos of the incident have gone viral on social media. "I will visit you soon. Keep studying hard. You must do well," he is heard telling the children. Sources said that Singh became immensely popular because of his unconventional ways of teaching and drawing his students' interest. He was posted as an assistant teacher at the school in 2018. He used games and social media to raise awareness among the children, drawing more and more students to the school, which had always seen low attendance because of the difficult terrain.

Trial shows VR may help reduce common phobias

Wellington: Virtual reality (VR) therapies may reduce phobias as a new trial suggests fresh hope for the estimated one in 12 people worldwide suffering from a fear of flying, needles, heights, spiders, and dogs.

The results from the trial, published in the Australian and New Zealand Journal of Psychiatry, showed a 75 per cent reduction in phobia symptoms after six weeks of the treatment programme. "The improvements they reported suggest there's great potential for the use of VR and mobile phone apps as a means of self-guided treatment for people struggling with often-crippling phobias," said researcher Cameron Lacey, Associate Professor at the University of Otago. For the study, the team included a total of 129 people, who took part in the six-week randomised, controlled trial, between May 2021 and December 2021, with a 12-week follow-up. Participants needed to be aged between 18-64 years, and have a fear of flying, heights, needles,



spiders, and dogs.

Participants downloaded a fully self-guided smartphone app aimed at treating patients with phobia and anxiety. They were emailed weekly questionnaires to record their progress. Those experiencing adverse events could request contact from a clinical psychologist at any stage. The trial studied phobia patients using a headset and a smartphone app treatment programme -- a combination of Virtual Reality (VR) 360-degree video exposure therapy and cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT). The app programme consisted of standard CBT components including psychoeducation, relaxation, mindfulness, cognitive techniques, exposure through VR, and a relapse prevention model. Participants were able to select their own exposure levels to their particular phobia from a large library of VR videos. The researchers said this trial was novel, due to the cost-effective availability of the app and headsets and the fact that multiple phobias were tested at once.

'KEEP SHINING AND RISING. WISH YOU ALL THE BEST'

Virat Kohli replies to Babar Azam's 'stay strong' tweet

Team Absolute | New Delhi

On Thursday, shortly after talismanic India batter Virat Kohli was dismissed for 16 in the second ODI against England at Lord's, Pakistan skipper Babar Azam put out a tweet with a picture of him and Kohli from the ICC Men's T20 World Cup last year, with the caption reading as "this too shall pass. Stay strong #viratkohli." Soon after the tweet was released, many cricket fans from around the world started praising Babar for supporting Kohli. Now, on Saturday, Kohli replied to Babar's post, thanking him for his words of support. "Thank you. Keep shining and rising. Wish you all the best (clap emoji)," read Kohli's reply on Twitter.

On the eve of Pakistan's first Test against Sri Lanka at Galle, in a press conference,



Babar had revealed the reason behind tweeting in favour of Kohli, who is going through a prolonged lean patch in international cricket.

"Definitely. See, as a player myself, I know you can go through such a phase (out of form). I also know what a player goes through in such a phase and how can one come out of it. In those times, you need support."

"As a player, I just tweeted thinking that it will give just some support. He is one of

the best players. He is playing a lot (of cricket) and he knows how to come out of these situations. It takes time, if you back players, it will be really good."

In India's ongoing tour of England, Kohli has performed way below his lofty standards with the bat. He scored 11 and 20 in the fifth and rescheduled Test match against England at Edgbaston, before making one and 11 in the two T20Is at Edgbaston and Trent Bridge. After missing the first

ODI against England at The Oval due to a groin strain, Kohli was dismissed for a 25-ball 16 in the second ODI at Lord's, which India lost by 100 runs. With every low score, Kohli's form has become a hot topic of discussion, with many suggesting that he should take a break from the game while others called for him to be dropped from the Indian team in a year where the Men's T20 World Cup is scheduled to happen in Australia. Indian cricket enthusiasts will be hoping that Kohli gets a big knock under his belt when India face England in the series decider third ODI at Old Trafford in Manchester on Sunday. After the conclusion of the England tour, Kohli will not be a part of the Indian team travelling to the West Indies for three ODIs and five T20Is from July 22 to August 7.

Samantha's absence from social media worries her fans

Team Absolute | Hyderabad

Samantha Ruth Prabhu's recent social media engagement has been nearly non-existent. The bubbly actress, who typically keeps her fans engaged with her pictures, has been dormant on various social media platforms.

Samantha Ruth Prabhu was even active on social media during her lowest point when she announced her split from Naga Chaitanya. Samantha's social media activity has decreased, and supporters are concerned about her mental health.

While some admirers feel Samantha Ruth Prabhu appears to be on a social media detox, others believe she is simply not in the mood to communicate with any of



her social media followers for personal reasons.

Samantha's social media followers remarked, "It's strange that Samantha hasn't been uploading her usual content on Instagram. She usually includes at least one good quote or philosophical

statement. There are no images, quotes, or even brand posts. Hey! What's the matter, Sam? "

"Samantha is probably keeping a low-key presence for a few days so she can come back with an interesting announcement about her next major thing," a fan said. "I sincerely hope she is okay. Sam, at least, publishes her training videos or hilarious dog posts", another fan stated.

Samantha Ruth Prabhu's next film will be 'Shakuntalam', directed by Guna Sekhar of 'Rudramadevi.' In the mythological drama, she will play the majestic queen Shakuntala Devi.

The 'Majili' actress will also play the title character in 'Yashoda', a women-centric sci-fi thriller.

NASA's James telescope reveals stunning images of Jupiter, its moon

- New images show distinct bands that encircle Jupiter as well as the Great Red Spot, a storm big enough to swallow the Earth.
- In one of the images, Jupiter's moon Europa with a probable ocean below its thick icy crust is seen which is the target of NASA's forthcoming Europa Clipper mission.

Team Absolute | New Delhi

After releasing stunning coloured images of thousands of galaxies in our universe, NASA has now unveiled outstanding images of Jupiter and spectra of several asteroids taken by the James Webb Space Telescope.

The data demonstrates Webb's ability to track solar system targets and produce images and spectra with unprecedented detail, the US

space agency said in a statement. "What's more, Europa's shadow can be seen to the left of the Great Red Spot. Other visible moons in these images include Thebe and Metis," the space agency said. Scientists were especially eager to see these images because they are proof that Webb can observe the satellites and rings near bright solar system objects such as Jupiter, Saturn, and Mars.

Scientists will use Webb to explore the question of



whether we can see plumes of material spewing out of moons like Europa and Saturn's moon Enceladus. Additionally, Webb easily captured some of Jupiter's rings. That the rings showed

up in one of Webb's first solar system images is "absolutely astonishing and amazing".

Webb was designed with the requirement to track objects that move as fast as Mars, which has a maximum

"Combined with the deep field images released the other day, these images of Jupiter demonstrate the full grasp of what Webb can observe, from the faintest, most distant observable galaxies to planets in our own cosmic backyard that you can see with the naked eye from your actual backyard."

Bryan Holler, Scientist at the Space Telescope Science Institute in Baltimore

speed of 30 milliarcseconds per second.



INSTEAD OF POST-RETIREMENT AMBITIONS, JUDGES, BUREAUCRATS SHOULD SERVE NATION: GEHLOT

Jaipur | Agencies

Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot on Saturday, in presence of the Chief Justice of India and the Union Law Minister, said judges and bureaucrats should work to serve the country, instead being concerned about their post-retirement ambitions.

"I became the Chief Minister, some people become judges, Prime Minister, and MLA and it is a matter of pride as an opportunity has been granted to serve the country," he said, adding that life is not there for a thousand years, and one should serve the country during the lifetime.

"In this, what we can become after retirement, if this concern is amongst the judges and bureaucrats, then how will things work," said Gehlot, in his address at the inaugural session of the 18th All India Legal Services Authority.

The event was attended by Union Law Minister Kiren Rijju, Chief Justice of India N.V. Ramana, Justice U.U. Lalit and other judges from the



top court.

Gehlot also highlighted the barrage of criticism targeting Supreme Court judges Justices Surya Kant, and J.B. Pardiwala, for their observations during the hearing of a plea by former BJP spokesperson Nupur Sharma. "Recently Justices Surya Kant and Pardiwala said something. It is our duty to respect the judiciary. 116 people were made to stand up (against the two judges) including former judges, bureaucracy, officers and many others... Supreme Court judges had expressed their views on the situation in the country," he said. Gehlot also referred to the

nomination of former Chief Justice of India Ranjan Gogoi as a Rajya Sabha MP. He said Justice (retd) Gogoi was one of the four Supreme Court judges, who had said democracy is in danger, but became a parliamentarian after retirement. "I had asked the President of India 'was Mr Gogoi fine before or is he fine now?' This is beyond my understanding..." he said.

He said state governments are being overthrown and pointed at changes in government in Goa, Manipur, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, and Maharashtra. "Is there democracy? If elected governments

are overthrown due to horse trading... I don't know how my government got saved... situation is very delicate."

Gehlot said shouldn't the Prime Minister say that unity and brotherhood has to be maintained? "He has to say that I will not accept violence at any cost. I believe the Law Minister can convince him. He does not listen to us... Today the situation is such that it's creating a lot of tension," he said. He also praised Justice Ramana's speech in the US on the importance of tolerance and inclusiveness in the society. On July 2, Justice Ramana said it is the Aatolerance Aand inclusive nature of American society that is able to attract the best talents from all over the world, which in turn is contributing to its growth. "This principle of inclusivity is universal. It needs to be honoured everywhere in the world, including in India. Inclusivity strengthens the unity in society which is key to peace and progress. We need to focus on issues that unite us. Not on those that divide us," he had said.

51 lakh households to get zero electricity bill: Punjab CM

► IN A MAJOR RELIEF TO RESIDENTS, PUNJAB CHIEF MINISTER BHAGWANT MANN ON SATURDAY ANNOUNCED THAT AS PER THE GOVERNMENT'S PROMISE TO PROVIDE 600 UNITS OF FREE POWER PER BILLING CYCLE, 51 LAKH HOUSEHOLDS WILL GET ZERO ELECTRICITY BILL FROM SEPTEMBER.



Chandigarh | Agencies

The Chief Minister said for fulfilling its major promise, the government has decided to provide

600 units of free power to every household per billing cycle with effect from July 1. All domestic consumers will be eligible to get zero bills if their consumption is up to 600 units in every billing cycle. Mann said this decision has been implemented from July 1, so the households who will consume less than 600 units of power in the billing

cycle of July and August will not have to pay for their electricity consumption.

The Chief Minister said the bill of this month which will be payable in September will be zero for the consumers. Around 51 lakh households will be benefited from this pro-people initiative which is a huge relief to the domestic consumers.

PM Modi inaugurates Bundelkhand Expressway

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday inaugurated the Bundelkhand Expressway at Kaitheri village in Orai tehsil of Uttar Pradesh's Jalaun, officials said.

The 296 km four-lane expressway has been constructed at a cost of around Rs 14,850 crore.

Addressing a gathering after inaugurating the expressway, the Prime Minister recalled the glorious tradition of hard work, valor and cultural richness of the Bundelkhand region.

He said "the land that produced countless warriors, where the devotion for India flows in blood, the prowess and hard work of local sons



and daughters have always brightened the name of the country". Talking about the difference that will be brought about by the new expressway, the Prime Minister said "the distance from Chitrakoot to Delhi has been reduced by 3-4 hours by

the Bundelkhand Expressway, but its benefit is much more than that". "This expressway will not only give speed to vehicles here, but it will accelerate the industrial progress of entire Bundelkhand," PM Modi said.

Targeting Ahmed Patel aimed at 'washing BJP's sins' of Gujarat riots: Congress

Mumbai | Agencies

The Congress Maharashtra unit on Saturday slammed the BJP for targeting its late leader Ahmed Patel, terming it as a desperate attempt to "wash" the party's image tarnished in the 2002 Gujarat riots.

"The allegations against Patel are cheap and baseless. It is only intended to cover up the sins of the Gujarat genocide of 2002... Even the then Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee had reminded (then Gujarat Chief Minister Narendra) Modi of not following the 'raj dharma' during the riots," Congress state President Nana Patole said.

