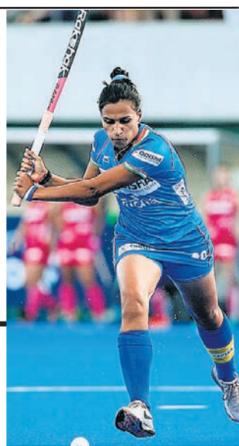


absolute india

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India always ready to give befitting reply if provoked ...



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Britney Spears beau helping star 'detox mentally and spiritually'...



SPORTS > 07

Rani, Vandana have helped achieve my goal: Forward...

'2nd wave still not over, vaccines effective against variants'

Bhargava, who also holds charge of secretary (health research), advised against any laxity at this stage. Keeping aside rumours that Covid vaccines available in India will fail in protecting people from new variants, Bhargava clarified that all vaccines being administered in the country have been found effective against the alpha, beta, gamma and delta variants of the virus.

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Warning that the second wave of Covid-19 "still not over", central government's 29th meet of the Group of Ministers (GoM), on Monday, advised people to follow Covid appropriate behaviour to keep themselves safe. The GoM clarified that all anti-Covid vaccines, currently available in the country, are found effective against alpha, beta, gamma and delta variants of the coronavirus.

The GoM strongly reiterated the importance of Covid appropriate behaviour at a time when restrictions are being lifted across the country. Besides, higher level of continued awareness building through sustained Information, Education and Communication (IEC) campaigns was highlighted. Dr V.K. Paul emphasized on the benefits of mask wearing and hand hygiene while ICMR Director General Balram Bhargava also cautioned that the "second wave of Covid-19 has still not subsided", noting that 80 districts in the

TEST RESULTS OF VAX EFFECTIVENESS ON DELTA+ SOON

New Delhi: With cases of the Delta Plus variant of Covid-19 getting reported from various parts of the country, the Union Health Ministry said on Monday that lab test results of the effectiveness of the Covid vaccine on the new mutant will be out in 10 days. Covishield and Covaxin vaccines work against SARS-CoV-2 variants Alpha, Beta, Gamma and Delta, while their effectiveness against the Delta Plus is being tested, the ministry said.

country still have high positivity rate. The announcement, which really would help people getting relief from fear of being infected with the new variants of the virus, comes dur-

ing the 29th meeting of the high-level GoM being chaired by union health and family welfare minister Harsh Vardhan through video conferencing.

COVID RELIEF: MEASURES WORTH OVER RS 6 LAKH CR ANNOUNCED

The Centre on Monday extended liquidity support to various stressed sectors of India Inc as well as micro credit borrowers and export oriented industries that police protection be granted, if necessary.



Account (NEIA) worth Rs 33,000 crore for project exports from India.

Similarly, support has been extended to ECGC (Export Credit Guarantee Corporation of India) worth Rs 88,000 crore for merchandise exports. Additional funds worth Rs 19,041 crore was announced for Digital India scheme. Also, the tenure of large scale electronics manufacturing PLI scheme has been extended. In addition, the Centre will come out with a new streamline policy for PPP and asset monetisation.

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The announcement was made by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman as part of economic relief package provided to spur investment climate in the country affected by the Covid pandemic.

Nirmala Sitharaman announced eight relief measures worth Rs 6,28,993 crore. These measures entail enhancement of existing relief schemes such as ECGLS and support for

state governments. Besides, a total of four new measures were announced to provide loans to micro credit borrowers as well as tourism industry. Further, Sitharaman announced Rs 50,000 crore guaranteed loan for creation of medical infrastructure. Atmanirbhar Bharat

Rozgar Yojana has been extended till March 31, 2022 entailing government PF liability of employees and employers depending on the size of the organisation.

On exports, the minister announced support extended to National Export Insurance

ECLGS GETS ADDITIONAL RS 1.5 LAKH CR

New Delhi: The central government, on Monday, enlarged the scope of ECLGS (Emergency Credit Line Guarantee Scheme) by providing an additional spending limit of Rs 1.5 lakh crore. Accordingly, overall cap of admissible guarantee under the scheme has been raised from Rs 3 lakh crore announced in May 2020 to Rs 4.5 lakh crore now. The ECLGS was launched in May 2020 as part of Atmanirbhar Bharat package.

CREDIT GUARANTEE SCHEME FOR FACILITATING MFIS LOANS

New Delhi: The government on Monday announced a new credit guarantee scheme that will facilitate loans to 25 lakh people through micro finance institutions (MFIs). As per the new scheme, guarantee will be provided to Scheduled Commercial Banks for loans to new or existing NBFC-MFIs or MFIs for on lending up to Rs 1.25 lakh to approximately 25 lakh small borrowers. Interest Rate on Loans from banks will be capped at MCLR plus 2 per cent. Maximum loan tenure 3 years, 80 per cent of assistance to be used by MFI for incremental lending, interest at least 2 per cent below maximum rate prescribed by RBI. All borrowers (including defaulters upto 89 days) will be eligible for guarantee cover for funding provided by MLIs to MFIs/NBFC-MFIs till March 31, 2022 or till guarantees for an amount of Rs 7,500 crore are issued, whichever is earlier.

FREE TOURIST VISA TO 5 LAKH TRAVELLERS



New Delhi: To encourage travel activities, the government on Monday said that it would offer tourist visa free of charge till March 31, 2022. The scheme will be applicable till March 31, 2022 or till 5,00,000 visas are issued, whichever is earlier. The benefit will also be available only once per tourist. About 10.93 million foreign tourists visited India in 2019, spent \$30.098 billion on leisure and business. Average daily stay for a foreign tourist in India is 21 days. Average daily spending of a tourist in India is around \$34 (Rs 2,400).

Serious problem, go to NHRC: SC on bodies found floating in Ganga



Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Supreme Court on Monday declined to entertain a plea seeking directions to frame a policy to protect the rights of the dead, in the backdrop of incidents of bodies being found in the river Ganga.

Commission...NHRC will take care of issues."

Advocate appearing for the petitioner, contended that directions are being sought for a policy to protect rights of the dead, in the backdrop of incidents of bodies being found in the river Ganga.

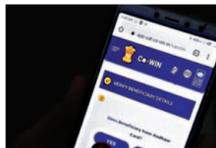
The bench responded, "NHRC was asked to respond. You go to the NHRC. How many forums will you approach? You have already approached High Court. The High Court gave a direction. NHRC has interfered". The bench emphasized that the issues raised in the plea are serious and the NHRC is the appropriate forum to examine the matter.

CAN'T DENY RESERVATION IN PROMOTION TO DISABLED

"We have no doubt that the mandate of Section 32 of the 1995 Act, The Persons with Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation), enjoins the government to identify posts that can be filled up with persons with disability. Thus, even posts in promotional cadre have to be identified for PwD and such posts have to be reserved for PwD".

India to share Covid vax technology with 50 countries 'free of cost'

COWIN PORTAL FOR VACCINATION IS UNIQUE IN THE WORLD IN TERMS OF PORTABILITY, SCALABILITY AND INCLUSIVITY AND IT IS A CITIZEN-CENTRIC PLATFORM, AND THAT 300 MILLION PLUS REGISTRATIONS AND VACCINATIONS WITH GRANULAR DETAILS OF EACH INDIVIDUAL ARE AVAILABLE ON THE PORTAL WITH A VERY SIMPLE PROCESS OF REGISTRATION.



Latin America, Africa and Asia. CEO of National Health Authority Dr R.S. Sharma made the revelation while addressing the 2nd Public Health Summit 2021 organized by Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) here.

He said that Co-WIN allows us to inclusively administer, effectively record, granularly evaluate, and timely course-correct the vaccination campaign and administration policy. "However, this would not have been possible without the robust and growing digital infrastructure, which has leapfrogged in the last decade," he said.

Team Absolute | New Delhi

India is all set to share 'free of cost' its Covid-19 vaccination technology with more than 50 countries from

TWITTER SHOWED LADDAKH, J&K OUT OF INDIA, REMOVES DISTORTED MAP



New Delhi: Twitter has removed the distorted map of India from its website after the microblogging platform received a lot of criticism over the same.

Twitter fueled another controversy as its website showed a distorted map of India on the career section on its website. The map that appeared on the 'Tweep Life' section showed Jammu & Kashmir, and Ladakh detached from India. This is not the first time that the social media platform showed the wrong map of India. In November 2020, Twitter had labelled the Indian territory of Leh in Ladakh as part of the People's Republic of China (PRC). The government of India issued a warning to CEO Jack Dorsey over the misrepresentation of the Indian map and later Twitter India issued an apology and removed the images and related tweets.

Twitter is already in a tussle with the government of India over compliance with the New IT rules.

Mamata calls Dhankhar 'corrupt', Governor hits back

Team Absolute | Kolkata

The war of words between West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee and Governor Jagdeep Dhankhar reached a flash-point on Monday after the CM alleged that the Governor was named in the 1996 Hawala Jain case.

"This Governor's name figured in the Jain Hawala case. But they have gone to court and cleared it. There is a PIL which is pending. The Governor is a totally corrupt person. He was named in the Jain Hawala charge-sheet. He had moved the court and got his name removed. But one writ petition is still pending which has his name," Banerjee said on Monday, adding that she has written three letters to the President seeking the removal of the Governor.

Banerjee was speaking in the backdrop of the Governor's recent demand



for a special audit in the Gorkhland Territorial Administration on charges of corruption. He made the demand on the day a BJP delegation met him in Darjeeling and demanded an audit of the GTA's expenses. "I am shocked to hear something from a leader of her stature. This is an effort to create sensation and spread misinformation and

misrepresentation. The entire world knows that no one has been convicted in the Hawala Jain case. It is in the public domain who are the people who have been charge-sheeted," Dhankhar said. Banerjee also termed the Governor's visit to North Bengal as a political stunt, claiming that he had only met MLAs and MPs of the BJP.

India test fires new generation nuclear capable Agni-Prime missile

Agni P is the latest and most advanced variant of the Agni class of missiles. It is a canisterised missile with range capability between 1000 km and 2000 km.

The first missile in the Agni series was test-fired in May 1989. Having a strike range of 700 km to 900 km, it was inducted in the armed forces in 2004. India already has five Agni class missiles in its arsenal.



BHUBANESWAR | Agencies

India on Monday successfully test fired a brand new missile in its most ambitious Agni series from

a defence facility off Odisha coast. The first test of the new generation nuclear capable ballistic missile Agni Prime was conducted from the launching complex IV of the Abdul Kalam Island at about 10.55 am.

Defence sources said indigenously developed by Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO), the missile met all mission objectives.

"Various telemetry and radar stations positioned along the eastern coast tracked and monitored the missile. The missile has followed textbook trajectory, meeting all mission objectives with high level of accuracy," stated a statement issued by DRDO.

Who will be the face of the PM in 2024? Asks BJP MP Subramaniam Swamy

Team Absolute | New Delhi

BJP MP Subramaniam Swamy has given the central government a home run. Subramaniam Swamy has been addressing the government for the last several days. He has also slammed the government on the issue of Chinese infiltration, Carona and Ram temple. Opposition groups called for a boycott of the assembly. So who will be the face of PM in 2024? Prime Minister Narendra Modi has been directly questioned about this. "Narendra Modi

himself says that those above 75 years of age should not remain in any post. LK Advani, Murli Manohar Joshi and Shantakumar have been sidelined due to age. Now, who will be the face of BJP in 2024? Enthusiasm should be created among the workers. If we don't ask the workers, a situation like Vajpayee's will happen". Even so, said Subramaniam Swamy. At the same time, he did not forget to mention that the BJP government will come in 2024. He has said this in an interview given to a channel.