"Not only was the then government of CM Modi incompetent in handling the situation at the time, but it even lacked the will to control it - and the shadows of that sin will never



leave..." he said.

The riots had damaged the country's global reputation but now, the BJP is deliberately attacking political opponents as a last-ditch effort to brighten up its tarnished image, he

said.

"The Modi-Amit Shah conspiracy of torturing and harassing the Opposition parties through the government machinery has not spared even those who have died. Since the

BJP has nothing to show in Gujarat, its resorting to defaming the Congress ahead of the Assembly elections there," Patole alleged.

Referring to the recent developments, Patole claimed said that the SIT which has falsely implicated the late Patel is a "puppet" of the government and a special award was given to a former SIT chief for giving the then CM Modi a clean chit.

The Congress leader said the people of Gujarat are not happy with the BJP as the so-called Gujarat Model of development has collapsed, and despite being in power even at the Centre, it has not been able to rein in the galloping inflation, massive unemployment, and a falling economy.

Dwelling on the allegations against former Vice-President Hamid Ansari, he termed them as "false and politically motivated".

811 PEOPLE RESCUED IN SINGLE-DAY IN FLOOD-HIT GUJARAT'S NAVSARI

Ahmedabad | Agencies

At least 1,300 people have been rescued from the rain-affected areas of Gujarat out of which 811 were rescued in a single-day from Gujarat's Navsari district, Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel said on Saturday here.

The rescue operation was held on Friday. "Coast Guard, NDRF and local swimmers worked hard throughout the night to get everyone out safely in this operation. Teams of NDRF and SDRF are deployed in Navsari and more teams are on standby and coordination with the Centre is underway." It was stated in the video conference held under the chairmanship of the Chief Minister.

A team of 200 workers of the Surat Municipal Corporation has deployed six JCBs, five dewatering pumps, tipper trucks, more than 47 golf machines for cleaning, mud removal and drug spraying in Navsari district under 'Operation Niramaya'. Apart from this, 40 health teams have also



been deployed in the affected areas of Navsari district for disease prevention and control, the Chief Minister was informed. As many as 14,900 people have been evacuated from the rain-hit areas to shelters.

The District Collector of Dang dis-

trict told Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel that the intensity of rain is now decreasing and the water in the rivers has started receding. The road to Saputara, which was closed due to mudslides and rock falls, has been reopened for two-wheelers.

Gujarat has received good rain so far. The state's 207 reservoirs had 50.92 per cent water storage till Friday. 1,69,139 mcf, i.e., 50.63 per cent of the total storage capacity has been stored in Sardar Sarovar Dam, the lifeblood of the state.

Constitutional provisions, values being openly violated: Yashwant Sinha

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The joint opposition candidate for the Presidential election, Yashwant Sinha on Saturday said the Constitutional provisions and its values were being openly violated by certain people in the country.

He said that elected governments were being brought down and all these people were against the spirit of democracy which is enshrined in the Constitution.

This year the Presidential election is not a contest between two individuals but two ideologies, Sinha said in a video message through his Twitter handle.

"The election to the post of the President of India this time is taking place under extraordinary circumstances. The country is facing various problems on various fronts. But the most important problem we are facing is the safeguarding and protection of the Constitution," he said.

"On one hand, we have those who have no use of values of the constitution, and on the other hand we have a dedicated band of those who want to protect the constitution and its values," the Presidential candidate said in the



message.

Appealing to vote for him in the election, Sinha said, "Only one side wants to protect the provisions and values enshrined in our Constitution. I appeal to all MPs & MLAs to vote according to the Constitution and conscience this time." "Use your conscience, listen to your inner voice, look at the various problems in the country and shower your blessing on me in this election," he appealed.

Andhra madrasa student dies, 11 ill due to food poisoning



Amaravati | Agencies

In a shocking incident, a madrasa student in Andhra Pradesh's Palnadu district died and 11 others were taken ill due to food poisoning on Saturday.

The incident occurred at a madrasa at Guralza town in the district.

The students got ill after they ate lunch served at madarsa. They soon complained of vomiting and diarrhoea and were shifted to a hospital, where one of the students succumbed. Condition of four of four others is stated

to be critical. Police registered a case and took up investigation. Municipal authorities collected samples of the food and sent it for analysis. This is the second incident of food poisoning in educational institutions in the Telugu states during the last 24 hours. Over 100 students had taken ill due to food poisoning at Rajiv Gandhi University of Knowledge and Technologies (RGUKT) at Basara town in Nirmal district of Telangana on Friday. Students complained of vomiting and diarrhoea after lunch at two hostels.

Coimbatore cop commits suicide after heavy losses in online games

Chennai | Agencies

After a policeman attached to the Coimbatore armed city force committed suicide, his friends and relatives blamed the online rummy game to which he was addicted to being the reason.

Kalimuthu, 29, had borrowed more than Rs 20 lakh from his known persons, including relatives and friends, and had been playing online rummy games in which he incurred in heavy losses and debts. The policeman had promised to repay his lenders the money he owed as early as possible but he could not meet the date line.

Officials told IANS that 32 government departments opened their stalls to show their products and schemes



in an exhibition at Gandhipuram, Coimbatore. The police stall at the exhibition was displaying its weapons in the stall and Kalimuthu was on duty. On Friday, afternoon he was alone on duty and he took an SLR gun from the display and shot himself in the abdomen. A senior police officer

attached with the Coimbatore city police told IANS that the bullet went through the abdomen and came out through his back. His colleagues who rushed to the spot after hearing the gunshot saw Kalimuthu lying in a pool of blood and he was rushed to a private hospital in Coimbatore where doctors

carried out surgery.

The bullet had damaged his kidney and he did not respond to medicines and succumbed to his injuries early this morning. Kalimuthu, who hailed from Virudhunagar district in Tamil Nadu, is survived by his wife Salai Thillanaikai and two children aged 4 and 3 years. It may be noted that there have been calls from political parties and social organisations for the banning of online rummy that has led to the death of several people. The PMK has been at the forefront of the struggle and the state president of the party, Dr Anbumani Ramadoss has called upon a string of agitations if the government takes immediate steps to ban the online rummy game that was taking the lives of several people.

Godavari flows above danger mark at Andhra Pradesh's Dowleswaram

Amaravati | Agencies

The Godavari river continued to flow well above the danger mark at Dowleswaram in Andhra Pradesh's East Godavari district while over 250 villages in six districts remained marooned on Saturday.

With huge inflows continuing from upstream Telangana, flood discharge at Sir Arthur Cotton Barrage at Dowleswaram near Rajamahendravaram increased to 23.20 lakh cusecs.

According to the Andhra Pradesh State Disaster Management Authority (APSDMA), the water level at the barrage stood at 20.60 feet, much above the danger mark of 15 feet. All 175 gates remained open to release the water downstream.

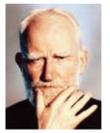
This is the first time in recent years that flood discharge at this level has been

observed at the barrage during July. Officials say normally such levels are observed during mid-August.

The Control Room in the APSDMA was closely monitoring the situation. If the flood discharge increases to 25 lakh cusecs, 628 villages in 44 mandals (blocks) of six districts will be impacted.

The authority has alerted the departments concerned. Officials said 21 mandals in Ambedkar Konaseema, nine in East Godavari, five in Alluri Sitarama Raju district, four in West Godavari district, three in Eluru, and two in Kakinada are likely to be affected. The floods have already affected 279 villages in 42 mandals of six districts. Ten teams of the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) and the State Disaster Response Force (SDRF) were engaged in rescue and relief operations.

Democracy is a device that ensures we shall be governed no better than we deserve.



George Bernard Shaw

INDIA WAS MEANT TO BE A "PARLIAMENTARY DEMOCRACY" AND NOT A "PARLIAMENTARY GOVERNMENT": CJI

SUSTAIN DEMOCRACY

Chief Justice of India N.V. Ramana on Saturday said that a strong, vibrant and active opposition helps to improve the governance and corrects the functioning of the government, but "unfortunately the space for Opposition in the country is diminishing".

Jaipur | Agencies

In his address at an event on '75 Years of Parliament Democracy' at the Rajasthan Assembly, he said: "Particularly, the leaders in the opposition used to play a stellar role. There used to be a lot of mutual respect between the government and the opposition. Unfortunately, the space for opposition is diminishing."

Chief Justice Ramana said strong, vibrant and active opposition helps to improve the governance and corrects the functioning of the government. "In an ideal world, it is the cooperative functioning of the government and the opposition which will lead to a progressive democracy. After all, Project Democracy is a joint effort of all the stakeholders," he added.

He added that in the absence of a thorough debate involving all the sides of the house, as a judge, he, at times, wonders as to how one traces the legislative intent behind the enactments.

The Chief Justice said building a peaceful and inclusive society is not just a matter of public administration, but also a duty of a statesman. "You are a reflection of the people's aspiration. Let morality of the constitution



guide you in the right direction. After all, you are all role models. Strengthening parliamentary democracy demands strengthening the

"Instead of engaging in meaningful debates for furthering democracy, politics has become acrimonious. The diversity of opinion enriches polity and society. Political opposition should not translate into hostility, which we are sadly witnessing these days. These are not signs of a healthy democracy. We are witnessing laws being passed without detailed deliberation and scrutiny."

opposition as well," he said.

"We have a form of government where the executive, both political and permanent, is accountable to the legislature. Accountability forms the core principle of democracy. I have, on several occasions, highlighted the significance of parliamentary debates and parliamentary committees. In fact, I used to look forward to the legislative debates."

The Chief Justice said a year ago, on Independence Day, he had expressed views on a decline in the quality of debate and, at times, even the lack of debate in the legislative bodies.

"On this occasion, I have a suggestion to make. Law making is a complicated process. One cannot expect every lawmaker to have a legal background. It is essential that Members of the Legislature have quality assistance from legal professionals, so that they are able to contribute to the debates meaningfully. The Hon'ble Speaker may consider providing the assistance of qualified law clerks to each of the MLAs.

"We, as judges, are also assisted by law clerks in our day-to-day Court work. Let me assure you, it will really be helpful to you all," he said.

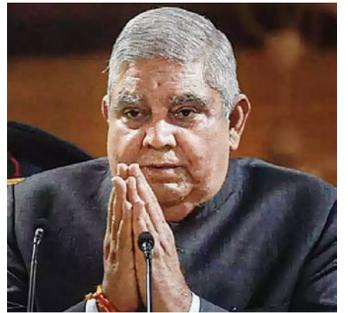
BJP picks Bengal Gov Jagdeep Dhankhar for Vice President

Team Absolute | New Delhi

West Bengal Governor Jagdeep Dhankhar will be the NDA candidate for Vice Presidential polls.

BJP chief J.P. Nadda announced the name of Dhankhar as the NDA candidate after the Parliamentary Board meeting at party headquarters here.

"After detailed discussion and considering all the names, the BJP Parliamentary Board has decided to announce the name of Kisan Putra Jagdeep Dhankhar as the BJP and NDA candidate for the post of Vice President. Presently he is the Governor of West Bengal and has been in public life for almost three decades," Nadda said. Prime Minister Narendra Modi, BJP chief J.P. Nadda, Union Ministers Rajnath Singh, Amit Shah and Nitin Gadkari, and Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan were present in the Parliamentary Board meeting. The BJP-led NDA candidate Dhankhar is all set to become next Vice President in this election as the voters are the members of Parliament and the BJP has a huge mandate in the Lok Sabha while in the Rajya Sabha it is the single largest party



having more than 90 seats. In the last election, the opposition fielded Gopalkrishna Gandhi but he lost to BJP's M Venkaiah Naidu. In 2017, Naidu polled 516 votes defeating the opposition's Gopalkrishna Gandhi, who could manage only 244 votes. The last date for filing of nomination papers for the Vice President poll is July 19 and election is scheduled to be held on August 6. The date on which counting, if required, shall be taken on the same day.