India reorients around 50K troops at border with China

Team Absolute | New Delhi

For the first time in 70 years, India has changed its posture towards China, unlike its previous defensive approach that placed a premium on fending on Chinese aggression. India is now catering military options to strike back and has reoriented its military accordingly.

India has reoriented around 50,000 troops whose main focus will be the disputed border with China. Sources said that the Mathura-based 1 strike Corp, earlier tasked to cross the western borders into



Pakistan, has been reoriented from its position to disputed border areas with China.

In addition to this, in the Central Sector - the least disputed portion of the border running along with Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand to Nepal, deployment has also been strengthened with at least division level troops. A Division of the Indian Army has at least 10,000 troops.



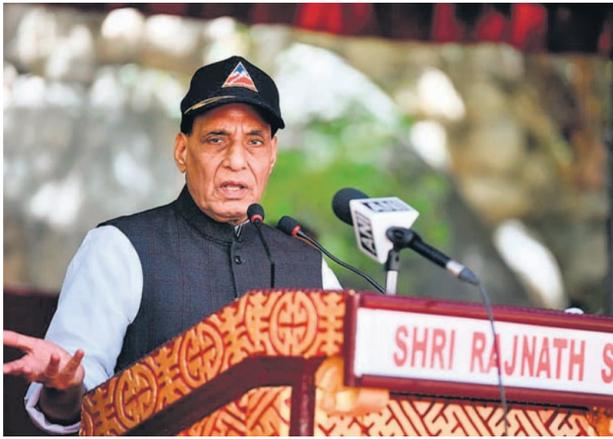
INDIA ALWAYS READY TO GIVE BEFITTING REPLY IF PROVOKED: RAJNATH SINGH

Team Absolute | New Delhi

India believes in resolving disputes through dialogue with neighbouring countries, but is always prepared to give a befitting reply if provoked, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh said on Monday.

During his address to the officers and jawans of the Indian Army's 14 Corps at Karu Military Station in Ladakh, Singh stated that India is a peace-loving nation that never resorts to any kind of aggression, but at the same time, it is always prepared to give a befitting reply if provoked.

He reiterated the government's stand of resolving disputes through dialogue with neighbouring countries, but assured the country that the safety and security of the nation will not be compromised at any cost. The Indian military has for long flagged the threat of a two-front war. With the disputed border with China, and Pakistan active at the same point of time, the Armed Forces are on high alert and preparedness. The Defence Minister assured all possible support to the Armed Forces, reaffirming the vision of the govern-



ment, under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, of a strong military that is capable of dealing with every eventuality. The Defence Minister paid rich tributes to the brave jawans who laid down their lives in the service of the nation during the Galwan Valley

incident in 2020, saying that the country will never forget their supreme sacrifice.

He lauded the exemplary courage displayed by the Indian Army during the incident and stated that the nation is proud of its Armed Forces.

Goa's iconic Club Tito's sold; owner cites harassment by netas, babus

PANAJI | Agencies

The local promoters of Club Tito's, one of the state's oldest party and nightlife haunts, have sold the club and other allied businesses in Goa citing harassment by government officials, politicians and NGOs, Ricardo D'Souza, a partner in the business venture, said on Monday.

The identity of the new owner, however, has not been disclosed yet.

"With sadness and anger, we have sold our entire business in Goa. I personally have suffered the least as I was compensated adequately and even my future generations won't have to work," D'Souza said in a post on social media. In a sarcastic barb, D'Souza, who had been complaining on social media platforms



about harassment by some bureaucrats, also said that those who harassed him while carrying out his business should now employ his workforce, who have no jobs in the "long term".

"Can I please ask our officials to employ them, as I do not ever plan any more business in Goa. By officials' I mean all the harassing lot, like police, PDA (Planning and Development Authority), CRZ (Coastal

Regulation Zone), NGOs, panchayats and sarpanchas, block development officers (BDO), and deputy collectors," D'Souza said.

"I am very grateful to certain segments of the government like Dr. (Chief Minister Pramod) Sawant, the IAS officers, ex-staff, present staff, our neighbours, all my friends and family and the common people of Goa who all contributed to this great Brand

called TITO'S. End of an Era!" D'Souza added.

Located in Calangute, Tito's over the last four decades had been billed as the mecca of nightlife in Goa. According to the club's official website, over the years since it was established in 1971, the club has played over 87,600 hours of music, hosted 16,425 parties and on an average had 90,000 visitors every month.

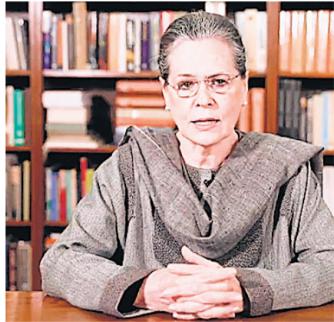
Sonia to decide on U'khand legislative party leader

Team Absolute | New Delhi

After the sudden demise of former minister Indira Hridyesh, Congress MLAs met in New Delhi on Monday and unanimously decided to authorise party chief Sonia Gandhi to appoint the Uttarakhand Legislative Party leader.

Devendra Yadav, Congress State Incharge, said in a tweet, "Held a meeting of @INC Uttarakhand Legislative Party to decide the new CLP leader for the state after the sudden demise of #IndiraHridyesh ji. It was unanimously decided to request Hon'ble @INCIndia President #SmtSoniaGandhi Ji to decide the same."

Congress deputy leader Karan Mahara is said to be the frontrunner in the race as the state goes for polls early next year and Congress is trying to balance caste equations in the state. Hridyesh was a Brahmin and a



very senior leader while the party wants to appoint a new PCC president - either a Brahmin or a Dalit.

10 OF MARRIAGE PARTY KILLED IN HIMACHAL ACCIDENT

Shimla: Ten members of a marriage party were killed on Monday when their vehicle skidded off the road and fell into a 300-foot-deep gorge in Shillai sub-division of Sirmaur district, police said.

Police official Bir Bahadur told the media the cause of the accident was yet to be ascertained. He said local villagers initiated the rescue operation with the help of the police. "The marriage party was returning from Chadeau village when it fell into the gorge on a sharp turn," he said.

Nine people died on the spot, while three injured were referred to the Civil Hospital in Paonta Sahib, he said, adding one of the injured later died. Two passengers sustained injuries. Chief Minister Jai Ram Thakur expressed grief over the accident.

Ajay Jadeja fined Rs 5K for dumping garbage in Goa village

Panaji | Agencies

Former India cricketer Ajay Jadeja, who owns a bungalow in the picturesque Aldona village in North Goa, has been fined Rs 5,000 for dumping garbage in the neighbouring village of Nachinola, the sarpanch of the village, Trupti Bhandodkar, said on Monday. Bhandodkar said the popular cricketer of the '90s paid the fine without any fuss. "We are plagued by the garbage issue in our village. Garbage from outside is also dumped in the village, so we appointed



some youth to collect the garbage bags and scan

them for any proof to identify the culprits," the sarpanch said. "We found a bill in the name of Ajay Jadeja in some bags of garbage. When we informed him not to dump the garbage in the village in future, he said he was willing to pay the fine. So he paid it. We are proud that such a celebrity, a popular cricket player, stays in our village, but such people should follow the garbage norms," Bhandodkar said. The village of Aldona is home to several celebrities, including Jadeja and writer Amitav Ghosh, among others.

Family of 6 commits suicide in Karnataka

Yadgiri | Agencies

Shockwave spread across Shahapur taluka of Yadgiri district where six members belonging to a family committed suicide by jumping into an open farm pond on Monday afternoon, said the police.

Shahapur taluka is around 550 kms from Bengaluru, and is part of one of the most backward districts of the state, where migration of labourers is quite often reported.

According to the police the deceased were identified as Bhimaraya Surapura, 45 and Shantamma, 36, while their children were - Sumitra, 13, Sridevi 12, Shivaraj, 9 and Lakshmi, 8. The police suspect

that the family was dependent on agriculture and prima facie investigations reveal that they were debt-ridden and private money lenders were harassing them. "This incident appears to be a suicide pact between family as the couple seem to have pushed their kids into this pond and then jumped into it. We have fished out their bodies with the help of the district fire department's team of divers," explained the police. "We are still ascertaining the veracity of allegations levelled by residents of Doranahalli village, who had accused that private financiers were harassing this family," said the police.

The police has registered a case and is investigating.

Parliamentary Committee on IT summons Google, FB on June 29

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Parliament Standing Committee on Information Technology (I&T) has issued summons to Facebook India and Google India asking them to send their representatives to appear before it on Tuesday to hear their views on safeguarding citizens' rights and prevention of misuse of social online news media platforms.

The meeting will be held at 4 p.m. onwards at Main Committee Room, Parliament House Annex in presence of committee members, officials of Ministry of I&T and the representatives of Facebook and Google. Senior Congress leader and Lok Sabha member Shashi Tharoor is the Chairman of the committee, which includes 31 members -- 21 from the Lok Sabha and 10 from Rajya Sabha.

The meeting schedule mentions that the committee is "to hear the views of representatives of Facebook India and Google India on the subject Safeguarding citizens' rights and prevention of misuse of social online news media platforms including special emphasis on women security in the digital space".

In its next sitting on July 6, representatives of the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology will submit evidence related to the subject before the committee. There have been more than two similar meetings between the



committee and the representatives of social media sites, including Facebook, Google and Twitter. In a recent one, the committee had called Twitter to appear before it on June 18 to give representation on how to prevent misuse of social media and online news. On June 20, India's permanent mission at the United Nations had clarified that India's new IT rules are "designed to empower ordinary users of social media" and that they were finalised after the government held broad consultations with civil society and other stakeholders in 2018.

The Central government has framed the Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021 ("new IT Rules") and notified the same on February 25 this year. The Rules came into effect from May 26.

Bhim Army to start cycle yatra in UP from July 1

Lucknow | Agencies

Lucknow: The Bhim Army has started preparing for the next Assembly elections in Uttar Pradesh, due early next year.

The Bhim Army volunteers, under the banner of Azad Samaj Party, will embark on a cycle yatra from July 1 and visit all blocks and villages to create awareness on the need of preventing division of votes in the Uttar Pradesh Assembly elections next year. Talking to reporters, Chandra Shekhar Aazad said, "My aim is to muster the support of at least 85 per cent people from the Bahujan Samaj. We are going to organise 'Bahujan Brotherhood Conferences' in the entire state and we will explain the value of vote to the people. We will ask them not to waste their vote if they want a secure future for



themselves." He said that the 2022 elections in Uttar Pradesh will give a chance to the people to decide what they want for the next five years. It will give an opportunity to decide their own future.

The Bhim Army chief continues to be cautious while talking about the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) and his relationship with the party.

J&K LT GUV PAYS OBEISANCE AT AMARNATH CAVE SHRINE

The Lieutenant Governor of Jammu and Kashmir, Manoj Sinha, paid obeisance at the Amarnath cave shrine on Monday.