RUSSIA STORING WEAPONS IN NUCLEAR PLANT

Kyiv: Russia has deployed multiple missile systems on the territory of the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant, as per Ukrainian officials, media reports said.

Russian forces are using these weapons to fire at the area around the city of Nikopol, Ukrainska Pravda reported. "As for the Zaporizhzhia NPP the situation there is very difficult, and every day it is becoming more so," Petro Kotin, President of Energoatom (National Atomic Power Generation Company) was quoted by Interfax Ukraine. "The invaders are deploying their military equipment there in particular, their missile systems, which they are already using to launch attacks on the other side of the Dniipro (River), the area around the city of Nikopol." Kotin said that there are still up to 500 Russian soldiers ensuring the security of the perimeter of the Zaporizhzhia NPP. Moreover, Russian heavy military equipment, weapons and explosives are also stored at the power plant.

Bank unions to start Twitter campaign against privatisation

Chennai | Agencies

A day ahead of the start of the Parliament's Monsoon session, the United Forum of Bank Unions (UFBU) has given a call for a campaign on Twitter against privatisation of government banks, a top union official said.

All India Bank Employees' Association (AIBE) General Secretary C.H.Venkatachalam also said a protest will be held before the Parliament on July 21 and a strike call will be given based on the developments during the session. The monsoon session of the Parliament begins on July 18 and one of the Bills that may be brought is to enable privatisation of the government banks.

"The Twitter campaign by the bankers will begin on Sunday, the morning of July 17. During these days, campaigning through social



media is also important apart from our traditional campaigning mode," Venkatachalam told reporter.

He had told the union members to tweet in English and also in the regional languages to reach a large number of people. For a long time, it has been said time has come to merge the government banks to have about five big banks. Recently, in a paper, Poonam Gupta of

National Council of Applied Economic Research (NCAER) and Arvind Panagariya of Columbia University had advocated privatisation of all government banks barring the State Bank of India (SBI).

They had said, to start with two banks with better asset quality and higher returns be privatised and set them as an example for disinvestment by the government in its other banks.

IMA URGES GOVERNMENT TO WITHDRAW GST ON HEALTHCARE SERVICES

New Delhi: The Indian Medical Association (IMA) on Saturday requested the Centre to immediately withdraw the imposition of GST on healthcare services.

In a letter to Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, it said that the decision is unfortunate and unfair for people of the country, and without input tax credits, will lead to a rise in healthcare costs.

"The GST Council, in its meeting, has also recommended that 'Room rent, excluding ICU, exceeding Rs 5,000 per day per patient charged by the hospital will also be taxed at 5 per cent, without ITC'. This is to be effective from 18th of July 2022. This was earlier in GST exempted category. Noting that the healthcare system of country is not on track owing to meagre government spending on health, and people are dependent upon the private sector, with high out of pocket expenditures, the IMA said that the decision of adding GST will simply raise the basic bed rates.



India logs 20,044 new Covid cases, 56 deaths

Team Absolute | New Delhi



India reported 20,044 Covid infections in the past 24 hours, a marginal rise against previous day's 20,038 count, as per Union Health Ministry data on Saturday.

In the same period, 56 fatalities took the nationwide death toll to 5,25,660. Meanwhile, the active caseload has also risen to 1,40,760 cases, accounting for 0.32 per cent of the total positive

cases. The recovery of 18,301 patients in the last 24 hours took the cumulative tally to 4,30,63,651. Consequently, the recovery rate stands at 98.48 per cent. Meanwhile, the Daily Positivity rate has also marginally increased to 4.80 per cent, while the Weekly Positivity rate stands at 4.40 per cent. Also in the same period, a total of 4,17,895 tests were conducted across the country, increasing the overall tally to over 86.90 crore.

POLICE CAN'T ISSUE SUMMONS OUTSIDE THEIR TERRITORIAL LIMITS: DELHI HC

New Delhi: Dealing with summons issued to a Delhi resident by the Jammu and Kashmir Police, the Delhi High Court noted that for the purposes of investigation, a police officer can require the attendance of a person situated within the limits of his own or adjoining police station but not beyond the territorial limits.

"From the plain reading of the sub-section (1) of Section 160 CrPC, it is evident that for the purposes of investigation, a police officer can require attendance of a person situated within the limits of his own police station or that of the adjoining police station and not someone who is situated beyond the said territorial limits," Justice Poonam A. Bamba said in a recent order. The court was hearing the plea moved by a Noida-based investigative journalist and his media outlet who were seeking to quash the summons issued to him by the office of the Sub-Divisional Police Officer, Pampore.



Bomb blast in Bihar govt school, two kids injured

Patna: Two school children were injured and four more fell unconscious after a bomb exploded in Bihar's Gaya district on Saturday.

Harpreet Kaur, the Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) of Gaya confirmed the incident. She said that the victims received injuries and were admitted in a hospital in Wazirganj, and were out of danger. The explosion took place at the government primary school, Murgiyachak under Wazirganj police station on Saturday morning. The victims were identified as Satyendra Kumar Manjhi (10) and Niraj Kumar Manjhi (9).

"The students were playing inside the school campus when the explosion took place. Four students also came under the impact of the explosion and fell unconscious. We have sent a bomb and dog squad at the school for investigation," Kaur said. The villagers claimed that three bombs also exploded in the village on Friday night.

Wazirganj is a Maoist dominated area of Gaya district. The police said that there was a possibility of bomb being kept in the school premises which exploded.

Delhi: Two groups clash over petty issue, one side records video to communalise matter

TWO GROUPS OF PEOPLE FROM DIFFERENT COMMUNITIES CLASHED OVER PETTY ISSUES IN THE NATIONAL CAPITAL'S SULTANPURI AREA AND WERE LATER STERNLY WARNED BY THE POLICE NOT TO FLARE COMMUNAL TENSION.

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Sharing details of the incident, Deputy Commissioner of Police (outer district) Sameer Sharma said a PCR was received on July 13 at Sultanpuri police station regarding heavy quarrel between two communities.

"On enquiry, it was found that the complainant, a 48-year-old man, who operates a street side amusement ride near Jama Masjid, was returning home along with his worker and his swing and when he reached near I-block, AB Extension, Peer Baba Mazar, he encountered a tempo (mini-truck) carrying fish crossing from the opposite side of a narrow street," the DCP said.



The official said that at this time an argument broke out between the driver of the tempo and the complainant over who would cross first, which soon broke out into a scuffle, between them, involving four more individuals.

The complainant called his brother who also got involved in the scuffle. "The complainant sustained head injuries and was taken to SGM hospital for treatment. While waiting for his statement, all the accused were immediately detained," DCP Sharma said.

Accordingly, based on the complainant's statement, an FIR under section 323, 341, 506

and 34 (common intention) was registered and all the accused were arrested. However, even after the arrest of all the accused, the complainant twice recorded a video through which he allegedly tried to incite hatred between two communities.

Taking strict note of it, the complainant was first warned by SHO Sultanpuri and then by ACP Sultanpuri not to communalise the issue. The complainant party later met with Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP) Sharma who also warned them of getting involved in any type of communal issue.

92-YEAR-OLD INDIAN WOMAN ARRIVES IN PAKISTAN TO VISIT ANCESTRAL HOME AFTER 75 YEARS



LAHORE | Agencies

The Pakistani High Commission, as a goodwill gesture, issued a three-month visa to a 92-year-old Indian woman, Reena Chhibar, who reached Pakistan on Saturday to see her ancestral home, media reports said.

As she made her way through the Wagah-Attari border to see her ancestral home, Prem Niwas, in Rawalpindi, she urged the governments of both the countries to "work together" to ease visa restrictions to make "coming and going easy for us", the Express Tribune reported. Reena reminisced of a multi-cultural diverse community that was thriving in 'Pindi before the Partition as she was driven from the border to Rawalpindi. "My siblings had

friends who would come over to our house from various communities, including Muslims," she said, remembering that "our house-help was also a diverse mix of people". In 1947, after the partition, her family moved to India. She was 15 years old at the time, and though over 75 years have passed since then, she said she "could not remove her ancestral home, her neighbourhood and the streets from her heart", Express Tribune reported.

Reena had applied for visa in 1965 to visit Pakistan, but she says she could not acquire permission amid high tensions due to the war between the two neighbours. She still managed to visit Lahore to watch a match between Pakistan and England as Pakistan had issued visas to Indians to watch the match.



EKNATH SHINDE, DEVENDRA FADNAVIS UPHOLD RENAMING OF AURANGABAD, OSMANABAD

▶ CHIEF MINISTER EKNATH SHINDE AND DEPUTY CHIEF MINISTER DEVENDRA FADNAVIS APPROVED THE DECISION TO RENAME AURANGABAD, OSMANABAD AND THE NAVI MUMBAI INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT, HERE ON SATURDAY.



the decision to rename Aurangabad, Osmanabad and the Navi Mumbai International Airport, here on Saturday. Briefing the media after a cabinet meeting, Shinde said that Aurangabad will be renamed as 'Chhatrapati Sambhaji Nagar' and Osmanabad shall be rechristened as 'Dharashiv'. The upcoming new inter-

national airport shall be renamed after D. B. Patil, a prominent leader from Konkan, he added. These proposals shall be passed in the legislature and then sent to the Centre for its approval, the duo said. The three decisions were taken by the previous Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) government in its final cabinet meet-

ing before it fell on June 29. Shinde-Fadnavis said that since those decisions were 'illegal' as the previous government had been reduced to a minority, the same has been cleared again. Shiv Sena leaders from Aurangabad, hailing the move, said that the credit for the renaming goes only to the late Balasaheb Thackeray.

Team Absolute | Mumbai
Chief Minister Eknath Shinde and Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis approved

Prez Poll: Yashwant Sinha cancels Mumbai visit

▶ THE JOINT OPPOSITION CANDIDATE FOR PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION YASHWANT SINHA HAS CANCELLED HIS VISIT TO MUMBAI WHICH WAS SCHEDULED FOR SATURDAY.



has been cancelled due to the flood situation in the state, said an official source of Yashwant Sinha camp. However, Shiv Sena president Uddhav Thackeray announced on Tuesday that his party would support Draupadi Murmu, saying that this is the first occasion wherein a tribal woman is getting the opportunity to become the President. He had said that several party leaders, especially from the tribal community like MLC

Aamshya Padvi, former MLA Nirmala Gavit, and Eklavya Sanghanta's Shivajirao Dhavale had urged him to back Murmu, although there was no pressure on him. The Shiv Sena has 19 MPs in Lok Sabha, three in Rajya Sabha and 55 MLAs. However, 40 of these legislators have now joined the faction led by Maharashtra Chief Minister Eknath Shinde. The ruling NDA candidate Murmu had visited Mumbai on Thursday as part of her

poll campaign, and met the BJP MLAs and MPs from Maharashtra as well as the legislators of its allies, including the Shiv Sena faction led by Shinde. Meanwhile, the Aam Admi Party has announced to support Yashwant Sinha in the presidential election. "The party's Political Affairs Committee meeting was held under the chairmanship of Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal and unanimously the Political Affairs Committee has decided that the party will support the opposition candidate Yashwant Sinha", MP Sanjay Singh said on Saturday. However, with the support of several regional parties like the BJD, the YSR-CP, the BSP, the AIADMK, and others, NDA candidate Draupadi Murmu's vote share is likely to reach nearly two-thirds.