SRINAGAR | Agencies

Sinha, who is also the Chairman of the Shri Amarnathji Shrine Board (SASB), performed puja at the shrine, accompanied by senior officers from the army, civil administration, police and SASB.

"May the divine blessings of Lord Shiva ensure good health and happiness in everyone's life and bless us with strength to overcome the ongoing health crisis," Sinha said. The annual pilgrimage to the holy cave shrine is a testimony to the tradition of cultural syncretism in Jammu and Kashmir. But considering the Covid-19 pandemic, it has been decided to keep the annual pilgrimage "symbolic" this year, with no physical darshan by the devotees.

However, respecting the sentiments of the devotees, the SASB has arranged for live telecast of the morning and evening 'Aarti' from the holy cave shrine. All the traditional religious rituals shall be performed at the shrine as per past practice, the Lt Governor said.

"The J&K government has taken a slew of measures to reduce the spread of the virus and every arrangement has been made to ensure that Covid appropriate behaviour is being followed during the Aarti and other rit-



uals. "Let us resolve to effectively deal with the pandemic by following the Covid guidelines and work towards furthering human welfare," Sinha said. Both the morning Aarti at 6

a.m. and the evening Aarti at 5 p.m., each for 30 minutes, will be live-streamed on SASB's official website and on the app specifically dedicated for the devotees. The devotees can pay virtual obeisance through SASB's portal

www.shriamarnathjishrine.com/AartiLive.html. The same may also be streamed through the shrine board's mobile based application which can be downloaded from Google play store.

CHANGE OF NAME

I, Army No. 14833545P, Rank Sep Name Bhosale Narayan Mahadev residing at : Dhabdhba Marg, Gandhinglaj, VTC, Gandhinglaj, PO-Badyachiwadi, Sub District-Gadhinglaj, District-Kolhapur, State-Maharashtra PIN-416502. I have changed my daughter name Kanishka to Bhosale Kanishka Narayan as per affidavit no. AY751811 date 28.06.2021 before Bhopal Court.

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FORMULA FOR CLASS XIITH RESULT FINALIZED IN STATE

Cent percent vaccination mandatory in educational institutions, Adherence to Covid appropriate behaviour must, GoM present recommendations related to education before CM

SCHOOLS WILL NOT OPEN IN THE STATE FROM JULY 1

Chief Minister said that schools will not open in the state from July 1. The system of education will continue only online and through TV. The significant decision on opening of schools will be taken after discussing the matter with the Center, other states and experts.

TECHNICAL EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

It was informed in the presentation of the Group of Ministers that the new session in technical education institutions will start from August 2 for Engineering classes of second, third and fourth year. First year engineering classes will start from 15th September. First, second and third year diploma classes will start from 17th August, ITI second year classes will start from 12th July and ITI first year classes will start from 16th August. Admission in first year engineering will be given on the basis of JEE Mains and Class XIITH result of Madhya Pradesh Higher Secondary Board. High school examination result will be considered as the basis for admission to first year diploma. The admission process of ITI will be completed by July 31.

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has said that marks of Class XIITH should be determined on the basis of best of five marks obtained in various subjects of Class Xth. If the students want to improve the result then



they can appear in exam. Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan was holding a discussion in Mantralaya on the recommendations of the Group of Ministers (GoM) constituted in connection with future strategy in government and private educational and training institutions during Covid-19 in the state.

Regarding the opening of institutions in the new academic session, the GoM, presented recommendations after receiving suggestions from all beneficiaries like students, parents, heads of institution, teachers and common citizens. Vaccination of teachers will be done on priority basis as per the recommendations received. Special training will be organized in educational

institutions on measures to prevent infection of Covid-19. Necessary arrangements will be developed to make educational institutions Corona safe.

The Paramedical Degree/Diploma Eligibility Tests will be held in the month of June-July. Paramedical certificate examinations will be conducted in the month of July. B.Sc. and M.Sc. Nursing examinations will be conducted by Madhya Pradesh University of Medical Sciences in the month of July. For admission to undergraduate and postgraduate courses under medical and dental education, the state government will start session after conduct NEET, UG/PG examinations. Classes will be conducted

through offline mode. As part of the preparation for the third wave of Corona pandemic, students will be given training in Corona pandemic management in the first 15 days.

Classes will be held in groups of 6 students each on clinical subjects

The Group of Ministers has recommended to conduct admissions for the academic session 2021-22 in the institutions related to AYUSH through online counseling after the examination results of NEET 2021. AYUSH course classes will continue to be conducted in online mode. Physical presence of 6 students each in groups will be ensured in the campus for clinical subjects.

HIGHER EDUCATION

In the recommendations presented by the Group of Ministers, it was told regarding the open book examination and examination results under the Department of Higher Education, that the examination results of undergraduate third year and postgraduate fourth semester examinations will be declared in July 2021, undergraduate first / second year and postgraduate second semester examinations in July 2021 and under graduation first/second year and postgraduate second semester examination results will be declared in August 2021. The admission process for undergraduate first year and postgraduate first semester will start from August 1. The admission process for undergraduate second and third year and postgraduate third semester classes will run from August 1 to 30, 2021. The new session for undergraduate first, second, third year and postgraduate first and third semester will start from September 1. Classes will be conducted with 50 percent physical attendance of students as per college wise time table in consultation with the District Disaster Management Committee. The laboratories will be operated with 50 percent attendance of students. Hostels and libraries will be started in a phased manner amidst physical presence of students.

State's new pharma policy on the cards: CM Chouhan

■ Cheap but high quality medicines for serious diseases will be on priority, State government to make policy to provide help to poor and middle class families in critical diseases, CM Chouhan virtually launches black fungus drug Amphoreva-B in Jabalpur



Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has said that a new pharma policy will be formulated to promote the manufacture of medicines for serious diseases like cancer, black fungus in the state. Our priority will be to make affordable but high quality medicines for critical diseases as per international standards. It is a matter of joy, satisfaction and pride for the state to start production of Amphoreva-B in Jabalpur in such a short time for

the treatment of black fungus. It is a matter of joy, satisfaction and pride for the state to start production of Amphoreva-B required for the treatment of black fungus in Jabalpur in such a short time.

Chief Minister said that the state government is contemplating to formulate a policy to help poor and middle class families in serious diseases that can be financially disastrous like cancer and lung-kidney-liver transplant.

Chouhan said that the production of this injection to combat black fungus is

an important step towards making the state self-reliant. Adding the word Reva to the name of Reva Cure Sciences Company symbolizes the company's proximity to its roots. This unit is the only pharma company in Madhya Pradesh to manufacture Anti Cancer Injection. Production of advanced nanotechnology based injections and the company being certified by WHO and European GMP is a matter of pride for the state. Chief Minister Chouhan congratulated the founders of Reva Cure for this achievement.

PANCHAYAT OFFICER'S BODY FOUND IN KHARGONE, FEAR OF SUICIDE

Khargone: Rajesh Baheti, Chief Executive Officer of Bhikangaon Janpad Panchayat in Khargone district, committed suicide by hanging himself at his residence. The reason for the suicide has not been disclosed. Police is engaged in the investigation of the matter. According to the information received from the police, there was information about the trapped person hanging in the room of his residence of District CEO Baheti on Sunday night. Police reached the spot and brought down the dead body. FSL team reached the spot, after making Panchama, the body was sent for post-mortem.

Sources say that the police have also found a suicide note from the spot. The police is not telling what is written in it, as well as the police is not confirming the receipt of the suicide note. The reason for the suicide is said to be unknown.

More than 2 crore people vaccinated in the state

Team Absolute | Bhopal

The campaign to vaccinate Corona is going on in full swing in Madhya Pradesh. So far more than two crore one lakh people have been vaccinated in the state. On the fifth day of the vaccination campaign in the state, enthusiasm was seen among the people. Dosages of 2 lakh 90 thousand 38 corona vaccine have been administered till 2 pm on Monday. So far, 2 crore 1 lakh 6995 doses of corona vaccine have been administered in the entire state.

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan interacted continuously with citizens, various organizations, vaccination promoters, dignitaries, front line workers, religious leaders, doctors, paramedical staff and members of disaster management committees to create an environment of vaccination in the state and as a result, the state there is a positive attitude towards vaccination. Important persons of the society, activists, public representatives are being



inspired and encouraging the common people for vaccination in self-motivation. The people who had confusion and fear about the vaccine, it has been removed. The corona vaccine has given a sense of security. There is enthusiasm for vaccination among people in urban and rural areas. They are getting vaccinated by reaching the vaccination center.

Third genders got the corona vaccine done with great enthusiasm

Team Absolute | Bhopal

On Monday, the third genders got the protection-armor corona vaccine with great enthusiasm at the vaccination center specially set up for the third genders in the Government Tamarhai School of Jabalpur city. On this occasion, MLA of Jabalpur North Zone, Vinay Saxena presented flowers and garlands to third genders by presenting shawls and quince. Rekhabei, from the third gender community, said that she is feeling very happy getting the vaccine. After getting the vaccine, former councillor of the same class, Hirabai said that to win

the war against Corona, everyone should get the vaccine as soon as possible. Hirabai said that when we go from house to house to congratulate people, then we also advise people to get the vaccine. Third gender Katrina said that vaccination is the only weapon to protect against corona. If we want to win from Corona, then all our colleagues have to get vaccinated as soon as possible. Katrina said that she herself got the first vaccine of Corona today. He is completely healthy after being vaccinated. On the other hand, Kashish Bai said that vaccination is a campaign to save the lives of the people. Everyone should get this vaccine.

37 new Covid-19 cases, 19 deaths in MP

Bhopal: Madhya Pradesh on Monday reported 37 Covid-19 cases and 19 deaths, taking the tally to 7,89,733 and the toll to 8,936, an official said.

The day also saw 138 people getting discharged from hospitals, which took the recovery count to 7,80,101, leaving the state with 696 active cases, he said. "Indore and Bhopal saw six and 11 cases respectively, taking their tally to 1,52,827 and 1,23,116. Both districts did not report any death during the day. The active caseload of Indore and Bhopal stands at 124 and 159," he said. The official said 37 of 52 districts in the state did not record a single coronavirus case in the last 24 hours. With 63,370 samples being examined in the last 24 hours, the number of tests in MP went up to 1,19,37,101, the official informed.

National Lok Adalat on July 10

Team Absolute | Bhopal

National Lok Adalat has been organized on 10th July. Under this, Lok Adalat will be organized in Madhya Pradesh from High Court level to District Courts, Taluka Courts, Labor Courts, Family Courts. Its preparations are in full swing. All types of cases, including civil and criminal compoundable cases, will be placed in the Lok Adalat organized on the instructions of the National Legal Services Authority, New Delhi. In which the parties will be able to make efforts to get the cases resolved by mutual conciliation and consent in a cordial atmosphere.



According to the member secretary of Madhya Pradesh State Legal

Services Authority, Giribala Singh, "Pending and prelitigation cases to be kept in various courts by the National Legal Services Authority for National Lok Adalat have been identified category wise. In this, pending court cases include criminal compoundable, negotiable. Cases under Section 138 of the Act, Bank recovery cases, Motor accident compensation claim cases, Labor dispute cases, Electricity and water tax bills (only compoundable cases), Matrimonial cases, Land acquisition cases, Service matters which are not related to retirement benefits. Also, revenue matters (pending only in district and high courts), civil matters etc. will be kept for disposal.

Approach to surveillance, feedback and adaptation to new realities is essential

Principal Economic Adviser Sanjeev Sanyal views at lecture series Institute of Good Governance

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Approach to surveillance, feedback and adaptation/adjustment to new realities is essential. This will pave the way for development. Actually we need to move ahead based on what is happening around us. Sanjeev Sanyal, Principal Economic Adviser to the Government of India, expressed these views in the lecture series 'Transformative Change-Sustainable outcomes' at Atal Bihari Vajpayee Institute of Good Governance and Policy Analysis on the topic 'Policy Making for an Uncertain Post-Covid World'.

Principal Economic Adviser Sanyal said that surveillance, continuous testing, vaccination and



quick response can prevent possible waves of corona. He said that the Government of India has taken action to deal with the Covid crisis by adopting an approach of Monitoring, Response and

Adaptation. Shri Sanyal said that the information and knowledge in the first wave of Corona was uncertain and unclear. As a result, a long lockdown had to be imposed. But after the opening of the lockdown, the

economy improved rapidly. The budget for the year 2020-21 was also expansionist. It focused on capital expenditure, land monetization and privatization of non-strategic sectors.

Flyover will be built in Indore according to the aspirations of the people: Bhargava

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Public Works Minister Gopal Bhargava has said that smooth traffic, the beauty of the city and the aspirations of the people will be fully taken care of in the construction of a flyover at the Bengali crossroads in Indore city. He said that technical advice would be taken from the traffic engineering experts of IIT, Delhi or Mumbai to change the original appearance of the flyover.

Water Resources Minister Tulsi Ram Silawat said that all public representatives are of one opinion to maintain the traffic convenience and beautification of Indore city dwellers. He said that A.B. Traffic will be smooth on the road. His endeavor is to save time and labor of the commuters at the busiest inter-



sections like Bengali Chauraha. For this, the Public Works Department, in consultation with experts, will make necessary reforms and changes. Principal Secretary Neeraj Mandloi informed that A.B. A 576 meter long flyover is being

constructed on the road at a cost of Rs 29 crore. Funds have been provided by the National Development Bank for the construction of this bridge. A total of 40 pillars are to be built on this flyover, out of which the work of 36 has been completed.



MUMBAI'S 50 PERCENT PEDIATRIC POPULATION HAS COVID ANTIBODIES

Team Absolute | Mumbai

In a significant finding, a sero-survey conducted by the BrihanMumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) has revealed that 50 per cent of the pediatric population in Mumbai has developed Covid-19 antibodies, ahead of the anticipated third wave of the pandemic, a top official said here on Monday.

BMC Commissioner I.S. Chahal said that even the proportion of the pediatric population having antibodies has shown an increase, as per the survey, the fourth of its kind conducted between April 1 and June 15.

While the sero-positivity is highest -- 53.43 per cent -- in the 10-14 age group, it is 51.04 per cent for 1-4, 47.33 per cent for 5-9 and 51.39 per cent for 15-18 age groups. The overall sero-positivity is 51.18 per cent, comprising 54.36 per cent in the public sector and 47.03 per cent in the private

sector, indicating that more than half the pediatric population in a healthcare setting have already been exposed to SARS-COV-2, said Chahal.

The survey was conducted by a team of doctors comprising Jayanthi Shastri, Sachee Agrawal, Gargi Kakani, Surbhi Rathi, Ramesh Bharmal, Chandrakant Pawar, Kusum Jashnani and Gayatri Amonkar, under the supervision of Chahal and Additional Municipal Commissioner Suresh Kakani.

As compared to the Sero-survey 3 in March, which showed a sero-positivity of 39.04 per cent in the under-18 age group, there is a noticeable increase (51.18 per cent) in the latest survey, conducted jointly by BMC's BYL Nair Hospital and Kasturba Molecular Diagnostic Laboratory (KMDL).

A total of 2,176 blood samples were made available from the samples received by various public (1,283) and private laborato-

ries (893) and sent to the KMDL for analysis, against the backdrop of the imminent danger of the Covid 'third wave' to the pediatric population.

The heartening outcome indicates that over 50 per cent of the pediatric population has antibodies to Covid-19 and the proportion has also increased as compared to the previous survey, amid apprehensions that the 'third wave' could affect the vulnerable youngsters in the below 18 age groups, against the higher ages that were hit in the previous two waves. The study has also suggested that the targeted health education and awareness about Covid-19 appropriate behavior should be created through various social media platforms (examples include memes, collaborating with social media influencers, etc.), cartoon advertisements and catchy jingles, according to Chahal.



Team Absolute | Mumbai

As the threat of the Delta Plus Covid-19 variant looms large over the state, Maharashtra plans to hike its vaccination process to up to 1.50 million doses per day, Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray said here on Monday. "We are making preparations to administer 15 lakh vaccine doses per day," Thackeray said, barely three days after the state achieved the distinction of becoming the first in the country to cross the 3-crore jabs mile-

Maha plans 1.50 mn vax jabs daily: CM

stone. With the proposed plans to administer 1.50 million jabs daily, health officials estimate that it will result in around one-crore doses per week (both first and second jabs), and around four crore vaccinations in a month, covering most of the remaining eligible adult population for both rounds in less than two months. Till Sunday, the state's vaccination data in various approved categories stood at 3,11,59,607, comprising both first and second doses, out of the state's total population of 12 crore.

In the 18-44 age group, 55,27,193 have got their jabs, including 269,666 who took their second dose; in the 45-plus age

group, 1,62,53,737 have got their jabs, including 39,98,123 who took their second shot.

The CM was inaugurating a state-of-the-art Jumbo Covid Centre in Malad suburb with 2,170 beds of which 1,536 are oxygen beds, 190 ICU beds, 200 oxygen-pediatric beds and 50 ICU-pediatric beds, in anticipation of the third wave of Covid-19.

Besides, the government plans new jumbo centres in Kanjurmarg, Sion and Worli and increase the number of beds in the existing jumbo centres at NSCI Worli, NESCO Goregaon and Richardson & Cruddas Byculla to ensure that there are no shortages, Thackeray said.

The CM cautioned that though beds may be going empty, the second wave has still not subsided, and urged all the people to

strictly adhere to the Covid appropriate behaviours.

Maha Vikas Aghadi senior ministers Eknath Shinde, Nawab Malik, Balasaheb Thorat, Anil Parab, Aslam Sheikh, Aditya Thackeray, Mumbai Mayor Kishori Pednekar, BMC Commissioner I.S. Chahal and Metropolitan Commissioner S.K. Srinivasan were present on the occasion. In the second phase of creating jumbo covid centres, the government will provide 8,320 beds more than the first phase, taking the total to 15,627, and with the existing beds in the other major government hospitals, the total bed strength is 19,928 for Mumbai.

This includes 9,193 oxygen beds, 1,572 ICU beds, 1,200 oxygen beds for children and 150 pediatric ICU beds for infants.

Fake Vaccination Case: Pre-arrest bail of accused Doctor rejected

Team Absolute | Mumbai

A court on Monday rejected the anticipatory bail application filed by one of the accused, a doctor, allegedly involved in cheating members of a Kandivali-based housing society by organising a bogus COVID-19 vaccination camp.

In a pre-arrest bail plea filed before the Dindoshi sessions court on June 22, the accused Dr Manish Tripathi had stated the main accused in the case is a private hospital but the Mumbai Police are trying to protect its powerful and politically well-connected owners.

Additional sessions judge L S Chavan rejected the application on Monday. In a complaint submitted to the police, the housing society had alleged that its members were cheated by some persons last month who claimed to represent a private hospital.

The residents had claimed that they couldn't find their details on CO-WIN app and



expressed fear that the vaccine administered could be spurious. The FIR was lodged at Kandivali police station on June 17 for conducting an unauthorised vaccination

drive at Hiranandani Heritage housing society for 390 people on May 30. Till last week, Kandivali police had arrested six people in the case.

New spider species named after 26/11 martyr who caught Kasab

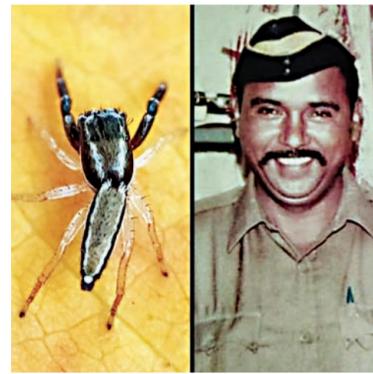
Quaid Najmi | Mumbai

In a poignant gesture, a group of naturalists have named a new spider species discovered in Kalyan, Thane, in memory of the 26/11 Martyr, Tukaram G. Omble -- the man who helped nab Pakistani terrorist Ajmal Kasab alive during the 26/11 terror strikes in Mumbai.

The new 'jumping spider' male sex-species, found last year in an urban locality of Kalyan town, has been christened as "Icius Tukarami", said Ahmedabad-based photographer and wildlife enthusiast Dhruv Prajapati.

Simultaneously, another group comprising Rajesh Sanap, Somnath Kumbhar and John Caleb -- discovered another unknown spider species distributed in Aarey Colony, Mumbai and also 50 kms away in Kalyan, and named it as "Phintella Cholkei", in 2017 and 2019, respectively.

"This is in memory of Kumbhar's friend, Kamlesh Cholke who used to collect and provide us with different species of spiders. It has unique body pattern and genital organs not seen in other spiders," Sanap told correspondent. The latest finds have been described and published in a research paper published in an internationally-reputed journal, "Arthropoda Selecta", jointly by Prajapati and Ravi Dutt Kamboj (both of Gujarat Ecological



Education & Research Foundation), Sanap and Caleb (of Indian Institute of Ecology & Environment) and Kumbhar - who meticulously collected both the species from the wild.

On the move to name the species after the Mumbai 26/11 hero, Prajapati said that he was deeply impressed by the extraordinary valour and bravery in the line of duty displayed by Omble when south Mumbai was under a 60-hour siege

during Nov. 26-28, 2008.

A former Indian Army soldier who retired and joined as an Assistant Sub-Inspector of Police attached to the D. B. Marg Police Station in 1991, Omble, 54, hailed from Satara and was manning a check-post at Girgaum Chowpatty at the height of the terror strikes in the wee hours of November 27.

Soon afterwards, the heavily armed Kasab and his associate Abu Ismail were seen speeding down the deserted Marine Drive in a stolen Skoda, but it was stopped at the traffic post near Chowpatty. In the indiscriminate firing by the two blood-thirsty terrorists and retaliated by the policemen on duty, Ismail was shot dead. However, Kasab was caught alive by Omble who managed to overpower him despite being pumped by over 40 bullets fired from an AK-47, which later claimed his life.

As his gallantry became a legend Omble, was declared a 'Martyr' and conferred with the country's highest peace-time honour, the Ashok Chakra in 2009. "It is to keep his memories and fearlessness alive in public minds, I decided to dedicate this new species of spider in Omble's name," Prajapati said. Earlier, Prajapati has named new spider species after two Bharat Ratna's - former President A. P. J. Abdul Kalam and cricket maestro Sachin Tendulkar - besides Kashmiri Martyr and Indian Army soldier.

Covid claimed 35 village sarpanches in Maharashtra

Team Absolute | Mumbai

At least 35 village sarpanches across Maharashtra have fallen prey to the Covid-19 pandemic in the past 16 months, officials said here on Monday. A delegation of sarpanches, comprising eight men and six women, called on Governor Bhagat Singh Koshyari at Raj Bhavan and conveyed this information to him.