Team Absolute | New Delhi
The joint Opposition candidate for Presidential election Yashwant Sinha has cancelled his visit to Mumbai which was scheduled for Saturday. The visit

SHINDE-FADNAVIS COMBINE LOSES NO TIME TO DISMANTLE MVA LEGACY

▶ RAISES WITH PM MODI ATTACHMENT OF PROPERTIES OF SANJAY RAUT BY ED AND DELAYS IN NOMINATION OF 12 MEMBERS BY GOVERNOR IN THE STATE COUNCIL BANNED PHYSICAL DARSHAN FOR DEVOTEES AT PUBLIC PANDALS

Team Absolute | Mumbai
Barely hours after they were sworn-in on June 30 evening, the new Chief Minister Eknath S Shinde and Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis indicated that they meant business. One of the first major decisions was to strike down the erstwhile Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) proposal to construct the Mumbai Metro 3 car-shed in Kanjurmarg, instead of the lush green Aarey Colony -- where it was originally planned by Fadnavis during his tenure as the CM (2014-2019). The Shinde-Fadnavis' move, though anticipated, attracted howls of protest from greens, activists and even former CM Uddhav Thackeray -- who was like a godfather to

Aarey Colony -- and his son ex-Minister Aditya Thackeray. A sad Thackeray publicly appealed, with folded hands' to Shinde-Fadnavis, not to bring back the Metro car-shed to Aarey Colony forests in the interests of Mumbai and the city's environment, while Aditya urged the new regime not to vent their angst against the Thackerays on Mumbaikars. Fadnavis responded with the right noises that he would respect Thackeray's sentiments before taking any final decision and days later, uprooted the Additional Municipal Commissioner Ashwini Bhide to reinstate her as the Mumbai Metro Rail Corporation Ltd. (MMRCL) Managing Director. In October 2019, as the then MMRCL MD, Bhide -- often regarded as the mother-in-law' of Mother Nature, had shocked the nation when Aarey Colony overnight got a massive haircut -- 2,141 trees were chopped off in barely 40 hours, or @1 tree/minute! Thackeray Jr., Congress workers, green groups and activists have been fuming and protesting at the new regime's latest reversal, but Bhide is entrusted with the task of pushing through the contentious proposal. After the MVA allies, Shiv Sena-Nationalist Congress Party, had scuttled the Centre's plans to construct the terminus for the Mumbai-Ahmedabad Bullet Train Project in the Bandra Kurla Complex, the Shinde-

Fadnavis ministry took a relook at the much delayed mega-project. They have resolved to build the Bullet Train terminus at the original intended BKC site and ordered the BrihanMumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) to shut down and pack up its 2-year-old Covid Jumbo Field Hospital there within 2 months, by September. In another jolt, the government has scrapped over 4,000 big and small water conservation projects in the state worth more than Rs 5,000 crore, designed to make the state drought-free' by 2025. However, in contrast, the government has decided to revive' the "Jalyukt Shivar Project", the pet scheme of Fadnavis when he was the CM, but which was struck down by the MVA. The Thackeray regime had based its decision on an open enquiry into the project after the CAG expressed doubts about the JST's effectiveness, and later a probe panel had submitted a report highlighting various irregularities in that scheme. The government has also opted to bring back the Emergency Pension Scheme, introduced by Fadnavis in 2018, rewarding those who had undergone jail terms during the Emergency (1975-1977), considered a dark chapter in Indian history. The MVA government had yanked off the EPS -- Fadnavis suspects it was done under pressure from the Congress -- which entitled a

pension of between Rs 5000-Rs 10,000 depending on the period of imprisonment the beneficiary had undergone. Shinde also struck down the decision cancelling direct election of village Sarpanches and Municipal Council Presidents - introduced in 2017 by Fadnavis, and which was removed by the Thackeray government in 2020. These reversals or cancellations have taken place despite an assurance by the Shinde-Fadnavis government that they would refrain from dumping any policies, projects or schemes of the MVA, unless they are found to be absolutely inessential. However, giving a minor concession, the three-week old government assured that it would review' the MVA's proposal to rename Aurangabad as Sambhajanagar' and Osmanabad as Dharashiv'. The AIMIM has cried foul and the Nationalist Congress Party had dissociated itself from the original move. Now, the Sena-NCP-Congress combine is worried that the axe could fall on several other mega projects it had launched during the 31-month-long MVA rule. Of particular concern are the Rs 1,600-crore water desalination plant to make Mumbai self-sufficient in drinking water, and the ongoing Mumbai Coastal Road Project -- both intended to be show-pieces' of the Shiv Sena ahead of the BMC elections.

LIKELY PITFALLS THAT COULD DERAIL THE SHINDE-FADNAVIS COMBINATION

After hijacking the Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) 3-party auto-rickshaw, new Chief Minister Eknath Shinde converted it into a two-wheeler with an over zealous pillion-rider in Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis.

Team Absolute | Mumbai
After hijacking the Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) 3-party auto-rickshaw, new Chief Minister Eknath Shinde converted it into a two-wheeler with an over zealous pillion-rider in Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis. Over 3 weeks after they were sworn-in, instead of zooming off, the government is still parked' on the road, but is busy clearing the route ahead by yanking off the MVA's decisions, policies, schemes and projects. Relegated to the pavement, the Shiv Sena-Nationalist Congress Party-Congress looked on gleefully as Fadnavis once snatched the microphone as a startled Shinde cast a brief bewildered stare at the audacity. Many in the Opposition are wondering aloud how soon' before the Bharatiya Janata Party heavyweight Fadnavis grabs the reins of power to jump into the driving seat sidelining the ex-autorickshaw driver Shinde. The challenges before the new regime are both daring and daunting, starting with the much-awaited Cabinet expansion, amid a storm raised by Shinde's 40-strong band of restless rebel Shiv Sena MLAs. Then, the Independents or fringes like the Maharashtra Navnirman Sena (MNS) to ensure a Thackeray' on board and the frightful prospects of humoring the BJP legislators, with many bigwigs ready to draw first blood at the first slight. All these would test the best of Shinde's balancing skills and Fadnavis' claimed Chanakya-esque' mastery to ensure a turbulence-free ride for the new regime. Among the secret worries are whether the Broddingnagian BJP with 106 MLAs looking down, would try to grab the cake and leave only crumbs for the rebels, with at least 20 prime portfolios up for grabs and coveted by all. The next concern for the breakaway group would be the Supreme Court verdict which could make or break the new government, with both sides of the Shiv Sena proclaiming they are the real' party. While winning the trust vote in the House was easy, the next formidable challenge for Shinde would be to win the confidence of the masses and establish his own credibility -- a disarming proposition as many in the past, like Raj Thackeray of the MNS, and others who revolted in different parties all over India have experienced. A major battle - legal and political - waiting to erupt between the Thackeray and Shinde sides, is over who will 'conquer' the Shiv Sena Bhavan (the party headquarters), bag its Tiger' logo, the iconic Bow and Arrow election symbol, the well oiled 56-year-old party apparatus, and most important, convincingly delink it from the magical Thackeray surname. Shinde would have to prove his supremacy over the Thackeray side in the upcoming civic body elections but hurdles are already cropping up with a section of his group reportedly against allying with the BJP. Retaining the CM's traditional stronghold of Thane may be a cakewalk, but dislodging the MVA hold over many other civic bodies like Mumbai, Navi Mumbai, Pune, Nashik, Aurangabad, Nanded, etc could pose problems, with or without the BJP's overbearing shadow. Top MVA leaders like Thackeray, Sanjay Raut (Sena), Sharad Pawar, Ajit Pawar (NCP), Nana Patole, Balasaheb Thorat (Congress), have already predicted that the ED' (Eknath-Devendra) government could fall on its own and the state would be pushed to a mid-term election in a few months. After Shinde-Fadnavis clear these teething hurdles, they have a table-full of major governance issues like the OBC quotas, handling Covid better than the MVA did, and fast-track or complete several big ticket ongoing projects, estimated to cost over Rs 5 lakh crores. They are the Mumbai-Nagpur Super Expressway, the Borivali-Thane Tunnel, the Mumbai Trans Harbour Link, the Mumbai Coastal Road, the southern and northern extension to the Worli-Bandra Sea Link, the Navi Mumbai International Airport, and more than 375-kms of Metro Rail spanning the Mumbai Metropolitan Region. Other mega projects are the Pune Ring Road, Marathwada Water Grid, the Jalna-Nanded corridor linking the Mumbai-Nagpur Super Expressway, augmenting the Mumbai-Pune Expressway, kickstarting the Konkan Expressway, the Sagari (coastal) Highway, Palghar-Raigad Multimodal corridor, and the long pending Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj statue in the Arabian Sea and the Dr BR Ambedkar Memorial in Dadar.

SHINDE ORDERS LONG-TERM PLAN FOR EASING TRAFFIC CONGESTION IN MUMBAI REGION



Mumbai: Chief Minister Eknath Shinde on Saturday asked the administration to initiate long-term planning for a road development project to ease traffic congestion in the Mumbai Metropolitan Region (MMR), officials said. The chief minister asked the Mumbai Metropolitan Region Development Authority (MMRDA) to take the lead in initiating such a project which will include the construction of by-passes, flyovers, service roads and underpasses, a release said here. District collectors and municipal commissioners within the MMR which includes satellite towns in the neighbouring Thane, Palghar and Raigad districts should extend cooperation over land acquisition and other issues, the chief minister said. Traffic on highways, especially that coming from the Jawaharlal Nehru Port Trust (JNPT) and Ahmedabad, should be regulated, he added. Municipal corporations in the MMR should ensure that roads under their jurisdiction are pothole-free, Shinde told the officials. The MMRDA, a state-run planning authority for Mumbai, and the Maharashtra State Road Development Corporation (MSRDC) should appoint special officers to deal with potholes, the chief minister directed.

Once bitten in the Ajit Pawar snafu, now BJP got its coup right

In one of the most brazen political coups in recent years, the 31-month-old unique experimental alliance of the Shiv Sena-Nationalist Congress Party-Congress 'Maha Vikas Aghadi crashed in 10 days flat, peaking a sneaky but defiant drama by rebels, spanning 3 states.

Team Absolute | Mumbai
In one of the most brazen political coups in recent years, the 31-month-old unique experimental alliance of the Shiv Sena-Nationalist Congress Party-Congress 'Maha Vikas Aghadi crashed in 10 days flat, peaking a sneaky but defiant drama by rebels, spanning 3 states. A group of 40 Shiv Sena MLAs -- the number dubiously coinciding with a famous tale in the glorious Arabian Nights -- decided to go 'single and mingle' with 'external forces' and the then Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray fell like a hapless 'Humpty Dumpty'. Almost like a puzzled 'Ali Baba,' Thackeray, who was once greeted with 'Assalamo Alaikum' by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, rushed to bolt the 'stable', but it was already too late as his trusted horses had bolted across the state's borders. The 40 MLAs zipped off in deluxe cars, air-dashed in chartered planes and were treated to 'super-secure' lavish sojourns in five-star hotels - in Gujarat, Assam and Goa - before their 'ghar-wapsi' to Maharashtra after a fortnight. The manner in which many of the lawmakers pulled off their nocturnal vanishing trick without arousing suspicions was both hackneyed and hilarious - slinking off with innocuous excuses of 'tummy upset', 'headache', 'body pains', etc, and one plucky MLA even 're-escaped' to Mumbai on a plea for a 'pee'. In Mumbai, the Sena went into a spin and mounted a belated damage control exercise as almost its entire legislative citadel and the MVA tumbled, Thackeray quit as CM, in 24 hours a new government propped up by the Bharatiya Janata Party was formed with Chief



Minister Eknath Shinde and Deputy CM Devendra Fadnavis. The entire rebellion, as it turned out later, bloomed with the blessings of the BJP without waving its usual 'Operation Lotus' flag, and it remained in denial mode till the two-member regime was sworn-in. With the embarrassing failure of a similar dawn operation that failed to germinate in late November 2019, when Fadnavis took oath as CM and the NCP's Ajit Pawar as Deputy CM, but falling in barely 80 hours - probably fresh in the mind, in June 2022, the BJP took pains to maintain 'a safe distance' up to the end after the MVA was dumped into the bin, before sounding the 'Horn, OK Please' triumphantly. Both sides headed by Shinde and Fadnavis even kept their proposed power-sharing formula a top secret -- and it was revealed only a few hours before the oath taking ceremony when the BJP shouted, 'Open Sesame' before a bogged media. And the doors of power were opened for Shinde as the new surprise CM, and seconds prior to the swearing-in, Fadnavis was squeezed in at the last second as the 'second-in-chief' to the CM, shocking the national and state polity. As a subsequent legal tangle unfolded, it transpired that the BJP offered the plum post to Shinde to dilute its 'power-hungry' image, plus blame the 'rebels group' in case it failed to limp for long, and - as Sharad Pawar and Sanjay Raut predict - pave the way for mid-term poll in a few months. Initially flustered, the Sena quickly went into offensive mode, took certain pre-emptive steps, but also dropped hints of rapprochement with the rebels as the party continued to split and leak incessantly. Undeterred, the rebels group

kept chanting that it is the 'real Shiv Sena', unnerving Thackeray and his loyal band of around 15 MLAs and some 16 MPs who are still sticking together. The 40-strong group, eyeing the upcoming 'ministerial treasures' on the treasury side -- besides lapsing into a peaceful 'sleep mode' with the invisible hanging swords of Central probe agencies off their heads -- became bolder. As a senior Sena leader rued, how - in just a fortnight - those who lacked the guts to even glance at the Thackerays, are now freely snapping, leering, jeering, and 'ordering' the Sena to dump the NCP-Congress and embrace its 'natural saffron ally' or prepare to be pushed to the political pavements. Down but not out, a determined Thackeray & Co. hit back with several legal cases, pending in the Supreme Court, cautioned Governor Bhagat Singh Koshyari against rewarding the rebel MLAs with ministries or offices of profit as their fate is hanging in the balance amid other remedies to safeguard the party apparatus and its assets like the Tiger logo and Bow & Arrow poll symbol, etc. On his part, Thackeray has remained dignified and statesman-like throughout the recent tumult and during his short-lived tenure as CM, with his image intact, despite multiple political assaults. These included facing perpetually long-faced allies, an ultra-aggressive Opposition BJP, a hostile Raj Bhavan, hounding central investigative agencies, aloof bureaucracy, a large part of his term spent battling the corona pandemic and its huge fallout, disgruntled party MLAs, and finally the proverbial 'stab in the back' that pulled the rug - and the CM's chair - from under his feet.