They told the Governor that since more than 35 sarpanches have been felled by Covid-19 in the past over a year, the state government should extend financial assistance to their families or dependents.

The delegation, which was led by Sarpanch Parishad's regional president Datta Kakde-Patil, handed over a memorandum of various demands to the Governor.

The sarpanches demanded that th funds received by the gram panchayats under the 15th Finance Commission



should be spent only for development purposes and creation of infrastructure facilities in the concerned villages.

The delegation -- which included the trustees of the Sarpanch Parishad, Avinash Ahvad, Rajaram Potnis, Anand

Jadhav, Ashwini Thorat and others -- also stressed the need for building a well-equipped 'Sarpanch Bhavan' in Mumbai for the lodging and boarding of the village heads whenever they visit the state capital for various works.

ANURADHA PAUDWAL CONTRIBUTES TO DONATION OF CARDIAC AMBULANCE



Mumbai: Veteran singer Anuradha Paudwal has contributed to the donation of a cardiac ambulance through her organisation Suryoday Foundation.

"People lose their lives due to unavailability of ambulance. There have been so many cases where patients cannot even reach the hospital. In case of a medical emergency, every moment is critical in saving a patient's life. JJ Hospital got in touch with us and we decided to donate a cardiac ambulance," said the veteran singer. The ambulance, which cost almost costs 36 lakh, was donated to JJ Hospital. Paudwal made the donation along with Lions International Club.

200-plus sex workers get vaccine shots in Mumbai

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Over 200 female commercial sex workers were administered the first dose of Covid vaccine here on Monday as part of the efforts to include the vulnerable and marginalised communities in the inoculation drive.

The Wadia Hospital, along with Aarya, GAURAV and Aastha Parivar, organised the unique drive covering more than 200 female CSWs from different parts of the city.

The campaign was witnessed by Mayor Kishori Pednekar, MLA from Sewri Ajay Chaudhary, Wadia Hospital CEO Minnie Bodhanwala, rights activist Zainab Patel and Mumbai District AIDS Control Society Additional Project Director Shrikala Acharya.

"Many vaccination drives have been conducted for various vulnerable and marginalised communities of the society, but the CSWs were left behind. As sex work is still considered a 'taboo', it is even tougher for them to tackle the problems they encounter on a daily basis," Pednekar said.

Bodhanwala said that coronavirus doesn't discriminate on the basis of gender and anybody can be infected, adding that the initiative is aimed to safeguard the most vulnerable



sections from its harmful effects.

"We always wanted to help this section of the population and we counselled them as there was lot of misinformation about vaccination. But even after vaccination, they must adhere to the Covid appropriate protocols," said Bodhanwala.

Founder of the NGO 'WithAarya', Shital Bhatkar, took the initiative to erase the taboos associated with sex work and resolve the problems of the CSWs, especially since the pandemic hit them hard and many lost their livelihoods. Along with the vaccination drive, the CSWs were given a ration kit, personal hygiene and sanitation kit besides a saree from 'Aarsa', an initiative supporting the cause of artisans.

Fuel price rise paused on Monday after rising for 2 days

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Petrol and diesel price rise went on a pause mode on Monday after rising sharply for past two days that took up the price of the two auto fuels by up to 70 paise per litre.

Accordingly, the price of petrol remains at Rs 98.46 a litre and diesel at Rs 88.90 a litre in the national capital.

Similarly, price of the fuel in the other key metros also held Sunday's price line but not before reaching new historic high levels.

Petrol is most expensive in Rajasthan's Sri Ganganagar where it now retails at Rs 109.67 per litre. Even diesel in the city is priced at a high of Rs 102.12 a litre.

In Mumbai, Chennai and Kolkata, petrol is priced at Rs



104.56, Rs 99.48 and Rs 98.30 per litre, respectively. With the trend in price movement over past couple of months, petrol would be nationally available at Rs 100 per litre or more soon. Diesel is also catching up fast to hit century across the country. In line with petrol prices,

the price of diesel is also increasing across the country, but its retail price rise remained unchanged on Monday. In Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai and Kolkata, diesel continues to be sold for Rs 88.90, Rs 96.42, Rs 93.46 and Rs 91.75 per litre, respectively.

SAT grants interim relief to Franklin Templeton against SEBI orders

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The Securities Appellate Tribunal (SAT) on Monday granted interim relief to Franklin Templeton in terms of SEBI's recent orders against the fund house.

The appellate tribunal will next hear the matter on August 30.

SAT has stayed the SEBI order restraining Franklin Templeton from launching new debt schemes for two years. It has, however, asked the asset management company to deposit Rs 250 crore in three weeks in an escrow account.

Commenting on the development, a Franklin Templeton spokesperson said: "With reference to the order issued by Whole Time Member (WTM) of SEBI on June 7, 2021, Franklin Templeton Asset Management (India) Pvt. Ltd filed an



appeal and an application for stay before the Securities Appellate

Tribunal (SAT). After hearing the parties, the SAT has stayed the opera-

tion of the order passed by the WTM. The matter is listed on August 30, 2021 for further directions," the spokesperson said. On June 7, SEBI had barred the fund house from launching any new debt scheme for two years, along with imposing a penalty of Rs 5 crore for violation of regulations in the shutting down of six debt schemes last year. In its order, the capital market regulator said that Franklin Templeton Mutual Fund has been found to have violated the provisions of the Mutual Funds Regulations and also certain SEBI circulars. Further, on June 14, SEBI imposed penalties on Franklin Templeton Trustee Services and the CEO Franklin Templeton Asset Management (India), Sanjay Sapre among other key officials in the matter of winding of six debt schemes last year.



EDITOR'S SPECS

Lost islands?

A study conducted by ocean engineering scientists at IIT Kharagpur shows that 10 islands among the 36 islands of Lakshadweep archipelago might have more than 60 per cent land loss in the next 30 years because of the continuous and extreme rise of sea water level in the last 15 years. Lakshadweep, a group of 36 islands, is known for its exotic and sun-kissed beaches and lush green landscape. India's smallest Union Territory, Lakshadweep is an archipelago consisting of 36 islands with an area of 32 sq km. It is a Uni-district Union Territory and comprises 12 atolls, three reefs, five submerged banks and 10 inhabited islands. The capital is Kavaratti and it is also the principal town. While doing research, scientists realised that while it had been indicated that the sea level at the 36 islands would rise between .8 mm to 2m by the end of the century, in most islands it had already reached the .78 mm mark. We have projected 70 per cent to 80 per cent land loss in many islands by 2035. There are many small islands in the archipelago that will be reduced to a strip almost. The worst affected will be Chatlat island, where land loss will be over 82 per cent. The study mentions that the rise is much higher in the Arabian Sea than the Bay of Bengal because the latter's salinity is lower because of many fresh water rivers opening into it. Hence, Lakshadweep islands are at a great risk compared to India's other archipelago, the Andaman and Nicobar Islands. Deep signs of damage have also been noticed at the islands' lone airport in the Agatti, which has started getting dangerously inundated. The government need to take immediate coastline protection measures by creating artificial barriers and embankments, especially in the Bipra, Minicoy, Kalpeni, Kavaratti, Agatti, Kiltan, Chatlat, Kadmat and Amini islands, to save them from extinction.

DROUGHT: THE NEW GLOBAL CALAMITY?

Asad Mirza

Drought is a hidden global crisis that risks becoming "the next pandemic" if countries do not take urgent action on their water and land management. A recent UN report, says that at least 1.5 billion people have been directly affected by drought during the current century, and its economic cost has been estimated at \$124bn (₹1.89bn). The true cost is likely to be many times higher as estimates do not include much of the impact in developing countries. The report entitled Global Assessment Report on Disaster Risk reduction: Special Report on Drought 2021 published earlier this month will be part of discussions at the next climate talks known as COP26, which are scheduled to take place in Glasgow, UK in November. Mami Mizutori, the UN secretary general's special representative for disaster risk reduction in the foreword of the report says that drought is on the verge of becoming the next pandemic and there is no vaccine to cure it. Most of the world will be living with water stress in the next few years. Demand will outstrip supply during certain periods. Drought is a major factor in land degradation and the decline of yields for major crops. She says many people had an image of drought as affecting desert regions in Africa, but that this was not the case. Drought is now widespread, and by the end of the century all but a handful of countries will experience it in some form. She further says that people have been living with drought for 5,000 years, but what we are seeing now is very different. Human activities are exacerbating drought and increasing the impact, threatening to derail progress on lifting people from poverty. Developed countries too have not been immune to drought. The US, Australia and southern Europe have experienced drought in recent years. Drought costs more than \$6bn a year in direct impacts in the US, and about ₹7.7bn in the EU. A senior scientist at the US National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and a co-author of the report, Roger Pulwarty has been quoted as saying that drought also goes beyond agriculture. He gives the example of River Danube in Europe, where recurring drought has affected transport, tourism, industry and energy generation. He further opines that we need to have a look at how to manage resources such as rivers and large water basins. A common scientific theory opines that changing rainfall patterns as a result of climate breakdown is a key driver of drought, but the report also identifies the inefficient use of water resources and the degradation of land under intensive agriculture and poor farming practices as playing a major role. Deforestation, overuse of fertilisers and pesticides, over-grazing and over-extraction of water for farming are also major problems, identified in the report. Mizutori has called for governments to take action to help prevent drought by reforming and regulating how water is extracted, stored and used, and how land is managed. She says early warning systems could do much to help people in danger. She stressed on working with local people and techniques, as local and indigenous knowledge could help to inform where and how



to store water and how to predict the impact of dry periods. Energy Imbalance Meanwhile, in another related alarm scientists from NASA and NOAA say that earth's energy imbalance' roughly doubled from 2005 to 2019 in an 'alarming' manner. According to a new research, details of which were released earlier this month, the earth is trapping nearly twice as much heat as it did in 2005, described as an 'unprecedented' increase amid the climate crisis. 'Energy imbalance' refers to the difference between how much of the Sun's 'radiative energy' is absorbed by Earth's atmosphere

and surface, compared to how much 'thermal infrared radiation' bounces back into space. In a statement about this study NASA said that, "A positive energy imbalance means the Earth system is gaining energy, causing the planet to heat up, and the trends we found were quite alarming in a sense". Any increase in greenhouse gas emissions keeps heat in earth's atmosphere, trapping radiation that would otherwise move into space. This warming spurs other changes, including ice and snow melt. Any increase in water vapour, and changes to clouds, could further exacerbate this warming, NASA says. The study found that this doubling is the result, in part, by an increase in greenhouse gases and water vapour, as well as decreases in clouds and ice. Researchers also said that a 'naturally occurring' shift in the Pacific Ocean from a cool phase to a warm one probably had a significant role in amplifying this energy imbalance. The study also determined that unless the rate of heat uptake slows, greater shifts in climate patterns should be expected. Some cheer for activists On the other hand, in an historical judgement, a Belgian court has ruled that Belgium's climate failures violate human rights. In the latest legal victory against public authorities that have broken promises to tackle the climate emergency. Belgian judges said state's failure to meet climate targets breaches civil law and human rights convention. The Brussels court of first instance declared the Belgian state had committed an offence under Belgium's civil law and breached the European convention on human rights. By not taking all "necessary measures" to prevent the "detrimental" effects of climate change, the court said, Belgian authorities had breached the right to life (Article 2) and the right to respect for private and family life (Article 8). The NGO, Klimaatzaak - which means climate case in Dutch, and which brought the case hailed the judgment as historic, both in the nature of the decision and the court's recognition of 58,000 citizens as co-plaintiffs. The legal victory in Belgium follows similar rulings in the Netherlands, Germany and France, where judges have condemned governments for inadequate responses to the climate crisis or failing to keep their promises. According to the European Commission, Belgium the first continental European country to undergo the industrial revolution is on track to miss its emission reduction targets for 2030. What all these three news put together means is that the Climate Change threat is really more dangerous and omnipresent. Until and unless the world's leaders act in unison and honour their commitment to raise and spend \$100 billion, to tackle the threat as per the Paris Agreement and take some coordinated and concerted measures at Glasgow, we may face a dire threat to the human race.

(Asad Mirza is a political commentator based in New Delhi. He writes on Muslims, educational, international affairs, interfaith and current affairs. The views expressed are personal)

international

US TO SOON SEE EXPLOSIVE OUTBREAK OF DELTA VARIANT: EPIDEMIOLOGIST

Washington | Agencies

The US is set to witness an explosive outbreak of the Delta Covid variant in a month's time, if people are not fully vaccinated, warned Eric Feigl-Ding, an epidemiologist and a public health scientist. "The US has just one month to act before it becomes full blown Delta variant dominant. One month to slow it down. One month to fully vaccinate," Feigl-Ding said in a series of tweets. He urged the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the World Health Organization (WHO) to take urgent steps to vaccinate people in the US. "But we likely have even less time than that if CDC doesn't act soon," Feigl-Ding said. "If the CDC doesn't issue new guidelines to stem the growth of #DeltaVariant, which can transmit via merely 5-10 seconds of passive breathing exposure, it will be extremely derelict," he said. "The Delta variant is leaps and bounds faster than any other variant known to date. It represents a clear and present danger to the world. This Delta variant surge will not end well for low vaccination areas," he noted. Feigl-Ding emphasised on the need for two doses of vaccines and said "1 dose is



definitely not enough". Concerns are rising about the spread of the Delta variant of Covid-19 in the US as President Joe Biden falls short of his July 4 vaccine rollout goal and cases explode in the UK. The highly contagious Delta variant, first identified in India, has spread to at least 92 countries. According to the CDC, the variant now represents at least 20 per cent of Covid

cases in the US, and is expected to become dominant in a matter of weeks. Besides vaccinations, it is imperative to wear masks. Feigl-Ding has urged the CDC for reversing its mask rule as nations like Australia and Israel are reimposing masks due to the threat of the Delta variant. He cited a Queensland health official, who early last week had warned that "5-10 seconds" is all one needs to transmit the Delta variant. It can be a "fleeting moment" of seconds. Meanwhile, the WHO has also said that being vaccinated may not be enough, and people must continue wearing masks, maintain social distancing and other Covid-appropriate behaviours. "Israel and now the WHO are both coming out strongly for masks even if fully vaccinated. Israel has 60 per cent people who have received both doses of Pfizer vaccine, yet it knows it needs to re-impose masks because of the new Delta Variant outbreak. The WHO is on the right side of the science this time, better than CDC," Feigl-Ding said. "Don't act slowly against the Delta Variant. Speed matters. You must move quickly or else once Delta hits a critical mass, you will be in trouble and lose control," he said.

5 MILITIAMEN KILLED IN US AIRSTRIKES IN IRAQ, SYRIA

Damascus: At least five members of paramilitary group were killed in US airstrikes on the border region between Iraq and Syria, a war monitor said on Monday. The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR) said the fighters were killed and several others wounded during the strikes on the Syrian side of the frontier, reports Xinhua news agency. The Pentagon said on Sunday that it conducted airstrikes against facilities used by "Iran-backed militia groups" in the region. "The US strikes targeted operational and weapons storage facilities at two locations in Syria and one location in Iraq, both of which lie close to the border between those countries," Pentagon Press Secretary John Kirby said in a statement. According to Kirby, resident Joe Biden directed the airstrikes against Iran-backed militia targets.

Afghan civilians take up arms against Taliban

Kabul | Agencies

Afghan civilians have started taking up arms in an effort to defend their towns and villages falling to the Taliban as violence has intensified in the war-torn country in recent weeks, according to a media report. So far, hundreds of locals have taken up arms in support of the government forces across the provinces of Takhar, Balkh, Badghis, Baghlan, Nangarhar, Laghman, Jawzjan, Samangan and Kapisa, Herat, Patkia, Ghor and Kunduz, the TOLO News report said. Sources said that since Saturday evening, five districts fell to the Taliban -- Sayed Abad and Chak-e-Wardak in Maidan Wardak, Rostaq in Takhar, Arghistan in Kandahar and Shortepa in Balkh. During this period, the government forces have had some progress but could not



recapture any of the fallen districts, TOLO News reported. "Paktia residents pledge to the government and the security agencies that we are with you," said Abdul Malik Zazai, head of the provincial council. Some residents of Enjil district in Herat who have taken up arms warned the Taliban to quit violence or they will face resistance from the people. "We pledge to the people that we will defend the country until the last drop of our blood," Farid Ahmad, a public uprising force member. In Ghor and Kunduz as well, people say they have been left with no option but to take up arms to fight the Taliban.

Record-breaking heat hits US Pacific Northwest



Washington | Agencies

Temperatures are expected to increase across the US Pacific Northwest through Tuesday following a weekend of record-breaking heat in the region, according to the weather service. Portland, the largest city in Oregon, and Seattle in Washington were both forecast to break all-time record highs, reports Xinhua news agency. On Sunday afternoon, the airport in Portland

recorded a temperature of 43.3 degrees Celsius, the hottest ever logged there since record-keeping began in 1940, according to the National Weather Service. Temperatures were expected to rise a bit more later. Seattle saw its hottest June day in recorded history on Saturday as the temperature hit 38.3 degrees. It was only the fourth time on the books that Seattle had ever topped 38 degrees, according to a report by the San Francisco Chronicle.

41 militants killed in Somalia suicide attack

Mogadishu | Agencies

Somali National Army (SNA) said that 41 al-Shabab militants were killed and several others injured in a suicide attack in the country's Galmudug state. An SNA commander told state-media that three SNA soldiers and five from Galmudug's regional paramilitary forces (Darwish) were also killed during the attack on Sunday near a security camp in Wisil, which is one of the safest towns in Galmudug, reports Xinhua news agency. The military said some of the civilians and soldiers wounded in the fighting were taken to the country's capital Mogadishu for medical treatment. The Somali government strongly condemned Sunday's terrorist attack by al-Shabab and sent its condolences to the families of those killed by the terrorists. Deputy Information Minister, Abdirahman Yusuf Al-Adala said the government had taken immediate



action to help the people of Wisil, who showed courage and resisted attempts by the terrorists to attack their town. The al-Shabab militant group which is fighting the government has been driven out of major strongholds in Somalia in recent years in a joint offensive by AMISOM and local forces but the group still stages attacks across the country.

GLOBAL COVID-19 CASELOAD TOPS 181MN

Washington: The overall global Covid-19 caseload has topped 180.7 million, while the deaths have surged to more than 3.92 million, according to the Johns Hopkins University.

In its latest update on Monday morning, the University's Center for Systems Science and Engineering (CSSE) revealed that the current global caseload and death toll stood at 181,038,754 and 3,921,974, respectively. The US continues to be the worst-hit country with the world's highest number of cases and deaths at 33,624,871 and 603,966, respectively, according to the CSSE. In terms of infections, India follows in the second place with 30,233,183 cases. The other worst countries with over 3 million cases are Brazil (18,420,598), France (5,831,972), Turkey (5,409,027), Russia (5,387,486), the UK (4,748,644), Argentina (4,405,247), Italy (4,258,069), Colombia (4,158,716), Spain (3,782,463), Germany (3,734,489) and Iran (3,167,741), the CSSE figures showed. In terms of deaths, Brazil comes second with 513,474 fatalities. Nations with a death toll of over 100,000 are India (395,751), Mexico (232,521), Peru (191,584), Russia (131,070), the UK (128,364), Italy (127,472), France (111,130) and Colombia (104,678).





Britney Spears beau helping star 'detox mentally and spiritually' after conservatorship hearing

Los Angeles | Agencies

Britney Spears' boyfriend Sam Asghari is reportedly helping the star to "detox mentally and spiritually" after her explosive conservatorship hearing last week.

The 27-year-old fitness expert flew to Hawaii with Britney, 39, and her security team after her emotional hearing appearance in which she spoke about how the

conservatorship negatively affects her life.

A source told US Weekly that the Iranian model is treating the popstar "like a princess" and making sure Britney knows he "loves her unconditionally."

"Sam made sure his schedule was clear the week after the hearing to be there for her 100 percent and support her," the insider said.

"She's been super emotional so he's making sure she's loved and treating her like a princess."

ED SHEERAN'S LIFE CHANGED AFTER HE BECAME A FATHER

London | Agencies

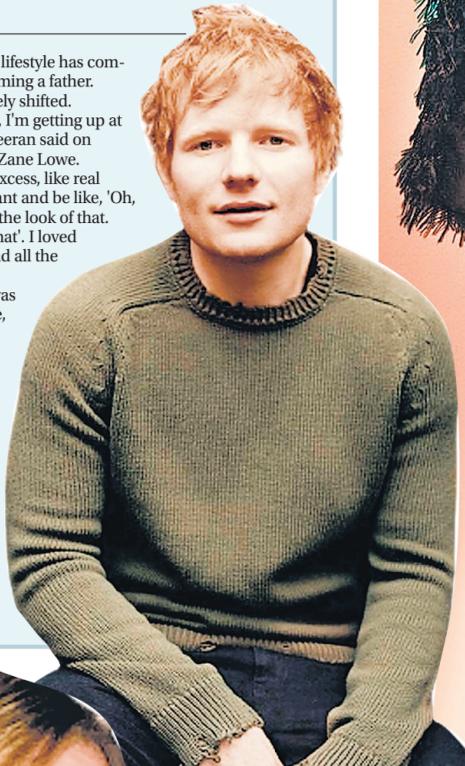
Singer Ed Sheeran says his lifestyle has completely shifted since becoming a father.

"My lifestyle has completely shifted. Instead of going to bed at 6am, I'm getting up at 6am and earlier than that," Sheeran said on "New Music Daily", hosted by Zane Lowe.

"I used to do everything to excess, like real excess. I would go to a restaurant and be like, 'Oh, I like the look of that. And like the look of that. And like, I'll just, I'll eat all of that'. I loved drinking everything in sight and all the other stuff," he recalled.

"I just found when Cherry was six months pregnant, I was like, right at this point (her) waters might break anytime and I'm just going to stop excess and just be available and be the husband that I'm meant to be," he said, according to femalefirst.co.uk.

Sheeran also said he had "certain expectations" going into fatherhood, after people told him it would be the "best thing" that has happened to him.



Megan Fox celebrates 'over two decades' of bisexuality

Los Angeles | Agencies

Hollywood actress Megan Fox asserted that she has been bisexual for over two decades, in a new social media post. Although she came out over a decade ago, she doesn't often openly address her sexuality. Fox, who is part of the LGBTQIA community, celebrated her "over two decades" of bisexuality by sharing a number of sultry selfies flaunting rainbow-tip manicure in honour of Pride Month.