PREPARATION FOR COUNTING OF VOTES IN 133 URBAN BODIES COMPLETED: SEC

Counting of votes will be held on July 17 in 11 Nagar Nigam, 36 Nagar Palika Parishad and 86 Nagar Parishad

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Counting of votes will be held on Sunday, July 17 from 9 am in 44 districts of 133 urban bodies where voting was held on July 6 in the first phase of Urban Bodies Elections-2022 and results will be declared. State Election Commissioner Basant Pratap Singh has informed that all the preparations for counting of votes have been completed. Singh has informed that on July 17, counting of votes will be held in 11 Nagar Nigam, 36 Nagar Palika Parishad and 86 Nagar Parishad. Voting in urban bodies was done through EVMs. In the second phase, in the 214 urban bodies where polling was held on July 13, the counting of votes will be held on July 20 from 9 am.

Singh has informed that on July 17, the counting of

votes will be done in Nagar Nigam Bhopal, Indore, Gwalior, Jabalpur, Khandwa, Burhanpur, Chhindwara, Ujjain, Sagar, Singrauli and Satna. On the same day counting will also be held in Nagar Palika Parishad Rajgarh, Bhaora, Sehore, Vidisha, Ganjbasoda, Dabra, Guna, Ashoknagar, Datia, Panagar, Sihora, Amarwada, Seoni, Waraseoni, Narsinghpur, Kareli, Goteagaon, Gadawara, Badnagar, Neemuch, Shajapur, Mandasaur, Makronia Bujurg, Rahli, Chhatrapur, Damoh, Panna, Itarsi, Betul, Amla, Harda, Umaria, Lahar, Sheopor, Porsa and Ambah.

Similarly, counting will be held on July 17 from 9 am for the Nagar Parishad Khujner, Suthalia, Silwani, Bari, Bareilly, Betma, Depalpur, Gautampura, Hatod, Mahugaon, Manpura, Rau, Sanwer, Badnawar, Shahpur,

Antari, Bhitwar, Bilaua, Pichor, Mohana, Badarwas, Khaniyadhana, Rannaud, Shadhnur, Baraunikhurd, Barela, Bhedaghat, Barghat, Tendukheda, Saikheda, Chichli, Salichauka, Vijayraghvar, Kaimor, Jiran, Alot, Tal, Maksi, Badod, Nagari, Bagli, Kamnava, Hatpipliya, Kannaud, Satwas, Loharda, Katafod, Khategaon, Nemawar, Shahpur, Bilhara, Surkhi, Khajuraho, Rajnagar, Harpalpur, Patharia, Hindoria, Baldeogarh, Khargapur, Niwari, Taricharkala, Orchha, Kakarhati, Ajaygarh, Devendra Nagar, Hanumana, Mauganj, Naigarhi, Chitrakoot, Uchehra, Jaitwara, Kothi, Birsinghpur, Sohagpur, Shahpur, Khirkiya, Timarni, Sirali, Nautozabad, Chandia, Amarkantak, Mihona, Alampur, Daboh, Raun and Baroda.

MP likely to see 'Operation Lotus' redux during Prez poll

▶ AFTER THE BJPS OPERATION LOTUS TOPPLED THE CONGRESS GOVERNMENT IN MADHYA PRADESH IN MARCH 2020, THE OPPOSITION IS NOW SUSPECTING THAT THE SAFFRON PARTYS OPERATION MAY BE VISIBLE HERE AGAIN DURING THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS.

Team Absolute | Bhopal

After the BJP's Operation Lotus toppled the Congress government in Madhya Pradesh in March 2020, the Opposition is now suspecting that the saffron party's operation may be visible here again during the Presidential elections. If sources are to be believed, it is suspected that at least five to six Congress MLAs, if not more, may vote for the NDA's Presidential candidate Draupadi Murmu.

Sources in the Congress told IANS that two-three tribal leaders, who believe that they will not be getting tickets from the party in the 2023 assembly elections, may cross-vote for the NDA candidate on Monday. However, some other sources claimed that there are five to six Congress MLAs who may cross-vote, including one from the Gwalior-Chambal division and a non-tribal.

Sources said that though several Congress MLAs are in touch with the BJP, the saffron party is specifically targeting the stronghold areas of the Congress so far and therefore tribal leaders are its target.



The Congress, which claims to have revived in the municipal and district panchayat elections (though the results are yet to be announced) is worried that if the BJP's Operation Lotus is again successful in Madhya Pradesh, it would have a psychological effect on the party for the next assembly elections, which is scheduled in 2023.

On Thursday, during the visit of joint opposition Presidential candidate Yashwant Sinha to Bhopal, 77 out of the 96 Congress MLAs attended the legislature party meeting. Clarifying on the absence of 19 MLAs from the meeting, state Congress

spokesperson Abbas Hafeez said, "Those who couldn't attend the meeting had already told the party leadership about their inability to attend the meet in view of the counting of votes in the local body polls in their districts." However, a senior Congress MLA from the Malwa-Nimar region said that the party was aware that there were some black sheep, who may cross-vote for the NDA candidate on July 18. "There were around 3-4 MLAs, particularly tribal MLAs from Dhar-Jhabua region who may vote in the name of respecting larger tribal sentiments," the MLA told IANS requesting not to be named.

"It is very clear that nearly half-a-dozen Congress MLAs are queuing up before senior BJP leaders, but the BJP is not in a hurry now, until the next assembly elections come near. Many of those who joined the BJP with Jyotiraditya Scindia, most probably will be given another chance. To fill that vacuum, the saffron party will target Congress leaders for the next assembly elections," said a senior journalist. In March 2020, Madhya Pradesh had witnessed the BJP's 'Operation Lotus' like in Maharashtra recently. The then mass resignation of 22 MLAs had resulted in the toppling of Congress Chief Minister Kamal Nath, 15 months after he had come to power. Several Congress legislators resigned soon after senior Congress leader Jyotiraditya Scindia joined the BJP.

MP Cong appoints leaders to look after counting of votes for civic body polls

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Three days after the urban body polls, including for Mayoral posts in Madhya Pradesh, both the ruling BJP and the Opposition Congress are confident of victory, however, the final poll results will be announced on July 17 and July 20.

In its earlier poll schedule, the Madhya Pradesh State Election Commission had fixed July 17 and 18 for counting of votes, however, due to the Presidential elections on July 18, the second day of counting has been postponed to July 20. On Friday, the Madhya Pradesh Congress Committee appointed senior party leaders, who will be present during the counting of votes at the respective areas they have been appointed. Veteran Congress leader and Rajya Sabha MP Digvijaya Singh will be looking after in Bhopal, while former Minister Suresh Pachouri has been appointed for Indore.

Leader of Opposition in Madhya Pradesh Assembly, Govind Singh has been tasked to look after two municipal corporations - Gwalior (on July 17) and Morena (on July 20).

Other senior Congress leaders who have been appointed for their respective areas are - Mukesh Nayak (Sagar), Rajendra Kumar Singh (Satna), Vivek Tankha (Jabalpur), Sukhdev Panse (Chhindwara), Kamleshwar Patel (Singrauli and Rewa), Bala Bachchan (Ujjain), Arun Yadav (Khandwa), Sajjan Singh Verma (Burhanpur and Dewas), Tarun Bhanot and Laxhan Ghangoriya (Katni) and Kantilal Bhuria (Ratlam).



There are total 16 municipal corporations across 52 districts in Madhya Pradesh and the BJP had won all in the last civic body elections.

Meanwhile, the Congress claimed that the party has won 386 zila panchayat seats against the ruling BJP's 360, while 129 Independent members have been elected. There are a total 875 zila panchayat member seats in Madhya Pradesh. Madhya Pradesh Congress General Secretary and In-charge of administration Rajeev Singh, releasing a list of party's supported candidates who won the elections, said that the party has made the list in public to expose BJP's false claim of winning district panchayat elections. "Since panchayat elections are not held directly under parties, and maintain the dignity of it, the Congress did not release any list. But, BJP's false claim has prompted the party to make the list in public," Singh added.

CM PLANTS PEEPAL, NEEM AND KARANJ SAPPLINGS



Bhopal: Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan planted saplings of Peepal, Neem and Karanj along with the workers of Suryodaya Foundation in the Smart City Garden. The foundation established in 2017 plant saplings in various garden on the 2nd Sunday of every month. Along with this, cleanliness campaigns and tree-planting programme are conducted in Hamidia College on the birth anniversary of Rani Laxmibai. The foundation has been actively helping people during the hardships of Covid-19. Peepal planted today is a shady tree. Along with its religious and ayurvedic significance it purifies the environment. Abounding in antibiotic elements, Neem is acknowledged for its medicinal qualities. Karanj plant is considered important in Ayurvedic medicine and also used in religious works.

Man kills youth as offer to Goddess in MP's Rewa

■ In a bizarre incident, a man allegedly hacked a youth to death at a temple in Madhya Pradesh as an offer to Goddess after his wife gave birth to a male child.

Team Absolute | Bhopal

In a bizarre incident, a man allegedly hacked a youth to death at a temple in Madhya Pradesh as an offer to Goddess after his wife gave birth to a male child.

The incident was reported in a village in Rewa district and the victim has been identified as a 19-year-old Divyansh Kol.

As per police, chromatically, locals found a boy's body on the temple's floor with a deep cut on the neck on July 6 and informed the

police. Police reached the spot and took the body for post-mortem but could not identify it.

After the photograph of the victim was circulated on social media, police came to know that the deceased belonged to a neighbouring village - known as Keunti.

During the investigation, police found that the victim was close to Ramlal Prajapati and they were heading together towards the temple on July 6. In the meantime, police noticed that Prajapati was missing from his home and his mobile was switched off.

Suspecting Prajapati's involvement in the case, police raided his house during the night and took him to the police station for interrogation. Naven Tiwari, sub-divisional officer of police of Sirmour (in Rewa district) told IANS that Prajapati tried to mislead the police narrating

different stories, however, later he admitted to having killed the youth.

Prajapati told the police that he has three daughters and he always wanted a son. Therefore, he had pledged that if his wife, who was pregnant, gives birth to a male child, he would sacrifice a youth.

Last month, Prajapati's wife gave birth to a male child and he was searching for a youth for the sacrifice. "Since then, Prajapati was in search of a boy to offer the Goddess. Since the victim was close to him, he convinced him to go to the temple. As the victim lay down to offer prayer to the Goddess, Prajapati attacked him on the neck with a sharp axe and fled the spot," Tiwari said.

Tiwari said that accused has been arrested and booked for murder. Further investigation was underway.

World Snake Day: RMNH ORGANISED ORAL QUIZ 'SNAKES OF INDIA'

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Regional Museum of Natural History, Bhopal (a regional centre of National Museum of Natural History, New Delhi) a subordinate office of Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Govt. of India; organized an Oral Quiz on the occasion of World Snake Day on 16th July 2022; on the theme 'Snakes of India.'

In this competition 08 teams comprising 02 students participated from various schools of Bhopal. Apart from these students 32 students



also participated this programme as observer. Oral and visual questions were asked during the quiz. Many interesting questions were also asked during this quiz like Name the snake of India which builds nest to lay eggs? And How many sets of teeth can grow in life of

snakes? Apart from these questions many interesting information were also shared with students and teachers. Four teams for final round were selected out of two preliminary rounds. Rishabh Kothari and Dhairya Garg from Delhi Public School, Kolar Road bagged first

prize, Himanshu Jaiswal and Shikhar Sharma from Bal Bharti Public School, Neelbad bagged second prize and Aaish Jaan Khan and Ishaque Malik from Bal Bhawan Scool, Shamla Hills, Bhopal bagged third prize while Prachi Bhojwani and Richa Shrama from Navnidh Hassomal Lakhani Public School, Sant Hirdaram Nagar, Bhopal won encouragement prize. Escort teachers from all 08 schools were present during the quiz. Manik Lal Gupta, Scientist - C and Co-ordinator of the programme was Quiz Master of this Oral Quiz.

CM GREETES SHOOTER AISHWARY PRATAP SINGH

Bhopal: Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan congratulated the shooter of Madhya Pradesh Shooting Academy Bhopal Aishwary Pratap Singh for winning gold medal in 50 metre rifle 3 position event of ISSF Shooting 2022 World Cup (South Korea). In his message on social media, Chouhan said that Aishwary has made the country and Madhya Pradesh proud with his wonderful and exceptional game.

CM Greets newly elected Panchayat representatives

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan met the newly elected Panchayat representatives of Shivpuri, Vidisha and Harda at the residence office. Water Resources, Fishermen Welfare and Fisheries Development Minister Tulsi Silawat, Farmer's Welfare and Agriculture Minister Kamal Patel, Minister of State for Public Works Suresh Dhakad and MLA Umakant Sharma were present as well. While extending felicitations to the newly elected Panchayat representatives, Chouhan articulated that



they should work with dedication for the development of the area and welfare of the people. Ensure that benefits of various public welfare schemes run by the Central and State Governments available to every eligible

person in the area. The Chief Minister said that activities should be conducted through campaigns for cleanliness, health, nutrition, education, environment protection and women empowerment.

CHIEF MINISTER EXTENDS GREETINGS ON ICARS FOUNDATION DAY

Bhopal: Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has extended felicitations on the 94th Foundation Day of the Indian Council of Agricultural Research. In his message on social media, Chouhan said that the Council has made an unparalleled contribution to fulfil Prime Minister Narendra Modi's resolve to double the income of farmers. Expressing gratitude on behalf of the farmers of the state for the continuous virtuous efforts of the council, CM Chouhan said that "the progressing farmer is the pride of India." The activities of the council are helpful in the all round development of agriculture and farmers.

WOMAN IAS OFFICER ALLEGES 'MISTREATMENT' IN LEAKED WHATSAPP CHAT

Team Absolute | Bhopal

A young woman IAS officer posted here has alleged mistreatment by a senior officer posted in CM house while accusing him of not providing her a vehicle to return home. She expressed her anguish within a closed WhatsApp group of state's women IAS officers, which apparently got 'leaked.' Insiders say she had been conducting an inquiry into a major corruption case. "This is the first time I am using this group to share. If I don't share it now and remain silent then I will be ashamed of being a woman, a human being and an IAS officer. Since this group is of lady IAS officers, they can better guide me and help me to get through this" reads 'leaked' message by the 2011 batch IAS officer.

She was posted as Additional CEO MNREGA. While she was on leave from July 4, 2022 onwards. On July 7 she got a

call from Deputy Secretary GAD that she has been posted as Deputy Secretary, Revenue. "On July 8th I went to MNREGA office for relieving formalities where I was handed a relieving letter immediately. I was going to join the new department, and had to return the vehicle immediately. But I used the vehicle to go to Vallabh Bhawan. I joined the new department and called on PS. To my surprise, PS told me that I cannot enter his room. He has no work to give to me. He explicitly said now I will see you so I have taken you under me. When I asked him what had happened, he did not answer. I asked him if I could make a submission, he told me I had no right to speak. I requested him to provide me the vehicle to go back home because I have to give back the MNREGA vehicle, he said he will not give me any vehicle. When I asked him how I was supposed to go back home, he said that the lower staff of Vallabh

Bhawan goes home, ask them how they go? and he called his male subordinate which I could make out to be his PA, sarcastically told him to ask for a vehicle and he would give him the vehicle and in front of him told me to get up and get out and I will not get the vehicle. While, DS Coordination, Revenue was arranging a vehicle to at least drop me home, he called her and stopped her from providing me any vehicle despite there being a spare vehicle available. When DS Co-ordination asked him how madam would go back home and it was getting late, he said let her go herself" she wrote adding she had no option but to retain the MNREGA vehicle. She went ahead asking questions - Should I keep mum regarding the misbehavior meted out to me by PS Revenue? Why did PS Revenue not think it appropriate to hear my submission? When PS Revenue had no work for me, why did he take me? Has he taken me under him just to

harass me? Is it acceptable? Will he be not wasting me? "No one in the Revenue Department picked up my calls, neither responded to my messages and no vehicle came for me, finally now security guards of Vallabh Bhawan are dropping me home. Nothing left to say. Disheartening" she wrote. Sources say, she was supported by some other women IAS officers.

"It was almost with a sense of de ja vu that I read your narrative. It was anguishing how unjustly u were treated. My kudos to u for being forthright to speak your truth. I respect your courage. Such things have happened to me in 39 years of service in the IAS I think ultimately let's face the truth there are good guys and bad guys everywhere Fight the good fight with the latter and nourish and be inspired by the former. I have never heard u or seen u but i am with u" wrote a senior IAS officer supporting her 'distress.'

HARDA FARMERS GRATEFUL TO CM CHOUHAN



Bhopal: Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan's decision to purchase moong of summer time at minimum support price was praised by farmers of Harda and they have expressed their gratitude. The farmers of Harda, who reached the CM residence under the leadership of Minister for Farmers Welfare and Agriculture Development Kamal Patel and Water Resources Minister and in-charge of District Harda Tulsiram Silawat, thanked Chouhan for farmer-friendly decision. The farmers said that with the purchasing moong of summer time at the minimum support price, the farmers would get a fair price for their hard work.



How Demi Lovato hit her head on a crystal

Los Angeles | Agencies

'Sorry Not Sorry' hitmaker Demi Lovato recently smashed her head against a crystal and had to get stitches before her appearance in a television show. The singer shared the details of the accident in a TikTok post Wednesday, revealing they sustained a head injury after the extremely common everyday act of smacking into a crystal display, reports Entertainment Weekly.

The following day, during an appearance on Jimmy Kimmel Live, the 29-year-old artist, who prefers pronouns They/Them, wore a wig to cover the cuts and detailed the rocky sequence of events.

Entertainment Weekly noted that Lovato told guest host Mark Rober: "So I was picking something up off the floor that I dropped, and I'm a huge fan of crystals -- I have this amethyst that is about this tall. Anyways, I went to bend down and pick something up and I didn't see the amethyst and I hit my head, and I had to get three stitches last night -- in my face!"

Lovato recalled Facetimeing with their doctor and learning they would need stitches just above their eyebrow.

They added, "I was like, 'I have Kimmel (the show) -- what do I do?' So I did what any sane person would do. I made a TikTok before I even told anyone."

In the video on their TikTok page, they are holding their head while the platform's popular "THEY ARE GONNA KNOW" audio plays.

"Nobody's gonna know. Nobody's gonna know," says one voice.



Los Angeles | Agencies

Baz Luhrmann's 'Elvis' has become one of the rare films without super-



heroes or dinosaurs to reach the \$100 million mark at the US box office. Globally, the film has minted over \$170 million, reports Variety. The film was made on a lavish budget. The movie which looks at Elvis Presley's rise to become one of the hottest acts in rock 'n' roll, as well as his struggles with drugs and changing tastes, cost \$85 million to produce and tens of millions more to market.

'Elvis' stars Tom Hanks as the singer's manager Colonel Tom Parker with relative newcomer Austin Butler in the title role. Butler,

who beat out higher profile actors like Ansel Elgort and Miles Teller to land the part, has attracted Oscar buzz. Variety adds that 'Elvis' has a good chance to bypass 'Australia' and its \$211.8 million haul to become the second-highest-grossing film of Luhrmann's career. 'The Great Gatsby', another Warner Bros. release, netted \$355.6 million globally to rank as the director's most popular film.

Jeff Goldstein, president of domestic distribution at Warner Bros., said in a

'Elvis' rocks 'n' rolls to mint record \$170 mn globally

statement accessed by Variety, "We are not only pleased to cross this milestone, but truly thrilled to see it happen with a film like 'Elvis'."

He added that it's gratifying to see a non-branded IP with an up-and-coming lead create not just box office noise but also result in a significant spike in other areas in today's market and especially in the summer corridor.



Los Angeles | Agencies

'Zero Dark Thirty' star Chris Pratt laughed away rumours that he was being eyed by Disney as the next Indiana Jones, saying jokingly that he fears he would be "haunted by the ghost" of Harrison Ford, who, incidentally, just turned 80, reports Deadline.

Talking to the podcaster Josh Horowitz, who asked about an article which reported the speculation, the actor joked: "I don't even know who Steven Spielberg is. Who? Steven Who? No, aren't they doing

Not touching 'Indiana Jones': Chris Pratt

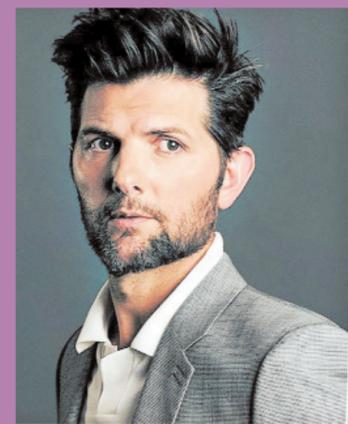


Indiana Jones with Harrison Ford?"

"All I know," Pratt continued, "is I once saw a quote from Harrison Ford and I don't even know if it was really him but it was enough to scare

me, that was like, 'When I die, Indiana Jones dies.' And I'm like, am I gonna get haunted by the ghost of Harrison Ford one day when he dies if I play?"

Deadline noted that Ford is, in fact, returning to the Indiana Jones franchise for the 2023 James Mangold film. Pratt doesn't offer a flat-out denial of any previous discussions on the matter.



Los Angeles | Agencies

After his hit drama 'Severance' landed an Emmy nomination, Adam Scott is joining the cast of the superhero film 'Madame Web'. The film stars Dakota

Adam Scott joins Dakota Johnson in superhero film 'Madame Web'

Johnson in the titular role of a clairvoyant whose psychic abilities allow her to see within the spider world itself, reports Variety.

Variety notes that the movie, produced by Sony, will be an origin story for the character, who served as an ally to Spider-



Man in the Marvel comics.

The rest of the cast includes Sydney Sweeney, who just received double Emmy nominations for 'Euphoria' and 'The White Lotus', Emma Roberts, Celeste O'Connor, Isabela Merced, Tahar Rahim and Mike Epps. S.J. Clarkson directs the spin-off in Sony's universe of Marvel characters. Matt Sazama and Burk Sharpless wrote the script.