"Putting the B in #LGBTQIA for over two decades @moveon @intoactionus #pride," she wrote as the caption with rainbow emojis. In the comment section of the post, her followers wrote how much they love her for putting herself out there and reminding everyone that she is a member of the LGBTQIA community. "Honey you made us realise the B in a lot of us," a fan wrote. Some were shocked as they did not know that the actress is bisexual. The first time she opened up publicly about her sexual identity was in a 2008 interview. Fox, who shares three kids with estranged husband Brian Austin Green, also used her social media to speak publicly about LGBTQ+ rights.

Kimberley Walsh secretly gave birth to third son a month ago

Los Angeles | Agencies

Kimberley Walsh has given birth to a baby son as she welcomes her third child into the world with husband Justin Scott.

The ex-Girls Aloud singer

revealed she had a "perfect" labour experience with little Nate Jackson Scott, after the births of her other sons Bobby, six, and Cole, four, left her "in shock".

Kimberley, 39, was induced and Nate weighed in at 7lb 4oz when he was

born last month, with the couple managing to keep the arrival a secret for weeks. She said, "I wasn't due until 8 June but when I had a last set of blood tests at the end of May they found these antibodies that hadn't been there the whole

pregnancy." They said it was unusual for them to show then, as usually they would treat them throughout the pregnancy. Kimberley revealed the couple named their new son Nate after admiring the name for years.

TV FAVOURITE RYLAN CLARK-NEAL SEPARATES FROM HUSBAND DAN

Los Angeles | Agencies

Television and radio favourite Rylan Clark-Neal and husband Dan have separated after six years of marriage, The Sun can reveal.

Rylan, 32, has taken a break from his Radio 2 show and stepped away from hosting Eurovision in the wake of the decision. Sources insist he will

be back on air soon.

One said, "Rylan's one of the most beloved people on TV so fans will be sad to hear what has happened."

He often spoke of their relationship on air and they even co-hosted an episode of This Morning but unfortunately things haven't worked out.

Rylan first found fame as a contestant on The X Factor in 2012. He then

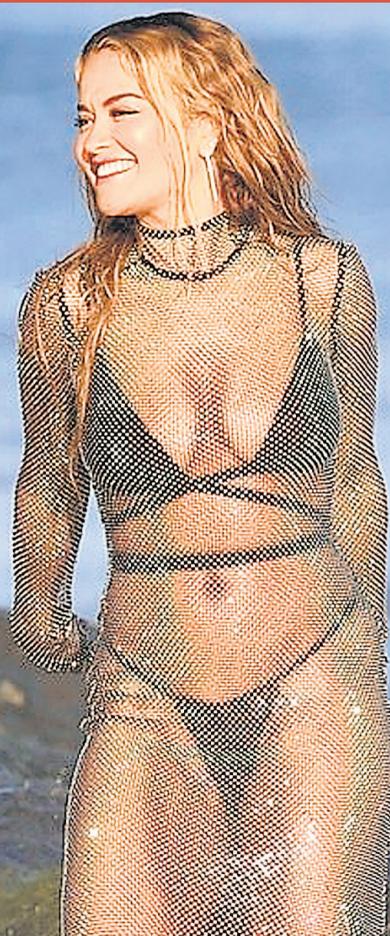
became one of Britain's most recognisable TV faces after winning Celebrity Big Brother in 2013.

The same year he met ex-Met Police detective Dan, who it is understood has moved out of their home to a rented flat in Essex.

The couple met when Rylan interviewed Dan on Big Brother spin-off Big Brother's Bit on the Side



ABSOLUTE PIC OF THE DAY



Rita Ora





RAHI WINS GOLD IN 25M PISTOL EVENT AT WORLD CUP



Osijek | Agencies

India's Rahi Sarnobat won gold medal in women's 25 metres pistol event at the International Shooting Sport Federation (ISSF) World Cup here on Monday. "This gives me the assurance that I am on the right track and I have to keep working on this up till the Olympics," Rahi said after her victory. Rahi shot 39 out of 50 in the 25m pistol final

to win the first gold for India in the ongoing World Cup. Manu Bhaker, the other Indian in fray, finished seventh in the eight-competitor final. Rahi, 30, started on a positive note and continued to dominate as the final progressed. Earlier in the preliminary round, Rahi had shot 591 out of 600 while Manu scored 588 in the qualification round. Mathilde Lamolle of France shot 31 in the final to win silver while Russia's Vitalina Batsarashkina took home bronze with a total of 28. In the qualification round of the women's 50m 3-position rifle event, India's Tejaswin Sawant shot 1168 out of 1200. The 50m 3-position rifle competition is considered to be the most gruelling event. The competitors have to shoot 40 shots each in kneeling, prone and standing, in that order. Tejaswin shot 390 out of 400 in the kneeling position and scored 397 in prone. In standing position, she could only manage 381 for an aggregate total of 1168. Anjum Moudgil, the second Indian shooter in the event, shot 1162. She had a series of 389 in kneeling, 391 in prone and 382 in standing. With average scores, Tejaswin and Anjum might not make the cut for the final in women's 50m 3-position competition.

Dhawan-led India enters week-long quarantine on arrival in Colombo

Colombo | Agencies

The Shikhar Dhawan-led Indian limited-overs squad reached Colombo on Monday evening for a three-ODI and three-T20I series, and was placed in three-day room quarantine at the Taj Samudra Hotel immediately on arrival. "All the basic protocols will be followed as the team will undergo quarantine for a week and stay inside the bio-bubble for the entire tour," said an official of Sri Lanka Cricket (SLC). According to a statement from SLC, the team will be in room quarantine at Taj Samudra from June 29 to July 1. They will then be allowed to practice within quarantine from July 2 to 4. From July 5, they will be out of quarantine but stay inside the bio-bubble and practice or rest as per the team management's wish. The Indian squad comprises 20 players and five net bowlers. The team, led by opener Shikhar Dhawan and coached by Rahul Dravid, will play three ODIs



and three T20 Internationals from July 13 to 25. India will play ODIs on July 13th, 16th and 18th. The ODI series will be followed by the T20 International series, with matches on July 21, 23 and 25. "The key goal is to try and win the series. Hopefully, people can get opportunities to put up performances and knock on the

doors of selectors," Dravid had said ahead of the departure to Sri Lanka. India's squad: Shikhar Dhawan (captain), Prithvi Shaw, Devdutt Padikkal, Ruturaj Gaikwad, Suryakumar Yadav, Manish Pandey, Hardik Pandya, Nitish Rana, Ishan Kishan (wicket-keeper), Sanju Samson (wicket-keeper),

Yuzvendra Chahal, Rahul Chahar, K Gowtham, Krunal Pandya, Kuldeep Yadav, Varun Chakravarthy, Bhuvneshwar Kumar (vice-captain), Deepak Chahar, Navdeep Saini, Chetan Sakariya. Net bowlers: Ishan Porel, Sandeep Warrier, Arshdeep Singh, Sai Kishore, Simarjeet Singh.

Belgium down Portugal 1-0 to reach Euro 2020 quarterfinals

Seville | Agencies

Thorgan Hazard's first-half goal fired Belgium into the European Championships quarterfinals as the current world No. 1 team overcame defending champions Portugal 1-0 in a heavyweight clash here. The Dortmund attacking midfielder scored in the 42nd minute on Sunday when he got the ball just outside the box and fired a superb shot into the bottom right, reports Xinhua. "It was a nice goal and we beat the holders," said the 28-year-old, who was named the Player of the Match. Roberto Martinez's side will next face Italy, who are the only other team having won every game so far in the



tournament, in Munich on July 2. "Today was like a final...and Italy is also a complicated game," Thorgan Hazard added. But some injuries that happened in the match have cast some shadow on Belgium's victory as playmaker Kevin De Bruyne limped off early in the second half because of an injury after being tackled from behind by Portuguese Joao Phillinha. The Red Devils suffered another

injury in the closing period as Real Madrid star Eden Hazard was replaced by Yannick Carrasco after straining his hamstring. Belgium, who are striving for their first major title, benefited from an extra 48 hours' rest after easily winning Group B with three straight wins, while Portugal arrived in the knock-out stage with only one win from their group matches -- a 3-0 verdict over Hungary in the opener.

Rani, Vandana have helped achieve my goal: Forward Udit

Bengaluru | Agencies

Indian women's hockey team forward Udit said on Monday that training with experienced players such as captain Rani Rampal and Vandana Katarriya have taught her the finer nuances of the game and that the team was geared up for the Tokyo Olympics. The 23-year-old, who is a member of the Tokyo-bound squad said, "Training with Rani (Rampal) and Vandana has taught me a lot of things. They have played nearly 500 games for India between them and share a very good rapport. They are very experienced players and have always supported me during my time with the team. I am very lucky to have seniors like them around." Udit, who has played 32 matches for the country, said it was a "dream-come-true moment" for her



when she was named in the 16-member Olympic squad. The Haryana player, who was also part of the silver medal-winning team at the 2018 Asian Games in Jakarta, spoke about how she switched to hockey from handball. Udit, who made her senior team debut in 2017, added that she feels fortunate to have had the chance to play for the Indian team in some of the biggest sporting events. On the Indian team's preparations for the Olympics, Udit said, "The Indian team only has one focus right now, which is Tokyo. There is no doubt that the next few weeks are going to be the most crucial days of our lives. Everything we do now, we will do with the aim to produce the best results at the Tokyo Olympics."

SERENA WILLIAMS TO SKIP TOKYO OLYMPICS



London: Serena Williams, the winner of 23 Grand Slam singles titles and four Olympic gold medals -- three of them in doubles -- has confirmed that she will skip the Tokyo Games, scheduled to commence on July 23. "I'm actually not on the Olympic list, not that I'm aware of," Serena said on Sunday, a day before the scheduled Wimbledon start. "If so (if I am on the list), then I shouldn't be on it. There's a lot of reasons that I made my Olympic decision. I don't feel like going into them today. Maybe another day. Sorry. In the past, the Olympics have been a wonderful place for me. Serena won the Olympic doubles gold in 2000 Sydney and 2008 Beijing. At the 2012 London, she won both the singles and doubles gold.

BCCI WILLING TO WAIT ON DECISION TO INCLUDE 2 FRANCHISES FOR IPL 2022

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Indian cricket board is looking to include two new franchises in the Indian Premier League (IPL) ahead of next year's edition. However, the process is still in the works and will require an analysis of market as well as feasibility, said a top BCCI office-bearer. "We are looking to have two franchises in next year's IPL but we will have to see the market and also assess the situation prevailing in the country. We can't guarantee a timeline because there are a lot of things we have to consider," said Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) treasurer Arun Dhumal on Monday. There have been talks that Ahmedabad could host one of the franchises. However, a bidding process will have to get underway before the final decision to admit any new franchise is taken. While the IPL 2021 was



suspended halfway through this year (after 29 out of 60 matches were played) due to emergence of Covid-19 cases in four of the eight franchises, the remainder of this year's edition will be played from September 19 to October 15 in the United Arab Emirates (UAE). The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) is planning a mega auction ahead of next year. In a mega auction, barring three retentions and two right-to-match (RTM) card players, all of the players are offloaded in the bidding pool. If two franchises are added, then there definitely will have to be a mega auction.