Variety adds that following the success of 'Venom' starring Tom Hardy as the classic

Spider-Man villain, Sony began building its own cinematic universe of Spidey characters. After last year's sequel, 'Venom: Let There Be Carnage', Jared Leto starred in 'Morbius' earlier this year as the blood-sucking vampire villain, Dr. Michael Morbius.

Los Angeles | Agencies

A few days after her latest legal victory in court, Britney Spears is sharing her passion and love for

Fans cheer as Britney sings all-time hit number 'Baby One More Time' a cappella

an extremely long time ... maybe too long," Spears wrote in her caption that accompanied a video of her belting out the song that made her famous -- but this time, an a cappella version (without musical accompaniment). Spears, according to 'Variety', sings with power in the video, "showing off her raw vocal ability that garnered much praise in the comment section. Spears' new version, however, includes one notable difference from the original lyrics: "Give me a f***ing sign," she hits hard in her new video, which she says she recorded earlier this week.

"I haven't shared my voice in

Los Angeles | Agencies

Hollywood star Ryan Gosling will be seen playing a trained assassin in the upcoming film 'The Gray Man', which he says is the kind of movie that made him want to make movies

Ryan Gosling: 'The Gray Man' is the kind of film that made him want to be in movies

Gosling plays Sierra Six, also known as 'The Gray Man', a trained assassin who is inducted into the CIA's top-secret Sierra programme from a U.S. federal prison. He's highly skilled and one of the best in his shadowy business, but there's a hitch: Sierra Six uncovers incriminating secrets about the agency, making him the target of the CIA and a global manhunt.

The actor shared how much he would have loved such a film when he was growing up.

He said: "Personally, it's the kind of film that I would have loved growing up. It's the kind of film that made me want to make movies. It has such an amazing cast and it walks such an interesting tonal line." He added: "It gives you all of the larger-than-life action sequences and set pieces, but at the same time you get to follow these characters." 'The Gray Man' will start streaming on Netflix on July 22.



ABSOLUTE PIC OF THE DAY



Joy Corrigan





Singapore Open

SINDHU STORMS INTO FINAL WITH WIN OVER KAWAKAMI

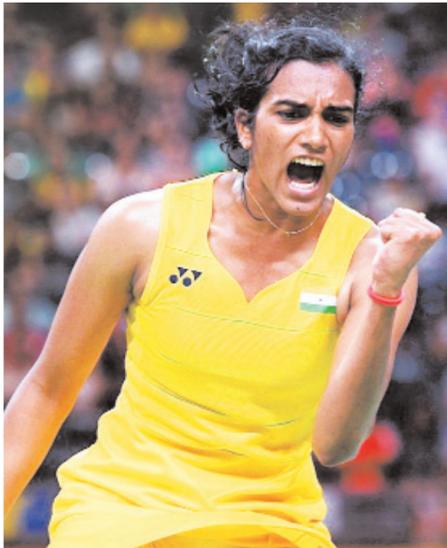
Singapore | Agencies

Ac Indian shuttler PV Sindhu stormed into the women's singles final at the Singapore Open 2022 after beating Japan's Saena Kawakami in the semi-final, here on Saturday.

World No 7 Sindhu beat world No 38 Kawakami 21-15, 21-7 in her final four clash, which lasted for 31 minutes. Former world champion will face the winner of the other semifinal between Japan's Aya Oori and Chinese shuttler Wang Zhi Yi in Sunday's final.

It will be the Tokyo bronze medallist's third summit clash of 2022, having gone on to win both the Syed Modi International and Swiss Open BWF Super 300 titles in January and March, respectively. However, the Singapore meet is a Super 500 tournament.

Two-time Olympic medallist Sindhu started the match with intent and raced to a 7-2 lead after peppering her



Japanese opponent with some well-placed smashes and deft drop shots. However Kawakami, who got a walkover from top seed

as it seemed the tide had turned in the Japanese player's favour, though, the Indian stepped on the pedal to take five of the final six points to pocket the game.

The 27-year old Sindhu took little time to stamp her authority in the second game and took a formidable 11-4 lead into the break. After the restart, she continued to boss the proceedings despite occasional flashy winners from her Japanese opponent. In the end Sindhu pocketed the match comfortably.

This was Sindhu's third straight win over Saena Kawakami in head-to-head meetings. She is the last remaining Indian badminton player at the Singapore Open.

On Friday, London 2012 bronze medallist Saina Nehwal and HS Prannoy had bowed out in the women's and men's singles quarter-finals respectively while the duo of MR Arjun and Dhruv Kapila had also crashed out in the men's doubles final eight clash.

Tai Tzu Ying in the second round before upsetting Thai ace Pornpawee Chochuwong in the quarters, fought back and drew level at 11-11. Just

Shooting World Cup

AISHWARY STRIKES GOLD IN MEN'S 50M RIFLE 3 POSITIONS



Team Absolute | New Delhi

Junior world champion Aishwary Pratap Singh Tomar struck gold in the Men's 50m Rifle 3 Positions (3P) event beating Hungarian Zakan Pekler 16-12 in the gold medal match at the ongoing ISSF World Cup Rifle/Pistol/Shotgun stage in Changwon, Korea.

According to information received here, this was the youngster's second ISSF World Cup gold and India's fourth of the competition, helping them hold on to top spot in the standings.

After showing incredible form in topping the qualifiers on Friday, 21-year-old Aishwary made it a wire-to-wire per-

formance, also topping the ranking round early on Saturday morning with a score of 409.8 to make the decider. Pekler shot 406.7 to join him.

In the final Pekler did put up a good challenge but Aishwary was always ahead and in control and brought out the big shots when it mattered to close out like a pro.

India missed out on another medal as Manu Bhaker finished fourth in the women's 25m Pistol after shooting extremely well to make it to the medal round. Her first task in the morning was to qualify for the ranking matches and she shot a steady rapid-fire round of 293 to qualify seventh with an overall effort of 581. She then topped her four-woman

ranking round missing just two shots across the four 5-shot series. Her score of 18 was four better than Singaporean Teh Xiu Hong who followed her through to eventually win gold.

Law of averages probably caught up with Manu in the medal round as she became the first to be eliminated in fourth place with just nine hits to her name after the fourth five-shot series.

In more good news coming in, Anjum Moudgil has qualified in sixth place for the ranking round of the women's 3P with a score of 586 in the qualifiers. The finals are on Sunday.

India currently leads the medal tally with four gold, four silver and one bronze medal.

England Women score massive win over South Africa; take 2-0 lead in ODI series



Bristol | Agencies

England Women's team top order, led by Sophia Dunkley and Emma Lamb, gave a commanding performance as they thrashed South Africa by a massive 114 runs in the second One-day International (ODI) at the County Ground here to take an unassailable 2-0 lead in the series.

Dunkley smashed 107 off just 93 balls and right-arm off-spinner Charlie Dean claimed 4/53 as England triumphed with nine overs to spare.

It was Dunkley's maiden ODI century which laid the foundation for England's mammoth 337/5 in 50 overs in the second ODI after the hosts elected to bat first. Openers Tammy Beaumont and Emma Lamb got England Women going with a fine opening partnership 127.

Dunkley was well-supported by Nat Sciver as they stitched together 142 for the third wicket, with all four of

England's top batters passing the half-century mark.

In reply, South Africa's Laura Wolvaardt and Andrie Steyn gave the tourists a solid start but the side was ultimately dismissed for 223 as England took an unassailable 2-0 lead.

Charlie Dean was the wrecker-in-chief, finishing with figures of 4/53, with the tweeker well-supported by young pace bowler Issy Wong (3/36) as England increased their points lead in the multi-format series to 6-2.

Brief scores

England Women 337/5 in 50 overs (Tammy Beaumont 58, Emma Lamb 67, Sophia Dunkley 107, Nat Sciver 63; Nadine de Klerk 2/65, Chloe Tryon 2/34) beat South Africa Women 223 in 41 overs (Laura Wolvaardt 55, Marizanne Kapp 73; Charlie Dean 4/53, Issy Wong 3/36) by 114 runs.

World Athletics

Eugene (Oregon) | Agencies

Two of India's top medal prospects at the World Athletics Championships 2022 here, 3000m steeplechaser Avinash Sable and long jumper M Sreeshankar, qualified for the finals in their respective categories, raising hopes of bringing home elusive medals from the global competition.

Sable finished third in his heat, clocking 8:18.75 to make the cut for the men's 3000m steeplechase final, while in men's long jump at Hayward Field, Sreeshankar was the only Indian among the three to qualify for the final, which will be held later

STEEPLECHASER AVINASH SABLE, LONG JUMPER M SREESHANKAR QUALIFY FOR FINALS

on Saturday, according to Olympics.com.

Sreeshankar also became the first male long jumper from the country to advance to final.

Sable was way off his personal best of 8:12.48 -- a national record -- but he made it to the final, where the top three from each of the three heats along with the next six fastest make the cut. The final will be held on Monday.

Sable was seventh fastest overall among the 15 qualifiers, which was led by 2020 Tokyo Olympic Games champion Soufiane El Bakkali of Morocco, who timed 8:16.65. Sable had also

made it to the 2019 World Championships finals in Doha but had finished 13th in 8:21.37.

The others who made the cut in the gruelling race included defending champion Conselus Kipruto (Kenya) and Lamecha Girma (Ethiopia, runner-up in the last edition. Commonwealth Games medallist Abraham Kibiwot of Kenya and Olympic medallist Evan Jager of the USA also made the final cut.

Sreeshankar, the national record holder in long jump, made it to the final with a jump of 7.86 metres. The Indian logged two successful attempts, with his second

valid jump of 7.86 metres earning him a place in the final, while the second one -- 8.0 metres -- was a foul.

The qualification criterion for long jump is athletes achieving the cut of 8.15 metres or the top 12 performers from the two groups. Only two athletes met the standard with Japan's Yuki Hashioka leading the pack with a jump of 8.18 metres. India's Jeswin Aldrin had one successful attempt from his three, his valid leap measuring 7.79. Muhammed Anees Yahiya managed a best of 7.73m from his three attempts. Aldrin finished 20th while Anees Yahiya was 23rd overall in the 32-man field.



Juventus, Atletico Madrid to meet in friendly match in Israel

Jerusalem | Agencies

Juventus and Atletico Madrid will meet for a friendly match at the 29,400-seat Bloomfield Stadium in Israel's coastal city of Tel Aviv-Yafo on August 7, both clubs have confirmed. "Having previously hosted Champions League matches in recent years, Bloomfield will be the venue for an enticing appetizer before the new season for

both sides," Juventus said in a statement on Friday. "It's a pleasure to return to Israel to play a match like this, against an important rival with whom we have already faced on several occasions in the Champions League," said Atletico coach Diego Simeone.

"Facing a club with a great tradition and international prestige is always stimulating," added Juve coach Massimiliano Allegri. "It will be a prestigious test ahead of

the start of the season, in front of a passionate public."

Both teams will begin their league journey eight days later, with Juventus taking on Sassuolo in Serie A, whilst Atletico will visit Getafe in La Liga, reports Xinhua.

Israel will also host a friendly match between AS Roma and Tottenham on July 30, and the French Super Cup match between Paris Saint-Germain and Nantes the following evening.

Still a lot of cricket left in Virat: Kapil

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Since November 2019, Virat Kohli hasn't scored a century in international cricket and has been in a prolonged lean patch across all formats. With every low score coming off his bat, the debate on Kohli's poor form climbs up with the Men's T20 World Cup in Australia just three months away.

Now, legendary all-rounder and 1983 World Cup-winning captain Kapil Dev feels that Kohli has still got a lot of cricket left in him and pointed out that the talismanic batter has to himself create a way for getting back amongst the runs.

"It's not like India haven't played without Virat in the last five to six years, but I want such a player to be back in form. Yes, he's been dropped or rested but there's still a lot of cricket left in him. And he has to create the path for that.

"Maybe play Ranji Trophy



or score runs anywhere. His confidence needs to be back. This is the difference between a great and a good player. A great player like him shouldn't take so much time to get back in form. He has to fight with himself and get things in order," said Kapil to ABP News.

After the conclusion of England tour, Kohli will not be travelling to West Indies for three ODIs and five T20Is. Asked on whether Kohli has been dropped or rested, Kapil remarked, "I can't say a

big player like Virat Kohli should be dropped. He is a very big player. If you have said that he has been rested to give him respect then there's no harm in that. "The most important part is how to bring such a player back in form? He's not an ordinary cricketer. He should get more practice and play more matches to get his form back. I don't think there's any player in this world who is bigger than Kohli in T20s but when you are not doing well, the selectors can take their call.

England, India face off in a winner-takes-it-all ODI series decider at Manchester

Manchester | Agencies

After 2018 and 2021, it will be the third time that an ODI series between England and India will enter a winner-takes-it-all decider match. Sunday at Old Trafford in Manchester will see both England and India take the field to decide who ends this trip on a high: hosts on visitors.

With less than 18 months to go for the 2023 Men's Cricket World Cup to be hosted by India, the three-match series has been a medium for England to see how they are standing in life post Eoin Morgan's retirement and what they would need more to firm up their plans for a title defence in the subcontinent.

After being blown away by Jasprit Bumrah's six-fer at The Oval, England gave the same treatment to India at Lord's through tall left-arm quick Reece Topley's 6-24, with good support from fellow left-arm quick David Willey and lower-order runs of Willey as well as Moeen Ali rescuing them from a top-six meltdown after Yuzvendra Chahal



struck in middle overs. They would like for Jason Roy to find his mojo back at the top. For India, the opening pair of Rohit Sharma and Shikhar Dhawan chased down 111 at The Oval without breaking a sweat. But at Lord's, where England had helpful conditions, they were just unable to break free, as the hosts made swift inroads to bounce back in the series.

The pressure from Topley and Willey was such that Rishabh Pant got out for a two-ball duck off a full toss from pacer Brydon Carse trying to make a case for himself as a middle-overs enforcer.

The scrutiny lens on talismanic batter Virat Kohli is set to go up a notch, too. Kohli's prolonged lean patch has been the burning question and a matter of intense debate among cricket followers, especially with a Men's T20 World Cup in Australia just three months away.

Another low score at Manchester will increase the decibel levels on Kohli's lean patch, who has been without an international century since November 2019.

With Sharma stressing on the batters to take up an attacking approach to avoid top-order collapses and get more out of lower order runs, the series decider at Manchester could be the perfect place for India and Kohli to make up for all the previous shortcomings and provide an extension of their attacking batting approach from T20Is to clinch their second series on trot after winning T20I series 2-1.

LALREMSIAMI DISMAYED WITH INDIA'S WORLD CUP SHOWING; SAYS TEAM WILL DO BETTER IN CWG

Terrassa (Spain): Young India women's hockey team forward Lalremsiami is disappointed with the performance of the side in the FIH Women's World Cup Spain & Netherlands 2022, but added the girls will work on the mistakes and try to come back stronger at the Commonwealth Games in Birmingham, India, led by goalkeeper Savita, finished ninth at the World Cup, registering two draws against England (1-1) and China (1-1) respectively and losing 3-4 to New Zealand in the Pool stage. They suffered a 0-1 loss to Spain in the 'crossover game', thus missing out on qualifying for the quarterfinal stage of the competition. However, the team went on to beat Canada 1-1 (3-2 shootout) and Japan 3-1 to finish ninth in the tournament. As India begin their campaign at the Birmingham games from July 29, Lalremsiami said the "positive learnings" from the World Cup campaign will hold the side in good stead. "We are disappointed with the outcome (at the World Cup). I think we could have done better, but at the end, you need to accept, move on and focus on the positive learnings from the campaign. We will work on the mistakes and start afresh for the Commonwealth Games," said Lalremsiami. Lalremsiami, 22, who featured in all six World Cup matches, added she could have converted a few more goals but things didn't go as planned. She scored a goal against New Zealand in the Pool stage match.



GAURAV PARAJULI ABOUT KUMUD MISHRA; "HE IS A CUTIE BADASS"

Team

Absolute | Mumbai

Actress Tara Sutaria is all set to make her singing debut alongside Ankit Tiwari in the song 'Shaamat' from the movie 'Ek Villain Returns'. Tara says: "This is such a wonderful moment in my life and an incomparable feeling because 'Shaamat' was the first Hindi song I've ever recorded and also the first track to release of mine in this film. It has a lot of emotions and memories attached to it."

The lyrics for the song have been written by Prince Dubey. The 'Student of the Year 2' actress shares further about her character in

Shachi Chaturvedi | Mumbai

Filmmaker Imtiaz Ali's upcoming show Dr Arora is all set to stream on an OTT platform. Gaurav Parajuli, widely known for his role in 'Tandav'; gets in a candid conversation with Absolute Indian news. Gaurav Parajuli talks about his character, his experience of working with Kumud Mishra to having fun on set.

While talking about his character in the series Gaurav Parajuli said, "My character is a man with a tough appearance but a kind heart on the inside. In our culture, he is the definition of 'Mard'. We sense a slight pinch of innocence in him. He loves, he has a heart, and he occasionally shows a gun as well". While continuing the chat, Gaurav also points out the reason to say yes to the part, "Firstly, god has been kind, that's why I said yes."

Secondly, Imtiaz sir, Kumud sir, Sajid sir, were the part of the series, why would I say no?" According to the actor, working with Imtiaz Ali is a feeling for him, "Don't you think 'Imtiaz sir' just taking this name is an emotion? That is how I felt as well. With this name, you go to a mystic place altogether." Continuing his conversation, Gaurav jokingly said, "Bas Kun Faya Kun kardiya mene."

Tara Sutaria records her first ever Hindi song

the film and what she liked about her debut track.

"My character in the film is what really excited me to be a part of it but the music was definitely a driving force. I'm also so happy to collaborate with Ankit Tiwari and very eager to see the response of the audience," shares Tara.

Ankit Tiwari said: "The song 'Shaamat' is very close to my heart and I am glad that people will now get to hear it. Working with Tara on this was great and she put all her efforts into perfecting her art for the vision of this song. Can't wait to see how the audience reacts to it."

The series deals with an important issue that is considered taboo in our country. Sharing fear about the same, the actor quipped, "Forget the public. I was scared to tell this, my parents. I was worried that, what will I tell them. What am I doing?. Later I thought if I being an actor will not do it then what will we expect from the public? But I am telling you when you will hear the song or you will watch the series. You will understand that the topic has been put forth in such a way maintaining the fine line that you will be comfortable watching it with the family." Later, when asked if humour is the only way to tackle such heavy issues: Gaurav replies, "Yes, absolutely. For example, homoeopathy tablets used to taste nice because they were sweet. Similarly, sex is an intense topic and we need to add ingredients to make things palatable for the audience." Despite the serious subject matter, the cast of Dr Arora had a lot of fun on set. Gaurav highlighted one of these events. "Kumud sir is a cutie badass. We used to have this friendly banter on set; where we used to challenge each other. Kumud sir used to tease me by saying 'you didn't perform well, let me show you.' In the beginning, I took it seriously as I am a very competitive person. Later I realised he was just teasing me."



Team Absolute | Mumbai

Kartik Aaryan is a reliable and consistent actor. He is currently enjoying the massive success of Bhool Bhulaiyaa 2. Aside from that, his next

To note, on the same date Karan Johar's much-anticipated film Rocky Aur Rani Ki Prem Kahani is also hitting the theatres.

Touted to be a family-based romantic comedy, RRRPK stars Ranveer

Karan Johar and Kartik Aaryan to lock horns at the ticket window!

be released. Shehzada, is about to

In order to avert a clash with Katrina Kaif, Sidhanth Chaturvedi and Ishaan Khatter's Phone Bhoot and Arjun Kapoor's Kuttey, Kartik Aaryan's Shehzada which was earlier scheduled to release on 4th November 2022 will now release on 10 February 2023.

Singh, Alia Bhatt, Dharmendra, Jaya Bachchan, and Shabana Azmi in lead roles. For those who are unaware, Karan Johar and Kartik Aaryan had a fallout after things regarding Dostana 2 didn't work out in their favour. Recently, at an award function, they were seen interacting with each other and it looked like the two have buried the hatchet.



Rashmika delights paps with 'Saami Saami' hookstep in stunning outfit

Team Absolute | Bengaluru

She may be India's crush but 'Pushpa' star Rashmika Mandanna has shown that she is a grounded person with her heart in the right place. Srivalli aka Rashmika Mandanna has been the talk of tinsel town for her adorable gesture at a recent public appearance.

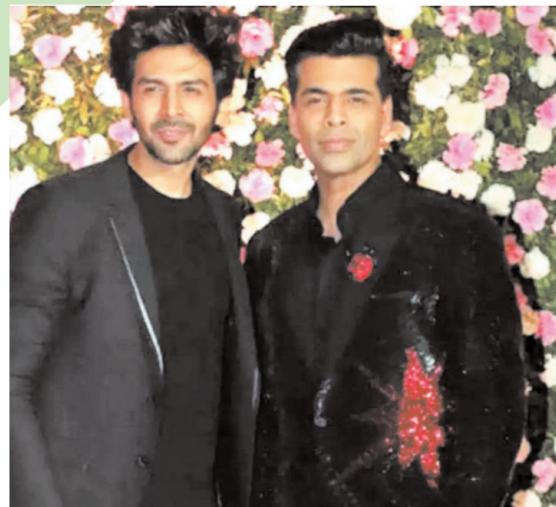
At the red carpet, the actress obliged the paps for some pictures and also went ahead to pose with all of them. She also flaunted the 'Saami Saami' hookstep and the famous 'thaggede le' hand gesture to the audiences.

Rashmika looked drop-dead gor-

geous as she posed in a figure-hugging thigh-high length dress. Boasting a deep V-neck, and an accentuated fabric from her waist.

Letting the outfit do all the talking, Rashmika went minimal with her accessories. She opted for simple yet effective pair of hoop earrings to go with her ensemble. The makeup was flawless and kept in neutral tones.

Meanwhile, Rashmika is all set to make her debut in Bollywood with multiple films in the pipeline including Sandeep Reddy Vanga's Animal opposite Ranbir Kapoor. She will also share screen space with Sidharth Malhotra in Mission Majnu and Goodbye alongside Amitabh Bachchan.



Happy Birthday Katrina Kaif

Anushka Sharma, Kareena Kapoor & others send love to the actress on her special day

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Katrina Kaif is one of the most talked about actresses in Bollywood. The diva has won hearts with her stunning beauty and her acting prowess. It is certainly a treat to watch her perform on the big screen. As the actress turns a year older on Saturday, social media was filled with birthday wishes for the lovely actress. From Ananya Panday and Anushka Sharma to others, many Bollywood celebs have taken to their social media handles to wish the actress on her special day. Kareena Kapoor took to her social media stories and shared a monochromatic picture of hers with the birthday girl. Alongside the pic, she wrote, "Happy birthday Kat!" Wishing Katrina Kaif love and light always, Anushka Sharma shared a smiling picture of the Namaste London actress to send her birthday wishes.

"Happy birthday Katrina Kaif, love and light always," wrote Malaika as she extended birthday greetings. Mom-to-be Sonam Kapoor shared a cute picture with Katrina twinning in pink attires as she showered birthday love on the actress. Sonam wrote, "Happy, happy birthday darling girl... have the best year... you deserve it!" Actor Dia Mirza also wished Katrina on Instagram, and wrote, "Happy birthday Katrina. Love, love, love." Actors Bhumi Pednekar and Janhvi Kapoor also shared their birthday wishes for Katrina. Janhvi shared a photo on her Instagram Stories and wrote, "Keep shining and dazzling all of us like you always have!" Bhumi wrote, "Happy Birthday Katrina". On the work front, Katrina will next be seen in Phone Bhoot starring Siddhant Chaturvedi and Ishaan Khatter.

Apart from this, she also has Tiger 3, Merry Christmas and Farhan Akhtar's road trip-centred film Jee Le Zaraa in the pipeline.



INSTAGRAM PIC OF THE DAY



Shradha Das