Ecuador hold Brazil to reach Copa America last eight

Goiania (Brazil) | Agencies

Ecuador advanced to the Copa America quarterfinals after Angel Mena's second-half strike earned them a 1-1 draw with Brazil. The tournament hosts began the match on Sunday with Neymar and several other regular first-team players on the bench as head coach Tite continued his rotation policy, reports Xinhua. Eder Militao put the defending champions ahead just before halftime, nodding the ball into the top right corner after connecting with Everton Soares's set piece. Angel Mena, who replaced the injured Moises Caicedo in the first half, equalised just after the interval, thumping a close-range shot past goalkeeper Alisson after Enner Valencia's looping header. The result ended a run of 10 consecutive wins for Brazil, who still entered the knockout stage having topped Group B with 10 points from four games. Ecuador, who finished the competition's first phase with three points,



secured a berth in the last eight despite failing to register a victory. In another Copa America match on Sunday, Andre Carrillo scored just after halftime to hand Peru a 1-0 win

over eliminated Venezuela. Peru clinched the second place in Group B with seven points while Venezuela finished fifth with two points.

SOUTH AFRICA STRIKE BACK TO LEVEL T20I SERIES AGAINST WEST INDIES

George's (Grenada) | Agencies

West Indies batsmen couldn't replicate the batting heroics of the opening T20I on June 26 and lost the second game of the five-match series against South Africa by 16 runs at the Grenada National Stadium here. Chasing a score of 166/7 in 20 overs, West Indies came up short with opener Andre Fletcher (35) and Fabian Allen (34) being the leading scorers. The home team could finally manage 150/9 as the Proteas clawed back from a demoralising eight-wicket loss in the first match to level the series 1-1. Fletcher, playing on his home ground, batted deep and was the sixth batsman to be dismissed after he faced 36 balls and hit two fours and a six. Earlier, West Indies left-arm pacer Obed McCoy claimed three wickets to restrict South Africa's scoring after a fast start. Playing just



his seventh match at this level, the 24-year-old had a career-best 3/25 off his four overs. The two teams return to the same venue on June 29 for the third match.

Brief scores
South Africa 166/7 in 20 overs (R. Hendricks 42, T. Bavum 46; K. Sinclair 2/23, O. McCoy 3/25) beat West Indies 150/9 in 20 overs (E. Lewis 21, A. Fletcher 35, F. Allen 34; K. Rabada 3/37, G. Linde 2/19) by 16 runs.

Nataraj betters Olympic qualification time in men's 100m backstroke

Rome | Agencies

India's Srihari Nataraj on Sunday shattered the Tokyo Olympic games qualification time in the men's 100 metres backstroke during the time trial at Sette Colli Trophy, but his feat is yet to be approved by the International Swimming Federation (FINA). Nataraj clocked 53.77 seconds, which was faster than the Olympic qualification time of 53.85 secs. If FINA approves his timing, the 20-year-old Bengaluru swimmer will become the second Indian to make the qualification cut that guar-



antees an automatic berth for the Olympics. Nataraj's performance of 53.77 secs is also better than his own previous national record of 54.07 seconds. FINA is expected to give a ruling on Nataraj's timing next week. On Saturday, India's Sajjan Prakash became the first-ever Indian swimmer to achieve the Olympic qualification time in the men's 200m butterfly event in Rome. Prakash clocked 1:56.38 seconds, which was better than the Olympics qualification time of 1:56.48 sec.

Second seed Aryna opens Wimbledon with easy win over qualifier

London | Agencies

Belarusian No.2 seed Aryna Sabalenka began her Wimbledon title quest with a 6-1, 6-4 triumph over Romanian qualifier Monica Niculescu in the first match that got completed under the No.1 Court roof here on Monday. Aryna, who is the second seed in the absence of Japan's Naomi Osaka and Romania's Simona Halep, took one hour and 15 minutes to demolish her Romanian rival and make it to the second round. The result was Aryna's only second main-draw win at Wimbledon, and first since defeating Irina Khromacheva of Russia on her 2017



debut. On her last visit in 2019, the Belarusian crashed out in the first round to the grass-court exponent Magdalena Rybarikova of Slovakia. On Monday, the 23-year-old Aryna was in imperious form, slamming 47 winners. The Romanian's serve, which averaged just 129 kmph, became target practice for Aryna. The Belarusian hit 15 clean return winners off it, and the third game of the second set saw a desperate Monica send down an underarm serve. Monica, 33, had last beaten a top-10 player in 2017 (Britain's Johanna Konta in Beijing), and had lost her first eight matches of 2021. But the grass season has seen her excel with six victories, including qualifying for Wimbledon without dropping a set.

Priyanka Chopra goes all-white to celebrate Pride Month

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actress Priyanka Chopra Jonas went all-white to celebrate Pride Month in New York. Priyanka posted a set of pictures on Instagram. In the images, Priyanka is seen sporting an all white coordinate blouse with a thigh high skirt. She completed her look with nude pumps and gold accessories.

"Sunday's OOTD. Feeling the love in NYC Happy Pride! @anjula_acharia," Priyanka wrote as the caption.

Priyanka was last seen on screen in the digital film "The White Tiger". The Ramin Bahrani directorial stars Adarsh Gourav and also features Rajkumar Rao in a pivotal role.

She is currently busy with "Citadel". Helmed by "Avengers" makers Joe and Anthony Russo, "Citadel" is a spy thriller series co-starring Richard Madden, and is billed as a global event for OTT.

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Neetu Kapoor on Monday shared a glimpse of what she terms "my world" through an Instagram picture. The photo features Alia Bhatt with her son Ranbir Kapoor, daughter Riddhima Kapoor Sahni and granddaughter Samaira. In the image, Neetu, Ranbir, Alia, Riddhima and Samaira pose for the camera flaunting big smiles. "My world," wrote late actor Rishi

NEETU KAPOOR'S 'WORLD' INCLUDES RANBIR, ALIA, RIDDHIMA

Kapoor's wife as caption with the picture that currently has 41.3K likes on the website. Neetu and Rishi Kapoor had tied the knot on January 22, 1980. Rishi Kapoor passed away in Mumbai on April 30 last year after a two-year battle with leukemia.

Meanwhile, Neetu is gearing up for making a comeback on the big screen with "Jug Jugg Jeeyo", which also stars Anil Kapoor, Varun Dhawan and Kiara Advani.

Maybe, Ray would have liked us for at least attempting 'Ray': Ali Fazal

story through the eyes of director Srijit Mukerji, and a lot of technicians because it was technical and very sound and it feels good," said Ali.

He added, "It was sweet to be just attached to that name and persona if it's even for a fleeting few seconds. I am just grateful. Jab takhumaarepaaskaamhai tab tak we are all grateful (till the time we have work, we are grateful)." "Was it tough to take to viewers, who are wholly not aware of Satyajit Ray's work?" "Yes, it was or maybe it is in some sections. In Bengal, they still celebrate him in a big manner but I think a large part of the new younger generations are still not aware of his work and so we had to," he claimed, adding: "We tried our level best to keep the essence of Ray alive in the work and in my acting. There have been some stellar performances in his cinematic work," he

said. Ali did not find it a challenge to immerse himself into the story written by Ray. He says he treated the project as a "very new project".

"I have seen that a lot of people are trying to make comparisons but can't possibly, because his cinema was very different from his writing. This is a written piece. In fact, in the original there were no female characters. So, we included female characters in our short. We tried... of course, it takes a darker path," he said. Ali added: "He was a great man and he led by example. He was a very progressive man. Maybe, he would have liked us for at least attempting 'Ray'. If we were making a remake of his film then the comparisons would have made sense. It is our little version and tribute. We have tried to push the boundaries." "Ray" released on Netflix on June 25.

Adnan Khan wants to explore negative roles on TV



Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actor Adnan Khan, who was last seen playing the protagonist Mawlawi Kabeer Ahmed in the TV drama Ishq "Subhan Allah", says he would love to play a negative role in his next show.

"After playing a romantic character, now I don't mind taking up negative roles. I would love to come out as a bad boy on the TV screen. Negative characters are fun and interesting. It would bring new challenges. The audience may take time to accept me in grey shades, but I'm sure to impress them with my acting skills," said Adil.

He feels that while, after playing negative characters, actors often lose out on positive roles, he is not worried about it. "I know the fact that mostly on TV, if you play negative roles, makers don't consider you back for the role of a protagonist. But I'm not worried about being typecast. I wish to be versatile. I'm looking for some challenging roles, be it positive or negative, to return to work," says the actor.

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Ali Fazal was recently seen in the segment "Forget Me Not" of the anthology series "Ray". The episode is based on Satyajit Ray's short story Bipin Chowdhury's Smitabhram (Bipin Chowdhury's memory loss). Ali plays an ambitious man named Ipsit, who boasts of a razor-sharp memory, and has a mental breakdown after

being challenged over some dates. "I find myself very lucky it was Satyajit Ray's short story that eventually evolved into something like Ipsit in 'Forget Me Not' in the anthology. It is a modern re-telling of his work, his short

SHILPA SHETTY: CARDIO IS NOT BORING

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Shilpa Shetty Kundra chose to highlight cardio sessions in her Monday post, moving away from the yoga videos she normally uploads.

Shilpa posted a video on Instagram, where she is seen doing a stepper workout, with a sprinkle of Bhangra hand movements to add a humour element.

"A different kind of #MondayMotivation today: 6" Platform Side-To-Side Shuffle. Cardio Is Not Boring, You Need To Be Exploring. An extreme lower-body-focused high intensity Interval Training Drill, which conditions the heart and lungs as well. Burn more calories in less time," the 46-year-old wrote alongside the clip.

She added: "Making it fun by adding Bhangra Arms; and yes, adding 'arms' will burn more calories. Try performing 3 to 4 rounds of 1 minute each. Rest for 1 minute after every round. Increasing the platform height will increase the intensity. If you are a beginner, start with 30 seconds per round on a 4" or 6" platform. Happy Cardioing, The SSK Way!" Talking about her professional

life, Shilpa has two films lined up. She will be seen in "Hungama 2", the sequel to the 2003 hit "Hungama", and also "Nikamma", which stars Abhimanyu Dassani and Shirley Setia.

When Mithun Da visited RajanShahi's Anupamaa set

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Actress Madalsa Sharma who is playing Kavya in RajanShahi's popular show Anupamaa was pleasantly surprised when her father in law actor Mithun Chakraborty came to her set. Madalsa is married to Mithun's son Mimoh. Mithun was shooting for a film in the vicinity paid a surprise visit to set.

Throwing more light on the incident Madalsa says, "It was such a pleasant surprise from Mithun dad, I was so happy to see him. The whole cast was happy to see the legend and we all have clicked pictures with him. The whole atmosphere was magical. Dad also sat and spoke to everyone about the show. He also expressed his positive views on my performance and also praised RajanShahi Sir for making a show like this. It's an amazing feeling, when dad came on my set and blessed all of us." She also adds, "In fact my mother in law Yogita Bali is a loyal audience of the show. She watches all the episodes."

Sudhanshu Pandey, Rupali Ganguly, Tassnim Sheikh, Nidhi Shah, Muskaan Bamne, Paras Kalnawat, Alpana Buch and Arvind Vaidya were also present on the set.

